

bow Serpent exhibit at Expo 88 and considers it in context in a way which has not been done before and which added to my understanding of Oodgeroo's work. I wish I could say the same of more of the book but I cannot.

There is no Canadian equivalent to Oodgeroo. Perhaps such an equivalent could be achieved by a combination of Pauline Johnson, Kahn Tineta Horn, Lenore Keeshig-Tobias, Lee Maracle, and Chief Dan George. Given that I doubt those five people could even discuss *The Rez Sisters* with any hope of agreement, this suggests the complicated and perhaps conflicting achievements of Oodgeroo. There is no question she deserves a tribute. It is too bad the academic system has not succeeded with this one but perhaps the book's very existence will lead to other studies which can begin to comprehend her contributions.

TERRY GOLDIE



Mary Beatina, OSM. *Narayan: A Study in Transcendence*. New York: Peter Lang, 1993. Studies of World Literature in English. Vol. 3. Pp. xii, 154. \$41.95.

Of all of the Indian English writers, it is probably R. K. Narayan who has attracted the most attention from literary critics, Indian and non-Indian. Various aspects of his art have been analyzed: his language and style, his theme and technique, his audience, his depiction of India in terms of tradition versus modernity and of the East-West encounter, his achievement as a short-story writer, his translations, and his non-fiction. Beatina takes up the question of the interaction between the mundane and the transcendent in four of Narayan's novels: *Swami and Friends* (1935), *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937), *The English Teacher* (1945), and *The Guide* (1958). The protagonist's transcendence of narrow, mundane bonds is always an ongoing process. The transcendent in Narayan, according to Beatina,

implies not necessarily any visionary experience or *nirvana*, but a getting beyond the expected, a spiritual discovery. . . . This step into another world always involves a spiritual experience—the kind of experience that would normally be called “transcendent,” and yet the experience that follows the transcendent experience often seems more genuinely spiritual than the conventionally religious or conventionally “other worldly” experience itself. This richer and wider form of transcendence occurs when the character brings the transcendent experience to bear upon the mundane world. (2)

Beatina begins with a brief introduction to Indian literature (3-5) and to Narayan's place in Indian writing in English (6-13), and with a survey of extant criticism (14-15). The second chapter, “Naive Transcendence,” is devoted to Narayan's first two novels, *Swami and Friends* and *The Bachelor of Arts*, in which Swami, the child in the former, grows

into Chandran, the adolescent hero of the latter book. (Krishnan in the subsequent book, *The English Teacher*, further, simply is an older version of Chandran.) These books raise the question of whether transcendence is helped or hindered by Westernization. The third chapter of *Narayan: A Study in Transcendence* is devoted to "Mature Transcendence: *The English Teacher*." Beatina shows the stages in the protagonist's transformation: Krishnan's experience of automatic writing is not really transcendence but just another step in his search for surrogates for Susila, his dead wife. It is the messages she communicates to him that lead Krishnan to look inward and to achieve true communion with her. The novels all commence with some kind of dissatisfaction or restlessness, which the protagonists also experience. They feel pain and loneliness, and enter a new world in different ways. Whether the transcendence is at a naive or a mature level, it leads to greater integration in mundane life. Transcendence is never a purely solitary affair; it affects the individual as well as society.

The Guide, analyzed in Beatina's fifth chapter, "Mature Transcendence," has a much more complex protagonist than that of the early trilogy. Beatina's in-depth study of the character of Raju takes due note of the opinions of critics such as C. D. Narasimhaiah, William Walsh, Y. V. Katak, and Balarma Gupta. Raju's sacrifice brings about a collective transcendence; his fast unites the villagers of Mangala and puts an end to violence. Raju testifies to the fact that transcendence is not the monopoly of the pure and saintly.

The last chapter, "Narayan, Forster, and 'A More Lasting Home,'" is disappointing. It is full of quotations from critics, including several from Nirad C. Chaudhuri's essay. Beatina suggests, but does not fully develop, interesting comparisons between Aziz and Chandran, in their attitudes to romantic love, and between Aziz and Krishnan (both wish to write poetry). Another weakness is that this chapter is confined to these early novels of Narayan; Beatina does not consider Narayan's depiction of the temple festival in *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*, which invites comparison with the festival in the "Temple" section of *A Passage to India*.

Beatina's analysis draws attention to some important aspects of Narayan's art, such as his depiction of the synthesis of religion and daily life, or the role of women, who play "dynamic roles in the lives of the protagonists and family life" (70). Swami's grandmother, Chandran's mother, Krishnan's mother, and Susila all shape the transcendence of the heroes. It is a pity that Beatina confines herself to just four novels by Narayan. A study of transcendence in later novels such as *A Tiger for Malgudi*, or an examination of the validity of this approach with regard to novels such as *The Talkative Man* would be illuminating. *Narayan: A Study in Transcendence* is well produced and documented, but there are minor mistakes: the protagonist of *The English*

Teacher consistently is referred to as Krishna (it should be Krishnan). Another irritant is the facile assumption that *The English Teacher* is Narayan's masterpiece—most critics consider *The Guide* his best novel. We are told several times that transcendence is a continuous process (18, 32, 90, etc.). The glossary giving information on Indian concepts and writers is a good idea, but some of the annotations leave much to be desired: that on Nirad Chaudhuri makes no mention of his best-known work, *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* (1951), or of his iconoclastic attitude towards India and Indian culture; another mentions Anita Desai's maiden name, which she never uses in her writings; Ananda K. Coomaraswamy is referred to as Ananda Coomarasamy.

SHYAMALA A. NARAYAN



Pamela Banting. *Body, Inc.: A Theory of Translation Poetics*. Winnipeg: Turnstone Press, 1995. Pp. xi, 250. \$16.95.

In "Sending: On Representation," Jacques Derrida concludes that "it is difficult to conceive anything at all beyond representation, but [that this] commits us perhaps to thinking altogether differently" (326). Both the economy of representation and the potential alternative economy of translation are prevalent foci for poststructuralists. Not only does the Western tradition of "representation" carry notions of "phallogocentrism," "presence," and "origin" but it also bears the dual sense conveyed in the German words *Darstellen* (to represent aesthetically) and *Vertreten* (to represent, or to speak for, politically). These issues are not foreign to Canadian literary institutions, particularly when in the last decade Native and feminist groups have raised political and ethical questions regarding who should be allowed to represent what, when, and how. It is within this Canadian and post-structuralist context that Pamela Banting theorizes "translation poetics," which, I believe, is the beginning of "thinking altogether differently." In *Body, Inc.: A Theory of Translation Poetics*, Banting offers an alternative approach to the reading, writing, and analysis of texts, based in a theory of signification rooted not in representation but in translation. She produces this method (or rather this "anti-method method") through close readings of contemporary Canadian long poems by Fred Wah, Robert Kroetsch, and Daphne Marlatt.

Body, Inc.: A Theory of Translation Poetics is organized into a few apparatuses: a preface, three large chapters on each writer (with three or four "mini" chapters within the larger ones), and a kind of epilogue-conclusion. Banting intermingles her own—often poetic—writing with these writers' poetry and statements of their own poetics, thereby performing her theory. This "anti-method method" is vital to her stated desire to reject "Cartesian universal reason" and to embrace in-