

The Four-Gated City, the shift is also generic, but far less ambiguous, as her hitherto determinedly realistic *Bildungsroman* explodes into a post-holocaust future. Once again, Scanlan perceptively relates history's real and figurative dimensions by interpreting the nuclear accident that turns England into a glowing wasteland as a symbolic figure for "the anger of women who have been excluded from participation in public history and ignored by history texts" (17-18).

Although Scanlan is often suggestive rather than definitive, and although she errs occasionally on the side of critical and rhetorical excess, her enthusiastic and intelligent study presents a new and valorizing approach to the complex, ambiguous, often dangerous interrelationship between history and its narratives. Far from following contemporary critical trends which dismiss Britain's postwar historical fiction as a tired, anachronistic remnant of its former "colonial" self, Scanlan uncovers more than enough evidence to support her closing assertion that the British novel "still responds to the living world of social experience" (196). As for the critic herself, she leaves the reader not only reaching for the original texts with renewed appreciation, but also eagerly anticipating her next provocatively synthesizing thesis.

JILL ANDREWS

Ralph J. Crane. *Inventing India: A History of India in English-Language Fiction*. London: Macmillan, 1992. pp. 212. \$35.00.

Sneja Gunew and Kateryna O. Longley, eds. *Striking Chords: Multicultural Literary Interpretations*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1992. pp. xxiv, 256. \$22.95 pb.

Although at first consideration these two books appear to lack much common ground, they do share the idea of invention and immigration. The first, *Inventing India*, takes up the way British and Indian writers have since 1857 constructed a fictional India in the English language, which is itself a kind of linguistic immigrant whether used by outsiders or natives. The second book, *Striking Chords*, examines the state of non-Aboriginal and non-Anglo-Celtic literature in Australia, and argues that such writing, whether in English or a foreign language, has generally been excluded from Australia's literary invention or marginalized as "migrant" writing.

In the introduction to *Inventing India*, Ralph J. Crane cites earlier critical works that have addressed the immense body of historical fiction about India's long relationship with England, beginning with the Indian Mutiny of 1857 (more recently called "the First War of Independence," Crane adds). Rather than repeating what has already been done, Crane approaches selected works "which manifest a sense of

history and in so doing shape, in important ways, our imaginative responses to India" (10).

The discussion of novels about the Mutiny focusses on John Masters's *Nightrunners of Bengal* and J.G. Farrell's *The Siege of Krishnapur*. Next comes what Crane calls "The Great Game," which examines writing about the rest of the nineteenth century. Here the focus is on Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* and *The Hill Station*, an unfinished novel by Farrell published in 1980. According to Crane, most of the work about this period leaned toward romantic adventure, and he mentions M. M. Kaye's *The Far Pavilions* and John Masters's *The Lotus and the Wind* as prime examples; the Kipling and Farrell novels, Crane concludes, transcend mere "historicity" and "capture the spirit of the time" (74). Moving next into a chapter called "Bridges," Crane explores fiction that concentrates on the gaps between East and West, and the conflicts they cause during the early part of the twentieth century. To develop this theme, he turns to E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*, Ruth Praver Jhabvala's *Heat and Dust*, and Raja Rao's *Kanthapura*. Although not strictly a comparative study, the parallels drawn comprise an original approach to the three novels.

The next chapter elaborates on how India's struggle for Independence has been treated by many Indian novelists and very few British writers for one reason or another. R.K. Narayan's *Waiting for the Mahatma*, Paul Scott's *The Raj Quartet*, John Masters's *Bhowani Junction*, and Manohar Malgonkar's *The Princes* receive the major attention. Why these books were chosen and others ignored, one wonders, and Crane's explanation—because they provide "a vivid sense of this historical sequence" (135) prior to Independence—is not altogether convincing. Books about the 1947 Partition are considered next. Here Chaman Nahal's *Azadi* and Kushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* receive the main attention in what comprises the weakest part of the book.

Scott's *Staying On* becomes the focus for the chapter on fiction about post-Independence India; Crane mentions a far more interesting book, Anita Desai's *Baumgartner's Bombay*, then dismisses it. The Indian side of this section offers an intelligent reading of Nayantara Sahgal's *Rich Like Us*. But what about Kamala Markandaya's *Pleasure City*? The final chapter, "The Chutnification of History," is devoted to Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, which Crane sees as "the ideal metaphor for the plight of the individual in history" (171) and praises for taking "fiction and history as far as they have ever been taken together" (189). Of course, this section could now be expanded with a similar reading of Shashi Tharoor's *The Great Indian Novel*.

The extensive bibliography of primary and secondary sources is extremely useful. Altogether, *Inventing India* provides an intriguing sample of fiction that uses history as a metaphor, even if the reader might wish that some books had not been highlighted and others ignored. Possibly there were too few Indian writers and too many British represented. But it is a readable work and encourages those who enjoy

fiction about India to compile their own lists of books that have helped them "invent" India. Appropriately, in the epilogue Crane quotes Ved Mehta's observation in *Walking the Indian Streets*: "Indias are endless" (192).

Striking Chords emerges as a non-strident manifesto on multicultural writing, as a subdued declaration of its rightful place in the invention of Australia. At the outset, editors Sneja Gunew and Kateryna O. Longley challenge the idea of an Australian national literature. They say that in the past it was a "subset of English literature," and will continue to be if it is "composed predominantly of the writings of white, male Anglo-Celts." They do admit that in recent years Anglo-Celtic women and "a very few Aboriginal writers" have been drawn into the circle. They then ask: "But what about those non-Aboriginal Australians who write from other than English or Irish cultural antecedents and languages?" (xv). To provide answers to this question, the editors have gathered thirty-three essays from non-Aboriginal, non-Anglo-Celtic writers, critics, and writer/critics. (In spite of repeated assertions that these authors do not get published widely, several familiar names crop up: Antigone Kefala, Con Castan, Yasmine Gooneratne, Ivor Indyk, Manfred Jurgensen, Rosa Safransky, B. Wongar, Ania Walwicz, to mention a few.)

Part I, "Theoretical perspectives," includes five essays, the thrust of each being that "multicultural aesthetics" need to be developed. For the most part, the discussions take the high road and do not offer many practical solutions. The question might be asked finally: Will "multicultural" aesthetics be that much different in the long run from any other kind of aesthetics? The most engaging essay in this group, Longley's "Fifth World," looks into the treasure of oral storytelling characteristic of fifth world inhabitants—the postwar immigrants, the "disempowered people who have lost their cultural, linguistic and political basis" (19). The second part, "Literary histories," offers lively essays, generally unencumbered by theory, but more immediate and personal in nature as various writers define the field and place themselves within its context. Kefala, for example, sees herself as both a "migrant writer" and an "Australian writer," and does not consider the two "mutually exclusive" (49). Loló Houbein, in another essay, offers an original approach to the question when he asks "What else can one be in Australia but multicultural?" (84).

The third part offers several "Author studies," including David Carter's look at Judah Waten and Gooneratne's discussion of Mena Abdullah. Margaret Coombs has a few pithy remarks to make on the qualifications for being classified as a non-Anglo-Celtic writer in her "Letter in response to a questionnaire." However disparate some of the views expressed in these essays, a common thread does run through them all: Australian literature will be poorer if it ignores its so-called multicultural writers. No one is likely to disagree with this claim. In fact,

some might argue that Australian literature has already claimed many of these riches.

The fourth part promises "Subversive re-readings," and opens with George Papaellinas's essay whose provocative title demands attention: "Exoticism is just a boutique form of xenophobia." He speaks of NESBians (Non-English-Speaking-Background) and concludes that praise of their work sometimes focusses more on the authors' "ethnic" origins than on the work itself. But as the writers speak their minds in varying ways, they all seem to agree on their Australianness. As Safransky points out in her essay, by the year 2000 over half the Australian population will be NESBians. Even if the mythical society of Anglo-Celtic Literary Cultural Guardians wants to exclude these new and varied voices, which is doubtful, the A-CLCGians will never succeed. The NESBians will be heard, are being heard in fact.

The final section is called "Re-writings," and includes a piece by B. Wongar called "Miklouho-Maclay and his dingo," which is more about ecology than literature. This should not be questioned, for his fiction always carries an ecological subtext. Interesting that the editors placed his essay at the end, for in it B. Wongar does not address multicultural issues at all, even though he may well be the quintessential multicultural writer: a Yugoslavian with an Aboriginal pen name who writes about Aboriginal life and mythology.

That is perhaps the major virtue of *Striking Chords*. It does not confine itself to a single chord. As its title suggests, no one chord among the composition of Australia's fifth world dominates. Certainly other virtues are the bibliographies, which cover primary sources, anthologies, journals, and secondary sources. Ironically, the bibliographical abundance might belie the fact that this writing has been ignored.

ROBERT L. ROSS

Susan VanZanten Gallagher. *A Story of South Africa: J. M. Coetzee's Fiction in Context*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1991. pp. xiii, 258. \$29.95.

This is a serious book that verges on the earnest. The author discusses J. M. Coetzee's fiction in the light of current critical attitudes towards history (and the writing of it), critical practice, and the obligations of the writer. This entails a summary of relevant theoretical attitudes, followed by a quick run through significant elements in South African history and Afrikaner "mythology," as well as a detailed discussion, in the six central chapters, of each of Coetzee's novels.

There is no thesis linking the chapters, other than Gallagher's constant attempt to place Coetzee's fiction "in context." This plan inevitably involves the constant elements of South African history, both current and distant, together with the deeply ingrained cultural attitudes that