



Paradise Remade

Elizabeth Buck

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This is a book about the politics of competing cultures and myths in a colonized nation. Elizabeth Buck considers the transformation of Hawaiian culture focusing on the indigenous population rather than on the colonizers. She describes how Hawaii's established religious, social, political, and economic relationships have changed in the past 200 years as a result of Western imperialism. Her account is particularly timely in light of the current Hawaiian demands for sovereignty 100 years after the overthrow of the monarchy in 1893. Buck examines the social transformation Hawaii from a complex hierarchical, oral society to an American state dominated by corporate tourism and its myths of paradise. She pays particular attention to the ways contemporary Hawaiians are challenging the use of their traditions as the basis for exoticized entertainment. Buck demonstrates that sacred chants and hula were an integral part of Hawaiian social life; as the repository of the people's historical memory, chants and hula practices played a vital role in maintaining the links between religious, political, and economic relationships. Tracing the ways in which Hawaiian culture has been variously suppressed and constructed by Western explorers, New England missionaries, the tourist industry, ethnomusicologists, and contemporary Hawaiians, Buck offers a fascinating 'rereading' of Hawaiian history. Elizabeth Buck is a Fellow at the East-West Center in Honolulu, Hawai'i.

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