Coffey, Brian, 1905-

Brian Coffey letters to Mark Axelrod
1978, 1990

**Abstract:** These four typed letters from Irish poet Brian Coffey to American academic Mark Axelrod consist of three written in 1978 and one in 1990. Coffey wrote to Axelrod about literature and philosophy.
### Descriptive Summary

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<td>Brian Coffey letters to Mark Axelrod</td>
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<td>Extent:</td>
<td>4 items (7 p.)</td>
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<td>Language:</td>
<td>Materials entirely in English.</td>
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### Administrative Information

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Brian Coffey

Avant-garde Irish poet and publisher Brian Coffey was born in Dublin on June 8, 1905. As early as 1924 Coffey began writing poetry. He published his first poems in the University College, Dublin's The National Student under the pseudonym Coeuvre.

During these early years, Coffey met fellow aspiring poet Denis Devlin, who would become a lifelong friend. While in Paris in the 1930s Coffey studied with French philosopher Jacques Maritain and became acquainted with Irish literary expatriates, Thomas MacGreevy and Samuel Beckett, both of whom encouraged his writing. Coffey’s best known work is Missouri Sequence.

In 1966, Coffey attended printing classes and established his own press, Advent Books, which began publishing limited editions of poetry with a special emphasis on typography and jacket design. Brian Coffey died on April 14, 1995, at his home in Southampton, England.

Mark Axelrod

Mark Axelrod is Professor of English & Comparative Literature at Chapman University, Orange, California, and Director of the John Fowles Center for Creative Writing.

Sources:


Scope and Content Note

These four letters from Irish poet, Brian Coffey to American academic Mark Axelrod consist of three written in 1978 and one in 1990. Coffey wrote to Axelrod about literature and philosophy.

Coffey responded to queries by Mark Axelrod and addressed questions regarding academic and philosophical issues. In the three letters written in 1978, Coffey discussed and suggested resources on French symbolism and comparative literature. Coffey considered the concepts of creative writing, poetry, the connection between a poet and scholar, as well as "what is it to be human." In one letter Coffey invited Axelrod to visit his home in Southampton and in another seemed to be offering ideas for future research or possibly ideas for a dissertation topic.

In 1990, Coffey wrote to Axelrod about Samuel Beckett. Coffey prefaced his comments by copying his 1937 poem, "One Way" from his book, Third Person, a poem which he wrote with Beckett in mind. Regarding Beckett, Coffey wrote, "he was a faithful friend, from our first meeting, in 1935, to the end. R.I.P."
Selected Search Terms

Personal Names
Axelrod, Mark--Correspondence.
Coffey, Brian, 1905- --Correspondence.

Topical Terms
Symbolism in literature--20th century--Sources.
Poets, Irish--20th century--Sources.
English poetry--Irish authors--20th century--Sources.

Form/Genre Terms
Letters (correspondence)

Occupation
Poets.

Personal Contributors
Axelrod, Mark, correspondent.

Related Materials in this Repository
This item forms part of MSS 099 Miscellaneous Literary and Historical Manuscripts.
MSS 382, Brian Coffey papers
Arrangement

The letters are arranged chronologically.
Detailed Description of the Collection

Typed letter signed, 1978 July 20 [Box 59 F854]

1 item (3 pp.)

The letter includes a separate handwritten note of postscript. Coffey wrote about French symbolism, poetry, and invited Axelrod to visit his home in Southampton.

Typed letter signed, 1978 August 14 [Box 59 F854]

1 item (2 pp.)

Coffey wrote about comparative literature, the philosophical idea of "what is it to be human," and suggests ideas for future research or possibly dissertation topics.

Typed letter signed, 1978 October 21 [Box 59 F854]

1 item (1 p.)

The typed letter ends with a handwritten postscript. Coffey discussed creative writing, the possible study of Paul Eluard, and the connection between poet and scholar.

Typed letter signed with envelope, 1990 September 26 [Box 59 F854]

1 item (1 p.)

In this letter Coffey wrote about Samuel Beckett and included Coffey's poem, "One Way."