

colonial theory should be included. Two such essays are by Kwame Appiah and Arif Dirlik. Appiah argues that the “post” of postcolonial theory and postmodernism are spaces created by capitalism to market cultural products. Dirlik states that even the postcolonial intellectual is complicitous in feeding into the goals of the capitalist frame of postcolonial theory.

One of the useful aspects of Mongia’s book—other than her introduction in which she outlines the major debates and discussions around postcolonial theory in the Anglo/American tradition—is her selection of articles which investigate problems of race, gender, and location within it. Almost without exception, the essays in this anthology are intellectually rigorous and provocative. Most of them have been published before in literary journals and books in the West and have already contributed in an important way to the debates on postcolonial theory. However, what is a little disconcerting (and this is despite Mongia’s claim that the anthology does not intend to give a comprehensive account of postcolonial theory) is the fact that the key articles that are presented as central to the debate are all by writers located in the West. This is intriguing especially because the essays in the book have critiqued consistently the politics of location and institutionalization of postcolonial theory by the West. Furthermore, Mongia’s caveat—that postcolonial theory in one context need not be relevant in another—is belied by the bafflingly broad title of the book, *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory* and by the global audience (from New York to New Delhi) that the book addresses. Overall, Mongia’s book succeeds in providing a good introductory overview of contemporary postcolonial critical approaches in the Anglo-American tradition.

TAISHA ABRAHAM



S. Shankar. *A Map of Where I Live*. Asian Writers Series. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1997. Pp. 224. \$14.95 pb.

Shankar’s debut novel, *A Map of Where I Live*, is a compelling narrative that explores the place of the Indian middle-class male’s experience with migration and his search for identity. The novel consists of two juxtaposed narratives: the first is the journal of R.K., a young historian recently returned from the US, who tries to reassimilate into South Indian middle-class life, and the second is the memoir of Valur Visweswaran, also a historian, who narrates his fantastic voyage to Gulliver’s Lilliput. In the summer of 1992, both Visweswaran and R.K. have returned from their travels abroad and currently reside in Krantinagar, a suburb of West Madras; both men are profoundly alienated from the middle-class culture of Krantinagar.

R.K. begins his journal as an attempt to “explain the events of his life” (8). As he ponders the possibilities of a career in law, he is asked

by a friend to help a visiting American anthropologist, Carol Carby, in her project on Domestic Workers Unions in Madras. Through his involvement in Carol's project, R.K. is drawn into local politics. He meets Shanthamma, the woman who heads the Domestic Workers Union, and Selvi, her protégé, and he helps Shanthamma in her bid to win the local elections as an independent candidate. The election campaign embroils the entire neighborhood in corruption, murder, and mayhem. R.K. chronicles the entire event documenting his own growth from a naïve observer to one who understands the political price of middle-class complacency. In narrating R.K.'s relationship to Carol, Shankar reworks E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*. Carol plays Adela Quested to R.K.'s Aziz. Shankar's Madras, however, is neither mysterious nor muddled like Forster's India, and the political crisis is brought about not by imperial-colonial conflict but by the vast economic chasm between the middle-classes (symbolized by the apartment complex, Anand Vilas, whose name means blissful abode) and the poor of Kuppanchery, the slum lying across a vast open field from Anand Vilas in the suburb of Krantinagar ("kranti" means revolution and "nagar" means city, in Hindi). R.K.'s return from his stint as a student in the US begins with his search for a map of his home and ends with his attempt to redraw the map of home through his writing.

Visweswaran's memoir also documents a quest for home by reworking Swift's colonial narrative. Visweswaran begins his search for Lilliput in the spirit of scholarly inquiry and soon this search becomes an obsession. He arrives in Lilliput and is convinced that the Lilliputian civilization is far more advanced than that of the savage "bandur" (the Lilliputian world for the giant people who inhabit most of the earth). Shankar redraws the map of Lilliput to satirize global politics. Visweswaran arrives in Lilliput full of optimism and is arrested for being an undocumented alien. The Mildendan ruling class first exoticizes his differences and exploits his labour for its own economic agenda whether it is construction, gentrification of the inner city, or as poster-child for a multinational corporation's advertisement for toothpaste. While benefiting from his body, they accuse him of depleting their natural resources and of spreading disease. After he "infects" the queen of Mildendo, Visweswaran is forced to flee Mildendo to Blefuscu and eventually to other Northern Lilliputian kingdoms before he escapes (reluctantly) to the "bandur" lands. Valur Visweswaran's education in the realities of Lilliputian life by two dissidents—Lar Prent and Faro Withrun—includes showing him the political, economic, and militaristic domination of Lilliput by Mildendo and Blefuscu; the exploitation of the working classes by the "explos" or multinationals; and the impact on the environment of Mildendan capitalism. Like Gulliver, Visweswaran returns home totally enthralled by his experiences with the Lilliputians. He is mocked by the inhabitants of Krantinagar and perceived as a crazy old man. Visweswaran is rejected by Lilliput and he is unable to find a home in Krantinagar.

Shankar's talent lies in telling a good story. As a storyteller he is witty, satirical (without being bitter), and possesses an eye for detail. His intricate descriptions of the sights and sounds of Madras and South Indian life reminds one of another great chronicler of southern Indian life, R. K. Narayan. From the ubiquitous coffee stalls to the beaches of Mahabalipuram, Shankar recreates Madras as one who has lived and breathed that city. The novelist also is very sensitive to spoken language, and this is apparent in the bilingual puns he uses. For instance, he names a Lilliputian region as Faraanaser, which captures a Tamilian's pronunciation of a question often asked in Tamil of people who own imported things. Another example of the bilingual pun is the name Vaasal for the coastal town from which Visweswaran escapes. The name sounds like "vassal" which describes its status within Lilliput but in Tamil the word also means "threshold" which is obviously a wonderful name for a town on the border. Sometimes the novel becomes heavy handed in its use of puns, as in the naming of Visweswaran's teacher, Edu Kator. This notwithstanding, *A Map of Where I Live* is an intelligent debut novel, which makes one look forward to this talented writer's next work.

NALINI IYER



Alok Bhalla, ed. *Stories About the Partition of India*. 3 Vols. 1994. New Delhi: Indus Paperback, 1997. Pp. xxxiii, 730. Rs. 195.

This collection of over sixty short stories has been translated from Urdu, Hindi, Bengali, Panjabi, Malayalam, Dogri, Marathi, and Sindhi. Two of them were originally written in English. The largest number is from Urdu and this is because Urdu was the medium of migrants from Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar. Hindi and Bengali understandably constitute the second largest group. The translations by Bhalla and his team are of a uniformly high quality. Exact idiomatic equivalents have been used for the turns of phrase in the original. While fiction about the Partition has been written in several Indian languages, no individual reader in fact has an access to all of it. This collection presents this holocaust from many different angles as it affected the minorities in the different regions.

The book was originally published in 1994. Its reprinting in the fiftieth year of India-Pakistan Independence is a grim reminder of the price we had to pay for it. Unfortunately, the embers of 1947 have not been put out yet. At the slightest pretext, they can be made to burst into fire once again.

There has been no sense of collective guilt in India or Pakistan over the horrors of 1947, as there was in Germany over Auschwitz or Belzen. Both sides feel that the provocation came from the other side. Some of the stories rehearse the most outrageous incidents. The effect