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Autore	Brody Jennifer DeVere
Titolo	Impossible purities : blackness, femininity, and Victorian culture // Jennifer DeVere Brody
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ISBN	0-8223-9695-5
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (273 p.)
Disciplina	820.9/358
Soggetti	English literature - 19th century - History and criticism Black people - Great Britain - Public opinion - History - 19th century Race awareness - Great Britain - History - 19th century National characteristics, English, in literature Women, Black, in literature Femininity in literature Black people in literature Race in literature Black race - Color Great Britain Civilization 19th century
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
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Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Bibliographic Level Mode of Issuance: Monograph
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references (pages [221]-243) and index.
Nota di contenuto	Complicating categories. --Miscegenating mulattaroons. --Casting the dye. --Masking faces. --Deforming island races. --Epilogue.
Sommario/riassunto	Using Black feminist theory and African American studies to read Victorian culture, Impossible Purities looks at the construction of "Englishness" as white, masculine, and pure and "Americanness" as Black, feminine, and impure. Brody's readings of Victorian novels, plays, paintings, and science fiction reveal the impossibility of purity and the inevitability of hybridity in representations of ethnicity, sexuality, gender, and race. She amasses a considerable amount of evidence to show that Victorian culture was bound inextricably to various forms and figures of Blackness. Opening with a reading of Daniel Defoe's "A True-Born Englishman," which posits the mixed origins of English identity, Brody goes on to analyze mulattas typified

by Rhoda Swartz in William Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, whose mixed-race status reveals the "unseemly origins of English imperial power." Examining Victorian stage productions from blackface minstrel shows to performances of *The Octoroon* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, she explains how such productions depended upon feminized, "Black" figures in order to reproduce Englishmen as masculine white subjects. She also discusses H.G. Wells's *The Island of Dr. Moreau* in the context of debates about the "new woman," slavery, and fears of the monstrous degeneration of English gentleman. *Impossible Purities* concludes with a discussion of Bram Stoker's novella, "The Lair of the White Worm," which brings together the book's concerns with changing racial representations on both sides of the Atlantic. This book will be of interest to scholars in Victorian studies, literary theory, African American studies, and cultural criticism.

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