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Our Caribbean Kin: Race And Nation In The Neoliberal Antilles (Critical Caribbean Studies)



Synopsis

Beset by the forces of European colonialism, US imperialism, and neoliberalism, the people of the Antilles have had good reasons to band together politically and economically, yet not all Dominicans, Haitians, and Puerto Ricans have heeded the calls for collective action. So what has determined whether Antillean solidarity movements fail or succeed? In this comprehensive new study, Alaa Reyes-Santos argues that the crucial factor has been the extent to which Dominicans, Haitians, and Puerto Ricans imagine each other as kin. *Our Caribbean Kin* considers three key moments in the region's history: the nineteenth century, when the antillanismo movement sought to throw off the yoke of colonial occupation; the 1930s, at the height of the region's struggles with US imperialism; and the past thirty years, as neoliberal economic and social policies have encroached upon the islands. At each moment, the book demonstrates, specific tropes of brotherhood, marriage, and lineage have been mobilized to construct political kinship among Antilleans, while racist and xenophobic discourses have made it difficult for them to imagine themselves as part of one big family. Recognizing the wide array of contexts in which Antilleans learn to affirm or deny kinship, Reyes-Santos draws from a vast archive of media, including everything from canonical novels to political tracts, historical newspapers to online forums, sociological texts to local jokes. Along the way, she uncovers the conflicts, secrets, and internal hierarchies that characterize kin relations among Antilleans, but she also discovers how they have used notions of kinship to create cohesion across differences.

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