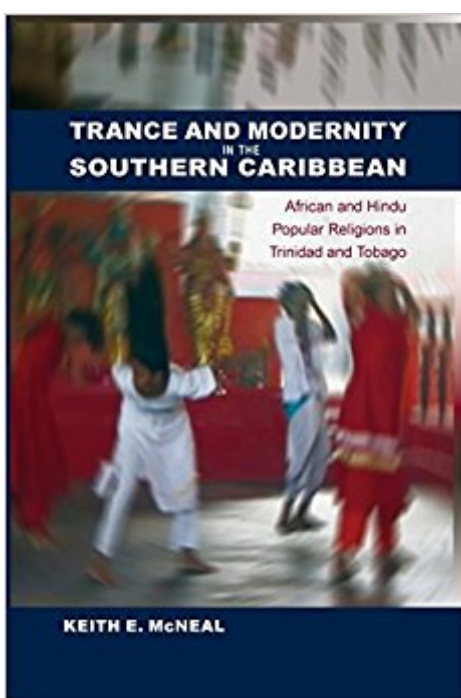


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# Trance And Modernity In The Southern Caribbean: African And Hindu Popular Religions In Trinidad And Tobago (New World Diasporas)



## Synopsis

Provides us with a masterful account of how socially marginalized segments of the African and Indian communities of Trinidad and Tobago developed trance-based religious cults linked with differing cultural heritages. Penetrating deeply into these two different communities with his careful fieldwork, he then places them within a brilliant account of the overall cultural history of this island nation. —Paul Younger, author of *New Homelands: Hindu Communities in Mauritius, Guyana, Trinidad, South Africa, Fiji, and East Africa*

This comparative study of African and Hindu popular religions in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago charts the development of religion in the Caribbean by analyzing the ways ecstatic forms of worship, enacted through trance performance and spirit mediumship, have adapted to capitalism and reconfigured themselves within the context of modernity. Showing how diasporic traditions of West African Orisha Worship and South Asian Shakti Puja converged in their ritual adaptations to colonialism in the West Indies, as well as diverged politically within the context of postcolonial multiculturalism, Keith McNeal reveals the unexpected ways these traditions of trance performance have become both globalized and modernized. The first book-length work to compare and contrast Afro- and Indo-Caribbean materials in a systematic and multidimensional manner, this volume makes fresh and innovative contributions to anthropology, religious studies, and the historiography of modernity. By giving both religious subcultures and their intersections equal attention, McNeal offers a richly textured account of southern Caribbean cultural history and pursues important questions about the history and future of religion.

## Book Information

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“This fine comparative ethnography serves both as a close empirical description of what is happening on the ground in Trinidad and Tobago and as a productive analytical exercise on contrasting politicizations of religions in relation to political campaigns, law, and institution building.”

“New West Indian Guide”

“A profound psychological analysis of trance as well as a sociological analysis of the nature of these so-called trance religions in Trinidad and Tobago.”

“Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions”

“Drawing on a range of research from many disciplines, McNeal offers a rich library resource and must read for scholars studying Caribbean religions.”

“Choice”

“McNeal’s richly detailed and always sympathetic study should help us to see how complex and fascinating our cultural and religious scene really is.”

“Trinidad Express Newspaper”

“[McNeal’s] field work and findings are crucial to understanding how the marginalised and the working-class in this country seek solace and relief in the divine, and should be studied closely by local scholars and politicians alike.”

“The Trinidadian Guardian”

Keith E. McNeal is associate professor of anthropology in the department of comparative cultural studies at the University of Houston.

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