

Tropicopolitans

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SRINIVAS ARAVAMUDAN

TROPICOPOLITANS



Colonialism and Agency, 1688-1804

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In "Tropicopolitans", Srinivas Aravamudan reconstructs the colonial imagination of the eighteenth century. By exploring representations of peoples and cultures subjected to colonial discourse, he makes a case for the agency - or the capacity to resist domination - of those oppressed. Aravamudan's analysis of texts that accompanied European commercial and imperial expansion from the Glorious Revolution through the French Revolution reveals the development of anticolonial consciousness prior to the nineteenth century. In readings that expose new relationships between literary representation and colonialism in the eighteenth century, Aravamudan considers such texts as Behn's "Oroonoko", Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe and Captain Singleton", Addison's "Cato", and Swift's "Gulliver's Travels", and Therapier's "Letters". He extends his argument to include analyses of Johnson's "Rasselas", Beckford's "Vathek", Montagu's travel letters, Equiano's autobiography, Burke's political and aesthetic writings, and Abbe de Raynal's "Histoire des deux Indes". Offering a radical approach to literary history, this study provides new mechanisms for understanding the development of anticolonial agency. "Tropicopolitans" will interest scholars engaged in postcolonial studies, eighteenth-century literature, and literary theory.

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