

specifically will be glad to have it, and the volume also adds to the ongoing scholarly debates over Mau Mau.

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POLITICS, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, AND GLOBALIZATION

Susan Thomson. *Whispering Truth to Power: Everyday Resistance to Reconciliation in Postgenocide Rwanda*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013. xxvii + 258 pp. List of illustrations. List of abbreviations. Note on Kinyarwanda language. Glossary. Index. \$27.95. Paper.

In this book Susan Thomson analyzes peasants' everyday resistance strategies to Rwanda's National Policy of Unity and Reconciliation, shedding light on how state power interacts with everyday life in the politically tense context of postgenocide Rwanda. Through its bottom-up perspective, the book is an important and innovative contribution to the literature on this intensely researched country.

The introduction frames the author's research as a lived experience. Thomson provides rich insights into the story behind the findings and the life path that led her to engage in this research, an important but often ignored aspect of ethnographic studies. The first chapter explains the book's methodology, which is based largely upon participant observation and life history interviewing. Thomson is a careful researcher and meticulously explains the judicious ways in which she engaged with her participants. Her account of the safeguards to guarantee the well-being of her participants may serve as important guidance to others conducting research in highly tense political environments. Most primary data in the book are drawn from detailed life histories of thirty-seven Rwandans in Southern Rwanda. Given that this is a limited sample, it would have been interesting to have more information about how and to what extent these peasants represent a cross-section of the Rwandan peasantry.

The second chapter provides a historical overview of Rwandan state-building and how it has instrumentalized ethnicity as a tool for domination and consolidation of power. The chapter offers an interesting overview of the important scholarship on Rwandan history that was produced before 1994. The chapter illustrates how the strategic design and reconfiguration of history on the part of political elites seeking to reinforce their own power positions have been practiced in both the past and the present.

The third chapter builds upon the second by analyzing in more depth how the postgenocide regime has instrumentalized its own (re)interpretation

of history. It focuses in particular upon the narrow interpretation of the 1994 genocide that—through the national policy of unity and reconciliation—legitimizes RPF rule. Thomson illustrates how the summary of the genocide in an “aggregate whole” of “Hutu perpetrators” and “Tutsi victims” ignores the multiple individual experiences of violence throughout the 1990s—particularly those experiences that do not match the official narrative.

The fourth chapter helps us understand the RPF’s authoritarian and top-down state apparatus through its national unity and reconciliation policy. Thomson illustrates how, on the one hand, state power is instrumentalized to enforce the policy. But more important, she highlights how, on the other hand, the policy is designed specifically to reinforce state authority through an “oppressive and structural form of social control” (109) imposed upon the everyday lives of ordinary Rwandans.

The fifth chapter focuses on the strategies of everyday resistance practiced by ordinary Rwandans. This chapter is by far the most interesting, although the discussion of what makes an act qualify as “everyday resistance” could have been spelled out more clearly. For example, the framing of survival in extremely harsh circumstances as itself an act of resistance makes the reader wonder whether all poor Rwandans are then continuously “resisting.” Thomson argues very convincingly, however, that resistance can be subtle and intelligently disguised. One of the most widespread tactics of people in their dealings with authorities is that of *ceceka* (to be quiet/to shut up). She focuses in particular on the revealing discourses of those who did speak out to her in private, from which she identifies three particular types of resistance: (1) staying on the sidelines, (2) irreverent compliance, and (3) withdrawn muteness. She argues that these acts, seemingly trivial on the surface, offer a more in-depth understanding of the power relations in which ordinary Rwandans are caught up.

In her final chapter Thomson brings together the different parts of the book to analyze the *gacaca* court process as a “state space” through which the postgenocide state has reinforced its power and control. She also offers insight into how peasants—particularly Tutsi survivors of the 1994 genocide—express their discontent in intelligent and subtle ways. The extensive quotations from her own field research are especially revealing.

Overall the book offers rich insights into an authoritarian system of state power that has developed self-serving policies that impose a heavy burden upon everyday life. At the same time, its bottom-up examination of how the practices of state control are experienced at the local level offers a rich and diverse image of what is hidden beneath the surface of apparent “normalcy.” Thomson claims that the subtle and indirect resistance strategies of peasants are at this point “incapable of significantly altering the post-genocide political order” (191), but she believes that these seeds of dissent demonstrate the potential for future upheavals (either peaceful or violent) that will culminate in a broad-level contestation of power. How to

provide corridors to contestation that is peaceful should clearly be a priority to both international donors and the Rwandan government.

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HEALTH AND DISEASE

William Beinart and Karen Brown. *African Local Knowledge and Livestock Health: Diseases and Treatments in South Africa*. Woodbridge, U.K.: James Currey, 2013. xvi + 304 pp. Maps. Notes. Index. \$90.00. Cloth.

African Local Knowledge consists of a systematic compilation and analysis of ideas about animal disease and its treatment, including the use of medicinal plants, among African livestock owners. Based on extensive field interviews conducted at nine sites in the North West Province, the eastern Free State, and the Eastern Cape, it provides a fair sampling of African veterinary knowledge in modern South Africa. The authors describe a varied and uneven terrain of ideas and practices produced by more than a century of interaction between biomedical (Western “scientific”) and naturalist theories of causation and cure and provide findings of considerable interest. Biomedical explanations still have only limited penetration in most communities. While vaccines and commercial medicines are in fairly wide use where they are available and affordable, they are often adopted with no acceptance of the aetiology on which they are based. Thus owners who dip their cattle may not necessarily see ticks as the vectors of particular diseases, though they are aware of the challenges to general health that heavy infestation poses. Environmental and nutritional explanations for sickness are still the most commonly held, and herders will generally attribute the well-being of their animals to the state of the pasture. If the grazing is good and animals are eating well, they are healthy; disease strikes unexpectedly. Ideas of non-natural causation are also important locally, mostly in the form of belief in the power of ambient spiritual forces (rather than the malevolence of witches) to cause harm and in the danger of pollution, often gendered.

The details of this valuable survey will be of particular interest to those involved with livestock in South Africa as scholars or veterinary practitioners, but the book is framed in such a way as to engage a much wider audience. Beinart and Brown situate their arguments and findings within the context of debates about the nature of and interactions among different sorts of medical (or, in this case, veterinary) knowledge. Drawing on the larger body of theory developed for human medicine, they address questions of veterinary pluralism, incorporation, and adaptation and of change over time. South Africa, with its long history of veterinary research and state