

# T. S. ELIOT SOCIETY

## NEWS & NOTES

Number 4

Spring 1988

Published by the T.S. Eliot Society (incorporated in the State of Missouri as a literary non-profit organization), 5007 Waterman Boulevard, Saint Louis, Missouri 63108

### A. D. MOODY NINTH ELIOT MEMORIAL LECTURER CENTENARY CO-PARTICIPANTS ANNOUNCED FOR SEPTEMBER 22-25

A.D. Moody, professor of English and American Literature at the University of York (England), will deliver the Society's Eliot Memorial Lecture on "T.S. Eliot: The American Strain," at the Eliot Centenary Celebration to be held in St. Louis September 22-25. At this, the ninth annual meeting of the Society, Dr. Moody will join a succession of critics and Eliot scholars thus honored in past years on occasions honoring Eliot at the anniversary of his birth, September 26, 1888. Because of the Centenary, the Memorial Lecture this year gains in importance; and appropriately Dr. Moody has been chosen to lecture as one of the outstanding scholars writing on Eliot in his adopted country. Dr. Moody, who will come to the United States this fall as a visiting professor at the University of Toledo (Ohio), is the author of a study of Eliot's poetry, *Thomas Stearns Eliot, Poet* (1979), combining close reading with psychological explorations. His other major publications include *Virginia Woolf* (1963), *Shakespeare: The Merchant of Venice* (1964), and *The Waste Land in Different Voices* (1974).

Dr. Moody's Memorial Lecture, the centerpiece of the Centenary program, is scheduled for the morning of Saturday, September 24. The Celebration begins however on September 22 and lasts through September 25, and comprehends also a lecture and music by Michael and Grainne Yeats respectively, son and daughter-in-law of the poet Yeats; sessions with panel lecturers on Eliot in the perspectives of drama, poetry, religion, philosophy, and the American background; production of two Eliot plays, *The Elder Statesman* and *Murder in the Cathedral* (the latter by Washington University); a commemoration banquet; dedication of a memorial to Eliot at the St. Louis Public Library; and for relaxation a city bus tour, a boat ride, and more educational a remarkable exhibition of Eliot-connected memorabilia at the co-sponsoring Missouri Historical Society. The complete table of events will appear in the Summer number of NEWS & NOTES.

Mrs. T.S. Eliot will very regrettably be absent from American celebrations of the Centenary, owing to obligations in England. Co-participants with Dr. Moody in our program will include:

William Randall Beard (Minneapolis, MN), Joseph Bentley (University of South Florida), Mildred Boaz (Millikin University), George Bornstein (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor), Ann P. Brady (Gustavus Adolphus College), Jewel Spears Brooker (Eckerd College), Robert Canary (University

of Wisconsin-Parkside), Diane Costanzo (Loyola University of Chicago), Vinnie Marie D'Ambrosio (Brooklyn College), Harriet Davidson (Rutgers University), Melanie Fathman (St. Louis University), Armin Paul Frank (University of Goettingen, West Germany), Leonard Frey (Hutchison School, Memphis, TN), Nancy D. Hargrove (Mississippi State University), William Harmon (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), Earl K. Holt III (First Unitarian Church of St. Louis), Cleo McNelly Kearns (University of Strathclyde, Scotland), Russell Kirk (Mecosta, MI), Leslie Konnyu (St. Louis), Allen J. Koppenhaver (Wittenberg University), James Longenbach (University of Rochester), Peter Michel (Missouri Historical Society), Russell Murphy (University of Arkansas at Little Rock), Laura Niesen de Abruña (Ithaca College), David Perkins (Harvard University), W. Ronald Schuchard (Emory University), Henry Schvey (Washington University), Kathleen Margaret Sibbald (McGill University, Canada), Carol H. Smith (Rutgers University), Grover Smith (Duke University), Erik Stocker (St. Louis Public Library), George T. Wright (University of Minnesota), Linda Wyman (Lincoln University, Jefferson City, MO), Grainne and Michael B. Yeats (Dublin, Ireland).

### HOTEL RESERVATIONS FOR THE CENTENARY CELEBRATION

Since a substantial portion of the Centenary arrangements (most of the lectures and special meals) are scheduled to take place at the Chase Park Plaza Hotel in St. Louis, members from out of town are urged to take advantage of the special rates that have been negotiated with the Hotel. Enclosed with this issue of NEWS & NOTES is a *Reservation Card* that you should send to the Hotel in order to be assured of your accommodations. The Centenary program will last until the mid-afternoon of Sunday, September 25. Members wishing to remain in St. Louis that evening may book their rooms for Sunday night as well for the first three nights, Thursday-Saturday.

## RECENT ELIOT FERMENT

At Harvard University from February to April, a lecture series on various aspects of Eliot's work drew large attendance. The lecturers were William Alfred, William Arrowsmith, Seamus Heaney, Helen Vendler, David Perkins, and Walter Jackson Bate. Directed by Blanford Parker and Larry Hill, the series was sponsored by the Harvard Department of English, the Poetry Colloquium, the Center for Literary Studies, and the Boston-Cambridge Ministry for Higher Education.

The Public Broadcasting System's presentation on T.S. Eliot, one of thirteen "Voices & Visions" segments about American poets from Whitman to Plath, was televised on March 22 (later in some areas). It was biographical in approach, notably through factual comments by Peter Ackroyd, with extensive archival material revealing Eliot at the microphone and in public and family settings. To buy or borrow the cassette, telephone 1-800-LEARNER.

On March 25 in Providence, RI, at the Northeast Modern Language Association's annual meeting, a program "T.S. Eliot: A Centennial Reconsideration" consisted of papers on the early poetry, on "What The Thunder Said," and on Eliot's prefaces. Society member Judith L. Johnston of Rider College is the president of the Association.

At the New City School in St., Louis on March 28, a dramatic soliloquy "The Enigmatic Mr. Eliot," written by Society member Donna Card Charron and acted by Larry Roberson, was presented by the Theatre Project Company under the direction of John Grassilli and by the St. Louis Humanities Forum, of which Dr. Charron is a co-chairman. After Roberson's portrayal of Eliot at various epochs with readings from the poetry and musical intervals by the Harmonic Choir, Society member Burton Wheeler of Washington University (billed as "provocateur") talked about Eliot. The Humanities Forum plans "Living Room Conversations," with poetry readings, at various addresses in St. Louis during May and June.

"Writers in Performance," the annual literary series produced at the New York City Center by the Manhattan Theatre Club and directed by Bill Wadsworth, devoted its benefit program this year on April 11 to a dramatic reading of selections from Eliot. The performance with a cast of four, Kate Burton, Blythe Danner, Edward Herrmann, and Sam Waterson, was introduced on stage by Eliot's publisher Robert Giroux, the T.S. Eliot Society's most recently elected honorary member.

The first such seasonable commemorative presentation of Eliot's poems as theatre (encouraged by the musicalized *Cats*) was *Let us go then, you and I*, which had a run at the Lyric Theater, London, last June. The narration, supplied by Peter Ackroyd, was spoken by Joan Bakewell and by Christopher Cazenove in successive weeks, and the program utilized the voices of Eileen Atkins, Edward Fox, and Michael Gough to render the poetry.

## ELIOT CONFERENCES SCHEDULED

The centenary conference "T.S. Eliot: Retrospect and Prospects" organized by Russell Murphy, editor of the *Yeats Eliot Review*, will meet at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock on May 6 and 7. The featured speakers are Shyamal Bagchee of the University of Alberta, currently a visiting professor at the University of Victoria, BC, who co-founded and for thirteen years edited the *Review*; and Grover Smith of Duke University, the vice-president and president-elect of the T.S. Eliot Society. Dr. Bagchee will address the Conference on "Eliot: Modern Poetry and 'Unpleasantness,'" and Dr. Smith will offer as a keynote address "Yeats, Eliot, and the Use of Memory." A list of other participants announced by Dr. Murphy comprises the following names: Jesse T. Airaudi (Baylor University), Joseph Bentley (University of South Florida, Tampa), Purnima Bose (University of Texas at Austin), R.J. Clougherty, Jr. (University of Tulsa), Christopher Coates (James Madison University), Lloyd Dickson (University of

Southern California), Venus Freeman (University of Florida), Steven Helmling (University of Delaware), William E. Kinnison (Columbus, OH), Juan Leon (Harvard University), P.S. Liggett (University of Tulsa), Dorthy Lindemann (Mapleton, MN), Dominic Manganiello (University of Ottawa, Canada), Timothy Materer (University of Missouri-Columbia), Jonathan Morse (University of Hawaii), Marguerite S. Murphy (Bentley College), Constance A. Pedoto (Sarasota, FL), Virginia Phelan (Colts Neck, NJ), Dennis Ryan (University of South Florida, Tampa), Laura Severin (North Carolina State University), David Spurr (University of Illinois-Chicago), Leslie Stratyner (Louisiana State University).

At Miami University, Oxford, OH, the weekend of May 26-28 a summer-institute conference entitled "T.S. Eliot and the Literary Tradition" will feature lectures by a small number of invited critics, with both audience and panel discussion. The topics have not been divulged, but the speakers are to "assess anew T.S. Eliot's contributions to and place within the literary tradition," according to the conference directors, C. Barry Chabot and William Pratt. Meanwhile the two directors will be teaching a graduate seminar, from May 16 to June 3, on the work of Eliot and on responses to it by his contemporaries and by writers of the present generation.

The National Poetry Foundation, of Orono, ME, which honors a different poet annually, will convene this year's conference August 18-20 to observe the T.S. Eliot Centenary. Dr. Carroll F. Terrell, the director, a recent patron member of the T.S. Eliot Society, hopes that the Foundation may be able to allow all Society members attending the conference a large discount from the cost of meals and accommodations; details in this respect have not yet been confirmed. All inquiries should be addressed to the National Poetry Foundation, University of Maine, Orono, ME 04469. The names of participants reading papers have not yet been circulated, but besides several distinguished guests the conference traditionally engages most of the best known authorities in the area of emphasis-critics and scholars alike. Various authorities also have been invited to submit essays to the Foundation's forthcoming Eliot volume, to be edited by Laura J. Cowan under the title *T.S. Eliot: Man and Poet*.

Several more Eliot conferences are projected for September and later. Three are being shaped by Society members: one by Anne C. Bolgan at the University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, September 26-29; one by Burton Wheeler at Washington University, St. Louis, September 30-October 2; and one by Joseph Bentley at the University of South Florida, St. Petersburg, October 28-29.

## FOR AULD LANG SYNE

The T.S. Eliot Society, founded in 1980 by Leslie Konnyu, began as the T.S. Eliot Society of St. Louis. But Mr. Konnyu, encouraged by widespread attention to the annual Memorial Lecture, which had broadened the enrollment, asked the Board of Directors in 1986 to approve the shorter name for the Society. It was not that the Society became the less "of" St. Louis but that it became the more "for" Eliotists everywhere. It was incorporated in 1986.

Up to 1988, T.S. Eliot Memorial Lectures have been given by Sr. Marcella Holloway CSJ, the late Mr. Robert Clive Roach, Mr. Charles Guenther, the Rev. Earl K. Holt III, Dr. Jewel Spears Brooker, Dr. W. Ronald Schuchard, Dr. Grover Smith, and Dr. James Olney.

The treasurer reports that the rise in membership and also the increase in the average amount contributed so far this year apparently reflect mounting interest in the endeavors of the Society. Everyone concerned with Society programs is aware of these responses and highly appreciates them. Contributions to the Society have been recognized as tax-free by the Internal Revenue Service. Annual categories of membership are as follows: Regular, \$15-24; Supporting, \$25-49; Sustaining, \$50-\$99; Patron, \$100 and above. Dues for 1988 became payable on January 1. Address: 5007 Waterman Boulevard, St. Louis, MO 63108.

## SOCIETY PEOPLE

Leslie Konnyu, founder of the Society, has recently issued *A History of American Hungarian Literature 1583-1987* in a revised and enlarged 2nd edition. The price of the book, paperbound, is \$10.00 p.p. from the *American Hungarian Review*, 5410 Kerth Road, St. Louis 63128. The date 1583 refers to the composition in that year of a Latin poem by Stephen Parmenius of Buda concerning Sir Humphrey Gilbert's Newfoundland expedition, which Parmenius accompanied.

Dr. Maxim Tabory has announced that his book *Frost and Fire: Collected Poems and Translations* will be available to libraries and to members of the Society at a reduced price, until the end of July, of \$16.50 (cloth), \$12.50 (paper, numbered series), or \$11.00 (unnumbered), with author's autograph if requested. Shipping charge \$1.50. Send orders to Dr. Tabory at 2211 Carey Road, Kinston, N.C. 28501.

Cleo McNelly Kearns's book *T.S. Eliot and Indic Traditions: A Study in Poetry and Belief* was brought out by the Cambridge University Press last summer.

A collection of Society papers on T.S. Eliot, envisioned by Jewel Spears Brooker several years ago as a book containing the texts of selected Memorial Lectures, may eventuate in earnest after the Centenary Celebration. Dr. Brooker has indicated that a publisher may be ready to bring out the collection next year. No arrangement has been decided, but it is likely that the volume will include a sampling of the short papers presented at the Society's 1988 meeting as well as recent Memorial Lectures, among them A. D. Moody's Centenary address.

*T.S. Eliot Annual*, No. 1, long delayed by the formality of gaining permission for critical quotations from Eliot's writings, is now expected to appear in June (London: Macmillan Press Ltd). The *Annual* is edited by Shyamal Bagchee.

### REMINISCENCES: WITH TSE AT HARVARD IN '32-'33

(Editor's note: The first installment of the following invited article by Mr. Derrickson appeared in the Fall 1987 number of NEWS & NOTES.)

From November '32 to June '33, T.S. Eliot often strode the few steps between his apartment, Eliot House B-11, to the House library. As desk attendant there for many hours, I could readily tell

when he was out of town on one of his 12 or more lecture trips in that nine-month period. Beginning with wordless issuing of books, my TSE contacts lengthened a bit after January 7, '33. That was the date, as the first chapter of these reminiscences recalled, that the *New Yorker* published my two-paragraph "Talk of the Town" item on a tea party that TSE hosted.

"Kinder than the *Boston Herald*," mused TSE of that hilariously flawed account. "Wittier, too," said Ted Spencer, TSE's almost constant companion. They were alluding to a *Herald* attack on TSE's "London accent," allegedly "watery" verse and "special kind of readers." Another hostile Boston daily calculated editorially that TSE's \$10,000 fee for eight one-hour Charles Eliot Norton Lectures figured out to \$1,250 an hour. The high price, the editorialist decided, must cover TSE's risk of losing some part of his "carefully cultivated British accent." But the \$10,000 actually covered TSE's socializing with students and professors and teaching selected graduate students in the second-semester course in English 26B, contemporary literature – as Spencer told one of our English 28 section meetings.

Any wit that Spencer could discern in my tea-party stemmed from C. L. Barber's alertness to Katherine Mansfield's authorship of a story called "A Cup of Tea." (See previous installment.) Barber knew, as a sophomore, of Mansfield's oral reading of TSE's "Prufrock" to the Bloomsbury circle after the poem appeared in *Poetry* (June 1915). Eliot biographers may wonder how happy TSE would have been – moralist as he appeared in his Norton Lectures – with the reputed libertine Mansfield's presenting "Prufrock" to the uninhibited "Bloomsberries." But, at the tea party I reported on in the *New Yorker*, TSE, once freed from the gate-crashing sophomore's tea monologue, waxed generous indeed about Mansfield's sensuous writing and her oral interpretation of verse.

Early in February '33 TSE asked me *sotto voce* to identify a library lounge; it was my future roommate David Weston Haycock. (My other roommate was the phenomenal scholar Philip Francis Dur, who had prepped at St. Louis Country Day School and whom TSE already knew.) From Spencer, TSE had learned that it was Haycock who had endowed him with the fictitious knuckle-cracking referred to in the *New Yorker* item. When the poet conferred with the student, however, it was Charles Townsend Copeland, advanced-composition teacher, that they discussed first. Copey had been his writing critic in 1910, TSE recalled. Haycock was suffering with Copey in '33 and had been told he could not use

*continued on page 4*

# BALLOT

REMINISCENCES *continued from page 3*

one more descriptive adjective before the course ended. TSE said that Copey's warning him against pomposity, orotundity, and sheer volume had for a time made him emulate Flaubert's minimalist economy. TSE asked Haycock whether it was true that Copey now napped while students read their papers aloud to him. Dave's ready nod, which amused TSE, was later confirmed in print by Richard (7 1/2 Cents, Pajama Game) Bissell, with whom Dave was to graduate, after a year out, in '36. Both neglected to note that in '33 Copey was 73. TSE's quizzing of Dave on how the tutorial system was working somehow persuaded my future roommate that Harvard must have been offering the visiting lecturer a tenured professorship. I already knew that such an eventuality was Spencer's cherished hope.

Tutors, having quarters in Houses, close to their tutees, were expected to help especially those poorly prepared students like me, who had entered under a plan based on high-school rank in class and not by writing decent College Board essays. So Dave sketched for TSE my particular problems and contrasted my preparation with his own. From an academically oriented public high school he had gone for a postgraduate year to Phillips Exeter Academy; I had come directly from Church Farm, a charitable trade school. Dave told TSE, too, that my Eliot House tutor, a well know toper, had put off his scheduled sessions with me six weeks in a row because he was suffering from hangovers, and that I'd been reassigned to Arthur C. Sprague in Kirkland House. Sprague predicted that I'd never graduate because I'd entered without any modern languages. He wouldn't let me take Fine Arts 5e, history of the printed book, and insisted that I load up on solid courses such as Kittredge on Shakespeare and Lowes on the romantics.

Lecturing all over the U.S. to make as much money as he could, TSE nevertheless found time to lay out the following plan. (He had returned from Yale, where he spoke on "English Poets as Letter-Writers.") He told me to read Byron's correspondence with an Italianate Briton (translator of Ariosto) with whom Byron exchange macaronics; to note some of Byron's Ogden Nash-like rhymes; to take Italian 1 and 10 (Dante). I obeyed TSE implicitly. He had rescued a floundering student.

Sprague approved, and my committee in time accepted my honors thesis entitled *Byron's Debt to William Stewart Rose*. But I never quite sensed the pretension to knowledge that underlay Sprague's deletions of my Italian-to-English translations of passages he himself could not understand.

HOWARD DERRICKSON

BALLOTING FOR BOARD MEMBER

The opening for a three-year term on the Board of Directors, due to occur on June 1, 1988, will be filled by vote of members who complete and forward the ballot.

The present members of the Board are as follows:

- Jewel Spears Brooker, *Chair*
- Grover Smith
- Earl K. Holt III
- Nancy D. Hargrove
- Allen J. Koppenhaver
- Leslie Konnyu, founder
- Ann P. Brady
- Melanie Fathman
- Charles Guenther
- Peter J. Michel
- John Warren Owen (term expiring)
- Margit Vincenz

Two candidates for the opening have been nominated in accordance with provisions of the By-Laws:

W. RONALD SCHUCHARD. Dr. Schuchard is associate professor at Emory University, Atlanta, GA. He has published articles on T.S. Eliot and on others and is co-editor of *The Collected Letters of W. B. Yeats*.

GLENN PATTON WRIGHT. Dr. Wright is associate professor at Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, IL. He is the author of articles either published, forthcoming, or in preparation on Virginia Woolf and on T.S. Eliot.

PROCEDURE FOR VOTING: Members in good standing may vote by detaching the ballot below, marking and signing it, and mailing it to:

Dr. Nancy D. Hargrove, Secretary, T.S. Eliot Society  
115 Grand Ridge Drive  
Starkville, Mississippi 39759

Ballots must be sent so as to reach the Secretary by May 16, 1988. They should not be mailed to the Society's St. Louis address.

MEMBER'S BALLOT FOR ELECTION TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
OF THE T. S. ELIOT SOCIETY  
(Term ending 1991)

You may vote for one.

W. RONALD SCHUCHARD

GLENN PATTON WRIGHT

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Dated \_\_\_\_\_ 1988

Mail to: Dr. Nancy D. Hargrove, Secretary, 115 Grand Ridge Drive, Starkville, MS 39759.