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### Wombs And Alien Spirits Women

"Wombs and Alien Spirits is a provocative book on women and religion and a valuable addition to the literature on Sudan."--Victoria Bernal, The Middle East Journal Synopsis Adherents to the "zar" cult in northern Sudan encounter spirits that are parallels of historically relevant figures in the known human world.

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Wombs and Alien Spirits: Women, Men, and the Zar Cult in Northern Sudan. Based on nearly two years of ethnographic fieldwork in a Muslim village in northern Sudan, Wombs and Alien Spirits explores the z â r cult, the most widely practiced traditional healing cult in Africa. Adherents of the cult are usually women with marital or fertility problems, who are possessed by spirits very different from their own proscribed roles as mothers.

Wombs and Alien Spirits: Women, Men, and the Zar Cult in ...

Wombs and Alien Spirits: Women, Men, and the Zar Cult in Northern Sudan (New Directions in Anthropological Writing) eBook: Boddy, Janice: Amazon.co.uk: Kindle Store

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Adherents of the cult are usually women with marital or fertility problems, who are possessed by spirits very different from their own proscribed roles as mothers. Through the woman, the spirit makes demands upon her husband and family and makes provocative comments on village issues, such as the

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increasing influence of formal Islam or encroaching Western economic domination. In accommodating the spirits, the women are able metaphorically to reformulate everyday discourse to portray consciousness of their own subordination. Janice Boddy examines the moral universe of the village, discussing female circumcision, personhood, kinship, and bodily integrity, then describes the workings of the cult and the effect of possession on the lives of men as well as women. She suggests that spirit possession is a feminist discourse, though a veiled and allegorical one, on women's objectification and subordination. Additionally, the spirit world acts as a foil for village life in the context of rapid historical change and as such provides a focus for cultural resistance that is particularly, though not exclusively, relevant to women.

Based on nearly two years of ethnographic fieldwork in a Muslim village in northern Sudan, *Wombs and Alien Spirits* explores the zar cult, the most widely practiced traditional healing cult in Africa. Adherents of the cult are usually women with marital or fertility problems, who are possessed by spirits very different from their own proscribed roles as mothers. Through the woman, the spirit makes demands upon her husband and family and makes provocative comments on village issues, such as the increasing influence of formal Islam or encroaching Western economic domination. In accommodating the spirits, the women are able metaphorically to reformulate everyday discourse to portray consciousness of their own subordination. Janice Boddy examines the moral universe of the village, discussing female circumcision, personhood, kinship, and bodily integrity, then describes the workings of the cult and the effect of possession on the lives of men as well as women. She suggests that spirit possession is a feminist discourse, though a veiled and allegorical one, on women's objectification and subordination. Additionally, the spirit world acts as a foil for village life in the context of rapid historical

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*Civilizing Women* is a riveting exploration of the disparate worlds of British colonial officers and the Muslim Sudanese they sought to remake into modern imperial subjects. Focusing on efforts to stop female circumcision in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan between 1920 and 1946, Janice Boddy mines colonial documents and popular culture for ethnographic details to interleave with observations from northern Sudan, where women's participation in zâr spirit possession rituals provided an oblique counterpoint to colonial views. Written in engaging prose, *Civilizing Women* concerns the subtle process of "colonizing selfhood," the British women who undertook it, and those they hoped to reform. It suggests that efforts to suppress female circumcision were tied to the continuation of slavery and the rise of commercial cotton growing in Sudan, as well as to concerns about infant mortality and maternal health. Boddy traces maneuverings among political officers, teachers, missionaries, and medical personnel as they pursued their elusive goal, and describes their fraught relations with Egypt, Parliament, the Foreign Office, African nationalists, and Western feminists. In doing so, she sounds a cautionary note for contemporary interventionists who would flout local knowledge and belief.

In Africa as well as in Europe, many spirits and their mediums are part of local as well as global cultures. Christian spirits named Hitler, Mussolini, or King Bruce (Bruce Lee) flourish in a pantheon of new holy spirits in Uganda waging war against the government. Spirits of airplanes, engines, guitars, and angels are found in Central Africa; and thunder, snakes, and rain as well as playboys and prostitutes inhabit the spirit world in West Africa. Spirit possession cults have continued to proliferate, even in the secular West,

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and continue to be a subject of intense interest. Despite the continuous expansion of the field, some problems are only now beginning to be explored. The experts in this volume focus on questions of power, the history and inner dynamics of cults, the role of gender and images of the other, based on research conducted during the last fifteen years in Africa. The contributors document changes taking place across the continent as possession beliefs and practices respond to new circumstances and address the shifting local implications of an increasingly global socio-economy. Gender, ethnicity, and class are examined as intersecting forces and features of spirit phenomena. The case studies presented are richly contextualized: history, social organization and upheaval, alternative religious options—all are considered relevant to an understanding of possession forms. Contributors: Leslie Sharp, Heike Behrend, Adeline Masquelier, Mathias Krings, Jean-Paul Colleyn, Alexandra O. de Sousa, Susan Kenyon, Tobias Wendl, Ute Luig, and Linda Giles Co-published with James Currey Publishers, U.K. The Wisconsin edition is not for sale in the United Kingdom, the traditional British Commonwealth (excepting Canada), nor in Europe.

"Quite an interesting book... " Religious Studies Review" It is by far superior to anything else on demons we have seen in the past few years." The American Rationalist"... Goodman is to be commended for a stimulating and wide-reaching treatment of a compelling and much-debated subject." Journal of Folklore Research Rich in detail derived from the author's fieldwork and the anthropological literature, this work paints a picture of possession as one of the usually positive and most widespread of human religious experiences. It also details the ritual of exorcism, which is applied when things go wrong.

Some of the most innovative and provocative work on the emotions and illness is occurring in cross-



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cultural research on depression. *Culture and Depression* presents the work of anthropologists, psychiatrists, and psychologists who examine the controversies, agreements, and conceptual and methodological problems that arise in the course of such research. A book of enormous depth and breadth of discussion, *Culture and Depression* enriches the cross-cultural study of emotions and mental illness and leads it in new directions. It commences with a historical study followed by a series of anthropological accounts that examine the problems that arise when depression is assessed in other cultures. This is a work of impressive scholarship which demonstrates that anthropological approaches to affect and illness raise central questions for psychiatry and psychology, and that cross-cultural studies of depression raise equally provocative questions for anthropology.

In the Red Sea Hills of eastern Sudan, where poverty, famines, and conflict loom large, women struggle to gain the status of responsible motherhood through bearing and raising healthy children, especially sons. But biological fate can be capricious in impoverished settings. Amidst struggle for survival and expectations of heroic mothering, women face realities that challenge their ability to fulfill their prescribed roles. Even as the effects of modernity and development, global inequities, and exclusionary government policies challenge traditional ways of life in eastern Sudan and throughout many parts of Africa, reproductive traumas—infertility, miscarriage, children ' s illnesses, and mortality—disrupt women ' s reproductive health and impede their efforts to achieve the status that comes with fertility and motherhood. In *Embodying Honor* Amal Hassan Fadlalla finds that the female body is the locus of anxieties about foreign dangers and diseases, threats perceived to be disruptive to morality, feminine identities, and social well-being. As a “ northern Sudanese ” viewed as an outsider in this region of her native country, Fadlalla presents an intimate portrait and thorough analysis that offers an intriguing

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commentary on the very notion of what constitutes the “ foreign. ” Fadlalla shows how Muslim Hadendowa women manage health and reproductive suffering in their quest to become “ responsible ” mothers and valued members of their communities. Her historically grounded ethnography delves into women ’ s reproductive histories, personal narratives, and ritual logics to reveal the ways in which women challenge cultural understandings of gender, honor, and reproduction.

"... groundbreaking... clear, straightforward, and economical.... seminal..." American Anthropologist  
"This is a challenging book... a remarkable contribution to African intellectual history." International Journal of African Historical Studies  
"Mudimbe ’ s description of the struggles over Africa ’ s self-invention are vivid and rewarding. From Blyden to Sartre, Temples to Senghor, Mudimbe provides a bold and versatile resume of Africa ’ s literary inventors." Village Voice Literary Supplement  
"... a landmark achievement in African studies." Journal of Religion in Africa  
In this unique and provocative book, Zairean philosopher and writer V. Y. Mudimbe addresses the multiple scholarly discourses that exist African and non-African concerning the meaning of Africa and being African.

A study in the collision between Western medicine and the beliefs of a traditional culture focuses on a hospitalized child of Laotian immigrants whose belief that illness is a spiritual matter comes into conflict with doctors' methods.

A Companion to the Anthropology of Religion presents a collection of original, ethnographically – informed essays that explore the variety of beliefs, practices, and religious experiences in the contemporary world and asks how to think about religion as a subject of anthropological inquiry.

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Presents a collection of original, ethnographically – informed essays exploring the wide variety of beliefs, practices, and religious experiences in the contemporary world Explores a broad range of topics including the perspectivism debate, the rise of religious nationalism, reflections on religion and new media, religion and politics, and ideas of self and gender in relation to religious belief Includes examples drawn from different religious traditions and from several regions of the world Features newly – commissioned articles reflecting the most up – to – date research and critical thinking in the field, written by an international team of leading scholars Adds immeasurably to our understanding of the complex relationships between religion, culture, society, and the individual in today s world

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