



The Construction and Representation of Race and Ethnicity in the Caribbean

Mervyn C. Alleyne

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The definition and evolution of the categories of race and ethnicity have long been debated among historians and scholars of social anthropology. This book examines how the meanings and values of race and ethnicity have been constructed historically and how they are represented symbolically, with particular focus on the Caribbean. Mervyn Alleyne examines the historical development of these categories in Europe, in Asia and in Africa and then proceeds to an in-depth analysis of the Caribbean, with a focus on Puerto Rico, Martinique and Jamaica as three different modalities of race and ethnicity and three different colonial systems. Through a unique approach grounded in linguistic, ethnographic and historic analysis, Alleyne draws on a wide array of evidence to ultimately oppose the widely held notion that racial antagonism against black people is the consequence of New World slavery in the period following the "discovery" of the Americas in the late fifteenth century. Of particular interest to academic audiences in history, linguistics, African American and ethnic studies, sociology and anthropology, this book also appeals to general readers interested in issues of race, ethnicity, and the historical experience of Africans and African-descended peoples.

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