

AGENDA ITEMS REQUESTED

All items to be discussed at the 1975 Annual Business Meeting should be sent by writing to the Secretary, Professor Janet Egleson Dunleavy, English Department, The University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee, *before* April 20, 1975.

As in the past, one item of interest to all ACIS members that will be decided at the meeting is the location of future meetings. Please send invitations from your university, in writing, specifying the year in which you would be willing to host an ACIS meeting. Details concerning the responsibilities of the conference coordinator and the costs expected to be absorbed by the host institution are available from the Secretary. If possible, alternative years should be noted (e.g., 1976 or 1977) for maximum flexibility in conference planning and maximum attention to the convenience of and travel costs to ACIS members.

By action of the general membership at the 1974 Annual Meeting, all Annual Meetings will be scheduled for a Thursday-to-Saturday period between April 15 and April 30.

ANOTHER DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR!

ACIS member Fraser Drew of the State University College at Buffalo is one of the first nine Distinguished Teaching Professors named by the 72-campus State University of New York, the only professor of English named among the nine.

IRISH-AMERICAN REPRINTS PLANNED

Arno Press, Ltd. has announced plans for an Irish-American Reprint Series, to contain approximately forty volumes of history, fiction, and scholarly essays (including selected M.A. theses and Ph.D. dissertations).

General Advisory Editor of the Series is ACIS member Lawrence J. McCaffrey of Loyola University; Professor McCaffrey has invited Margaret Connors, Joint Center for Urban Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University; James Walsh, San Jose State University; and David Doyle, University College, Dublin, to assist him on the Editorial Board.

Professor McCaffrey invites all ACIS members to send recommendations to the Editorial Board concerning out-of-print Irish-American material that should be made available to students, scholars, and teachers in this growing area of academic specialization and general interest.

american committee for



irish studies

newsletter

Published at the Department of English, The University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee

Volume V

February, 1975

CANDIDATES FOR 1975 ELECTION

In accordance with the bylaws, a committee consisting of Lawrence J. McCaffrey (History), Betty Messenger (Social Science), and Maureen Murphy (Literature) was named by the Executive Committee and approved by the membership at the General Business Meeting, May 3, 1974. Their task: to choose a slate of candidates from which the membership might elect officers for 1975-1978.

As Vice-President in 1972-1975, Professor McCaffrey, Department of History, Loyola University, automatically succeeds Professor John Rees Moore, Department of English, Hollins College, as President. Candidates for other offices recommended by the Nominating Committee are listed on the official ACIS ballot on page three of this issue of the *American Committee for Irish Studies Newsletter*. The *Newsletter* has been sent only to those members who are in good standing as of January 15, 1975. Members are requested to mark and clip the ballot, *affix stamp to addressed side*, and mail to Professor McCaffrey, chairman of the Nominating Committee, *before March 15*. The Nominating Committee will count the ballots received by that date and report the results of the election at the 1975 Annual Meeting at Stonehill College, North Easton, Massachusetts, April 24-26.

Under new Post Office regulations items that do not contain proper postage will not be delivered as addressed: if no return address is noted, they will be regarded as both undeliverable and unreturnable. Please be sure to attach proper postage before your ballot is mailed.

ACIS-MLA SEMINAR THREATENED

Fifty-five MLA members attended the 1974 ACIS-MLA Seminar on "The Mythological Background in Anglo-Irish Literature" despite location (a hard-to-find meeting room off an unmarked hallway on the second floor of the Hilton) and time (7:30 p.m. on a Saturday evening in New York City). In 1973 attendance was almost as high in the ACIS-MLA Seminar on Contemporary Irish Poetry despite simultaneous scheduling with the only other Irish Studies seminar on the MLA program (which obviously divided the potential audience for each). In 1972 an overflow crowd stood through the 8:30 a.m. ACIS-MLA Seminar on Douglas Hyde. Nevertheless, a petition signed by MLA members for continuation of the ACIS-MLA seminar in 1975 was accepted with reservations as to the possibility of its being scheduled.

"Theosophy and the Irish Literary Revival" is the topic chosen for the 1975 ACIS-MLA Seminar; papers have been invited by chairperson Professor Mary E. Bryson, English and Theatre Arts, Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana 59715. All ACIS-MLA members are urged to write *today* to Diana Jampol, Research Programs, MLA, 62 Fifth Avenue, New York 10011, supporting the seminar and protesting threatened capricious elimination of the ACIS-MLA seminar series after thirteen successful years.

REMINDER: ACIS MEETING IN MASSACHUSETTS

Fr. Francis Phelan is coordinator of the 1975 ACIS Annual Meeting, April 24-26, Stonehill College, North Easton, Massachusetts. For complete program see April ACIS Newsletter.

reviews

James Kilroy, *James Clarence Mangan*, Lewisburg, Pa.: Bucknell University Press, 1970. 74 pp. \$4.50.

No Irish poet between Goldsmith and Yeats has a greater claim to our attention than James Clarence Mangan. And yet, though he has had his admirers, he has not, aside from the occasional essay, received the kind of critical attention that he deserves: a study that would, among other things, determine his canon and text, define the context in which his gloomy and contradictory genius expressed itself, and locate him with some measure of accuracy in what may be called, without too great exaggeration, an Irish literary tradition. James Kilroy's recent study of Mangan might have taken up some of these important matters, but has not done so.

What Mr. Kilroy has done is to provide us with a slender monograph—some sixty odd pages of actual text—in which he jogs over old familiar ground, finds nothing new, certainly nothing exciting or significant in Mangan, and leaves him pretty much where he found him, which is to say where Duffy, O'Donoghue, Johnson and Yeats had left him. This would be a harmless, if not an especially useful, exercise if performed with care, consistency and a modicum of grace. Regrettably, these qualities are little in evidence. Facts carelessly contradict one another (on one page Mangan is ten years of age, on another fifteen, when first apprenticed as a scrivener), or they simply are not facts (Francis Sylvester Mahony was *not* an "ordained Jesuit"), or they are what might be called facts manque ("Mangan," we are told, "joined some of the established [!] writers of Ireland, such as Thomas Browne, John Sheehan and Maurice O'Connell . . . but he remained aloof from them"). This is a kind of carelessness not likely to inspire confidence in an author's control of his material.

In a monograph issued by a university press there is reason to expect that documentation, if attempted at all, will be full, accurate and consistent. Here the documentation is unpretentiously casual. Material quoted in the text may or may not appear in the bibliography; and the bibliography, even though "selected," is not always reliable. For example: there is a listing for James Joyce's essay on Mangan that appeared in the May, 1902, issue of *St. Stephen's*, an undergraduate magazine practically inaccessible to an American reader; but the same essay is readily available in *The Critical*

ACIS members who wish to review books or special issues of journals should write to the Editor, stating specific areas of academic interest.

Writings of James Joyce (New York: Viking, 1959), and on referring to this volume a reader will of course discover—though Mr. Kilroy seems totally unaware of this—that in 1957 Joyce re-wrote his earlier essay and that his final estimate of Mangan is quite different from that given in the item listed in this "selected" bibliography. Omissions of this kind tend to be misleading.

Not that Mr. Kilroy is misled by Joyce, or by Yeats or Lionel Johnson or any of the distinguished Irish commentators on Mangan. He simply ignores them, and in their place he presents Rudi Patrick Holzapfel—"Rudi Holzapfel, one of the most talented of the young poets writing in Ireland today, and himself a highly respected Mangan scholar, calls Mangan Ireland's greatest poet, barring none." And, still disdaining the Joyce-Yeats crowd, Mr. Kilroy quotes with approbation from Mr. Holzapfel: "If you like Joyce you get drunk in his Martello Tower and spew it all out at Forty Foot. If you like Yeats you can sit in the shadow of Ben Bulbin and read A. Norman Jeffares. But if you like Mangan . . . you reach for your pike. That is the difference. It is one hell of a difference." Alas, it is.

Mr. Kilroy's own style is not as vigorous or as spirited as Mr. Holzapfel's. Since it is a style that cannot easily be described, it must be allowed to speak for itself in the following examples. First, on the resources of modern literary criticism: "We even feel well qualified in the analysis of narrative poems, where character and plot structure can be analyzed in almost the same ways we approach drama." Next, on "public" poetry: "With these public poems, more than the personal lyrics, a rhetorical approach, proceeding from identifying the effects of the poems on the reader to analyzing techniques employed would seem most useful. The techniques range from choice of words to figures of speech, to use of ethical and emotional appeals and even poetic forms." And, finally, an insight into "Dark Rosaleen:" "his best-known poem is still subjected to recitations and quoted on any number of occasions."

A reader picks his way through the thickets of Mr. Kilroy's syntax at peril of his patience, and the passage, though blessedly brief, is not worth the price of a stout blue pencil.

Kevin Sullivan
Queens College, CUNY

James Newcomer, *Maria Edgeworth*, Bucknell Irish Writers Series. Lewisburg, Pa.: Bucknell University Press, 1973. 94 pp., \$4.95.

James Newcomer's earlier and fuller appreciation of Maria Edgeworth (*Maria Edgeworth the Novelist*) in the Texas Christian University Press Series offered a competent evaluation of the novelist. The Bucknell number, an abbreviated version, is far less satisfactory. Newcomer promotes Maria's cause with the devotion of a zealot, and he protests too much her current obscurity. Cover four promises to revive Maria Edgeworth "in her happy family with her adored father, stepmothers, and younger brothers and sisters whom she helped to educate, not to mention the famous in England and France, to whom she was well known by reputation and in person." That is precisely the problem. The author is so preoccupied cataloguing "Edgeworthian joys" and "Edgeworthian sorrows" that he distracts the reader from the fiction.

In educational theory Maria was unquestionably years ahead of her time, a 19th-century progressive whose essays

Raymond Porter. *Brendan Behan*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1973. 48 pp. \$1.00

This pamphlet, written for the series of Columbia essays on Modern Writers, is noteworthy for the brevity of its treatment of Behan's biography, the near absence of its literary criticism of Behan's work, and the length of the plot summaries which constitute 39 of the 45 pages of its text. One wonders if the undergraduates who supposedly constitute the market for this pamphlet expect themselves to be freed from picking out the works which are summarized so carefully for them, or if the instructors who put C minuses on their plot-outline book reports will ever stop to ask themselves whether Behan's work is so thin as not to be able to sustain genuine literary analysis, and if not what the point is in writing about him at all.

If there is some point apart from a definition of Behan's drinking himself to death or the borrowed heroics of his IRA emulation days. One wishes the pamphlet contained more of Behan the man, Behan the social phenomenon, Behan the brave and the wild. Porter does manage to capture some of the vitriol of his rebellion, some of the O'Casey-like majesty of rhythm and metaphor of his low Dublin accents, and some of the glorious incongruities of his characters' humor. There are just enough judiciously chosen quotations to make the case for Behan's wit and his remarkable ear for dialect.

In short, Porter's judgments of Behan are sound if scarce, and there is little doubt that he has read all of the author's work. However, I am not convinced that the constraining shackles of brevity imposed by the series format preclude more literary criticism than was evidenced in this essay.

Zack Bowen
State University of New York at Binghamton

Theatre and Nationalism in 20th-Century Ireland. Ed. Robert O'Driscoll. University of Toronto Press, 1971. 216 pp. \$8.50.

The conflict of cultural nationalism and political nationalism in the Irish theatre was the topic of the second inter-university seminar in Irish studies at St. Michael's College, University of Toronto, in 1968. The papers presented at the seminar have been published under the editorship of Robert O'Driscoll.

Richard Lovell Edgeworth, Maria's father, editor, and sometime collaborator, is, for example, first identified as Thomas Edgeworth. But it may be that the principal failing of the volume is that Newcomer has become too steeped in Edgeworthiana, that he hasn't the critical perspective to advance a balanced view. His own *Maria Edgeworth the Novelist* affords a more careful and a more convincing case. And P. H. Newby's *Maria Edgeworth*, in the English Novelists Series (London, 1950), and Patrick Murray's *Maria Edgeworth: A Study of the Novelist* (Cork, 1971) follow the same general format as the Bucknell Series, though they are more accurate, more objective, and better suited to the general reader.

Daniel J. Casey
State University of New York (Oneonta)

Phillip L. Marcus, *Standish O'Grady*, Bucknell University

The introduction and the nine essays are the work of scholars who bear impressive credentials. One must respect the professional competence of the articles even when they deal with areas—e.g., the *Playboy* and *Plough* disturbances—in which there are few undisclosed facts or unexpressed opinions. But there is an unfortunate tendency to slip away from the topic predicated in the title of the collection. The study of Samuel Beckett by Francis Warner, for example, is a useful explication of a thorny writer, but its title is a candid admission of irrelevance to the issue of art vs. politics. Other articles consider plays of dubious relevance, or move from drama into other literary forms.

This would be a pedantic objection if the supply of raw material were limited. But it isn't, hence one must ask why the Theatre of Ireland, the Irish Theatre, Irish language plays, theatre in Ulster, the Independent Dramatic Company of the Markievicz, the large body of nationalistic melodrama, the many letters and essays on a national theatre in the newspapers, and more that could be added, received little or no attention. The grand significance of such omitted material might be questioned, but not its historicity or its pertinence.

Turning from what might have been said to what was, I especially recommend George W. Harper's exploration of Yeats' love-hate relationship with Maud Gonne and her fellow nationalists. Also particularly worth notice is "Nationalism from the Abbey Stage," in which Thomas MacAnna observes that the Abbey, for all its successful resistance to nationalist pressure, staged plays which were nationalist in sentiment.

Among the principal merits of these two essays is the fact that they avoid the easy course, which some have taken, of simplifying the art vs. nationalism question into a true-man-and-traitor melodrama, in which Yeats, Synge, and O'Casey play the heroic leads, and nationalism is equated with strident mediocrity and the ethics of street gangs. If the issue were that easily defined it hardly would be worth the attention of serious scholars.

To conclude, it may be asking too much for a single seminar and a 216-page book to cover definitively its chosen topic. As it stands, the collection of essays forms a useful addition to any library of Irish studies. Still, one can hope that future seminars will choose to veer away from standard attitudes and well-beaten paths.

William J. Feeney
De Paul University

CELTIC GROUP TO SPLIT

As a result of proposed restructuring of MLA meetings, to be accomplished by 1976, the MLA Celtic Group has been designated as a "Discussion Group" (an intermediate session status, between larger "Divisional Groups" and smaller "Special Sessions" in anticipated size and significance). Because of the dual interests of those who have attended Group meetings, however, 1974 officers recommended division into two Discussion Groups: 1) Celtic Language and Literature; 2) Anglo-Irish (to embrace such subjects as Anglo-Scottish, etc.). Members attending the session accepted the recommendation by voice vote. It now goes to officers and members of the MLA Executive Committee for approval.


In 1975, therefore, the Celtic Group will meet for the last time in its old

format. Program Chairman Hugh B. Staples announces that papers from all sectors of the membership are invited, provided only that they do not exceed twenty minutes *maximum* in length of presentation and that they bear on some subject relevant to *either* Celtic or Anglo-Irish literature. Selection will be based on eclecticism and excellence.

Manuscripts should be sent as soon as possible to Professor Staples, English Department, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio 45221.

REMINDER: NEMLA, APRIL 3-5

ACIS-NEMLA members are reminded that the 1975 NEMLA Irish Writers and Writing Section will focus on Austin Clarke: chairperson is Professor Maureen Murphy, English Department, Hofstra University; place is Montreal.



american committee for
irish studies
newsletter

The ACIS Newsletter is published four times annually in February, April, October, and December, at The University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201. Vol. V, Serial No. 1

Editor: Janet Egleson Dunleavy
Bibliographer: Jim Ford
Editorial Assistant: Keri Clark

reviews

James Kilroy, *James Clarence Mangan*. Lewisburg, Pa.: Bucknell University Press, 1970. 74 pp. \$4.50.

No Irish poet between Goldsmith and Yeats has a greater claim to our attention than James Clarence Mangan. And yet, though he has had his admirers, he has not, aside from the occasional essay, received the kind of critical attention that he deserves: a study that would, among other things, determine his canon and text, define the context in which his gloomy and contradictory genius expressed itself, and locate him with some measure of accuracy in what may be called, without too great exaggeration, an Irish literary tradition. James Kilroy's recent study of Mangan might have taken up some of these important matters, but has not done so.

What Mr. Kilroy has done is to provide us with a slender monograph—some sixty odd pages of actual text—in which he jogs over old familiar ground, finds nothing new, certainly nothing exciting or significant in Mangan, and leaves him pretty

ACIS members who wish to review books or special issues of journals should write to the Editor, stating specific areas of academic interest.

Writings of James Joyce (New York: Viking, 1959), and on referring to this volume a reader will of course discover—though Mr. Kilroy seems totally unaware of this—that in 1957 Joyce re-wrote his earlier essay and that his final estimate of Mangan is quite different from that given in the item listed in this "selected" bibliography. Omissions of this kind tend to be misleading.

Not that Mr. Kilroy is misled by Joyce, or by Yeats or Lionel Johnson or any of the distinguished Irish commentators on Mangan. He simply ignores them, and in their place he presents Rudi Patrick Holzapfel—"Rudi Holzapfel, one of the most talented of the young poets writing in Ireland today, and himself a highly respected Mangan scholar, calls Mangan Ireland's greatest poet, barring none." And, still disdaining the Joyce-Yeats crowd, Mr. Kilroy quotes with approbation from Mr. Holzapfel: "If you like Joyce you get drunk in his Martello Tower and spew it all out at Forty Foot. If you like Yeats you can sit in the shadow of Ben Bulbin and read A.

ing its world of clerks, bureaucrats, entrepreneurs, and opportunists in terms similar to those implied by the title of Hugh Leonard's recent play "The Patrick Pearse Motel." We're in Paudeen's world in these books: the second-best lack nearly all conviction (the best are long gone) and the realists want to pull down Thoor Ballylee.

Hogan doesn't like the glumness of these novels and is to my mind less good on them than on the Furse books. He gets *The Return of Furse* in particular just right when he calls it basically a serious work and emphasizes its tonal shift from high jinks to sadness. But he faults the last books, as masquerading as tragedy when they are in fact melodrama, as he puts it. Disarmingly confessing his temperamental preference for lightheartedness, he comments that "much in *Leaves for the Burning* is horrible or ghastly," which seems wrong to me. It's a book of fecklessness, lost beliefs, alienation, dull routine, compulsive drinking, and aggressive or cynical or indifferent ignorance. Bad enough I suppose, but if we call them horrors what have we left for Ulster's gelignite and bigotry?

The view of Errorland dramatized in Wall's later books isn't "balanced" of course since Wall isn't Tolstoy, but to my mind it's not less authentic for that. Purged of fantasy, this dour, disaffected view of the Ireland of the 40s and 50s is closer to Carleton than James Stephens. We confront a benighted, Philistine country of surpassing drabness whose doctors don't know Yeats from O'Reilly and whose spirit is best epitomized by knots of black-clad Sunday loafers gathered on the main street of, say Mullingar in the ineluctable rain to watch in morose apathy the occasional Morris or Ford car come by.

Quibbles aside, I was glad to have my attention drawn to Wall by Robert Hogan's sympathetic essay. He's a witty, accurate writer who catches with equal deftness the right tone for both a medieval monastic schlemihl cum Sorcerer-in-Spite-of-Himself and an ex-student of the classics marooned as a civil servant in what is arguably the ugliest village in Ireland.

Stanley
Humboldt State University

James Newcomer, *Maria Edgeworth*. Bucknell Irish Writers Series. Lewisburg, Pa.: Bucknell University Press, 1973. 94 pp., \$4.95.

James Newcomer's earlier and fuller appreciation of Maria Edgeworth (*Maria Edgeworth the Novelist*) in the Texas Christian University Press Series offered a competent evaluation of the novelist. The Bucknell number, an abbreviated version, is far less satisfactory. Newcomer promotes Maria's cause with the devotion of a zealot, and he protests too much her current obscurity. Cover four promises to revive Maria Edgeworth "in her happy family with her adored father, step-mothers, and younger brothers and sisters whom she helped to educate, not to mention the famous in England and France, to whom she was well known by reputation and in person." That is precisely the problem. The author is so preoccupied cataloguing "Edgeworthian joys" and "Edgeworthian sorrows" that he distracts the reader from the fiction.

In educational theory Maria was unquestionably years ahead of her time, a 19th-century progressive whose essays (*Practical Education, On Professional Education*) and moral tales refined the tenets of a philosophy more pragmatic than Rousseau's. We are told by Newcomer that the Edgeworths thought proper toys developed good habits, that motivation prompted learning, that oppression and terror produced meanness and deceit, and then we are led through a tiresome parade of "instructive" stories about Cecilia and Leonora, Lazy Lawrence, Harry and Lucy, and Simple Susan. The uninitiated reader of Newcomer's little book has probably learned more about Maria Edgeworth the educationist than he cared to know.

Though Miss Edgeworth produced thirty-nine volumes, her literary reputation rests on *Castle Rackrent* (1800) and, to a lesser degree, on *The Absentee* (1812) and *Ormond* (1817). The success of *Castle Rackrent* lies in the novelist's portrayal of the narrator—in her use of Thady as the satiric plot—in the economy of the plot, and in the gravity of absenteeism in 18th-century Ireland. Newcomer only suggests such notions. His chapter on *Castle Rackrent* is reduced to a five-page plot summary with a bare bones analysis of the Rackrents and the "faithful Thady." He credits *The Absentee* and *Ormond* "good" novels, though he recognizes that they are flawed by melodramatic contrivances and excesses of sentiment. For the remainder of the canon, those other novels of manners that may be of interest to the literary historian and the social historian, he has abused the reader's patience. They are better passed over lightly than subjected to serious critical review in a guidebook of this sort.

Unfortunately Newcomer also perpetuates the myth that Maria Edgeworth accurately represented the Irish peasantry in her fiction. His claimers, that "she came to know the peasant inside out" and that *Castle Rackrent* "treated the Irish character, aristocrat and peasant, with absolute authenticity and integrity," are patently absurd. Though the Edgeworths were more enlightened and more compassionate than others of the Ascendancy, Maria's literary focus is her own Anglo-Irish society; her attentions are directed toward Big House traditions. The fumbling peasants, more often than not, skitter about Sambo-like in the wings muttering quaint blessings and ejaculations for the edification and amusement of their "betters." Miss Edgeworth tolerated the peasants but she never understood them, and, when she introduced them into the novels, they came off as groveling imbeciles or conniving rascals.

There are, in addition, several confusing statements and uneasy transitions that will lead the unwary reader astray.

Richard Lovell Edgeworth, Maria's father, editor, and sometime collaborator, is, for example, first identified as Thomas Edgeworth. But it may be that the principal failing of the volume is that Newcomer has become too steeped in Edgeworthiana, that he hasn't the critical perspective to advance a balanced view. His own *Maria Edgeworth the Novelist* affords a more careful and a more convincing case. And P. H. Newby's *Maria Edgeworth*, in the English Novelists Series (London, 1950), and Patrick Murray's *Maria Edgeworth: A Study of the Novelist* (Cork, 1971) follow the same general format as the Bucknell Series, though they are more accurate, more objective, and better suited to the general reader.

Daniel J. Casey
State University of New York (Oneonta)

Phillip L. Marcus, *Standish O'Grady*. Bucknell University Press, Lewisburg, 1970. 92 pp. \$4.50.

Marcus' volume on Standish O'Grady in the Irish Writers Series deals with three aspects of O'Grady's life and work: his writings about ancient Ireland (to which Marcus devotes half the book); his writings about Elizabethan Ireland (a brief section); and his political and social news on the Ireland of his own day.

While stressing the great inspiration that younger writers such as Yeats, AE and Rolleston derived from O'Grady, Marcus notes that the latter, in his attempt to re-create the history of ancient Ireland, never succeeded in bridging the gap between scholarship and creation. O'Grady in fact was never able to combine fidelity to his sources with a truly imaginative treatment of the material they contained.

Marcus makes clear the defects inherent in O'Grady's re-telling of the sagas: his uncritical idealization of Gaelic Ireland, and the sentimentality with which he strove to make the savagery of primitive warfare acceptable to the taste of his Victorian audience. Marcus gives instances of serious lapses of taste on O'Grady's part, of the ludicrous anachronisms in which he sometimes indulged and of the considerable liberties with his subject matter that O'Grady permitted himself to take. Marcus likewise observes the limitations of O'Grady's prose style—especially its conventionality. Perhaps this was the fundamental reason—though Marcus does not press the point—for the failure of O'Grady's works to reach a large audience.

Marcus makes the interesting point that O'Grady, in turning from ancient Ireland to the sixteenth century, had not really changed his theme: he was still concerned to celebrate the heroic virtues of a warlike native aristocracy. Hugh O'Neill and Red Hugh O'Donnell were modern versions of Cuchulain, and as such might serve equally as models to inspire the youth of modern Ireland.

In his final chapter Marcus discusses, as others have done, O'Grady's opposition to Home Rule and to the Land League, his appeal to his fellow landlords to follow the lead of Lord Randolph Churchill's Tory Democracy and his bitter disillusionment and scorn for their failure to do so.

What one regrets is the failure to shed any new light upon O'Grady's views on literature and politics during the last thirty years of his life. How did he regard the poems and plays of Yeats, Synge and Lady Gregory? Was he interested in, or excited by, the Abbey Theatre? Did he ever see *Kathleen ni Houlihan*, *Playboy* or *Deirdre*? Did he ever read *Hail and*

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

Farewell, or comment on Moore's depiction of himself at the famous Shelbourne dinner? How did he regard Larkin and the Dublin General Strike? Did he sympathize with the ideals of Sinn Féin? What was his attitude to the Gaelic League? What did he think of the Easter Rising (Marcus does not mention O'Grady's one recorded meeting with Pearse)?

O'Grady's self-exile from Ireland in 1918 is attributed to ill-health. Was it also due, at least in part, to disillusionment? How was O'Grady affected by the tragedies of the Black and Tan war? What was his attitude to the establishment of the Free State? No previous account of O'Grady has informed us about any of these subjects; nor unfortunately do we learn anything more from the present volume. All who are interested in Standish O'Grady as one of the chief sources of inspiration for the Irish Literary Renaissance would surely like to know something about his attitudes to literature and politics during the last third of his life: will this gap to our knowledge ever be filled? Do materials exist on which to base a judgment?

Giovanni Costigan
University of Washington

Elizabeth Boyle, *The Irish Flowerers*. Belfast: Ulster Folk Museum and Institute of Irish Studies, 1971, 160 pp. £3.00.

While the work of folklorists in the Republic has centered on verbal art, that of those in Northern Ireland has focused on folklife, or material culture. This book, one in a series produced by the Ulster Folk Museum, is the first to deal directly with a craft industry, an important element in folklife. Elizabeth Boyle is not, strictly speaking, a folklorist, but she has had a long standing interest in textile hand craftsmen, most recently those in Ireland, where she resided for a time near Belfast. In this volume, she combines information obtained through interviews and that acquired from the more usual range of written documents in describing "the working lives of embroiderers and their patrons and agents [since 1600], not only in order to trace the history of a special kind of employment and estimate its value but to discuss the way earnings were spent."

The subject of patronage occupies much space in the book. Despite the activities of those in convents and commercial firms and societal and private efforts to organize the female workers, described at some length, no segment of the industry enjoyed continual or marked success. For most of the period under consideration, the principal negating factor appear to have been the uncoordinated nature of the patronage, lack of official government support, an unappreciative home market, and a scarcity of dedicated teachers and talented designers. Today, despite improvement in each of these areas and a definite demand for the craft items, there is an inadequate supply of women willing to toil long hours over lace and embroidery.

In a final chapter, Boyle provides answers to questions—raised in her introduction—such as to what extent the industry contributed to sweating in the home and to the neglect of agriculture, whether their labor raised the status of women, what distinctions existed between those engaged in embroidery and those who made lace, and the commercial value of the work. Space permits neither a summation nor an evaluation of her views, but one senses in her comments a plea for increased support and supervision of this industry for women.

The title of the book should not put off the nonspecialist. The author's use of literary quotations, depictions of town and country life in various eras, biographical sketches, geographical descriptions of areas where certain lace schools flourished, translations of earnings into spending power, and references to well-known Irish figures usually associated with other situations help to hold the attention of persons with varied interests. Numerous miscellany—such as the explanation of the sculptures on the exterior of the Robinson and Cleaver store in Belfast—are also scattered throughout the volume. While I would have preferred the use of additional reminiscences of living respondents, I recognize the problems of selectivity in a work of this sort. A minor criticism as regards organization: repetition, in the form of enlargement of certain topics in successive chapters, was at times tedious to this reader. The book is attractively printed, and it contains many fine illustrations.

Betty T. Messenger
Columbus, Ohio

The University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee
Department of English
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201

Address Correction Requested
Return Postage Guaranteed.

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MILWAUKEE, WIS.
Permit No. 864

Deadline for April issue: March 1