

## Queer Spiritual Spaces Project – Ethics, Safety, Confidentiality



“Rainbow Tree” by Teresa Montoya <http://www.swataka.com> with thanks

### Want to participate in our project but concerned about safety, confidentiality and ethics?

- ❖ We will keep your contact details safe and confidential
- ❖ You can use any name of that you choose when you take part. No Identifying details (such as small group names etc. will be used in the study)
- ❖ We will work in partnership with you to co-create interview and discussion spaces which recognize diversity and which are aware, sensitive and supportive.
- ❖ We want your opinions and contributions to the design of the project.
- ❖ Interviews and discussion groups will be recorded so that we can use the material. These records will be kept in a secure locked file and only the project researchers, will have access to them
- ❖ We will ask for your written permission before we use any of the material we create with you
- ❖ You will be free, of course, to withdraw from participation in the project at any stage
- ❖ If you find any part of the project or the project itself emotionally stressful you can ask to skip that part, or you can stop the researcher.
- ❖ We will always listen to you and your concerns
- ❖ This is a summary sheet and there is a longer version of this that explains everything you need to know.



## Queer Spiritual Spaces Project – Information Sheet

Queer Spiritual Spaces: An investigation into the place of the sacred in non-dominant faith groups by LGBTQI [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex] peoples, using case studies.

**You are being invited to take part** in a research study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Do ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

### What is the purpose of the study?

This project seeks to investigate Queer Spiritual Space(s) in contemporary Britain and the United States.

The project wants to look at:

- the place of LGBTQI people in spiritual and cultural places,
- what you think queer spiritual space is
- where queer spiritual space is for you

We want to examine how queer spiritual spaces are made, understood and embodied. We are also interested in how they are located, textually, geographically and imaginatively.

It is important to this research that participants have a role beyond simply 'responding' to questions. To this end we are hoping that you will be involved in creating research that you are interested in and perhaps helps you.

### Why have I been chosen?

You have been asked to take part because you are active within a faith group that we are particularly interested in knowing more about and you identify as or are in some way affiliated with alternative sexualities/gender identities.

### Do I have to take part?

No! It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and asked to sign a consent form. If you do decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. A decision to withdraw at any time, or a decision not to take part, will not affect you in any way. The research team will not tell anyone that you have been involved or that you have withdrawn.

### What will happen to me if I take part?

If you decide to take part you will be asked questions about your spiritual and sexual/gender identities and practices. There are many ways that people can be involved. These include in-depth individual discussions with a research, group discussions with people who are part of your faith group and inter-faith group discussions. You may also be asked to participate in activities that create visual materials. The project operates both through face-to face contact and online. This means you can get involved in the way that you wish to.

If you are part of a focus group discussion, this discussion will be with other people and you will get the chance to share your experiences, practices and thoughts. There are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers and we are interested in what you think and do, as well as what you have experienced.

The researcher will explain to you what is going to happen in your specific discussion and activities. It is hoped that whatever way you get involved you will be part of a two-way process so that you can feed into how the research works and suggest outcomes for the project. However, this is your choice.

### What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

It is possible that some of the topics discussed during the interview may bring up memories that are emotionally stressful. Please take care of yourself during the discussion and finish it if you want to. The research assistant can also move on to another topic if you do not want to talk about something. If you are part of a group discussion, please feel free to take a break whenever you wish/need to. The facilitators and researchers are not trained counsellors but we will have lists of services and groups that may be able to help you. **Please feel free NOT to talk about something that may be stressful to you.**

### What are the possible benefits of taking part?

We hope to use this research to create a lasting inter-faith resources, this will include a book, a website and other academic and popular publications. The information we get from this study may help us to understand

more about what it is like for people who participate in queer spiritual/faith practices. We also hope to understand more about the creative and exclusionary effects of discrimination upon religious participation and spiritual cultures, about contemporary LGBTQI cultures, and about the ways people have found to be creative about expressing belief in the sacred. Your participation will help to create this and develop future activities in this area.

#### **Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?**

Confidentiality is very important in this study. You will not be identified in any of the research publications (unless you want to be). We will use fake names for all the participants and some of the groups they are involved in. All the information will be anonymised and no video recordings will be used in the dissemination of the research (on the website or in any publications). After the project is complete, the data will be archived in a secure environment, and anything deemed sensitive will be destroyed.

Only the researchers will have access to your personal data, which will be kept password protected files and stored in a secure environments.

We ask that you respect each others confidentiality as well and do not discuss individuals outside the focus group. You may wish to talk about the issues we have covered but should you do so please do not reveal other people's names, experiences or personal details.

#### **What will happen to what I say/write/create?**

Online discussions will be recorded in the written text. Verbal discussions will be video/audio taped. Audio recordings will be written out verbatim and this is the data from these recordings. Video recordings will also be written out word for word, and may be analysed for visual queues and markers. If you complete other exercises such as creative drawings, these will be used with your permission. If you would like a copy of your parts of the data, this can be provided, please let your research assistant know. The results of the research will be used for academic publications and also there may be media interest in the project. However, unless you have asked to be, you will not be identified personally in any report/publication.

#### **Who has reviewed the study?**

This project has been approved by the Arts and Humanities Council (UK) and the Economic and Social Research Council (UK), and by the University of Sussex ethics committee.

#### **What if something goes wrong?**

If something goes wrong (which we sincerely hope it won't), there are procedures in place to make a complaint. In the first instance it is hoped you would talk to the research assistant and ask them to help resolve any issue. After this please contact the Principal Investigator., Professor Sally Munt. If this is not appropriate, another of the two senior co-investigators from other universities around the UK who are affiliated to the project would be asked to handle your complaint, keeping your concerns in strictest confidence. The University of Sussex and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (UK), are funding this project, so in serious instances you can appeal directly to them.

#### **Contact for Further Information**

Check out our website for further information  
<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/sccs/1-2-1.html>

Heather R. White  
Postdoctoral Fellow  
[hewhite@vassar.edu](mailto:hewhite@vassar.edu)

Professor Sally R Munt (Principal Investigator)  
[s.r.munt@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:s.r.munt@sussex.ac.uk)  
Dr. Kath Browne (Co-Investigator)  
Dr. Andrew Yip (Co-Investigator)

**You will be given a copy of the information sheet and a signed consent form to keep.**



**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME!**

“Rainbow Tree” by Teresa Montoya <http://www.swataka.com> with thanks