

Thoughts on *Bucknell Review*

An interview with Harry R. Garvin

A Capsule History

Bucknell Review was founded by Harry R. Garvin (HRG) in 1957 and was published continuously under his editorship through 1984. (It should be noted that although volumes were published in 1974 and 1975, there seems to be no record of them.)

The predecessor of *Bucknell Review* was *Bucknell University Studies*, 1954 -1957, edited by Gladys Cook; it was a journal that published only the work of Bucknell faculty. When Dr. Cook asked HRG if he would take over as editor, he agreed, with one important condition: the journal would accept appropriate scholarly contributions from national and international contributors.

So, in 1957, the first volume of the newly named *Bucknell Review* appeared. The journal was published in soft cover, and was financed first by Bucknell University and later by Thomas Yoseloff's Associated University Presses. Beginning in 1976, it appeared in hard cover. Throughout its history, *Bucknell Review* remained a completely autonomous publication.

HRG further broadened its scope to reflect new developments in literary and critical theory. Some of the titles of these "themed issues" include: *Phenomenology, Structuralism, Semiology* (1976); *Twentieth Century Poetry, Fiction, Theory* (1976); *New Dimensions in the Humanities and Social Sciences* (1977); *Women, Literature, Criticism* (1978); *The Arts and Their Interrelations* (1979); *Romanticism, Modernism, Postmodernism* (1980); *Theories of Reading, Looking, and Listening* (19981); *Literature, Arts, and Religion* (1982); *Literature and Ideology* (1982); *Science and Literature* (1983).

HRG acknowledges the many contributions of Bucknell faculty members who wrote prefaces or contributed articles. James Heath, a longtime Associate Editor, succeeded HRG as editor. He was followed shortly afterward as editor by another Associate Editor, Michael Payne, and others.

Contributions to Bucknell University

Bucknell Review enhanced the scholarly reputation of Bucknell, and helped to attract many outstanding additions to its faculty. HRG often heard from colleagues that during interviews with sought-after candidates they would ask "Why are you interested in Bucknell?" And the answer would contain a reference to the growing awareness and prestige of *Bucknell Review*.

The journal attracted established critics who were widely known in their fields, such as F.R. Jamieson, a leading Marxist critic teaching at the University of California at San

Diego. It also attracted aspiring young writers. When Joyce Carol Oates visited the Bucknell University campus in 1976 as a Weis fellow, she told the audience that *Bucknell Review* was one of the first publications to accept her work and give her the confidence to launch her literary career.

An important offshoot of *Bucknell Review* was *Makers of the Twentieth Century Novel*, published in 1977. HRG reprinted a number of essays on the novel which had previously appeared in the journal. He asked the authors to comment on their texts in light of more recent criticism and other findings. HRG wrote in the preface: "A critic is rarely offered a peremptory opportunity to confront his published essay." This book became, and remains, a basic research resource for writers on the 20th-century novel. Currently, the title connects to 1,900,000 Google entries.

Staying Ahead of the Trends

HRG is often asked how, as editor, he managed not only to keep up with academic trends, but to anticipate them. The secret, he says, was knowledge of what was brewing in the heart of the academic literary world. "As Chairman of Bucknell's English Department, I received hosts of applications for positions, whether advertised or not. Each application included the title of the completed or tentative dissertation. I knew that these dissertations were 'hot topics,' suggested by the scholars in English Departments across the country who were guiding these doctoral candidates. These subjects were going to be the books we would all be talking about in another two years. So, *Bucknell Review* covered them first."

HRG also attended MLA national meetings and listened to major papers read; in addition, he scanned the titles of papers being presented at regional MLA meetings and similar disciplinary gatherings for the sciences, philosophy, social sciences and history.

Greg Clingham, speaking at the 2007 celebration of the 50th anniversary of *Bucknell Review*, stated that it was one of the notable achievements in the history of Bucknell University.

Bucknell Review: Issues edited by Harry. R. Garvin

Bucknell Review: soft cover, spring and fall, 1957 – 1975

Phenomenology, Structuralism, Semiology, 1976

Twentieth Century Poetry, Fiction, Theory, 1976

New Dimensions in the Humanities and Social Sciences, 1977

Literature and History, 1977

Women, Literature, Criticism, 1978

The Arts and Their Interrelations, 1979

Romanticism, Modernism, Postmodernism, 1980

Shakespeare: Contemporary Critical Approaches. 1980

Theories of Reading, Looking, and Listening, 1981

Literature, Arts, and Religion, 1982

Literature and Ideology, 1982

Science and Literature, 1983

The American Renaissance: New Dimensions, 1983

Rhetoric, Literature, and Interpretation, 1983

The Arts, Society, Literature, 1984