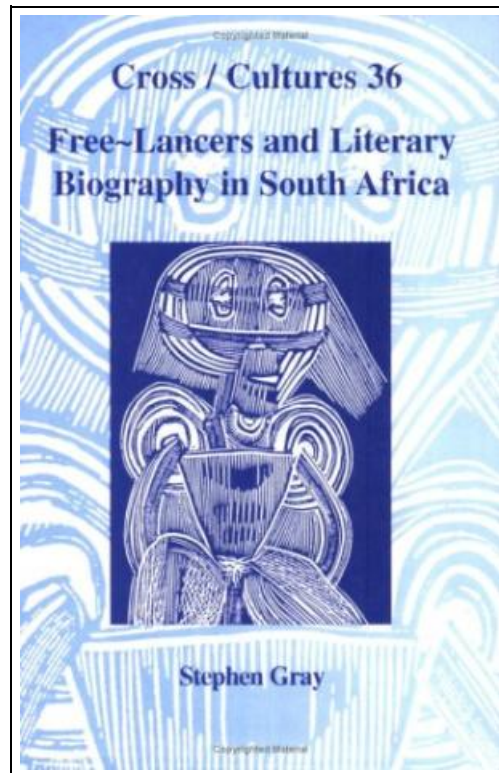


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Reviews

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FREE-LANCERS AND LITERARY BIOGRAPHY IN SOUTH AFRICA (PAPERBACK)



Brill, Netherlands, 1999. Paperback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. This collection is concerned with the problems and pleasures of writing literary biography in the context of South African writing. Stephen Gray s introduction outlines the choice faced by the researcher: between writing revisionist history (a la Strachey) and the personal bias the portraitist must take into account when conducting the retrieval especially of lost and enigmatic figures (a la Symons). Concentrating on the unattached irregulars of the arts in South Africa - often the arts of their times - Gray stresses the value of the free-lance figure in the formation of an evolving colonial and post-colonial literature. Subjects included are: Charles Maclean, alias John Ross, who recorded his experiences of the Zulu King Shaka in Natal s first captivity narrative; Douglas Blackburn, rated as the successor of Swift for his satires of the Anglo-Boer War conflict; Beatrice Hastings, polymath journalist whose lovers included Katherine Mansfield and Amedeo Modigliani; Stephen Black, founder of indigenous South African drama in English; Edward Wolfe, the Bloomsbury painter who began as a child-actor in the mining town of Johannesburg; Bessie Head, who became the Botswana-based wise-woman of African literature before her untimely death in 1986, yet never knew her own origins; Etienne Leroux, the Free State rancher who, in Afrikaans, wrote much-banned postmodernist novels; Mary Renault whose bestselling novels set in Ancient Greece peculiarly represented the shutdown of democracy in apartheid South Africa; Sipho Sepamla, stalwart of the Soweto Poetry school which came to prominence after the 1976 Soweto uprising; and Richard Rive, novelist, cultural commentator and liberation icon, murdered in his prime. The portrait gallery of the figures who have shaped and defined the role of literature in South Africa is both revealing and provocative, showing the route taken by some...



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