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Caribbean Literature in English (Longman Literature In English Series)

Louis James

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Caribbean Literature in English places its subject in its precise regional context. The `Caribbean', generally considered as one area, is highly discrete in its topography, race and languages, including mainland Guyana, the Atlantic island of Barbados, the Lesser Antilles, Trinidad, and Jamaica, whose size and history gave it an early sense of separate nationhood. Beginning with Raleigh's *Discoverie of...Guiana* (1596), this innovative study traces the sometimes surprising evolution of cultures which shared a common experience of slavery, but were intimately related to individual local areas. The approach is interdisciplinary, examining the heritage of the plantation era, and the issues of language and racial identity it created.

From this base, Louis James reassesses the phenomenal expansion of writing in the contemporary period. He traces the influence of pan-Caribbean movements and the creation of an expatriate Caribbean identity in Britain and America: `Brit'n' is considered as a West Indian island, created by `colonization in reverse'. Further sections treat the development of a Caribbean aesthetic, and the repossession of cultural roots from Africa and Asia. Balancing an awareness of the regional identity of Caribbean literature with an exploration of its place in world and postcolonial literatures, this study offers a panoramic view that has become one of the most vital of the `new literatures in English'.

This accessible overview of Caribbean writing will appeal to the general reader and student alike, and particularly to all who are interested in or studying Caribbean literatures and culture, postcolonial studies, Commonwealth 'new literatures' and contemporary literature and drama.

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