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A HISTORY OF LITERATURE IN THE CARIBBEAN. Edited by A. James Arnold. Volume 2. ENGLISH- AND DUTCH-SPEAKING REGIONS. A Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2001. x, 672 p.

Although this is volume 2 of the three-volume *A History of Literature in the Caribbean*, it is actually the last to be published. Volume 1, *Hispanic and Francophone Regions*, was published in 1994 and volume 3, *Cross-Cultural Studies*, in 1997, all of them with A. James Arnold as editor-in-chief. As with volume 1 in the series, the present volume is equitably divided between the two literatures (or families of literatures) it covers, the Anglophone literatures occupying the first half, and those from the Dutch-speaking regions the second. As with volume 1, these halves are also divided in two, with the first sub-part comprehensively covering a number of general issues and themes—such as the use of language/s in the region, the opposition of literate versus oral and popular cultures, literary institutions, and the specificities of separate islands and territories as far as literature is concerned—and the second part addressing issues of genre. The first sub-part of the volume's half devoted to the Anglophone Caribbean, entitled "Literary Development: A Contrastive History," is preceded by a useful historical introduction by Vera Kutzinski (then at Yale University, now at Vanderbilt), who edited the Anglophone section. Within this sub-part we find the section "Emergence of Language and Literature," with a chapter on "Language Use in West Indian Literature" by Maureen Warner-Lewis. Next, there is the section "Popular and Literate Cultures," with a chapter on "The Institution of Literature" by Helen Tiffin. Finally, the section "Islands and Territories" comprises the chapters "The Literatures of Trinidad and Jamaica" by Sarah Lawson Welsh and "Guyanese Identities" by Josephine V. Arnold.

As James Arnold remarks in his editorial preface, "Charting the Caribbean as a Literary Region," the present volume for the first time brings the literatures of the Dutch-speaking regions of the Caribbean into the same literary-historical orbit as their Anglophone, Francophone, and Hispanic counterparts. This is an inestimable merit. However, as Arnold is the first to recognize, this almost inevitably leads to discrepancies in the treatment of the material concerned. Specifically, whereas the half of the volume devoted to Anglophone literatures follows the pattern set in the first volume of the series, with the sub-part devoted to "genres" dealing comprehensively with fiction, poetry, and drama ("The Novel before 1950" by J. Downing Thompson, Jr.; "The Novel from 1950 to 1970" by Hena Maes-Jelinek; "The Novel since 1970" by Hena Maes-Jelinek and Bénédicte Ledent; "Short Fiction" by Victor Ramraj; "A History of Poetry" by Edward Baugh; "Theatralizing the Anglophone Caribbean, 1492 to the 1980s" by Rob Canfield; and "The Essay" by Laura G. Yow), the corresponding sub-part devoted to the Dutch-speaking regions is much less neat and much more uneven.

The explanation for the discrepancy between the Anglophone and the Dutch-speaking parts of the volume is simple. To begin with, although over the last thirty years or so quite a lot has been written on the literatures of the former Dutch colonies in the Caribbean, and although most of the recognized authorities in the field also feature in this volume, relatively little theorization has been undertaken with regard to this material. This stands in marked contrast to the literatures of the other regions of the Caribbean, which over these same thirty years have been heavily theorized. Second, relatively little has been done when it comes to writing a comprehensive history of all the literatures of all the former Dutch colonies in the Caribbean. For the most part, the best-known literary historians have confined themselves to one specific island or territory. Michiel van Kempen, for instance, has largely concentrated on Suriname, recently publishing his two-volume *Een geschiedenis van de Surinaamse literatuur* (Breda: De Geus, 2003, 1396 p.), which undoubtedly will be the standard history of Surinamese literature for many years to come.

Likewise, Wim Rutgers has devoted a life-time to the study of Aruban literature. Third, the linguistic as well as literary situation of the former Dutch colonies is extremely complex, with more than twenty languages spoken (and most of them also written) in Suriname, and various creoles on the islands, with some of the islands having English or Spanish as their initial “cultured” languages. Finally, the literary history of some of the smaller former Dutch islands remains virtually uncharted. In many ways, then, what we find in the part of this volume dedicated to the so-called Dutch-speaking regions is pioneering work indeed.

The title to the second half of the present volume points to the difficulties involved; instead of the comprehensive title of the first part—“The Anglophone Caribbean”—we find the title, “The Netherlands Antilles, Aruba, and Surinam,” indicating the divisions to be encountered in the various chapters that follow. The title to the first sub-part likewise highlights the difficulties of the undertaking: “Prospecting the Field: A Contrastive History of Literary Development.” Instead of the fairly extensive and comprehensive articles of the Anglophone half of the volume, here we find, following a brief introduction by Ineke Phaf-Reinberger, the editor of the Dutch half, a sequence of short chapters (assembled under the same three section headings as in the Anglophone counterpart): “Notes on Early Printing in the Dutch Caribbean Islands” by Maritza Coomans-Eustatia; “Ideological Controversies in Curaçaoan Publishing Strategies (1900-1945)” by Aart G. Broek; “The Literary Infrastructure of Suriname: Problems and Changes” by Michiel van Kempen; “The Creole Languages of the Caribbean” by Pieter Muysken; “The Value of Guene for Folklore and Literary Culture” by Frank Martinus Arion; “Song Texts as Literature of Daily Life in the Netherlands Antilles” by Rose Mary Allen; “*Katibu to galena*: From Hidden to Open Protest in Curaçao” by Joceline Clemencia; “From Oral to Written Literature: St. Maarten, Saba, and St. Eustatius” by Alida Albus; “*Di nos e ta!*: Outside and Inside in Aruban Literature” by Wim Rutgers; and “Conclusions” by Phaf-Rheinberger.

The title to the second sub-part of the Dutch half, “A Mosaic Setting: A Contrastive History of Genre,” also underlines the implied fragmentation. After another introduction by Phaf-Rheinberger, we find six sub-sections. The first of these, “Overview,” gathers together “West Indian Slavery and Dutch Enlightenment Literature” by A.N. Paasman; “The Portuguese Jewish Nation: An Enlightenment Essay on the Colony of Suriname” by Ineke Phaf-Rheinberger herself; “Curaçaoan Literature in Spanish” by Liesbeth Echteld; and “Strategies and Stratagems of Some Dutch-Antillean Writers” by J.J. Oversteegen. The second section, “Fiction,” consists of “The Contemporary Surinamese Novel” by Ineke Phaf-Rheinberger and “Surinamese Short Narrative” by Michiel van Kempen. The section “Poetry” features “Literary Magazines and Poetry in the Netherlands Antilles” by Wim Rutgers; “The Surinamese Muse: Reflections on Poetry” by Vernie February; and “East Indian Surinamese Poetry and Its Languages” by Theo Damsteegt. “Drama” contains “Forms of Dramatic Expressions in the Leeward Islands” by Igma M.-G. van Putte-De Windt and “*Banya*, a Surviving Surinamese Slave Play” by Trudi Guda. The section on “Literary Magazines” has the chapters “*Civilisadó*: A Doomed Civilizing Offensive in Curaçao, 1871-1875” by Eva Abraham-van der Mark and “Prewar Prose and Poetry in Papiamentu” by Aart G. Broek. Finally, “Literary Criticism” consists of the brief “Antillean Literary Criticism: Caribbean vs. Dutch Approaches” by Jos de Roo. This sub-part is also rounded off with “Conclusions” by Phaf-Rheinberger.

While fully appreciating the arduousness and novelty of the task undertaken by the editor of the Dutch half of this volume, one cannot help wondering whether a tighter editorial reign might not have yielded greater consistency in both the reach and quality of contributions here. Some of the essays, such as those by Phaf-Rheinberger on the Portuguese Jewish Nation, Guda on *Banya*, or Abraham-van der Mark on *Civilisadó*, while

intrinsically interesting, seem out of proportion in a comprehensive survey such as the three-volume *History of Literature in the Caribbean* features. The same goes for the contribution by Muysken, which wildly overshoots the aims of the present volume, offering a highly technical-linguistic description of Caribbean creole languages, without any observable relation to the literature that supposedly is the focus of the exercise. And while the various islands and territories making up the former Dutch colonial empire in the Caribbean obviously have different histories, including literary histories, the same goes for their Hispanic, Francophone, and Anglophone counterparts. Yet, for these counterparts a greater degree of aggregation apparently was not the problem it seems to have been for the "Dutch" part. The thorough grasp of Anglophone fiction the reader gets from the chronologically staggered contributions of Thompson, Jr., Maes-Jelinek, and Maes-Jelinek and Ledent, for example, simply eludes that same reader when it comes to the Dutch-speaking part. Inevitably, this vitiates to some extent part of the aim of these volumes: to enable a truly comparative view of literatures in the Caribbean. The Dutch part is simply too fragmented, and its various contributions often have too narrow a focus, to allow for a ready comparison with either the other (Anglophone) part of the present volume, or the two parts of volume 1.

The criticism just voiced notwithstanding, the present volume, together with its companion volumes, is indispensable for anyone professionally interested in Caribbean literature from a comparative point of view. The contributions to the Anglophone part are without exception informative and admirably balanced as to comprehensiveness and attention to detail. The Dutch part also contains some very able contributions. In addition, an invaluable feature of this volume—and its companion volumes—are the rich bibliographies to the various contributions. All too often, the diverse literatures originating in the Caribbean are treated separately both because of the obvious impediments of language and because of the historical complexities involved. Here, for the first time, we have knowledgeable and useful surveys of all these literatures, side by side, inspired by a common set of questions, and within a roughly common descriptive model. No doubt, studies of specific themes, techniques, or lineages will refine upon these volumes; in fact, this is already being done in the third volume to the *History of Literature in the Caribbean, Cross-Cultural Studies*. For the foreseeable future, though, these volumes will remain the obvious starting point and touchstone for anyone venturing into the field of Caribbean literature.

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