

Culture, Embodiment, and the Senses

Tuesday, 25 October 2005

Reading

- Jeanne Favret-Saada and Catherine Cullen, “Unbewitching as Therapy,” *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Feb., 1989): 40-56.
 - Clayton Robarchek and Carole Robarchek, “Worani Grief and the Witch-Killer’s Rage: Worldview, Emotion, and Anthropological Explanation,” *Ethos*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (2005): 206-230.
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Film: “Of Men and Gods”

The film is about *masisis* [homosexual men] in Haiti and is comprised of testimonials.

must endure abuse quietly

lower classes uneducated and therefore don’t understand/accept

the idea that they are born they way they are

or attribute it to the Vodou spirit Erzuli, she may “call them”

straight men with wives and children visit them (prefer them because they are “tighter”)

homosexuality is an act for these men, while it is an identity for the *masisis*

the *performance* is what constitutes a masisi

masisi identity is very gender-oriented/polarized – they feel they are “women” yet this category is based on the essentialization of culturally “feminine” traits to the woman

Vodou is tolerant -- maybe why masisis feel comfortable with it – they won’t be persecuted

one masisi became a Vodou priest and found the community’s respect that way

there is no hierarchy in Vodou, adding to the equality and acceptance

Vodou practices during the gathering include dancing, drumming, being possessed

the *lwa* [spirit] enters the body and the person would take the gender of the *lwa*

body = vehicle for the spirits

slow, deliberate movements during the dance, convulsive movements during possession

also a pilgrimage for certain saints, including lighting candles, bathing in water, chanting