



Fearful Symmetries: Essays and Testimonies Around Excision and Circumcision. (Matatu)

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Often labelled 'rituals' or 'customs', male circumcision and female excision are also irreversible amputations of human genitalia, with disastrous and at times life-long consequences for both males and females. However, scholars and activists alike have been diffident about making a case for symmetry between these two practices. *Fearful Symmetries* investigates the sociological, medical, legal, and religious justifications for male circumcision and female excision while it points to various symmetries and asymmetries in their discursive representation in cultural anthropology, law, medicine, and literature. Experts have been convened in the above fields - SAMI ALDEEB ABU-SAHLIEH, DOMINIQUE ARNAUD, LAURENCE COX, ROBERT DARBY, ANNE-MARIE DAUPHIN-TINTURIER, TOBE LEVIN, MICHAEL SINGLETON, J. STEVEN SVOBODA - along with first-person testimonies from J.K. BRAYTON, SAFAA FATHY, KOFFI KWAHULE?, and ALEX WANJALA. The volume covers various genres such as sacred writings, literary and philosophical texts, websites, songs, experiential vignettes, cartoons, and film as well as a vast geographical spectrum - from Algeria, Ivory Coast, Egypt, Kenya, and Somalia to the then Congo and contemporary Northern Zambia; from Syria to Australia and the United States. In addressing many variants of excision and circumcision as well as other practices such as the elongation of the labia, and various forms of circumcision in Jewish, Islamic, and African contexts, *Fearful Symmetries* provides an unprecedented, panoptical view of both practices.

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