



Oceania and the Victorian Imagination: Where All Things Are Possible

Peter H. Hoffenberg

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Oceania and the Victorian Imagination: Where All Things Are **Possible**

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Oceania and the Victorian Imagination: Where All Things Are Possible Peter H. Hoffenberg Oceania, or the South Pacific, loomed large in the Victorian popular imagination. It was a world that interested the Victorians for many reasons, all of which suggested to them that everything was possible there. This collection of essays focuses on Oceania's impact on Victorian culture, most notably travel writing, photography, international exhibitions, literature, and the world of children. Each of these had significant impact. The literature discussed affected mainly the middle and upper classes, while exhibitions and photography reached down into the working classes, as did missionary presentations. The experience of children was central to the Pacific's effects, as youthful encounters at exhibitions, chapel, home, or school formed lifelong impressions and experience. It would be difficult to fully understand the Victorians as they understood themselves without considering their engagement with Oceania. While the contributions of India and Africa to the nineteenth-century imagination have been well-documented, examinations of the contributions of Oceania have remained on the periphery of Victorian studies. Oceania and the Victorian Imagination contributes significantly to our discussion of the non-peripheral place of Oceania in Victorian culture.



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