

NOTED IN PASSING

Patrick J. Blessing of the History Department, University of Tulsa, announces the completion of a national search for manuscripts and oral history collections about the Irish experience in America. Professor Blessing and his colleagues contacted all university libraries, archdiocesan archives, and major public libraries in order to compile the report. The manuscript should be published in summer 1980.

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ACIS member Victor Power has been awarded an Illinois Arts Council Creative Writing Fellowship for 1980. The award is based on his current writings, particularly his novella *In the Town of Ballymuck*.

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A four-week course in Language and Folklore in Ireland, offered under the auspices of the University of Ottawa, will be conducted this July through the Annagry Irish Summer College in Annagry, County Donegal. The course will include trips to the islands of Arranmore and Gola, visits to historical sites, and study of Irish folk tales, dances, and songs. For more information write to Dr. Gordon W. MacLennan, English Department, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada K1N 6N5.

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Those interested in Irish study tours might want to contact Mary H. Rieke, Centre for Irish Study Tours, 27 Brookfield, Terenure, Dublin 6. The Centre offers tours focusing on a variety of topics including Irish literature and theater, history, folklore, music, and art.

TWO CORRECTIONS

Now that you have paid your 1980 dues (you *have* paid, haven't you?), please note two corrections to Tom Hachey's annual dues memo *cum* newsletter:

(1) The questionnaire about research in Irish history should be returned to Professor Hachey, History Department, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53233.

(2) The correct address for the Irish Book Center is 245 West 104th Street, New York, New York 10025. IBC, run by Kay and Herman Chessid, stocks over 600 titles of Irish interest, the largest range of books in the field in North America, and fills orders for individual purchases and classroom adoptions.

american committee for irish studies newsletter



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JOYCE NEWS Ars Nova Tour

Arrangements are underway for an American tour by Ars Nova, whose programs of Joycean music were received with enthusiasm at the last two International James Joyce Symposia. "The Song of the Sirens," based on music from *Ulysses*, lasts an hour and twenty minutes and can be given as a separate entertainment. "The Music of *Finnegans Wake*," a companion piece, runs 45 minutes.

The proposed tour will take place in Fall 1980. For a brochure and further details, write to Pethick Edwards, Ars Nova, 7 Orchard House, County Grove, London SE5.

Joyce Broadsheet

A new Joyce publication, the *James Joyce Broadsheet*, will contain critical articles, reviews, and announcements of events of interest to readers of Joyce's works. Subscriptions are £3.00 (British) in Europe, £3.50 elsewhere. Address: James Joyce Centre, University College, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT.

Provincetown Meeting

Plans for the James Joyce symposium in Provincetown, Massachusetts have expanded to include at least thirteen panels during the five day meeting (June 12-16). Aside from the panels, the program will include presentations by or discussions with Robert Motherwell, James Johnson Sweeney, Herbert Cahoon, Arthur Berger, Norman Mailer, Alan Dugan, and Stanley Kunitz. There will be an art exhibition and musical entertainment by Kevin McDermott.

For information about *housing*, write to Candice Deering, Chamber of Com-

merce, Provincetown, Massachusetts 02657. For information about the *meeting*, write to Zack Bowen, English Department, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware 19711.

MLA SESSION

Cheryl Abbott has proposed a special session for the 1980 MLA meeting, on the topic "Women in the Imagination of an Insurrection: Dublin, Easter 1916." Those interested in the panel should write to Professor Abbott at the English Department, Northeastern University, 360 Huntington Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts 02115.

GUIDE TO IRISH STUDIES: UPDATE 4

Course Listings:

University of Miami (Coral Gables, Florida): Graduate seminar in Joyce and Woolf, Fall 1980; undergraduate course in Modern Irish Literature is now open to graduate students. Contact Patrick A. McCarthy, English.

DePaul University (Chicago, Illinois): Topics in Irish Studies: the Easter Rising, Spring 1980. Contact Bill Feeney, English.

Xavier College (Chicago, Illinois): Irish Roots in America, March 3-May 12, 1980. Contact Rev. Kevin O'Neill Shanley.

Valparaiso University (Valparaiso, Indiana): Irish History and Literature. Contact Gus Sponberg, English.

Northeastern University (Boston, Massachusetts): Northeastern has formed an Irish Studies Committee; Ruth-Ann Harris (History) is Chairman. Literature and Politics: Irish Nationalism, Spring 1980. Contact Cheryl Abbott, English. Seminar in Comparative Politics: The Northern

continued on page 2

reviews

Jorgen Anderson, *The Witch on the Wall: Medieval Erotic Sculpture in the British Isles*. Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, and London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1977. 172 pp.

Upon being informed of the contents of this book and the theme of the so-called "Sheela-na-gig", my maternal grandmother who came from just outside Dublin would have said it was another abominable scheme dug up by an Anglophile to discredit the Irish again. Looking at the cover of this book which portrays a sculptured Sheela-na-gig, my mother would have asked me to please take it to my room as she wouldn't want the neighbors to walk in and see *this* on our coffee table.

The book graphically portrays in words and pictures the iconography of one erotic theme found in medieval churches and castles in France, England, Scotland and Ireland. A large portion of small stone figures were produced around the twelfth century. Few if any of the tourists who have visited ruins have seen them, as they are tucked away in portions of the buildings where one's attention would not normally be drawn. Also, some of the sculptures are so weathered by time and elements, or defaced, that their forms would not be conspicuous.

The book was originally the author's doctoral dissertation written to receive his degree in Art History from the University of Copenhagen. It was published with the support of the Danish Research Council for the Humanities. Turning doctoral dissertations into books is done no better by the Danes than by Americans. The end product has all the shortcomings and caprices of this type of endeavor. It is annotated and documented to the point of nausea. To say that some of the material is redundant is an understatement. All of us who have been through the doctoral mill know that this is the accepted way to structure and produce a manuscript that will be approved. The German art historians of the nineteenth century who invented the degree doted on this requirement, but this formidable format can and does kill the subject for the average twentieth century reader.

The author has no "Forward" telling us what he intends to accomplish in his production, so he avoids one great pitfall. Now what is his book all about? In blue ink on a black back

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

cover he tells us:

The Witch on the Wall—A female nude, often referring very openly to her genitals. Found on medieval buildings, churches and castles, but sometimes interpreted as a fertility figure of pagan origin. First developed by Romanesque carvers, the image was adopted for protective purposes by builders in medieval England and Ireland. In the latter country it won particular favour, associated with lingering pagan beliefs. As an erotic subject of enigmatic origin, the Sheela-na-gig has evaded scholars since the mid-nineteenth century, when antiquarians first began to wonder about this kind of figure.

To get the most out of the written text one should know Latin, French, German and Gaelic as none of this material is translated. Also, a good background of medieval life and its civilization certainly would help one better comprehend *The Witch on the Wall* or the why of the Sheela-na-gig. But no mind, the book is understandable without any of the foregoing. Now for the positive side. The material has certainly been thoroughly researched and documented, with material drawn from such diverse places as the University of Chicago, Milan, Italy, and Nepal. It really is an art history book written for art historians by an art historian. Anderson expects you to know the names of the component parts of a medieval church or castle, and no one can accuse him of talking down to his audience as his vocabulary is rich and articulate.

The photographs in the book are of good quality and the line drawings are superb.

In summation let me reiterate that the book is mainly for art historians, secondly for the history student who empathizes with the medieval world, and lastly for the lover of the erotic. I should probably include also sociologists and aficionados of mythology because the author notes that the carvers of the Sheela-na-gigs give us an insight into the twelfth century's ill regard for women and the kinship between the Sheela-na-gig and other sex symbols such as the mermaids of poetic lore.

Lastly, as a possible descendant of one of the stone carvers written about in this book, I vehemently protest the subtitle of this publication. Anderson calls it "Medieval Erotic Sculpture in the British Isles." The author at the end of the book catalogs one hundred and sixteen known Sheela-na-

continued from page 1

Ireland Conflict, Spring 1980. Contact David Schmitt, Political Science. Irish Civilization, Spring 1980. Contact Ruth-Ann Harris (History).

Queens College (Flushing, New York): In addition to regular offerings of Elementary Irish 2 and The Irish Revival, Queens is offering The Rise of Modern Irish Literature. The Irish Studies Program is featuring a special lecture series in Spring 1980 including Tom Flanagan, John A. Murphy, and Sean O'Tuama. Contact Kevin Sullivan, Irish Studies Program.

C.W. Post College (Greenvale, New York): Revolution and Civil War in 20th Century Ireland, Spring 1980. Contact the Political Science Department.

Correction: The Internship Program with Departments and Agencies of the Irish Government was incorrectly listed as a SUNY, Cortland program. The one-semester experimental program was arranged by Prof. Donald Leon of Cortland with the Institute of Public Administration; it is not a Cortland program.

Summer School: The University of Vermont's Irish Studies Program is offering An Introduction to the Irish Language with Kenneth Nilsen, and Literature and Society in Modern Ireland with Terrence Brown, from July 14 to August 8, 1980. Contact Tony Bradley, English.

—Maureen Murphy
Hofstra University



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

Editor: Patrick A. McCarthy
Review Editor: Frances Bohnsack
Bibliographer: Jim Ford, Boston Public Library

gigs, of which at least sixty-nine or more are to be found in Ireland. The term "British Isles" as used in the nineteenth century did include Ireland when Victoria ruled the waves but today . . .!!! His wife, a girl from Galway, Ireland (so the information about the author states) should have prevented this misnomer but may have been overruled by the British publishers George Allen and Unwin Limited, London, for obvious reasons. Nevertheless, I protest.

John T. Carey
University of West Florida

Paddy No More: Modern Irish Short Stories. Nantucket, Mass.: Longship Press, 1977. 212 pp. \$9.95.

Paddy No More is an anthology of eighteen short stories by Irish authors, together with an essay by Francis Stuart entitled "The Soft Centre of Irish Writing." The "soft centre" is very apparent in many of these stories, many merely reaching the level of good college writing—some are reasonable tales, others are not worth the effort.

One continues to wonder who the "Publisher" is by name, as he does write a "Foreword," but I think we can thank him for his effort to gain, in collected short story form, a wider audience for Irish writers than they are able to gain either in their own country or in the little magazines here. *Paddy No More* is a good enterprise, a good thing to have done to encourage (mostly) younger writers. Short stories by each author (generally two) are preceded by a photograph or sketch and a brief biographical blurb.

I see no genius to hail in Francis Stuart. His closing remark in the "soft centre" piece is worth noting: "Today, it is by exposing the minds of religious orders to the shock of original writing that a community ensure [*sic*] its organic growth." This preoccupation is both common and understandable in Irish writing, but I think Stuart brings no new insights to the dilemma.

The chief characteristics of Juanita Casey's prose are its adjectival nature, clotted similes, and trivial fantasy.

Michael Foley's "The Joy Beyond All Telling" deals with ineffable joy, more specifically, the joy of the fairy tradition in Ireland, in which voices and music sounding aloud to the chosen few are not unusual. The experience related in "The Stranger" reminds one of George Moore's hearing voices telling him to go to Ireland. The story is, however, well told.

Desmond Hogan's "Mothers of Children" is a good, coherent story. His "A Poet and an Englishman" is an honest and straightforward account of both sexual persuasions and their various failings. Compared to the other stories in this volume, Desmond Hogan's work doesn't look bad.

Neil Jordan's "A Bus, A Bridge, A Beach" has a questionable ending, but much fine description along the way. Jordan has a fine sense of rhythm, pared language, and he stacks his words and pictures nicely. "The Old-Fashioned Life" is a superb story. Take this example of his descriptive power: "His eyes are like new-formed embryos; webs of centrifugal blood-red lines, leading to a hard, black alive pupil."

Lucile Redmond has achieved in "The Shaking Trees" a miniature masterpiece in poetic prose. The story concerns transubstantiation into an aspen through radical identification and grief—a poignant tale. Her "Transcients" is less successful, an atmospheric mood piece, impressionistic in nature, and centered on a single mystery man.

Cheryl Abbott
Northeastern University

Grattan Freyer, ed. *A Prose and Verse Anthology of Modern Irish Writing*. Dublin: Irish Humanities Centre, 1979. 309 pp. £3.50.

Anthologies are always a matter of one man's meat; however, we can judge them by how well the collections illustrate the critical principles governing the editors' selections. Grattan Freyer announces that his selection is based on providing his readers with works of "not necessarily 'minor' writers" but those "less well known outside their own country" to illustrate "different tendencies in modern Irish writing."

If this is the case, why include perennials like Frank O'Connor's "Guests of the Nation" (available in a German translation) and Sean O'Faolain's "Lovers of the Lake" and why feature works of widely read poets like Patrick Kavanagh, Austin Clarke, John Montague, Thomas Kinsella and Seamus Heaney whose work appeared in French translation at least ten years ago ("Poetes irlandais d'aujourd' hui," *Le Monde*, 12/21/68)? Why not introduce writers who are truly less well-known: Mervyn Wall, Michael McLaverty and Aidan Higgins? The list of poets is even longer. Mention of just the younger poets would include Paul Muldoon, Seamus Deane, Michael Longley, Derek Mahon, Frank Ormsby, Eiléan Ní Chuilleánain and Richard Ryan.

If Freyer's book is designed for the non-Irish reader, then some of his introductions are misleading. For example, novelist and critic Benedict Kiely is dismissed in seventy words as "another Northern humorous writer." (*Proxop- era?*) Flann O'Brien is the other; however, his Strabane birth aside, O'Brien/Myles was the quintessential Dubliner. Those non-Irish readers interested in knowing more about the writers represented will also find a number of frustrations with the casual editing: translators of poems from Irish are not named; sources and dates for particular works are missing; dates, when given in introductions, are frequently at odds with dates in the bibliography, and factual inaccuracies appear.

Conor Cruise O'Brien, who provided the Preface to *Modern Irish Writing*, suggests quite a different focus, for he finds politics irresistible even when introducing a literary anthology. "The Fenians — of whom the Provisional I.R.A. are only the latest wave — have shown themselves a far more noxious, intimidating and regressive force than even the most hostile of reasonable minds could think of Catholic clergy in Ireland then or now as being." O'Brien's view is that Freyer's selection is informed by Catholic republicanism.

My view is that the editorial principle behind *A Prose and Verse Anthology of Modern Irish Writing* is the bottom line, permissions. This is not an insignificant problem; even W.B. Yeats explained that prohibitive permissions limited the Kipling and the Pound selections in *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*, but in this case the number of minor works and minor writers appears to be a function of permissions. Permissions also raise the question of recommending this book as a text for American classes, even were it to meet editing standards, because apparently American permissions have not been obtained. Fortunately, we can look forward this year to two American anthologies of Irish writing: *Contemporary Irish Poetry* edited by Anthony Bradley for the University of California Press and *Soft Day: A Miscellany of Contemporary Irish Writing* edited by Peter Fallon and Sean Golden for Notre Dame Press, collections which promise to provide suitable texts for class use and substantial commentary to enlarge our understanding of the literature of modern Ireland.

Maureen Murphy
Hofstra University

Journal of Beckett Studies, Summer 1978, ed. James Knowlson. 134 pp. \$6.00.

This is the third issue of the biannual *Journal of Beckett Studies*, available in the United States through the Humanities Press, and, according to Editor James Knowlson, the largest printing yet. The format, designed by graphics students at The University of Reading, is elegant and includes photographs of a recent German television production of *Ghost Trio*. *All Strange Away*, characteristic of Beckett's recent prose and previously available only in an expensive limited edition, is reprinted here. *JOBS* "aims," Knowlson writes, "to appeal to those interested in theatrical performance as well as to those more concerned with critical analysis," but the dramaturgic appeal of this issue is limited to an unsurprising interview with Billie Whitelaw and two intriguing but regrettably brief theater reviews. The scope of the journal is also now enlarged to include "a judicious blend of articles and reviews on the writing of others," in this case an essay on Michel Butor and reviews of recent criticism of Joyce and Wilde as well as Beckett. Nevertheless, *JOBS*, as represented here, remains characteristic of any periodical devoted to the work of a single author: the main features are rather esoteric explications and reassessments for a select audience of devotees.

The least attractive effects of this insularity are apparent in Michael E. Mooney's "Molloy," part 1: Beckett's 'Discourse on method.'" Acknowledging at length the many previous discussions of Beckett's destructive use of Cartesian philosophy, Mooney reads *Molloy* as a "disturbingly humorous inversion" of the *Discourse on Method*. The interpretations ultimately produced, that Molloy's "loadstones" are "the irrational, the unknowable, and the infinite," and that *Molloy* examines failures of language, are familiar. This essay is characteristic of the paradigmatic approaches to Beckett's work which proliferated during the 1960's: it chooses to authenticate its interpretations through evocation of an intellectual tradition rather than to establish them through examination of relevant internal evidence. In the 1970's, primarily because of Lawrence Harvey, several manuscripts became available, and Jeri L. Kroll's "Belacqua as artist and lover: 'What a misfortune,'" which focuses on the "romantic miscarriages" and representations of women in *More Pricks Than Kicks* and the unpublished draft of it *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, is more indicative of the present state of Beckett studies. The "artistically determined auto-eroticism" she discovers in Belacqua leads to some useful generalizations about the function of alienation in Beckett's later work, generalizations which have become even more suggestive since Deirdre Bair's biography became available. This argument does, however, require an extremely traditional reading of character in Beckett's work, the disadvantages of which have been pointed out by several commentators, notably H. Porter Abbott. Kroll's conclusion, that in these early works "style becomes the expression of the bewildered mind's activity," is, as a result, more a departure from her evidence and previous argument than an extension of them.

Judith E. Dearlove's "The voice and its words: 'How it is in Beckett's cannon'" examines precisely that function of style in Beckett's work, and her essay, unburdened by any secondary text, is the most valuable in this issue. Her opening distinction between the method of *Three Novels* and the fiction since, on the basis of the former's dramatization of "the mind's limitations" and the latter's concentration instead on "consideration of its imaginative constructions," produces original readings of both *How It Is* and the shorter recent prose. This elaboration of the use of images and

abstract systems in these works manages both to refute the emphasis on physical misery which many have assumed is characteristic of *How It Is* because of its prevalence in the trilogy, and to account for the manner in which "Beckett thrusts enormous pressure on the few remaining objects" in his fiction as his style becomes increasingly economical and reductive. By thorough and lucid examination of a narrative "shift from exterior orders to internal fabrications," Dearlove successfully challenges the convention of treating all of Beckett's French fiction as a single, continuous unit in his *oeuvre*. Like Dearlove's essay, the dozen reviews in this issue are valuable because they frequently challenge rather than simply rarify critical commonplaces in Beckett studies with an originality most of the featured essays here lack.

John P. Harrington
Rutgers University

Patrick Keatinge. *A Place Among Nations: Issues of Irish Foreign Policy*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1978. 287 pp. £ 11.55.

To meet a need for a book-length account of Ireland's foreign policy, Trinity College political scientist Patrick Keatinge has written a three-part study that combines historical and analytical modes. Adopting a broad definition of foreign policy to include "all governmental objectives, decisions and actions which impinge on human behavior," the author covers more ground than would a volume with a narrower focus. Realizing that a state's external relations are indebted to pre-independence sources, Keatinge reviews the role of Britain's Ireland in Part I. He stresses the smaller island's security and its economic and settler opportunities for hegemonic Britain. Keatinge also notes Irish nationalism's lack of ideological coherence and unity respecting Ireland's concrete foreign policy once freedom was achieved. Mitchel, Casement and Connolly were unique in having clear (and varying) visions of free Ireland's external relations. Irish states of mind as well as British power contributed to the ambiguous status of the Irish Free State in world affairs.

Depending chiefly on previously published studies, the author provides a conventional survey of the diplomatic history of the Free State and the Republic. He sees de Valera's constitutional republicanism as a partially successful effort to strengthen and sharpen Irish nationalism and to offset the major imbalance in Anglo-Irish relations. Yet partition was not undone. Keatinge follows his mentor Basil Chubb in believing that unification is not realizable. Clearly, Irish neutrality in World War II further deepened partition and isolated the 26-county state from European currents, even as Irish pride was served. Keatinge agrees that the Irish regime and people missed an opportunity to join the struggle against a more substantial challenge to national liberty than British imperialism.

This restricted vision began to recede in the post-war period when communism was found without difficulty to be the enemy of Western (Christian) civilization; but Ireland did not take the logical step of joining NATO. By this time the veto power of Northern Ireland unionists over unification had received bipartisan support in Britain. Remarkably, the Fine Gael and Labour parties accepted this veto power at the Sunningdale conference in late 1973 in a tardy testimony to "pluralism," and as a price paid to Britain and unionists for northern and pan-Irish reforms which perished or never surfaced. Aware that unification persists as a goal among republicans who may disagree on methods to achieve a 32-county Republic and in pockets of Irish ethnics in the diaspora, the author is not troubled about a major tension in

the evolution of Irish nationalism and Irish foreign policy. Conceivably, unification has been relegated by the bulk of the Irish people and their political leaders to the same ethereal realm as the goals of the Gaelic League and the GAA. Much depends on Fianna Fail's future policy.

Meanwhile, Ireland has joined the European Economic Community, widening Irish intellectual horizons, commercial markets, and elite job opportunities. Keatinge writes that Ireland meets the world through Europe. He does not overlook Ireland's disarmament and peace-keeping activities in the United Nations. The potential rewards for Ireland in the EEC are evident; less obvious is what Ireland can do for the EEC. Keatinge examines the emergent economic aspects of Irish foreign policy under the rubric of "prosperity"; other issue-areas examined are "independence and identity," "security," "unity," "international milieu: order," and "international milieu: justice." The issue-area organization of Part II of the book is the most original feature of the volume.

Within "security," the study implies that Ireland is an oddity in a Western European context. Yet the author offers no remedy. The Dublin regime, he suggests, will have to do more about protecting expanded fishing zones. Would any of the martyrs of 1916 have foreseen the importance of the Minister for Fisheries? The discussion of economics notes Garret FitzGerald's contribution to the regime's systematic approach to, and increases in, external economic aid. Such aid is likely to remain a miniscule percentage of GNP, given the country's external debt, mounting energy bills, and the narrow basis of domestic support for assistance to nations even less developed than Ireland.

Comparing Ireland's attention to "international order" and "international justice," Keatinge finds that "order" has received a higher priority based on Ireland's record in international organizations and bilateral diplomacy. Ireland's unwillingness to take a stronger line on anti-colonial questions may be explained by the country's Western orientation or inherent conservatism. Nothing is clearly said about Ireland's position on such controversies as the Arab-Israeli dispute, Vietnam, or Idi Amin's Uganda. That Ireland has a regional human rights concern was demonstrated by the Dublin regime's pursuit to Britain's displeasure of the case involving northern internees in the European human rights network. Keatinge touches all too lightly on the relationship between Catholicism and the fact that the Soviet Union was not recognized until 1973, despite the First Dail's contacts with the Bolshevik regime.

Part III of the volume is devoted to a discussion of the problems of foreign policy design, policy-making process, and the future. A master design is still to be found. Keatinge summarizes a critique of the policy-making process which appeared in his earlier book, *The Formulation of Irish Foreign Policy*. Answering needs for policy planning and increased public awareness of foreign policy issues are pre-requisites for placing Irish foreign policy on firmer and higher ground. Misinterpreting Ireland as a "middle-power" instead of a micro-state, Keatinge has major expectations for a society that is only now entering an industrial and secular phase and experiencing world currents.

In the future Keatinge sees greater attention to economic foreign policy and a movement of Ireland into a European context and out of an Anglo-Irish subsystem. Unlike the leading political forces in the three corners of the subsystem, the author takes seriously the possibility of an independent Northern Ireland, a reading that raises questions about his insights into conditions close at hand. One may speculate

that the "European dimension" is another form of euphoria which hides the hard nationalist realities of EEC politics. Still, Ireland is finding a "place" through EEC membership that would not have materialized if the country had followed Sinn Fein, leftist, and isolationist opinion and stayed out of the community.

Keatinge ends on the curious theme that Western Europe may not continue its war-less condition of the last 30 years, implying that Ireland's security may be at stake in the future, a situation which calls for the country to live by its "wits." But who is the potential adversary that would involve Ireland in a war in the 1980's? How is policy planning to be reconciled with living by one's wits? Despite this unsatisfactory conclusion, the book is a valuable study because it is the first comprehensive account of Irish foreign policy and offers a relatively analytical examination of a full range of the state's external relations.

Paul F. Power
University of Cincinnati

Thomas Flanagan. *The Year of the French*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979. 516 pp. \$12.95.

After the French and American Revolutions, intellectuals in Dublin were caught up in the spirit of rebellion. At the same time, the Irish peasants were as discontented as ever with their absentee landlords and were viewed by the intellectuals as ready for their own revolution. In fact, of course, they were by no means ready. But by an accident of history, Wolfe Tone was able to enlist the French to aid in a small way an Irish revolt that started in County Mayo. French support was tentative, however, and the Irish peasants so ill-prepared that the incident was decidedly minor in an historical sense. Thomas Flanagan's fictional history deals with this minor revolution and with the momentum that led up to the Battle of Ballinamuck even in the face of certain defeat. In a way, *The Year of the French* is a novel about how rational, even cynical, men, as well as the unschooled, can become involved in a gesture that they know from the start is futile.

The overall fabric of the book is poetic, and the reader comes to see Ireland, the revolution, the rebels, and history through the eyes of Owen Ruagh MacCarthy—poet, schoolmaster, and libertine. MacCarthy's poetic vision reveals the ominous and deadly: "Moonlight falling on a hard, flat surface, scythe or sword or stone or spade." MacCarthy bridges two worlds—the Gaelic and the English—until these two worlds collide in the dawn at Ballinamuck, the Place of the Pig. Unwittingly, MacCarthy has been drawn from his poetry into rebellion, and his vision is nihilistic.

At the same time, however, Flanagan's book has a neo-classical structure that incorporates journal entries and letters with narrative. Through the widely divergent points of view of five narrators, Flanagan synthesizes a balanced perspective of the denouement of the rebellion, the battle, and the subsequent executions.

The Year of the French is a history of repression and reprisal, a beautifully contrived picture of the cycle of violence that is Ireland. But what seems to hold the story back is the frequent change of narrator, a change that tends to become repetitious. This is especially true during the slaughter at Ballinamuck. It is at this point that action should move forward quickly and not be retarded by a change of perspective. Even MacCarthy's poetic stream-of-consciousness loses its vitality and power toward the end of the book, and his poetry seems little more than a conceit. The book may be too long, since there is little change of character and little that isn't a foregone conclusion at the beginning of the

revolution. What is left is the futility of the conflict between the English and the Irish, and the book has given the reader a visceral understanding of this much earlier. The reader reads on in hope that everything that is inevitable will somehow fail to come to pass.

Flanagan has a real problem here in his first novel: he took as his subject a moment in a long history of continuing conflict, the essence of which had been little changed since the Battle of the Boyne and which would undergo little change for another century. He has succeeded in imparting to the reader the sense of irreconcilability that was Ireland for centuries and is still Ulster today, but in so doing he has precluded the possibility of dramatic change in character and dramatic resolution of problems. Perhaps this is why the book is nearly (but not quite) compelling straight through to the end.

Laurie Kaplan
Goucher College

Richard Allen Cave. *A Study of the Novels of George Moore*. Irish Literary Studies 3. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1978. 239 pp. plus notes and index. \$22.50.

Almost all book-length studies of the works of George Moore suffer from the same disease: categorization. (Collections of essays, curiously, seem unaffected.) Richard Allen Cave's recently published examination of Moore's novels is no exception: Cave divides the novels into three categories, The Novel of Social Realism, A Phase of Experiment, Styles for Consciousness. As is always the case, the novels do not quite fit. Cave finds it necessary to leap forward and back in his discussion, suggesting chronological development, and then discarding chronology, for example, to place *Esther Waters* in Category I and *The Lake* in both Categories II and III. Moreover, although both book jacket and author's note promise analysis of "each of Moore's novels in detail," this promise is not fulfilled: *Confessions of A Young Man* and *Hail and Farewell* are regarded as autobiography. (About *Confessions*, however, Cave clearly has his doubts: he quotes from it as if it were straight autobiography on pp. 13-18 and 141, quotes from it as if it were a novel on p. 70, discusses it as a novel on p. 104, asserts that it is George Moore's autobiography in which a younger Moore is the

"central character" — a term used in discussing fiction—on p. 106, then warns the reader not to accept *Confessions* as "literal autobiography" on p. 107.)

Lewis Seymour and Some Women and *Muslin* also are omitted, as merely retitled revisions of *A Modern Lover* and *A Drama in Muslin*, although Cave acknowledges that few of Moore's novels "escaped revision," and that "several underwent wholesale redrafting" (that Cave perceived *Lewis Seymour* as significantly different from *A Modern Lover*, however, is clear from passing references to each, although only the latter receives extended critical attention). Both versions of *The Lake* are discussed, and the major differences between them are noted, but only after a synopsis of the 1921 version is presented as if it were the 1905 version, a problem of organization sure to cause confusion in readers who are themselves not thoroughly familiar with the composition history on which the discussion is based. A caveat in the Author's Note explains why the 1921 version would be the basis for the synopsis: in discussing novels that had been subjected to "wholesale redrafting," Cave states, he will indicate which version he feels to be superior; in general, he will choose the text used in the Ebury Edition because these texts are "most accessible" and because they are based on the version "most satisfying" to George Moore. The problem with Cave's choosing a text on the basis of accessibility and his own opinion as to which is "superior" is, of course, that it obscures the questions of development and influence that he has promised to treat.

Nevertheless, Cave's book has a place in critical literature: the strength of his study is in his discussions of the novels themselves, especially in his analysis of characterization and motivation. In these passages he contributes valuable insights. That these insights might have been made more valuable had he compared his ideas with those of his predecessors—he ignores all critical studies of Moore published since 1955, including even Georges-Paul Collet's and Jean C. Noel's although much of his own critical commentary concerns the influence of French authors on Moore's work—is probably carping.

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6

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