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Invisible Agents shows how personal and deeply felt spiritual beliefs can inspire social movements and influence historical change. Conventional historiography concentrates on the secular, materialist, or moral sources of political agency. Instead, David M. Gordon argues, when people perceive spirits as exerting power in the visible world, these beliefs form the basis for individual and collective actions.

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Ohio University Press. Invisible Agents shows how personal and deeply felt spiritual beliefs can inspire social movements and influence historical change. Conventional historiography concentrates on the secular, materialist, or moral sources of political agency. Instead, David M. Gordon argues, when people perceive spirits as exerting power in the visible world, these beliefs form the basis for individual and collective actions.

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of profane agents.2 Instead, the history of the entwined visible and invisible worlds that I propose here locates its arguments around the conceptions and sensory perceptions of historical agents who have thought that invisible spirits have exerted power in this world. Africanist scholarship characterizes such belief in invisible spirits as part of

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Invisible Agents shows how personal and deeply felt spiritual beliefs can inspire social movements and influence historical change. Conventional historiography concentrates on the secular, materialist, or moral sources of political agency. Instead, David M. Gordon argues, when people perceive spirits as exerting power in the visible world, these beliefs form the basis for individual and collective actions. Focusing on the history of the south-central African country of Zambia during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, his analysis invites reflection on political and religious realms of action in other parts of the world, and complicates the post-Enlightenment divide of sacred and profane. The book combines theoretical insights with attention to local detail and remarkable historical sweep, from oral narratives communicated across slave-trading routes during the nineteenth century, through the violent conflicts inspired by Christian and nationalist prophets during colonial times, and ending with the spirits of Pentecostal rebirth during the neoliberal order of the late twentieth century. To gain access to the details of historical change and personal spiritual beliefs across this long historical period, Gordon employs all the tools of the African historian. His own interviews and extensive fieldwork experience in Zambia provide texture and understanding to the narrative. He also critically interprets a diverse range of other sources, including oral traditions, fieldnotes of anthropologists, missionary writings and correspondence, unpublished state records, vernacular publications, and Zambian newspapers. Invisible Agents will challenge scholars and students alike to think in new ways about the political imagination and the invisible sources of human action and historical change.

Science and Magic in the Modern World is a unique text that explores the role of magical thinking in everyday life. It provides an excellent psychological look at the subconscious belief in magic in both popular culture and society, as well as experimental research that considers human consciousness as a derivative of belief in the supernatural, thus showing that our feelings, emotions, attitudes and other psychological processes follow the laws of magic. This book synthesises the science of 'natural' phenomena and the magic of the 'supernatural' to present an interesting look at the juxtaposition of the inner and outer selves. Fusing research into psychological disorders, subconscious feelings, as well as the rising presence of artificial intelligence, this book demonstrates how an engagement with magical thinking can enhance one's creativity and cognitive skills. Science and Magic in the Modern World is an invaluable resource for those studying consciousness, as well as those looking at the effect of magical thinking on religion, politics, science and society.

"Animism, the Seed of Religion" is a 1905 treatise on the subject of animism by English writer Edward Clodd. Animism is the religious belief that creatures, objects, and even places have an innate spiritual essence, and can even arguably be considered to be alive. This fascinating volume explores the history and development of this theory while linking it to the origins of religions the world over. Edward Clodd (1840 - 1930) was an English writer, banker, and anthropologist famous for his various and notable literary and scientific friends. Other notable works by author include: "The Childhood of the World" (1872), "Jesus of Nazareth" (1880), and "Nature Studies" (1882). Contents include: "Brain in Animal and Man", "Man in the Making", "Animal and Human Psychology", "Naturalism; or, Conception of Power Everywhere", "Animism; Or, Conception of Spirit Everywhere", "Theories of the Nature of Spirit", "Spirits in Inanimate Things", "Fear of Sequence in the Object of Worship", "Absentee Gods", etc. Many vintage books such as this are increasingly scarce and expensive. It is with this in mind that we are republishing this volume now in an affordable, modern, high-quality edition for the enjoyment of readers now and for years to come.

Seminar paper from the year 2022 in the subject Ethnology / Cultural Anthropology, grade: 1,0, University of Freiburg (Institut für Ethnologie), language: English, abstract: Based on the topic of human-environment relation, I am going to delve into the question of who is subjectively identified as a 'supernatural agent' and what type and scope of agency is attributed. In the context of the seminar that also asks about the connection to COVID-related healing practices, I will then link the concept of supernatural agency with phenomena of health. Thereupon I want to present the methods and findings of my research following the guideline question: How do religious actors in Germany and Indonesia connect their belief with medical action against the Covid-19 pandemic?, focusing on Christian actors in Germany. Toward the end of 2019, a tiny entity given the name SARS-CoV-2, overpowered the world with a relentless ferocity that sharply exposed the vulnerability of modern human civilization. A belief in the superiority of our species, in the progressiveness of modern social systems, in the achievements in technology and medicine, could not save us from the power of "one of nature's most miniscule members". With the ongoing spread and unpredictable mutation of the COVID-19 virus, a global war has been declared on something biologically not even classified as a living being, and states mobilize all resources to regain control. This 'invisible agent' challenges our personal lives and state action just as much as the postulated separation between humanity and 'nature'. Not only must we acknowledge the virus as a more-than-human global actor in contrast to humans as being the only forceful agents "acting upon a passive world", its assumed origin in zoonosis also marks a point of fusion between human and non-human realms, and therefore can be seen as a reinforcement of entanglement that transcends nature/culture dichotomy.

In Colonial Transactions Florence Bernault moves beyond the racial divide that dominates colonial studies of Africa. Instead, she illuminates the strange and frightening imaginaries that colonizers and colonized shared on the ground. Bernault looks at Gabon from the late nineteenth century to the present, historicizing the most vivid imaginations and modes of power in Africa today: French obsessions with cannibals, the emergence of vampires and witches in the Gabonese imaginary, and the use of human organs for fetishes. Struggling over objects, bodies, agency, and values, colonizers and colonized entered relations that are better conceptualized as "transactions." Together they also shared an awareness of how the colonial situation broke down moral orders and forced people to use the evil side of power. This foreshadowed the ways in which people exercise agency in contemporary Africa, as well as the proliferation of magical fears and witchcraft anxieties in present-day Gabon. Overturning theories of colonial and postcolonial nativism, this book is essential reading for historians and anthropologists of witchcraft, power, value, and the body.

"How do gods and spirits come to feel vividly real to people-as if they were standing right next to them? Humans tend to see supernatural agents everywhere, as the cognitive science of religion has shown. But it isn't easy to maintain a sense that there are invisible spirits who care about you. In How God Becomes Real, acclaimed anthropologist and scholar of religion T. M. Luhmann argues that people must work incredibly hard to make gods real and that this effort-by changing the people who do it and giving them the benefits they seek from invisible others-helps to explain the enduring power of faith"--

Competing for Caesar brings together, for the first time, key scholars working on various issues related to religion and public life in Zambia. They explore the interplay between religion and politics in Zambian society and how these religions manage and negotiate their identities in public life. This book analyzes recent religious dynamics in the nation's political life, and considers what constructive role religion could play to promote an alternative political vision to subvert neo-colonialism. Competing for Caesar carries forward a unique commitment on the part of Fortress Press to engage with the challenges and opportunities of Christianity in the Global South. The book will be of interest to scholars, professors, and students in a wide range of fields.

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