

T. S. ELIOT SOCIETY

NEWS & NOTES

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WINKING BACK AT THE STARS

BY JEWEL SPEARS BROOKER

Like migratory birds we fly
Southward and wink back at the stars.
Sandor Lajosy, "Autumn Sadness"
Leslie Konnyu, translator

On February 24, 1992, Dr. Leslie Konnyu, the founder of the T. S. Eliot Society and a distinguished American Hungarian man of letters, died in St. Louis, just a few days before his 78th birthday. For more than half a century, he was an indefatigable and self-sacrificial servant of the greater community and of literature and art. He was a poet, editor, translator, musician, and a generous patron of other artists. He was also a leader in organizing events and societies which supported and memorialized the best in culture and in history. Dr. Konnyu was a patriot and an active force for good in his community. He will be greatly missed by his family, his fellow Hungarian expatriots, his many friends, and also by members of the T. S. Eliot Society.

The T. S. Eliot Society owes its very existence to the efforts of Dr. Konnyu. From the time he arrived in St. Louis, he was conscious of the fact that the Nobel Laureate whom many critics consider the century's finest poet was not widely appreciated in the city of his birth. Dr. Konnyu took it upon himself to correct the situation and spent years campaigning for an Eliot memorial in St. Louis. He did not succeed in his dream of raising a statue to Eliot, but he did something much greater. With virtually no support from the city which the Eliot family had served long and well, Dr. Konnyu organized the T. S. Eliot Society as a living memorial to the poet. Dr. Konnyu's rich and continuing legacy includes an annual Eliot Memorial Lecture attended by scholars and lovers of literature from many states. His legacy also includes the splendid 1988 centennial celebration of the poet's birth in St. Louis. With other members of the Society, Dr. Konnyu was able to welcome participants from eight countries and visitors from around the world.

My own path crossed that of Dr. Konnyu in 1983. As an Eliot admirer and scholar, I had noticed a "filler" item on Eliot in my hometown newspaper, the Tampa Tribune. I have now misplaced the news clipping, but its headline was something like "St. Louis Poet Sings Solo Love Song for T. S. Eliot." Although brief, the column revealed that Dr. Konnyu, in spite of resistance, was going to much trouble and some expense in an attempt to force the city of St. Louis to acknowledge one of its greatest sons. I had planned to be in St. Louis that summer for research on Eliot in the libraries of Washington University and the Missouri Historical Society. Soon after arriving, I called Dr. Konnyu. He was kind and eager to meet me, and indeed, he and his lovely wife Elizabeth invited me to dinner. I was moved by his efforts on behalf of my favorite poet, and thus our friendship was built on our love of poetry and our appreciation of Eliot. Dr. Konnyu told me about the T. S. Eliot Society. In the early days, membership was not open, and thus he said that he would like to "evaluate" my scholarship before inviting me to join the Society. After examining my publications, he kindly accepted me as a member and soon thereafter invited me to give the

next Eliot Memorial Lecture. Within a short time, I was invited to be on the Board of Directors and thus began my close association with Dr. Konnyu. He remained actively involved in the Society's work and was a presence at every meeting, including the meeting in 1991. He was generous in his support of the Society and unfailing in bringing civility and grace to our proceedings.

It must be said, of course, that the T. S. Eliot Society was only one of Leslie Konnyu's many activities. His life was devoted to service, and he measured it out in ladles, not in coffee spoons. All of his work, in one way or another, was profoundly informed by his ethnic roots and by his early years in Eastern Europe. Born in Tamasi, Hungary, in 1914, he was educated in Hungary and established his reputation there in the tragic years of the late 1930s. By the end of that decade, he had published several volumes of poetry and had become known as a literary presence by lecturing on Budapest Radio and participating in numerous cultural activities. With the German occupation of Hungary in 1945, Dr. Konnyu was sent by the regime to a munitions factory in Austria. He remained there until liberated by the U. S. Army later that year, and then with his family, he spent four years in a refugee camp in Austria. As a refugee in Austria, Dr. Konnyu remained politically active, organizing schools and promoting a library for Hungarian refugees. In 1949, through the efforts of an aunt in Missouri and the Catholic Relief Association, Dr. Konnyu emigrated to St. Louis with his wife and children.

Dr. Konnyu never forgot the pain which forced him to flee his beloved homeland, and he devoted the rest of his life to celebrating and promoting political and religious freedom. I shall never forget hearing him speak at the Eliot Centennial in 1988 about the Rumanian dictator, Nicolae Ceaucescu, who was then destroying hundreds of Hungarian villages in Transylvania. He continued to be haunted by the tragedy of post-war Hungary, and much of his energy was devoted to preserving Hungarian culture and to supporting his fellow Hungarian immigrants in this country. He wrote histories of Hungarians in Missouri, of Hungarian participation in the Civil War, of Hungarian artists, of Hungarian Transylvania, and of Hungarian literature. The latter, *History of Hungarian Literature*, is a basic resource. By nature, Dr. Konnyu was a teacher. As his fellow poet Charles Guenther has said, "He started out as a teacher in rural Hungary and later became a teacher of Hungarians everywhere; indeed. . . a teacher to all men of good will in the free world."

Most members of the Eliot Society will know Dr. Konnyu through his passion for poetry. He has translated many Hungarian poets into English, and such poets as Ezra Pound, Carl Sandburg, Robert Frost, and T. S. Eliot into Hungarian. Himself a poet, he lingered most lovingly on the themes of political and religious freedom. He published volumes in Hungarian and in English, and in 1968, in English, his *Collected Poems*. These poems convey something of his civilized anger and his proud humility, his spirit, his loves, his passion. As Robert Penn Warren says in "Audubon"—"What is a man / But his passion?" What indeed.

DENIS DONOGHUE 1992 MEMORIAL LECTURER

Denis Donoghue, author of many distinguished studies of modern literature and literary criticism, will deliver the T.S. Eliot Memorial Lecture at the Society's annual meeting, which will take place in St. Louis September 25-27.

Mr. Donoghue is currently Professor of Modern English and American Literature at University College, Dublin, and occupant of the Henry James Chair of Letters at New York University. His many publications include *The Third Voice: Modern British and American Verse Drama* (1959); *Connoisseurs of Chaos: Ideas of Order in Modern American Poetry* (1965); *The Ordinary Universe: Soundings in Modern Literature* (1968); *William Butler Yeats* (1971); *Thieves of Fire* (1973, in Faber & Faber's T.S. Eliot Memorial Lecture Series); *The Sovereign Ghost: Studies in Imagination* (1976); *Ferocious Alphabets* (1981); *The Arts without Mystery* (1983); *We Irish: Essays on Irish Literature and Society* (1986); *Reading America: Essays on American Literature* (1987); *England, Their England: Commentaries on English Language and Literature* (1988); and most recently the autobiographical *Warrenpoint* (1990).

THE 1992 ANNUAL MEETING: CALL FOR PAPERS

The twelfth annual meeting of the T.S. Eliot Society begins on Friday September 25 and continues through Sunday September 27. Most of the activities will take place at the Drury Inn at Union Station in St. Louis. Reservations may be made by calling Drury Inn at 314-231-3900 or 1-800-325-8300.

In addition to Denis Donoghue's Memorial Lecture, we will have several sessions devoted to papers, panels, and other presentations. At this time the Board is issuing a call for papers, the proposals for which should be sent by June 15 to Vinni Marie D'Ambrosio, 11 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10003. As is the Society's custom, papers should not have been published previously and should take no more than 20 minutes to read. Those who submit proposals will be contacted soon after the June 15 deadline. The schedule for the annual meeting will be published in the summer *News & Notes*.

T.S. ELIOT SOCIETY SESSION AT ANNUAL ALA CONFERENCE

The T.S. Eliot Society will participate in the annual conference of the American Literature Association, which will take place at the Bahia Resort Hotel in San Diego on May 28-31. The ALA is a coalition of approximately thirty-five American author societies and has been sponsoring a conference annually since 1990. The Eliot session will be chaired by the president of the Society, Vinni Marie D'Ambrosio, and includes the following presentations: Ann P. Brady (Gustavus Adolphus College), "Evolution of the Dramatist"; Joan Hooker (New York University), "T.S. Eliot's *A Song for Simeon*: A Medley of French Translations"; and Sanford Schwartz (Penn State University), "Modernist Priest or Postmodern Prophet: The Recasting of T.S. Eliot."

Members of the T.S. Eliot Society are automatically members of ALA and are entitled to attend its conferences. The registration fee this year is \$35 (\$10 for retired persons, independent scholars, and graduate students), and should be sent to ALA, c/o Alfred Bendixen, Executive Director, California State University, 5151 State University Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90032. For reservations at the Bahia Resort Hotel (\$74 per night single, \$80 double) phone 1-800-288-0770.

SOCIETY PEOPLE

We note with deepest regret the passing of Leslie Konnyu, author, editor, and translator, who founded the T.S. Eliot Society in 1981 and will be remembered for his inspiration and leadership.

Jewel Spears Brooker, ex-President of the Society, has been elected national President of Christianity and Literature. She will also be Visiting Professor at Doshisha University in Kyoto, Japan, this coming academic year. The University of Massachusetts Press is bringing out the paperback edition of her book, *Reading "The Waste Land,"* and has accepted her new book on Eliot and Modernism.

Nancy Hargrove, of Mississippi State University, who served as Secretary of the Society 1986-88, has received her fourth Fulbright Lectureship, this time to teach American literature at the University of Lund in Sweden during spring semester 1992. She has also recently published an article, "I felt to be sitting next to a descended god": The Influence of T.S. Eliot on Sylvia Plath," *Texas College English* 23 (Spring 1991) 10-15.

Robert Fleissner, of Central State University Ohio and author of *Eliot and Black Identity*, has published "Donne's Compasses Re-figured: The Ambivalent Finale," *American Notes and Queries* 5 n.s. (January 1992) 16-18.

Ronald Schuchard, of Emory University and currently a member of the Society's Board of Directors, has been editing Eliot's previously unpublished Clark Lectures (1926), which is scheduled for simultaneous publication by Faber and Harcourt in 1993.

Russell Elliott Murphy, of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and editor of the *Yeats Eliot Review*, has published a Special Issue of the journal that contains the proceedings of the Society's September 1990 meeting. The Special Issue (11.2, Fall 1991) is edited by Grover Smith, President of the Society 1989-91, and includes the following contributions: Virginia B. Phelan, "Unidentified But Invited: Charles Williams at *The Cocktail Party*"; Anthony E. Fathman, M.D., "Viv and Tom: The Eliots as Ether Addict and Co-Dependent"; Jewel Spears Brooker, "From Epithalamium to Rhapsody: Mind and World in Wordsworth and Eliot"; Nancy K. Gish, "Eliot and Marianne Moore: Modernism and Difference"; Linda Wyman, "Where the Words are Valid: The Language of Eliot's Drama"; Russell Elliott Murphy, "Demeaning Eliot: The Future of Literary Studies"; and Shyamal Bagchee, "Subtle Souls and Dry Bones: Hopkins and Eliot."

Several members of the Society are contributing to *The Fire and the Rose: New Essays on Eliot's "Four Quartets,"* edited by Edward Lobb, of Queens University, Ontario. The new collection, which is scheduled for publication by Athlone Press, London in late 1992 or early 1993, includes essays by Jewel Spears Brooker, Gordon Donald Childs, Denis Donoghue, Cleo McNelly Kearns, Michael Levenson, A. Walton Litz, Louis L. Martz, and Ronald Schuchard.

We note with regret the passing of William Arrowsmith, of Boston University, who was writing a book on Eliot at the time of his death.

News & Notes depends upon individual members of the Society to report their ongoing activities. If there is anything you wish to have noted in the newsletter, please send the information to the editor, Sanford Schwartz, 465 Park Lane, State College, PA 16803.

NEW POEMS AND LETTERS DISCOVERED

On November 1, 1991, the Times Literary Supplement published a piece entitled "T.S. Eliot as 'Tom Possum': The 'Good Grey Poet' and the Tandy Family," by Judith Chernaik. On the following day The New York Times ran an article under the title, "2 More T.S. Eliot Poems Found Amid Hundreds of His Letters." These articles report the discovery of letters written over a thirty-year period

from Eliot to the family of Geoffrey and Doris (Polly) Tandy, plus two new poems, a whimsical piece called "The Practical Cat," and "Mr. Pugstyles: The Elegant Pig," a satire on British politics and politicians. The documents were in the possession of the Tandys' daughter, Anthea, and were found after her death by her husband, Edward Kidner, while he was rummaging through an apple crate in the attic of their home. The British Library has purchased the collection, parts of which will be displayed in its manuscript saloon, and The Times Literary Supplement has acquired from the Eliot estate the rights to publish the two new poems.

DISSERTATIONS ON ELIOT

The following is a list of doctoral theses devoted partially or entirely to Eliot for the year 1990. The list was produced through a computerized search; any omissions are unintentional. Lists of dissertations published in other recent years, along with any additions to the 1990 list, will appear in subsequent issues of *News & Notes*.

Judy Cato, *Sea Drift: The Pattern of History in T.S. Eliot's "Four Quartets"* (U. of Virginia, 1990), DAI 51/03A, p. 859.

Jo-Anne Cappeluti, *Inner Distance: Depersonalized Poetics of T.S. Eliot and W.H. Auden* (U. of California, Riverside, 1990) DAI 51/07A, p. 2377.

Elena Corrigan, *Patterns of Communication in Poetry: The Theoretical Work of Osip Mandelstam and T.S. Eliot* (U. of Toronto, 1990) DAI 51/04A, p. 1220.

Robert Crafton, *Critical Poetry: On Reading T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land"* (Washington U., 1990) DAI 52/03A, p. 910.

Ghada Dahman, *Determining Common Ground: William Carlos Williams, T.S. Eliot, and the Quest for Experimental Technique in Modern American Poetry* (Indiana U., 1990) DAI 51/06A, p. 2017.

Helen Emmitt, *Mixing Memory and Desire: T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Wallace Stevens, H.D., and the Creation of a Poetic World* (U. of California, Berkeley, 1990) DAI 52/04A, p. 1337.

Anthony Flinn, *Authority and Transpersonality: The Situation of the Speaker in Yeats, Eliot, and Williams* (U. of Washington, 1990) DAI 51/03A, p. 842.

Mark Jeffreys, *T.S. Eliot's "Athenaeum" Reviews: Rhetoric, Drama, and the Critical Point of View* (Emory U., 1990) DAI 51/05A, p. 1620.

Ernesto Livorni, *Dantesque Iconoclasts: Pound, T.S. Eliot, Ungaretti, Montale* (U. of Connecticut, 1990) DAI 51/08A, p. 2735.

Gail McDonald, *Learning to be Modern: Pound, Eliot, and the American University* (U. of Pennsylvania, 1990) DAI 51/11A, p. 3739.

Terrence Riddell, *Reference and Structure: Literary Modernism and the Philosophy of Language* (Marquette, 1990) DAI 51/08A, p. 2757.

Steven Shreiner, *The Modernist Legacy in Composition: The Primacy of the Writer* (Wayne State U., 1990) DAI 51/06A, p. 2006.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: MELANIE FATHMAN RE-ELECTED, THREE NOMINEES ON BALLOT

In last fall's Board election, the members of the Society elected Melanie Fathman to a renewed three-year term on the Board of Directors, to which she was first elected in 1987.

For the spring 1992 election to the Board, three members of the Society have qualified, each receiving the required five nominations. This time the number of candidates for three-year terms equals the number of Board seats to be filled. Two Board terms will have ended, in course, on June 1; the third seat has become vacant owing to the death in February of Leslie Konnyu. A ballot is provided in this issue for the formal election of the three unopposed nominees:

E. Philip Bollier of Tulane University, a long-time Society member whose Eliot scholarship stretches back three decades with articles on Eliot's critical ideas, personal philosophy, and poetic texture.

Ann P. Brady (incumbent) of Gustavus Adolphus College, author of *Lyricalism in the Poetry of T.S. Eliot* and of a critical study of Browning. She is currently writing a book on Dante. Dr. Brady is also an authority on Scottish and Irish balladry and the folk music of Appalachia.

Lois A. Cuddy of the University of Rhode Island, co-editor of *Critical Essays on T.S. Eliot's The Waste Land*. She has

MEMBER'S BALLOT FOR ELECTION TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE T.S. ELIOT SOCIETY (Terms ending 1995)

YOU MAY VOTE FOR THREE:

E. Philip Bollier

Ann P. Brady

Lois A. Cuddy

Signature _____

Dated _____

1992

Mail to the Secretary: Dr. Mildred M. Boaz, 603 Radliff Road, Bloomington, IL 61701

published on various modern writers and, in relation to Eliot, on the Homeric tradition.

The other elected members of the board are Melanie Fathman (to 12/94), Grover Smith (to 12/94), and Virginia Phelan (to 5/94). *Ex Officio* members are Vinni Marie D'Ambrosio (president), Sanford Schwartz (vice-president), Mildred Boaz (secretary), Linda Wyman (treasurer), Ronald Schuchard (historian), and Earl K. Holt III.

At its annual meeting in September, the Board of Directors will conduct its triennial election for Historian of the Society. Initial identification of candidates for the office will be made by the Supervisor of Elections.

LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE

The Board of Directors is reviewing the existing state of the Society and soliciting its members for suggestions regarding its present and future activities. If you have any comments on current Society programs, or recommendations for future programs, please send them to the president of the Society, Vinni Marie D'Ambrosio, 11 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10003.

Various members of the Society have also expressed interest in expanding the *News & Notes*, perhaps to include more information on recent Eliot scholarship. Please send any suggestions for revising the newsletter either to the president of the Society or to the vice-president and editor, Sanford Schwartz, 465 Park Lane, State College, PA 16803. Any recommendations will be warmly received.

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