

# T. S. ELIOT SOCIETY

## NEWS & NOTES

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### AMERICAN LITERATURE ASSOCIATION SAN DIEGO 1994

The T.S. Eliot Society will again participate in the annual conference of the American Literature Association (ALA), which will run from Friday June 2 through Sunday, June 5 at the Bahia Resort Hotel in San Diego. This year's Eliot session will be chaired by the President of the Society, Vinni Marie D'Ambrosio, and includes presentations by Jo-Anne Cappeluti (Fullerton, CA), "Between Two Worlds: T.S. Eliot's Lyric Narrative," and Ruth Z. Temple (CUNY Graduate Center), "The Desire and Pursuit of the Whole."

The ALA is a coalition of approximately forty American author societies. It has been sponsoring an annual conference since 1990. Members of participating author societies are automatically members of ALA and are entitled to attend its conference. The registration fee this year is \$35 (\$10 for retired persons, independent scholars, and graduate students), and should be sent ALA, c/o Alfred Bendixen, Executive Director, California State University, 5151 State University Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90032-8110. For reservations (\$77 single, \$82 double) call the Bahia Resort Hotel (1-800-288-6770) in San Diego.

### ANNUAL SOCIETY MEETING LAST CALL FOR SEPTEMBER PAPERS

The fifteenth annual meeting of the T.S. Eliot Society begins on Friday September 23 and continues through Sunday September 25. Once again most of the activities will take place at the Drury Inn at Union Station in St. Louis (314-231-3900). The Board is now issuing its final call for papers, the proposals for which should be sent by June 10 to Vinni Marie D'Ambrosio, 11 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10003. Papers should not have been published previously and should take no more than 20 minutes to read. The Board also welcomes recommendations for session topics and for other activities at the annual meeting.

The September 1993 meeting featured Christopher Ricks' Memorial Lecture, "Early Eliot" (a discussion of his forthcoming edition of the poems in the Berg Collection); Larry Melton's sound-and-image show, "Ragtime in the Age of Eliot"; Mildred Boaz and Guy Hargrove's presentation, "Wagner, Shakespeare, and Mrs. Porter: An Interart Study of Music and T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*"; and papers by various members of the Society — Sumana Sen-Bagchee, "The Poet and the Sleuth: T. S. Eliot and Raymond Chandler," Vimala C. Rao, "Murder and Mayhem in Eliot's Plays," Joon-Soo Bong, "Reading Eliot's Notes on *The Waste Land*," and Virginia Phelan, "Sweet Surrender to Julia's Silk: Costume and Conceit in *The Cocktail Party*." The Conference also included an Open Forum of Society Members on Friday evening, a reception at the home of Anthony and Melanie Fathman on Saturday evening, and Rev. Earl K. Holt III's annual address at the First Unitarian Church on Sunday morning.

A complete program of the 1994 annual meeting will appear in the summer issue of *News & Notes*.

### ANNUAL STUDENT ESSAY CONTEST

The T.S. Eliot Society recently inaugurated an annual essay contest for the best graduate student essay on Eliot. The contest was conceived and sponsored by Dr. Anthony and Melanie Fathman, longtime Society members and hosts of its annual banquet. The winner will be awarded a prize of \$500 plus a subvention for travel expenses to the annual meeting in St. Louis.

This year's contest has been publicized by a flyer, designed by society member Chuck Crispin. The flyer was included in the Fall 1993 *News & Notes* and also mailed to all graduate institutions in the United States and Canada. The competition is open to all graduate students of English and related areas of study. Essays should be approximately 3000-5000 words long and focus on some topic related to *Four Quartets*. The deadline for submission to Vinni Marie D'Ambrosio is June 1, and the winner will be notified by July 15.

### THE FUTURE OF ELIOT STUDIES A CALL FOR HELP

T.S. Eliot will be one of seventeen American authors featured in a forthcoming volume, *Prospects for the Study of American Literature: A Guide for Future Research*. The book is designed to describe the current state of scholarship on major American authors, to indicate the archival, editorial, and biographical work still to be done, and to suggest possibilities for future historical and critical study. Edited by Richard Kopley (Penn State University), a well-known Poe scholar, *Prospects* is scheduled for publication in 1996 by New York University Press.

One of the largest stumbling blocks to new research on Eliot is the prevalent belief that there is nothing to be done, either because it's been done already or because legal restrictions make it impossible to do. Although it is difficult to deny that such problems exist, Eliot scholars recognize that there is still much which lies ahead. The *Prospects* volume provides an opportunity to suggest to aspiring as well as established scholars some possible directions for future research.

The editor of *News & Notes*, who has been invited to compose the Eliot section, is seeking information and advice from other members of the Society. He does not wish to scoop your pet project; he is simply asking for suggestions that would help him announce to the scholarly community that the study of Eliot has a future and forecast what that future might look like. Please send your comments to Sanford Schwartz, Department of English, 22 Burrowes Building, University Park PA 16802 (814-863-3069; Fax 814-863-7285). Also indicate whether you think that the Society should devote some space in its own newsletter to discussion of the future of Eliot scholarship.

## BOOK REVIEWS

In the previous issue, *News & Notes* began to run brief reviews of new publications related to Eliot. The review column is open to any member of the Society. If you are interested in reviewing a new publication, please contact the editor, Sanford Schwartz, Department of English, 22 Burrowes Building, University Park PA 16802 (814-863-3069; Fax 814-863-7285). In fairness to all members of the Society, the assignment of reviews will operate on a first come/first served basis, though every effort will be made to distribute assignments as widely as possible among the membership. The reviews should be approximately 500 words in length; they may be descriptive and analytical but not openly judgmental. The aim is to provide members of the Society with a sufficiently ample description of the book to decide whether or not they wish to read it.

**Laura Elizabeth Niesen de Abruña, *The Refining Fire, Herakles and Other Heroes in T. S. Eliot's Works*, New York: Peter Lang, 1992. xiv + 190 pp. \$35.95.**

Herakles in Greek mythology was the man/god, indefatigable in his labors, physically overwhelming in battle, and Olympian in his appetites. In Greek drama, particularly in the plays of Euripides, Herakles was changed from the loutish and comical strongman into the ideal hero who suffered and sacrificed for his friends and the common good. It is the central idea of *The Refining Fire* that Eliot recognized in the transformed Herakles myth a model for a Christian hero to the twentieth century. Eliot sought a hero able to suffer and sacrifice to achieve "illumination" and to benefit the community. He also sought a hero within the cultural tradition of *areté*, the Greek concept of "physical courage, endurance, and energy, and above all success," attributes which Eliot felt were still powerful influences in contemporary society.

Niesen de Abruña resolves Eliot's heroes and saints into four distinct phases, starting with his early poetry and ending with *Four Quartets* and the plays. In the first phase, major figures in the poetry are about as far from the Herakles model as is possible. Characters such as Prufrock, Gerontion, and the Fisher King are defined by negatives — in heroic, indecisive, sexually impotent and spiritually unenlightened. The main second phase figure is "Sweeney," who possesses certain positive characteristics, such as physical strength, but lacks spiritual sense, which prevents his showing any real concern for others. Despite some satirical insights, Sweeney is an isolated figure living a death-in-life existence without possibility of illumination or creative action. Occupying Eliot's third level of the sacrificed hero are Shakespeare's Anthony, his Coriolanus, and Virgil's Aeneas. All were for Eliot positive and creative figures destroyed by flaws in their own characters, thus unfit to be Heraklean models or Christian heroes.

The Herakles motif comes to full fruition in Niesen de Abruña's fourth phase, especially in *The Cocktail Party*, the centerpiece of her analysis. Behind Eliot's writing of this play is his reading of Euripides' *Alcestis* in which Herakles throws off his comic and drunken character and performs the heroic and selfless action of wrestling with Death to rescue Alcestis, the wife of his friend, from the grave. In *The Cocktail Party*, aspects of the Heraklean hero are divided between two people, Sir Henry Harcourt-Reilly, the doctor/psychiatrist who saves the dying marriage of two characters in the play, and Celia Coplestone, who in suffering martyrdom by crucifixion in a foreign land, performs a Heraklean "saving sacrifice" and thus becomes Eliot's complete Christian hero.

Eliot's meticulous attention to the sources he reworked is emulated by Niesen de Abruña in her meticulous analysis of Eliot's methods of achieving his transformation. Through the many scholarly allusions and points of discussion in her work, she provides the opportunity to approach Eliot's writings, especially his later poetry and his plays, with fresh insights and new understanding. This study also serves to motivate the reader to seek out and read or perhaps reread the many other sources mentioned in the text and cited in the bibliography.

F. X. Roberts  
University of Northern Colorado

**Ted Hughes, *A Dancer to God: Tributes to T. S. Eliot*, New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1993. 54 pp. \$16.00**

Ted Hughes's book, published originally in England by Faber in 1992, prints three occasional tributes to T. S. Eliot, whom the author sees as having given a name and a voice to the "desacralized landscape" of the modern world — a voice that we "almost immediately" recognized as our own. The first tribute consists of Hughes's remarks on unveiling a plaque to Eliot on the wall of 3 Kensington Court Gardens, where Eliot last lived (26 September 1986); the second, an introduction to a reading of *The Waste Land* (25 September 1988); the third, a toast to Eliot, an abbreviated version of which Hughes gave at the centenary dinner hosted by Valerie Eliot (26 September 1988). The first section, entitled "The Truly Great," positions Eliot as "the grand master...of all the poetries of the modern world," his culminating triumph being *Four Quartets*. The second section, "The Song of Songs in the Valley of Bones," aims at defining the place and nature of *The Waste Land*, a musical "ritual of death and rebirth," in which the repeated final blessing, "Shantih," contains "all the anguished voices of the poem." His longer and more analytical title piece, far too complex and subtle for adequate treatment here, sums up Eliot's place as "not merely a great poet, but a poet who stands in English with maybe only one other name; a poet...of an utterly new species." Informing this allusion to Shakespeare is more than a decade's work that the Poet Laureate spent bringing forth *Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being* (1992).

While all three pieces are tributes to Eliot's art, each attempts to assess his contribution to English literature and world letters in light of his centennial, which invited long views and overall critical assessments. In his title piece, Hughes sees William Butler Yeats as another incomparable poet, representing "a culmination of specific poetic traditions, the complex autochthonous traditions in these islands." But Hughes values Eliot not just as the poet of the British Isles, but as "the prophet of a new world...which has already, in its soul, and throughout all its peoples, suffered the global holocaust, and must now, somehow, find in its own ashes the spiritual strength to resurrect itself." In short, each of these poets has a unique role in twentieth-century poetry, but Eliot's role is global.

Hughes is specific in pinpointing, for example, "The Death of Saint Narcissus," an early poem which he quotes in its entirety, as an instance of the voice of Eliot's shamanistic persona that evolves throughout his oeuvre. "The final drama of his decision to reject the world publicly and become a dancer to God (completing the life-plan laid down in 'The Death of Saint Narcissus') rises through the parable of *Murder in the Cathedral* to the rose-window, many-petalled choreography of the dance before God in an English chapel, which is the pattern of *Four Quartets*."

These tributes are more than tributes: they characterize and particularize.

Joan Fillmore Hooker  
New York University

## BOOKS RECEIVED

If you are interested in reviewing any of these books for *News & Notes*, please contact the editor, Sanford Schwartz, Department of English, 22 Burrowes Building, University Park PA 16802 (814-863-3069; Fax 814-863-7285).

J. A. Richardson, *Falling Towers: The Trojan Imagination in The Waste Land, The Dunciad, and Speke Parott*. Newark: University of Delaware Press. 1992.

Vinod Sena and Rajiva Verma (eds.), *The Fire and the Rose: New Essays on T. S. Eliot*. Delhi: Oxford University Press. 1992.

## BOOKS, MONOGRAPHS ON ELIOT 1987-1994

The following is a list of books and monographs devoted partially or entirely to Eliot for the years 1987 to the present.

- Alldritt, Keith. *Modernism in the Second World War: The Later Poetry of Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, Basil Bunting and Hugh MacDiarmid*. New York, Peter Lang, 1989. 121 pp.
- Alvarado Tenorio, Harold. *La poesia de T. S. Eliot*. Bogota, Centro Colombo Americano, 1988. 185 pp.
- Asbee, Sue. *T. S. Eliot*. Hove, Wayland, 1990.
- Asher, Kenneth George. *T. S. Eliot and Ideology*. Cambridge, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Bagchee, Shyamal (editor). *T. S. Eliot, a Voice Descanting: Centenary Essays*. Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1990. xiii, 294 pp.
- Barfoot, C.C. and Theo D'haen (editors). *Centennial Hauntings: Pope, Byron and Eliot in the Year 88*. Atlanta, Georgia, Rodopi, 1990. 366 pp.
- Barratt, Daniel. *Shifting Eliot: Chapters from an Unpublished Book*. Great Britain, Bynmill, 1987. 45 pp.
- Basu, Tapan Kumar (editor). *T. S. Eliot: An Anthology of Recent Criticism*. Delhi, Pencraft International, 1993. 237 pp.
- Beehler, Michael. *T. S. Eliot, Wallace Stevens, and the Discourses of Difference*. Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1987. 182 pp.
- Bergonzi, Bernard (editor). *T. S. Eliot, Four Quartets: A Casebook*. Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1991. 269 pp.
- Bernabo, Antonella. *La Presenza di Shakespeare in T. S. Eliot e J. Joyce*. Pisa, ETS, 1992. 129 pp.
- Berry, S. L. *T. S. Eliot*. Mankato [Minn.], Creative Education, 1993.
- Bloom, Harold (editor). *T. S. Eliot's Murder in the Cathedral*. New York, Chelsea House, 1988. 150 pp.
- Bronzwaer, W. J. M. *T. S. Eliot: Een Amerikaan in Europa*. Baarn, Ambo, 1988. 179 pp.
- Brooker, Jewel Spears. *Mastery and Escape: T.S. Eliot and the Dialectic of Modernism*. Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 1994.
- Brooker, Jewel Spears (editor). *Approaches to Teaching Eliot*. New York, MLA, 1988. xii, 203 pp.
- Brooker, Jewel Spears (editor). *The Placing of T. S. Eliot*. Columbia, University of Missouri Press, 1991. viii, 204 pp.
- Brooker, Jewel Spears and Joseph Bentley. *Reading the Waste Land: Modernism and the Limits of Interpretation*. Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 1990. xii, 239 pp.
- Brooks, Harold Fletcher. *T. S. Eliot as Literary Critic*. London, Woolf, 1987. 160 pp.
- Brown, Dennis. *Intertextual Dynamics within the Literary Group: Joyce, Lewis, Pound and Eliot, the Men of 1914*. Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1990. x, 227 pp.
- Bush, Ronald (editor). *T. S. Eliot: The Modernist in History*. Cambridge [England]; New York, Cambridge University Press, 1991. x, 210 pp.
- Calder, Angus. *T. S. Eliot*. Brighton, Sussex, Harvester Press, 1987. ix, 182 pp.
- Calimani, Dario. *T. S. Eliot: lo spazio retorico*. Roma, Carucci editore, 1988. 240 pp.
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- Chellappan, K. *Tagore, Bharathi, and T. S. Eliot: Towards Creative Unity*. Annamalainagar, Annamalai University, 1987. vi, 125 pp.
- Clarke, Graham (editor). *T. S. Eliot: Critical Assessments*. London, Christopher Helm, 1990. 4 v. Contents: v. 1. Memories, interviews, contemporary responses — v. 2. Early poems and the Waste land — v. 3. Ash-Wednesday, Four Quartets and the drama — v. 4. The criticism and general essays.
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- Cookson, William and Peter Dale (editors). *T. S. Eliot*. Redding Ridge [Ct], Black Swan Books, 1988.
- Cooper, John Xiros. *T. S. Eliot and the Politics of Voice: The Argument of The Waste Land*. Ann Arbor, Michigan, UMI Research Press, 1987. x, 121 pp.
- Cowan, Laura (editor, with an introduction by). *T. S. Eliot: Man and Poet*. Orono, Maine, National Poetry Foundation, University of Maine, 1990-1992. 2v. Volume 2 has special title: *An Annotated Bibliography of a Decade of T. S. Eliot Criticism, 1977-1986*. Volume 2 compiled and edited by Sebastian D. G. Knowles and Scott A. Leonard.
- Crane, David. *On Eliot's Four Quartets*. Durham, New Century Press, 1987. 150 pp.

- Crawford, Robert. *The Savage and the City in the Work of T. S. Eliot*. Oxford, Clarendon Press; New York, Oxford University Press, 1987. xii, 251 pp.
- Cuddy, Lois A. and David H. Hirsch (editors). *Critical Essays on T. S. Eliot's The Waste Land*. Boston, G. K. Hall, 1991. ix, 288 pp.
- Dale, Alzina Stone. *T. S. Eliot: The Philosopher Poet*. Wheaton, Ill., H. Shaw, 1988. 209 pp.
- D'Ambrosio, Vinni Marie. *Eliot Possessed: T. S. Eliot and FitzGerald's Rubaiyat*. New York, New York University Press, 1989. x, 244 pp.
- Danzer, Ina Dorothea. *T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, und der französische Symbolismus*. Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1992.
- Davies, Toni and Nigel Wood (editors). *The Waste Land*. Philadelphia, Open University Press, 1994.
- Deniers, Claudia. *Die Darstellung des Alters im Werk T. S. Eliots: Ein Literaturwissenschaftlicher Beitrag zur Gerontologie*. Frankfurt am Main, New York, Peter Lang, 1993. 193 pp.
- Deo, S. S. *T. S. Eliot: Philosophical Themes in Drama*. Delhi, Amar Prakashan, 1987. xii, 213 pp.
- Dickens, David Bruce. *Negative Spring: Crisis Imagery in the Works of Brentano, Lenau, Rilke, and T. S. Eliot*. New York, Peter Lang, 1989. xi, 242 pp.
- Domenichelli, Mario and Romana Zacchi (editors). *The Spectre of a Rose: Intersections: Seminario Eliotiano, Cagliari, 5-6 aprile 1989*. Roma, Bulzoni, 1991. 296 pp.
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- Evans, Giles. *Wishwood Revisited: A New Interpretation of T. S. Eliot's The Family Reunion*. Lewes, Book Guild, 1991. 140 pp.
- Fleissner, Robert F. *Ascending the Prufrockian Stair: Studies in a Dissociated Sensibility*. New York, Peter Lang, 1988. xxiv, 224 pp.
- Fleissner, Robert F. *T. S. Eliot and the Heritage of Africa: The Magus and the Moor as Metaphor*. New York, Peter Lang, 1992. xiii, 255 pp.
- Fleissner, Robert F. *T. S. Eliot and Race: A Compilation of Feature Stories and Letters in the London Times (August 1988), The Eliot Centennial, with Responses in England and the New York Times*. 1988. unpagued.
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- Gordon, Lyndall. *Eliot's New Life*. New York, Farrar Straus Giroux, 1988. x, 356 pp.
- Guido, Maria Grazia. *Il Linguaggio Drammatico di T. S. Eliot*. Galatina, Congedo, 1992. 275 pp.
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- Sahu, N. S. (editor). *T. S. Eliot, the Man as a Poet, Playwright, Prophet, and Critic: A Reorientation*. Bareilly, Prakash Book Depot, 1988. iii, 131 pp.
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