

ABSTRACT

In Search of the "Hidden Holy Names": Sexuality and Spirituality in the Poetry of Lorna Goodison

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One of the main concerns of Goodison's poetry is a quest for identity which begins in Tamarind Season with a focus on sexuality recorded in imagery which can be read as signifier of a concern with the spiritual. The thesis attempts an examination of the relationship between sexuality and spirituality in the three collections, Tamarind Season, I Am Becoming My Mother and Heartease and finds that even when the poetry is ostensibly concerned with sexuality, the symbolism often yields spiritual content.

It also finds that by the Heartease collection, the search for identity which started with a focus on male/female relationships in the context of sexuality disconnected from spirituality, develops into a growing awareness of personal wholeness as part of a spiritual reality.

At the heart of the search for identity is a concern with the role of the artist expressed in

Suppose we call out the singers and musicians
by their hidden holy names
and them pull out from the belly
bottom of the drum and the bass
chords that quake evil
make holy spirit raise...
("Heartease III" Ts.)

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