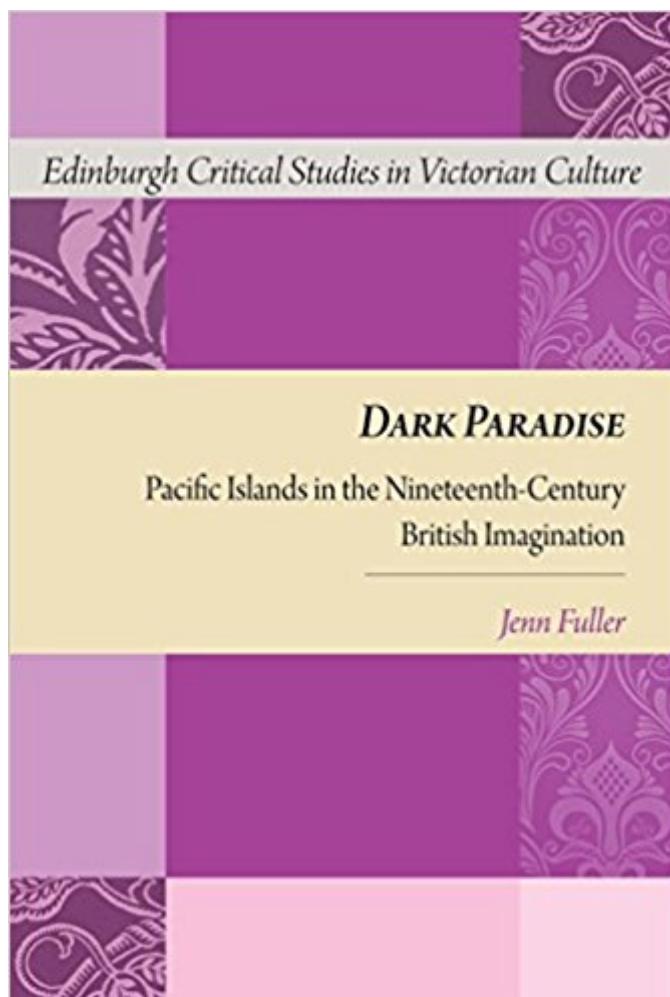


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Dark Paradise: Pacific Islands In The Nineteenth-Century British Imagination (Edinburgh Critical Studies In Victorian Culture)



Synopsis

The discovery of the Pacific islands amplified the qualities of mystery and exoticism already associated with 'foreign' islands. Their 'savage' peoples, their isolation, and their sheer beauty fascinated British visitors across the long nineteenth century. Dark Paradise argues that while the British originally believed the islands to be commercial paradises or perfect sites for missionary endeavours, as the century progressed, their optimistic vision transformed to portray darker realities. As a result, these islands act as a 'breaking point' for British theories of imperialism, colonialism, and identity. The book traces the changing British attitudes towards imperial settlement as the early view of 'island as paradise' gives way to a fear of the hostile islanders and examines how this revelation undermined a key tenet of British imperialism - that they were the 'superior' or 'civilized' islanders.

Book Information

Series: Edinburgh Critical Studies in Victorian Culture

Hardcover: 256 pages

Publisher: Edinburgh University Press; 1 edition (July 1, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1474413846

ISBN-13: 978-1474413848

Product Dimensions: 9.4 x 0.7 x 6.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

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