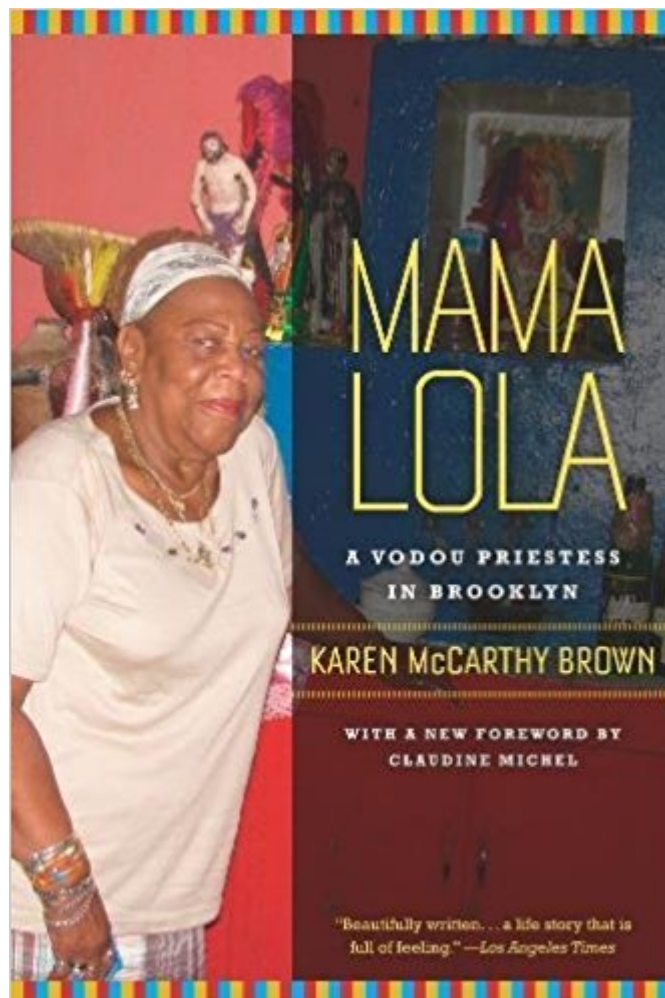




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# Mama Lola: A Vodou Priestess In Brooklyn (Comparative Studies In Religion And Society)



## Synopsis

Vodou is among the most misunderstood and maligned of the world's religions. Mama Lola shatters the stereotypes by offering an intimate portrait of Vodou in everyday life. Drawing on a 35 year long friendship with Mama Lola, a Vodou priestess, Karen McCarthy Brown tells tales spanning five generations of Vodou healers in Mama Lola's family, beginning with an African ancestor and ending with Claudine Michel's account of working with Mama Lola after the Haitian earthquake. Out of these stories, in which dream and vision flavor everyday experience and the Vodou spirits guide decision making, Vodou emerges as a religion focused on healing brought about by mending broken relationships between the living, the dead, and the Vodou spirits. Deeply exploring the role of women in religious practices and the related themes of family and of religion and social change, Brown provides a rich context in which to understand the authority that urban Haitian women exercise in the home and in the Vodou temple.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Brown weaves together fictional, biographical, and ethnological narratives into a moving account of the life of a Vodou community and its leader, Mama Lola. This book belies the stereotypes that still distort the image of this ancient religion in the academic as well as the popular mind."&#151;Albert J. Raboteau, Princeton University"An eloquent contribution to the emerging feminist paradigm of scholarship as engaged, embodied, and life-affirming."&#151;Carol P. Christ, author of *Laughter of*

Aphrodite" A riveting narrative, rich in detail. Karen Brown brings a rare, well-informed regard to her interpretation of Haitian religious life."#151; Lawrence E. Sullivan, author of *Icanchu's Drum: An Orientation to the Meaning of South American Religions*

Karen McCarthy Brown is Professor Emerita of the Sociology and Anthropology of Religion at the Graduate and Theological Schools of Drew University. Claudine Michel is Professor of Black Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles.

I've enjoyed reading the book very much. I've found it very entertaining because the writing is so visually descriptive. I also very much like the way the author captured the colloquial speech of Lourdes and all the subjects in the book. It really helped me capture a sense of immersion in the culture, of being there, in the birthday suppers and other action in the book. I feel like this book has given me a much greater understanding of Voodoo and also ancestral worship. I understand how the spirits are often tied to the Catholic saints a lot better now, too. Most importantly, I can understand more of where the 'magick' comes from, what to look for when I see a Voodoo altar, or see glimpses of spirit possession in media. Before it was very foreign to me. I only knew it as a magical belief system, but the book describes magical thinking that's pervasive and very family oriented that I had not considered to be so very relevant before. There's something about the way the author writes that let me take off my moral judgements so that I could better connect with the stories and beliefs- It was always easy to see the people through the magickal trappings, sayings, and various rituals. It's a good read. I'd recommend it to anyone that is new to the subject, that wants to learn more about Voodoo as it is practiced by Haitian natives. It is a paperback, but it's a bit large; about the size of most hardbacks.

Not really a book on Haitian Vodou. Mama Lola is more a family history and a description of what serving the spirits means to them. Dr. Brown makes this amazing woman and her family come alive on the page. Alourdes is all at once a devout woman, devoted mother, petulant and powerful woman. Her family is at once inspiring and beverage out your nose funny. By the end of this edition, I found myself not only falling in love with Alourdes family, but with the spirits they so loyally serve. A terrific book if you want to understand what Vodou means to its followers, what life is like for immigrant women and the pride and strength that comes from growing up in the poorest country in the Western hemisphere.

A required book for an anthropology course. The subtitle says it all when it says it is an "Expanded Edition". This book is very thorough and detail-packed. It will take a long time to read, but it contained much information about the subject of vodou. It is an eye-opener for those who know nothing and have sad but true pre-conceived mistaken ideas about vodou. Highly recommended as a teaching device for those biased against this blend of religion, spirituality, culture, and lifestyle.

Such a good book. I bought this book for an Anthropology class I was taking. I had no idea how much I would love it. It is a great story. Insightful, interesting, and educational. I enjoyed every minute of it. I highly recommend.

A truly excellent work of scholarship and content related to vodou. Its only drawback as well as its greatest gift is that its content on Vodou and its ritual and beliefs is entwined with a personal story. This makes getting the essence and structure of the religion more difficult than in some other works, but to its credit, it is oh so accurate and scholarly, and it gives some personal insights into the life of a mambo (female priest) and her faith as well. Bravo to Dr. Brown.

came in decent condition readable, just needed it for class in college

Amazing read! Wonderful book that showcased vodou in a new light- the human, societal light. The book itself was in amazing condition.

This book gives an amazing insight into the practice of Vodou. It is easy to understand and written in an enjoyable manner. This will allow you a greater understanding of what it means for someone to be a Vodou practitioner.

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