



**Pyramids and Nightclubs: A Travel Ethnography
of Arab and Western Imaginations of Egypt, from
King Tut and a Colony of Atlantis to Rumors of
Sex Orgies, Urban legends about a Marauding
Prince, and Blonde Belly Dancers**

L. L. Wynn

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Living in Egypt at the turn of the millennium, cultural anthropologist L. L. Wynn was struck by the juxtapositions of Western, Gulf Arab, and Egyptian viewpoints she encountered. For some, Egypt is the land of mummies and pharaohs. For others, it is a vortex of decadence, where nightlife promises a chance to salivate over belly dancers and maybe even glimpse a movie star. Offering a new approach to ethnography, *Pyramids and Nightclubs* examines cross-cultural encounters to bring to light the counterintuitive ways in which Egypt is defined.

Guiding readers on an armchair journey that introduces us to Russian and Australian belly dancers on Nile cruise ships, Egyptian rumors about an Arab prince and his royal entourage, Saudi girls looking for a less restrictive dating scene, and other visitors to this "antique" land, Wynn uses the lens of travel and tourism to depict a fascinating and often surprising version of Egypt, while exploring the concept of stereotype itself. Tracing the history of Western and Arab fascination with Egypt through spurious hunts for lost civilizations and the new economic disparities brought about by the oil industry, *Pyramids and Nightclubs* ultimately describes the ways in which moments of cultural contact, driven by tourism and labor migration, become eye-opening opportunities for defining self and other.

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