



Improvisations of Empire

Thomas Pringle in Scotland, the Cape Colony and London, 1789–1834

By *Matthew Shum*

Pub Date: 13 July 2021

Binding: Paperback

Price: £25.00 / \$40.00

ISBN: 9781839981791

BISAC CATEGORY: BIOGRAPHY & AUTOBIOGRAPHY / Literary Figures POETRY / European / English, Irish, Scottish, Welsh, HISTORY / Africa / South / Republic of South Africa

BISAC CODE: BIO007000

BIC CODE: DSBF

Extent: 232 pages

Size: 153 x 229 mm /

6 x 9 inches

Series: Anthem Advances in African Cultural Studies

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In his book *Improvisations of Empire*, Matthew Shum critically analyses the life and works of Thomas Pringle. Is the space that Pringle occupies in the history of South African Writing, one that he is justified in holding? Is there a need for re-assessment of his position? These are some of the questions that this book will lead the readers to ask. — Dhruvajyoti Banerjee, <https://postcolonialinterventions.files.wordpress.com/2020/07/pi-5.2-dhruba-review.pdf>, published June 30, 2020

“*Improvisations of Empire* shows how a careful reading of a literary oeuvre can transform how we think about the legacies of the colonial era. It rescues Pringle from the realms of liberal mythmaking, casting new light on a historical period in which nation-building, class-consciousness, abolition, Christian evangelism and colonialism were deeply entangled.” — Peter D. McDonald, Professor of English and Related Literature, University of Oxford, UK

‘*Improvisations of Empire*’ examines the varied career of Thomas Pringle, a Scottish poet and journalist. It engages his formative Scottish years, his stay in South Africa and his subsequent residence in London where he became the secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society and a well-known editor.

Contents

Introduction; 1. Scotland: 1789–1820; 2. The Eastern Cape Frontier: 1820–1822; 3. Cape Town and Beyond: 1822–1825; 4. London: 1826–1834; Conclusion; Bibliography; Index.

About the Author

Matthew Shum, a research associate in the English department at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, has previously taught in the English department at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The focus of Shum’s research is colonial writing in South Africa in the long eighteenth century.

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