Culture, Embodiment, and the Senses
Tuesday, 25 October 2005

Reading


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