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failure; far from it. Rather, I read this book as one of several recent studies that productively revisits the literary history of last century's middle decades. Bentley's approach suggests that interwar modernism served perhaps less as a convenient target, and more as an unacknowledged inspiration, for politically committed writers of the 1950s.

Note

1. Alan Sinfield, *Literature, Politics, and Culture in Postwar Britain* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), 79.

***A Passion for Joyce: The Letters of Hugh Kenner and Adaline Glasheen.* Edward M. Burns, ed. Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2008. Pp. xxvii + 433. \$159.95 (cloth).**

Reviewed by Marjorie Perloff, Stanford University

Adaline Glasheen (1920–1993) was a phenomenon. An M.A. in English from Washington University in St. Louis, turned Farmington, Connecticut housewife and mother, she began, in 1946, to “fiddle,” with the proper names in *Finnegans Wake*, in their various punning and disguised manifestations and, within a few years, had produced the first version of her famed *A Census of “Finnegans Wake”: An Index of the Characters and their Roles*. The *Census* went through three editions and made Glasheen a major player in Joyce studies, although by her own insistence, she advanced no claim to be a Joyce critic, much less a literary historian or theorist. As she told Hugh Kenner, whom she first approached in 1953 on the recommendation of the Cambridge don Matthew Hodgart, who pronounced Kenner to be “the best Joyce critic in your country” (3): “I don’t in the least regret having made the census because I don’t teach, I don’t have a career to make or a family to support and if I weren’t making a census of FW I might be doing something really destructive like hanging crossed white dotted swiss curtains or belonging to the league of women voters” (6).

If these words now strike us as charmingly quaint (Glasheen often adopts a “who, little old me?” tone), think again. In her own way, this self-made scholar was nothing if not ambitious, and by the 1970s, with Kenner’s help, she was contributing essays to Joyce collections and giving papers at international Joyce conferences. But because her concern was always with hard facts, with precise and often highly obscure information, Kenner seems to have confided in and trusted her as he did few other Joyceans (or, for that matter, Poundians); certainly, she became an important sounding board for his own studies of FW and *Ulysses*. Accordingly, the voluminous correspondence between these somewhat unlikely kindred spirits, meticulously edited by Edward M. Burns, whose annotations alone—a kind of “Census” of Kenner’s own discoveries and evolving formulations about Joyce’s writing—are worth the price of this volume, makes for fascinating reading, even for those, like myself, who are not Joyce scholars.

The bulk of the correspondence took place in the 1970s when Kenner, having finished *The Pound Era* and *Samuel Beckett*, came back to Joyce, working up the material that was to go into *Joyce’s Voices* (1977) and *Ulysses* (1980). For example, on 24 January 1974, Kenner tells Glasheen:

I have been remarking with wonderment that Joyce adopted the Dedalus persona just months after two brothers, sons of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, flew on manmade wings at Kitty Hawk (Dec. 1903).

Mechanical wings, JJ's response to Yeats's perpetual birds? Joyce does much Yeats-baiting I think. In *The Pound Era* . . . I remark that what *Ulysses* does is present Yeatsian reincarnation / transmigration with the aid of the naturalist methods Yeats abhorred. (103)

Burns gives us a long footnote on the Wright brothers and Joyce's first use of the pseudonym "Stephen Dedalus" in a letter to Oliver St. John Gogarty on 3 June 1904, a few months after the Wright brothers' flight (104). On 1 February, Glasheen responds, "*Ireland of the Welcomes* May–June 1969 (I haven't seen it) on a Trinity C[ollege] Dublin Professor who flew his own glider in College Park in 1895 . . . George Francis Fitzgerald . . . My fairly rickety source says the glider failed. Pictures said to show Fitzgerald in beard and top-hat" (104). And again Burns's note is helpful, giving us the gist of the article "Intrepid Bird Men" in the magazine *Ireland of the Welcomes*, and identifying George Francis Fitzgerald as a professor of experimental philosophy at Trinity College, Dublin, whose work on gliders evidently paved the way for the Wright Brothers.

Such Joyce lore, even though a good deal of it is absorbed into Kenner's books, makes Burns's edition of these letters a goldmine for scholars. Equally interesting, to my mind, is what the correspondence tells us about Kenner and the academic atmosphere of the time. In an early letter to Glasheen, Kenner refers, with considerable asperity, to Indiana University Press's initial refusal to publish *Dublin's Joyce*—"Two readers said there was nothing here at all they hadn't known all along"—and complains to his new friend of the academy's demand for "remorseless publication." The notion of the illustrious Hugh Kenner ever having had difficulty getting into print will surprise readers, as will the self-representation that follows:

My specific gift for writing on Joyce is not cleverness (whether I possess that or not) but considerable skills in reading as distinguished from deciphering. I am probably the only "Joyce expert" who is also thoroughly conversant with Eliot, Pound, and Wyndham Lewis. Most Joyceans act as though literature consisted of the 19th century plus Jimmy. One result of this is that they tend to praise as brilliance what he meant to sound like slightly stale joking. Joyce's basic technique is a prose that is *almost* what it looks like. (14)

Here Kenner puts his finger on his particular gift—inspired analytic reading, conducted within a broader context, something quite unusual among Joyceans, Glasheen herself certainly included.

At the same time, both Kenner and Glasheen are very nasty when it comes to another wide-ranging Joyce scholar, Richard Ellmann. The contempt for Ellmann, who was, after all, responsible for the initial publication of *Census I* by Northwestern University Press, is expressed in letter after letter. "I read Ellmann's newish Yeats book *The Identity of Yeats*," writes Glasheen on 27 March 1955. "I thought it was totally undistinguished but not positively bad. He was industrious, he was careful but infinitely dreary" (54). And of Ellmann's famous Joyce biography (1959), she writes Kenner in 1972, "I am gladdest at the news that you are coming back to Joyce who needs you because he was killed dead by R. Ellmann" (95). Both Glasheen and Kenner deplore as voyeuristic and frivolous the publication of *Giacomo Joyce* (1968), the secret love letters and notes to an exotic Jewish lady the author met in Trieste.

As someone who has always admired Ellmann and who still puts to good use his *Identity of Yeats* and *James Joyce*, I found the continual bad-mouthing, especially by Glasheen, unattractive. More intriguing is the dismissal on both Glasheen's and Kenner's part of the great French theorists of the day. In July 1975, Glasheen was invited to a Joyce symposium in Paris. Kenner had moved from Santa Barbara to Johns Hopkins in 1973. The symposium, Glasheen tells him cheerfully on her return to Farmington, was "monstrous," and she explains:

O I mean to ask you . . . from the French side the Symposium was dominated by a guru named Lacan who has taken up Joyce who he hasn't (he said in his rhapsody to us at the Sorbonne) read but rhapsodized and said Joyce was an *escabeau* [stepladder] while female

disciples in the rotunda audience copied down every word he said in notebooks. Natch I didn't follow what he said . . . Afterward Walt Litz [A. Walton Litz, leading Joycean and Princeton professor] bought me coffee and lectured me very seriously about the dangers of Lacan who, he said, had a devoted and dangerous following in the Yale and Harvard English departments. He named a lot of people (I'd only heard of one—Harold Bloom) who, WL said, would kneel before me if they heard I had but been at a rhapsody by Lacan. I still haven't found any other American who even heard of Lacan and, but for Litz would pay no mind (he was extraordinarily serious and—odd this—made me promise to stand by Jane Austen and the rational mind because the next decade was going to be a burst of intellectual unreason) . . . have you read or heard of the man? (146–47)

Kenner's response (1 September) is characteristically decided and terse:

You ask of Lacan. Alas, one has heard tell of Lacan. A nuisance like all French intellectuals, and I agree with Walt Litz. American scholars when they are not blindworms are apt to be sheep herded by Lacan's ilk. Cf. the Levi-Strauss craze of which I am thoroughly sick, in part because everyone around here [Johns Hopkins] keeps dropping into its jargon. More & more esoteric rules of chess, to conceal from themselves that it is chess they are playing and not love. (149)

Amusing as this exchange is, especially for veterans of the Yale-Hopkins theory axis of the seventies, it is also somewhat deflating. Clearly Glasheen never asks herself *why* identifying every proper name in *Finnegans Wake*—a book, by the way, hardly known for its projection of the “rational mind”—is worthwhile; the value of getting the facts straight is taken as a given. As for Kenner, his own brilliant textual analyses, themselves not as unLacanian in method as he might have thought, compete favorably with those of the “French intellectuals” he dismisses out of hand. But such dismissiveness has a cranky “know-nothing” tinge unworthy of such a generous and brilliant critic.

One comes away, then, from Burns's superb edition of this remarkable correspondence with mixed feelings. The elucidation of Joyce's writings by both correspondents is very impressive, even as their contempt for anything beyond “hard” scholarship can be problematic. Maybe the “burst of intellectual unreason” Walton Litz is said to have predicted so gloomily is sometimes necessary, especially in the case of that mysterious echo chamber called *Finnegans Wake*.

***Radical Vernacular: Lorine Niedecker and the Poetics of Place.* Elizabeth Willis, ed. Iowa City: Iowa University Press, 2008. Pp. xxiii + 307. \$39.95 (cloth).**

Reviewed by Peter Nicholls, New York University

With this new collection of essays on Lorine Niedecker, we are beginning to move toward a much fuller appreciation of the multifaceted nature of the poet's work and thought. To be sure, many of the contributors to Jenny Penberthy's seminal *Lorine Niedecker Woman and Poet* (1996) were critical then of the temptation to present her simply as a lonely, worn-down rural figure, washer of floors by day and poet by night, though that image of Niedecker had influential currency in the UK, as Peter Middleton observes in his account of “The British Niedecker.” The dust jacket of Fulcrum's *North Central* (1968), for example, gloomily and tersely informed the (presumed metropolitan) reader that the poet “Now lives isolated in Fort Atkinson, Milwaukee with her husband” (258–59). As Middleton notes, the talk of isolation fails to notice Niedecker's visits to New York, her wide-ranging correspondence with Louis Zukofsky and Cid Corman,