ANTH 162: Non-Western Worlds: Caribbean “Others”  
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Words which are italicized and in bold type are Kreyol words. Bold type words are key concepts.

Kramer notes that this is a film about the rituals of daily life in a rural, agrarian, peasant village in Haiti. By “rituals” she means the things people do repetitively, i.e. which are part of their culture. The secular life is the subject of this film – how do people live, work, feed themselves, find entertainment. Another Kramer film will introduce us to the sacred life of these people, especially their living of their vodun religion.

Note that a Haitian rural village may not conform to our ideas of a village. Homes are scattered across the countryside (dispersed hamlet settlement pattern), each family occupying a habitation, the primary domestic unit, often containing an extended family, consisting of one or more adult couples and their children and children’s children.

The village in the film is probably very much like what Jacques Roumain had in mind when he set his novel in Fond Rouge, which the exception that there is no school in Fond Rouge.

As you watch the film, take note of the following:

- The peasants’ dependence on the land and the declining productivity of the land.
- Can’t afford machines, so do work by hand with the aid of draft animals.
- Notice throughout that people share the burden with family members – “brother with brother, cousin with cousin, godparents…”
- Fetching water.
- Note their clothing – work and dress.
- The African characteristic of carrying loads on the head (permits heavier loads and less chance of injury).
- The agricultural cycle and the crops – corn, beans, millet, Congo beans, rice, yams, etc.)
- Note the many examples of cooperative labor (coumbites). You will see two major examples in the erection of a building and the clearing of a large field, but there are many examples of smaller groups of men and women weeding and planting – note that songs usually accompany this work).
- The coumbite makes work go faster, accomplish large tasks, also entertainment – music.
- What work, tasks, do the women do?
- What work, tasks, do the men do?
- This is the sexual division of labor.
- Note the large mortar and pestle (African heritage).
- Self-sufficiency – make or produce most of what they need (note man making rope from sisal).
- Music – songs and instruments (bamboo, drums, stone on machete blade, conch shell).
- Tuesday market at Fonde-des-Negres (cyclical market system).
- Note the name of the school (Arme du Salut). This is a Salvation Army mission school – notice the shoes the children are wearing!
- Hard work and hard life (no fat people), but the children do play and the adults sing and laugh.
- Entertainment: cock fights, cards, dominos, dance, food and drink vendors.

The film ends with a repeat of the idea that there is a strong attachment to the land of one’s ancestors. But the young are leaving because there is not enough land to support them.