

Nettleford, Rex Ralston Milton
1933 –
Essayist and editor

Born in Jamaica, Nettleford is one of the Caribbean's most well-known and respected social commentators and cultural leaders. A Rhodes Scholar at Oxford, he has been Director of the Extra-Mural Department of the University of the West Indies in Jamaica for many years, as well as director of the University's Trade Union Institute. He has written widely on literary, theatrical and artistic subjects as well as his important historical and sociological publications, and he is also the editor of the influential journal **Caribbean Quarterly**. From this position Nettleford exercises his wide experiences and deep understanding of the West Indian cultural scene to continually encourage the creation of a positive local response to West Indian artistic expression. His essays have appeared frequently and widely during the last decade, in both regional and international publications, and he has travelled extensively throughout the West Indies. His best known single work, *Mirror Mirror* (1970) is a perceptive and penetrating study of the phenomenon of Jamaica's racial and economic divisions, and a careful analysis of the island's historical heritage. Nettleford holds positive and liberal views about the future

of Jamaica and the cultural possibilities of the region as a whole. Many of his essays dismiss the limitations of the commonest interpretations of West Indian history; the slave-centred, cultural-conflict view of plantation history, as well as the more recent Marxist appraisals of economic divisions and class struggle are in his view negative and narrow. He continues to propose a more open and complex interpretation, and a less restricting future for the many possibilities and energies which Caribbean society so clearly presents.

Bibliography

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