

# ACIS Newsletter

Published for the American Committee for Irish Studies

Hollins College, Virginia, 24020

Frank O'Brien, Editor  
Hollins College

Jim Ford, Bibliographical Editor  
Boston Public Library

Spring, 1970

This edition of the Newsletter is being edited from Dublin where your editor will be staying until the latter part of July 1970. Anyone wishing to change a mailing address should continue sending such requests to Hollins College. Other commissions could be sent to Frank O'Brien, 19 Eton Square, Terenure, Dublin 6.

## I.A.S.A.I.L.: Summer Conference

The International Association for the Study of Anglo-Irish Literature plans its first conference on 24-28 August 1970 in Dublin. A. Norman Jeffares, Chairman, has written as follows: "the aims of the Association are to encourage the study of Anglo-Irish Literature by holding conferences and other meetings from time to time and by issuing a news letter, as well as circulating information about library holdings, lecture courses, etc. We have been in close touch with the Committee recently formed by the Royal Irish Academy for the Study of Anglo-Irish Language and Literature: our activities will be complementary, and I.A.S.A.I.L.'s Committee includes the Chairman of the Royal Irish Academy's Committee."

Annual subscription of membership to the Committee is £2,2 s.; undergraduate membership is £1,1s. Please send fees or requests for information to: John Kelly, Esq., Treasurer, Keynes College, University of Kent at Canterbury, Canterbury, Kent.

## British Studies: S. M. U. Press

CURRENT RESEARCH IN BRITISH STUDIES is published quadrennially for the Conference on British Studies, an organization of American and Canadian scholars and students. The sixth edition lists and classifies work in progress at the end of the year 1968. It includes the research projects of approximately 850 scholars and advanced graduate students. Classification is both chronological and topical. Price is \$4.00 per copy: Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas 75222.

## Works in Progress

Ronald Ayling and Michael J. Durkan are to publish (via Macmillan & Co. Ltd.) a Bibliography of Sean O'Casey's Writings. Any help that ACIS members can give concerning rare O'Casey publications, or out-of-the way journals that contain letters and articles by him, or any bibliographical information would be much appreciated. Send any information to Mr. Durkan, Olin Library, Wesleyan University.

### ACIS Annual Congress

Be reminded that the 1970 meeting will be held from April 30 to May 2nd. "Quidnunc" of The Irish Times, February 4, 1970 has written of the reason for the change: "Originally, the meeting was to have been held from May 7th to 10th. The reason for bringing it forward is that a rock festival (nothing to do with geology) is to be held in the Carbondale area around those dates. One of the organisers of the Kinsella function writes: 'We have an idea that a quarter of a million people (or more) swirling through the neighbourhood would considerably dilute the Irishness of the occasion.'"

Note: Agenda items for the business meeting must be sent to the Secretary, Robert Rhodes of Cortland, now.

### Joyce Translation

In 1968, Professor Chon-Keun-Kim, Soodo Women's College, Seoul, Korea published a two volume translation of Joyce's Ulysses. He seeks a grant to enable him to visit Ireland for one year's study of Joyce's background. Professor Roger McHugh of University College, Dublin has forwarded this information, and he wonders if there might be a source of grants for such a visit in the United States. Members having any information should communicate with the Professor first mentioned.

### Summer Travel

Despite the uncongenial winter skies in Dublin, summer comes on, (one hopes). The Synott Travel Agency has just forwarded information about the Irish Benevolent Association summer air fares. It would be best to write now as the fares listed seemed quite reasonable. Please mention the ACIS Newsletter in any request for membership; write Brian Callander, Synott Travel, 415 Lexington Avenue, New York 10017.

Car rentals should be made in advance of your departure from North America, if you expect to hire a car. Dublin car firms are quite busy in the summer months. Rates begin at \$4.20 a day plus .04 a mile in the period 1 July to 30 September. Hertz and Avis have agencies here.

### The Cuala Press

The work of the Dun Emer Press, later the Cuala Press, founded by Elizabeth Corbet Yeats in 1903, is a part of the literary history of the twentieth century. In reviving the Cuala Press the Directors (Michael B. Yeats, Anne Yeats, Thomas Kinsella and Liam Miller) intend to maintain the original policy, a distinguishing characteristic of which was the search for new work by Irish writers.

The highest achievement of the Press was the long series of first editions of works by W. B. Yeats, who acted as Editor of the Press from 1903 until his death in 1939. The list also included first publication of works by George Russell (AE), Douglas Hyde, Lady Gregory, John M. Synge, Ezra Pound, Frank O'Connor, Louis MacNeice, Donagh MacDonagh and Patrick Kavanagh. When Elizabeth Corbet Yeats died in January, 1940, her work was continued by Mrs. W. B. Yeats. The last Cuala Press book was published in 1946.

The new Cuala Press books will continue the traditions first set in the original prospectus of 1903, which is reproduced in facsimile overleaf. The typographical standards set by Emery Walker will be adhered to. The same type-faced, Caslon, in the same size, will be used. The books will be printed at the original hand-press used since 1903. The paper, as in the earlier books, will be specially made at Saggart, County Dublin, by the Swiftbrook Mills and bindings, in linen with coloured boards, will also remain unchanged. The publications will include the best new work being written in Ireland, printed with the same craftsmanship that made the Cuala Press famous amongst book collectors everywhere.

As with the original series, the first new Cuala Press edition will be a work by W. B. Yeats. This is Reflections, transcribed and edited by Curtis Bradford from the hitherto unpublished sections of the 1908-1914 Journals. The edition will be limited to five hundred numbered copies, and will be ready in the winter of 1969. This will be followed by The Frenzy of Sweeny, a lyrical play by Austin Clarke, first printings of works by Ezra Pound, John Montague and Thomas Kinsella, and a three-act play The Silencers, by Jack B. Yeats.

Intending subscribers should write to the Cuala Press at: 116 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin, 2.

### Synge Centenary Committee

Under the auspices of University College, Dublin and Trinity College, Dublin the Synge commemoration will be held in Dublin from April 27 to May 1, 1971. Several prominent Synge scholars will read papers, and there will be an exhibition of books and manuscripts and related material at Trinity College. An exhibition of paintings of and by his contemporaries will be displayed at the National Gallery, and there will be performances of his plays at the Abbey. Write Maurice Harmon, Executive Secretary, c/o University College, Dublin for further details.

### Irish Folk Culture: Reading List

John Messenger will be pleased to send any member a list of texts used in his anthropology course at Indiana University's Folklore Institute at Bloomington. The 13 page compilation contains a course outline and a bibliography listing; it is up-to-date and valuable, to say the least, for anyone planning such a course or intending to use sources in the field of folk studies.

Messenger's study of Aran life, Inis Beag, has just been released by Holt.

### ACIS Reprints

Monographs in the series (vols. 2 through 6) are available at the University of Chicago Bookstore at \$1.25 plus postage. The reprint of F. N. Robinson's "Satirists and Enchanters" is out of print.

### School of Irish Studies: Dublin

Students considering full or part year study in Irish Studies in Dublin are advised of the program directed by Maurice Harmon of University College, Dublin. Applications for the fall term (24 September - 11 December 1970)

must be received by 1 August 1970. The School of Irish Studies has credit arrangements with two American colleges and should be able to work out similar arrangements with students from other American colleges or universities. Depending on terms desired, travel and accommodation arrangements, tuition ranges from \$960.00 to \$3,575.00. Full particulars may be had from: The Secretary, School of Irish Studies, Ely Hall, 7 Ely Place, Dublin 2, Ireland.

#### ACIS Survey

The membership is urged to cooperate with the questionnaire sent out by Robert Rhodes, ACIS Secretary. Only by a full reply can we hope to have a clear picture of the character and depth of programs of Irish courses, fellowships, and the like in North America. Between them, your editor and Rhodes receive easily two request a month from college and graduate students about offerings and places of study. Please return the questionnaire as soon as possible. It will do much to further scholars and scholarships in Irish studies.

#### Dublin Notes: Housing

The rental situation in Dublin has become progressively tighter in the past two years. Unfortunately Dublin is falling victim to the office-building boom that plagues other cities, and an increase clerical population has made rentals difficult - but not yet impossible. The American embassy will supply a list of realtors (estate agents) who have dealt with American trade. My own experience with some on this list was not exactly happy; one or two did not seem interested in half-year leases and the files of one other were not up-to-date.

One firm, not on the Embassy listing, gave prompt service: Mr. Jeremy White of Peter S. White, Estate Agents, 29 St. Anne Street, Dublin has said that he would be willing to receive requests for house and flat rentals. Since I am recounting a one-time experience, this should not be construed as an unqualified endorsement by me or the ACIS. Commissions on all transactions are fixed by the Irish Auctioneers and Estate Agents Association. Any one wishing a full listing of all agents in Ireland should write them: 38 Merrion Square East, Dublin 2.

Any ACIS member with family who wishes a furnished house (rent £65.00 per month, plus utilities) in Terenure for six months or longer may write me; I leave in July.

Students and others who desire accommodations in private homes or hostels in Dublin should write Mrs. Prescott, Irish Tourist Board, O'Connell Street, Dublin. This same office has a catalogue of approved houses, guest houses, and hotels throughout the country and will forward it on request.

#### Travel Publications and Fact Sheets

The Department of External Affairs, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin has a selection of pamphlets on Irish Culture, the Arts, the Provinces, as well as a booklet with statistical information on the country, and, further, maps. These items are free on request and would cost several dollars if bought in Dublin shops.

#### The National Library

The streets of Dublin are not the only locations bursting at the seams. The National Library, while still as helpful as ever, is reaching such a state that books, manuscripts, and microfilm will have to be stored in the portico or the Dail parking lot. At a meeting on 10 October 1969, the National Library of Ireland Society was formed to focus attention on the condition of the Library which, if it is to achieve its aims as a national institution, urgently needs greatly increased space, staff, and finance from the appropriate government body. This is so, not only for present holdings, but for the accommodation of a National Archives, when such a policy is adopted by the Government. The purpose of the Society is not to raise funds from the private sector.

Members of the sponsoring body include: Senator Michael Yeats, Professor David W. Greene, Mr. Dermot Ryan, and Professor Richard Ellmann. Professor Patrick Lynch is Chairman, and The Chief Justice, Cearbhall O Dalaigh is Patron.

Membership subscription is £1 p.a., and it entitles one to a reader's ticket, a copy of the Annual Report of the Library, and reports of the Society's activities. Any one interested in supporting the Society should send their subscription (a check for the dollar equivalent will do) to: The Secretary, The National Library of Ireland Society, Kildare Street, Dublin 2.

## I

A Note on Sean O'Casey's Manuscripts and His Working Methods<sup>1</sup>. Sean O'Casey bequeathed to his wife a rich and varied store of literary material. Despite requests from private individuals, libraries and institutions during his lifetime, the playwright refused to sell any of his manuscripts. Some of his replies to book dealers and collectors give the impression that he was completely indifferent to the literary or financial value of manuscripts and first editions; this is certainly not true, although he himself saw little point in the collection of first editions as such. He did not keep copies of first editions of his works, but he did present inscribed copies of each new work to his wife and to his children.

Mrs. O'Casey has said that it was Bernard Shaw who told the O'Caseys, presumably in the 1930s, that they must preserve every scrap of manuscript material, since it would, in time, acquire financial value. Thereafter, she added, "we put everything that would be worth keeping in a large chest reserved especially for that purpose." This is only part of the truth, however, for a survey of the material now in the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library makes it quite plain that O'Casey had hoarded material long before he became friendly with G. B. S. Amongst his papers are several exercise-books and notebooks that he had used in Dublin. One book of rough jottings is dated 1918, and there is also a complete holograph draft on separate sheets of ruled paper of The Harvest Festival, a three-act drama which was submitted to the Abbey Theatre at the end of 1919; with the latter is also a substantially altered thirteen page holograph of most of Act 1 of the play, fragment of a revised draft probably written after the Abbey's rejection of the work early in 1920. Notes for, and drafts of, Nannie's Night Out and Kathleen Listens In are included among the papers, and there are longhand and typescript versions of several early poems, some of which remain unpublished and appear to date from the period 1918 to 1922. Another valuable part of the collection is that which contains the various typescript drafts of Within the Gates and The Silver Tassie, showing in great detail the evolution and extensive revision of these two plays.

Of O'Casey's full-length plays, it is The Silver Tassie, Within the Gates, The Star Turns Red, Red Roses for Me and The Drums of Father Ned which are best represented in the manuscript material now in the possession of the New York Public Library. There are notes and drafts of The Silver Tassie in four collections of material, Within the Gates in six, The Star Turns Red in three, The Drums of Father Ned in four, and though Red Roses for Me appears in only one exercise-book, it is a very full draft of all four acts. The one-act plays are also well represented: of the eight, only one is not among the manuscript material, and that is the last, The Moon Shines on Kilenamoe. Drafts of the two earliest staged one-acters, Kathleen Listens In and Nannie's Night Out, are to be found in the same exercise-book, and each of the other five works - A Pound on Demand, The End of the Beginning, Hall of Healing, Bedtime Story, and Time to Go - appears in a relatively full draft.

No trace of The Frost in the Flower or The Crimson in the Tri-colour is to be found. Nor are there among these papers any longhand writings connected with Oak Leaves and Lavender, The Bishop's Bonfire, Behind the Green Curtains, or

Figuro in the Night. There is only a fragment of part of Act 1 of The Shadow of a Gunman, two very short snatches of Juno and the Paycock and one page of revisions for The Plough and the Stars. There are two brief early fragments of Purple Dust and a mere snatch of dialogue for Cock-a-Doodle Dandy.

It is interesting that several typescript copies of Kathleen Listens In (1923) and Nannie's Night Out (1924) were among O'Casey's papers, for he had long denied knowledge of their whereabouts. It is true that the former was first published in June 1961, thirty-eight years after its stage premiere in Dublin, in the pages of the Tulane Drama Review; and the following year both sketches were printed in Robert Hogan's collection of the dramatist's early writings, Feathers from the Green Crow. Yet in neither case did the author provide the texts, and he was only reluctantly persuaded to allow them to be printed because the editors stressed their historical interest for O'Casey scholars. Of the typescript copies of them among his papers it is likely that one or more were presented to him by students who had pieced together a text from fragmentary acting scripts extant in the Abbey Theatre library; but there are also carbon copies of the original typescripts of both works together with changes that were made for their stage presentation in Dublin.

The six volumes of Autobiographies are very well represented. One exercise-book reveals that in October 1930 O'Casey planned a book of seventeen short stories, and the ideas for some if not all of them were clearly autobiographical. From 1930 onwards he was engaged in writing what he called "biographical sketches", or, in the words in which he described the first volume of memoirs, writing "stories" about "what I saw and heard and felt during the first eleven or twelve years of my life". Often, these stories or events appear in one continuous narrative in the exercise-books, undivided by chapter or title. Sometimes there is no break at what is, in the published version, the end of a volume - in one exercise-book, for instance, the unbroken narrative sequence contains the final chapters of I Knock at the Door and the opening ones of Pictures in the Hallway: similarly, another notebook contains a long draft which eventually was to become nine chapters in Rose and Crown and ten chapters in the following volume, Sunset and Evening Star. As in the case of the dramas, drafts of each autobiographical book appear in several places: I Knock at the Door in five exercise-books, Pictures in the Hallway in four, Drums Under the Windows in two long drafts, while material for Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well is to be found in three exercise-books, Rose and Crown in five, and ideas and drafts of Sunset and Evening Star also appear in five places.

## -II-

We may thus see that a considerable volume of O'Casey's work exists in longhand and in typescript; this is almost certainly not the result of Shaw's advice, though it may have made O'Casey more careful in keeping successive typescript drafts of later works and also galley and page proofs, none of which can be found for his earlier published plays. It is certain, though, that at various times in his life he had a good deal more documentary material than has eventually survived. An Appendix to his early pamphlet The Story of the Irish Citizen Army, published in 1919, reproduces the texts of several documents which were most probably drafted by the author when he served as Honorary Secretary of the worker's militia. They include a manifesto announcing

the re-organization of the I.C.A., the first handbill issued by that body, an early membership card dated 1913, a transcript of the army's Constitution, and details are also quoted from the first poster printed by the Citizen Army Council in 1914. In the text itself O'Casey described his aims in the book as follows:

"Incidents are generally recorded as they occur chronologically, and few attempts are made critically to consider the circumstances that evolve them. The author hopes that the materials, carefully gathered together from original manuscripts in his possession, from notes recorded during the organising period of the Army, and from the contemplation of events in which the author participated, will be of use for incorporation in whatever history may be written around the events which culminated in the dramatic rising of Easter Week."

These original documents must have been lost or deliberately destroyed in the years from 1918 to 1922, when, at a time of guerilla warfare and of arbitrary armed raids and arrests, any evidence of nationalist or revolutionary sympathies was highly dangerous. We know that the writer changed his address several times during this period and that he was several times raided by Black and Tans and Auxiliary forces. Yet subsequent evidence suggests that at least some notes from these years remained in his possession in later years. Reviewing Drums Under the Windows in 1945 St. John Ervine, who was extremely hostile to the work's portrayal of Irish nationalism in the years leading up to 1916, took occasion to question its accuracy. O'Casey replied immediately in a letter to the Spectator (Nov. 23rd 1945), in the course of which he declared:

"When Mr. Ervine says that neither O'Casey nor anyone else could remember 'conversations that took place thirty years ago', he seems to be ignorant of the fact that O'Casey was writing of these very things in Gaelic League and Sinn Fein Manuscript journals, in the Irish Worker and in The Irish Nation."

This statement suggests that the author had some of these writings -- or, more likely, notes used in preparing them -- to hand when writing the early part of his life story, but they have not survived. Pasted into several notebooks among his existing papers are press cuttings relating to social and political events in Ireland in those years (as well as later reviews of his own work) and no doubt even more material of this kind was in his possession while he was writing the first four books of autobiography.

As a young man O'Casey drew and painted a good deal when he could afford the necessary materials. He had wanted at first to be an artist and, though bad eyesight dissuaded him from pursuing art as a career, he continued to sketch occasionally throughout his life. Many of his letters were illustrated, especially those to his children; when they were young these drawings, of people, natural scenes, butterflies and so on, were often brightly coloured in crayon or pencil. His correspondence also featured cartoons and satirical sketches, some of them executed with considerable skill. I have seen several of the playwright in comic situations: two really delightful ones, showing completely different facets of his life, come readily to mind. The first, done in 1928 at the time The Silver Tassie was rejected by the Abbey Theatre directors, portrays O'Casey being unceremoniously kicked out of that theatre's

front entrance by the august boot of W. B. Yeats, with Lennox Robinson looking on. The other is an amusing back view of the dramatist as an old man, wearing an apron and with his shirt sleeves rolled high up his arms, washing up an enormous pile of dirty dishes.

Once, browsing through the books in his Torquay study, I came across a large folded envelope which had evidently been used as a bookmark. On its reverse side was a fine drawing of a young man and woman -- her skirts flying -- engaged in a whirling dance. A man playing an accordion, street vendors with their baskets, and several men lounging on a parapet made up the middle distance of the picture, with a vague suggestion of tenement buildings and a steeple in the far distance. It was clearly the setting for what one might call the "epiphany" scene in Act III of Red Roses for Me. The writer confirmed in subsequent conversation that a number of the ideas for scenes in his books started on paper, not as lines of dialogue or stage directions but as sketches. He first saw the action or setting in visual terms in his mind's eye, then made a sketch or series of sketches of it, and afterwards attempted to translate it into words. Yet, though his notebooks do contain a few caricatures of characters in plays or autobiographical episodes and though there are some scene settings for particular plays in them, there are on the whole disappointingly few drawings in the mss. collection. One can only guess that many of his initial sketches, like the one for Red Roses for Me, were made on odd scraps of paper that have since been lost or mislaid. Fortunately, in one of the earliest drafted series of jottings made for The Silver Tassie (now in the collection), several sketches have been preserved. Drawn in ink on printed notepaper (headed "7 St. Andrew's Mansions, Dorset Street, London, W.1") are four scenes from Act II and one from Act IV of the play, accompanied by notes and fragmentary dialogue. The sketch for Act IV is merely a rough outline of the stage set, but the other four possess considerable graphic interest. Two depict the overall design for the war scene in Flanders, with a huge howitzer (centre mid-stage) dominating the picture, flanked by a large crucifix on the left and a man strapped to a gunwheel on the right. Directly in front of the howitzer, and centre forestage, is a brazier. The other two drawings concern the action taking place around the brazier when the Visitor and Corporal first come on-stage. In both the Croucher is huddled near the fire, four soldiers lie in various inert positions round about, while one in full uniform is lashed to the wheel close by. The sketches are especially interesting in that, with a few lines from the pen, O'Casey has here strikingly captured the men's war-weariness and physical exhaustion.

### -III-

In old age the playwright refused various offers to buy his manuscript material, declaring on several occasions that he did not know himself just what he possessed and that it was difficult for him with very poor sight to locate manuscripts amongst the mass of material that had accumulated with the years. It is quite likely that he really did not know in any detail the contents of his workroom; what is equally certain, however, is that if he had really wanted to dispose of his manuscripts he could easily have done so, as the exercise-books which contain most of his longhand material were easily found among his papers -- indeed several of them were not kept in the chest which housed most of the papers, but were freely available on his bookshelves.

It is clear that he had other more important reasons for wishing to retain this material, even though in earlier times, particularly during the war and for ten years afterwards, he badly needed the money which they would have provided.

I think there were two main reasons for his refusal to sell. There is no doubt that he wished to leave his wife something concrete in addition to royalties, which are a hazardous inheritance at the best of times. For several years before his death he had been anxious about providing for Eileen's future, and he knew that his papers were the only realisable assets that he possessed. Secondly, the nature of his working methods meant that even his old notebooks and exercise-books were a possible source of fresh material for new work. Again and again in his work he returns to ideas and characters and snatches of dialogue that he had recorded in the past. Thus his notebooks are full of a heterogeneous collection of material gathered and worked over at widely different times. This does not mean that his invention failed in later years for, on the evidence of his papers, this method had always been a characteristic of his work from his earlier days. Indeed it is probably as true as any generalization is true to say that most writers work in this way, continually drawing upon past experience, if not actual past mss., to modify and reinforce present experience.

Moreover, when we bear in mind that from 1930 or thereabouts until his death the playwright -- in writing his autobiography -- was engaged in taking, as he put it in the sub-title to the first volume, "swift glances back at things that made me", it is not difficult to understand why he should have had recourse to his old notebooks as well as to his memory. Even after the completion of his last volume of autobiography in 1954 he continued to use autobiographical material, as in the fine sketch, "An Army with Banners", in Under a Colored Cap (1963). The mass of material relating to the autobiographies in the Berg Collection certainly exposes the falsity of the following judgement in a recent essay on "The Autobiographies of Sean O'Casey":

"Outside Ireland, O'Casey doesn't seem to have been a complete person. He didn't possess the massive portmanteau of notes and freak, blotting-paper memory for dialogue that Joyce carried with him into exile, virtually bringing Dublin with him."<sup>3</sup>

In no respect is this true, for quite apart from the copious Dublin jottings to be found in his papers, O'Casey also possessed a remarkable ear for dialogue and a fine memory, both of which (as in the case of Joyce himself) were sharpened by his having very poor sight.

#### -IV-

It is perhaps advisable to give one particular instance drawn from O'Casey's notebooks to illustrate his working habits. As early as the 1920s (if not earlier, for it is difficult to date some entries precisely) O'Casey had planned to write a play concerned with the railway, no doubt drawing upon his own knowledge of working for the G.N.R.I. He wrote several pages of recollections of his work on the railway, which, though obviously intended for inclusion in one of the autobiographical books, progressed no further than an early typescript stage. In one note he thought of "The Signal" as a possible

title for a play. In another entry he mentions the possibility of using a man named Rankin, a building worker with whom he worked on the railway, as a character in a play. Yet though these entries were made in the 1920s, it is not until the early 1940s that he uses the railway as a background to a play. That is in Red Roses for Me (published 1942), in which the protagonist is a railwayman and the setting is a house near a shunting yard; the top of a railway signal can be seen through the window and the noise of steam engines can occasionally be heard. Later, in The Moon Shines on Kyleneamoe, published in 1961, the entire setting of the action is a railway station. It is not until 1955, when The Bishop's Bonfire was published, that the figure of Rankin was used in a play; here, the dramatic creation appears similar in character to that of the Rankin that O'Casey knew round about 1907, but though he is still a building worker, he is not connected with the railway. In this way, we see O'Casey returning to earlier ideas and adapting them for different purposes later in life.

This working method complicates the task of cataloguing O'Casey's manuscripts. It is sometimes difficult to date entries, for instance, and when, in addition, the exercise books-often contain material from widely divergent periods of his life, and when drafts of the same work are to be found in several books, the difficulties multiply. A hypothetical case may be given as an example. One exercise-book will contain the ideas for, and the rough scenario outline of, one particular play, followed by the rough draft of several scenes from another which was written some years later; the book will then have lain unused for twenty years until O'Casey took it up again to jot down some ideas for, and perhaps write whole drafts of, chapters for one or more of the autobiographical volumes.

The sequence of chapters in the manuscripts of the autobiographical volumes is not always the same as that which it takes in the printed form, so that material used in chapters in, say, Drums Under the Windows and Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well may well appear in the same place in one of the notebooks. In addition, O'Casey often writes entries at both ends of a notebook, and sometimes the narratives of two separate drafts will overlap in the centre of a book. The result is described in a letter from the playwright to an American book dealer, dated January 30th, 1955:

"My MS - what I have of it - is curious sight! I don't think I've a single MS word of my first three plays [this is inaccurate as the catalogue shows], though here and there, on widely differing notes on differing subjects, there may be a paragraph that came into my head suddenly, and was jotted down for future use. My first writings of plays and biographies are scattered about on various slips, in various books, among many things, and even the rough typescript of the first draft is a scattered thing, very different from the last thing decided. Many have asked me about this, and one script is in either Harvard or Yale.<sup>4</sup> A number of Universities - why, God only knows - have asked me for MS, but up to now, I have had no time to look about me to see what I have."

Earlier, in a short article written for the New York Herald Tribune and published on October 19th, 1952, O'Casey described his working procedure in greater detail:

"All my work is first written down in longhand, then a rough script is typed from this, changing, adding, and taking away (making the script better, and sometimes making it worse), till the whole work is roughly done; a second draft is then done, changing, adding, and removing again, and from this what is thought to be a final copy is typed, which as the days pass, and new thoughts come, proves to be unsatisfactory in many places, for a lot of changes are made in the galley-proofs, and some, even, in the page-proofs, before they are passed for printing. Work? Ay, manalive, it is, and I don't like it, and never shall!"

There is little to add to this description, except to note that, in some cases, O'Casey's revision did not stop with the galley or page proofs of the first edition. Three plays - Within the Gates, Purple Dust and Red Roses for Me - were revised quite extensively after their first publication, so that subsequent editions differ radically from the first published text. The Silver Tassie also underwent some important changes when it was reissued in the second volume of his Collected Plays 21 years after the work's first publication. One might add a further postscript to O'Casey's description of his MSS. On examination, it will be seen that his first-longhand drafts are overlaid by zigzag cancellation marks made by red and blue and sometimes brown and mauve coloured pencils - so that, in appearance, the pages look struck by forked lightning! In this way it is possible to see what material has been used in the first typewritten draft, for once a passage has been thus used, the original handwritten draft is cancelled in coloured pencil.

Critics have for years reiterated the charge that, in the words of P. S. O'Hegarty, the dramatist was "not an artist, but a propagandist"<sup>5</sup> or - if artistry was allowed him - merely a "photographic artist", as A. E. Malone declared.<sup>6</sup> While the realism and propaganda in O'Casey's work are indubitable - and it is not necessarily the worse for either - his notebooks make clear that he was, above all else, a literary craftsman in his working habits. Throughout his long writing career he searched assiduously for the right words in the right order and for the most effective organising of his material. He was a poet by method as well as nature, taking infinite trouble over details and writing many drafts, correcting and revising each time. Future detailed analysis will reveal and evaluate the exact nature of his deliberate and painstaking artistry, but even a less-than-thorough examination of the manuscript and typescript material in the Berg Collection affords fascinating insight into the creative processes of a writer whose literary discrimination and self-criticism are plainly apparent in his working methods.

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Note written in June 1965 as an introduction to a catalogue (prepared by the present writer) of the papers then in the possession of the O'Casey Trustees and since transferred to the care of the Berg Collection. It should be made clear that all value judgements like "rich store" and "valuable" relate to the literary and not monetary value of the collection.

<sup>2</sup> Article by Ulick O'Connor in The World of Sean O'Casey ed. S. McCann (1966).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 238-39.

<sup>4</sup> I think O'Casey's memory is at fault here: the reference is to a typescript of Within the Gates given to the New York Public Library at the time that the play was first presented in that city. There certainly were no O'Casey manuscripts or typescripts at either Yale or Harvard in 1955.

<sup>5</sup> "A Dramatist of New-Born Ireland", North American Review, CCXXIV (1927), p. 322.

<sup>6</sup> The Irish Drama (1929) p. 210.

Ronald Ayling

(Reprinted from the June 1969 New York Public Library Bulletin)

A Commentary on the Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats. By A. Norman Jeffares. Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1968. \$15.00.

It is to be hoped that this valuable book will be issued in a more available paperback edition. But the hardback is a handsome job of bookmaking, and readers who will be using it over the years may well require the more durable edition. Intended to assist the reader of Yeats's poems, the book provides a wealth of materials, some of them not easily come by, that will indeed make the attentive reader a better understander of perhaps the most important corpus of poetry written so far in this century.

Following the order of the poems in the Collected Poems (second edition, 1950), to which there are page references in bold in the margins, Professor Jeffares gives date and place of first publication, and date of composition where this is possible. He quotes not only the notes to early editions, but relevant passages from Yeats's critical and autobiographical prose; and helpful glosses of unfamiliar words and phrases are given. He intentionally does not provide critical comment or judgement, preferring to use his available space to give information on Yeats's sources, reading, and life that will enable the reader to arrive at his own evaluation. As the editor says, Yeats probably would not have objected, for the poet once remarked to his wife: "I don't want them to know all about everything." There is little chance that they will, now or even in the distant future.

The difficulties with Yeats's poetry (which, to be sure, can easily be exaggerated) come from the tremendous range of disparate areas of knowledge on which he draws. Irish myth, poetry, and folklore; many of the English poets from Chaucer to Auden; the occult tradition, both Eastern and Western; the literature and traditional wisdom of the Middle East and the Orient; the theology and ritual of Christianity; the Greek literary and philosophical tradition; painting and sculpture from many periods; the history of Byzantium

and Renaissance Italy; world drama from Sophocles to the Noh to his contemporaries on the Continent and at home; ballet and dance; many European philosophers and historians; Irish history, literature, politics, and controversy (especially in later life from the Eighteenth Century writers); and last and most important, the loves and hatreds and friendships of his own life. The difficulty is compounded by Yeats's habit of remaking whatever he borrowed into something rich and strange, a part of his own vision of himself and the cosmos.

Take "The Three Beggars." The old crane of Gort, who speaks the framing first and last stanzas, mutters about the slim pickings he finds:

'Though to my feathers in the wet,  
I have stood here from break of day,  
I have not found a thing to eat  
For only rubbish comes my way.  
Am I to live on lebeen-lone?'

Jeffares glosses lebeen-lone (following Henn in The Lonely Tower) as "a small fish or minnow." This puts the reader on the right track, but there is a long and complicated history behind this baffling Yeats Irishism. John Kelleher, in an article as amusing and witty as it is scholarly and sound, has traced this peculiar expression to its lair. (See "Yeats's Use of Irish Material", Tri-Quarterly, Number Four (Fall, 1965), pp. 115-125. This special double issue has many pieces of interest to readers of Yeats.) Kelleher finds that the term does indeed come from the Irish, but it was confusing enough to evade the knowledge of "the greatest living Irish scholar" who, moreover, had the advantage of knowing Yeats. The scholar admitted to Kelleher that he had intended to ask Yeats, but hadn't, and now "felt the question was forever insoluble." His trouble was, says Kelleher, that he knew too much. Expecting a grammatical expression, he had no luck, for Yeats had clipped the genitive-plural ending and inverted the proper word order, thereby producing a plainly incorrect but phonetically pleasing invention. "Lone" is Irish lón: "food, fare, provender," and "lebeen" is leighbín: "a little rag or strip, which by extension is used for any very small fish." (The plural should be leighbíní.) Even more complicated is the tortuous history of Yeats's use of Clooth-na-Bare, to mean the Hag of Beare in "The Hosting of the Sidhe" and apparently a mountain in "Red Hanrahan's Song About Ireland." But I haven't space to go into the details of Kelleher's account. Suffice it to say that his point is not to make fun of Yeats's scholarship; on the contrary, he defends Yeats as someone who knew his job, and modestly concludes: "Great literature is written and is best interpreted by great poets, not by professors."

As Kathleen Raine has shown, and as Yeats himself and many others have amply documented, Blake was a central influence and a lasting one on Yeats's theory and practice of poetry. Blake's hatred of "abstraction" was interpreted by Yeats in accord with his own anti-scientific bias.

Locke sank into a swoon;  
The Garden died;  
God took the spinning-jenny  
Out of his side.

And Blake's contraries without which there is no progression certainly helped

shape Yeats's dialectical view of experience, of the opposition of a Good and Evil quite distinct from the conventional view. ("Good is the passive that obeys Reason. Evil is the active springing from Energy. Good is Heaven--Evil is Hell."). In "Vacillation" Yeats considers the extremities between which man's life runs its course. It is one of Yeats's numerous "choice" poems in which the poet must sacrifice Life, and maybe Salvation, for the sake of Art. If he is lucky, his reward is a joy that comes from transcending the problems of living by taking the right attitude toward death. He must measure his work.

And call those works extravagance of breath  
That are not suited for such men as come  
Proud, open-eyed and laughing to the tomb.

Yeats was lucky enough to achieve "twenty minutes more or less" of bliss. Jeffares quotes the passage in "Anima Mundi" where Yeats describes this kind of experience. The blessed mood that seems to "burn up time" comes, Yeats has discovered, "the moment I cease to hate." Hatred, he thinks, is the "common condition of our life"--at least, he confesses, it is so with him. But in the poem remorse has forced him to turn inward; he can no longer lose himself in the beauties of nature. He imagines those heroes at the peak of achievement who have been able to cry, "Let all things pass away." And thinking with longing and admiration of the saintly condition, he yet rejects it (as always) for his "predestined part"--the poet whose theme must be, like Homer's, "original sin." For after all it is the poet's imagination (or the philosopher's, if the philosopher be Berkeley) that makes reality. Yeats must draw his sweetness from his own strength, as Samson drew honey from the carcass of the lion he had killed. Though religious goodness is at a considerable distance from scientific abstraction, they somehow come together in a Blakean sense as kinds of passivity that deny the constructive and transcendent power of the imagination.

What Jeffares' commentary shows over and over again is how much of a piece all Yeats's work is (though a very large piece). This book will be well thumbed by teachers in courses of modern poetry, but let us hope others as well will feel a proper gratitude for the truly herculean labor Professor Jeffares has performed. Yeats was permitted, or could permit himself, to vacillate between mighty extremes; we lesser mortals must content ourselves with more trivial vacillations. We have our own reward, though--the poetry of Yeats. This book can bring it closer to us.

In the list of abbreviations at the front of the book, WPM is misprinted for WMP (Words for Music Perhaps and Other Poems). And the attractive map of Yeats's Ireland, which has a legend listing places associated with people important to the poet, fails to show Cloyne (near Cork), where Berkeley was bishop--though it does show Kilkenny where he was born.

John Rees Moore  
Hollins College