

Entrepreneurial Selves: Neoliberal Respectability and the Making of a Caribbean Middle Class (Next Wave: New Directions in Women's Studies)

Carla Freeman



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Entrepreneurial Selves is an ethnography of neoliberalism. Bridging political economy and affect studies, Carla Freeman turns a spotlight on the entrepreneur, a figure saluted across the globe as the very embodiment of neoliberalism. Steeped in more than a decade of ethnography on the emergent entrepreneurial middle class of Barbados, she finds dramatic reworkings of selfhood, intimacy, labor, and life amid the rumbling effects of political-economic restructuring. She shows us that the déjà vu of neoliberalism, the global hailing of entrepreneurial flexibility and its concomitant project of self-making, can only be grasped through the thickness of cultural specificity where its costs and pleasures are unevenly felt. Freeman theorizes postcolonial neoliberalism by reimagining the Caribbean cultural model of 'reputation-respectability.' This remarkable book will allow readers to see how the material social practices formerly associated with resistance to capitalism (reputation) are being mobilized in ways that sustain neoliberal precepts and, in so doing, re-map class, race, and gender through a new emotional economy.

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