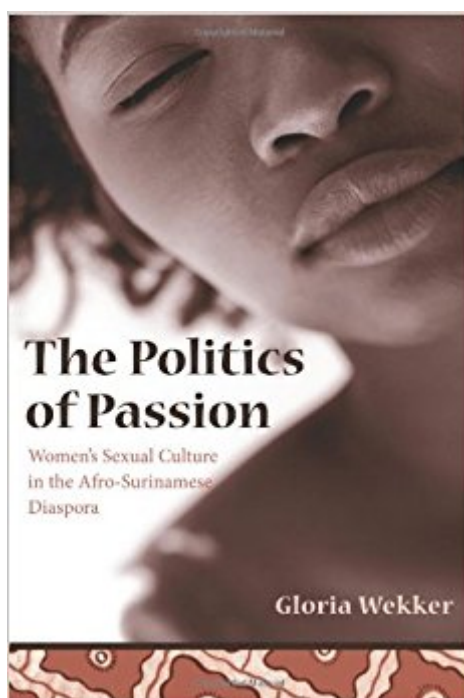


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The Politics Of Passion: Women's Sexual Culture In The Afro-Surinamese Diaspora (Between Men-Between Women: Lesbian And Gay Studies)



Synopsis

Gloria Wekker analyzes the phenomenon of mati work, an old practice among Afro-Surinamese working-class women in which marriage is rejected in favor of male and female sexual partners. Wekker vividly describes the lives of these women, who prefer to create alternative families of kin, lovers, and children, and gives a fascinating account of women's sexuality that is not limited to either heterosexuality or same-sex sexuality. She offers new perspectives on the lives of Caribbean women, transnational gay and lesbian movements, and an Afro-Surinamese tradition that challenges conventional Western notions of marriage, gender, identity, and desire. Bringing these women's voices to the forefront, she offers an extensive and groundbreaking analysis of the unique historical, religious, psychological, economic, linguistic, cultural, and political forces that have shaped their lives.

Book Information

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In-depth study of politics of passion in the Caribbean islands and Suriname. Provocatively fascinating. The construct of marriage in Indoamerican/Northern European domination history/economy. Non marriage and independence/close female friendships/relationships as resistance against white/religious male domination. Gloria Wekkers' approach of this research is unique and politically personal. Mati work at its best! To me an eye opener to female sexuality autonomy and choices. Recommended reading for all women of the world.

This book is an excellent blend of anthropology, ethnic studies, women's studies, gay studies, and postcolonial studies. Progressives bemoan studies that fail to consider race, class, gender, and sexuality together; well, this is an important intervention in that dearth of material. For those who do not understand the difference between essentialism and constructionism, this will make you understand. Professor Griff, Winnie Mandela, Robert Mugabe and so many others make false claims that Africa had no homosexuality until Europeans intervened. Dr. Wekker disproves that by showing how Surinamese mati are influenced greatly by West African religion and principles. You could almost say this is an Afrocentric support of Blacks in same-sex romantic relationships. This is a book that Black gay male and lesbian activists all over the Diaspora need to own and read. Some may want to read this book along side "African Homosexualities." When quoting informants, Dr. Wekker uses their actual Surinamese language and then translates it into English. For polyglots and those familiar with the Dutch-speaking world, this may be informative. However, there is a way that it just takes up space. This book would have been 50 pages shorter without it. Perhaps, Dr. Wekker wants readers to inhabit multilingual terrains, as Gloria Anzaldua did. Still, I think readers like me who don't understand any form of Dutch will skip through a lot. I did love some of the colorful idioms and phrases here. One Surinamese woman says, "Only god knows why he didn't give the horse horns." I'm still trying to find a way to use that phrase in 21st-century America! (By the way, the author writes in American English, rather than British English.) Dr. Wekker tries to "keep it real." She stands against bourgeois posing intended to impress elite audiences. Still, there is a way that this book makes us Black people look bad. The book is filled with violence, sexual promiscuity, womanizing from either gender, disparagement of marriage, and other things that some may find objectionable. I do worry about what would happen if this book gets into the wrong people's

hands. You can see and hear the author in a documentary called "Middle Sexes" narrated by Gore Vidal. As women's studies departments become gender studies departments, readers may want to peruse this alongside Bana-Shute's book on Surinamese men.

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