

T. S. ELIOT SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Number 34

Spring 1998

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CHARLES ALTIERI 1998 MEMORIAL LECTURER

The distinguished critic, Professor Charles Altieri (University of California at Berkeley), will deliver the Memorial lecture at the Society's Annual meeting in September.

Registration forms, programs, and further details will be included in the Summer issue of the *T.S. Eliot Society Newsletter*, which will appear by early August.

ALA ANNUAL CONFERENCE, 1998

The Society will sponsor/co-sponsor two sessions at this year's American Literature Association conference:

A. Chair: Shyamal Bagchee, University of Alberta; papers: "New Type of Intellectual: Eliot's Contemplative Withdrawal," Kenneth Kramer, San Jose State University; "Building a Modern Criticism: T. S. Eliot and the Aesthetic Sphere," Jan Gorak, University of Denver; and "Frost and Eliot: Forty Years of Interaction," William Harmon, University of North Carolina.

B. (This session, organized by Jewel Spears Brooker, will be co-sponsored by the Ezra Pound Society.): "You can't just lick it off the page!": Teaching Modernist Poetry," chaired by Timothy Materer, University of Missouri, Columbia. Papers: "Teaching The Waste Land: An Interdisciplinary Approach," Nancy D. Hargrove, Mississippi State University; "Teaching Canto 81: Hypertext as Ezuvercity," Gail McDonald, University of North Carolina, Greensboro; "Teaching Harmonium," Charles Altieri, University of California, Berkeley; "Teaching Eurydice: HD Among the Male Modernists," Cassandra Laity, Drew University.

(continued on next page)

THE 19th ANNUAL MEETING OF THE T.S. ELIOT SOCIETY

St. Louis, 25-27 September 1998

Call for Papers

The Society invites proposals for papers or presentations to be selected for the Annual Meeting in St. Louis. Proposals, not exceeding 250 words in length but articulating clearly the central aim or direction of the paper or presentation being offered, should be forwarded to the President, Professor Linda Wyman, 621-6 Woodlander, Jefferson City, MO, 65101, USA. *Please bear in mind the fact that our panel format allows no more than 20 minutes to each participant.* To be considered for selection, a proposal must be postmarked by June 15; notification of acceptance will be sent out by July 15. The Society has a small fund to defray expenses of graduate students and new PhD's whose papers are selected for presentation.

The eighth annual ALA conference will be held between May 28 and 31 at the Bahia Hotel, 998 West Mission Bay Drive, San Diego, CA 92109 (ph. 800-288-0770). The conference will begin on Thursday morning and continue through Sunday at noon, with an opening celebration Wednesday night and a closing celebration Saturday evening. Preregistration conference fees will be \$50 (with a special rate of \$10 for independent scholars, retired individuals, and students). The hotel is offering a conference rate of \$82 single and \$90 double.

If you have questions about the 1998 conference, please contact Jeanne Reesman; with questions about the ALA, contact Alfred Bendixen at abendix@calstatela.edu. Conference Director: Jeanne Campbell Reesman; e-mail: reesman@lonestar.utsa.edu; fax: 210 - 458-5366; Phone: 210 - 458-4374, voice mail at 458-5130.

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The editor invites submissions of brief articles, notes, news items and book reviews that are likely to be of interest to the Society's members. Submit on a diskette—IBM or compatible and WordPerfect, please—or pasted in the body of an email message.

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**TSE Panel at NEMLA
17-18 April 1998**

The 1998 Northeast Modern Language Association Conference, to be held at Omni Inner Harbor Hotel in Baltimore, MD will include the following session on Eliot:

"*Inventions of the March Hare: Early T.S. Eliot*"--chaired by Gary Roberts, Brandeis University. Papers: Thomas Orange, University of Western Ontario, "*The March Hare Poems: Reconfiguring Eliot's Literary Field*"; Lisa Amber Phillips, Brandeis University, "*The Use and Re-Use of Poetry: Eliot and Poetic Borrowing*"; Jami Bartlett, University of Central Florida "*To Hear My Madness Singing: Theory and Practice in Early Eliot.*" Respondent: Judith L. Johnston, Rider University.

A Few Words from the President

A society which has been served by presidents from Leslie Konnyu through Sanford Schwartz must wonder what to expect from its incumbent. I offer these few words:

Expect me to return often to the words, and works, which attracted me to T. S. Eliot in the first place, and to urge you to do the same.

Expect to hear Eliot's words, as well as words about him, at annual meetings of the Society.

Expect me to continue to raise questions about how Eliot is to be taught, how he is to be learned, in the next century—in the next decade, even.

Expect me to welcome ideas that come from a broad range of critical perspectives, asking only that they come from persons who seek to extend and enrich an understanding of Eliot and who express themselves clearly. I think of Eliot's words about "the possibility of co-operative activity" between critic and artist leading to "the further possibility of arriving to something outside ourselves, which may provisionally be called truth."

Linda Wyman

A T.S. ELIOT HOAX

Lee Oser, Millikin University, Indiana

"T. S. Eliot's Peripatetic Apostrophe", written by Lawrence Douglas and Alexander George, published in the North American Review 281 (May/June 1996), pages 41-45, and recently picked up by several prominent data bases in the US, is a fine hoax. Set under the heading "The Literary Life," the article marshals half-a-dozen spurious letters and a battalion of footnotes, beginning with the real and shading towards the unreal, that subjoin the orderly columns of print. A pair of collage-style, postmodern-looking graphics reinforce the article's Pynchonesque flavor. In the on-line version of the popular Wilson Humanities Index, the following abstract appears: "The writer discusses a missing apostrophe in the barman's cry in the second section of T. S. Eliot's The Waste Land. . . . He provides extracts from the correspondence between Eliot and J. J. Glove, who worked at Faber & Faber with Eliot, that sheds light on Eliot's attitude toward the error." For the more naive reader, the center of the piece is the missing apostrophe in the refrain "HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME"; for the more sophisticated, there is no center, only the enigmatic flight of signifiers.

Like the much-publicized Sokal hoax, "T. S. Eliot's Peripatetic Apostrophe" upholds the convention of providing clues that, upon close inspection, become howlingly obvious. Mr. Glove, we learn, was Eliot's copy editor at Faber, the devoted "galley slave" who left the Hogarth Press in the lurch in order to pursue his Eliotan destiny. Messieurs Douglas and George adduce page 253 of the extremely rare Blooms Buried: A Secret History of the Eliot-Woolf Feud, by Victoria St. Mongre-Butte (London: Queens Square Press, 1987), where Virginia Woolf remarks on the loss: "Oh Lenny, how the salaried class wearies me! They're as loyal as a loose button, a small coin. Still, I will miss Mr. Glove, his rough and hairy voice is like an unshaven chin." Retiring from Faber in 1966 ("though the precise circumstances remain unclear"), J. J. Glove seems to have surprised the literary world with his article, "New Notes for 'The Waste Land,'" published in a 1982 number of Ars Poeticum (ouch), which produces a late interpolation, allegedly by Eliot, acknowledging the

influence upon The Waste Land of Meyer J. Gant's (French, please) patch of doggerel, "Its Time Is Growing Near." Glove, a failed poet, had apparently rigged the galleys for decades in the hope of doing justice to Gant. Put on the trail by Glove, W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley write Eliot in pursuit of Gant and the truth, and thus occasion a little hunting music. Eliot answers the scholars by at first denying Gant's influence, but late in life all but admitting to it.

Unearthed among Glove's papers in 1992 ("Glove, Jeremy Jackson, d. 1992" in the Wilson Index), the missives attributed to Eliot are campy: "Glove! Yesterday's letters did not invite colloquy. Whether your redactions in the galleys make the poems more 'Wystanish'--as you put it--is quite beside the point." Douglas and George paint a most suggestive if fragmentary picture of Eliot's dealings with Gant, a fellow Oxonian, who takes a very long time to show Eliot some poems (only to be politely rebuffed), a veritable Prufrock living in the shadow of greatness. Anchored alongside many genuine items, the bogus footnotes have a plausible look, and fully exploit the playfulness and absurdity of some academic titles.

North American Review editor Robley Wilson told me that, on the matter of source-checking, he trusted author Alexander George, a philosophy professor at Amherst College whom he had previously published. Mr. Wilson has a good eye for prose, and the literary merits of the article may well outweigh its deviousness. But it is devious. According to the authors, the demurring apostrophe "demonstrated a persistence of an almost viral nature." Much the same could be said about the infectious data of "T. S. Eliot's Peripatetic Apostrophe": I credit Douglas and George for pointing this out in their own oblique fashion. Still, every hoax stands to make a fool out of someone. As Mark Twain, himself a contributor to the North American Review, said about his 1862 courtroom hoax: he had intended "to make the judge look ridiculous."

Lee Oser co-authors the annual Eliot/Pound essay for American Literary Scholarship (Duke University Press); his book, T. S. Eliot and American Poetry, will be published in July by the University of Missouri Press.

RECOVERING ELIOT'S RADIO BROADCASTS

Michael Coyle, Colgate University, New York

In the Fall of 1996 the Eliot Society kindly allowed me to present a paper entitled "Eliot on the Air: 'Culture' and the Genres of Mass Communication." I remain grateful to the Society for the opportunity, and for the engaging questions that followed from it. My research at the time did not extend beyond those of Eliot's broadcasts that were subsequently published in the *Listener*, the weekly print arm of the BBC. From such published evidence I knew that between 1929-1964, Eliot made 37 broadcasts. I had spent time in the British National Sound Archive, but had discovered there no recordings of talks other than those published in the *Listener*. I've learned a lot since then.

My research into Eliot's association with the BBC really took off in the Summer of 1997, when I was able to spend two weeks in the BBC Written Archives Centre, west of London in Caversham. What I discovered (and "dis-covered" is the word) is that Eliot made more than double the number of broadcasts I had previously reckoned. I can now document at least 83 different broadcasts, not counting rebroadcasts of recorded talks, or the reading of or critical commentary on Eliot's work by other voices. Documentation for something as ephemeral as a radio broadcast can be tricky. Recordings are ideal, but Eliot pre-recorded no broadcasts before 1936 (his correspondence makes it clear he didn't like the idea of pre-recorded talks), and only 18 recorded broadcasts remain in that part of the BBC archives open to the public. Consequently, documentation must come from "print" sources like the BBC's massive Programmes as Broadcast volumes, contracts preserved in the BBC's files, or (less frequently) from scripts stamped with the BBC notice "Passed for Policy." I suspect that evidence for additional broadcasts may turn up, but I do not expect an additional number of any great significance.

Eliot's radio talks are formally distinct from his public lectures or published essays. In general, especially prior to the Second World War, he strove to achieve a kind of conversational tone. Early on his

topics were almost exclusively literary in nature, and surprisingly he did not broadcast a reading of his own poetry before 1942, when he did so for the Scandinavian Section of the BBC Overseas Service. That he should have made his first reading of his own work for the Overseas Service is no incidental detail. Eliot made more broadcasts for Overseas Services than he did for any of the Home Services, and he was particularly committed to the Indian Service. In September, 1941, for instance, he affirmed to Indian Programme Organiser Zulfiqar Bokhari that he considered the BBC's Indian Broadcasts a matter of the highest importance; even after the institution of the BBC's Third Programme in September 1946, and his close association with it, Eliot remained loyal to Indian and Overseas programming. After the outbreak of war, he came increasingly to speak on the definition of culture, and to reflect on the unity of European culture. In this regard, Eliot's behavior was particularly exemplary. In the very pitch of war, he endeavored to imagine a peace that was more than the absence of fighting.

I am happy to report that the work that I have completed thus far will be published in two forthcoming collections already anticipated by the Society's members. For the volume Jewel Spears Brooker is currently editing for Macmillans, *T. S. Eliot and Our Turning World*, I have prepared a checklist of Eliot's broadcasts, as well as an essay bearing the same title as the paper I delivered to the Society two years ago. For the second of the two Eliot numbers that Jim Loucks is editing for *ANQ*, I have contributed an essay entitled "'This Rather Elusory Broadcast Technique': Eliot and the Genre of the Radio Talk." It is my hope that these essays will spark additional interest in an aspect of Eliot's career that has yet to receive scholarly attention. Besides transcripts for many of the talks, the BBC Written Archives Centre also holds a sizable body of Eliot's correspondence; currently these letters may be read but not quoted. When they are published they will help Eliot's readers connect his broadcast work with his other creative and critical activities.

Among Michael Coyle's many publications is Ezra Pound, Popular Genres, and the Discourse of Cultures (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995).

FOR HELP WITH SOCIETY MATTERS

- To submit papers for any reading session sponsored by the Society or to make suggestions or inquiries regarding the annual meeting or other Society activities, please contact the president:

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ELIOT MEETINGS AT THE 1997 MLA CONFERENCE

The following two panels were held at the 1997 MLA meeting in Toronto

A. "The Waste Land after Seventy-Five Years," chaired by Michael Coyle. The three papers read were: "Give, Sympathize and Control: Does *The Waste Land* Have a Politics?" by Michael Levenson; "Inviolable Voices: Gender, Violence and Metaphor in *The Waste Land*," by Jewel Spears Brooker; and "That Shakespearian Rag' Rvisited: *The Waste Land* and the Cultural Divide," by David Chinitz.

B. "T.S. Eliot: Desire and Sexuality," chaired by Cassandra Laity. Papers presented were: "Discarnate Desire: Stragebies fo Suppression and Inventins of the Mach Hare," by Nancy K.

Gish; "T.S. Eliot and Pater: The Erotics of Surrender and the Decadent — Trope of the Slain Youth," by Cassandra Laity; and "Infinitely Gentle, Infinitely Suffering Thing': Lacan and the Material of Desire in Eliot," Charles Altieri.

ANQ: Special Issues on TSE

ANQ--previously known as *American Notes and Queries*--will publish two special issues this year under the general title, "T.S. Eliot at 110: Fin-de-siecle Studies." Guest edited by J. Loucks of Ohio State University, *ANQ*'s Summer 1998 and Autumn 1998 numbers will carry contributions by Kenneth Asher, Ronald Bush, David Chinitz, Michael Coyle, Miriam Fuchs, Anthony Julius, Roger Kojecky, Jack Kolb, Randy Malamud, Christopher Ricks, and others.

**FEW WORDS
FROM EDMONTON**

This is the first issue of the *Newsletter* to be produced at University of Alberta. The transfer from the able hands of Linda Wyman to my fumbling ones has caused some delay in its appearance; for this I apologize to Members. I hope to be able to send out the Summer issue on time—by early August. For their unfailing friendship, advice and support I am grateful to Michael Coyle, Sanford Schwartz, Grover Smith, and Linda Wyman. I am sure all readers of the *Newsletter* join me in thanking Dr. David Partenheimer and his team for allowing us to use, once again, their excellent annual bibliography.

**DAVID IGNATOW
1914 – 1997**

David Ignatow, the important American poet, died recently. Here is Ignatow on death:

I have lived to find out
the sun also will die,
I will die first
and in time
I will have a companion.

— from *Shadowing the Ground* (1991)

NEW MEMBERSHIP FEES

The Society's new membership fee schedule is as follows:

Patron:	\$100.00 and above
Sustaining Member:	\$ 50.00 – 99.00
Regular Member:	\$ 25.00-49.00
Student Member:	\$ 15.00-24.00

ELECTION TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

At this time there are five positions vacant on the Society's Board of Directors. A ballot, containing names of six duly nominated candidates, is provided below for the election of five members to the Board.



**MEMBER'S BALLOT FOR ELECTION TO
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE T.S. ELIOT SOCIETY**

TERM OF OFFICE: 3 YEARS — YOU MAY VOTE FOR FIVE:

- | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| David Chinitz | <input type="checkbox"/> | Michael Coyle | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Melanie Fathman | <input type="checkbox"/> | William Harmon | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| David Huisman | <input type="checkbox"/> | Benjamin Lockerd | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Signature _____ Dated _____ 1998

Mail to the Secretary: Professor Grover Smith, 215 W. Woodridge Drive, Durham, NC, 27707, USA

To be valid, ballot must be postmarked no later than 15 June 1998.