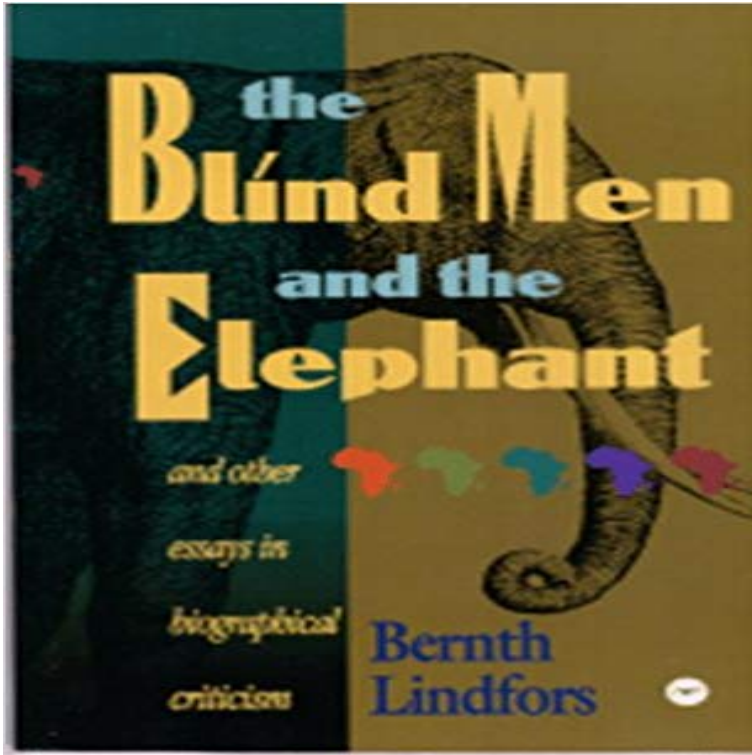


# The Blind Men and the Elephant: And Other Essays in Biographical Criticism



This book is a collection of essays, which examine the lives, and works of a number of outstanding contemporary writers of African origin. The biographical subjects include Chinua Achebe, Dennis Brutus, Cyprian Ekwensi, Ngugi wa Thiongo, 1986 Nobel Laureate, Wole Soyinka, Amos Tutuola, Janheinz Jahn and Sartjee Baartman. The essays approach the African literary subjects from a variety of biographical perspectives. The first two deal with biographical criticism itself, offering examples of how it can be abused as a method of literary evaluation. The next three are concerned with demonstrating why the themes and techniques employed by Dennis Brutus, Wole Soyinka and Ngugi wa Thiongo have changed significantly over time. The remaining essays are primarily biographical, setting down a reliable factual record of important moments in the careers of two Nigerian writers, a German scholar and a South African performer. Each essay has its own strategy, but they all work toward a common goal: illumination of a reciprocity between literature and life.

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