



The Empty Seashell: Witchcraft and Doubt on an Indonesian Island (Paperback)

By Nils Bubandt

Cornell University Press, United States, 2014. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 234 x 155 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. The Empty Seashell explores what it is like to live in a world where cannibal witches are undeniably real, yet too ephemeral and contradictory to be an object of belief. In a book based on more than three years of fieldwork between 1991 and 2011, Nils Bubandt argues that cannibal witches for people in the coastal, and predominantly Christian, community of Buli in the Indonesian province of North Maluku are both corporeally real and fundamentally unknowable. Witches (known as gua in the Buli language or as suanggi in regional Malay) appear to be ordinary humans but sometimes, especially at night, they take other forms and attack people in order to kill them and eat their livers. They are seemingly everywhere and nowhere at the same time. The reality of gua, therefore, can never be pinned down. The title of the book comes from the empty nautilus shells that regularly drift ashore around Buli village. Convention has it that if you find a live nautilus, you are a gua. Like the empty shells, witchcraft always seems to recede from experience. Bubandt begins the...



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