

Queering Creole Spiritual Traditions: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Participation in African-Inspired Traditions in the Americas (Haworth Gay & Lesbian Studies)

By Randy P Lundschieen Conner, David Sparks

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What roles do queer and transgender people play in the African diasporic religions? *Queering Creole Spiritual Traditions: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Participation in African-Inspired Traditions in the Americas* is a groundbreaking scholarly exploration of this long-neglected subject. It offers clear insight into the complex dynamics of gender and sexual orientation, humans and deities, and race and ethnicity, within these richly nuanced spiritual practices.

Queering Creole Spiritual Traditions explores the ways in which gender complexity and same-sex intimacy are integral to the primary beliefs and practices of these faiths. It begins with a comprehensive overview of Vodou, Santeria, and other African-based religions. The second section includes extensive, revealing interviews with practitioners who offer insight into the intersection of their beliefs, their sexual orientation, and their gender identity. Finally, it provides a powerful analysis of the ways these traditions have inspired artists, musicians, and writers such as Audre Lorde, as well as informative interviews with the artists themselves.

In *Queering Creole Spiritual Traditions*, you will discover:

- how the presence of androgynous divinities affects both faith and practice in Vodou, Candomble, Santeria, and other Creole religions
- how the phenomenon of possession or embodiment by a god or goddess may validate queer identity and nurture gender complexity
- who practices the African-derived spiritual traditions, what they believe, and who their deities are
- how these faiths have influenced the art and aesthetic traditions of the West

This landmark book opens a fascinating new world of thought and belief. The authors provide rigorous documentation and faultless scholarly method as well as personal experience and the testimony of believers. *Queering Creole Spiritual Traditions* sheds new light on two widely different fields: LGBT studies and the theology of the African diaspora. A thorough bibliography points the way to further study, and an extensive photograph gallery provides a unique look at the believers and their practices. Every library with holdings in queer theory, African mythology, or sociology of religion should have this landmark volume.

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- Sales Rank: #7599236 in Books
- Published on: 2004-04-05

- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.50" h x 6.00" w x 1.00" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 402 pages

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Review

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From the Author

Finalist for the 2005 Ashe Journal Book award. See ashejournal.com/index.php?id=18 for additional information

About the Author

Connor is a writer and educator.

David Sparks was educated theologically in England and Canada and has served for 30 years with The United Church of Canada. David's previous three-book lectionary series, *Prayers to Share*, has been welcomed and widely used in North America and Europe and further afield in India and Australia.

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