

Subject to Colonialism: African Self-fashioning and the Colonial Library



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(Dr. Pat Hegmann)

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Duke University Press, United States, 2001. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 214 x 149 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. Subject to Colonialism provides a much needed revisionist perspective on the way twentieth-century Africa is viewed and analysed among scholars. Employing literary, historical, and anthropological techniques, Gaurav Desai attempts to generate a new understanding of issues that permeate discussions of Africa by disrupting the centrality of postcolonial texts and focusing instead on the cultural and intellectual production of colonial Africans. In particular, Desai calls for a re-evaluation of the colonial library -that set of representations and texts that have collectively invented Africa as a locus of difference and alterity. Presenting colonialism not as a singular, monolithic structure but rather as a practice fraught with contradictions and tensions, Desai works to historicise the foundation of postcolonialism by decentering both canonical texts and privileged categories of analysis such as race, capitalism, empire, and nation. To achieve this, he focuses on texts that construct or reform - rather than merely reflect - colonialism, placing explicit emphasis on processes, performances, and the practices of everyday life. Reading these texts not merely for the content of their assertions but also for how they were created and received, Desai looks at works such as Jomo Kenyatta s ethnography of the Gikuyu and Akiga Sai s history of the Tiv and makes a particular plea for the canonical recuperation of African women s writing. Scholars in African history, literature, and philosophy, postcolonial studies, literary criticism, and anthropology will welcome publication of this book.

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