

1981 ACIS CONFERENCE

The 19th annual conference of ACIS will be held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania from April 30 through May 2, 1981. The conference, whose theme is Three Irelands, will be jointly sponsored by the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie-Mellon University. Conference coordinators are Hugh Kearney and Tony Cahill of the University of Pittsburgh and David Miller of Carnegie-Mellon.

The final program, together with reservation and lodging information, will be sent to ACIS members in the first week of March. If you do not receive your mailing shortly thereafter, please contact Tony Cahill, 3R03 Forbes Quadrangle, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15260; phone (412) 624-3141.

IRISH STUDIES IN DUBLIN

Sean J. White, Dean of the School of Irish Studies, has announced that the School will offer a wide range of courses for the 1981-82 academic year. Areas covered will include Irish history, archaeology, fines arts, folklore, and political science as well as Anglo-Irish literature and the Irish language. For more information, write to the School, Thomas Prior House, Merrion Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4.

Meanwhile, University College Dublin has begun offering a graduate research degree in Anglo-Irish Studies. Applications, together with an academic transcript, birth certificate, and two letters of recommendation from recent professors, should be sent to Maurice Harmon, Department of English, University College, Belfield, Dublin 4. The course of study includes bibliographical work and basic research.

GAELIC TOURS

Colaiste na Gaeilge is currently arranging three trips to Gaelteacht areas of Ireland: an August trip to Spiddal (Connemara) for those with no knowledge of Gaelic, and May or June trips to Dingle (Co. Kerry) and Inishmaan (Aran Islands) for intermediate speakers. For details and descriptions of the tours, which include intensive instruction in Irish Gaelic, write to Seán Mac Craith, 34 Oakland Street, Dedham, Massachusetts 02026.



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CANADIAN MEETING

The 14th International Seminar of the Canadian Association for Irish Studies will be held March 18-21, 1981, at Trent University (Peterborough, Ontario, Canada K9J 7B8). The conference theme is Women in Irish Legend, Life and Literature. Contributors will include Ronald Ayling, Liam de Paor, Denis Donoghue, Anne Dooley, Hugh Kenner, Margaret MacCurtain, Ninian Mellamphy, Andrew Parkin, Lorna Reynolds, Ann Saddlemyer, J. Percy Smith, Míchéal Ó'Súilleabháin, and Nóirín Ní Riáin.

Inquiries may be directed to Finn Gallagher, English Department, Trent University.

RE: JOYCINGS

With the centenary of Joyce's birth only a year away, the Joyce Industry is gearing up. Major events this year include a three week Joyce course for graduate students and junior faculty members in Yugoslavia and a symposium in New Mexico.

The Yugoslavian meeting will be held on May 11-29 at the Inter-University Centre of Postgraduate Studies in Dubrovnik. An impressive faculty (Jacques Aubert, Bernard Benstock, Leslie Fiedler, Arnold Goldman, Franz Stanzel, Thomas Staley, and a dozen others) will offer lectures on all aspects of Joyce's works. For registration write to the Inter-University Centre of Postgraduate Studies, Frana Bulica 4, YU-50000 Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia.

Somewhat nearer home, the New Mexico meeting, to be held at the Uni-

versity of New Mexico in Albuquerque on June 11-16, will focus on two topics: How Joyce Means and Joyce's Influence on Latin-American Writers. Ideas for papers and panels should be submitted to Phillip Herring, Department of English, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin 53706, or Mary Power, Department of English, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131, by March 1.

SCOTCH-IRISH DOINGS

Jack Weaver wishes to thank ACIS for its financial assistance with the Scotch-Irish Heritage Festival held at Winthrop College, Rock Hill, South Carolina, on November 20-22, 1980. The program was a glowing success, with over 400 people attending the sessions. A "Selected Proceedings" should be available by Fall.

A project of related interest is the proposed Park and Museum of American Culture to be built in Staunton, Virginia. Modeled on the Ulster-American Folk Park in County Tyrone, the park will reproduce 18th century farms from Ulster, Germany, England, and Appalachia. Those ACIS members interested in the Scotch-Irish farm (or the others, for that matter) should contact Robert R. Oliver, Secretary to the American Advisory Committee, P.O. Box 676, New York, New York, 10022; phone (212) 734-1848. Alan Ward, Vice President of ACIS, attended the planning meeting at the invitation of the Yorktown-Jamestown Foundation, which will administer the museum.

reviews

Edward MacLysaght, *Changing times: Ireland Since 1898*, Gerards Cross, Bucks.: Colin Smythe Ltd., 1978, 248 pp. \$14.50 or £6.30.

Historian, novelist, farmer and participant in Irish events for most of the century, Edward MacLysaght presents an informative and entertaining autobiographical commentary on Ireland in the twentieth century. He was born in 1887 and his book is divided into the three consecutive themes of his active life — Rural, Political and Academic.

Though highly selective, *Changing Times* is useful and instructive for those with prior background in Irish history. It is the account of an exceptional man who, while not a central figure, was usually close to the major Irish personalities and events of his time. It is also the story of a man who was involved in a wide spectrum of activities, a rare occurrence in this age of specialization.

The Rural section of the book, centering on the episodes of his youth, farming, and everyday life in those early Edwardian years, is the one he most enjoyed writing. It recalls his unsuccessful attempt to organize an Irish-speaking commune on his farm at Raheen. The motivation behind the community was to preserve the Gaelic language and to keep the people on the land. He attributes its failure to the interruptive activities of the British during the Anglo-Irish War.

More valuable for the study of general Irish history and Anglo-Irish relations, the longest portion of the book deals with politics. The author was introduced to politics after the Easter Rising in his association with such literary figures as George Moore, Stephen MacKenna and A.E. He discusses the "Dominion Status" proposal of the Irish Conference Committee of May 1917, the election of Eamon DeValera in Clare in 1917, involvement at the 1917-18 Irish Convention, including his unofficial liaison with Sinn Fein, and the conscription crisis of 1918.

MacLysaght's insight and personal experiences during the Anglo-Irish War, 1919-1921, serve as yet another reminder of the misdeeds of the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries. In the course of 26 raids during "the troubles," many of his most interesting papers were taken from him by British forces. Therefore, his diary entries for this period were sketchy. Nonetheless, his discussion of the killing of

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

Dick McKee, Peadar Clancy, and Conor Clune in Dublin Castle in the wake of Bloody Sunday and of the activities of the East Clare Brigade of the I.R.A. are worthy of reading.

The author also gives favorable attention to the Anglo-Irish Truce and Treaty of 1921 and the First Senate of the Irish Free State, 1922-1936. With respect to Michael Collins, he cites letters from Collins to Austin Stack as well as his discussion with labor leader William O'Brien as proof that Collins was a "man of the movement" and prime creator of the I.R.A. Other topics such as the Boundary Commission and Agreement of 1925 are also covered with refreshing honesty.

The final part on MacLysaght's academic work has narrower appeal dealing with Schools and Universities, the Manuscripts Commission, the Institute for Advanced Studies, the Genealogical Office and the National Library. Five appendices are also added, including one on the author's travel to South Africa in 1938.

Changing Times is a readable and intelligent account by a man who, during the first 91 years of his life, lived through the most turbulent of Irish times.

Martin Frederick Seedorf
Big Bend Community College

S.B. Bushrui, ed. *A Centenary Tribute to John Millington Synge, 1871-1909: Sunshine and The Moon's Delight*. Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1979. 356 pages. \$5.75.

First published in 1972, this collection deals with broad issues in Synge's life and works. It consists of a Foreword by A. Norman Jeffares, a "Centennial Poem" by Marcus Smith, twenty-two essays on Synge, a Synge Glossary compiled by Alan Bliss, and a twenty-one page "Select Bibliography," which lists basic books and articles in English and many entries in foreign languages. The volume's organizational principle is not always apparent. Excluding the Jeffares Foreword, the Smith poem, and the ending material, i.e. the selected bibliography, the notes on the contributors (which are too long and somewhat pretentious), and the index, Bushrui's book divides into six sections, with divisions being indicated by asterisks in the table of contents. The first section consists of seven essays, all dealing with Synge's plays; the fifth section traces Synge's influence on modern Irish drama and

CALLS FOR PAPERS

Papers are solicited for the following meetings:

(1) The 1981 ACIS Midwest Regional Conference, to be held at Valparaiso University on October 16 and 17. Manuscripts, conference theme or panel topic suggestions, or other inquiries should be sent to Arvid F. Sponberg, 1706 Chicago Street, Valparaiso, Indiana 46383 by May 15. Co-coordinator of the conference will be James Startt of the History Department at Valparaiso University.

(2) The Anglo-Irish Discussion Section at the 1981 Modern Language Association meeting (New York, late December). Papers should reach the chairman, James Carens (English Department, Bucknell University,

Lewisburg, Pennsylvania 17837) by April 1.

(3) A possible MLA special session on Irish Satire After Swift, to be chaired by Patrick A. McCarthy, English Department, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida 33124. One page abstracts should be sent by April 1.

O COME ALL YE IRISH GROUPS

Greenwood Press plans to publish a reference volume on Irish-American organizations, past and present, national and local. Anyone interested in writing entries for the volume should contact the editor: Michael F. Funcheon, Department of History, South Dakota State University, Brookings, South Dakota 57007.



The *ACIS Newsletter* is published four times annually in February, April, October, and December, at the University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida 33124. Vol. XI, Serial No. 1.

Editor: Patrick A. McCarthy
Review Editor: Nita Cary
Bibliographer: Jim Ford, Boston Public Library

importance (or lack of it) in the Arab world and in Japan, France, and Germany (with one wondering why only these places were chosen). The other sections seem to have no inner consistency, although they do make important points about Synge's relationship to Lady Gregory and to Yeats and do provide information on other background topics such as newspaper reports of the riots over *The Playboy of the Western World*.

Another problem with Bushrui's book is that some of it is dated. Richard M. Kain's excellent account of the *Playboy* riots, drawn from Irish newspapers, has been superseded by James Kilroy's *The 'Playboy' Riots* (1971 [sic]), which is Volume 4 in The Irish Theatre Series and which reprints important newspaper accounts of the furor — although Kain does include materials omitted by Kilroy. The need for Alan Price's cranky but perceptive "A Survey of Recent Work on J.M. Synge" has been obviated by Weldon Thornton's highly competent section on Synge in the MLA's 1976 *Anglo-Irish Literature: A Review of Research*, ed. Richard J. Finneran. Also, since the first publication of Bushrui's book in 1972, three full-length volumes of secondary bibliography on Synge have appeared: the first by Paul M. Levitt in 1974, the second by E.H. Mikhail in 1975, and the third, this reviewer's annotated bibliography, in 1979.

Apart from these objections, however, Bushrui's volume is certainly worth reissuing. Though some of the essays are long-winded and tend to emphasize the obvious, many of them make perceptive points. In the section of the collection dealing with the plays, for example, T.R. Henn applies his extensive knowledge of the Aran Islands to *Riders to the Sea*, permitting the reader to understand the dialogue and allusions of the characters through the point of view of fisherfolk, with their arcane customs. David R. Clark effectively discusses Biblical imagery while examining the character of Maurya in the same play: "If there is too much passive suffering, not enough positive will in Maurya and her play — that is because Synge chose an action which is suffering, the action of enduring." Augustine Martin traces Dionysian and Apollonian "postures" in *The Playboy of the Western World*. He finds that "Old Mahon from the beginning and Christy towards the end embody the Dionysiac freedom, energy and excess" (their opposites being Shawn Keogh and Father Reilly). Finally, Vivian Mercier, with a highly original interpretation of *The Tinker's Wedding*, finds that the priest is a sympathetic figure, though he feels that Synge's "ambiguous" treatment of him is the "weakest point of the play. . . ."

The fifth section of the volume, that dealing with Synge's impact, begins with Robert Hogan's essay, which traces the possible influence of Synge on George Fitzmaurice, Bryan MacMahon, Michael J. Molloy, and (in his early work) John B. Keane. Hogan's analysis is all the more effective because he admits the difficulty of proving definite influences. For example, in discussing the "grotesquerie so frequently found in Irish playwrights," Hogan wonders whether this quality is a "direct influence of Synge or simply an inevitable effect of Irish history." Hogan is particularly adept at finding similarities between Synge and the Irish writers who followed him, figures with whom Hogan is thoroughly familiar.

The other essays in this "fifth section" of Bushrui's volume, while less significant than Hogan's article, do point out interesting adaptations of Synge in foreign countries. Ghassan Maleh finds that Synge is attractive to Arabs because both the Arab World and Ireland are involved in struggles for freedom and national unity: unfortunately, the Arabic translations of Synge's works are poor, and *The Playboy of the Western World* turns out to be "The Spoilt Youth of the West." Again, Gerard Leblanc demonstrates "how little Synge is known in France." And Johannes Kleinstuck stresses the difficulty of translating Synge into German and the misuse of his work by anti-fascists such as Brecht in his *Die Gewehre*, which distorts *Riders to the Sea*.

All in all, then, Bushrui's collection is well worth purchasing. It contains many good ideas, and, though a grab bag, it has much more value than dross.

Edward A. Kopper, Jr.
Editor, *Modern British Literature*

Andrew Parkin, *The Dramatic Imagination of W.B. Yeats*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1978; New York: Barnes & Noble, 1979. 208 pp. \$23.50.

Andrew Parkin's study attempts to show the presence of the "dramatic imagination" throughout Yeats's canon, though the emphasis is clearly on the plays. Although the book offers a number of useful insights — such as the reading of *Calvary* or the remarks on the closing lyrics in *The Only Jealousy of Emer* — as a unified study it is less than fully successful.

One problem with *The Dramatic Imagination of W.B. Yeats* is that the intended audience is unclear. The restrictions in subject matter and approach might suggest a specialized audience; yet the study contains much more plot summary than necessary, much of the relevant scholarship is passed by in silence, and many of the interpretations are familiar. Yeatsians will be taken aback to see MacGregor Mathers described as simply "a magician Yeats met in London," and they may find infelicitous the phrasing in "Yeats's speculations about our least understood powers led him to a life-long involvement in supernatural and occult experience, yet if his soul soared, his reason could not but scratch the sceptical itch." The commentary on *The Speckled Bird* seems unplaced; *The Dreaming of the Bones* and *The Death of Cuchulain* are each discussed in two different chapters, while *The Resurrection* is hardly mentioned and *The Herne's Egg* disposed of in one paragraph. The book is not immune from some of the unfortunately standard errors in Yeats criticism, including misspelling ("Olivia Shakespeare"), mistitling ("Swedenborg, Mediums, Desolate Places"), and misdating (the acting version of *The Shadowy Waters* is variously dated 1907 and 1911).

Indeed, there seems to be a general imprecision about this work. Consider, for example, the statement that "it was not until around 1897 that he produced the short stories of *The Secret Rose* — 'The Adoration of the Magi,' 'Rosa Alchemica,' 'The Tables of the Law.'" Now although all three of those stories were intended to be part of the collection, because of the publisher's objections only "Rosa Alchemica" appeared in the published version. Moreover, with the exception of "The Adoration of the Magi," all of the stories in question had first been published between 1892 and 1896; and as Curtis Bradford noted fifteen years ago, the page proofs for *The Secret Rose* are dated 2-8 November 1896. But the most puzzling example of imprecision is this description of Yeats's middle years:

He was deeply unhappy at the time of his marriage, but his excitement at Mrs. Yeats's automatic writing soon inspired him to develop and organise their metaphysical speculations into *A Vision*. The Easter Rebellion of 1916 soon gave him the sense of Ireland's ancient heroism alive again, even amid the horror of the unprecedented slaughter of the 1914-18 war. He got a creative second wind and lived on to enjoy his marriage and write much of his greatest work.

Here we have the spectacle of the 1916 Rebellion revivifying a marriage which in fact took place over a year after the Rebellion. And when did Yeats not "enjoy his marriage"?

However, the overriding problem with *The Dramatic Imagination of W.B. Yeats* is not one of error and imprecision but of a failure to sufficiently define the key term of the title. The opening chapter begins with an interesting title — "A Fragment of God: Yeats's Idea of the Imagination" — but thereafter does little more

than quote some of the standard passages of the prose, including what Parkin calls "the now notorious opening of the essay on 'Magic,'" before reaching the following bland conclusion: "When we ask what was the most characteristic mode of expression for Yeats's imagination, we find that his answer is that of the classic dramatist: the sovereignty of speech governed by an un-failing sense of decorum." Here Parkin has failed to draw on much significant material, both primary and secondary: one thinks, for instance, of Yeats's work in the 1893 three-volume edition of Blake, or of Edward Engelberg's *The Vast Design* and Hazard Adams's essays on Yeats's aesthetics.

From this unpromising beginning Parkin then proceeds through his selected works, occasionally losing sight of his main thesis and always with the mixture of insight and imprecision already noted. The book ends without any real sense of having reached a conclusion. Yeats's imagination still awaits its sufficient chronicler.

Richard J. Finneran
Newcomb College, Tulane Univ.

Francis M. Carroll, *American Opinion and the Irish Question: 1910-23*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978. xii + 319 pp.

Carroll undertook a complicated and creative social historical job. He did not pretend to be able to get indices of overall American opinion. Whether or not they might have been helpful to his project, they were not available for his time-period. Instead he achieved his purpose by portraying the impact of those accepted as spokespersons for significant American publics upon decision-making processes related to Irish questions in the United States, United Kingdom, and United Nations. Upon the basis of a careful combing of manuscripts, newspapers and periodicals, and published memorabilia, he presents a most impressive description of what took place.

The book gives a fascinating dimension to Irish history. As Carroll says, "The Irish question was effectively kept before the American people for a longer time, and perhaps on a grander scale, than any other ethnic nationalistic movement in the United States before or since" (p. 2). After all, there are far more Irish in the United States than there were ever in Ireland, estimated at around 25 millions in 1900; that includes third and fourth as well as first and second generation Irish.

Carroll treats especially the American reactions to and involvement in the home rule movement and the rebirth of revolutionary tendencies before and during World War I, the 1916 rising and its aftermath, the connections of the Irish situation with the American war crisis of 1917-18, what happened or chiefly did not happen to the Irish at the Paris Peace Conference, and American reactions to the Anglo-Irish struggle of 1919-21 and to the founding of the Irish Free State in 1921-23. Not only does he give an enlightening summary of statements bearing upon those developments, but he provides extensive reference notes that students of Irish history will find rewarding.

In talking about the publics significant to his study, Carroll had difficulty finding a label for native Americans not of Irish derivation. He did not like the term, WASP; it is, after all, inaccurate as a label for assorted Irish, Huguenots, Germans, Swiss, Swedes, French, and many others as well as for "Anglo-Saxons." He apparently decided that he had to give up and use the term "native Americans" for the non-Irish natives. Unfortunately this also gives an inaccurate contrast with Irish-Americans. After all, the Irish have been coming here since 1607, and they came in quantities during the 1740s and 1840s. Irish-Americans, except for recent immigrants, are as "native" as anyone except for the Amerindians. I do not mean to suggest that I have an alternative term to offer to Carroll!

In spite of the American government's failure to support Irish independence, Carroll points out that it "was willing to use its influence on behalf of prisoners in 1916, to encourage a settlement in 1917, to promote Anglo-Irish talks in 1919, and to assist in relief operations in Ireland in 1916 and 1921." For that matter, he believes that "American opinion on the Irish question was more important to the British government than to the American."

This is a dedicated piece of scholarship, a substantial addition to Irish and American historical literature.

Alfred McClung Lee
Brooklyn College and the Graduate School, CUNY

Damian F. Hannan and Louise A. Katsiaouni. *Traditional Families? From Culturally Prescribed to Negotiated Roles in Farm Families*. Dublin: The Economic and Social Research Institute, 1977. 227 pp. £4.50.

It is now over forty years since Conrad Arensberg and Solon Kimball began their well-known studies of the Irish rural family. Ever since *Family and Community in Ireland* was published in 1940, it has been a standard reference work, a "classic" in the field of family studies.

An important study of the Irish rural family has recently been published by Damian Hannan and Louise Katsiaouni. Students of the Irish family will welcome the availability of this important monograph, for the work is based upon careful research techniques, and the data are analyzed systematically and thoughtfully. Moreover, the book is a valuable benchmark for understanding rural families in other societies involved in the transition from traditionalism to modernism.

Arensberg and Kimball set forth a view of society as "an integrated system of mutually interrelated and functionally interdependent parts." Hannan and Katsiaouni end their work by writing that the structural functional mode of theorizing is not useful for studying contemporary Irish families. Underlying their research initially was a form of structural functional theorizing, and the statistical analysis assumed a linear model. However, once the analysis began, the authors found the "variables studied would prove completely intractable using these perspectives." As the analysis proceeded, an eclectic approach to theory was employed, composed of role, exchange, and reference group theories. The simplistic, additive, linear model was abandoned for it did not fit the data.

This new work is marked by a careful sampling plan in which 408 families in the ten western, least prosperous, and more remote counties of Ireland were interviewed. Unlike so many American family studies, this research specified that both spouses were to be interviewed simultaneously. The monograph is meticulous in its detailed analysis.

Arensberg and Kimball's conception of the traditional Irish family was the starting point for the study. The Irish farm family — like those in many other peasant cultures — is characterized by a clearly differentiated and institutionalized division of labor, patriarchal authority, and a socio-emotional structure in which the mother acts as the major source of emotional support and the manager of family tensions. Questions about these characteristics were incorporated into the interview guide and a number of specific items were then employed to index the variables.

A method of cluster analysis was employed which would extract "the minimum number of unique clusters that best segregate the most individuals." The seven family types resulting from the clustering differed considerably, and it was not possible to arrange them along a single continuum

from traditional to modern. Clusters 1 and 2 are clearly the most "traditional" and Cluster 4 the most "modern," but the other four clusters do not fit into a neat simplistic classification. Cluster 7 was clearly anomalous, perhaps because of its religious composition. Only five per cent of the total sample were Protestant families but about a third were found in Cluster 7. Religion was found to be one of the most statistically significant of the background variables.

Hannan and Katsiaouni conclude that the picture of Irish family life drawn by Arensberg and Kimball is not valid for the present day. While there are a minority of families which resemble those of the earlier period, the modalities are clearly different as a result of the breakdown of rural isolation by new modes of communication and transportation and by innovations in farm practice which have altered relationships between father and son. Consumption patterns have also changed and the decision-making process is more complex than earlier.

About a quarter of the families are clearly "modern" with a breaching of traditional sex roles, joint consultation, and a mutually supportive emotional structure. Economic and technological changes were significant influences on family interaction, but the stage of the family cycle was more important. One of the interesting findings is that in the most traditional families half the wives express clear dissatisfaction with their husband's family roles. On the other hand, in the most "modern" families less than one in seven expressed such dissatisfaction.

The publication of this volume by the Economic and Social Research Institute in Dublin may limit its readership in the United States and elsewhere. This would be most unfortunate. I urge readers of this review to order a copy for their institutional libraries so that their students may have the opportunity to learn and to be challenged by a meticulously executed piece of family research.

Gordon F. Streib
University of Florida

"Irish Poetry After Yeats." *The Literary Review* 22,2 (Winter, 1979). 151 pp. \$3.50.

"Irish Poetry After Yeats" is an imprecise title for this number of *The Literary Review*, since it is mainly an anthology of thirteen contemporary poets, ranging in age from Thomas Kinsella (52) to Gregory O'Donoghue (29). Guest editor Adrian Frazier *does* address the generation of Austin Clarke and Patrick Kavanagh in an introductory essay, and also refers to that earlier period and to Yeats himself in four interviews (with Brendan Kennelly, Eavan Boland, John Montague, and James Simmons). It seems, however, that the editor is more concerned with Yeatsian fallout than the poets are. Mr. Frazier even seems eager to stir up rebellion against Yeatsian influence; in being so he is a generation late. The poetry (about five pages per poet), though generally un-Yeatsian, is in no way anti-Yeatsian, and the interviewed poets seem reluctant to defy a poet now dead forty years.

Mr. Frazier's essay portrays contemporary Irish poetry as a movement riding over the bones of Yeats on the rustically-carved wheels of Paddy Kavanagh. Though it is true that Kavanagh is as important to these contemporaries as Yeats, it is an oversimplification to judge these present-day poets as vitally engaged in the Clarke-Kavanagh debate with Yeats's shadow. They have cast their minds on other days, their own.

Mr. Frazier tends to base this supposed conflict on political opinions rather than aesthetic judgements, and these opinions are also narrow oversimplifications:

In order to appreciate modern Irish poetry, it is important to understand that Irish poets do not share the world's

unqualified approval of Yeats. They know too much about him. They know he was the son of a middle-class portrait painter who pretended to belong to the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy. They know he supported, by writing drum songs, the proto-Fascist Blueshirt movement in the thirties. They know, in other words, that the great poet was often a silly old man, slightly dangerous, on the wrong side in politics and the minority side in religion. (p. 134)

Ah, the non-Irish world understands so little of Yeats. It must be informed of his sins: his middle-class origins, pride in his ancestry, drum-songs, silliness (Auden's or Frazier's version?), old age, "wrong" politics, "minority" religion. Terrible man. But why is Mr. Frazier so much more frightening here than Yeats ever was?

Set against this narrowness, the poets, ironically, display a remarkable tolerance; they are almost identifiable as a group by their refusal to exaggerate their own opinions. Their verse keeps their agitations within the boundaries of honesty and order. There is Kennelly's individualistic irony — checked by a strong tolerance and friendliness; Derek Mahon's earth-passion — modified by quietness of image and understatement; Seamus Heaney's tragic awareness — tempered by aesthetic curiosity and archeological calm; and Montague's acute intellectuality — regulated by what seems a profound humility.

The four interviews also exhibit this self-regulating spirit among the poets, an intelligent outgrowth of their desire to be free and sane in too factional a world. The Boland interview is remarkable for her rejection of "ready-made" identities or inherited arguments. Her exchange with Mr. Frazier provides a kind of ironical drama of political or sociological questions doggedly parried by aesthetic, private responses. And Montague, though emotionally committed to the Catholic argument in Ulster, shows in his interview a similar instinct in a humorous way: "I think as much as possible Protestants and Catholics should make love together, any chance they get, providing they find each other pleasant, of course" (p. 172). Words of a contemporary.

Richard Bonaccorso
Central Connecticut State College

Lawrence J. McCaffrey. *Ireland from Colony to Nation State*. Prentice-Hall 1979. 214 pp. \$7.95.

In closing his 800-year Irish history, Lawrence McCaffrey states:

In Dante's inferno, the inmates of hell are sentenced to pursue hopelessly the pleasures of their vices through an eternity of boredom and frustration. Perhaps Northern Ireland is Britain's inferno, where contemporary politicians and their successors must try to disentangle the threads of centuries of ill-conceived and selfish Irish policies, always to be hopelessly thwarted by the duplicity of their ancestors. This "entangling duplicity" surfaces time and again as McCaffrey traces the twists and turns in Anglo-Irish relations from the coming of Strongbow to the present Ulster crisis. The result of this venture is an interesting and highly readable text concerning the varied strands and faces of Irish political nationalism.

McCaffrey opens with a rapid but clear discussion of events from Strongbow's arrival in 1169 to the emergence of Daniel O'Connell as a force in Irish politics. In his discussion he considers the origins of the "Irish Question." This material ranges from the broad areas of conquest and rebellion, through the Penal Laws, secret societies, and the United Irishmen, to the Act of Union and the fall of the Irish Protestant Political nation. Although he does not trace each step in intricate detail, McCaffrey clearly presents the immediate and long-range results of events within this extensive period. In capsule form he captures both the spirit and the import of the times.

Beginning with his chapter on Daniel O'Connell, McCaffrey discusses in greater detail the pendulum swing of Irish political thought from constitutional agitation to physical force measures. He presents O'Connell in an objective fashion which helps to clarify the position of the often maligned leader in regards to his relationship with the Catholic Church and the Westminster politicians. McCaffrey also establishes the principles which O'Connell contributed to the rise of Irish political nationalism. According to McCaffrey, "He had confidence that the agitation for Catholic emancipation contained the seeds of Irish nationalism. Catholicism was the symbol of an independent Irish identity."

As McCaffrey continues his journey through Irish history from the post O'Connell period to the present, his work examines the major events and forces that contribute to the current situation in Northern Ireland. In these various segments he offers the changing and diverse thoughts of Church leaders, his feelings on the impact of British policies during the famine years, an assessment of the contributions of Charles Stewart Parnell, and a picture of the changing face of Ireland and Irish politics during and since the 1916 Easter Rebellion. McCaffrey closes his work with a summary and evaluation of the current Northern condition.

Lawrence McCaffrey has provided a book that demonstrates the complex fabric of Anglo-Irish relations and Irish nationalism. The book flows smoothly and not only offers the beginning student a solid background for further study but also provides excellent supplementary material concerning this colorful period for courses in contemporary Irish literature and culture.

Ronald G. Hoover
Pennsylvania State University,
Altoona Campus

Barbara DiBernard. *Alchemy and Finnegans Wake*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1980. 163 pp. \$24.00 (\$7.95 paper).

In *Finnegans Wake*, James Joyce describes Shem, the artist, as "this Esuan Menschavik and the first till last alchemist." A comprehensive examination of the biblical and political levels of the book, suggested here by "Esuan Menschavik," has never been attempted, although a host of critics have commented on aspects of Joyce's use of religion and political history in his magnum opus. The alchemical metaphor, however, is explored thoroughly in this fine study by Barbara DiBernard, whose work reveals a firm command both of alchemical lore and of the Joycean

text. The result is a substantial addition to Joyce scholarship.

DiBernard argues that "Alchemy serves not only as a metaphor for the artistic process, but also as a source or analogue for many of the major themes of the *Wake*, including incest, colors, forgery, death and rebirth, the dream form, the use of excrement, the Golden Age, number symbolism, the macrocosm-microcosm theory, and the reconciliation of opposites." These different elements of the alchemical metaphor are analyzed in separate chapters, some of which reach conclusions of great significance to an understanding of *Finnegans Wake*. For example, the discussion of the alchemist's need to work from base materials to a spiritual end leads DiBernard to see that Joyce rejects any art that does not follow the same pattern: both the attempt to transcend or evade the physical world (as in the "art for art's sake" movement) and the literal-minded or utilitarian attitudes that ignore the spiritual end of art are equally condemned. Another real insight derives from the discovery of an alchemical analogue to the mathematical-artistic problem of "squaring the circle," which in its transmuted form often becomes "circling the square." Throughout the book, DiBernard examines the basic questions of *Finnegans Wake* from a fresh point of view and provides new evidence to support her reading of the *Wake*.

Alchemy and Finnegans Wake merits particular commendation for the clarity with which complex alchemical ideas are explained and for DiBernard's refusal to overstate her case. As she says, "*Finnegans Wake* does not allow the reader to fall back on comfortable beliefs and presuppositions, including the idea that a book has a correct interpretation." In an area in which some very useful studies have been marred by their authors' insistence on finding *the* solution to the book, DiBernard's broader vision is refreshing. That does not mean that I agree with all of her findings: I would question her twice-stated assertion that a reference to Shem's art as being like Dorian Gray's shows that Shem is a phony, since she does not point out that the words are spoken by Shaun, who can see only phoniness and perversity in Shem's art. But it is very difficult to find points like this to quibble about, because DiBernard has developed her case carefully and modestly, and because her argument is always based on hard facts. SUNY Press deserves a rap on the knuckles for the high price of the hardback edition of this book (the publication of a paperback edition at \$7.95 does not exactly make up for the price of the hard back copy), but DiBernard deserves nothing but praise for her contribution to *Finnegans Wake* scholarship.

Patrick A. McCarthy
University of Miami

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The University of Miami
Department of English
P.O. Box 248145
Coral Gables, Florida 33124

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