In Haitian Vodou, one Iwa (deity) is widely celebrated as the spirit of pèp la (the people). The Iwa Gede is a trickster who resides over death and sexual regeneration. He embodies transgressive masculinity and carnivalesque freedom. This presentation explores how such a rogue became a national sign. It traces Gede’s rise in popularity to early waves of urbanization in the first half of the 20th century, and new forms of masculinity that the city made possible. Through a close reading of ethnographic texts, the chapter maps Gede’s ascendance against the centralization of political and economic power in the capital. The paper argues that Gede offers a powerful example of gender formation and apotheosis as popular historicity.

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