

## Book Reviews

John Frow, *Marxism and Literary History*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1986. pp. 275. \$20.00.

John Frow's *Marxism and Literary History* provides a cogent extension of poststructuralist neoMarxism to literary history, and those who are predisposed to view texts and schools from within such a paradigm will doubtless find it valuable for its careful articulation of critical issues. Those who have been inclined to doubt the claims of this theoretical mode, however, will probably feel that both the Marxism and the historicism of Frow's book are of questionable validity: if they find the study valuable, they will do so because it sets forth so clearly the difficulties encountered by any attempt to assimilate historical materialism to the anti-referential premises endemic to poststructuralism in its various modes.

I say "anti-referential" because Frow's book is, first and foremost, a polemic against the empiricism and reflectionism that he sees haunting even the most sophisticated Marxist literary theories. Frow takes as his antagonist any variant upon base/superstructure theorizing that would posit the text's signified as a "content" that is the "presence of an absence, signifying the absent presence of reality" (7). Indeed, he claims, the concern that has heretofore crippled Marxist theory has been its preoccupation with representation, whereas, he believes, the signified of discourse is the process and practice of signification itself.

To be sure, Frow's argument enables him to anatomize quite compellingly the problems accompanying Lukacs' theory of realism, which takes the "typical" as a "category of life" and ends up asserting that "'reality' writes the novel" (13-14); to conclude that the Eagleton of *Criticism and Ideology*, for all his stress on the "reality" of ideology, invokes the "materiality" of history in a "theological" way (27); to note that Jameson, believing as he does in the "recoverability of the absent cause," conflates the "'real object' with the 'object of knowledge'" (38).

But while Frow scores some points against his opponents, he seriously distorts their positions in a number of ways—largely, I think,

because he never comes to terms with the premises of Marxist epistemology. Jameson, for example, may be faulted for a certain haziness about how one goes about recovering the text's "absent cause," but Frow fails to grant the complexity of Jameson's view of mediation and concludes — quite wrongly — that Jameson's correlation of abstraction in the text and abstraction in the referent is "an act of mediation . . . brought about only by means of a pun" (40-41). The Eagleton who rather contortedly posits a "Real" beyond the "curved space of ideology" certainly cannot be charged with "grounding Marxist politics in a category of History that would be external to its discursive mediations" (46). Indeed, much of Frow's entire polemic against Marxist theories of reference is directed against a straw man. Marx himself continually stipulated that abstractions are material, and no significant Marxist thinker since Lukacs has embraced the naive empiricism that Frow seems bent on discovering under every stone. Indeed, Frow's polemic reveals less about flaws in traditional Marxism than it does about his own antipathy to a premise fundamental, in my view, to any serious Marxist inquiry — namely, the validity of the base-superstructure paradigm, which, no matter how many mediations and reciprocities are attached to it, remains the cornerstone of any materialist investigation of history or ideology.

Frow's quarrel with received Marxist notions of reference and representation shapes his formulations of textual practice and literary history throughout his book. He attempts, first, a rehabilitation of Russian Formalism for the project of Marxist literary history. Cleansed of the idealism accompanying the Formalists' unmotivated view of the causality of literary change, he argues, the Formalists' notion that literary change occurs primarily *within* the literary system is eminently compatible with the discursively-based model he is formulating. He offers, second, a model of discourse as a dialogic — really trialogic — ground on which the competing rhetorical claims of "field," "mode," and "register" signal the text's insertion in history. Indeed, he argues, it is through the often contradictory "reality effects" and "ideological effects" produced by this competition that the text mediates class struggle: "the clash of voices is a clash of power," he notes, "and the analysis of discourse is an analysis of and an intervention in this politics" (82).

Frow's formulation of the intersection among various historically-engendered discursive codes produces some intricate and provocative readings — of texts ranging from various translations of the *Iliad* to Petronius' *Satyricon* to the novels of the Australian communist writer Frank Hardy. I am puzzled, however, by Frow's claim that these readings are in any significant way "Marxist." They are Bakhtinian and subtle, but the "clash of power" that they map out remains, as far as I can see, firmly located in the literary terrain. While Frow argues throughout his study that his historicized model of literary systems yields a discursive analysis of class struggle, this promise, in my view, is

never met. Class struggle—a feature inevitably bound to the “referent” that Frow is bent upon abolishing—never makes its way into Frow’s geography—as neither do any other traditional concerns of Marxism, such as the relation of base and superstructure, the relation of cultural forms to modes of production, or, indeed, even the concrete relation between politics and the various “reality effects” and “ideological effects” that texts routinely project. Frow might well argue that such concerns are misplaced, and that the project of Marxist criticism is to reformulate them. But he has reformulated them so fully, in my view, as to leave them behind. *Marxism and Literary History* is in many ways a fascinating study; perhaps my main complaint is that it has been misnamed.

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R. A. Shoaf, *Milton: Poet of Duality: A Study of Semiosis in the Poetry and Prose*. New Haven: Yale, 1985. pp. 225. \$17.00.

In this ambitious, wide-ranging, and not always lucid study of Milton’s imagination, R. A. Shoaf addresses in an interesting way the oldest problem of Christian poetics: How can a poet committed to the unity of the Word and the authority of the Father make use of the radically dialogical forces of imaginative expression? To elucidate what he offers as Milton’s solution, Shoaf distinguishes between the “ideology” (a bad thing) of *dualism* and the “structure” (a good thing) of *duality*. Whereas *dualism* implies an absolute separation of body from soul and of good from evil such that no communication between them occurs, *duality* implies an exchange or a conversation between differentiated parts of a unity temporally or transcendently deferred: “duality . . . is in the service of monism” (26). Thus when Milton in *De Doctrina Christiana* 1.7 rejects the dualism of body and soul (“the whole man is the soul” [*Complete Prose Works* 6: 318]), he is not rejecting all difference in favour of mystical communion with the One; he is enclosing difference within the horizon of a unity that is eschatologically deferred, leaving ample room within its bounds, which are the bounds of history, for the duality that is implied in the word *conversation*.

The principal form in which this duality becomes manifest as conversation is in the relationship between Man and the Father, wherein the creature is made in the image of the Creator. The experience of history is therefore initiated and subsequently conditioned by original sin, through which Man loses both the image of God in himself (its remnants persisting only in reason) and the Word of God as Man had once known it in living conversation. For while originally the relationship was one of what Milton in a different context calls “conversation meet” (*PR* 4.232), it degenerates after the fall into a conflict (Shoaf, punning somewhat freely, calls it a *duel*) between human disobedience and divine love. Man then becomes engaged in

an internal conflict between captivity and deliverance or, under the new covenant, repentance and sin. (Only when this conflict is abandoned in favour of either mysticism or despair does duality break down utterly into dualism.) Therefore the work of restoration must be carried out within history by accepting conflictual dialogue both with oneself and with God; and the exchange must be directed not toward an idolatrous goal of mystical union but toward a resumption of that first conversation between Adam and God, which was begun when they walked in the garden. This is what Milton means in *Of Education* by regaining to know God aright; and *Paradise Lost* prepares us for that greater conversation, Shoaf argues (following Stanley Fish), by making the reader increasingly aware of an active role in the production of meaning. The wise reader will not try to enter into the single, certain truth of the poet's intention but will find meaning instead in the play of conversation between that intention and his response to the text.

Thus far I have tried to translate into more explicitly Miltonic terms what Shoaf seems to be after: I have tried, that is, to enact the conversational response that the book, according to its principles, would seem to require. But so that the reader may decide whether she would wish to engage the same interlocutor, it is time to let the book speak for itself. Citing from *Areopagitica* the assertion that "trial is by what is contrary," Shoaf proceeds as follows:

We know the meaning of what we have tried and of what has tried us: what we have dualed and (yes, of course) dueled, we know and understand—it has meaning for us. And meaning is the meaning, I hope to show, of *Paradise Lost*. (2)

In effect, then, we, the readers, in repeating the poem by reading it, also *pair* it (adjust to it), even as the poem *pairs* (and repeats) Scripture in order that we might together *repair* the *impairment* of justice wrought by the Fall. (15)

It is hard to talk back to this sort of thing because it seems to be already talking, quite happily, to itself. What would one say to an author who advises us, with elephantine wit, that the garden is properly called "Par(pair)adise" (15)? The reader of the preface is given, if not a fair justification, at least a fair warning:

My play with words is certainly expendable; it harbors no mystery and claims no right/rite to awe. Rather the wordplay is a sign that signs are multiple in their signification, and this, as Milton clearly saw, is also a sign of sin, the *sine qua non* of the creation . . . In the end, however, the sign is not sin because it is different from sin (by the grace of one graph, for example) and reproduces itself. With signs, as with human procreation,  $1 + 1 = 3$ . (xi-xii)

While it is comforting to be assured that Milton saw something clearly, one wonders whether Milton had the insight to "see" exactly what is credited to him here: that sin is a matter of orthography and that, despite all appearances given by Sin herself in *Paradise Lost*, evil is not, like the sign, self-reproducing. Instances of this curious indifference to what the Miltonic texts actually say are too numerous to cite. But their

tenor is evident in one noteworthy passage where the evangelical poststructuralism is laid on rather thick:

When the individual Christian subjects himself in good conscience to the arbitrariness of the sign, so that the free play of signification is liberated, that individual's faith is sufficient to justify him. (29)

Pray for us, Saussure.

While a hostile reader might well be convinced by such passages that more than the wordplay in this book is expendable, there are in fact numerous points of interest scattered throughout, many of them having little more than a tangential connection to Milton. There are, for instance, some fine middle chapters, sparkling with insight, on Ovid, a poet with whom Shoaf seems much more at home than with Milton. And readers who persist to the eleventh and twelfth chapters, on *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*, will have their reward. But since much of what is said in this long and involved book is either free digression or a following through of the thesis already described, it may be useful at this point to speak in more general terms by reflecting on the historical context of the problem raised at the outset. How can the Christian poet incorporate within the unified authority of the Word the imaginative forces that are released by poetic expression? I believe Milton's solution is more radical than Shoaf allows and that he is much closer to Blake than to Dante in the way he encounters this problem.

While the problem extends beyond the Christian tradition—it is present, for example, in Homer—it is particularly intense on the inside because Christianity, considered psychologically, was invented to bring the religious, or externalizing, drive of the imagination under control. The “good news” of Christianity, to a populace bewildered by a profusion of deities soliciting rites, was that the number of gods to be concerned with can be lowered to one. While similar adjustments to the remarkable exteriorization of psychic forces in late antiquity took place concurrently, Trinitarian Christianity succeeded because rather than suppressing the dialogical it came to terms with it, incorporating and restricting the play of difference within a unified structure of authority. Thus it avoided, on the one hand, the uncompromising dualism of the Manicheans (who had inherited the paradoxes and absurdities of classical idealism), and it restricted, on the other hand, the proclivity of the imagination to create, to invest with supernatural being, and to fear, anything whatever. Thus the variety of the world is not rejected by Christianity as an evil realm of appearances forever distinct from the transcendent realm of the forms; it is generated out of an original dialogue taking place within the unity of God—a notion splendidly illustrated by Dante in the famous lines on the Trinity opening the tenth canto of the *Paradiso*. Christianity avoids polytheism by making an evangelical claim to a unique, historically instituted authority; and it avoids dualism—with its hatred of the body, of politics, and of the world—by conducting within the members of the

Trinity a conversation that the dualist has tried to condemn or ignore.

Is Milton the subordinationist, the materialist, the mortalist, the portrayer of a stern and ironical God, a poet of duality? Perhaps we should turn to the last works for an answer. For in *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes* he seems to recover something of that sense of the terrible remoteness and silence of the final authority, thus leaving the work of restoration open to a radical playfulness requiring absolute balance. The final, direct image of God that Milton provides is not the thundering and ironical Father but the incarnate Son at the very moment when he enters into his ministry of conversation with Man. I suppose it is a question of where one would situate Milton's emphasis; but I do not see his commitment to the discovery of the self in the other (through parable, conversation and debate) as being "in the service of monism." Much depends, however, on how we read those lines in which, paraphrasing St. Paul, Milton has the Son speak to the Father of a time when the Father shall be "All in All"; for their apparent monism may be nothing more than that — an appearance:

Scepter and Power, thy giving, I assume,  
And gladlier shall resign, when in the end  
Thou shalt be All in All, and I in thee  
For ever, and in mee all whom thou lov'st. (PL 6.730-33)

The word *all*, and the spatial idea of inclusion, make this look like an eschatological morass. But considered more closely these lines may well suggest a state of radical difference and absolute play, wherein each of the saints has become a more distinct individual than ever before. God, no longer a Father, is a totality in each. And yet each one is *in* the Son also, in the sense not of an enclosure but of a conversational engagement. Perhaps the lines do not *need* to be read in this way. In interpreting their deliberate ambiguity, however, we must try to imagine how Milton conceived of this final state, which is described here in traditional terms. I think that even in these lines of *Paradise Lost* he understood that final, sacramental participation as he had once imagined it in "Lycidas": as the "unexpressive nuptial Song" (l. 176), in which the self, like a musical phrase, is fully asserted only in marriage to an other. Milton thought too highly of music to write in the service of monism.

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GORDON TESKEY

Meenakshi Mukherjee, *Realism and Reality: The Novel and Society in India*. Delhi: Oxford UP, 1985. pp. 218. \$33.75.

This is the second major monograph of literary criticism by Meenakshi Mukherjee, although perhaps the word monograph denotes too small a focus for this or her previous study, *The Twice Born Fiction: Themes and Techniques of the Indian Novel in English* (New Delhi: Arnold-

Heinemann, 1971; 2d ed. 1974). These two works certainly make her an extremely important critic of Indian fiction in English in particular and of modern Indian fiction (irrespective of language differentiation) in general.

The present work is composed of two clearly separate but yet interrelated parts, the first of which is study and analysis of the historical and social context in which the modern Indian novel developed. The importance of such an approach is clearly stated at the end of the first paragraph of the text:

It is not an accident that the first crop of novels in India, in Bengali and Marathi, appeared exactly a generation after Macaulay's Educational Minutes making English a necessary part of an educated Indian's mental make-up were passed. Yet to regard the novel in India, as is sometimes done, as purely a legacy of British rule — such as the railways or cricket — would be to overlook the complex cultural determinants of a literary genre. (3)

She then proceeds to demonstrate how Indian culture affected the concept of realism, which she accepts as "essential to the evolution of the novel" (37). In short, Indian writers took the genre and remade it for their own ends — Realism (as an aesthetic) had to adjust to reality; the Indian scene was not the European, the Indian psyche not the western. Consequently, the western criterion of realism should not be strictly applied as a standard of judgement in regard to the Indian novel — as is usually the case, at least by westerners.

The second part is an examination, in light of the thesis developed in Part One, of three key twentieth-century novels. These are *Pather Panchali* (by Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyaya — or Banerji; written in Bengali, published in 1929, and made into Satyajit Ray's classic movie of the same title); *Godan* (Premchand's Hindi classic published in 1936); and *Samskara* (by R. R. Anatha Murthy, written in Kannada, published in 1965). All have been translated into English. The analysis of each novel is of at least three-fold importance: insight into the work, both in terms of its own exposition and in comparison to other relevant fiction (western as well as Indian); cultural context (e.g., *Samskara* has been criticized "by orthodox critics" as a "repudiation of Hinduism," and yet has also been said to represent a "brahminic world view," which is "a special mode of apprehending reality, an experience that pervades all aspects of a man's life, going beyond his conscious mind" [179]); and how the work — written in a genre European in development — is peculiarly Indian. Thus, in regard to the last point, "one cannot think of anything in western literature with which *Pather Panchali* can be compared" (144), and similarly *Samskara* "both in content and form . . . can serve as an illustration of the kind of mutation that a western form has undergone in India" (167).

But other works as well are given comparative and contextual treatment, such as Mirza Ruswa's classic story of the Lucknavi courtesan, *Umrao Jan Ada* (Urdu, 1901), and the Bengali tetralogy of

Saratchandra Chatterji (or Chattopadhyaya), *Srikanta* (1917-33). These analyses also are valuable for their focus on the traditional aspects of the novels, especially the characterization of the central female figures. Indeed, the emphasis on characterization of women in the modern Indian novel is the most valuable and illuminating feature of this fine study; valuable for the insight (certainly the cultural as well as the literary) into the characterization of women, and illuminating for such analysis as a tool to demonstrate the divergent approach toward realism taken by Indian novelists. That is to say, with the quality of group identity (e.g., caste or community — what the writer terms [68] “the hierarchical and role-oriented structure of traditional Indian society”) so central in Indian culture, it was a particular challenge for writers to achieve “the creation of characters in situations permitting individual choice as well as their mimetic representation in a manner which did not distort contemporary Indian reality. [Further,] the challenge to achieve this successfully was intensified when the characters represented happened to be women.” This, of course, is because of the cultural and literary tradition of defining women’s identities (including, as the author aptly points out, by women themselves) “in terms of [their] relationship with men — as a daughter, as a wife, as a mother” (98). Nevertheless, the novel of realism did develop in India, precisely because “the tension between individual and society had required a certain intensity,” albeit its development necessitated that “the reality of the Indian social situation . . . be . . . bent” (99).

The success of this remarkable study is due to the able interrelating of three different critical approaches — historical (the development of the novel along western lines and away from the traditional literary forms of *purana* and *dastan*, or tales and romances), analytical (especially concerning women), and descriptive (the critiques, in separate chapters, of the three paradigmatic novels). Likewise, its value is threefold — historical, sociological, and literary. It would be especially worthwhile for anyone interested in the role and development of women in Indian tradition and society.

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FRITZ BLACKWELL

Ken Goodwin, *A History of Australian Literature*. New York: St. Martin’s, 1986. pp. xi, 322. \$32.50.

Appearing only five years after *The Oxford History of Australian Literature* (1981), Goodwin’s *History of Australian Literature* replaces that generally unsatisfactory volume. The *OHAL*, written by three men and arranged by genre (fiction, poetry, and drama), lacks in consequence a unified viewpoint and offers a somewhat blurred view of literary history. Goodwin’s history is a coherent, integrated study, written from a more scholarly approach.



Goodwin wisely concentrates on the literature of the last fifty years, pointing out that the earlier Australian literature is of interest primarily to literary historians. He has made a special effort to bring his history as up to date as possible, an effort that the writers of the *OHAL* should have made but did not. And so he provides entries for important new writers like Elizabeth Jolley, Barbara Hanrahan and Tim Winton, whose names do not appear in the *OHAL* at all. (He omits any mention of Jessica Anderson, who has twice recently received the Miles Franklin Award for fiction, but perhaps he feels that her talents are essentially very mediocre—as indeed they are.) The result of his unusual contemporaneity, though, is that he ends his history abruptly, leaving some loose threads untied.

The chapter on the nature of Australian literature that opens the history is thoughtful and unusually free of the chauvinism that currently afflicts Australian life, infecting even the intellectuals who earlier had seemed immune. Goodwin draws attention, for example, to the repetitiveness of Australian literature: “[it] is in large measure a literature of persistence, endurance and repetition almost beyond endurance. . . . Australian authors wear down and wear out their readers by the repetition of horrors, instances of similar incidents, lists of details or stylistic mannerisms” (4). But if Goodwin is not chauvinist, he makes no direct criticism of things Australian either, and dismisses writers of the 60’s like Donald Horne, who are critical of Australian values: “In a mood that has permeated Australian critical journalism since . . . , Horne carps at everything and everyone” (192). And while he perceives that “writers in Australia have emphasized such themes as the search for identity by a wanderer or explorer, . . . the sense of being an outcast” (3), Goodwin does not go on to remark that they have been unable to formulate or elevate any moral code beyond that of mateship. The lack of moral vision is one of the greatest limitations of Australian literature, as it is of Australian society. Goodwin is an elusive social commentator: the observation that Brian Penton’s novels postulate that “white Australian society has never escaped its convict origins, its early struggle for existence, its incapacity for morality or altruism” (84) elicits from him no indication of his own beliefs.

Goodwin is also free from academic snobbery in relation to undistinguished Australian authors who have been bestsellers overseas. These authors have presented their critics with something of a problem: what account should be given of them in a national literary history? A balanced history of a young literature like Australia’s does in fact need a consideration of popular writers, if only because they reflect or affect the image of Australia overseas and within Australia itself. The *OHAL* does not recognize popular authors other than to name contemporary and hence wellknown ones like Colleen McCullough and Alan Moorehead (Arthur Upfield and Morris West are not even named). Goodwin deals with the problem more realistically by providing entries for McCullough and West.

In his entries on individual authors, Goodwin varies between the factual, the interpretive, and the evaluative. When he is merely factual, as with novelists like Katharine Susannah Prichard, Christina Stead and Thomas Keneally or with dramatists like Jack Hibberd and David Williamson, he can disappoint: one wonders what he considers the writer's special achievement or place in Australian literature to have been. But when he deals with poets, Goodwin is much more likely to be interpretive. He is especially good in his exegesis of poems by John Shaw Neilson, Kenneth Slessor, James McAuley and Francis Webb. The main achievements of Australian literature, however, lie in the novel, and interpretation would perhaps most usefully be accorded to certain major but problematic novels like those of Patrick White, Randolph Stow and Shirley Hazzard.

When Goodwin evaluates a writer or a work, his evaluations are well-considered and temperate. Henry Handel Richardson's *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*, for instance, is referred to as an "impressive trilogy," a respectful and temperate assessment; it is not a great novel, if only because it refuses to stay long in one's mind after one has read it. His evaluation of Martin Boyd, too, is succinct and cogent: "[Boyd] depicts sensitive and intelligent loners, moved by affection but rarely by passion. He is essentially a literary entertainer, dealing with serious but unresolved ideas" (97). Goodwin is not afraid of reducing an inflated reputation, as when he remarks of William Gosse Hay's *The Escape of the Notorious Sir William Heans* that "The mesmeric, Meredithian prose and deftly conveyed atmosphere fail to conceal the hollow artifice and triviality of the events in this costume novel" (66).

Goodwin's history is unique in paying attention to literature in English by Aboriginal writers. It also surveys children's literature, omitted in the *OHAL*, and looks at recent literature by non-English-speaking migrants. It pays proper attention to women writers and does not subordinate them to male writers. The point is important, for women are more prominent in Australian literature than in any other literature in English. Goodwin has of course a male viewpoint and therefore leaves still unfilled the need for a history of Australian literature written from a woman's perspective, one that endeavours to define the special nature of women's contribution to Australian literature and their special eminence within it.

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## Books Received

- CAPLAN, USHER, and M. W. STEINBERG, ed. *A. M. Klein: Literary Essays and Reviews*. pp. xxix, 424. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1987. \$19.95 pb.
- DUTTON, RICHARD. *Modern Tragicomedy and the British Tradition*. Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1986. pp. 227. \$25.00.
- HINCHCLIFFE, PETER, and ED JEWINSKI, ed. *Magic Realism and Canadian Literature: Essays and Stories*. Waterloo, Ont.: U of Waterloo P, 1986. pp. 126. \$10.00 pb.
- KIRKHAM, MICHAEL. *The Imagination of Edward Thomas*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986. pp. xi, 225. \$39.50.
- LEWALSKI BARBARA KIEFER, ed. *Renaissance Genres: Essays on Theory, History, and Interpretation*. Harvard English Studies 14. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1986. pp. 498. \$8.95 pb.
- LEWIS, TOM J., and ROBERT E. JUNGMAN, ed. *On Being Foreign: Culture Shock in Short Fiction: An International Anthology*. Yarmouth, Me.: Intercultural, 1986. pp. xxv, 293. np.
- MARTIN, HEATHER C. *W. B. Yeats: Metaphysician as Dramatist*. Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier UP, 1986. pp. xiv, 153. \$21.95.
- SALE, ROGER. *Closer to Home: Writers and Places in England, 1780-1830*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1986. pp. 153. \$15.95.
- TANNER, TONY. *Jane Austen*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1986. pp. 291. \$20.00.
- WALLER, JOHN O. *A Circle of Friends: The Tennysons and the Lushingtons of Park House*. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1986. pp. 290. \$29.50.
- WEBER, HAROLD. *The Restoration Rake-Hero: Transformations in Sexual Understanding in Seventeenth-Century England*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1986. pp. 253. Unpriced.
- WHITE, R. S. *Keats as a Reader of Shakespeare*. Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1987. pp. 250. \$24.95.
- YENSER, STEPHEN. *Consuming Myth: The Work of James Merrill*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1987. pp. 367. \$27.50.