

The Isle of Pines, 1668: Henry Neville's Uncertain Utopia

By John Scheckter

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A short fiction of shipwreck and discovery written by the politician Henry Neville (1620-1694), *The Isle of Pines* is only beginning to draw critical attention, and until now no scholarly edition of the work has appeared. In the first full-length study of *The Isle of Pines*, supported by the first fully critical edition, John Scheckter discloses how Neville's work offers a critique of scientific discourse, enacts complicated engagements of race and gender, and interrogates the methods and consequences of European exploration. The volume offers a new critical model for applying post-colonial and postmodern examination strategies to an early modern work. Scheckter argues that the structure and publication history of the fiction, with its separate, unreliable narrators, along with its several topics—shipwreck survival, the founding of a new society, the initial phases of European colonization—are imbued with the sense of uncertainty that permeated the era.

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Editorial Review

Review

'This edition is already a labour of critical love, a book-length study of a seventeen-page piece of fiction.' Times Literary Supplement 'For Scheckter, The Isle of Pines is the very model of a modern major theorist's dream text: a body of words upon which the twenty-first century's favourite instruments for cultural and textual analysis may be employed for an exemplary dissection. And it is short enough for a very complete job of it, done with microscopic attention to every detail. Scheckter displays brilliant command of relevant theories that he lovingly applied to suggest what Neville's "uncertain utopia" may reveal about ideas of race, class, gender, scientific method, any cultural identities as understood in the seventeenth century and (more fully) as many now understand them.' Science Fiction Studies 'Scheckter's monograph impresses most by its sustained attention to a rather short early modern fiction. It manages to tease out a wide range of semantic layers that relate directly to a whole range of twenty-first century critical reading practices.' Notes and Queries 'Everyone who wishes to study The Isle of Pines must engage this book...' The Scriblerian

About the Author

John Scheckter is Professor of English at Long Island University, New York. His previous work includes The Australian Novel, 1830-1980: A Thematic Introduction.

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