

Dual Descent and GLBT Identities in Chris Abani's *The Virgin of Flames*

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The paper will examine the female deities of Chris Abani's *The Virgin of Flames*—including Mami Wata, Fatima and the Virgin Mary—considering how attention to the Igbo provision for female transmission of lineage may illuminate these figures. It will challenge critical tendencies to read the refusals of gay identity in the novel as an expression of internalized homophobia by considering these refusals and the anomalous gender of the protagonist in relation to dual descent. Chinua Achebe's "African Trilogy" will provide a counterpoint for my reading of Abani's novel.