

And the Birds Began to Sing: Religion En Literature in Post-Colonial Cultures



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Reviews

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(Lizeth Witting)

AND THE BIRDS BEGAN TO SING: RELIGION EN LITERATURE IN POST-COLONIAL CULTURES

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Brill, Netherlands, 1996. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 223 x 150 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. Taking as its starting-point the ambiguous heritage left by the British Empire to its former colonies, dominions and possessions, *And the Birds Began to Sing* marks a new departure in the interdisciplinary study of religion and literature. Gathered under the rubric Christianity and Colonialism, essays on Brian Moore, Timothy Findley, Margaret Atwood and Marian Engel, Thomas King, Les A. Murray, David Malouf, Mudrooroo and Philip McLaren, R.A.K. Mason, Maurice Gee, Keri Hulme, Epeli Hau ofa, J.M. Coetzee, Christopher Okigbo, Chinua Achebe, Amos Tutuola and Ngugi wa Thiong'o explore literary portrayals of the effects of British Christianity upon settler and native cultures in Northern Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific, and the Africas. These essays share a sense of the dominant presence of Christianity as an inherited system of religious thought and practice to be adapted to changing post-colonial conditions or to be resisted as the lingering ideology of colonial times. In the second section of the collection, *Empire and World Religions*, essays on Paule Marshall and George Lamming, Jean Rhys, Olive Senior and Caribbean poetry, V.S. Naipaul, Anita Desai, Kamala Markandaya, and Bharati Mukherjee interrogate literature exploring relations between the scions of British imperialism and religious traditions other than Christianity. Expressly concerned with literary embodiments of belief-systems in post-colonial cultures (particularly West African religions in the Caribbean and Hinduism on the Indian subcontinent), these essays also share a sense of Christianity as the pervasive presence of an ideological rhetoric among the economic, social and political dimensions of imperialism. In a polemical Afterword, the editor argues that modes of reading religion and literature in post-colonial cultures are characterised by a theodical preoccupation with a praxis of equity.

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