

lends itself to satire and panegyric. Kelsall exposes the contradictions, ambiguities, and evasions that come to characterize the image of the house and, often enough, the role of the poet after Jonson, as the ideal becomes harder to locate.

The emblematic but real house of the country house poem (from Jonson to Pope) yields to the naturalistic but fictional house of the novel (from *Tom Jones* to *Rebecca*) at the exact midpoint of the study, when the building is over and the task of preservation begins with the Georgian house. I have particularly liked Kelsall's discussion of *Mansfield Park*, where sober, evangelical, middle-class Fanny Price becomes the one to transmit country house values down the social scale and is herself lodged at the rectory, a part of Mansfield Park and apart from it, a stance necessary for the maintenance of the idea in its purity. Byron, however, was to the manor born, and Norman Abbey, in the later cantos of *Don Juan*, is true to form in being both an idea and its travesty, both developed through images of mother and child with meanings natural and religious, which Kelsall reads as eventually being "proleptic"—a recurring term—of Disraeli's two nations. Prolepsis is Kelsall's solution to a falsifying teleology in the writing of history, and, whether or not it is truer, it is the occasion for making witty conjunctions and connections that always instruct and delight.

*The Great Good Place: The Country House in English Literature* is fascinating as a species of historiography, but I do not wish to reduce it to its historical argument. The book is arranged as a series of close critical analyses of individual texts, and the pleasure of reading arises from watching conventions alter with context, the variety of contexts being Kelsall's great strength as a critic. The genre of country-house description expands and develops far beyond its classical antecedents when woman emerges as the the redemptive spirit of place. The cultural hopes and values she embodies reflect Kelsall's conservative and humanist view of the function of literature and criticism at the present time, when it is said that we have no values to transmit.

MAIA BHOJWANI

Brian Swann, ed. *On the Translation of Native American Literatures*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992. pp. xx, 478. pb. \$34.95, cloth \$53.95.

Brian Swann's *On the Translation of Native American Literatures* is an extremely important book for anyone interested in literature by aboriginal Americans. While the book addresses the matter of translating and transcribing oral aboriginal literatures into written English, the essays grapple with principles that reverberate even in the written texts of modern aboriginal authors who work exclusively in English. The collection comprises twenty-four intensely thoughtful and well-informed chapters that cover a wide range of problems encountered in the at-

tempt to translate aboriginal texts. The scholarly field is well represented, including such scholars as Dell Hymes, Dennis Tedlock, John Bierhorst, and Arnold Krupat. While most of the contributors are anthropologists by training, a substantial number come from linguistic and literary backgrounds. The guidance and influence of Swann, who is a professor of English in New York, is clearly felt throughout the collection, and his editorship lends a remarkably interdisciplinary focus to the book. The mix of humanists and social scientists generates a perspective on Native literatures that stimulates thought, even when some of the mechanics of technical explanation are relatively inaccessible to lay readers. While it was frequently necessary to skip over sections that depend on too much specialized anthropological or linguistic knowledge (too much for me, at any rate), every chapter stimulated my thinking about how I, as a Canadian of European ancestry, can approach the literature of indigenous North Americans.

The problems of translation are so immense, in fact, that this book about translation almost leads one to the conclusion that Native American literatures should never be translated because the process of translation so corrupts the original work that the resulting translation becomes an independent creative effort on the part of the translator. The original text serves only as an inspiration, an indigenous North American Muse, as it were. My own preference—and I suspect that of many *ARIEL* readers—is to accept that state of affairs, and to read and evaluate the translation as an independent work. Jerome Rothenberg's chapter, "We Explain Nothing, We Believe Nothing": American Indian Poetry and the Problematics of Translation," states this position clearly where he says,

[t]his means that translation, as we have sometimes tried to practice it, is not the reproduction of, or stand-in for, some fixed original, but that it functions as a commentary on the other and itself and on the differences between them. It is much more a kind of question than a summing up. (65)

Rothenberg, the author of more than forty books of poetry, has no illusions about "reproducing" original texts in another language.

But there is clearly another dimension to this issue, and it is well represented in Swann's book, particularly by anthropologists. At its most extreme, this position advocates the creation of a mechanical code by which both literal and cultural signals of the original language can be conveyed to readers of another language. The resulting text—often made up of structural linguistic diagrams and copious annotations—has little to recommend it in terms of grace or elegance, but it perhaps provides skilled linguistic readers with a more direct link to the original work. The obvious question is whether it is possible to appreciate poetry—no matter where its origins may lie—through such a mechanistic approach.

A major and often underestimated complication of the many attempts to translate "objectively" is that, in almost all cases, the indige-

nous literatures subjected to translation are also being distorted by the shift from an oral to a written medium. Swann is well aware of what occurs when "performance" is eliminated, for he is also the editor of *Smoothing the Ground: Essays on Native American Oral Literature* (1982); consequently, the essays presented here are sensitive to the problems inherent to transcription as well as to translation.

In "Incorporating the Native Voice: A Look Back from 1990," John Bierhorst employs two extremely well chosen terms to discuss translation. He speaks of the "donor" culture, the culture that produces the original text, and the "recipient" culture, the culture into whose language the work is translated (51). Using these terms, then, if A. J. M. Smith's "The Lonely Land" were to be translated into Inuktitut, Canadian anglophones would constitute the "donor" culture, and the Inuit would be the "recipient" culture. But the true aptness of the terms appears with the reverse dynamic, when aboriginal languages are translated into English; for when the donor culture is very small in comparison to the recipient culture, some level of "imperial displacement"—to use Jerome Rothenberg's phrase (65)—inevitably occurs. Bierhorst's terms, then, are especially appropriate because they signal that translation is not a neutral linguistic act, but rather involves one culture giving something up, while another culture takes something it did not have before.

A number of scholarly books of late have emphasized the literature of aboriginal peoples in Canada. I'm thinking of W. H. New's *Native Writers and Canadian Writing* (University of British Columbia Press, 1990), Penny Petrone's *Northern Voices: Inuit Writing in English* (University of Toronto Press, 1988), and her *Native Literature in Canada: From the Oral Tradition to the Present* (Oxford University Press, 1990). Although all three volumes are quite different, each book is designed to advocate and promote the recognition of aboriginal writing within the Canadian mainstream. Yet any reflective reader of Swann's new book will necessarily become aware of issues that complicate such easy advocacy. Does, for example, the process of "imperial displacement" disappear when aboriginal writers choose to compose in the language and written medium of the dominant culture? If translation cannot be a neutral act, is it possible that aboriginal writers can avoid "giving something up" as the "donor" culture by composing their work in the language of the dominant culture, or will this only mean that they give up their language—with all its cultural coding—as well? While *On the Translation of Native American Literatures* does not itself address such questions, the principles and problems explored in the essays have great relevance to how we read Thomas King, Lee Maracle, Tomson Highway, and other contemporary aboriginal authors.

I suspect it is inevitable that the dominant Euro-Canadian culture will continue broadening its own horizons and congratulating itself for its enlightened cultural pluralism. Swann's book, however, should

help us step less naively as we negotiate the complexity of one-size-fits-all multiculturalism, where one language is considered an adequate encoder for the values of a diversity of cultures.

RICHARD C. DAVIS

Jonathan Hart. *Theater and World: The Problematics of Shakespeare's History*. Boston: Northeastern UP, 1992. pp. xii, 404. \$37.50.

At her adultery trial, the always-surprising Hermione, Queen of Sicilia, produces as part of her defence a stunning retrospective gloss on some of the problematics of Shakespeare's chronicle history plays. The chaste life of this "fellow of the royal bed" who owns "A moi'ty of the throne" is, she insists, "more / Than history can pattern, though devis'd / And play'd to take spectators" (*The Winter's Tale* 3.2.32-39). The consistency of her royal history exceeds the most cunning patterns—whether providential, didactic, or scientifically historiographical—that her playwright had ever devised "to take [in?] spectators" at his English history plays. Those patterns, we may recall, were sometimes tragic (*Richard II*), sometimes comic (*I Henry IV*), and sometimes, according to Jonathan Hart, as problematic (*Henry V*) as any problem play, the form towards which he argues the Lancastrian histories of the Second Tetralogy gravitate. The argument that Hart presents is well worth following and deserves a far more eloquent, Hermionean defence than a short review permits.

The delicate negotiations between the "world" of the title—by which Hart seems to mean the locus of actual events unfolding in time—and the representation of those events in a theatrical space under the aspect of dramatic time are, he maintains, extraordinarily unsettled and unsettling. These relations are endlessly bedeviled by what Hart, following Northrop Frye, calls the Fall (of everyone—historian, playwright, character, reader) into Language and its peculiarly temporal discontents. "The relation between the Fall," Hart writes, "the temporality into which we are fallen, and the human problems of genre and representations that have artistic implications especially for Shakespeare's representation of history should be uppermost in our minds throughout the book" (20). It is iterative imagery study, rather than semiotic analysis, that Hart performs on the texts in order to establish the "fallenness" or inadequacy of language in Shakespeare's histories, oft-worked terrain like the gardener's plot in *Richard II* (3.4). In the three long central chapters of the book he doesn't often step back to question the adequacy of the Clemens-Spurgeon model of textual analysis or the mystifying and universalising effects of Frye's version of human history *sub specie aeternitatis*. But, then, Shakespeare critics were not actively challenging imagery study, structural analysis, or myth criticism when Hart began his project as a doctoral thesis at Toronto a dozen years ago, and he does, in fairness, survey alternate