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Title: Review: "Emigrants and exiles: Ireland and the Irish exodus in North America", by Kerby A. Miller (Oxford University Press, 1988)

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bellmen, beadles, waywrights and measurers of coal and salt, to arrange for their payments, to abate nuisances such as dangerous walls, dog-eared paving slabs and the perennial obstructions caused by overflowing water and discarded rubble, to ensure the control of foreigners entering the town, the pricing and selling of goods and the observance of the Sabbath.

Legitimate enough activities, you might feel, that should be performed without much ado. That they weren't is what gives the Calendar its particular appeal. The jurors could not divorce their personal interests from the needs of the body politic at large. Indeed paranoia is too faint a word to describe the obsession that gripped them when their livelihoods, mostly as merchants, were threatened by the inroads of foreigners or hawkers. So they threw their full weight against those who 'entertained', i.e. provided accommodation for, suspicious incomers, strange beggars, and the wandering impoverished. And they hammered any trader audacious enough to set up business in defiance of them. To defy the law regularly was to have your shop shut up summarily, or to have that pig of yours found straying for the second time, killed, one half going to the beadle and no division at all reserved for the owner.

After the main issues have been considered there is much in the way of detail to excite interest. It transpires that despite all their inside information the Kinsale councillors had no better luck with their investments than the rest of us. We are confronted with instances of the taxes known as Scott and Lott (levied on one's capacity to pay) and Watch and Ward (to pay for watchmen). A *capias* directed against Thomas Cremin and John Mahon for breaking the sabbath day by playing hurling twanged a hidden chord in the memory of the reviewer by reminding him of when he was similarly treated for doing likewise in the streets of Cork nearly 250 years later.

R. Henchion

Writings on Irish history 1985. Compiled by Clara Cullen and Monica Henchy. The Irish Committee of Historical Sciences, Dublin, 1987. Pp. 93.

This annual publication takes the place of the 'Writings on Irish history' formerly published each year from 1936 to 1978 as an addendum to *Irish Historical Studies* and continued for a further five years on microfiche produced by the above Committee. For the average reader/researcher, a booklet such as this, with chronological classification and an index of authors, is a very convenient method of keeping up with developments in Irish historiography.

Most of the listings derive from historical journals — a wide range of them, though one wonders how these are chosen or assessed. *Timoleague historical news sheet I* is featured, but not *Seanchas Chairbre* nor the Bandon and Kinsale journals. And why is no reference made to *Peritia*, journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland, published annually since 1982?

There may also be gaps in the listing of newly-published books, but these are not easy to trace since books are not indexed separately. Perhaps it would be better if they were; there is an appreciable difference between a full-length study and an article in a journal.

D. Ó Murchadha

Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish exodus to North America. By Kerby A. Miller. Oxford Univ. Press, 1988. Stg£8.95.

'An Irish boy was leaving . . . don't forget your dear old mother' . . . even as this review is being written, the balladeer is wringing out the tears on the television set. It could not be more apt, as the volume under review substantially deals with the practical thrusts towards emigration and the subjective tugs that militated against that selfsame emigration.

First published in hardback in 1985, Dr Miller's calling upon the plenitude of source material, not least emigrants' own testimony, and contemporary ballads, as well as the richness of recent interpretive historical scholarship, testified to in total by the profusion of notes at the conclusion of the text, makes his work, not just the thematic study that it modestly purports to be, but a comprehensive major study of social, economic and cultural history of the Irish experience from the seventeenth to the beginnings of the twentieth century. Should one dare to wonder, indeed, given the immediacy of the 1980s emigration phenomenon, to the point of the creation of modern ballads drawing upon old themes, whether objective historical stances ought to recommend Dr Miller's study as an ongoing monograph.

Mindful of Dr Richard Kearney's studies of the Irish mind, and of the conceptual studies of Ireland produced by Drs Oliver McDonagh (*States of Mind*), F.S.L. Lyons (*Culture and Anarchy*) and Patrick O Farrell (*Ireland's English Question*), as well as the constantly renewed socio-economic work

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of Drs L.M. Cullen, Mokyr, Lee, Ó Gráda, Kennedy, Solow, Ó Tuathaigh, Donnelly and Clark, the volume under review should serve not just as the essential update of the limited, if worthy, surveys of emigration that, outside of Schrier, already existed, but as a useful antidote to the memorabilia of emigration that form the substance of the stage.

The conceptual core to Dr Miller's study threads its way through the great mass of factors which he draws upon to explain the several stages of emigrant movement from the country — political, religious, social and economic. That conceptual core pivots on the conflict between traditional and modernist worldviews — the tension that existed between the passive and the active sides of the nation's psyche as utilitarian motivations overrode loyalties to the ashes of fathers and the temples of gods, be they Christian or pre-Christian. Not the least interesting facet of this interpretive study is Dr Miller's appreciation of the manner in which native Irish elements, Church, Nation and a rising socio-economic and leadership class both gained from and sustained this conflict of two cultures.

The dysfunctionary effects of the fragmentation of old certainties on Irish societies — for this study is ever appreciative of the changing nature of the problem and its participants, both at home and abroad — lie at the heart of many of this book's parts, namely those which deal with the causes of emigration before the American Revolution (Catholic emigration being not the only one attended to), to 1814, to the Famine, during the Famine, and post-Famine, and the ability or inability of the emigrants to cope with their new environment, for various reasons. Dr Miller is comprehensive to the point of understanding the melange that both the home and foreign positions constituted — there could never be a uniform rejection or acceptance of the norms at home or abroad. The loyalties to kin, the explanation of the emigration as voluntary or enforced, the psychological inferences of language itself in the sense of conveying fatalism, passivity and the finding of scapegoats, and the degree to which loyalties were adhered to or not in exile, were the ingredients that led to dysfunction in the prospective emigrants in Ireland, as their society crumbled under modernization, and in the immigrants as they met modernization in America.

As a synthesis of the work of modern scholars, those mentioned, and the others listed in Dr Miller's own bibliography, *Emigrants and Exiles* needs constant re-readings to get at its layers of perception and range of coverage. Its absolute avoidance of complex syntax and vocabulary, however, allows it to be read by anyone interested in the Irish experience.

Pádraig Lane

My Story. By Peter O Leary. Trans. by Cyril Ó Céirín, with a new introduction. Oxford UP, 1987. Stg£3.95. (First pub. Mercier Press, 1970).

To the teenager of the 1950s An tAthair Peadar's *Mo Scéal Féin* seemed to be just the dull and rather uninteresting musings of a geriatric parish priest — except of course for that remarkable chapter which depicted the Famine in all its starkness, and that other in which one shared in the old man's youthful exhilaration as he recreates the panoramic views seen by those who make it to the top of Mangerton. A few years later, one returned to *Mo Scéal Féin* to discover many of those linguistic quintessential delights; in one's preoccupation with An tAth. Peadar's consummate mastery of his linguistic medium, however, one missed much of the subtlety of the man himself, and of his message. Of this one becomes keenly aware in reading Cyril Ó Céirín's admirable introduction to his translation; indeed it soon impinges that where the old priest seemed to be indulging in inconsequential rambling, he was in fact at his most subtle, commenting obliquely and smiling wryly. Please return to it again, young man (or woman) not now so young.

There is much more besides for the thoughtful reader in Ó Céirín's introduction to his subject whose life spanned the period from O Connell to De Valera; and some salutary food for thought too perhaps for an tAth. Peadar's many disparagers. (Seán Ó Ríordáin distanced himself from these and from their fashion). The translator also adds useful notes to each chapter, as well as 15 excellent appendices which shed light on the man and on his times; all very commendable indeed.

He translates into a rural variety of Hiberno-*English* (*pace* P.L. Henry who still persists inexplicably in his preference for the term Anglo-*Irish*). A perennial problem for translators is whether to translate *per paraphrasim* or *verbum e verbo:* to opt totally for one is sometimes, but not always, desirable; the total exclusion of the other is often unwise. In this case the translation is almost exclusively literal, a variety of English albeit one built on the deepest possible Irish substratum. It is largely successful, eschewing, as it does, Synge's flourishes, and it also seems (paradoxically perhaps) closer to the original than is that strange product of linguistic

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