



Inventing 'Easter Island'

Beverly Haun

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Easter Island, or Rapa Nui as it is known to its inhabitants, is located in the Pacific Ocean, 3600 kilometres west of South America. Annexed by Chile in 1888, the island has been a source of fascination for the world beyond the island since the first visit by Europeans in 1722 due to its intriguing statues and complex history. *Inventing 'Easter Island'* examines narrative strategies and visual conventions in the discursive construction of 'Easter Island' as distinct from the native conception of 'Rapa Nui.' It looks at the geographic imaginary that pervaded the eighteenth century, a period of overwhelming imperial expansion.

Beverley Haun begins with a discussion of forces that shaped the European version of island culture and goes on to consider the representation of that culture in the form of explorer texts and illustrations, as well as more recent texts and images in comic books and kitsch from off the island. Throughout, 'Easter Island' is used as a case study of the impact of imperialism on the view of a culture from outside. The study hinges on three key points - an inquiry into the formation of 'Easter Island' as a subject; an examination of how the constructed space and culture have been shaped, reshaped, and represented in discursive spaces; and a discussion of cultural memory and how the constraints of foreign texts and images have shaped thought and action about 'Easter Island.'

Richly illustrated and unique in its findings, *Inventing 'Easter Island'* will appeal to cultural theorists, anthropologists, educators, and anyone interested in the history of the South Pacific.

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