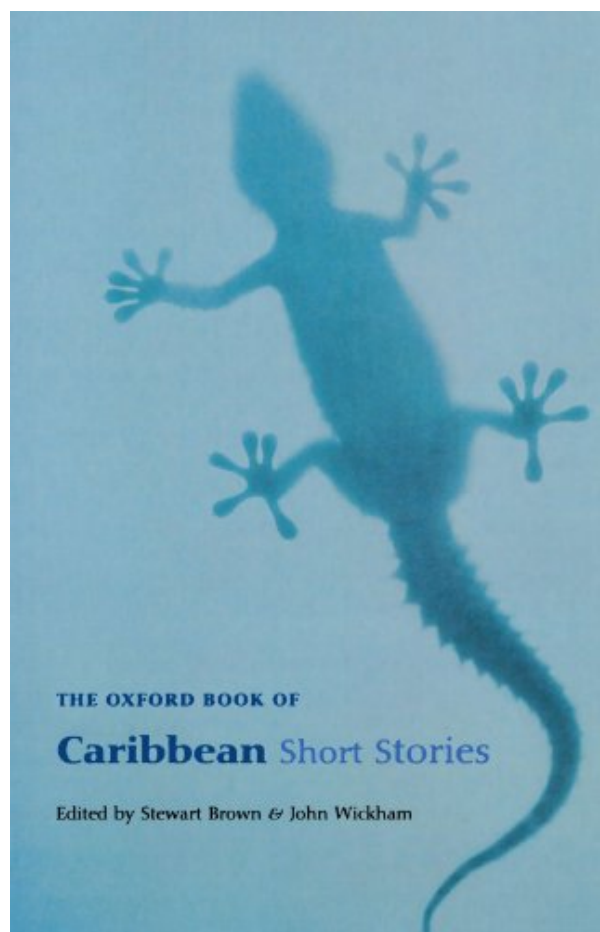
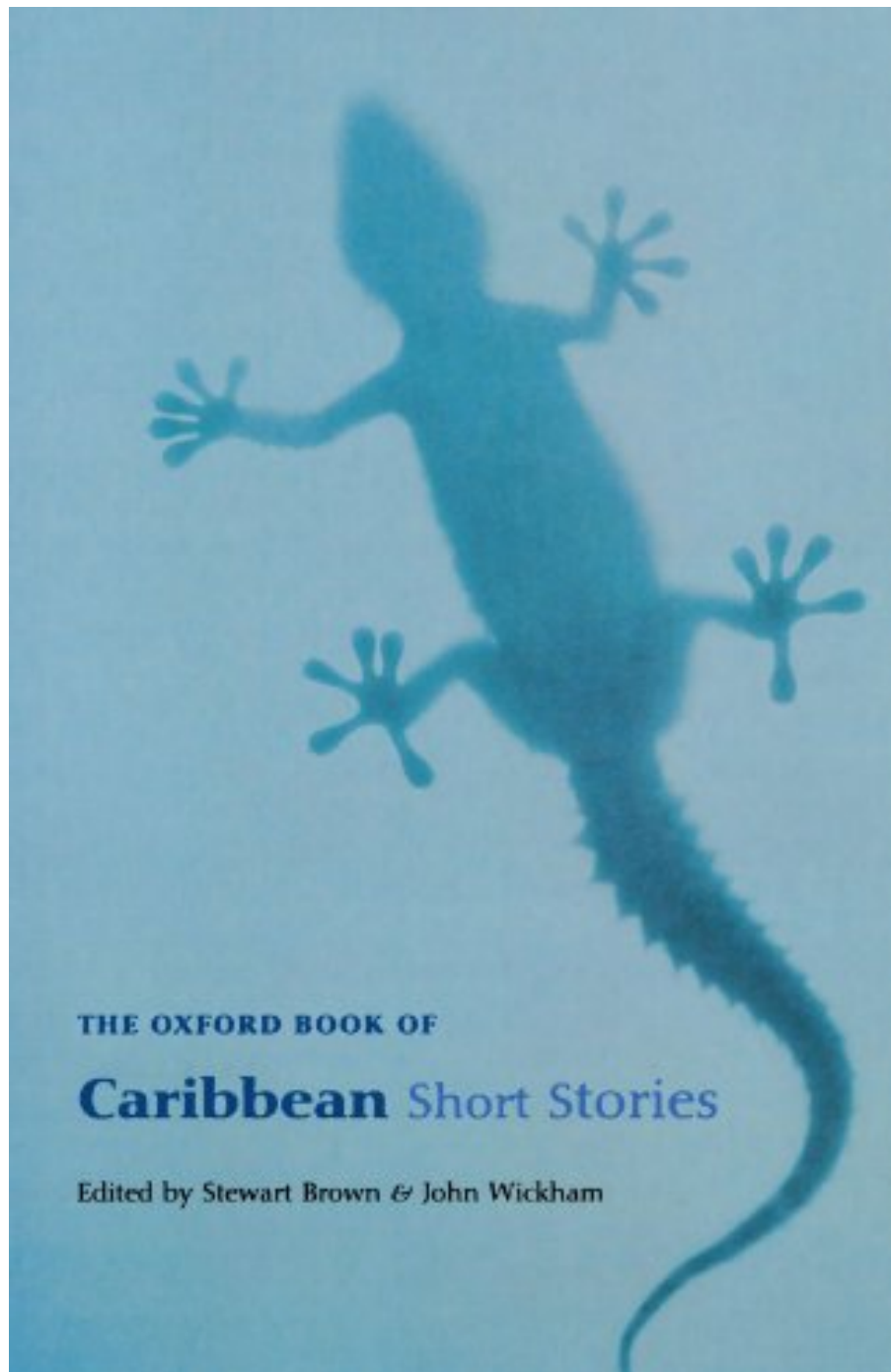


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Review

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Some of the freshest, most vital, and diverse new literature written in the twentieth century has emerged from the Caribbean. And central to Caribbean literature is the short story, with its ties with the oral tradition. Now, *The Oxford Book of Caribbean Short Stories*, edited by Stewart Brown and John Wickham, brings together fifty-two stories in a major anthology representing over a century's worth of pan-Caribbean short fiction. This breathtaking collection is unique--and indispensable--in its inclusion of authors from the English, French, Spanish, and Dutch-speaking Caribbean.

The distinctly Anglophone viewpoint of such prominent authors as Jean Rhys, Sam Sevon, V.S. Naipaul, and E.A. Markham is richly contrasted by contributions from French, Spanish, and Dutch writers like Alejo Carpentier, René Depestre, and Thea Doelwijt, while the new generation--represented by such writers as Edwidge Danticat and Patrick Chamoiseau--points the way forward for Caribbean writing into the twenty-first century. With his stimulating introduction, Brown provides an up-to-date overview of Caribbean writing. Exploring the literature's themes of history, race, social justice, identity, and migration, he traces its evolution from the gritty naturalism of the Anglophone tradition to the magical realism of the French and Spanish traditions to a body of contemporary pan-Caribbean literature that cannot be contained in any convenient linguistic, geographical, or thematic definition.

Charting the shifting ideologies and styles of this century--from the flamboyant wit of Samuel Selvon to the deceptive simplicity of Jamaica Kincaid--*The Oxford Book of Caribbean Short Stories* delivers a wealth of satisfactions in a single volume with unprecedented range.

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A gripping glimpse of the cricket playing Caribbean

By A Customer

This is the book which truly gives the reader a feeling of the "cricket playing Caribbean" a term the editors borrowed from Guyanese-born professor Gordon Rohlehr. Editors Stewart Brown and John Wickham have expanded the borders the Caribbean by including two writers from Suriname, a writer from Panama and Gabriel Garcia Marquez from Colombia. Marquez described himself as a Caribbean writer in a collection of interviews he did for a book entitled *The Fragrance of Guava*. There are also stories from Cuba, and Puerto Rico. The book begins with a wonderfully symbolic story by Barbadian writer Frank Collymore entitled "Some People Were Meant to Live Alone." In this story, a young man visits his eccentric uncle who may have been a murderer. In the end, the young man becomes a recluse himself. The philosophical question of whether or not we are meant to be alone or in the company of others applies, in many ways, to the individual islands of the Caribbean. The editors say they purposely began their anthology with the story because Collymore is considered by many to be the father of modern Caribbean literature. The book ends with "Nineteen Thirty-Seven", a story by young Haitian writer Edwidge Danticat. This story of a daughter visiting her mother who has been imprisoned wrongfully by the Haitian government because traitors have named her as a practitioner of voodoo, is also symbolic because it shows us how superstition often rules these islands. It also shows us how the literary torch is being passed on to a new generation of writers. In between these two stories are a delightful offering of stories which capture the fine nuances of life in the Caribbean. No other book I've read so far, deals better with the relationship between males and females, a giddy game of posturing and submission which is sometimes tragic and sometimes humorous.

13 of 13 people found the following review helpful.

A fine entry into short-form Caribbean Literature

By Julius P. Gittens

Sadly, this was to be John Wickham's last contribution to West Indian literature, as one of the region's finest writers and editors died in 2000. Indeed, the reader owes a debt of gratitude to Wickham for his discerning eye and vast knowledge of Caribbean writers and writing shine through in this book. But we have this fine gift to cherish in his memory and in honour of the rich and diverse tradition and innovation that is Caribbean writing. As much as are Wickham's own short stories, this anthology is striking in its range, readability and resonance. And as the Caribbean consciousness has transcended cultural and strict geopolitical lines over the last century, the range of offerings in this book has also grown from what it would have delivered had it come out a few decades earlier. This book embraces Haiti, Colombia as much as the Anglophone Caribbean. An essential collection of short story writing in English and as delicious a slice of the West Indian civilization as you're likely to find anywhere.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Great for BCC's Caribb Lit class!

By Miriel Robles

I took a Caribbean lit. class at Broward college. I bought this book on a whim and loved it. The stories are eclectic and lead you into the world of the Caribbean you never knew...

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