Book Reviews

The Diary of Ford Madox Brown, edited by Virginia Surtees. Published for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981. pp. xvi, 237. $36.00.

For a long time Ford Madox Brown was the most underrated Pre-Raphaelite painter. As late as July 1893, a few months before his death, one of his finest pictures, *Jesus Washing Peter's Feet*, was bought in at Christie's, and this at a time when works by Alma-Tadema and G. F. Watts were selling for thousands of pounds. After his death neither the Royal Academy nor any other body came forward to mount a retrospective exhibition, as the Academy and the Burlington Fine Arts Club had done in 1882 for his one-time pupil, Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Several years later Ford Madox Ford's biography of his grandfather (1896) sold so few copies that he had to repay Longmans their advance. A few of Brown's contemporaries, but shamefully not Ruskin, recognized his stature, especially the French critic Robert de La Siezeranne, who began his *La Peinture Anglaise Contemporaine* (1895) with a long account of the painter. But it was not until recent decades when we began to look again at Pre-Raphaelite pictures and Victorian art in general that the excellence of Brown's draughtsmanship and his achievement as a landscape painter have been adequately assessed. John Gere made the point in *Pre-Raphaelite Painters* (1948) that Brown's landscapes of the 1850's, "which combine a lovingly close, but never finicky, attention to detail with the largeness and breadth of the traditional English landscape school, are the most satisfactory application of Pre-Raphaelite 'truth to nature' to landscape painting." His present reputation owes much to Mary Bennett of the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, whose series of Pre-Raphaelite exhibitions (Millais, 1967; Hunt, 1969) rightly began in 1964 with Brown. While we await her *catalogue raisonné* of the painter, it is good to have Virginia Surtees' edition of his important and moving diary.

Parts of the diary, which runs with many gaps from 1847 to 1868, were published long ago. Following Brown's death his daughter Lucy (Mrs. W. M. Rossetti) began a biography which had not advanced very far by the time of her own death in 1894. The commission then fell to Ford, who gave extracts from the sixth and final volume of the diary (1856-1868). Mrs. Surtees does not speculate why the first five volumes, by far the most interesting part of the diary, were not used by Ford. Evidently W. M. Rossetti, who would have found them among his wife's papers, decided that, given their frank revelations about Brown's private life and their caustic comments on D. G. Rossetti and Ruskin, they were safest with himself. In *Pre-Raphaelite Diaries and Letters* (1900) he published extracts, in which the spelling and punctuation, and occasionally the phrasing, were carefully remedied.

The diary is primarily as Mrs. Surtees says "the working diary of a painter." Daily hours of work, starts and false starts with pictures, difficulties with models ("Miss Chamberlayne all day, a very devil, a very devil"), tramps over London in search of draperies and accessories; but also interruptions to have his hair cut in Oxford Street or to visit relatives or to entertain friends who called at inconvenient and inconsiderate hours: all are meticulously chronicled. The fascination of the diary derives in large part from the unselfconscious mingling of important and trivial detail.

It is also a poignant document (perhaps the best we have) of the plight of the poor, unrecognized artist in Victorian Britain. Convinced in September 1847 that he would not sell his "Seeds and Fruits of English Poetry" (later redesigned as *Chaucer at the Court of Edward III*), he recorded: "very likely it may only add one more to the many kicks I have already received from fortune . . . of one thing she cannot rob me . . . the pleasure that I have received & daily yet receive from the marking out of a subject after mine own heart, a love offering to my favorite poets, to my never-faithless Burns, Byron, Spencer & Shakespear." During the early 1850's poverty became more oppressive. For two years he lived in Hampstead, engaged on his most famous picture *Work*, "most of the time intensely miserable very hard up & a little mad." In 1854 his *Lear and Cordelia*, "having cost 8 months work & the frame £3.10," sold for £15. Three years later his situation had not improved. He was forced to beg money from the Leeds stockbroker and art collector Thomas Plint to bury his infant son Arthur, and daily he contemplated "poverty closing now in on me fast on all sides." By the time the diary ends in 1868, Brown was enjoying what little prosperity he was to know, but one should not be misled by the accounts of convivial gathering of artists and writers at 37 Fitzroy Square in Justin McCarthy's *Reminiscences* and elsewhere. Money problems con-

tinued to plague Brown to the end, as the unpublished letters and diaries of W. M. Rossetti (who became his son-in-law in 1874) amply show.

At the same time gloom and despair is not the exclusive note struck by the diary. As Mrs. Surtees points out in her brief introduction, which is the most succinct and discerning account of Brown's character that has been published, to his close friends and family he was "warm-hearted, loving and generous, and to those he considered ill-used by wordly circumstances he showed the keenest sympathy." Almost every page of the diary offers evidence of these qualities.

By contrast D. G. Rossetti and Ruskin, whose presence in the diary add substantially to its documentary value, appear much less attractive individuals. Rossetti might almost be seen as the villain of the piece. More often than not he appears as compulsively self-centred, "keeping me up talking till 4 A.M., painting sometimes all night making the whole place miserable and filthy, translating sonnets at breakfast working very hard & doing nothing." Even when he was comparatively well-off he failed to repay Brown his frequent loans; while his increasing rudeness to Brown's tiresome and often drunken second wife Emma, and his fondness for indiscriminate abuse, stretched their friendship to the breaking point. "20th [May 1885] to Town to see if Rossetti would join in a newly projected exhibition.... Of course he would not, being the incarnation of perverseness.... Rossetti after much desultory conversation began abusing Cave Thomas's picture, but so spitefully & unfeelingly that at last I lost my temper & accused him of venom & spite & delighting to set friends against each other. This of course he did not agree to & it ended in my telling him to keep to *his* friends, as to me his ways were disagreeable." What saved the friendship was Brown's recognition of Rossetti's genius ("Gabriel... drawing wonderful & lovely 'Guggums' [Lizzie Siddal]... each one a fresh charm each one stamped with immortality"), and his appreciation of the younger artist's instinctive and not infrequent generosity. In May 1856, after recording another of Rossetti's snubs of Emma, he felt compelled to set down "some of the bright side" of his character, and concludes: "I could narrate a hundred instances of the most disinterested & noble minded conduct towards his art rivals which places him far about Hunt or Millais for greatness of soul."

Towards Ruskin, who neither praised Brown nor bought his pictures, he showed no such tolerance. Several of the entries on Ruskin are the gems of the diary. Ruskin lauding Lizzie Siddal's drawings as better than Rossetti's is "the incarnation of exaggeration." Describing their first meeting in July 1855 Brown writes with uncharacteristic venom: "while I was smoking a pipe in shirt sleeves

'Enter to us' *Ruskin.* I smoke, he talks divers nonesense about art, hurriedly in shrill flippant tones — I answer him civilly — then resume my coat & prepare to leave. Suddenly, upon this he sais 'Mr. Brown will you tell me why you chose such a very ugly subject for your last picture'. I dumbfounded at such a beginning from a stranger look in his face expectant of some *qualifiycation* & ask 'what picture', to which he, looking defyingly answers Your picture at the British Exn. . . . I . . . replied contemptuously 'Because it lay out of a back window' & turning on my heel took my hat and wished Gabriel goodbuy. . . . So much for my first intervue with the 'stoneless' expositor of stones." (The annulment of Ruskin's marriage in the previous year was still a frequent topic of conversation.) Two years later at a meeting of the Thomas Seddon subscription committee at Denmark Hill Ruskin "was in appearance like a cross between a fiend & a tallowchandler . . . [he] was playful & childish & the tea table overcharged with cakes & sweets as for a juvenile party. After this, about an hour later, cake & wine was again produced of which R. again partook largely, reaching out with his thin paw & swiftly absorbing 3 or 4 large lumps of cake in succession."

Mrs. Surtees' editing is in most respects admirable. She allows Brown's singular spelling (Tennisson for Tennyson, Whales for Wales, among the more engaging examples) and capitalization to stand, but wisely she silently inserts the minimum of punctuation demanded by the sense. Footnotes are careful and helpful, and contain (as does the introduction) much unobtrusive scholarship. She has consulted birth, baptismal, death, and marriage registers, the Census, and numerous directories; and she gives an exact and valuable account of Brown's many places of residence. More information on Brown's and Rossetti's patrons might be wished for, and she should certainly have given the numbers in her own *catalogue raisonné* of the many Rossetti pictures referred to in the notes. Also she might have said something about the extent and nature of W. M. Rossetti's omissions from the published version of the diary. Yet there is much to be thankful for. The nineteen illustrations of Brown's works, however, are a great disappointment, being almost without exception grimy and indistinct. Much better quality is expected in a volume published by Yale for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art.

ROGER W. PEATTIE

Carol Houlihan Flynn, *Samuel Richardson, A Man of Letters.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982. pp. ix, 342. $25.00.

That a master printer, respectable citizen, and affluent patriarch discovered in the letter the means of liberating repressed energies is the basic argument of Carol Houlihan Flynn's study: "The pen provided Richardson with a way into the personalities of others, and ultimately a way into himself" (p. 284). Although not shockingly new, the idea is complex and amorphous, raising fundamental questions about the author in the text. Sometimes discussion begins with the obvious, as in the laboured comparison of the dullish *Apprentice's Vade Mecum* and *Familiar Letters* to the highly ambivalent novels. Clichés, redundancy, and sweeping generalizations (the "threat of seduction animated the imagination of the eighteenth century," p. 107) occasionally cause some nodding, but most of the time the discourse is brisk and engaging. This is a book no serious Richardsonian can afford to miss.

Perhaps its most distinctive attribute is its unflagging inquisitiveness and speculative zest, but a tendency to slide away from one idea to another without rigorous analysis results in uneven, contradictory interpretations, which may be examined under three heads — the ideal of religious perfectionism, the elements of romance and fairy tale, and the dilemma of sexuality.

Despite its title, "The Self-Made Saint," the opening chapter does not intentionally mock Christian doctrine. Richardson may have prided himself on his worldly fortune, but he was too well informed an Anglican to presume that one is a saint by sheer will power and hard work. Besides, Flynn at one point argues that his protagonist is blessed without any effort on her part: "From the start Pamela is a living saint, a being who has achieved as much perfection as possible in an imperfect world" (p. 20). Curiously, in another place Flynn complains that Sir Charles Grandison, "already fixed, has nowhere to go. He is inalterably a good man" (p. 260); and she dismisses him as repellent. Saints are rare creatures because their sincerity of feeling, language, and behaviour is utterly beyond doubt; yet if even Mr. B. accuses Pamela of hypocrisy, Fielding and other detractors may have a point. In a later context, moreover, Flynn's "living saint" appears more like Mr. B.'s "little equivocator": "Pamela does what every sentimental woman does, only she does it better. Humorously and deftly, she makes her fortune by exploiting her only marketable resource, her virginity" (p. 136).

After the rape Clarissa's alienation from the world, flesh, and lover seems complete enough to guarantee her a safe passage to paradise; but Flynn gets involved unnecessarily in a doctrinal muddle to ascribe the heroine's perfectionism at various times to Puritan, Latitudinarian, and Catholic sources before concluding that the

novel is essentially irreligious because sentimental. In a few pages we move from Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross to Levin Schücking and Paul Parnell on the affective egoism in *Clarissa*, the latter two a welcome purgative of the idea that "Richardson managed to transcend his own tradition to create a mystic saint who creates the Catholic saints' experiences and meditations in their own language" (p. 27). However, when Flynn rules Clarissa's death suicidal and her forgiveness vengeful, the barefoot Spanish mystics seem very remote indeed. My own book is quoted (with the disarming misprint "beautification" for beatification") as though in support of this view; but as the context should make clear, my argument there was to the effect that Clarissa's conscience is punishing her to death and that she accepts the first part of her father's curse as a divine decree. Flynn's sensitive reading of "Clarissa's complicity in her own rape" during the escape to Hampstead and the return to Sinclair's house complements Richardson's explicit statement to Aaron Hill about depicting her as unconsciously in love before the elopement and crisis. The discovery of her passion accounts for her relentless guilt after the rape; and after suffering the loss of self by her bodily pollution, her peaceful death comes as a gift of grace, a Christian version of the *Liebestod* in the Tristan myth. Richardson was well aware of St. Augustine's objection to Lucretia's death as "prompted not by the love of purity, but by the overwhelming burden of her shame" [*The City of God* (New York: Random House, 1950), p. 25] and was at pains to suggest that Clarissa died passively after the trauma induced in her "delicate" sensibility.

As Flynn ably demonstrates in her fourth and possibly most valuable chapter, when Richard Hurd in his *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (1762) lamented the demise of romance in the Enlightenment he was overlooking its subtle transformation in the "new species of writing" introduced by Richardson and Fielding: "Richardson was able to abstract the terrors of common life — the envy, jealousy, fear, and lust — make them part of his character's psyche, and then project them back to the reader" (p. 149). Taking a cue from Iona and Peter Opie that the Cinderella story is about "reality made evident," Flynn at first emphasizes that like the prince, Mr. B. must change his perception to recognize Pamela's real superiority; but then discussion shifts to how the "Power of Witchcraft" resolves the conflict: "By changing everyone's way of thinking about her, Pamela has transformed reality" (p. 163). To be consistent, if Pamela is the reality to be made evident, is she not therefore demonstrating somehow the illusions that Mr. B. and his society had been suffering under rather than transforming reality by magic of sorts? Her own sense of wonder at converting her world obviates the sense of her being in perfect control over the changes that occur.

Maybe because *Clarissa* is so much finer a novel Flynn is at her best in interpreting the threatening element of fairy tales in such scenes as the altercations between Clarissa and her mother in the first volume: "Recognizing the inherent kinetic energy in the most aimless actions 'neither busy nor unbusy,' Richardson exploits the latent violence of the commonplace" (p. 172). Though not mentioned, Pope's epic miniatures reveal a similar inherent energy in the ordinary event and may even have influenced the novelist; at any rate, Flynn's brilliant insight reminds us that we are not far from *The Rape of the Lock*: "Richardson's characters are violent, almost mad in their passion as they fling their crockery and their bodies about their well-appointed room" (p. 173). Important for defining the genre that gives forth the emotion is the stress on the violence within the mind and the consequent paralysis in the physical sphere: "When Clarissa histrionically considers slavery in the Indies and live burial, she acts in a 'romance' world of ogres, monsters, and murder that dominates her way of thinking of the 'real' world. Her fears, both real and imagined, imprison her more effectively than Uncle Antony's moated house could ever do" (p. 175). In this respect, perhaps the Gothic romance intersects with the "work of tragic species."

Against the diffidence of some recent Richardsonians, notably of the standard biographers, T. C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel, and of such learned interpreters as Mark Kinkead-Weekes and Margaret Doody, Flynn looks into the text and bravely describes somewhat the hidden dynamics of the encounter, freely incorporating ideas about sexuality that until Freud and Lawrence were scarcely articulated in literary criticism. While discreetly eschewing the jargon of psychoanalysis, she argues persuasively the Freudian thesis concerning the degradation of the female as a pleasurable release from the ascetic Christianity that extolls the mother and contemns the woman: "In Richardson's world, to be exalted, the sublime woman first had to be degraded. Such a need for the control and mortification of women suggests an obsessive fear of female sexuality. Richardson regarded the fallen woman as an obscenity" (p. 132). Aside from the problem of distinguishing between the "world" of his novels and the world of Salisbury Court and Parson's Green, this speculation about "obsessive fear" seems to go against earlier guesses by Leslie Stephen, Ian Watt, and others concerning his female personality or by Eaves and Kimpel on his masochism. Without some concensus on norms for inquiry, anything goes. In "real life," however, we know that Richardson was a generous benefactor of Mrs. Lætitia Pilkington, a literary woman but also a known adultress; nevertheless, she expressed sincere gratitude and never complained of having been treated as an "obscenity," even

though she cheerfully exploited her notoriety rather than cast herself as a penitent Magdalen. Furthermore, Richardson's close friendship with Lady Bradshaigh seems almost disappointingly free of the obsessions his novels may suggest.

What Flynn confuses in this study is all the usual evidence of Richardson's personality deriving from his letters with the very different fictional writing within a literary genre he painstakingly defined as a new event. Maybe, as his biographers believed, the search for the "real" Richardson was doomed at the outset, entrapping the critic in a welter of psycho-social fantasy that at once reveals everything and nothing. Whether the ontology of the self is only a matter of language is an intriguing question never asked in this otherwise capacious essay. In only a few pages, for instance, Merleau-Ponty may have put the ghost to rest by identifying the erotic writer with the verbal means of generating the reader's response: "The public prefers to believe that the writer, as a being of unknown species, must have certain sensations which contain everything and are like Black Masses. The erotic writer banks on this legend (and makes it all the more credible to the extent that sex for many men is the only way to the extraordinary). But there is a trick with mirrors here between what is written and what is lived. A good part of eroticism is on paper" [*Signs* (Evanston: Northwestern, 1964), p. 310]. Among the several delightful excursions into Georgian England here is one on the prevalence of "harem fantasies" among the upper classes, and Flynn brings her material up so close that it is difficult not to imagine Richardson writing his erotic fiction in a London bagnio to compensate for his presumed impotence. But as his playful letter to his good wife, Bett, suggests after the completion of *Clarissa*, the aging, corpulent, and diseased husband had not only enjoyed an affair on paper but won a friend who seemingly could commiserate with the neglected wife while being brought into existence.

University of Illinois JOHN A. DUSSINGER

Kenneth Ramchand, ed., *Best West Indian Stories*. Nelson Caribbean, 1982. pp. 186. Unpriced.

Although this anthology of West Indian short fiction is largely designed for secondary schools, it can be a useful text for university students, especially those unfamiliar with West Indian literature. Ramchand has chosen several well-known pieces: Anthony's skill in calling up the sensitive, imaginative world of childhood is represented by "Enchanted Alley" whose boy-narrator may be regarded as a prototype of other youngsters in his later fiction; "At the

Stelling," John Hearne's compellingly taut story, is also there, and Selvon is represented by "Cane is Bitter" and "My Girl and the City." The latter was chosen because, presumably, it is an example of the genre's power to convey mood and feeling. But I do not think it is one of Selvon's better efforts: like Jan Williams' melodramatic "Arise, My love," it is, one feels, uncommonly self-conscious, overwritten in places ("... waving my hand in the air as if to catch the words floating about me and give them mission"), and even adolescent at times. Selvon's "Brackley and the Bed" would have been a better choice, and indeed it is surprising that this effervescent story was not chosen since Ramchand himself cites it as a fine example of the short story's oral resonances. But there can be no quarrel with his selection of Rhys' "I used to Live Here Once" and Mais' "Red Dirt Don't Wash." The former, like Janice Shinebourne's "The Bridge," is a splendid example of how well-crafted compression and intensity of focus can raise the short story above the ruck of mediocre fiction; and the latter is a very carefully crafted story of a youngster's slow awakening which is climaxed by a sort of Joycean epiphany.

Ramchand, rather wisely, has not confined his selection to the better-known stars; several of the lesser-known lights are also included in the anthology. In John Stewart's "Stick Song," for instance, an exiled Trinidadian, who takes the name of a nineteenth-century slave and folk hero of sorts, returns home and has an emotional, even transcendental, encounter with memories of his vestigial African past. The story focuses upon the cultural, religio-political resonances of stickfighting, a theme Earl Lovelace has explored in his recent novel, *The Wine of Astonishment*. Lovelace too is represented in "Shoemaker Arnold," an early, charming story of a tough cynic who discovers, in spite of himself, a deeply submerged, but generous capacity for a passion he has too long repressed. Wayne Brown, better known as a poet, has contributed "Bring on the Trumpeters" and its rather verbose introduction. There is, unfortunately, something of a studied self-consciousness about Brown's introduction; but the story is a decidedly fine evocation of the tension and passion of thoroughbred racing at Port of Spain's Savannah, and, moreover, there is an interesting inventiveness in the narrative style. Noel Woodroffe's "Wing's Way" is equally engaging. This is a loving, even lyrical treatment of an alienated Chinese shopkeeper who is desperately trying to maintain a tenuous connection with his homeland in a torpid village in Southern Trinidad. "Her House," Clyde Hosein's moving story of Crazy Gina, one of the wretched of the earth, a derelict living in Port of Spain's famous Woodford Square, is a particularly sensitive treat-

ment of a human discard beneath whose rags one can detect a fine character and sensibility.

But Ramchand has omitted some worthwhile stories. For instance, C. L. R. James' excellent "Triumph" is not there, and having "agonized over Lamming and Austin Clarke," he decided not to include them in the collection. A pity: Lamming's "A Wedding in Spring," or, say, Clarke's "They Heard a Ringing of Bells" would have been assets, and John Wickham's "Meeting in Milkmarket" or "Casuarina Row" might have been included instead of Drayton's "Mr. Dombey, the Zombie," a slight, rather jejune piece.

Ramchand's introductory discussion of the short story is, of course, meant for secondary school students; even so, he tends to favour, unwisely, I think, the traditional, largely old-hat concepts of the genre. The element of surprise, for example, is not a particularly good yardstick for distinguishing between the short story and longer fiction, and indeed it is part of the nineteenth-century concept of the "well-made" short story which adheres to an unimaginative formula. And his definition of the short story — "it focuses on a single character at a critical point in his or her life" — is perhaps more applicable to the dramatic monologue.

Edgar Allan Poe clearly understood that when one reads short fiction the continuity of one's emotional and intellectual responses is for the most part unbroken. The first-rate writer can effectively exploit this quality of the short story, and several of the stories in this collection are the work of uncommonly talented writers.

University College of Cape Breton HAROLD BARRATT

William C. Dowling, *Language and Logos in Boswell's* Life of Johnson. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981. pp. xix, 185. $16.00.

This ambitious book has a number of potentially discordant aims. It is a deconstructivist analysis of a difficult text; it is a "partial grammar of discontinuity" in literature (pp. xvii-xviii); and it is an attempt to reconcile deconstructivism with "the Anglo-American tradition" of Richards, Empson, Wimsatt, and Frye (p. ix). The theoretical issues are the most visible, and the most frequently cited authorities are Derrida, Hartman, Miller, Wellek, Wimsatt, and Wittgenstein, while the citations of works on Boswell and on biography are surprisingly few, even in a book that strives to depart from established orthodoxies. Dowling maintains a generally satisfying balance by basing the theoretical discussion on practical problems posed by the text. These parallel investigations do not meet with equal success, however, for although his account of the *Life* and

his comments on literary discontinuity are stimulating and suggestive, his demonstration of the radical unity of deconstructive and more conventional criticism is illusory. This uneven accomplishment should not prevent anyone from reading his book.

The Preface introduces the main themes: the problems posed by the concept of narrative "worlds," by discontinuous structures, by the narrator's mediating and unifying consciousness, and by the illusion of presence. More than half of *Language and Logos* exploits these to criticize Anglo-American theory. The first chapter exposes the literary "world" as inadequate and substitutes a model, based on Derrida, of the *Life* as a plurality of worlds and antiworlds — a system of discontinuous, mutually deconstructive orders of discourse, each defined by its antithetical relation to the others. The *Life* appears in the second chapter as a work which undermines its own norms by presenting antithetical consciousnesses; Boswell's narrative consciousness is only one among many and therefore cannot mediate among them. Dowling traces different versions of Johnson from the periphery to the core of the *Life* in the third chapter, peeling away the moral speaker of Johnson's works, the uncouth private man, the Carlylean moral hero, the prosaic letter-writer, and finally even the central, anguished spirit of the *Prayers and Meditations*, whose utterances disclose an absence, not a presence, at the heart of the *Life*. The fourth chapter finds a formal model for the *Life* as a whole in the conversation scenes, where all consciousnesses are deconstructed into mere discourse, a game of language and speech at play.

Having shown that narrative worlds, the mediating narrator, and the presence of the biographical subject are all illusions, Dowling reverses his argument and rescues the Anglo-American tradition by asserting what he regards as stable sources of coherence. The fourth chapter argues for such coherences in language itself, for, Dowling claims, the words embody Johnson's mind and spirit. This rehabilitates the notion of presence. The fifth chapter discovers "an ultimate narrative stability" in the narrator's relation to the internal "audience as antithesis," allowing a wholesale resuscitation of formerly deconstructed critical concepts, modified and reinterpreted to be sure, but not fundamentally changed. Dowling states that his assumptions are those of the Anglo-American tradition, and many passages show this bias. For instance, the conclusion of the second chapter speaks of critical models collapsing when facing the text itself and goes on to characterize the *Life* "as a coherent sphere of phenomenal reality — as, in short, a literary world" (p. 64). This is not so much a reconciliation as a grafting of deconstructive techniques onto older ontological presuppositions. Dowling does not deal with Derrida's critique of those presuppositions, and he never shows

convincingly that the coherences he asserts are at all less arbitrary than the ones he has deconstructed.

The book's single greatest flaw is an Epilogue in which Dowling undertakes to reconcile all the current critical conflicts. He does so to his own satisfaction by conjecturing that these conflicts announce the birth of a revolutionary new humanism. To Renaissance humanists and, very strangely, to modern critics, he attributes the view that language "reveals the human mind in its divine and eternal aspect, summons man home to the abode of God and the angelic orders" (p. 176). The wishfulfilling conjecture, the glib historical analogy, and the rhetorical heightening are ornaments for argumentative poverty here. More a confession of faith than reasoned exposition, this Epilogue is irrelevant to the rest of this study.

Language and Logos is, then, a sometimes tendentious, sometimes obscure and oversubtle book, but imperfect as it is, it will repay attention. Its very failure to achieve its primary theoretical goal is instructive, and at its best it casts an uncommon light on the *Life* and on other works like it. Dowling has more to offer the Boswellian than the theorist, and even the Boswellian is likely to disagree with him, but this disagreement will be fruitful of insight. As for the condition of criticism at the present time, Dowling's book is far short of the last word.

JANIS SVILPIS

Books Received

FIGHTER, ANDREW, *Poets Historical — Dynastic Epic in the Renaissance.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982. pp x, 237. $17.95.

GHENT, DOROTHY VAN, *Keats: The Myth of the Hero* (ed. Jeffrey Cane Robinson). Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983. pp. x, 278. $25.00.

HALLIBURTON, DAVID, *Poetic Thinking — An Approach to Heidegger.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982. pp. xii, 235. $22.50.

HOLDERNESS, GRAHAM, *D. H. Lawrence: History, Ideology and Fiction.* Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, Inc., 1982. pp. xii, 248. $32.50.

MACK, MAYNARD and GEORGE DEFOREST LORD, eds., *Poetic Traditions of the English Renaissance.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982. pp. xiii, 319. $22.50.

MARTIN, PHILIP W., *A Poet Before His Public.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983. pp. x, 253. $37.50; $11.95 pb.

PINKA, PATRICIA GARLAND, *This Dialogue of One: The Songs and Sonnets of John Donne.* University: Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1982. pp. xiv, 193. $18.75.

SCHWARTZ, MURRAY M. and COPPELIA KAHN, eds., *Representing Shakespeare — New Psychoanalytic Essays.* Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982. pp. 296. $7.95 pb.

SENA, VINOD, *W. B. Yeats — The Poet as Critic.* Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, Inc., 1982. pp. xvi, 232. $21.00.

SERRES, MICHEL, *The Parasite* (trs. Lawrence R. Schehr). Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982. pp. x, 257. $17.50.

SHARMA, K. K., *Modern Fictional Theorists — Virginia Woolf & D. H. Lawrence.* Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, Inc., 1982. pp. 194. $13.00.

SMIDT, KRISTIAN, *Unconformities in Shakespeare's History Plays.* Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, Inc., 1982. pp. x, 207. $31.50.

SMITH, STAN, *Inviolable Voice — History & 20th Century Poetry.* Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, Inc., 1982. pp. x, 243. $32.50.