

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-

stead local and particular sites of “the body” as the locus for writing. Existing in process, and successful if readers take up the attitude and ethos of translation, translation poetics encourages readers to think anew their relation to language and, rather than striving towards “fidelity,” “purity,” or “presence” to work instead within the inevitable loss, excess, and infidelities involved in translation—and ultimately, to work “toward an Other language” (224).

Banting’s most important anchors in this alternate translation tradition are Roman Jakobson and his three categories of translation—interlingual (within the same language), intralingual (between different languages), and intersemiotic (between different sign systems)—and Jacques Derrida’s anti-logocentric deconstruction. However, rather than dwelling on European theorists of translation, the weight is on Canadian critics’ and poets’ statements and theories. Although these may be borrowed from European theory, Banting’s decision to use the Canadian versions performs translation poetics, wherein fidelity to an “original” is eroded, and the local and particular *Canadian* context is foregrounded. Yet sometimes Banting’s privileging of this context reveals a lack of acknowledgment of the tradition in which she works. She cites Derrida yet ignores feminist “translations” and “original” work on similar topics; she barely mentions Julia Kristeva’s “transposition,” a concept quite similar to her own work; and she does not engage Kristeva’s “semiotic.” Further, there are other feminists working on translation and Canadian literature, most notably, Barbara Godard, whom she mentions only briefly.

Banting includes *intralingual* translations between pictorial and written or spoken language, between a colonizer’s language (British English) and Canadian English, between speech and writing, between “proper” speech and idiolects, and from phallogocentric language *towards* a (m)other tongue; *interlingual* translations between English and an unlearned other language (for Wah, Chinese; for Marlatt, Malaysian); and *intersemiotic* translations between body language and writing or speech. For Banting, Wah’s “picto-ideo-phonographic writing” (for example, in his use of pictograms and Chinese characters) foregrounds the materiality of the signifier. He explores issues of race and ethnicity by translating not only Chinese syntax and speech patterns but also his own body as part of his search for his father. Kroetsch translates between the (prairie) vernacular and the written, rooting “the colonial English word in postcolonial Canadian soil and in Canadian tongues” (99). In *The Sad Phoenician* he translates letters of the alphabet and thematizes the infidelity of translation. The sections on Marlatt are some of the strongest work in the book. Marlatt translates pictogrammic, ideogrammic, and phonetic elements of language as well as gesture, performance, and hysteria. Most important, she writes in an “interlanguage” towards a (m)other tongue. Banting’s critique

of Lola Lemire Tostevin's essentialist (mis)reading of Marlatt effectively foregrounds the inadequacies of mapping one economy of reading (representationalist) onto a writing that is generated in and calls out for another (translation).

While *Body Inc.: A Theory of Translation Poetics* forwards "translation poetics," Banting spends much more time discussing "translation" than "poetics." I believe her work could profit from attention to contemporary debates concerning this latter area. For instance, Charles Bernstein and Steve MacCaffrey have explored poetics as an alternative to literary criticism, as a genre which resists naming meaning and instead theorizes the functioning of literary discourse; their writing blurs the boundaries between poetry and this meta-discourse of poetics. In contrast, Banting's style belongs much more to traditional literary criticism. While it does have elements of the performative, it does not engage in the kind of blurring of boundaries that potentially exists in the contemporary poetics genre. Attention to this mode would contribute to her desire to create an "anti-method method."

Also, for Banting, "theory" is not a text under critical consideration. She uses "friendly" poets' and theorists' quotations as a way of "saying" her own position, and she rarely situates these quotations or offers a critique of them. Moreover, there are the "unfriendlies," whom she criticizes almost entirely, for example, Dennis Cooley, Tostevin, and René Descartes. Further, Banting does not deal with the "limits" of her theory. While she engages in a perceptive critical mode in her criticism of Frank Davey, Cooley, and Tostevin, she does not turn this critical glance towards her own work. For example, while Derrida suggests translation as an alternate economy to representation, he also questions whether translation is entirely separate from representation and therefore perhaps is not entirely "outside" representation's problems. Banting does not examine the ambiguities and complexities of the new economy, such as the question of how translation poetics reproduces or even hides the very same problems of representation, or how these conceptions of representation and translation are limited to a Canadian or a Western context.

Because *Body, Inc.: A Theory of Translation Poetics* focuses on close readings of contemporary Canadian writers, engages discussions particular to Canadian criticism, and assumes familiarity with a number of theoretical issues, it will be most useful to graduate students and professionals working in contemporary Canadian writing. In fact, Banting's arguments—about using translation poetics as a reading strategy not only with the three writers she analyses but with a number of Canadian long-poem writers who use translation as a generative device—are so strong that I do not believe it is possible to respond adequately to this writing without engaging with her work. And while I would like to see a separate project on the theory itself (which I believe holds possibilities for other literary and cultural texts), I under-

stand that rooting this text in the specific context of Canadian poetry is vital to Banting's body of work.

MARGARET TOYE

WORK CITED

Derrida, Jacques. "Sending: On Representation" ["Envoi"]. Trans. Peter Caws and Mary Ann Caws. *Social Research* 49.2 (1982): 294-326.



Thomas C. Foster. *Understanding John Fowles*. Columbia: U. of South Carolina P, 1994. Pp. ix, 186. No price.

A few weeks before writing this, I was driving in Dorset and was drawn into making a detour away from the main road via Lyme Regis—partly, no doubt, to revisit the complex and compressed town centre, with its steep hills, crazy twists and turns, roads no wider than the car. But as I looked out at the Cobb, half hoping to see a solitary woman standing at the end, then drove close to John Fowles's house, I realized it was more than a desire to see the town. I have been reading and teaching Fowles for thirty years now, and persistent rumours of his bad health—the book under review mentions the "mild stroke" in 1988 which resulted in the end of his career as a novelist (3)—with the realization that there may well be no new fiction from him, had somehow pulled me to pay a useless tribute, to thank him. There, on the B3052, I felt both loss and gratitude as well as anger that Fowles was only 59 when his last novel appeared and already 39 when his first was published. Too short. Too short by far for a writer with such a brimming imagination, who once said that his fantasy was to "write a book in every genre" (Olshen 2). There must, one feels, be so much more unwritten.

If we had to sum up Fowles as writer, which I cannot begin here, we would have to cover wide territories—Jung, Freud, reason, socialism, existentialism, mysticism, mythology, authorial responsibility, feminism, game-playing, trickery, spatio-temporal tension, visual imagery, didacticism, rootedness and exile, history, daring trapeze-acts with narrative, Alain Fournier, hazard, levels of education, elitism, the health of society, freedom in its widest senses. And more. Fowles is a complex fictioneer, rich, challenging, wide-ranging, and it is sad that today his name is invoked less and less in discussion of the contemporary novel.

It could be, I suppose, that people have forgotten, or never known, the incredible cult of Fowles (from 1965 to 1978 especially), an intense popularity which extended from graduate seminars to the commuter bus, from MLA sessions to the beach. Well over three million paperback copies of both *The Magus* and *The French Lieutenant's Woman* have been sold—I do not know hardcover figures—and *The Collector*,