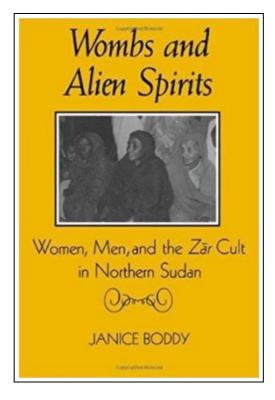
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WOMBS AND ALIEN SPIRITS: WOMEN, MEN AND THE ZAR CULT IN NORTHERN SPAIN (PAPERBACK)



University of Wisconsin Press, United States, 1990. Paperback. Condition: New. New. Language: English. Brand New Book. Adherents to the zar cult in northern Sudan encounter spirits that are parallels of historically relevant figures in the known human world. Those possessed, usually women, meet aliens who speak about issues confronting a village such as the increasing influence of formal Islam or encroaching Western economic domination. By manifesting spirits while possessed, women also can provocatively embody their moral antitheses. In learning to accommodate their spirits, they learn the antilanguage of zar and are able metaphorically to reformulate everyday discourse to portray consciousness of their subordination. The book is organized into three parts: part 1 examines the moral universe of village women by discussion the meaning of female circumcision, personhood, kinship, marriage, and bodily integrity. Part 2 introduces the zar cult and, with several examples, describes the conditions under which possession, initially an illness, might occur. The author discusses the role of possession in the lives of men as well as women, both as members of families exhibiting a propensity for spirit intrusion and as individuals suffering from poor self-image largely occasioned by infertility. Part 3 describes the spirit world apart from specific incidents of possession in order to understand what messages villagers will derive from their experiences of spirits. Based on nearly two years of ethnographic field work in a Muslim village in northern Sudan, Janice Boddy s study offers a multidimensional interpretation of the zar that is grounded in observation, anthropological theory, and practice.



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