

REGISTER NOW FOR DENVER CONFERENCE

ACIS Conference Coordinator Professor Peggy M. Walsh has set a deadline of April 5 for preregistration for the 1977 Conference. A special money-saving preregistration fee of \$22.50 covers admission to all academic sessions, receptions, buffets, banquets, and film showings: there are no other charges except, of course, for hotel and transportation and meals not listed in the Conference Program. Registration after April 5 will be \$25.00, as stated in the registration information mailed to all members on March 11, 1977. It is also an all-inclusive fee.

Members are reminded that the conference site will be *not* Metropolitan State College, the host institution, but the Denver Marina, centrally located in downtown Denver. Accommodations at the Denver Marina for ACIS members attending the conference are priced at \$17.00 for single occupancy, \$24.00 for double. Airport limousine service between Stapleton Airport and the Denver Marina will be available at a one-way fare of \$2.05 per person.

Registration fees and requests for further information should be addressed to Professor Walsh at the History Department, Metropolitan State College, 1006 11 Street, Denver, Colorado 80204.

SECRETARY REQUESTS AGENDA ITEMS

Items to be placed on the agenda of the 1977 General Business Meeting are still being accepted by the ACIS Secretary, Professor Johann Norstedt, English Department, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia 24061.

THEATER HISTORIES PLANNED

Professor Hugh Hunt, who may be reached at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin 1, is currently engaged in writing a history of the Abbey Theatre for publication by Gill and Macmillan in 1978. Professor Gearoid O Tuathaigh, History Department, University College Galway, is at the same time preparing a history of the Abbey's younger Irish-speaking sister, the Taibhdheare na Gaillaimh. Both Professor Hunt and Professor O Tuathaigh would be grateful for any information or for copies of relevant papers that ACIS members may be in a position to contribute.

american committee for



irish studies

newsletter

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Volume VII

April, 1977

ACIS CONFERENCE 1977 PROGRAM

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27

REGISTRATION, Denver Marina Hotel, 4-6 p.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING, Walsh Residence, 6:00 p.m.

THURSDAY, APRIL 28

Morning

Registration, Denver Marina Hotel, 8:30-9:30 a.m.

Session I:

Keynote Address: "The Celtic Connection," by Dr. Maurice Harmon, University College, Dublin. Member, Royal Irish Academy.

Panel on "The Modern Irish Writer and his Celtic Heritage." Moderator, Sean Gorman, University of Notre Dame. Panel: Contemporary Irish writers.

Afternoon

Session II:

"The Celticization of George Moore." Jack Weaver, Winthrop College.

"Padraic Colum, Purveyor of our Celtic Heritage." Jeanne Brown Krochalis.

Session III:

"W. B. Yeats and Celtic Ireland." Mary Helen Thuente, Indiana University—Purdue University.

"Yeats and Celtic Spiritual Power." Daniel S. Lenoski, St. Paul's College, University of Manitoba.

Meeting: Yeats Manuscripts Board, chaired by William M. Murphy, Union College, 4:30 p.m.

Reception and Buffet Dinner, Denver Marina, 6:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, APRIL 29

Morning

Session IV:

"Religion and Irish Society." Chairman: Emmet Larkin, University of Chicago. Participants: Karl Bottingheimer, State University of New York at Stony Brook; David Miller, Carnegie-Mellon University; Joan Connell, Chicago State University; Eugene Hynes, Southern Illinois University; Hugh Kearney, University of Pittsburgh; John Murphy, University College, Cork; Gerry Gunnin, Oklahoma Baptist University; Maurice O'Connell, Fordham University, and Desmond Bowen, Carleton University.

Afternoon:

Session V:

"Women in Irish Myth, Literature, and History," Shari Benstock, University of Illinois—Urbana, Chairperson.

"The Many Faces of Irish Womanhood." Janet E. Dunleavy, University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee

"The Women of '98." Maureen Murphy, Hofstra University

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reviews

Lawrence J. McCaffrey. *The Irish Diaspora in America*. Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1976. 214 pp. \$8.95.

This book, which originally was to be titled *Pioneers of the American Ghetto*, is itself a pioneer work in Irish-American and ethnic historiography. It is also an urbane and eloquent analysis of the Irish immigration experience by a writer whose special empathy for his subject has produced an engaging profile of the Irish psyche. Devoid of any element of filial piety, and exhibiting a remarkable degree of detachment and objectivity, the narrative is occasionally polemical, frequently provocative and uniformly engrossing. Within a deceptively slim volume, 175 pages of actual text, is compressed a sophisticated synthesis of the notable scholarship published to date on this subject, together with a persuasive thesis which distinguishes this study as a seminal work in immigration literature.

McCaffrey deplores the cultural imperialism of the long-dominant Anglo-American Protestant history establishment and urges American ethnics to study their country's heritage as participants rather than as aliens. In a brief but instructive survey of Irish history before and after the era of emigration to America, he reminds us of the reasons why the Irish, an agrarian people, chose overwhelmingly to reside within large cities in the New World; why Irish immigrants invariably felt more hostility toward Britain than did the native Irish who remained behind; why Irish-Americans supported the North in the Civil War even though they were opposed to the emancipation of Blacks; why Irish immigrants became the special hate objects of American nativists; and how the 19th century Irish American sought the establishment of a free and independent Ireland for much the same reasons which prompted twentieth-century Jews, Poles, and Blacks to seek similar goals for Israel, Poland, and black Africa.

What constitutes this book's special significance is its highly imaginative scrutiny of the real, rather than apparent, factors which shaped the destiny, values, and beliefs of the Irish-American community. McCaffrey seeks to exorcise the exclusively pejorative connotations which presently accrue to the word *ghetto*, not by idealizing the indisputably oppressive conditions of ghetto existence, but rather by emphasizing how ghettos served as havens in a hostile society and as half-

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

way houses between two cultures. He convincingly argues that Irish political expertise protected Catholic interests in the United States and, in the process, "Americanized" other Catholic ethnics. McCaffrey notes, for example, how the native Irish had learned to organize and operate within the Anglo-Saxon political system and to sustain a church dependent on private financial support and free of state control.

There are parts of this book which are, of course, necessarily more interpretive than conclusive. For example, is Irish violence usually more verbal than physical? Are the Irish of South Boston "one obvious exception to the successful assimilation of Irish-Americans"? Indeed, were the Irish ghettos in New England really unique in urban America because of that region's Protestant Ascendancy and caste society where failure and defeatism produced in the Irish inhabitants paranoid attitudes toward religion, politics, and other Americans? Another tentative but equally tantalizing proposition concerns the influence of the westward movement upon the diversity and character of the Irish. McCaffrey reasons that the farther west the Irish settled in the United States, the greater became their confidence and competitiveness because of increased opportunities and enhanced prospects for success. But if the definitive evidence needed to support any or all of these observations must await further research, much of it of a technical and highly quantitative nature, this study of a pioneer experience quite appropriately shows the way to bold new frontiers.

Yet, McCaffrey's summary conclusions are more melancholy than euphoric. He laments the loss of identity and the severance from cultural roots which accompanied the upward mobility of materially affluent Irish-Americans. He feels that two cultural forces in particular, Romanization and Anglicization, continue to modify the original Gaelic personality, and he decries the American Catholic school curriculums which feature poor imitative models of WASP culture rather than the rich but neglected heritage of distinct ethnic groups. McCaffrey insists that Irish-American students should know how Ireland anticipated the experiences of Third World countries emerging from colonial status, how Irish immigrants not only pioneered the American ghetto but also were the "Blacks" of the United Kingdom, and how the Irish partici-

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REVOLUTION MONOGRAPH AVAILABLE

To tell the story of Ireland and the Irish in the American Revolution, the American Irish Foundation has published *Harp and Sword 1776* by Charles Lucey. Divided into four sections, the book explores the common ground between Ireland and America, both ruled by George III; the Irish in Colonial America; the "Irish Line" in the Continental Army; Irish general officers who served with Washington. Suitable for use in high school and undergraduate courses as well as for a general readership, the book is available from the American Irish Foundation, 81 Shore View, San Francisco, California 94121. A donation of \$15.00 for six copies is requested.

The American Irish Foundation was

established by President Eamon de Valera and President John F. Kennedy in 1963 on the occasion of President Kennedy's visit to Ireland. Its purpose is to encourage and support cultural exchange between the two nations. In addition to its annual literary award to an Irish writer, the AIF has contributed to the support, in recent years, of the Killarney Bach Festival, the Listowel Writers' Week, genetic research at Trinity College, the Craggaunowen restoration in County Clare, and the cataloguing of the centuries-old manuscript archive of the O'Connor Dons. It has helped to establish an American History Chair at University College Dublin and has restored the American law section of the Kings Inns Library. And it is now providing necessary funds for many other worthwhile projects of interest to ACIS members.

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IRISH STUDIES

newsletter

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Editor: Janet Egleston Dunleavy
Book Reviews: Nancy M. Walczyk
Editorial Assistant: Gail Olsen
Bibliographer: Jim Ford, Boston Public Library

REVIEWS continued from page 2

pated in and contributed to the cultural development of western civilization. Assimilation has threatened ethnicity and, consequently, Catholicism, resulting in a diminution of the very pluralism which has been the hallmark and strength of American society.

Thomas E. Hachey
Marquette University

Richard M. Kain and James H. O'Brien, *George Russell (A.E.)*. Irish Writers Series. Lewisburg, Penna.: Bucknell University Press, 1976. 93 pages. \$4.50 (paper \$1.95).

The seeming dualism in George Russell, who was at once an agriculturalist and a mystic, is perhaps represented in the exact splitting of the seventy-four pages of text by the two authors of this short critical introduction to George Russell and his works. Richard M. Kain goes first with biographical chapters on Russell's Personality, Early Success, and Decline. James H. O'Brien follows with critical chapters on AE's Theosophy and Poetry.

Professor Kain's attempt to present the personality of Russell depends to a considerable extent on his gathering of remarks and glimpses of Russell from various contemporaries. We are told how Russell appears in *Ulysses*, in George Moore's *Hail and Farewell*, how Simone Téry portrayed him, what Stopford Brooke's diary said of him, and how Katharine Tynan remembered him at lunch at Sir Horace Plunkett's Foxrock home. We read, too, short responses to Russell's work by Joseph Holloway, W. M. Clyde, and Austin Clarke. This gathering of vignettes, along with the telling of the basic chronological narrative of Russell's life, is related in a direct, sometimes elementary, style, a style which must be the result of the burden placed on Professor Kain, an accomplished and important critic of Joyce, Yeats, and others, to present Russell—at least complex and at most extraordinary—in thirty-seven printed pages. Readers are given a rudimentary portrait in rudimentary style, and if this is a necessity or goal of a volume in this series, so be it.

The chapters on AE's theosophy and poetry are more interesting and perceptive. What little criticism there has been of AE's verse since his death in 1935 tends to repeat the same assessment, that the poetry is marked by monotony, repetitiveness, and a compelling certainty in the essential Goodness of everything that is, limitations that were earlier noticed by Yeats, Mr. Kain reminds us here. But Mr. O'Brien's discerning reading of AE goes beyond this assessment. His discussions of AE's poetry and theosophy are more than fundamental presentations of the beliefs and the matter of the verse, although the fundamentals are there. Mr. O'Brien does place AE with his contemporary Theosophists who were "dissatisfied with the commercial spirit, imperial politics, and official Christianity" found in Ireland, and were drawn to the evolution of spirit Theosophy proposed, in response to Darwin, Tyndall, and Huxley. The program of Theosophy provided AE a "means of recognizing and developing his inner powers," and Mr. O'Brien suggests that AE did "develop his intuitive powers to a level that is of first importance to those concerned with the possibilities of consciousness."

The verse, however, with its intense desire to see through or beyond a material order led AE to see "before and after, but seldom . . . the here and now, his imagination disengaging itself frequently where there was need for precision." AE's imprecisions remained because "he attributed to the psyche a control of verbal revelation surpassing that of the critical mind." Sound and incisive as these remarks are, they are not new, nor does Mr. O'Brien suggest they are. But he does dis-

cuss new insights into AE's verse when he notices tensions and conflicts inherent in AE's verse and suggests variety and change in the verse from 1890 to 1934, as AE's aspirations changed. In AE's *The Divine Vision* the poet, as usual, seeks "both human and divine love," but Mr. O'Brien's readings suggest that "one type of love excludes the other," and that the familiar unity found in AE comes into doubt. In the poem "The Man and the Angel" Mr. O'Brien sees a claim "that man's wisdom has a richness the angels lack, for man's knowledge is gained through suffering and purification of mortal experience, whereas the angels are restricted to knowledge based on pure intuition." To this reading Mr. O'Brien carefully adds the lines from the speaker in "Love," who says that if he were secure in the absolute he "would still hear the cry of the fallen recalling me back from above,/To go down to the side of the people who weep in the shadow of death." The possibility of such conflicts and tensions in the verse of AE allows for the possibility of seeing a new element of energy or vitality in the poems making them more interesting than generally assumed. The critical insights of Mr. O'Brien make this an interesting book.

William A. Dumbleton
State University of New York at Albany

Edwin J. Kenney, *Elizabeth Bowen*. Irish Writers Series. Lewisburg, Penna.: Bucknell University Press, 1975. 107 pp. \$4.50 (paper, \$1.95).

Edwin Kenney's attempt to define Elizabeth Bowen's "literary sensibility" in terms of her personal childhood experiences and her Anglo-Irish heritage is appropriate to the Bucknell University Irish Writers Series and differs from approaches in other critical books on Bowen which stress her relationship to the historical tradition of the novel (Heath) and to the ambience of the twentieth century (Austin). His results are, however, disappointing: his approach yields no critical focus for his discussions of the novels (the discussions are little more than summaries in chronological order with occasional references to points presented in the introductory chapter), and he distorts her early life through emphasizing what might have been its emotionally and socially debilitating aspects. (For a more balanced presentation of one aspect of Bowen's life see Gary Davenport, "Elizabeth Bowen and the Big House," *SHR*, 1974.) His discussion in the opening chapter skips back and forth among Elizabeth Bowen's autobiographical accounts found in *Bowen's Court*, *Seven Winters and Afterthoughts*, and *Pictures and Conversations* (to which he had access though it was published after his book) and her essays collected in *Seven Winters* and *Collected Impressions*. But he does not make clear, either in the text or by parenthetical documentation, which source he is quoting, putting the general reader for whom the series is intended wholly at his mercy in accepting the accuracy of his interpretations.

The lack of critical depth in his interpretation of the effect of Bowen's early life on both her decision to become a writer and what that art reflects is starkly revealed by his thesis: Bowen was a frustrated, insecure child who had to tell stories—that is, tell lies—to achieve adulthood, a condition which protects itself by telling lies. Kenney's highly conjectural approach is not even a sophisticated application of Freudian theories about the personal unconscious as a source of art. He orchestrates his theme by frequent repetition of such words as "guilt," "betrayal," "fanatical desperation," "obsession," "curse," and of course "lies." While it is true that her family wanted a son, Kenney neglects to point out that Bowen makes clear her parents' joy and pride in having a child of their own. She did indeed have a governess, and her

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mother was detached as a person, but she was deeply involved in Elizabeth's life, even before their enforced departure from home under her father's doctor's orders: "She gave me—most important of all as a start in life—the radiant, confident feeling of being loved" (BC, p. 407).

The most egregious of Kenney's distortions occurs in the following passage which, when followed by a more complete quotation from "Out of a Book" (CI), a source not identified by Kenney, will make clear the problems I have indicated.

Kenney says:

All through her creative writing, she confesses, there runs "a sense of dishonesty and of debt." The adult, the writer, like the child, relies for life upon being lied to, but the adult also tells the lies, creates his own fictions for life. The feelings of betrayal and guilt are connected in a circular process in which Miss Bowen recalled and used her feelings of childhood in her creative act as an adult.

Bowen, however, has said:

All through creative writing there must run a sense of dishonesty and of debt. . . . The imagination, which may appear to bear such individual fruit, is rooted in a compost of forgotten books. . . . The aesthetic is nothing but a return to images that will allow nothing to take their place. . . . All susceptibility belongs to the age of magic, the Eden where fact and fiction were the same; the imaginative writer was the imaginative child, who relied for life upon being lied to—and how, now, is he to separate the lies from his consciousness of life? . . . *did* I live through that, or was I told that it happened, or did I read it? When I write, I am re-creating what was created for me.

Kenney mistakenly interprets Bowen's use of "dishonesty" to mean "lying." She obviously means that no image in fiction is wholly original. In addition, comparison of the passages makes one uneasy with Kenney's glib equation of lies: telling a deliberate untruth to deceive someone else about the truth and lying in the sense of "fiction"—portraying as real a thing which did not actually occur. He has also superimposed "betrayal and guilt" on Bowen's emphasis upon a return to the past, both personal and literary, and its presence in all writing.

While fiction may "lie" to present a deeper truth, good criticism scrupulously avoids even unintentional inaccuracy and misrepresentation.

Barbara H. Brothers
Youngstown State University

Alan Warner, *William Allingham*. Irish Writers Series. Lewisburg, Pa: Bucknell University Press, 1975. 90 pp. \$4.50 (\$1.95 paper).

Darcy O'Brien, *Patrick Kavanagh*. Irish Writers Series. Lewisburg, Pa: Bucknell University Press, 1975. 72 pp. \$4.50 (\$1.95 paper).

Robert Buttel, *Seamus Heaney*. Irish Writers Series. Lewisburg, Pa. Bucknell University Press, 1975. 86 pp. \$4.50 (\$1.95 paper).

These three poets, published together in the sense of simultaneous critical scrutiny, come from the northern counties of Ireland, and bring to my mind two old literary questions: how far relation to and dependence on a certain place strengthens a poet's central work, and how far such a local situation helps the poetic process of achieving greater self-knowledge. These works partially answer and supplement these questions in relation to each of their subjects. The general conclusion for me is that Allingham suffered too little from these "soil contacts" in the wrong age, Patrick Kavanagh excitingly transformed them through visionary insight and mediation between subject and object, while Seamus Heaney has been forced to consider exploiting them caught in the over-stimulative "right" age of literary sophistication and

violence. If in Ireland poets are always born, their making—apart from Yeats—is usually touch and go.

Professor Warner's account of Allingham is gentle if at times on the verge of exasperation that Allingham did not make more of his gifts and Ballyshannon. Care and thoroughness are conferred on the background, and Allingham's addiction to Tennyson and England, in that order, exemplified. Allingham wrote an interesting diary, though no Boswell—Tennyson's views on Ireland are those of Barry Goldwater on New York, "Couldn't they blow up that horrible island with dynamite and carry it off in pieces—a long way off?" One can certainly agree that *Laurence Bloomfield in Ireland* embodies the poet's most interesting writing; its sharp irony towards landlord and tenant and its realism suggest Allingham could have been a greater Anglo-Irish novelist. The noble vision of Ireland at the end of the poem is alas, and too well we know, contradicted by Allingham's couplet, "Not men and women in an Irish street/But Catholics and Protestants you meet."

Professor Warner ultimately agrees that Yeats in his letter to Allingham's widow over-emphasized his Irishness; one concurs with Harold Bloom that there is very little Allingham in Yeats and once again suspects the motive: the desire to cover the tracks back to Mangan and Moore.

Patrick Kavanagh's stature as a poet is increasingly evident. His personality developed through each stage of his work and he was one of the rare people who talked of poetry as if it were love. Another aspect of his greatness is the constant refusal of a cultural mission or any care towards building up an audience; he was content to be linked to his readers by destiny. Professor O'Brien senses appropriately these and other aspects of Kavanagh, especially his scorn of symbolism as in the anti-Yeatsian poem, "An Insult," Darcy O'Brien gets his post-Yeatsian history right and he also understands the mendacity of parts of "The Great Hunger," and the problem that confronted Kavanagh after the sentimental verse of *A Soul for Sale*—how to stop writing in the Irish rhetorical mode that people want (and still do), how to tell the truth in middle age. Professor O'Brien does not accord as large a triumph to most of the later work as I do; but he writes well of Kavanagh's art becoming all: the life and poetry had come together. If poetry becomes at its best a natural, inevitable material, Kavanagh is a poet as much as Austin Clarke, with the difference that Clarke got his poems from his library or *The Irish Times* and Kavanagh from his walks and his "holy hour" rests by the canal. Kavanagh's greatness is his return to the earth and sunlight of Baggot Street. Of course the Yeatsian "Antaeus-like contact" in "The Municipal Gallery Revisited" is much more limited than any restriction in Kavanagh's subjects. Darcy O'Brien quotes John Montague's statement that Kavanagh did truly liberate his generation but "he liberated us into ignorance." The answer to that is in Kavanagh's final comment in *Lapped Furrows*: how can anyone be liberated into ignorance?

There seems a number of errors in Professor O'Brien's book: the poet spent several months yearly in the sixties in London not "several weeks each year," "The Same Again" cannot be dated to 1966 as I published it in *Arena* in 1965, and John Charles McQuaid would be "His Grace" not "His Excellency."

Robert Buttel in his study of Seamus Heaney deals less with ideas than does Professor O'Brien; he is content with close annotation of primarily the language of Heaney's first three books. He borrows Kavanagh's distinction between the provincial and the parochial. A provincial trusts only what the metropolis has to say while "parochialism is universal." It looks as if Kavanagh liberated us into "parochialism"—a concept

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obviously becoming over-familiar and the fact is that the metropolis, both London and Dublin, has treated Heaney's work very kindly. Professor Buttel traces the connections between Heaney and Hughes and Frost; Heaney is naturally the kind of writer who puts his eggs in the craft basket, "A poem begins with craft . . ." There is no allowance for the intuition that poems are waiting to be written, of composition as the difficult act of recording something from an outside source. The music is on the page; not, as Mandelstam suggests, playing in the ears. Within his ideological context Heaney is a good writer, and I think Professor Buttel is right in seeing *Wintering Out* as the natural development of the early books, stronger if marking time in direction. I cannot go along with all his judgments; for instance, "The Navvy" seems to keep a humanity not always easily glossed in other typed poems.

For all his concentration on individual poems I find in Professor Buttel's critical approach a defect noticeable in some other books of the Irish Writers Series: an academic timidity before a reputation and a humility towards Irish writing not always in accordance with reality. This courtier style is most common with contemporary writers and, in the case of this short study, is possibly augmented by reliance on interview material. Basically, with the exception of Kavanagh's work

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"Political Activism and the Literary Revival: A Confluence of Perspectives." Bonnie K. Scott.

"Elizabeth Bowen's Portrait of a Young Irish Woman Writer." Barbara Brothers, Youngstown State University.

Session VI:

"Michael Collins and the Road to Beal na mBlath." Robert T. Reilly, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

"Revisionism and 1916—Historians and Politicians." John Murphy, University College, Cork.

"The Anglo-Irish War and the Irish Political Tradition—Myth and Reality." Ronan Fanning, University College, Dublin, currently Senior Fulbright Scholar at the School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University.

Session VII:

"Hollywood Interprets O'Casey—A Point of Departure (John Ford and *The Plough and the Stars*)." The film will be shown at 7:30 p.m. After the film, discussion will be directed by Bernard Benstock, University of Illinois—Urbana/Champaign.

SATURDAY, APRIL 30

Morning

Session VIII:

"A Hidden Dimension of the 'Hidden Ireland': Celtic Links with the Continent in the Eighteenth Century." William D. Griffin, St. John's University (New York).

"The Irish in Latin America: Research Opportunities." Bryan O. Walsh, Catholic Charities (Miami).

General Business Meeting

Afternoon

Session IX:

Wyer Auditorium, Denver Public Library

"Leon Uris' *Trinity*: An Interdisciplinary Appraisal." Chairperson: Betty Messenger, Ohio State University. Participants: John Messenger (Anthropology), Ohio State University; Daniel Casey (Literature), State University of New York—Oneonta; Alan Ward (Political Science), College of William and Mary; Joseph Curran (History), LeMoyne College; and Lawrence J. McCaffrey (History), Loyola University and President, American Committee for Irish Studies.

Evening

ACIS Banquet, Denver Marina, 7 p.m. Speaker: J. C. Beckett

which thematically transcends boundaries, I question the drift towards regionalism.

James Liddy

The University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee

Reliques of Irish Poetry (1789), trans. by Charlotte Brooke and *A Memoir of Miss Brooke* (1816) by Aaron Crossely Hobart Seymour. Gainesville, Fl.: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1970. 524 pp. \$43.00.

Reliques of Irish Poetry is a reproduction of the 1789 collection of Charlotte Brooke's translations of old Irish poetry. Brooke, the daughter of the writer Henry Brooke, was an accomplished poet in her own right. Included in the volume is a biography of Miss Brooke by Aaron Crossley Hobart Seymour, whose preface to the 1816 edition is the principal source of biographical information on Charlotte Brooke and her work. The contemporary introduction by Leonard R. N. Ashley sketches the main features of Brooke's life, her devotion to her widowed father, her poverty, and her attempt at preserving the heritage of Gaelic poetry in both original form and in translation. Unlike the Macpherson edition, Brooke's volume also includes the originals. (Continued on page 6)

Irish Economic and Social History, No. 3. Published by the Society for the Study of Irish Economic and Social History, T. Parkhill, Treasurer, P.R.O.N.I., 66 Balmoral Avenue, Belfast BT9 6NY, Northern Ireland. \$8.00 or £2.50. [Price information, although not consistent with current exchange rate, is noted by reviewer as correct as stated: Ed.]

This new journal of Irish studies which has now reached its third issue caters to a membership of more than 500, a fact that suggests that the time is ripe for this kind of emphasis in Irish history. In response to Professor Joseph Lee's *cri de coeur* that a haporth of fact is worth a ton of speculation at this point in Irish population studies, Valerie Morgan of the New University of Ulster uses the parish register of Blaris, Lisburn to analyze the two centuries from 1661 to 1848. The issue contains also valuable articles on nineteenth-century rural history by W. A. Maguire on the Donegal estates and by Professor J. S. Donnelly of the University of Wisconsin—Madison on the Irish Agricultural Depression of 1859-1864. T. K. Daniel of Queens University, Belfast contributes a challenging analysis of Cumann na nGaedheal economic policy, 1922-1932. The issue concludes with an extremely useful series of thesis abstracts (continued from previous issues) and five substantial reviews. If the subscription is paid in sterling, it is a better bargain than if paid in United States currency.

Hugh F. Kearney
University of Pittsburgh

Ashley's introduction is interesting and succinct. About half of it is a discussion of old Irish myths and poetry as a national entity which possesses its own artistic integrity. The last part of Ashley's essay defends the Gaelic language and appraises its position in contemporary Ireland as well as the Ireland of ancient times. While this might be unnecessary for students and scholars of Irish literature, if the intention is to introduce the works of antiquity to a general audience, this part of the introduction serves the purpose.

Ashley's defense of Charlotte Brooke's undertaking might also be used as the *raison d'être* for the present publication of this eighteenth-century volume:

Charlotte Brooke undertook to save some of the precious heritage of her country's literature, something of the four great cycles of the bardic literature (of mythology, of Ulster, of Finn, and of the Kings of Ireland) and the varied and wonderful poetry that succeeded them. All this could not be permitted to crumble into dust . . . for the literature of song and legend survived, if only, like so many of the beautiful castles of Ireland, in ruins that merely hint at their former strength and glory. The ancient songs remain . . . 'Mid desolation tuneful still.'

As a history of a culture and heritage which has contemporary political and social ramifications, *Reliques of Irish Poetry* deserved to be printed in 1789, and the need for its reprinting in 1976 is no less legitimate.

In her own introductory essay Brooke makes no claim for any comprehensive survey of Old Irish Poetry. Neither does she assume a scholarly guise. Rather she samples, in an unscientific way, in order to preserve what she can of the several forms of Irish poetic composition:

With a view to throw some light on the antiquities of this country, to vindicate, in part, its history, and prove its claim to scientific as well as to military fame, I have been induced to undertake the following work. Besides the four different species of composition which it contains, (the HEROIC POEM, the ODE, the ELEGY, and the SONG) others yet remain unattempted by translation:—the ROMANCE, in particular, which unites the fire of Homer with the enchanting wildness of Ariosto. But the limits of my present plan have necessarily excluded many beautiful productions of genius, as little more can be done, within the compass of a single volume, than merely to give a few specimens, in hope of awakening a just and useful curiosity, on the subject of our poetical compositions.

The Brooke volume contains four heroic poems, three odes, five elegies, six songs, and an Irish tale composed by the

author herself from earlier plots and materials. The poetic techniques are for the most part simple with alternate rhyme and ballad stanzas in the majority of cases, and in the case of some heroic poetry, rhyming iambic pentameter couplets. Like the author's prose, the stanzas are direct and simple, rendered in effective, lyrical language. An interesting aspect of the poems is Brooke's extensive footnote documentation. Particularly interesting for the general reader, the footnotes explain the words, names, and situations included in the poetry. Miss Brooke's own narrative poem, while not as interesting as some of its heroic counterparts, is nevertheless the display of a competent poet doing original work. The book concludes with a lengthy biographical summary by Aaron Crossley Hobart Seymour, a gentleman whose turgid prose is rivaled only by his piety and obscurity of vision. Nevertheless Seymour's biography is the only relatively comprehensive account of Miss Brooke's life, opinion, and times. Even for 1816, however, Seymour's verbal excesses in description must have seemed a bit overwrought:

The latter at one period of her life was deeply enveloped in the thick mists of affliction, and almost overwhelmed by their pressure. No sooner was it known than it was felt more keenly by her friend; formed to sympathy, her heart wept, and her eye dropt the friendly tear, the grief was divided, consolation was suggested, and arising from rational sources, was like oil to the wound.

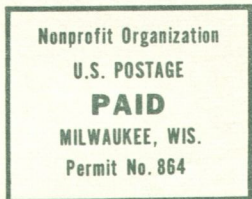
Seymour's essay concludes with the correspondence of Charlotte Brooke on religious matters, interminable passages of piety and religious admonitions which would have graced Parson Adams' sermons but which have little relevance except to embellish a portrait of Miss Brooke's goodness.

Thus in *Reliques of Irish Poetry 1789* we have some remarkable poems saved from antiquity together with very helpful notes and comments by Charlotte Brooke, an interesting introduction to her works by Miss Brooke, a much less interesting introduction to Miss Brooke's introduction by Aaron Seymour, and an introduction to all of the introductions and the volume as a whole by Leonard Ashley. While Ashley's own introduction provides an occasional three-fold redundancy, his thumbnail sketch of Miss Brooke is nevertheless succinct and well done. The poetry at the heart of the book is perhaps more valuable as an historical artifact than as an aesthetic experience, but the volume is more than worth the price to students of Irish literature and history.

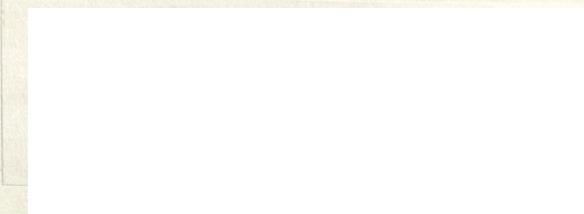
Zack Bowen
University of Delaware

The University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee
Department of English
P. O. Box 413
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201

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