A.C.I.S. NEWSLETTER

June 1966
Hollins College
Virginia 24020

Dear Member:

The University of Kansas made all welcome, and the very cordial spirit of Hal Orel and the Kansas administration was well-matched by lovely weather. We understand that tornadoes followed in our wake, probably to accentuate the pleasing atmosphere we all enjoyed during our stay. The thanks of the Committee for a job well done! About one-hundred people attended in all. California, New York, Dublin, Ontario, New Mexico and points in between were represented.

Next year, Hollins will sponsor the meeting. For those unfamiliar with the school, it is slightly east of Kansas in the Roanoke Valley of the Blue Ridge chain. John Moore and your editor will direct the conference. We ask for any suggestions with regard to papers and speakers you care to send us. Many of those attending the meeting suggested using part of Thursday evening for the banquet and a pair of papers. It was felt that this would alleviate the congestion of work that has been growing at each of the past meetings; it would also allow visitors to leave without rush to return on the weekend to their families. If you have any opinions on this, please let us know. The meeting will be at approximately the same time in May as this year, unless the membership finds this period difficult. It was also suggested that some of the papers be duplicated and mailed to those attending in advance of the meeting. This would give us time for longer and better-organized discussion periods. Subject to the topics you suggest and the speakers elected, the conference will add this feature.

Each annual meeting of the Committee has the fortunate accident of being different in some special way from the last. This year the symposium on inter-disciplinary approaches to Irish studies brought forth some excellent presentations of courses in Irish studies at several schools. These presentations are one good reason why we decided on this late issue of the Newsletter. Those of you who wish to offer courses in Irish studies or who are looking for improvements for current offerings should find something of use in the ideas and curricula printed here. Larry McCaffrey's paper is particularly concerned with the European importance of Ireland from 1800-1922. While the temporal limits of his interests may have special appeal to historians of that period in European affairs, his general remarks contain several arguments one might wish to offer a dean or chairman for studies in any area of Ireland's culture

**Inter-Disciplinary Approaches to Irish Studies**

L. McCaffrey

In constructing an inter-disciplinary nation or area study program it is impossible in a semester, or even a year, to treat the complete history of a culture and still give students meaningful insights. The committee organizing the program should select a period of history; one that is significant—short enough to be thoroughly analyzed, yet long enough to reveal trends and characteristics of a culture.

I would suggest that an interdisciplinary program in Irish Studies concentrate on the period 1800-1922. It was a time when Ireland produced a talented and influential group of politicians and a literary movement that made a substantial contribution to the content of Western Civilization. From 1800 to 1922 Irish issues had a significance that extended beyond Ireland, Britain, and Europe into the Western Hemisphere and even the non-Western World.
inspired by that nationalism, a period that concluded with Easter Week, the Anglo-Irish guerrilla war of liberation, and civil war, might have even more value to a world-conscious American student than courses in Russian history.

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Roger McHugh, Professor of English at University College Dublin has instituted the following program at that school. Those interested should write the registrar.

Degree of Master of Arts in Anglo-Irish Studies

Roger McHugh

It is proposed to offer for this degree a full-time postgraduate course of study, consisting of:

1) A central course in (a) Anglo-Irish literature 1800-1950 with special emphasis on the period 1904-1939; (b) the history of the English language in Ireland; (c) the impact of Irish literature and Irish studies upon Anglo-Irish literature.

2) Short subsidiary courses in Celtic mythology, Irish literature and Irish folklore.

3) A special course in modern Irish history.

Candidates must be honors graduates in English, and of good academic standing in this or in another approved university. They may proceed to this degree by examination only, after three terms' lectures. An oral examination may be required in addition to the written examination.

Courses begin in October; examinations the following September. Applications to the Registrar, University College, Dublin, before September 1, 1966.

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John Messenger of Indiana’s Folklore Institute presented the following at the symposium. The syllabus is different for each year, and rather than attempt some compilation and for the sake of speed, I list both the 1965 and 1966 offerings. Those of you who wish the longer bibliography of suggested readings should write him at the Institute, Room 204, 716 E. Eighth Street, Bloomington.

Irish Folk Culture - 1965 (One Semester)

John Messenger

Textbooks


The experience of Ireland in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has many dimensions and offers as many opportunities for studies in comparative history and culture as any other country within the boundaries of Western Civilization. In our time students concerned with the challenge of Communism have demonstrated interest in Russian history, but in the underdeveloped portions of the world nationalism is an even more powerful force than Communism. An examination of a period in Irish history that set precedents in political agitation and organization, that produced an interesting form of cultural nationalism in a primitive and underprivileged community, and that created an impressive literary movement
VI. Forms of Irish Verbal Art
   A. Prose narratives (Greene; Leach, selection on Celtic folklore; Yeats)
   B. Proverbs and riddles
   C. Song texts and poetry (Hogland; O'Sullivan)
   D. Other

VII. Art of Storytelling in Ireland (Delargy)

VIII. Functions of Verbal Art in Irish Society (Bascom, 1954; Fischer)
   A. Folk society
   B. Emergent nation

IX. Influence of Folklore on Irish Literature, Drama, Music, and Art (Mercier)
   X. Use of Verbal Art in Reconstructing Irish History

   Irish Folk Culture - 1966 (One Semester)

Textbooks


Other Required Readings to be Assigned

Course Outline

I. Introduction

II. Field of Folklore
   A. Definition of folklore (Bascom, 1953 and 1955; Leach, selection on folklore)
   B. Forms of folklore (Leach, selections on folktales, legends, marches, motifs, myths, proverbs, riddles, types, and classification of folklore)
   C. History of folklore studies (Dorson, 1963)
   D. Collection of folklore in Ireland (Danaher, 1951; Dorson, 1953)

III. Irish History (Inglis)
   A. Prehistoric period (10,000 B.C. to 500 A.D.)
   B. Medieval period (500 to 1500)
   C. Modern period (1500 to present)

IV. Irish Folk Culture and Personality (Arensberg; Danaher, 1962; O'Faolain; Tracy, pp. 159-133)

V. The Aran Islands (Tracy, pp. VII-155)
Irish Nationalism & Literature
Bob Rhodes

The approach that I'll be describing is currently in its second go-around. While I'll be viewing it primarily from the viewpoint of the student and teacher of literature, I'm also hopeful that I'll give some real sense that what I'm describing is in fact an 'interdisciplinary' course. It's called 'Irish Nationalism and Literature Since 1829'; it is a junior-level, elective, may be taken for either English or History credit, and is taught jointly by Cahill and myself. The catalogue describes the course this way: "Irish Nationalism and Literature Since 1928. The Irish Question as revealed in the nationalist movement and its literary expression in the works of Yeats, Joyce, and O'Casey. (This course is the same as History 406)."

"At the outset, let me note what well may be two unique points about this course: first, it's taught by what is now fashionably called a 'team-teaching' method; second, it has the kind of specific limitation of period and material suggested by the title and course description.

"The course is conducted almost entirely by lecture, with series of lectures in history alternating with series in literature. In history we begin with a theoretical and practical framework of conceptions of nationalism before moving to four specific 'case histories' of Irish nationalism, viewing these, by the way, in their broader British political context: (1) O'Connell and Young Ireland, (2) Butt and Parnell, (3) Redmond— to 1914; (4) 1916 and the aftermath. And, in the case of literature, we have a series of five lectures: (1) Yeats—poetry and Autobiography; (2) Joyce—Dubliners and Portrait; (3) O'Casey—Dublin trilogy and InSHalfeen. Farn Thee Well; (5) more recent developments.

"This semester, our scheme has gone something like this:

A. Cahill: begins with Act of Union and moves down to about 1848 (6 lectures).
B. The Nation: ballad and popular poetry, tradition, language (2 lectures).
C. Cahill: down to Parnell's death (3 or 6 lectures).
D. Rhodes: Yeats and his Circle (7 lectures). Here I have to sketch in some political and national events and activities---at least minimal observations on such things as 1916, the Black and Tans, and the War, while they're only minimal they're also a kind of preparation for Cahill's more extensive remarks, and hopefully his remarks then give the literature more meaning, even if in retrospect.
E. Rhodes: Joyce (5 or 6 lectures).
F. Rhodes: Civil War (5 lectures).
G. Rhodes: O'Casey (4 lectures). By this time, with Cahill's extended remarks, we can approach O'Casey with substantial background.
H. Cahill: post-Civil War (2 lectures).
I. Rhodes: some recent examples (2 lectures).

"On the matter of evaluation of students: There are two one-hour examinations taken by all students whether enrolled for history or English credit; one in history, devised and evaluated by Cahill; one in literature, devised and evaluated by me. There's a final examination---history, half literature. Some sample questions: History: There are important similarities and differences in the nationalist movements of O'Connell and Parnell. Discuss what you consider to be the significant historical factors, variables and issues in the growth and ultimate defeat of the two movements. Literature: Quotation from Yeats's Journals for 1910---'Thinking of her [Maud Gonne] as I do as, in a sense, Ireland, a summing up in one's mind of what is best in the romantic, political Ireland of my youth, and of the youth of others for some years yet, I must see to it that I close [my essay on Synge] with a statement of national literature as I would create it and of its purpose. All literature created out of a conscious political aim in the long run creates weakness by creating a habit of unthinking obedience. Literature created for its own sake, for some eternal spiritual need, can be used for politics. Dante is said to have unified Italy. The more unconscious the creation the more powerful...' Discuss Yeats's career as an exemplification of his stated intentions, or as a failure to exemplify it, or both.

"In addition, we require a paper of 12-15 pages, topics to be selected in consultation with the instructors. As a matter of interest, you may want to know that students enrolled for English credit are currently pursuing such topics as: Yeats and Griffiths—more specifically, Yeats and his adherents vs. Griffiths and his followers through material appearing in The United Irishman and Sinn Fein; the Playboy riots in America; patriotic ballads; Pearse as a literary man; Young Ireland and Young America (Whitman and others attempting to establish a national American literature)."
"Having mobilized long-standing Irish discontent into an effective agitation for Catholic Emancipation in 1829, O'Connell employed a similar constitutional pattern in early Irish nationalism. In both 1843 and 1829 O'Connell carefully held agitation and political pressure within legal limits, for he fully expected to win concessions on the Repeal question by the same tactics that had won Catholic Emancipation. But in 1843 his cause did not find so sympathetic an audience in England, and, taking advantage of this, Sir Robert Peel frustrated O'Connell's methods first by calculated indifference to Repeal agitation and finally, when the opportunity presented itself, by an open ban on a mass meeting at Clontarf. Rather than risk an outbreak of violence, O'Connell called off his followers.

"After the setback at Clontarf O'Connell's influence on the course of Irish nationalism diminished rapidly, for with the failure of constitutional methods of agitation in 1843 the militant nationals saw their only hope in subversive action, and the Irish question became marked by increasing bitterness and violence. According to Mr. McCaffrey, O'Connell failed because he did not realize that the political climate of 1843 required different tactics. But he did not fail completely. His efforts forced Peel to reexamine the Irish question, and Peel's new policies might well have achieved a peaceful solution had it not been for bitter opposition in England and famine in Ireland.

"The significance of this study, however, extends beyond the affairs of England and Ireland. It shows Daniel O'Connell to be among the first to develop the now familiar tactics of constitutional democratic political agitation and it also demonstrates the limitations inherent in these tactics."

The Irish Stage in the County Tones: 1720-1800, by William S. Clark, has just been published. It contains twelve illustrations in addition to 405 pages of text. It is published by the Oxford University Press and is intended to be of interest to all readers of Irish social history, not simply to theatre specialists.

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Yeatsiana

For those of you who have caught up on your Yeats bibliography and who may not have been informed, The James Joyce Quarterly in its Winter 1966 issue has devoted many of its pages to W.B.Y. Richard Rain has an interesting essay on the Yeats Centenary in Ireland. The Quarterly is published by the University of Tulsa.

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Requests for Information

Henry Summerfield writes the following: "Through my research on 'A.E.,' on whom I am writing a book, I have come in contact with Mr. Alan Denison, compiler of Printed Writings of George W. Russell (A.E.) and editor of Letters from A.E. Mr. Denison, who lives in England, is now writing a book on John Hughes, the sculptor, and he has asked me to try to trace the whereabouts of the two pictures described below, which were sold at the John Quinn Sale, New York, February 1927, by the American Art Association Galleries (The Parke-Bennet Galleries):

Catalogue, p. 114, item 274-A: "John Hughes. Two small pencil drawings in one frame. Both by John Butler Yeats the Elder; dated June 1903 by the artist. Autographed by the subject."