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978-0-521-59558-2 - Questioning Misfortune: The Pragmatics of Uncertainty in Eastern Uganda

Susan Reynolds Whyte

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Questioning misfortune

Some of the most interesting new ethnographies of experience highlight the indeterminate nature of life. *Questioning misfortune* is very much within this tradition. Based on a long-term study of adversity and its social causes in Bunyole, eastern Uganda, it considers the way in which people deal with uncertainties of life, such as sickness, suffering, marital problems, failure, and death. Divination may identify causes of misfortune, ranging from ancestors and spirits to sorcerers. Sufferers and their families try out a variety of remedial measures, including pharmaceuticals, sorcery antidotes, and sacrifices. But remedies often fail, and doubt and uncertainty persist. Even the recent commercialization of biomedicine, and the peril of AIDS can be understood in terms of a pragmatics of uncertainty.

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A widow shortly after her husband died (1992)

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University of Copenhagen



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For
Zacha Mudanya
and
Tim Wamudanya

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Acknowledgements

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