



H. Rider Haggard on the Imperial Frontier: The Political And Literary Contexts of His African Romances (British Authors Series, 1880-1920)

Gerald Monsman

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H. Rider Haggard on the Imperial Frontier, the first book-length study of H.R.H.'s African fiction, revises the image of Rider Haggard (1856-1925) as a mere writer of adventure stories, a brassy propagandist for British imperialism. Professor Monsman places Haggard's imaginative works both in the context of colonial fiction writing and in the framework of subsequent postcolonial debates about history and its representation. Like Olive Schreiner, Haggard was an Anglo-African writer straddling the moral divide of mixed allegiances: one empathetically African, the other quite English. The context for such Haggard tales as *King Solomon's Mines* and *She* was a triad of extraordinary nineteenth-century cultures in conflict: British, Boer, and Zulu. Haggard mined his characters both from the ore of real-life Africa and from the depths of his subconscious, giving expression to feelings of cultural conflict, probing and subverting the dominant economic and social forces of imperialism. Monsman argues that Haggard endorses native religious powers as superior to the European empirical paradigm, celebrates autonomous female figures who defy patriarchal control, and covertly supports racial mixing. These social and political elements are integral to his thrilling story lines charged with an exoticism of lived nightmares and extraordinary ordeals. *H. Rider Haggard on the Imperial Frontier* will be of interest to readers of imperial history and biography, lost race and supernatural literature, tales of terror, and heroic fantasies. The book's unsettling relevance to contemporary issues will engage a wide audience, and the groundbreaking biographical account of Haggard's close contemporary Bertram Mitford in the appendix will add appeal to specialists.

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