

Commonwealth of Letters: British Literary Culture and the Emergence of Postcolonial Aesthetics



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(Arelly Dare)

COMMONWEALTH OF LETTERS: BRITISH LITERARY CULTURE AND THE EMERGENCE OF POSTCOLONIAL AESTHETICS

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Oxford University Press Inc. Hardback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW PRINT ON DEMAND., Commonwealth of Letters: British Literary Culture and the Emergence of Postcolonial Aesthetics, Peter J. Kalliney, Commonwealth of Letters complicates the traditional understanding of the relationship between elite, aging modernists like T.S. Eliot and the generation of colonial poets and novelists from Africa and the Caribbean-Kamau Brathwaite, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Jean Rhys, and others-who rose to prominence after World War Two. Rather than a mostly one-sided relationship of exploitation, Kalliney emphasizes how both groups depended on-and thrived off-one another. The modernists, dispirited by the turn to a kind of bland, welfare-state realism in literature and the rise of commercial mass culture, sought rejuvenation and kindred spirits amongst a group of emigre writers from the Caribbean and Africa who had been educated in the literary curriculum exported to the colonies in the years before 1945. For their part, the postcolonial writers, ambitious for literary success and already skeptical of the trend toward corruption and philistinism among their compatriot anticolonial politicians, sought the access to cultural capital and the comforting embrace of literature provided by metropolitan modernists. As a result, modernist networks became defined by the exchange between metropolitan and colonial writers. In several chapters, Kalliney provides compelling analyses of colonial writers in postwar cultural institutions, such as the BBC, literary anthologies, and high profile English publishers such as Faber & Faber and Heinemann, developer of the African Writers Series. Throughout, Kalliney acknowledges the elements of cultural imperialism, and paternalism involved in these relationships; however, he broadens our perspective on postcolonial writers by emphasizing the strategic ways they manipulated these elite modernist networks to advance their own cultural agendas. Transatlantic Modernism and the Emergence of Postcolonial Literature is a study of midcentury literary institutions integral to modernism and postcolonial writing....



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