



Heroism and the Supernatural in the African Epic (African Studies)

Mariam Konaté Deme

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There exists a strong tendency within Western literary criticism to either deny the existence of epics in Africa or to see African literatures as exotic copies of European originals. In both cases, Western criticism has largely failed to acknowledge the distinctiveness of African literary aesthetics. This book revises traditional literary canons in examining the social, cultural and emotional specificity of African epics. Mariam Konaté Deme highlights the distinguishing features that characterize the African epic, emphasizing the significance of the fantastic and its use as an essential element in the dramatic structure of African epics. As Deme notes, the fantastic can be fully appreciated only against the cosmological background of the societies that produce those heroic tales. This book not only contributes to the scholarship on African oral literature, but also adds reshapes our understanding of heroic literature in general.



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