labus as well. The trick really is to ensure that students are told quite clearly that for the BA major in literature they must do at least one genre course, the compulsory theory course (which, in India, would have a strong dose of Sanskrit literary theory), a period course, and perhaps a context/theme course (such as postcolonial writing, representation and gender). It is a pity that what Trivedi does so well in his own book gets transformed into a syllabus that does not really do the obvious: that is, move the teaching of literature from periods and literary histories to theory and interdisciplinarity.

The last section is presented here by way of a debate with the author. It should not supersede what I consider is one of the best books to have come out of India by an Eng. Lit. critic. Trivedi is a great reader of texts; he writes with enthusiasm and a rare fluency. A reviewer like me who also reads most of the texts mentioned in this book in the original, finds reading the book a particularly rewarding experience. It is a pity that while the Indian diaspora continues to produce highly inventive literary critics in English, there are few and far between in India itself. If Trivedi's book can inspire other Indians to write as well—and to discuss writing in India's many languages with the same skill—then this book will go down as that "moment" when Indian Eng. Lit. criticism reached maturity.

VIJAY MISHRA

Salman Rushdie and Elizabeth West, eds. *The Vintage Book of Indian Writing 1947-1997*. London: Random House, 1997. Pp. xxiii, 578. £7.95; £5.60 (India).

Salman Rushdie seems to have a special gift for getting embroiled in controversy. This time he has ensured it even before *The Vintage Book of Indian Writing 1947-1997* reached India by publishing the introduction in the special fiction issue of *The New Yorker*. His contention that "there is only one Indian writer in translation whom I would place on par with the Indo-Anglian" (52) provoked a large number of Indian academics to question Rushdie's credentials. The book features fiction and non-fiction by 32 authors, including Rushdie himself, and the second half of the "Introduction" (xvii-xxiii) provides a good guide to the writers who appear in the anthology. It is the opening section which has raised hackles. Rushdie declares:

> The prose writing—both fiction and non-fiction—created in this period by Indians working in English is proving to be a stronger and more important body of work than most of what has been produced in the 16 official languages of India, the so-called "vernacular languages," during the same time; and, indeed, this new, and still burgeoning "Indo-Anglian" literature represents perhaps the most valuable contribution India has yet made to the world of books. (x)

U. R. Ananthamurthy, a Kannada novelist who is also the president of the Sahitya Akademi (India's National Academy of Letters) expressed the misgivings of most Indians:

> I am surprised that a sensitive and creative writer like Rushdie should speak with such arrogance. . . . No Indian writer in any of the languages can assume to know what is happening in the other Indian languages. Rushdie does not even live in India. How can he make such an enormous assumption? (19)

Almost all Indian intellectuals would agree with K. Satchidanandan, a Malayalam poet, when he asserts that Indian English literature does not deserve the centrality Rushdie claims for it: "It is but a peripheral region of Indian literature and there is an obvious disparity between the publicity it attracts and its literary quality" (ix).

The very phraseology suggests that Rushdie is quite out of touch with academic discourse in India: *vernacular* (derived from *verna* "home born slave") is outmoded, and the term "Indo-Anglian" has long been replaced by "Indian English." But perhaps Rushdie deliberately uses "vernacular" as part of the attempt to valorize English over other Indian languages. Nabaneeta Deb Sen, an academic and a well-known writer in Bengali, compares him to Lord Macaulay,[1] who dismissed all the literatures and sciences of the Orient: "A familiar voice, Mr Rushdie, we have heard it before. Remember Lord Macaulay? We always bow to the supreme wisdom of one who reads no Indian language" (4).

Rushdie claims that "*knowing* and *loving* the Indian languages in which I was raised has remained of vital importance. As an individual, Hindi-Urdu, the 'Hindustani' of North India, remains an essential aspect of my sense of self" (xvi; emphasis added), and he refers to "the other music, the rhythms, patterns and habits of thought and metaphor of my Indian tongues" (in *The New Yorker* it is "all my Indian tongues"). One wonders which languages of India he actually knows. From his comments on literary dynasties, it is clear that he has not read any Hindi literature. One of the most popular novelists in Hindi is Shivani, and Mrinal Pande, her daughter, is equally well known. Yet Rushdie claims that his publication of Kiran Desai's fiction "establishes the first dynasty of modern Indian fiction" (xxiii). Modern Indian literature can boast of many other dynasties, in various Indian languages. The Malayalam woman poet Balamani Amma's daughter Kamala Das (b. 1934) writes poetry in English and fiction in Malayalam under the name Madhavi Kutty; Balamani Amma herself is the niece of a famous poet, Nalapattu Narayana Menon (1887-1954). Nabaneeta Deb Sen's father and mother are eminent writers in Bengali.

All except two of the authors (the editors mention only one, Saadat Hasan Manto) write in English—the book should be called "The Vintage Book of Indian Prose in English." Most of the leading Indian Eng-

lish writers are included. The book starts well, with Jawaharlal Nehru's famous "Tryst with Destiny" speech (delivered just as India attained independence in 1947). It is the first literary composition within Rushdie's time frame, and serves to draw attention to Nehru's literary talent. The second piece, an excerpt from *Prison and Chocolate Cake* by Nayantara Sahgal (Nehru's niece) describes life in Delhi in the months following independence, and provides insights into Nehru's personality. It is good to see an excerpt from that seminal text, *Midnight's Children*. One of the best stories in the book is Rohinton Mistry's "The Collectors," a sensitive depiction of emotional deprivation and a father's disappointment. Satyajit Ray's story, "Big Bill," provides a welcome touch of humour. But the choice of other pieces is not equally as happy: the editors somehow seem to light on poorer texts by the authors they have chosen for inclusion. R. K. Narayan, for example, is represented by a somewhat silly story, "Fellow Feeling," rather than "A Horse and Two Goats," while Nirad C. Chaudhuri is represented by excerpts from *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*, containing the very passages that C. D. Narasimhaiah had picked out as examples of poor writing. "In the Mountain," by Ruth Jhabvala, is certainly not her best short story. Shashi Tharoor is represented by excerpts from *The Great Indian Novel*, a work which can be appreciated only in its totality; one wonders why Rushdie ignores Tharoor's short stories. Many well-known writers such as G. V. Desani, Mulk Raj Anand, Kamala Markandaya, Ved Mehta. and Anita Desai are included. But Ruskin Bond, perhaps the best Indian English short story writer, has been left out. All the young novelists of the "St. Stephen's School," such as I. Allan Sealy, Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Mukul Kesavan, and Upamanyu Chatterjee, are here, and so are the latest sensations, Arundhati Roy (who won the 1997 Booker Prize) and Ardeshir Vakil, whose debut novel *Beach Boy* has received rave reviews. Rushdie includes a long and somewhat rambling account of the horror of the Partition from Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man*, but Khushwant Singh's vastly superior account in *Train to Pakistan* is ignored. One is perplexed by the inclusion of Anita Desai's daughter Kiran instead of more talented Indian women like Shashi Deshpande, Bulbul Sharma, Neelum Saran Gour, or Manjula Padmanabhan. Kiran Desai's first novel, *Strange Happenings in the Guava Orchard*, is yet to be published, and the excerpt here does not reveal any exceptional talent. Perhaps the choice of writers is influenced by the criteria of being published abroad and knowing Rushdie personally.

The editing is far from meticulous or scholarly. Firdaus Kanga is spelt "Firdans" in the introduction (xix); Githa Hariharan fares worse—she becomes Githa "Hiriharan" in the introduction (xxii) and "Hiraharan" on the "Contents" page (vi). These mistakes can be considered the fault of the proof reader, but not so the shoddy "Biographical Notes," in which there is no uniformity of length or style. Amit

Chaudhuri gets fourteen lines, but Jawaharlal Nehru is dismissed in two lines—"Jawaharlal Nehru was born in 1889. He became India's first Prime Minister in 1947. He died in 1964" (573)—without any mention of his books or his achievement as a writer. The Sahitya Akademi Award, variably referred to as "the National Prize of the Indian Literary Academy" (573) and "National Academy of Letters Award" (570), is mentioned for R. K. Narayan and Anita Desai, but not in the notes on such other winners as Mulk Raj Anand, Nirad C. Chaudhuri, Amitav Shosh, Nayantara Sahgal, or Vikram Seth. Most irritating of all is the lack of dates. The date of birth of the author is essential in a survey of this kind, so that we can know which of the "four generations of writers" (ix) he or she belongs to. Gender seems to be an important consideration; the age of just three of the women writers is mentioned, but only one man, Mukul Kesavan, is left "ageless." The editors give the date of birth of an established novelist like Anita Desai, but not of her daughter, or of less-known women like Anjana Appachana, Padma Perera, Arundhati Roy, or Gita Mehta. Also missing are the dates of first publication of the extracts, which would give us a rough idea of the growth and development of Indian English literature. The introduction notes "only one translated text—S. H. Manto's *Toba Tak Singh*" (x), but there is one more: Satyajit Ray's story "Big Bill." Perhaps the editors have appropriated Ray into their group of "Indo-Anglian" writers, not realizing that he writes in Bengali. One can understand the constraints under which Rushdie must have worked, with a price on his head; it is surprising that the co-editor (who married him after the publication of the book) did not take more pains over the editorial apparatus. But a Rushdie book sells, no matter what its content, especially if it is aided by provocative statements.

SHYAMALA A. NARAYAN

NOTE

[1] Thomas Babington Macaulay, as President of the Governor-General's Council, drafted a "Minute on Education" (2 Feb. 1835), advocating English education for Indians. He condemned all Indian vernaculars as "languages in which by universal confession there are no books on any subject which deserve to be compared to our own" and declared that a "single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia."

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Rosemary Marangoly George. *The Politics of Home: Postcolonial Relocations and Twentieth-Century Fiction.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996. Pp. x, 265. $49.95.

The Politics of Home: Postcolonial Relocations and Twentieth-Century Fiction ranges across literary texts from the First as well as the Third World, engaging with various contemporary theories on literature, nationalism, feminism, and Marxism. Rosemary Marangoly George attempts a "reassessment of our understanding of belonging—in English language as much as in spaces we call home" (1). Stimulating and insightful, the book oscillates between theoretical reflections and close textual analyses to unravel the complex implication of "home" with notions of the nation and the gendered subject.

In questioning the assumptions behind the use of "home" and its ready reduction into a nationalist frame, George uses the notion of location which "suggests the variable nature of home and the self" (92). She sees the latter as negotiated stances ruled by the site from which they are defined. One of the points of departure for George's project is her argument about the "colonial subject." George treats the entire twentieth-century literature produced from locations affected by the dynamics of colonialism as products of the colonial subject. This move has mixed consequences: it takes George away from any reduction of subject positions to nationalist locations and allows her to make insightful connections between the literatures of the former colonies and former colonizing countries, tracing common mechanisms of deterritorialization. However, at a less immediate level, this poses some new problems. If colonial subjectivity is seen as a heterogeneous location that allows for the diverse stances of the colonizer and the colonized, we need to have a clearer theoretical understanding of the relations between subjectification and the processes of taking stances.

The elision of this problem might be a result of understanding the notion of the colonial subject in terms of a specific form of literary discourse. The colonial subject of *The Politics of Home* is actually the subject of texts that belong to global literatures in English. There is the need for a more differentiated understanding of the relations between the two. Even within literary discourses, an alternative move would have been to locate global literatures in English in the larger context of twentieth-century literatures affected by the dynamic of colonialism—the non-English literatures of the former colonies belong to that realm, and they may complicate the picture.