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Island Bodies: Transgressive Sexualities In The Caribbean Imagination



Synopsis

Caribbean Studies Association Gordon K. and Sybil Lewis Prize – Outstanding. One of the best examinations of the dissonance between official sexual ideologies and actual social and cultural practices I have had the pleasure of reading.” David William Foster, author of *São Paulo: Perspectives on the City and Cultural Production* – A thoughtful exploration of how Caribbean women and sexual minorities are at the center of a sexual revolution that refuses containment within Euro-American concepts of identity and sexuality. This is an unprecedented sexual revolution, led by sexual minorities, transforming the region and giving new meanings to what inclusion and liberation look like.” Amalia L. Cabezas, author of *Economies of Desire: Sex Tourism in Cuba and the Dominican Republic* In *Island Bodies*, Rosamond King examines sexualities, violence, and repression in the Caribbean experience. Analyzing the sexual norms and expectations portrayed in Caribbean and diaspora literature, music, film, and popular culture, King skillfully demonstrates how many individuals contest traditional roles by maneuvering within and/or trying to change their society’s binary gender systems. These transgressions have come to better represent Caribbean culture than the “official” representations perpetuated by governmental elites and often codified into laws that reinforce patriarchal, heterosexual stereotypes. Unique in its breadth as well as its multilingual and multidisciplinary approach, *Island Bodies* addresses homosexuality, interracial relations, transgender people, and women’s sexual agency in Dutch, Francophone, Anglophone, and Hispanophone works of Caribbean literature. Additionally, King explores the paradoxical nature of sexuality across the region: discussing sexuality in public is often considered taboo, yet the tourism economy trades on portraying Caribbean residents as hypersexualized. Ultimately King reveals that despite the varied national specificity, differing colonial legacies, and linguistic diversity across the islands, there are striking similarities in the ways Caribbean cultures attempt to restrict sexuality and in the ways individuals explore and transgress those boundaries.

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