

AN EDITOR'S VIEW OF IRISH T(R)OPICS

The following four essays and the lyric poem “Maeve Married” are from the Eleventh Annual Southern Regional meeting of the American Conference for Irish Studies, which celebrated the millennia (both the one past and the one present) with a Caribbean odyssey on the cruise ship *Estasy*. The experience was extraordinary, for the weather in Nassau was nothing like that of the southeastern United States in February *anno Domini* 2000. Probably, Sandra Sprayberry’s essay on Synge and Walcott in our post-colonial time is most representative thematically of the papers read, as I recall with delight in the largely anachronistic décor of the Chinatown Lounge, the bar by night that served as the plenary site by day. I remember, for example, being struck by the exotic ceiling fixtures—a huge, hovering, spiraling dragon with lanterns hung as if to give Yeats’s Wheel of Incarnation an Eastern guise he might have appreciated as my own session presented its interpretation of the poet’s interests in the philosophy of the Pre-Socratics, in Swedenborg, in automatic writing, and in fathering (as he supposed) the Avatar of the future. Scholarly eclecticism and more than usual attention to Irish culture, settlement, and movement in the Americas, it is fair to say, characterized this exciting odyssey of the mind. Pirates, revolutionaries, demographics, great literature!—who could ask for more than that? So a debt of thanks was paid to organizer Jim Doan, Nova Southeastern University.

Twentieth-century theater history in Dublin and London and censorship in Ireland constitute the center of gravity in these essays (that is, in *matter* and *gravitas*). The essays by Joan Dean and William Atkinson were, in fact, joined in a special panel on issues of censorship in Ireland—and most especially affecting the Abbey Theatre and thus the Irish national theater movement in the first and second generations of Ireland’s literary renaissance. Bringing the story of the theater up to date with the reception of Northern Irish drama in the last quarter of the century, Marilyn Richtarik completes the unit of scholarship from the cruise conference, the spirit of which is extended to our Republic of Letters column in the form of Kathryn Kirkpatrick’s mediating lyric. Is it a post-Modern enterprise to revive the “longer English lyric” in the manner of Yeats’s poems “Narrative and Dramatic”? Kirkpatrick’s adaptation of legendary lore might claim the revival for Southern Anglo-Irish-Americans. The poem is a somewhat revised and slightly longer version of the segmental poem she read one tranquil evening to an appreciative audience that included Senator Michael Yeats and his wife Grainne.

The ACIS selections are then joined to Evelyn Harris Haller’s “Ways to Access the Landscape, Soundscape, and Lifescape of Ireland in the Poetry of W. B. Yeats.” Once intended for an MLA anthology on Yeats, “Haller’s work, here revised and updated for our audience, is particularly suited to The Republic of Letters at this point in *SCR*’s history. Her attention to media is consistent with the platform from which our literary magazine is produced at Clemson by the Center for Electronic and Digital Publishing. In our first year under this arrangement—our thirty-third in all—*SCR* is the chief “angel” in this new twenty-first-century publishing house. See <http://www.clemson.edu/caah/cedp>.

The poems of Van Cleave, Marion, and Raney are part of the integrative accent of the spring issue as a whole. The procedure follows the example of contemporary poetry streamed in the issue *Ireland in the Arts and Humanities, 1899-1999*, 32.1 (fall 1999).

—Wayne Chapman