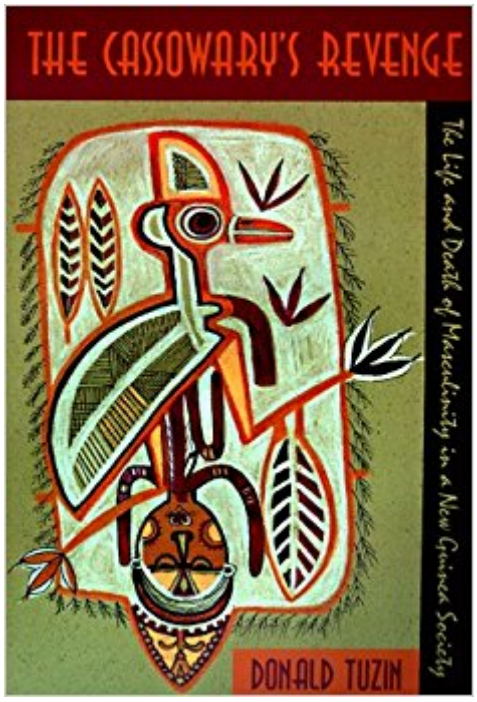
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The Cassowary's Revenge: The Life And Death Of Masculinity In A New Guinea Society (Worlds Of Desire: The Chicago Series On Sexuality, Gender, And Culture)



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Synopsis

Donald Tuzin first studied the New Guinea village of Ilahita in 1972. When he returned many years later, he arrived in the aftermath of a startling event: the villageÃ¢â ¬â„¢s men voluntarily destroyed their secret cult that had allowed them to dominate women for generations. The cultÃ¢â ¬â„¢s collapse indicated nothing less than the death of masculinity, and Tuzin examines the labyrinth of motives behind this improbable, self-devastating act. The villagers' mythic tradition provided a basis for this revenge of Woman upon the dominion of Man, and, remarkably, Tuzin himself became a principal figure in its narratives. The return of the magic-bearing "youngest brother" from America had been prophesied, and the villagers believed that TuzinÃ¢â ¬â„¢s return "from the dead" signified a further need to destroy masculine traditions.The Cassowary's Revenge is an intimate account of how IlahitaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s men and women think, emote, dream, and explain themselves. Tuzin also explores how the death of masculinity in a remote society raises disturbing implications for gender relations in our own society. In this light Tuzin's book is about men and women in search of how to value one another, and in today's world there is no theme more universal or timely.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A very important book in the study of being human

This is an absolutely fascinating book. It tells how the men of Ilahita, a village in the Sepik region of Papua New Guinea, consciously and deliberately destroyed their secret men's cult (the Tambaran)

by revealing its secret artifacts to the women. The book describes in a detailed but incredibly readable way how a prophecy contained at the end the Ilahita creation myth (involving the local lake and a Cassowary Woman) foretold the destruction of the cult, enmeshing the men and women of Ilahita on a downward spiral that even involves the anthropologist author in the second coming of the Cassowary Woman's "youngest son". It also describes the resulting damage to the village's gender dynamics, its cultural destruction at the hands of the Revival Christianity (now run by the women in a similar way to the method used by the men in the old Tambaran system), and the village's final loss of local power and land. Quite a tragic story, and one which has relevance to our own society's gender dynamics.

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