Matthew Campbell. *Irish Poetry Under the Union, 1801–1924*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2013. Pp. 252. US$95.00.

The 1801 Act of Union between Ireland and Great Britain has been a frequent starting point for critics of Irish literature who focus on the genre of the national tale as expressive of the complicated alignments and disjunctions operating in the Irish political and cultural landscape at the time. In *Irish Poetry Under the Union*, however, Matthew Campbell considers the "national longing for form" articulated in lyric poetry during the period in which Ireland and Great Britain were politically joined in union (14). For Campbell, the "technical struggle" in a lyric poem can be just as revealing of the complex nature of cultural contact as the marriage plot of the national tale (15). As Campbell indicates, nineteenth-century Irish poetry written in English has received comparatively little critical attention as a genre (with the important exceptions of critics like David Lloyd and Julia Wright), and the criticism it has prompted has tended to read the poetry retrospectively as preparation for the rebellion and political upheavals of the twentieth century. Campbell seeks, however, to tell the story of Irish poetry before William Butler Yeats without assuming the end of the story: "It is one purpose of this book to suggest that there was at least a century of prosodic innovation in Irish-English poetry before the revival" (24). Another purpose of the book is to present the poetry of nineteenth-century Ireland within a larger British imperial context. In addition to considering Irish poets,

Campbell examines the work of English writers such as Matthew Arnold, Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Algernon Charles Swinburne, and Gerard Manley Hopkins through an Irish lens. This offers a welcome corrective to much nineteenth-century literary criticism that has tended to divide texts down national lines, with critics of Irish literature focusing overwhelmingly on the Great Famine and emigration and critics of English Victorian literature sidelining Ireland. Campbell is also to be commended for a perspective that considers the entire archipelago of the British Isles. As he suggests, a "four nations approach" has tended to fall away in criticism of nineteenth-century Irish poetry, despite the continuing influence on Irish poets of works by James Macpherson and Robert Burns and the cross-fertilization between English and Irish Romantic and Victorian poetry.

For Campbell, Irish poets writing in English explore and exploit the different meanings of "originality," both as point of origin and as unique creative effort. The first five chapters of the book offer a roughly chronological overview of how the "synthetic form" of the Irish lyric poem in English combined Irish and English elements during a period when the Gaelic language and culture were suffering huge losses and when English print culture in Ireland was undergoing a rapid expansion (5). While chapter one serves as a general introduction to the argument of the book, chapter two, "The Ruptured Ear: Irish Accent, English Poetry," establishes the argument's own point of origin by tracing "the development of a sophisticated poetic form founded in writing for music" back to the *Irish Melodies* of Thomas Moore (30). Chapter three considers the work of Francis Sylvester Mahoney, who adopted the persona of a parish priest in County Cork, Father Andrew Prout, in order to satirize Moore in *Fraser's Magazine* in 1834. Despite Mahoney's dismissal of Moore as a cultural fabricator, Campbell perceives "links of style and content" between works by Mahoney, Moore, and contemporaries like John Philpot Curran who also experimented with forms of synthesis (60). In chapter four, Campbell examines the translations of the Protestant Unionist writer Samuel Ferguson within the context of a post-Catholic Emancipation but economically depressed Ireland. Chapter five focuses on the "repetitive originalities" of James Clarence Mangan, a mid-century poet who specialized in imitations, translations, admixtures, and reinventions and drew on a range of traditions from the Irish to the Persian (99). As Campbell suggests, Mangan achieves "a remaking of the past in an unrepeatable style" (99). Chapter six shifts perspective in order to consider "The English Poet and the Irish Poem." Campbell suggests that faced with the failure of the United Kingdom to fully integrate Ireland, nineteenth-century English poets who employed Irish material sought to "maintain an ambivalence" between

"sounding the echoes of the [Irish] past through the losses of the present" and desiring to "forget it altogether" (135). This chapter considers uses of Ireland and Irish material in the work of Tennyson and Arnold as well as an illuminating discussion of English and Irish poetic responses to the *immrama*, or early Christian poems of pilgrimage. Chapter seven juxtaposes the work of the English Jesuit poet Hopkins, who lived in Dublin between 1883 and 1889, with that of Yeats during the years leading up to and immediately following the Home Rule Crisis of 1912. *Irish Poetry Under the Union* concludes with a chapter on Yeats' revisions of his early poems following the establishment of the Irish Free State and the end of the Union—for at least part of Ireland. According to Campbell, Yeats faced a dilemma at this point: "[T]he question for Yeats was how to write a poetry no longer serving the need either to create a national tradition or to remain in hock to the traditions of dominant neighbours" (193).

Despite framing *Irish Poetry Under the Union* in terms of the dual political concerns of Irish national identity and British imperialism, Campbell is wary of critics who adopt "a historical narrative" that threatens to "smother the small-scale delicacies of Irish poetry" (14). He seeks to negotiate a way between the Scylla of what he terms historical "overdetermination" (58) and the Charybdis of "formalism" (60). Accordingly, he pays close attention to the poems themselves, offering careful and nuanced readings. In particular, he attends to the intermediality of the works as they resonate in print with overtones from oral language, song, and music. At times, however, the desire to avoid overdetermination results in some conceptual maneuvering as Campbell both utilizes and rejects theoretical frameworks that employ historical narratives, chiefly postcolonial theory. He notes, for example, that "[t]he most powerful theoretical recipe" for the "mixture of high and low cultures" found in nineteenth-century Irish lyric poetry "has been offered by those critics who gather variety into heteroglossia, and beyond that, into the discourse of hybridity noticed in so many postcolonial cultures across the world" (17). At the same time, however, he repudiates (arguably unfairly) postcolonial critics like Homi Bhabha for separating form and content and "finding an overdetermination of the achievement of the arts and the individual work of art by a combination of perceived historical process and discourses of ethnicity and gender derived from anthropology or linguistics" (58). This tension comes out in other ways as Campbell both acknowledges that "authenticity itself is a synthetic construct" yet nevertheless implies that some of the poets considered do achieve a certain authenticity (1). In describing Moore's work, for example, Campbell notes, "[t]he sounds of a dying language and musical culture echo through the sounds of the language that have taken its place,"

suggesting at least a trace of what seems to be understood as an "authentic" point of origin. In a similar vein, Campbell suggests an authenticity underlying Ferguson's "Cean Dubh Deelish": "the folk song turns to art poem, a synthetic formal achievement but one nevertheless catching the frankness, the ache and the voice of an original in the forms of another language, like the loved one in the song, where a certain intimacy is about to give way to a longer embrace" (11). Despite the uneasiness that such conceptual slippages raise, however, Campbell's close attention to such often-invoked terms as "hybridity" is salutary in asking the reader to consider anew the relationship between politics and aesthetics in an Irish context. Moreover, his focus on Irish poets and their English counterparts and his rich and attentive readings of their work make this an important contribution to nineteenth-century literary and cultural studies in the British archipelago.

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