



Epistemologies of African Conflicts: Violence, Evolutionism, and the War in Sierra Leone

Zubairu Wai

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This book offers a bold, ground-breaking epistemological critique of the dominant discourses on contemporary African conflicts. Based on a detailed and painstaking examination of the dominant ways in which the Sierra Leone civil war has been interpreted, theorized, and understood, author Zubairu Wai considers how Africa is constructed as a site of knowledge and the power political implications that this construction has for the continent and its people. Wai situates the current discourses on contemporary African conflicts within the centuries-long Eurocentric conceptions of Africa conceived of and conveyed through various systems of knowledge, socio-historical and political processes, and practices of representation. He also investigates the historical linkages between Africanism and a Western will to power that since the fifteenth century has also perfectly espoused and necessitated an Africanist will to truth. Identifying evolutionism as a major condition of Africanist knowledge linked to systems of power, this book ultimately argues that the scripts of these conflicts are always already written long before the first shots are fired. Thus, the predicament of Africanist discourses emanates not only from the conceptual limitations of the "colonial library" and evolutionist epistemology, but also these discourses' devotion to the power and knowledge regimes of the Western will to power that makes them possible.

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