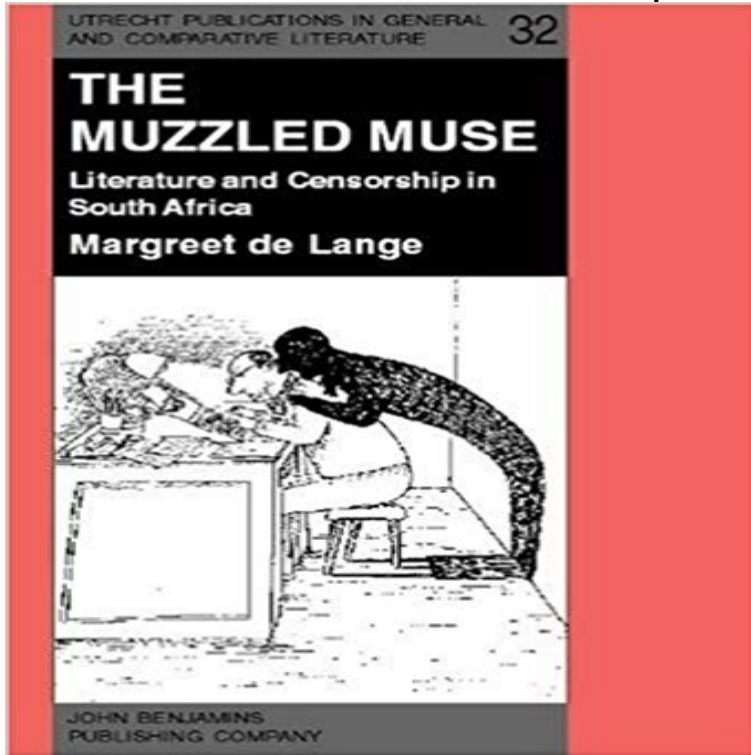


The Muzzled Muse: Literature and censorship in South Africa (Utrecht Publications in General and Comparative Literature)



The long history of censorship is a parallel and equally powerful history of literature. Censors bear witness to the power of the word even more forcefully than the writers and the readers they consider dangerous. (Index on Censorship 6/1996) A critical assessment of literature produced under censorship needs to take into account that the strategies of the censors are answered by strategies of the writers and the readers. To recognize self-censoring strategies in writing, it is necessary to know the specific restrictions of the censorship regime in question. In South Africa under apartheid all writers were confronted with the question of how to respond to the pressure of censorship. This confrontation took a different form however, depending on what group the writer belonged to and what language he/she used. By looking at white writers writing in Afrikaans and white and black writers writing in English, this book gives the impact of censorship on South African literature a comparative examination which it has not received before. The book considers works by J.M. Coetzee, Nadine Gordimer, Andre Brink, and others less known to readers outside South Africa like Karel Schoeman, Louis Kruger, Christopher Hope, Miriam Tlali and Mtutuzeli Matshoba. It treats the censorship laws of the apartheid regime as well as, in the final chapter, the new law of the Mandela government which shows some surprising similarities to its predecessor. Margreet de Lange teaches Comparative Literature at Utrecht University and coordinates the University's interdisciplinary program of South African Studies. She received her Ph.D. from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. De Lange expertly sketches in the historical and literary backgrounds as she goes, taking us right up to the recent (unsatisfactory) revision of the censorship laws, making *The Muzzled Muse* a vitally important summary of literary censorship.

in South Africa, and a handbook of what to guard against in the future. Shaun de Waal, Mail & Guardian Sept. 26 to October 1, 1997

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