

Books Abroad

An International Literary Quarterly

Tradition and Innovation in the Occidental Lyric of
the Last Decade. IV. Present-Day Hispanic Lyric
JOSE VÁZQUEZ AMARAL

The Present State of the Study of
Metaphor

MAX I BAYM

The Metaphorical Texture of
Daniel Deronda

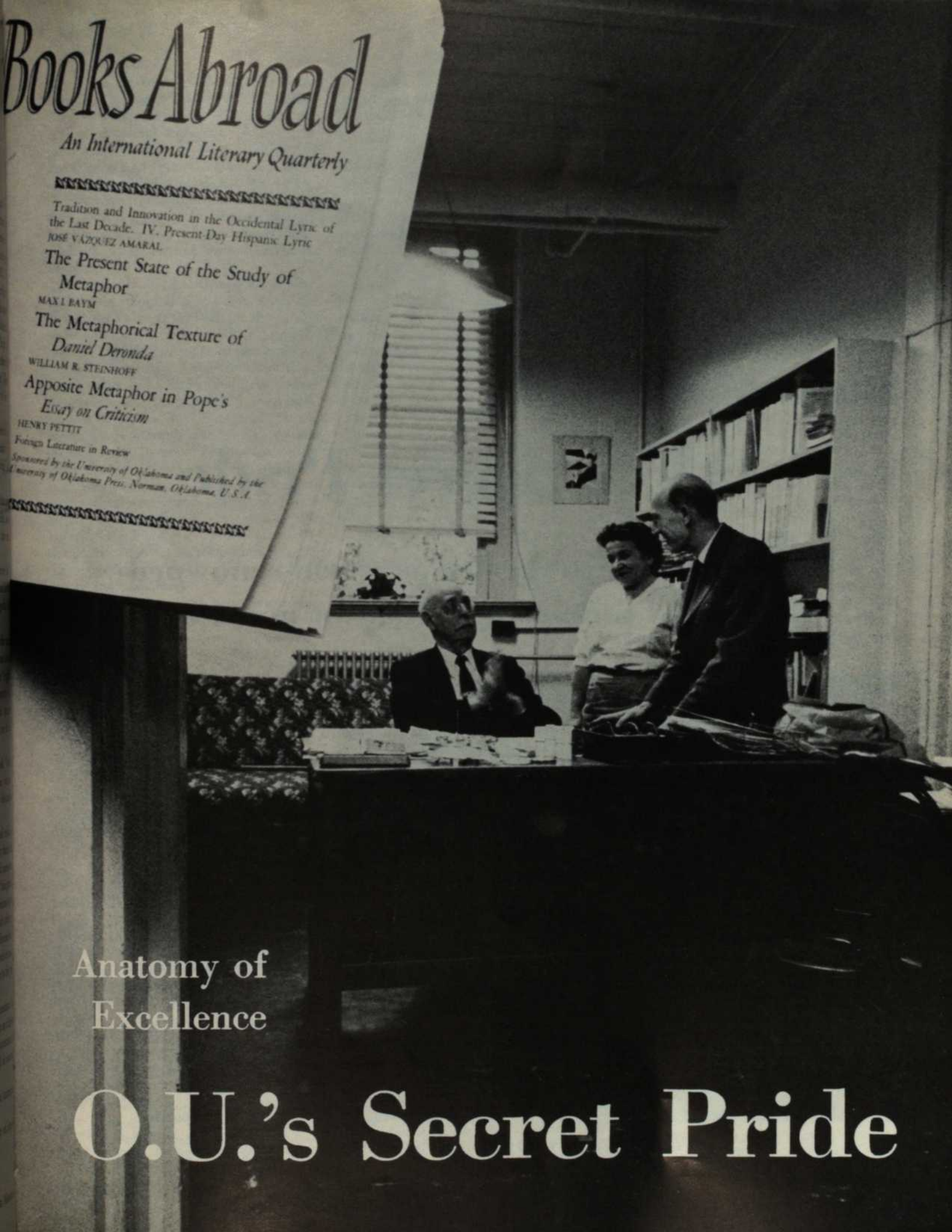
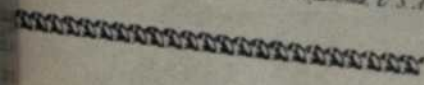
WILLIAM R. STEINHOFF

Apposite Metaphor in Pope's
Essay on Criticism

HENRY PETTIT

Foreign Literature in Review

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Anatomy of
Excellence

O.U.'s Secret Pride

Books Abroad:

O.U.'s Secret Pride

a literary quarterly that is world-renowned
is virtually unknown in its own home town



Dr. Robert Vlach, editor of *Books Abroad* and associate professor of modern languages, joined the O.U. faculty in 1959. A native of Czechoslovakia, Dr. Vlach speaks eight languages. He holds a bachelor's degree, 1936, from Classical College, Prague, Czechoslovakia, and a doctorate, 1947, from the University of Prague. He has taught Czechoslovakian, Polish, Russian and French languages in Europe and came to O.U. from Bennett College, Greensboro, North Carolina, where he taught Russian, German and French. While living in Hamburg, Germany, Dr. Vlach was the editor of a literary paper, *The Harvest*, and he has been a correspondent for the largest publishing house in Czechoslovakia.

IF YOU were to visit the basement offices of O.U.'s *Books Abroad*, you would probably be greeted enthusiastically by the dynamic new editor, Dr. Robert Vlach, who would offer you a chair, a piece of candy and an impassioned lecture on his favorite topic—the prophet-in-its-own-country status of his publication. To illustrate his point he would first suggest that you imagine—just for a moment—that you are back in college taking another quiz. As usual you aren't quite prepared—but then it's multiple choice, so you tackle the first question:

Books Abroad is

- (1) A student organization sending used textbooks to underdeveloped countries.
- (2) a book club offering foreign novels in English translation.
- (3) a book company specializing in imported books.
- (4) an American literary quarterly concerned primarily with comments on current foreign books.

Now if you were to answer as most of those whom Dr. Vlach has quizzed, the "used textbooks" idea would sound logical and you would check No. 1. But you'd be

wrong, since the second question reads:

This international literary quarterly has been published since 1927 by

- (1) Yale University.
- (2) Trinity College.
- (3) O.S.U.
- (4) O.U.

There should be no doubt on this one. Your alma mater isn't likely to call your attention to a review published by O.S.U. or any other school—so it has to be No. 4 again—by O.U.

But hold on a second. If this were true, you—who spent some years in Norman—would have noticed such a review. It has been published by the University of Oklahoma for 35 years and is considered—quite rightly—to be one of the greatest items of pride within the University. And yet you probably have never seen or even heard of it.

When Dr. Vlach first came to O.U. three years ago, he gave his imaginary quiz to anyone on campus who would give him the time and when the "used textbooks program" was the most commonly held misconception, he was puzzled.

"I had met *Books Abroad* long before I was completely certain whether Okla-

homa was an Indian tribe, an American dance, or a river in Arizona," the native Czechoslovakian explains. "I had read the review in several European countries, in great and even not-too-great libraries and knew people in France, Poland and Sweden who could discuss each issue. In the home town of this unique publication, however, with the exception of some administrative officers and a few professors who subscribe to it, no one even suspects its existence."

But even if *Books Abroad* is without widespread recognition at home, it has not lacked for renown throughout the world of letters. In 1952, on the Silver Anniversary of publication, some of the greatest names in international literature sent their congratulations. Clifton Fadiman called *Books Abroad* "an absolutely invaluable adjunct in my work." The great French writer Andre Maurois said, "*Books Abroad* is the only international publication which is, at the same time, completely objective and careful of literary standards." German author Fritz von Unruh called the publication "the best literary magazine in the United States," and the *London Times* admitted that "there is no other literary quarterly quite like this publication of the University of Oklahoma."

Perhaps Thomas Mann best summed up the impact of the review when he wrote, "*Books Abroad* serves a purpose the importance of which has become increasingly evident in these troubled times. By disseminating literary information on a world-wide scale and through its comments on and reviews of foreign books, your quarterly, the only publication of its kind, has been keeping faith with the all-important task set for it by Roy Temple House in 1927—the promotion of international understanding."

The idea of promoting international understanding was almost all that Dr. House had to go on 35 years ago when he launched *Books Abroad*, a project which was to bring both prestige to the University and international prominence to himself. Dr. House, now editor emeritus of *Books Abroad* and David Ross Boyd professor emeritus of modern languages, had been at O.U. for 16 years when he finally persuaded his department to undertake the publishing venture.

"Such a publication had been talked about for a long time," he recalls, "but nothing had been done about it. American book reviews rarely paid any attention to foreign publications, although there were millions of people in this country who spoke or read German, Spanish, Italian and other languages.

"It occurred to a group of us amateurs—all school teachers, not even journalists—

that we might fill a need, in a small way, with this publication. We made many mistakes, and we were amateurish for a number of years."

The first edition, a 32-page review and bibliography of recent foreign publications, was published in January, 1927, on ordinary bulletin paper, and distributed without charge. Dr. House and his colleagues had sent letters to 200 publishers in 24 countries asking for books to review.

"We held our breath, but soon books were arriving in a steady stream," Dr. House remembers. "Spain was very enthusiastic. I'll never forget the day on shipment arrived from a Spanish publisher. It was addressed to my home, and the mailman was the picture of disgust as he had to haul in a huge sack crammed with heavy volumes."

Soon *Books Abroad* was drawing a more impressive response for its pioneering effort in the field of contemporary world letters. One of the most memorable days in Dr. House's life was the day when recognition came from France—a country which likes to consider the cultural sphere her own privilege and monopoly. The recognition came in the form of the most coveted French decoration, the Legion of Honor. The Belgium government also decorated the Oklahoma professor and later House was nominated for the Nobel Prize.

Today, 12 years after his retirement from

the faculty, Dr. House at 83 still maintains an active interest in the publication he founded. Mrs. Bernice Duncan, now Dr. Vlach's associate editor, first worked for the quarterly under Dr. House, whom she recalls as "a gentleman of the old school, courteous and scholarly, who encouraged me in a sensitivity toward language and style." Dr. Ernst Erich Noth followed Dr. House to the editorship in 1950 with Dr. Bernard Fleischmann occupying the position from 1959 to 1961.

All of the editors of *Book Abroad* have been travelers—as much as limited budgets and a few private grants have allowed. In 1952 the Rockefeller Foundation thought enough of *Books Abroad's* Silver Anniversary to finance Dr. Noth's trip to 12 European countries to commission writers and critics to do survey articles on the situation and evolution of the world's literatures during the past 25 years. Dr. Fleischmann made a similar tour in 1960, and Dr. Vlach has already visited Mexico to encourage the writers and critics of that country to become a part of the quarterly's far-flung contributing staff.

Leading Mexican newspapers regarded his visit as a sign of increasing interest in Mexican culture by the United States. "In the face of Russian and especially Cuban attempts to win sympathies of not only well-established but promising young authors,"

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Dr. Roy Temple House, shown here when he was editor of *Books Abroad*, was nearly as famous as the publication he founded. He received the Legion of Honor and was nominated for a Nobel Prize.

O.U.'s Secret Pride

continued

Vlach says, "Mexican writers appreciate every sincere gesture from the United States."

Dr. Vlach is an ambitious man with great plans for the expansion of *Books Abroad's* influence throughout the world and here at home as well. His campaign to bring this world-renowned publication into local prominence has become a one-man crusade.

"I have come to the conclusion that if *Books Abroad* is an item of pride of this university, as stated in my contract, it is an absolutely secret pride," Dr. Vlach says. "As the new editor, I asked if I was bound to this secrecy too, and to my astonishment got the answer that I was not—so I intend to make the great revelation of a 35-year-old secret."

And if Dr. Vlach succeeds in his efforts to increase literary awareness at home, he should also be able to present to his readers a wider range of international literary news.

"I intend to place the same emphasis on Slavic languages that is presently given by *Books Abroad* to Spanish, Italian, French and German," he explains. "There are many Slavic writers presently in exile who must be given attention. Dr. Bernard Fleischmann, my predecessor, took the first great steps in pointing the way for such writers by contacting scholars interested in Slavic literature. I have only to develop this. It's the business of *Books Abroad* to promote international friendship through literature, so why limit its appeal? There are so many written languages it's actually necessary to have a reviewer in every country."

"More Americans are interested now in foreign peoples and more foreign countries want to make themselves known to America. It's the perfect time to disseminate information around the globe."

Next in the Sooner

In the coming issue, the *Sooner Magazine* will bring you an article written especially for alumni magazines by the world's best-known historian, Dr. Arnold Toynbee, on the question of America's neglect of its creative minority. The issue will also feature another in the "Anatomy of Excellence" series, spotlighting the O.U. Research Institute. The story of the University's on-the-job training program for prospective teachers will round out the main articles, with the regular features—Conversation Piece, Cobean, and Roll Call.

Books from Sooner Authors

THE OSAGES: Children of the Middle Waters

By John Joseph Mathews (University of Oklahoma Press)

Don't expect to read *The Osages* in a single evening. This massive 826-page volume is the result of 30 years of painstaking research and few of the historic details have been omitted. Author Mathews, '20ba, himself an Osage, has recorded the oral history of his people from the days before the white man's invasion to the present. Much of his success in gathering the needed information can be traced to his own Indian heritage and to the eagerness of the Osage people to preserve their history. In addition to endless conversations with the old men of the tribe, the 65-year-old Mathews spent many research hours in the Phillips Collection at O.U.'s Bizzell Memorial Library pouring over everything that had already been written on his subject. Mathews' style is informal, his devotion to his task evident in every word and his book an epic contribution to the heritage of his people. —CJR

TWILIGHT OF HONOR

By Al Dewlen (McGraw-Hill)

This fast-paced novel of courtroom drama and the morals of the newly-rich in the Texas Panhandle was given a regal sendoff for its public debut in December. The 328-page book had a McGraw-Hill fiction award of \$10,000 and the honor of being a Book-of-the-Month Club selection as references. Dewlen, who studied professional writing at O.U. during the early 1950's, has woven a tense story around the grisly motel murder of Jess Hutcherson, an epic-type figure of modern High Plains history—a highly individualistic, eccentric and wealthy oilman. The court-appointed lawyer for the accused murderer takes it upon himself to see that his client isn't railroaded to the electric chair. The lawyer searches for justice in the clouds of a community vendetta and also has a battle royal with the concepts of justice and personal morality. The solution to the conflict is truly shocking. Dewlen is completely at home in writing this story—a hold-over from his days as a court reporter. A resident of Amarillo, he knows the Panhandle people well and portrays them vividly. Based vaguely on the details of an actual crime which outraged the Texas Panhandle, the book does have some similarities to the best-seller *Anatomy of a Murder* but is by no means an imitation. —HM

PONY TRACKS

By Frederic Remington

Edited by J. Frank Dobie (University of Oklahoma Press)

This little volume, which first appeared in 1895, contains 15 sketches of life in the frontier cavalry and infantry from the days following the Civil War to the turn of the century. The profuse illustrations by author-artist Remington add to highly readable accounts of scouting parties and Indian skirmishes along the western frontier. In the accounts there is an underlying respect and admiration for the hard, wiry men who lived in Remington's West, for their humor, for their resignation to the fact that life held little more comfort than a good smoke, and that it might be snuffed out in an instant. One can almost hear the creak of the army saddle on the cow pony, feel the sleet freezing on the greatcoat and taste the coffee, "black as evil," as the camp breaks up in the morning. The moving journalistic style gives the tales the immediacy of today's newspaper, and a realistic glimpse at the "pony tracks" and more important, the men who made them. —RDC

SETH EASTMAN: Pictorial Historian of the Indian

By John Francis McDermott (University of Oklahoma Press)

Seth Eastman is a beautiful book from the first page of print to the last illustration. In telling the story of Eastman, John Francis McDermott has kept pace with the high standard set by his 1959 effort, *George Caleb Bingham: River Portraitist*. The new book follows Eastman from his early days as a cadet at the United States Military Academy, where much of his talent was developed, through his years of work and study among the Indian tribes of the North and Midwest. Besides narrating Eastman's life, the author has included more than 100 illustrations of the artist's work, making *Seth Eastman* an interesting and valuable book for all lovers of pictorial art. The illustrations of Eastman's