lems. Cults in particular are also an institutionalized and symbolic way of defying male domination.

The continuing vitality of African traditional medicine and the role of female spiritual healers, in particular, reflects the capacity of these healers to adapt to the rapidly changing conditions of social and economic life in Africa today. African traditional healers lost status and power during the colonial era. Many of the cults which formerly occupied an important place in religious life of the people have become peripheral in the contemporary era. Even though not much of the past "glory" has been recouped since independence, the spiritual healer still occupies a unique position in African society.

In view of the role played by female spiritual healers, especially for women, the definition of women's health and well-being must incorporate the entirety of their lives, the full range of their needs and activities, and all the discomforts and illnesses that they face. This perception of women's health is recognized in traditional medical practices.

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