

To Grandmother

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work would not have been possible without the support of the Vanderbilt University Graduate Department of Religion and the Fund for Theological Education. I am especially indebted to my dissertation committee, Professors Victor Anderson, Lewis V. Baldwin, Fernando Segovia and Jose Medina. They provided me with unending support, feedback, and rigorous intellectual discipline. I am also deeply indebted to the faculty, staff, and students of Tennessee State University, the University of Tennessee, and Mount Holyoke College for their support. I owe a great debt to my advisor, Victor Anderson. This dissertation could not have been completed without his keen insight. He has been an exemplary mentor, teacher, and friend. I am forever indebted to him for the many discussions and debates that led to this dissertation. I am also eternally grateful for the support of my fellow graduate school colleagues; Meredith Hammons, Heather McMurray, Charles Bowie, Patrick Bahls, Maggie Hoop, Kevin Happell and Suzanne Schier-Happell are true friends who provided both emotional and intellectual support. I must also thank Craig Johnson for being one of the best friends a person could have and for understanding when I would tell him to not ask me about my progress on “the D-word.” Finally, I am extremely grateful for the support of my family, especially my sister, Kim Peigne. Through our almost weekly telephone calls, I have come to appreciate the woman she has become, and I hope she has come to appreciate her sometimes-overbearing brother. Last, and certainly not least, I dedicate this dissertation to my grandmother, Petronella Sneed. Without her unconditional love, quiet confidence, and

patience, I do not know where I would be. Without her, I would not know what an ethics of openness looks like.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
Chapter	
I. BLACK LIBERATION THEOLOGY, AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURAL CRITICISM	1
Introduction	1
Introducing Black Liberation Theology	6
Major Themes in Black Liberation Theology and Black Cultural Criticism	9
Womanist Theology	17
Sexuality in Black Liberation Theology and Black Cultural Criticism	22
Conclusion	32
II. BLACK LIBERATION THEOLOGY, AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURAL CRITICISM AND REPRESENTATIONS OF HOMOSEXUALITY	35
Introduction	35
Sexual Difference and Black Theologians	39
Homosexuality in African American Cultural Criticism	55
Tolerance in Black Liberation Theology	71
Conclusion	74
III. THE REPRESENTATIONS OF HOMOSEXUALITY IN BLACK QUEER MEN'S FICTION	76
Introduction	76
Black Queer Literary Formation	78
Thematizing Black Queer Literature	83
Conclusion	109
IV. TRACING THE REPRESENTATIONS OF RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY IN BLACK QUEER MEN'S LITERATURE	112
Introduction	112
Black Queer Literature and the Black Church	113

Black Queer Literature and Spirituality	126
Conclusion.....	138
V. CONCLUSION.....	145
BIBLIOGRAPHY	157