

# sooner scene

The death of Dr. Robert Vlach in January was a great loss to the University as well as a personal loss to his family, friends, and colleagues. Dr. Vlach was a man of high intellect and ability, and his contributions as a teacher and as editor of *Books Abroad* are difficult to measure with words. The prestige and influence of OU's literary quarterly are testimony to his leadership. The last *Books Abroad* newsletter he wrote, from which we quote below, indicates the range encompassed by this unique University publication which contributes so significantly to the world of letters. The newsletter follows:

With the Winter 1966 issue just published, *Books Abroad* enters into the fortieth year of its existence, rather unknown and unnoticed in Oklahoma and on the campus. Yet I don't believe it is an exaggeration to say that it does for the international image of the University about as much as, for instance, football does on the domestic scene. Here are three examples from this year which is only beginning:

This month the October issue of the Bombay review *The Indian P.E.N.* reached Norman, with an exhaustive comment on the first *Books Abroad* special issue, *A Homage to Dante*. Professor Srinivasa Iyengar, the top Indian specialist in the field of Western literatures, writes this comment among others: "It is truly an international 'homage' . . . This is altogether a sumptuous and meritorious collection, fully worthy of the occasion."

Regarding a current issue of *Books Abroad*, the novelist Prema Nandakumar states that the review "has been doing signal service in promoting a wide exchange of literary news all over the world." He finds "descriptive and bold articles" in it, and writes that the "Foreign Literature in Review" section is "truly an international stadium." (Vol. XXX, No. 10, 302-08)

What may be considered the greatest success of *Books Abroad* in its long history is the translation and publication in book form of the Dante issue—materialized only thanks to a gift from the Alumni Development Fund—by the Spanish publishing house Taurus in Madrid, under the title *Dante en su centenario*. Taurus books are distributed not only in Spain but in Mexico as well as Central and

South America. The book was published in the first days of January.

*Books Abroad* comments on Czech works are translated for printing in the official organ of Czech writers, *Literární noviny*. The rebellious Czech generation uses the criticism coming from the United States as arguments in its struggle for more stress on purely literary values.

India—Spain—Czechoslovakia, but *Books Abroad* has something to offer in the United States, too: at the Modern Language Association Annual Convention (in Chicago, December 27-29), for the fourth time, *Books Abroad* presented its own program, organized as an independent section, surveying the best in different national literatures published during the year. The *Books Abroad* program is one of the best attended.

The potentialities of *Books Abroad* are far from exhausted by all this. On the contrary, the review could be improved, with some \$6,000 to \$8,000 investment yearly, so that it would be the best of its kind in the world—a very insignificant sum in comparison with what it could accomplish for the University, Oklahoma and the United States. If you happen to know a Maecenas interested in promoting culture, please send me his name!

The newly published first issue of our fortieth volume carries a main article on Robbe-Grillet's *La jalousie*—the most penetrating study we have ever carried on this controversial representative of the French "new wave." Its author is Professor Dominique Penot of OU. Other articles deal with the Spanish novelist Ana Maria Matute (who recently visited our campus), the distinguished British novelist Angus Wilson (interviewed by Lawrence Poston, III), Wolfgang Borchert of Germany, poetry and drama in New Zealand, literature as a political force in Hungary, etc., etc. In the book review section, 253 works from around the world are commented upon.

From OU, reviews are carried by Willis H. Bowen, Edith Copeland, Bruce I. Granger, Wolfgang Lockemann, John Paul Pritchard, C. G. Thayer, and Robert Vlach. Another Oklahoma contribution is by Donald Arthur from OCU.



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Editor

PAUL GALLOWAY

Executive Editor

R. BOYD GUNNING

Editorial Assistant

JUDITH FREYER

Photographer

LARRY McDADE

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**THE COVER:** The sign of victory is a familiar sight for Sooner wrestling fans this season as the nation's best team heads toward the NCAA title.

**AT LEFT:** A particularly photogenic snow descended on the campus in January, and photographer J. P. Smith braved the blizzard to take this photograph of Evans Hall. More on page 12.

**NEXT ISSUE:** The May magazine will include articles on OU's graduate teaching assistants, dissent on the campus, and primate research.