

—but I found the book disappointing. There is not enough that is new. Derek Walcott is represented by a meandering lecture. The interviews with Andrew Salkey and Jan Carew are only of interest for their historical details. Birbalsingh believes literature should serve political interests: the conversations show that some West Indian writers, notably George Lamming, remain committed to Castro, think the changes in Eastern Europe a mistake, regard democracy as a capitalist plot to divide workers, hope for a revival of Communism; others, such as Dionne Brand and Caryl Phillips, live in the First World while imagining themselves to be part of a Third World united in opposition to the West. As with Parisian intellectuals the discourse takes well-trodden paths and follows its own conventions without reference to reality. A. K. Heath has now lived for over 40 years in England without writing about or liking the country. Few of the authors have tried to return permanently to the West Indies. With the Caribbean enjoying a high standard of living, most of its dictators departed, and its African survivals increasingly regarded as a small part of the cultural brew, the past 150 years of writing Caribbean history needs to be re-thought. Significantly, the younger writers, such as Jamaica Kincaid, David Dabydeen, and Caryl Phillips interview best.

BRUCE KING



Bruce King, ed. *New National and Post-Colonial Literatures: An Introduction*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996. Pp. 311. \$108.00.

Bruce King's collection of essays has a strange title. Nowhere does it indicate that the literatures referred to are all written in English. Moreover, it is not clear whether the pairing of "new national" and "post-colonial" literatures indicates a distinction between two things or alternative names for the same thing. There can, of course, be post-colonial literatures that are not national literatures—this book includes essays by Vinay Dharwadker on "The Internationalization of Literatures," Chelva Kanaganayakam on "Exiles and Expatriates," Victor J. Ramraj on "Diasporas and Multiculturalism," and Adam Shoemaker on "Indigenous Literatures in Canada, Australia and New Zealand"—but can there be new national literatures in English that are not postcolonial? The title is best read as an affirmative answer to a question that it itself poses: whether the new national literatures of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand are fully as postcolonial as, say, the literatures of the Caribbean and Africa.

The title of King's introductory essay, "New Centres of Consciousness," is also mystifying (he cannot mean that people in Africa and India only came into consciousness when they started writing in English) until the reader realizes that the collection is primarily concerned with the "new nations" of Canada and Australia. More than half of the four-

teen articles concern themselves with Canada and Australia, while only one is primarily concerned with African literature and none gives much attention to Indian literature. The preponderance of attention given to "settler-invader" literatures and diasporan literatures is even at the cost of duplicating topics: Aritha Van Herk and W. H. New both write about the literature of the first whites in Canada and Australia; Chelva Kanaganayakam and Victor J. Ramraj both write about writers who do not live where they were born. This imbalance is a reflection of the backgrounds of the contributors. Eight are Australian or Canadian. None is African. Only one critic lives in the Caribbean. The South Asian contributors live in North America and write about globalization, feminisms, and exile. The price of this volume is exorbitant, guaranteeing that it will only ever be found in first-world libraries.

The Australian Helen Tiffin, in her article on curriculum and canon formation, makes a useful distinction between two approaches to post-colonial literature: that which arose out of Continental poststructuralism and out of colonial discourse theory and is based primarily in the US, and that which arose out of Commonwealth literature studies and is based primarily in Europe, Australia, and Canada. The first is heavily theorized, is dominated by identity politics, and deconstructs the nation-state; the second is more concerned with creative writing than with theory and focuses on nation formation. It is the second stream that insists on the postcoloniality of Canada and Australia.

The centre that must be resisted shifts perceptibly in Tiffin's article from Britain the colonizer to America the metropolis and source of the first stream of postcolonial theory. A fellow Australian, Gareth Griffiths, in his article on "The Post-colonial Project," also warns about the dominance of the American academy: "contemporary literary theory has a base in a specific cultural and institutional power structure, largely still located in Europe and America. It carries with it the philosophical and cultural preoccupations of those structures, not all of which will be either relevant or friendly to the endeavours of the people and texts it claims to serve" (173-74). Griffiths pleads for the "settler-invader writer" (if there is anyone prepared to identify herself that way) to be given her due by the centre. The very plea for recognition by the centre, however, inevitably reinscribes the centre.

Throughout the collection, the US casts a large shadow by its absence. Adam Shoemaker traces the rise of "pan-aboriginality" in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand without mentioning Native American literature. Victor J. Ramraj's article of immigrant literature and multiculturalism is largely concerned with people who came to Commonwealth countries from other Commonwealth countries and who already spoke English. He discusses West Indians and South Asians who come to Canada but not Jews or Chinese in Canada nor West Indians and their descendants in the States (for example, Paule Marshall, Audre Lorde, or Jamaica Kincaid). Van Herk's and New's

discussions of exploration and settler literature also ignore the US. The one exception in this regard is Vinay Dharwadkar, who writes about the influence of international markets and audiences, explicitly including American, on the dissemination of literary forms.

The omission of the US is not an oversight, as would be the case if the articles were intended as objective studies of the representation of aboriginality, settling, and immigration in creative literature. Helen Tiffin argues that literary studies are best understood as a struggle for representation. This struggle takes two forms. On the one hand, at home there is the continuing struggle to displace the traditional British canon in favour of national literature: "we" should be reading ourselves. On the other hand, in the American academy, there is still too much attention given to Shakespeare and Milton and not enough to Australia, the Caribbean, Africa, and India: others should be reading us, too. The margins read the literature of the centre but should not have to; the centre ignores the margins, but should not be allowed to. (Of course, the claim that Canadian and Australian literatures are postcolonial is not an argument that they should be taught in Africa or the Caribbean. See first point: everyone should be reading themselves.)

At least the first target of this struggle for recognition will certainly be attained. Literary curricula, Tiffin says, have always served political interests, and in the struggle between the ancients and the moderns, the moderns always win. Classical British literature will go the way of Greek and Latin. I suspect, however, that, for much the same reasons (every "we" should be studying "ourselves"), students in Australia and Canada will reject nineteenth-century settler literature as merely of historical interest: it is hard to see why some purported origins, distant in time and in world-view, should be considered more "us" than others are. The case for the literature of pioneers and settlers is not helped by Aritha van Herk's article, which is so reliant on passive constructions as to suggest a world wholly without agency. By contrast, W. H. New's analysis shows that much can be learned about the operations of colonization from colonial as opposed to postcolonial literatures. (A minor complaint: New gives the wrong dates for Manitoba and British Columbia joining Confederation and for the independence of Zambia, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago).

The emphasis on literature from Canada and Australia can both illuminate and obscure the discussion of postcoloniality. Drawing parallels between nationalisms in Ireland, Australia, and West Africa, C. L. Innes is able to relativise all three in a useful way, but she fails to acknowledge how different is the nationalism found in island states with natural borders from that found in West Africa, where Senegal, Ghana, and Nigeria have inherited from the colonizer arbitrary borders corresponding to no precolonial entities. Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is arguably an example of African rather than of Nigerian

nationalism, which is a distinction that has no equivalent for Irish or Australian writers.

Given the collection's concern with asserting a particular definition of "post-colonial," the subtitle, "an introduction," is a little coy. King spends the bulk of his introductory essay denouncing the direction taken by postcolonial theory. He accuses theorists (especially those of the first stream but also perhaps Tiffin) of their own imperialism because they have constructed the West as a monolith: "Is not their view of the West their own Other?" (18). This reader, however, doubts whether King has himself avoided the sin of othering of which he finds so many guilty.

King argues that literary history is more important than theory, and accordingly many of the articles are not so much analytical discussions of a particular category as lists of appropriate authors who fit that category, lists that make admirably clear the resistance of such topics as exile, multiculturalism, and globalization to generalization and easy summary. Anyone familiar with the field will recognize the appropriateness of having Chantal Zabus write about the representation of African languages in English texts, having a West Indian critic, J. Michael Dash, write about hybridity and creolization, and having Stephen Slemon write about postcolonial theory (his article commendably steers a course between the two streams of postcolonial literature by eschewing maps and declaring itself merely "the commentary of a single traveller through a given landscape" [184]). Most of the authors repeat what they have said elsewhere, but that is to be expected in an introduction.

NEIL TEN KORTENAAR



Rosemary Jane Jolly. *Colonization, Violence, and Narration in White South African Writing: André Brink, Breyten Breytenbach, and J. M. Coetzee* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio UP; Johannesburg: Witwatersrand UP, 1996). Pp. xvii, 179. \$39.95, \$18.95 pb.

The central question that Rosemary Jolly asks in her book is "how do we construct the space between responsibility and violence in dissident rhetoric . . . ?" (xv). This concern with the ethics of narrative representation is taken up by later questions: "What is the precise relationship . . . between the violence of domination as it is portrayed by the narrative, and the violence of domination that . . . the narrative itself exemplifies in its acts of appropriation?" (40); "What kinds of narratives avoid this pitfall . . . ?" (12).

Jolly examines these ethical issues with specific reference to the narratives of André P. Brink, Breyten Breytenbach, and J. M. Coetzee. Throughout, her discussions are astute and form a valuable contribution to South African literary criticism. In the case of Brink's *A Chain*