Imagining the Cape Colony

Edition: 2012
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ISBN: 9781920499754
Format: Soft Cover
Number of Pages: 232 pages
Retail price: R400.00 (incl. VAT, excl. delivery.)
Website Link: juta.co.za/pdf/25282/

About this Publication:
Postcolonial history and literary culture is of wide interest currently. Imagining the Cape Colony revisits a key phase of South African history – the period 1770-1830 - addressing debates about nationalism, colonialism and neo-colonialism, and postcolonial/post-apartheid literary culture. The American Revolution of 1776 and the French Revolution of 1789 produced the most influential forms of the modern nation state. This book interrogates their impact in a specific colonial and literary context.

The book examines how anti-colonial struggles of the past have been represented and inscribed over time, such as the early modern Portuguese literary and historical narratives of the defeat of Dom Francisco d’Almeida at the Cape in 1510. It looks at French representations of the Cape ‘Hottentots’ - by Jean Tavernier, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and François Levailant - and analyses them against the anomalous treatment of the Khoisan post apartheid. The author reflects on settler nationalism as expressed in speeches, poems and novels, as well as Cape slavery and historical accounts of the Griqua nation.

The book presents a wide-ranging survey of the very many textual ‘imaginings’ of the Cape Colony; a historically nuanced investigation of theories of ‘nation’ and ‘colony’; an exposition of substantial archival material on the Cape from the period 1770-1830; a politically engaged discussion of colonial/postcolonial and apartheid/post-apartheid literary histories; and a critical dialogue between South Africa’s colonial past and post-apartheid present.

Contents Include:
- Chapter 1 Remembering the Khoikhoi victory over Dom Francisco d’Almeida at the Cape in 1510: Luiz de Camoes and Robert Southey
- Chapter 2 French representations of the Cape ‘Hottentots’: Jean Tavernier, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Francois Levailant
- Chapter 3 British models of governance: Adam Smith and John Bruce on the Cape Colony
- Chapter 4 African land for the American Empire: the proto-imperialism of Benjamin Stout
- Chapter 5 Historical and literary re-iterations of Dutch Settler Republicanism
Of Interest and Benefit to:

Academics and students of history and South African history in the colonial period; and critics, theorists and students of postcolonial literary studies, the eighteenth century and Romantic period, and travel writing.