the professionalization and medicalization of midwifery services. Cormac Ó Gráda’s very analytical take on the influence of the socioeconomic, cultural and environmental factors on infant and child mortality in the area of Pembroke did not explore gender per se, but made significant points regarding ethnoreligious differences noting that economic factors were most influential in infant and child mortality. Ciara Breathnach examined the challenges faced by Lady Dudley’s District Nursing Scheme pointing to the difficulties of funding and staffing the scheme and the tensions between ethnomedical practices. Greta Jones explored the incidence of tuberculosis, which occurred more frequently in females than males (33) pointing to the importance of the “inner dynamic of families” (48) and the important role that women played. Mel Cousins moved the readers firmly into the twentieth century examining national insurance records after the formation of the Irish Free State highlighting the gendered nature of claims but also the difficulties of taking these records at face value.

Moving on to the realm of mental health, Pauline Prior examined criminal lunacy, but from the vantage point of psychiatry, showing how medical knowledge was used to support socially acceptable gendered notions of femininity and masculinity. The short-lived institutions for inebriates were examined by Elizabeth Malcolm who noted gendered attitudes to chronic drunkenness despite the growing medicalization of excessive drinking. Oonagh Walsh’s chapter examines the custody versus cure dilemmas faced by asylums pointing to the gendered difference between “therapies.”

Sexuality was another important theme addressed in this volume. Laurence M. Geary tackled the institutional treatment of venereal disease pointing to the unjust social discourse which placed women as the locus of the disease, thus excusing men’s sexual activity. Susannah Riordan and Leanne McCormick examined the costs of venereal disease in the twentieth century. Riordan, in her chapter, calculates the difficulties and limitations of the venereal disease policies in the Republic of Ireland 1943-1952 laying the main responsibility for its ineffectiveness on politicians and administrators. McCormick’s work on the implementation of venereal disease policies in Northern Ireland during the Second World War highlights local attitudes and beliefs that again placed the blame squarely on women. Sandra McAvoy dissected the arguments for the introduction of the 1935 Criminal Law influence of religious discourses.

Preston and Ó hÓgartaigh conclude that the social history of medicine has “come of age” (8), which hopefully means that historians will continue to explore new and old themes in the history of medicine, using a variety of historical approaches as well as gender, as a category of analysis. As this edited collection demonstrates, gender matters. And understanding how gender influenced medical services and practices not only helps us understand the past, but also the present.

— Birkbeck, University of London

**Leeann Lane**

**Rosamond Jacob: Third Person Singular**


**Reviewed by Madolyn Nichols**

Despite Rosamond Jacob’s role as author (of three novels, a children’s book, a fictional biography of the wife of Theobald Wolfe Tone), her importance to researchers of Irish history has heretofore been excusing men’s sexual activity. Susannah Riordan and Leanne McCormick examined the costs of venereal disease in the twentieth century. Riordan, in her chapter, calculates the difficulties and limitations of the venereal disease policies in the Republic of Ireland 1943-1952 laying the main responsibility for its ineffectiveness on politicians and administrators. McCormick’s work on the implementation of venereal disease policies in Northern Ireland during the Second World War highlights local attitudes and beliefs that again placed the blame squarely on women. Sandra McAvoy dissected the arguments for the introduction of the 1935 Criminal Law influence of religious discourses.

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Frank Ryan. Jacob was also something of an anomaly: in an era which privileged a woman’s role within the domestic sphere, she possessed neither children nor husband; in a time when Catholicism was considered a defining aspect of Irish culture, Jacob’s views remained solidly anticlerical. Born in 1888, Jacob came of age in an era which would later be known as a turning point both for Ireland and for middle-class women. However, considering the fact that single, middle-class women have so infrequently been the focus of study, women like Jacob have tended to fall through the cracks: “Jacob,” Lane suggests, “offers a key into lives more ordinary within the urban middle classes of her time, and suggests a new perspective on female lives” (4).

Lane explores Jacob’s literary ambitions and sense of failure at her lack of commercial success, and documents how Jacob, who viewed herself quintessentially as a writer, employed events in her personal life as material for her novels.
Lane, for instance, details the way in which Jacob records her affection “like a man” for Tony Farrington (i.e. physically rather than emotionally) and how her feelings led her to interrogate normative values which prescribed sexual passivity for women (197). Jacob would later voice this ambivalence through her protagonist Constance in her unpublished novel Third Personal Singular. Lane also details Jacob’s tireless work behind the scenes throughout the exhilarating years of the revolution and her sense of disappointment at the anti-climactic nature of life in independent Ireland. In her later life, Jacob felt compelled as a single woman to look after those women that the Irish Free State had forgotten (Meg Connery and Mrs. Mellows are mentioned in some detail, among many other friends and colleagues), and notes frustratingly that she would not have been expected to do so had she been married.

The highlight of this excellent study is not in the rich detail of an era central to Irish history nor even as the chronicle of the failed career of a political understudy; instead Lane compellingly tells the story of a woman who, though she was in many ways at the heart of the events around the revolution, continued to feel isolated and different, “singular” as a result of her ideology and personal status. Through her, Lane conveys the sense of servitude that was so much a part of many women’s lives in Catholic Ireland in the years surrounding independence—the thanklessness and lack of recognition that frustrated Jacob but continued to drive her to work for nationalist and feminist organizations and in the service of individual friends. While Jacob serves as the topic of this volume, it is also in many ways a study of a frequently-overlooked stratum of Irish society: single, middle-class women. Lane’s work makes an important contribution to the history of women in Ireland and is a welcome addition to the field.

– University of Warwick

MÁRTIN MAC CON IOMAIRE
AND EAMON MAHER, EDs.

‘Tickling the Palate’: Gastronomy in Irish Literature and Culture

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USD $58.95

Reviewed by Barbara Ketcham Wheaton

In ‘Tickling the Palate’: Gastronomy in Irish Literature and Culture Máirtín Mac Con Iomaire and Eamon Maher have given us an excellent collection of essays. Its three sections deal first with fictional representations and memoirs of Irish foods, second with real-life culinary and dining traditions in Ireland, and third with the future of Irish food and drink, at home and abroad. Since Irish food studies is a relatively new area of academic engagement, it seems helpful to summarize the contents of the essays, and encourage readers to pursue them for themselves.

Only three cookbooks of Irish origin were published before 1847, but Dorothy Cashman, writing in “That delicate sweetmeat, the Irish plum,” has been able to find useful food references in Maria Edgeworth’s Castle Rackrent and The Absentee, as well as in the National Library’s collection of culinary manuscripts. The excellence of Irish foodstuffs shines through Cashman’s essay: the orchard fruit, the salmon from Sligo (she finds a manuscript reference and connects it with kin of Edgeworth). Flicka Small’s essay, “Know Me Come Eat With Me: What Food Says about Leopold Bloom,” describes the eaters, eating places, foodstuffs, and the acts of eating in James Joyce’s Ulysses on June 16, 1904. It is no travel-writer’s dream day: Bloom sees a Christian Brother buying sweets and mentions a malnourished child, encounters a vegetarian and thinks of cannibals. Many kinds of hunger are evoked, and some threats: “Unless you eat weggibobbles and fruit, the eyes of the cow will pursue you through all eternity” (qtd. 41).

In “Cowpie, Gruel and Midnight Feasts: The Representation of Food in Popular Children’s Literature,” Michael Flanagan takes on the enormous topic of food in English and Irish books and magazines, many of which were read in all English-speaking countries, in particular the writings of Lewis Carroll, Kenneth Graham, and Maurice Sendak. He devotes much attention to Bruno Bettelheim’s Freudian interpretation of fairy tales, seeing them variously as examples of early sexuality and oral fixations. He makes a common error: the “apple” we read of the Bible and in Greek mythology was not known until later antiquity. Our modern apple is descended from a tree that had not yet been domesticated in those early centuries. Flanagan also discusses the importance of children’s periodicals, particularly Boy’s Own and Our Boys.

Eamon Maher, in “The Rituals of Food and Drink in the Work of John McGahern,” shows that the author sets many scenes in his novels around meals that are often tense, fearful, or sorrowful. The food and drink often sound delicious, but the contexts in which they are eaten are painful. Rhona Richman Kenneally’s essay, “The Elusive Landscape of History: Food and Empowerment in Sebastian Barry’s Annie Dunne” (2002), is based on Barry’s early childhood memories of farmstead life in south Wicklow in the 1940s. The novel is set in the late 1950s. Annie Dunne is an aging, unmarried woman who is dependent on relatives for a home. She has little education but she does have skills that are useful on a farm. There is, for example a splendid description of the amount of labor involved in churning butter,