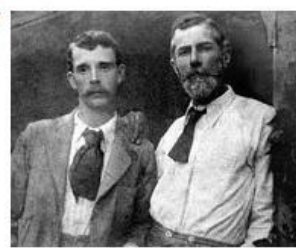




## **SWITCHINGVIEW**

**BY SIMON DAWSON**

LOOKING AT GAY LIFE  
THROUGH A DIFFERENT LENS



### **TEXTS AND RESOURCES - VIDEO INT 3.1.**

## **QUEER MINISTRY PART 1.**

# **HOW PATRIARCHY SUPPRESSED LGBT AND THIRD GENDER PRIESTS AND SPIRITUAL LEADERS.**

This video follows on from the first three videos in the series, where I set out my basic “Intermediate Type” thesis:

- Across history, homosexual and other LGBTQIA+ people have often been accepted and valued by the cultures they lived within.
- In many cultures there are reports of such people being closely involved with a spiritual vocation, as priests, shamans or other forms of spiritual leadership, or in warfare.
- Sadly, much of this activity was suppressed or destroyed when European colonialism spread anti-gay values across the world.
- Because of the suppression this history has been all but forgotten, but the evidence is still there and can be uncovered.

These videos can be accessed through my switchingview website

<https://www.switchingview.com/>

## **QUEER MINISTRY**

In these Queer Ministry videos I want to take this thesis one stage further

- If we study Queer Ministry across the world we can get a greater understanding of the expressions of Queer Ministry in and around Judah and the Roman Empire when Judaism and Christianity came into being.
- We can use this greater knowledge to challenge current Christian teaching as being prejudiced and incorrect, and based on outdated scholarship.

Much of the video is based on the work of Randy P. Connor and Edward Carpenter.

Connor wrote *"Blossom of Bone"* (1993), a cross-cultural study which (according to the blurb on the back of the book) *"weaves together myriad accounts of gender variant shamans, priests, magicians and artists throughout the ages who have, in different ways, embodied the interrelationship of homoeroticism, androgyny, and the sacred."*

Much of the content of my Queer Ministry videos will be based on this book, and the *Cassels Encyclopaedia of Queer Myth, Symbol and Spirit* (1997), also edited by Connor.

Both books are sadly hard to obtain second-hand, but copies may be available online as PDFs to download. The books are invaluable in that, firstly, they contain well researched and scholarly evidence about this topic. And secondly, they look outside the Euro-centric academic ghetto in which much discussion of homosexuality is stuck.

Edward Carpenter's 1914 book on the same subject, *"Intermediate Types among Primitive Folk, a study in Social Evolution"* can be downloaded from my "Edward Carpenter Archive" website

<https://www.edwardcarpenter.net/ecpftite.htm>

The Queer Ministry information from Connor has been supplemented as follows:

### **World Gender Customs**

The map of gender variance across the world can be found here. The map on the website is interactive and will give you details of each culture when you click on each map pin.

[https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/content/two-spirits\\_map-html/](https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/content/two-spirits_map-html/)

## **SEX, GENDER AND GENDER VARIANCE,**

There is a discussion of the difference between sex and gender in *"A Little Gay Natural History"*, published by the Natural History Museum, London, England.

## **PATRIARCHY**

My main source about the history of patriarchal development is *"The Patriarchs: how men came to rule"* (2023) by Angela Saini. This is an excellent, very scholarly but very readable text, which explains this new research in a very clear way.

You can get a snap-shot of her arguments in this website article, which is the source of my patriarchy definition:

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/angela-saini-patriarchy-matriarchy-gender-equality>

Three of the authors I have mentioned - Connor, Roscoe and Saini - have all discussed the way that cultural attitudes to gender variance or homoeroticism will be influenced by the patriarchal or biarchal attitudes within that same culture. However the more overt linking of

these issues, and the suggestion of how this has been affected by a two-phase timeline in patriarchal development, is my own thesis.

The suggestion that the stories of the gods within a culture will mirror that culture's attitude to patriarchy or to women is in HWF Saggs *"The Babylonians"*. This is a remarkably perceptive comment for a book first published in 1962

### **Neolithic Biarchy**

The image of three neolithic women is on this website. The website explores the way that traditional archaeology has suppressed awareness of the roles of early women, and how this is being challenged by more modern archaeological scholars:

<https://www.archeotravelers.com/en/2021/03/30/the-invisibility-of-prehistoric-women/>

### **Suppression of Queer Ministry**

The image of European conquistadores attacking tribesmen with dogs is discussed fully in my third Intermediate Types introductory video – Suppression and Genocide.

The images of Queer Ministry across the world are as follows:

#### **The Galli (priests of Cybele) in Rome (top left):**

<https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/learn/histories/lgbtq-history/the-galli/>

#### **Gender variance in USA indigenous tribesmen (two centre images):**

See Will Roscoe's *"The Zuni Man-Woman"* for a detailed study and biography of Whe'Wha, a gender variant spiritual and secular leader of the Zuni tribe (New Mexico) in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Or *"Changing Ones: Third and Fourth Genders in Native North America"* is a more general review across the entire country. I will discuss this topic in much more detail in the next video.

#### **Hijira – India (bottom left image) and Mahu – Hawaii (top right image)**

See the World Gender Customs website listed above.

### **Women as Hunters and Warriors**

The Warrior Queen is Queen Tomyris of the Massegetae nation, who defeated the Persian King Cyrus about 530BC. The Massegetae were Scythian by culture, the origin of the Amazon female warrior legends. See Herodotus Histories Book 1.

## Indigenous Women with Autonomy

The image of indigenous Kenyan women dancing is taken from this Guardian newspaper article, which contains an interesting quote reinforcing the Biarchy theory

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/sep/22/kenyans-returning-to-precolonial-kikuyu-traditions-spirituality>

*Those who try to re-engage with the traditions, like Mukuru, also face some pressure to adopt it wholesale. She does not agree with some old Kikuyu traditions, such as female genital mutilation, for example. But she says the traditions entail a wide range of beliefs, including many that are progressive.*

*Under Kikuyu cultural practice, women had control over agricultural production, the community's main source of livelihood. Mukuru says she was surprised to discover that the culture was also matrilineal and sexually liberal. "Sensual dances were used as a way to gauge sexual synergy with the opposite sex," she says.*

Across the world, women in ex-colonial countries are exploring their own indigenous past to rediscover their own emancipated female history, as a way of pushing back against patriarchal ideas imported by colonialism. This exactly matches my own work exploring pre-colonial LGBT history as a way of pushing back against Eurocentric heteronormativity.

## POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL READING

### EXPLORING ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR TO HELP IN UNDERSTANDING PATRIARCHY, HOMOSEXUALITY AND GENDER VARIANCE

A key focus of my scholarship and teaching is to widen the field of study, to escape the patriarchal, heteronormative and Eurocentric bias is of much current academic discourse about homosexuality and gender.

One way of doing this is to look outside Europe and back in history, as shown in these Queer Ministry videos, and in the underlying scholarship of Carpenter, Connor and Roscoe.

A different way of widening the field is to look at animal behaviour. There is some fascinating recent work that has challenged the traditional, patriarchal, heteronormative assumptions embedded within much animal behaviour scholarship. This seems to exactly mirror the work done by Angela Saini and others on human patriarchy and on human sexuality.

One good introduction is *"Bitch: a revolutionary guide to sex, evolution and the female animal"* (2022) by Lucy Cooke ". The *"A Little Gay Natural History"* text mentioned above is quite short, readable, and cheap, as is *"A Little Gay History: Desire and Diversity across the World"* published by the British Museum.

These books will help you to question exactly what do we mean by “natural” in our lifestyles and behaviours. I found that studying these texts, and other books on animal behaviour, has enhanced my understanding of human sexuality and gender variance. I will explore this in the “Talking About Homosexuality” videos in due course.

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switchingview  
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