

IASAIL CONFERENCE

The International Association for the Study of Anglo-Irish Literature will hold its next Triennial Conference at Maynooth College from July 9 through July 13. The conference will include six major lectures: "Social Change and the Irish Imagination" by Patrick Raffoldi, "19th Century Religious Revivalism & the Literary Revival" by Vivian Mercier, "The Revival 1890-1920: A Re-Assessment" by Thomas Flanagan, "Historians and Magicians: Attitudes to History of Some Writers in the Republic" by Stan Smith, "Semantic Scruples: A Rhetoric for Politics in the North (Friel, Mahon, Heaney . . .)" by Des Maxwell, and "The Irish Writer Today: Self and Society, 1950-80" by Thomas Kilroy.

There will also be a variety of shorter papers, cultural and scenic tours, and entertainment. Further information may be obtained from the IASAIL Secretary, Terence Brown, at the English Department, Trinity College, Dublin 2.

SUPPLEMENT TO REVIEW OF RESEARCH

A *Five-Year Supplement to Anglo-Irish Literature: A Review of Research* is in progress, under the editorship of Richard J. Finneran. Scheduled for publication in 1981, the volume will update the work through early 1980 and will correct errors and omissions. Contributors remain unchanged except that Maurice Harmon will write the chapter on General Works. In addition, the *Supplement* will contain two new chapters: Modern Fiction, by Diane Tolomeo, and Modern Poetry, by Mary FitzGerald. Scholars are urged to send offprints, review copies, and notices of forthcoming publications or work in progress to the appropriate contributor or to the editor (Newcomb College, New Orleans, Louisiana 70118).

SEAN O'CASEY CENTENARY CONFERENCE

On March 27 and 28, 1980, Hofstra University will sponsor a conference in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the birth of John Casey, alias the playwright, autobiographer, and Irish exile Sean O'Casey. Robert Lowery, the convention coordinator, has called for proposals for papers. If you are interested or want further information, write to him at the University Center for Cultural and Intercultural Studies, Hofstra University, Hempstead, New York 11550.



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JOYCE SYMPOSIUM

The Seventh International James Joyce Symposium will be held from June 10 through Bloomsday, June 16. The site of the conference will be Zurich, where Joyce lived (and wrote most of *Ulysses*) during World War I, and where both Joyce and his wife are buried. The week's activities will include a host of panels, workshops, and talks covering many aspects of Joyce's life, his art, and his relationship to other writers. For more detailed information write to Phillip F. Herring, English Department, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin 53706, or Fritz Senn, Brünmatt 1, 8103 Unterengstringen, Zurich, Switzerland.

IRISH MUSIC: A ONE-WOMAN SHOW

Treasa O'Driscoll is planning a tour of her one hour musical performance entitled "I Am of Ireland: of Myth and Music." Mrs. O'Driscoll has won prizes for her singing and has written and presented a six-hour radio program of Irish music. The present recital includes songs in Gaelic and English. To arrange for a performance or to inquire further, write to Treasa O'Driscoll, 50 Summerhill Gardens, Toronto M4T 1B4, Ontario, Canada.

INFORMATION NEEDED

Those with information about the personal papers or direct descendants of Patrick Egan (1841-1919) are asked to write to Joyce S. Goldberg, 3920 Maybury Mall, Apt. 18C, Bloomington, Indiana 47401. Egan, an Irish activist, came to the United States in 1882, campaigned for Benjamin Harrison in 1888, and was named Minister to Chile (1889-93). Ms. Goldberg, who is writing a dissertation on the *Baltimore* Affair of

1891-92, is particularly interested in Egan's years in Chile, but she would appreciate information about other aspects of his life as well.

BRIEF ACIS NOTES

A Guide to Irish Studies in the United States, compiled by Maureen Murphy, was sent to ACIS members in March. The *Guide* was sponsored by ACIS and the Cultural Relations Committee of the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs. If you did not receive your copy, write to Professor Murphy at the English Department, Hofstra University, Hempstead, New York 11550.

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From time to time, someone suggests that ACIS should change its name in keeping with the evolving character of the organization: after all, a group with over 600 members in ten countries is hardly a "committee." Do you think we should consider a new name? If so, what is it? Send your suggestions by the end of September to the ACIS Secretary, Johann Norstedt, at the English Department, VPI&SU, Blacksburg, Virginia 24061.

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At last report, nearly half of the membership had not paid 1979 dues. As a matter of courtesy, copies of the February and April newsletters are being sent to all 1978 members, but for practical reasons the Secretary will have to remove from the mailing list all members who do not pay their dues by the end of May. Checks for \$6.00 (individual membership), \$9.00 (couples with joint memberships), or \$3.00 (students and retirees) should be sent to Professor Thomas E. Hachey, ACIS Treasurer, History Department, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53233.

reviews

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

Richard Fallis, *The Irish Renaissance*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1977. 319 pp. \$14.00 (\$7.95 paper).

All of us who teach survey courses in Anglo-Irish Literature find ourselves pressed for time to provide our students with background information that is adequate for more than a selection of the figures between Maria Edgeworth and the present. The paucity of suitable texts is another frustration: we need, for example, a good anthology of poetry since Yeats; and since Ernest Boyd's *Ireland's Literary Renaissance* (1922), no attempt has been made at a standard history of the movement. The perceived range of Anglo-Irish Literature is thus straitened by the practicalities of "covering" the major figures in the normal one-semester course.

In such circumstances then, *The Irish Renaissance* by Richard Fallis is very welcome. This book gives an overview of the Anglo-Irish writers, their works, and the literary movement in which they participate. Appropriately, Yeats appears in almost every one of the chapters. In Part One, Fallis describes the gradual development of the Revival from John O'Leary's meeting with Yeats through the last two decades of the 19th century and devotes two chapters to Irish history and literature in Irish and English. The second part sketches the nationalist agitation leading to the War of Independence and the Civil War, the Abbey Theatre and its playwrights, and the development of poetry and fiction during that time. Part Three describes the social and political background to Irish writing since 1923, the slow decay of the drama, and the complementary achievements in fiction and poetry. The book concludes with a survey of Irish writing since 1940, arguing its relationship to the Irish Renaissance.

There is a great deal of information in this book, which is ideally suited to the general student of Irish Literature: it provides in a graceful way the salient contextual information, and conveys a sense of the continuity and coherence of the literature itself. Encompassing an encyclopedia of details, it manages to be uncluttered; and all of the discussions of literary texts—especially those of Yeats—are fresh and lucid. The author anticipates the difficulties the beginner is likely to encounter, and directs inquiry to the

major issues while at the same time tracing political and literary transitions within the Irish scene. The author's assessments are always judicious, sympathetic, and generous. He is aware of the limitations of his endeavor, and suggests directions for further investigation. The style is remarkably free of the usual academic jargon.

He gives sound advice to new readers of Joyce, rightly insists on the importance of Austin Clarke, and is positively eloquent in his discussion of Yeats. He reminds us of still neglected areas in the field: autobiography, George Fitzmaurice, Seamus O'Kelly, and F.R. Higgins.

I expect that many readers will have some cavil here and there. In my view, the cases of Samuel Beckett and Flann O'Brien are not pursued strongly enough; it is strange to find Liam O'Flaherty's *The Informer* get more attention than *Skerrett*, and Lennox Robinson's *Drama at Inish* more than *The Whiteheaded Boy*. An annotated list of further readings concludes the volume.

I recommend *The Irish Renaissance* warmly. It should be on the booklist for every course in Irish Literature. And although written with an American readership in mind, it would do much good too in the libraries and schools of Ireland.

Coilin Owens
George Mason University

Jacqueline Genet. *William Butler Yeats: Les fondements de l'évolution de la création poétique*. Lille: Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Irlandaises de l'Université de Lille, III (1976). 768 pp. 150 F.

Genet on her second page regrets that Yeats is so "mal connu de public français." Her remaining 766 pages make information, long available to English-language university students, available to French university students also. Inasmuch as her quotations from Yeats are in English, it is doubtful that her book will make Yeats any better known to the French public. But as information, her smooth amalgamation of established bibliographical and critical material in English (e.g., Ellmann, Henn, Hone) cannot be faulted. A French university student can consult this work with confidence.

1980 ACIS MEETING

The 1980 ACIS conference will be held at the University of Delaware. Zack Bowen, who will be coordinating the meeting, would like to hear from ACIS members who have suggestions about a theme for the conference and for individual panels. Write to Professor Bowen at the English Department, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware 19711.

PEGGY WALSH

Peggy Walsh, coordinator of the 1977 ACIS Conference, died on February 28. Born in Chicago on October 22, 1931, she graduated from De Paul University summa cum laude, and completed her M.A. there. She received a Ph.D. from

the University of Chicago.

From 1957 to 1965 she taught at De Paul. In 1966 she joined the faculty at Metropolitan State College in Denver and chaired the History Department from 1968 to 1976.

In 1977 she coordinated the annual ACIS meeting in Denver, the first ACIS conference to be held in a far western state. Members who were present will long remember the superb organization and the warm welcome Peggy provided.

In addition to her historical studies, Peggy was the author of a children's book, *Bran's Adventure in Ireland*. Her love of animals and her deep commitment to Ireland emerge clearly in its pages.

—Jeanne Krochalis



The *ACIS Newsletter* is published four times annually in February, April, October, and December, at the University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida 33124. Vol. IX, Serial No. 2.

Editor: Patrick A. McCarthy
Review Editor: Laurie Kaplan
Bibliographer: Jim Ford, Boston
Public Library

Yet its undisputed usefulness as a textbook for French students keeps it from being of any use to ACIS members. It has nothing new to offer us in approach, facts, or insights. It is truly surprising that an academic milieu that has revolutionised Western criticism in the past decade could produce a book that could have been put together 15 years ago. Furthermore, although the subtitle promises a study of Yeats's creative process, Genet is innocent of any pedantry in this regard. All she does is follow the procedures of Stallworthy and Bradford in looking at successive drafts. (Incidentally, the manuscript pages are so badly reproduced they appear to be written in a non-Roman alphabet.) Freud is mentioned once; Bachelard, twice, including a footnote; Jung, 14 times, eight of these in footnotes. Bonaparte? Lacan? Ni vu ni connu.

If we may presume to advise Genet on what would be useful to the larger world of Yeats scholarship for her next works, it is that she combine her academic training and her accidental advantages. For example, from her French perspective, she could write a reception study, bilingual textual analysis, an influence study, or a cultural history. Let us elaborate. Why is Yeats "mal connu" in France? English-language readers know the works of such French Nobel winners as Gide and Camus well. Could French ignorance be attributed to defective translations? We do not know Saint-John Perse nearly so well as the French laureates who wrote fiction or drama. (We can tell that Genet has a flair for translation, for she did a remarkable job translating this reviewer's published interview with Anne B. Yeats.) Genet has some extensive well-informed footnotes on the impact of Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, but her section on French literature and Symbolism is disappointingly abbreviated—perhaps because she believes her students will know the material already, but she certainly does not draw any connections for them. Yet we know that albeit monolingual, Yeats received a "filtered quintessence" of French through intermediaries like Symons and Moore. We know also that Yeats spent much time with Maud Gonne whose official adult base of operations was France until the 1920's. Genet could speculate on the sights impinging upon Yeats's consciousness in nature and art (she barely manages to list some of the artists) or on the psycholinguistics of a monolingual English poet composing in a French-speaking milieu. Besides the effects of French culture on Yeats, did he have none himself on French writing? Finally, is it not more than a curious coincidence that writers of Yeats's generation like George, D'Annunzio, Robinson, Dario, Bryusov, and Balmont all renewed the poetic capability of their literary languages at the secular fount of French Symbolism? We look forward to reading Genet on these issues.

Marilyn Gaddis Rose
State University of New York at Binghamton

Maurice Harmon, ed. *Irish University Review*, issues of Autumn 1977 and Spring 1978. University College, Dublin. 154 and 135 pp. \$7.50 an issue, \$15 a year.

These recent issues of the *Irish University Review* indicate that it is pivotal for studies in modern Irish culture. The Autumn 1977 number is devoted in part to the National Library on the occasion of its centenary, and the Spring 1978 centers on literary Dubliners. The extensive annual bibliographies, thirty pages in each issue, as well as reviews of current works, and lists of books received — another thirty pages altogether — make this periodical indispensable as a guide to current activity.

In a brief notice it is impossible to treat the critical essays — on Yeats, O'Casey, Reid, Lavin, and Devlin. To select a

few insights: O'Casey's dialogue in *The Shadow of a Gunman* as an integral part of the author's vision of chaos and as reflection of the characters' pretentiousness and inability to act; the relation of Yeats's concepts of rhythm to contemporary French currents in art; and the appreciation of the work of the comparatively neglected poet Denis Devlin by Stan Smith (who is unfortunately omitted from the list of contributors, indicating once more that the editors need to cast a cold eye on copy).

The present Director of the National Library, Alf MacLochlainn, gives glimpses of the history of the library from the enactment in 1877 of the Dublin Science and Art Museum Act. The Royal Dublin Society library formed the nucleus, together with the great Joly collection, described by Patrick Henchy in another article. It was not yet a truly national library, however, as two thirds of the trustees were members of the Royal Dublin Society. The society's librarian, William Archer, was taken over, as was the headquarters in Leinster House. In 1881 Archer published his *Suggestions* for a modern building, including electric lighting (in 1881!) and fireproof materials. Another innovation, which MacLochlainn regrets, was the adoption of the new Dewey classification system.

In 1895 Lyster (of *Ulysses*) became librarian, followed by Best (also of *Ulysses*) in 1924, and Richard J. Hayes (1940-1967). Photographs of these men are printed as well as Sir Thomas Deane's careful drawing of the Leinster House quadrangle and Merrion Square beyond. MacLochlainn's immediate predecessor, Patrick Henchy, is not mentioned, nor is the date of Deane's building — 1883.

Terence de Vere White's fine account of Best as "a man of a very distinctive personality" may serve to modify the impression given by Joyce of a simple soul, lost amid pearls of wisdom from Stephen Dedalus.

The *Irish University Review* is a literate journal, and a welcome addition to the thin and often broken strand of such publications.

Richard M. Kain
University of Louisville

Arthur Mitchell. *Labour in Irish Politics, 1890-1930*. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1974. 298 pp. \$12.50.

Arthur Mitchell's useful and exhaustive study, *Labour in Irish Politics, 1890-1930*, is an expansion of a thesis written at Trinity College, Dublin, under the direction of the late David Thornley. It covers much the same ground as did the second half of Jesse Clarkson's Columbia dissertation, *Labour and Nationalism in Ireland* (1925), but in greater depth and detail, and continues the story beyond 1923, where Clarkson's study ended, down to the end of the twenties.

In addition to the annual Reports of the Irish Trade Union, of the Irish Labour Party and of the British Labour Party — all of which Clarkson also used — Mitchell has had access to the private papers of William O'Brien, General Secretary of the I.T.G.W.U. for thirty years after 1919, and of Thomas Johnson, leader of the Irish Labour Party from 1916 to 1927. He has also had interviews with Cathel O'Shannon, Peadar O'Donnell, James Larkin, Jr. and others who were active in labour politics.

There were many reasons for what the economic historian George O'Brien called "an extraordinary thing" — that the Irish labour party should be so insignificant. From its inception in 1912, when it avoided open advocacy either of nationalism or of socialism (it adopted a moderate socialist

program in 1918), the Labour party in Ireland sought to avoid alienating the working class voters of the North. For this reason also — that its potential electorate was both in Belfast and in Dublin — it adopted a rather non-committal attitude both to the war of 1914 and to the Easter Rising. The result was that the Labour party never even contested what Mitchell calls “the most important election in this century” — that of 1918. During the Black and Tan war, the trade unions used the weapon of the strike to help Sinn Fein against the British, yet they stood aside from Dail Eireann, even though the “democratic programme” of that body paid lip service to labour ideals, and was largely borrowed from the original draft of Johnson and O’Brien. As Mitchell remarks, ever since 1918 “the Labour leadership continued to trail behind public opinion on the national issue.”

Mitchell’s treatment of the Dublin General Strike of 1913 (really a lock-out, as he emphasizes) follows familiar lines. He breaks new ground in discussing the role of labour under the Free State — which, incidentally, did little to implement the “democratic programme” which it had borrowed largely from labour. During the absence of de Valera from the Dail, the Labour party formed the official opposition and, as Mitchell justly observes, it thereby “made a major contribution towards the creation of effective democratic government.”

During the ‘twenties, the Labour party saw most of its proposals defeated; yet many of them were adopted by later governments, or are now generally “recognized as objectives still to be achieved.” Thomas Johnson, whose progressive ideas were dismissed as “utopian and impracticable,” was indeed “a prophet, and he met the prophet’s fate,” being defeated for the Dail in 1927.

Apart from the inevitable handicap of functioning in a society dominated by clerical conservatism and suspicious of socialism as synonymous with communism, Irish labor suffered a further grievous blow with the return of Larkin from America in 1923. Finding himself superseded by Johnson and O’Brien in the leadership of the labour movement, Larkin sought revenge with what Mitchell calls “a near-demonic intent.” The result was the disruption of the Labour party and of the Trade Union movement. It took nearly half a century before the former (to quote the final sentence of the book) could “justly claim to be the focus of the Left in Ireland.” Mitchell, whose attitude to the Labour party is sympathetic but not uncritical, has written a clear and comprehensive history of its early struggles and accomplishments.

Giovanni Costigan
University of Washington

Paul Muldoon, *Mules*. Winston-Salem, N.C.: Wake Forest University Press, 1977. 59 pp. \$4.25.

Eileán Ní Chuilleanáin, *The Second Voyage*. Winston-Salem, N.C.: Wake Forest University Press, 1977. 53 pp. \$4.25.

“The greater the poetry the more diminished the life” may be an overly romantic aphorism to apply to the art, but most of the distinguished poets recently writing in Ireland as well as in this country seem to pack their bags for the real Mt. Parnassus in their fifties and sixties. This is lucky for the younger generations; room at the top means everything. So now Kinsella and Montague are the senior Irish poets, and the readership of poetry learns to accustom its sensibility to new names and unknown talents. Nostalgia for what may look like feelings for other times and better poets must be repressed. Wake Forest University Press’ new series of contemporary Irish poets fills this void with well designed and

produced books.

Paul Muldoon is an interesting poet; Eileán Ní Chuilleanáin from me commands no more than respect. Muldoon is lyrical with fine stanza control, especially over the quatrain; what is exciting about him in his sly dulcet tone, reminiscent of Auden at times. At other moments he is like the early Colum returned. In relation to the events happening around him in Northern Ireland his poetry is necessarily minimalist: his is a sane voice. He writes with an anecdotal power, his exuberance lies in event or period piece. “How to Play Championship Tennis” plays to our ambiguous anticipations of how politics moves in on Eros; behind the surface social feelings are given their special nuances. The last poem in the collection, “Armageddon, Armageddon,” reads as a mock heroic meditation on the Troubles with a shifting of mode and image in a surrealist manner. At all points it holds its lyric basis and gilded flow. Muldoon stops short of losing his form to his content. He parks at the edge of this sublimation.

A section of the poem concerns Oisín’s return. The poet gives the popular theme an unfamiliar power. “There and then he began to stoop, / His hair, and all his teeth fell out, / A mildewed belt, a rusted buckle. / The clays were heavy, black or yellow, / Those were the colours of his boots. / And I know something of how he felt.” One admires the craft here in avoiding simplicities of narrative description. One warms to the clever treatment of old materials. “Our Lady of Ardboe” borrows something of its phrases and feeling from Kavanagh’s “A Christmas Childhood.” The poet moves easily between the pagan and Christian mythology of rural Ireland, combining both in a pincer movement. “For I like to think, as I step these acres, / That a holy well is no more shallow / Nor plummetless than the pools of Shiloh, / The fairly thorn no less true than the Cross.” Muldoon brings both Irelands into shelter of his verses, like a farmer gathering his animals.

A final item in this poet’s list of qualities is his throwaway stance in some of his poems. He acts with an air of indifference which wakes up the reader to the poem. In other work the entertainment value is higher than the truth search. I miss the witness power of Padriac Fiacc, who burns with Belfast. These poems may not all be remembered.

The Second Voyage, by contrast academic, has little color or humor. Eileán Ní Chuilleanáin is not actually dull, merely abstract and archetypically cyclic; one longs for some throwaway spirit, a little wildness. The tone of the book lightens as it progresses; there is a fine poem at the end, “Wash.” A domestic scene of washing a fish expands into a holocaust consciousness: “Wash the man out of the woman: / The strange sweat from her skin, the ashes from her hair. / Stretch her to dry in the sun / The blue marks on her breast will fade.” I am reminded of the horror of Paul Celan.

James Liddy
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Alf MacLochlainn. *Out of Focus*. Dublin: The O’Brien Press, 1977. 62 pp. 2.75.

When Bernard Share’s *Inish* was first published in the United States, *Time* magazine dismissed it as being “in Finnegans wake.” As is so often the case, *Time* was out of joint: very few works of literature have been substantially influenced by *Finnegans Wake*, and very few aspects of modernistic innovation have come out of Ireland (Share was a rarity). Ireland may well move from the nineteenth into the twenty-first century without ever having passed through the

twentieth, but as Sabrina's father maintained, "I could pick a better century out of a hat." Alf MacLochlainn, innocently hiding behind his position as the Director of the National Library of Ireland, doesn't share that conservative attitude. His novella *Out of Focus* may owe nothing to Joyce's *Wake*, but it places itself solidly within the modernistic tradition carved out by Samuel Beckett and Flann O'Brien.

Not that Joyce is entirely outside MacLochlainn's focus. His anonymous protagonist reveals an occasional Stephen Dedalus characteristic, crushing the odd louse and boasting about "the vocabulary of lower Drumcondra, where they speak the best English." And a double-focus of homonyms throughout the novella echoes the basic trope of the Cyclops chapter of *Ulysses*, which begins with an "I" in a sentence which ends with an "eye" ("I was just passing the time of day with old Troy of the D.M.P. at the corner of Arbour hill there and be damned but a bloody sweep came along and he near drove his gear into my eye"). *Out of Focus* begins, "I knew that I had been asleep though not for long enough. The eye-sockets . . ." and continues the subjective perception throughout. Many another narrator had announced along with Christopher Isherwood, "I am a camera," but rarely as persistently as MacLochlainn's "I." The metaphor is maintained throughout, from the problem of opening one's eyes in the morning and attaching eye-glasses to one's nose, to the blood-shot eye attempting to see through a grid of bandage gauze at the end of the novella (which is graphically illustrated as well).

The protagonist himself has a distinguished lineage as a veteran slug-a-bed, immobilized during much of the day in which the "action" takes place, obviously as in love with his bed as the equally anonymous narrator of *At Swim-Two-Birds* and as involuntarily bedridden as many a Beckett character. In what constitutes a day in the life of an observer in Dublin (hardly the "dailiest day possible" one hopes), the morning exertion results in the hero being gently knocked down by a slowly passing automobile. The afternoon in the hospital is spent mostly in the bathtub (not the first character in an Irish novel to bathe, although it does play havoc with verisimilitude), the evening on a sofa viewing a scene in Phoenix Park, and the night back in hospital gazing through gauze. The chapter titles help refine the focus—"Awake for Morning Looking Through the Alice Glass," "On a Strangely Synchronous Afternoon," "You Drop Through that Transparent Air of Evening," "Natural Declension of the Soul at Night"—as do the thirteen illustrations and several mock-pedantic footnotes à la *The Third Policeman*. Needless to say, bicycles abound, and young love is personified by boy and girl and her bicycle.

MacLochlainn's milieu is as voyeuristic as Robbe-Grillet's, but his subjective "I" is no homicidal pathologue, but an accident-prone and inquisitive chronicler of the scene around him. His letting out the bathwater causes a flood that inundates the girl who has been having great difficulty wending her way to visit him, but this disaster was not his fault: he is merely fascinated by the view through the drain which glows like a church rose window. And the lighting of a gas lamp in the park by an injured bicyclist returns the favor: the explosion causes the broken nose and bandaged eyes. Every event in *Out of Focus* occurs either in two separate places or is seen via parallax from two points of view, and the negative viewpoint of the author's wife (expounded in the Preface) may not be that of the reader-viewer of Alf MacLochlainn's novella.

Bernard Benstock
University of Illinois

Margot Norris. *The Decentered Universe of Finnegans Wake: A Structuralist Analysis*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974. 151 pp. \$10.00.

Margot Norris's book, which uses a structuralist approach to *Finnegans Wake*, offers a well-written, illuminating analysis of that book. Of the two main approaches to the *Wake*, the conservative, which views the book as a novel and seeks for literary and philosophical structures and allusions, and the radical, which finds in the book an attack on the foundations and preconceptions of Western culture, Norris continues the latter, using the theories of Heidegger, Lacan, Levi-Strauss, and others to support her argument. The author views *Finnegans Wake* as a "decentered universe, one that lacks the center that defines, gives meaning, designates, and holds the structure together" (p. 121). Joyce, participating in the intellectual movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was attacking the traditional concept of structure. Thus, we are wrong to look for conventional plot, theme, character, or point of view in the *Wake*, or to assume that enough explication will finally unlock its secret. "The key to the puzzle is the puzzle" (p. 5) — it is the very nature of *Finnegans Wake* not to "make sense."

This does not mean that *Finnegans Wake* is nonsense. Rather, Norris shows that the structure, themes, language, and techniques of *Finnegans Wake* are not due to "Joyce's mischief, malice, or megalomania" (p. 5), but are intrinsic to the nature of the work. For me, this shows the real strength of the structuralist position. Ascribing the shifting identities in the *Wake* to the archetypal nature of the characters has somehow never seemed entirely satisfying. Here, by seeking for structure from within instead of imposing it from without, Norris suggests that this uncertainty of identity results from the fall of the father, who embodies law and confers identity in a society. Therefore, it reflects the fallen nature of the Wakean universe.

Another strong point of this analysis is its treatment of language. Since structuralists believe that language and societal institutions share the same structure, the breakdown of societal laws in *Finnegans Wake* is expressed by the breakdown of language. Norris convincingly illustrates that in this decentered universe, the language is decentered too. For example, Joyce, expressing the incest motif linguistically, fills grammatical slots with unacceptable letters or words. The language of *Finnegans Wake*, Norris asserts, is an example of Heidegger's "idle talk," unoriginal discourse which prevents communication and signals a fall into inauthenticity. It is easy to delight in Joyce's puns and portmanteau words, or to amuse ourselves counting the number of languages he used in the *Wake*, but Norris has given us a theory which allows us to enjoy the linguistic play while at the same time seeing it as more than ornament.

A structuralist analysis of *Finnegans Wake* was inevitable. Criticism, I firmly believe, reflects our own needs and world view. This does not detract from this very fine work, however, a work which reminds us to look at *Finnegans Wake* as if we were learning to read for the first time. The author states that we need "not the rapid, automatic decoding to which we are accustomed, but a slow, patient, bringing together, putting one thing with another, looking for similarities and contrasts rather than intrinsic meanings" (p. 69). By doing so herself, Norris gives new insight into the *Wake*, shaking us out of some comfortable suppositions, such as that the last word of the book connects with the first, and finding not an evolutionary cycle, or a celebration of

rebirth, but "the triumph of freedom over law, a freedom expressed in every thematic ambiguity and uncertainty, every aberrant lexical item or syntactical distortion of the work" (p. 71).

This is a valuable work. Everyone interested in Joyce and *Finnegans Wake* should read it.

Barbara DiBernard
University of Nebraska

A.T.Q. Stewart. *The Narrow Ground: Aspects of Ulster, 1609-1969*. London: Faber and Faber, 1977. 208 pp. \$13.95 or £5.95.

The question Stewart addresses in this study is the extreme emphasis of the past on the present throughout modern Irish and Ulster history. In particular he asks why did "attitudes, words and actions" so familiar in history come back in 1969 after nearly fifty years of peace?

Concerned primarily with the shape of the past instead of its surface details, *The Narrow Ground* examines five aspects of Ulster history since 1609—the plantation of Ulster, the siege of Derry or Londonderry, the United Irish movement, Belfast riots in the nineteenth century, and partition. Being neither a comprehensive nor a strictly chronological survey, the work assumes some previous knowledge of Irish history.

Regarding the problem of the Ulster plantation, Stewart reiterates conclusions reached by modern historical research that "the sharp line of division was one of religion, not of race" (p. 25). Pre-Reformation migrations between Ireland and Scotland were common and some assimilation took place during the plantation process. However, the many Irish who were dispossessed of their land after 1609 clung tenaciously to their Catholic faith while the new Protestant settlers developed a "special kind of siege mentality" (p. 47). This latter process is attributed to the new settlers' efforts to resist hibernization and to distinguish themselves religiously and nationally from the Catholic Irish. Settlers perceived for themselves a civilizing role bringing new laws, customs, speech and economic practices to Ireland; and events such as the rebellion of 1641 and the siege of Derry in

1689 are accorded the part of reinforcing these attitudes and behavior patterns.

According to the author, the main obstacle to the assimilation of people in Ireland was the success of the sixteenth century Reformation in Britain. This development divided the settlers religiously from the Irish and has complicated Anglo-Irish relations since that time. Even the formation of the United Irish movement by a minority of Protestants and Catholics proved to be temporary because of the memory of such long ingrained differences.

Throughout the nineteenth century, Stewart shows, rioting and agrarian violence were regular occurrences in times of peace as well as of rebellion; and the pattern of the secret army was already well established. Gradually, the violence transferred to the city of Belfast and other towns in the North as urban growth and industrialization created new zones of confrontation. The Orange Order, segregation, and partition are explained as symptoms of this prolonged sectarian strife rather than its initial causes.

In the final aspect, Stewart turns to the subject of partition in the twentieth century. Between 1886 and 1925 Protestants were determined not to become a minority in an independent Ireland just as Catholics in the North desired to join the majority in the South between 1920 and 1969. However, the author does not suggest that the Ulster Crisis of 1969 was created solely by the forces of the past. In his view, the beginnings were triggered by the events of the late 1960s—the protests in Paris and Czechoslovakia and the anti-Vietnam War movement in the United States. Stewart's argument is "that once these contemporary pressures have operated, the form and course of the conflict are determined by patterns concealed in the past, rather than by those visible in the present" (p. 183).

Though there is much to commend *The Narrow Ground*, in my opinion the theme is too narrow. There is little doubt that the religious element is central to the last five centuries of Irish political and social history and that this history exerts itself on the present, but the author undervalues the impact of land confiscations, penal laws and appalling living conditions. These are very important to the record as well.

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