

Ian P. Watt to present the fifth annual Robert C. Elliott Memorial Lecture

March 27, 1986

UCSD HOSTS FIFTH ANNUAL ROBERT C. ELLIOTT MEMORIAL LECTURE

Ian P. Watt, the Jackson Eli Reynolds Professor of Humanities at Stanford University, will present the fifth annual Robert C. Elliott Memorial Lecture at 8 p.m. Wednesday, April 16, in Peterson Hall 108, Third College. There will be a reception after the lecture.

Watt, who was the director of the Stanford Humanities Center from 1980-85, will speak on, "The First Myth of Modern Individualism: Faust."

A prolific writer, Watt is the author of numerous articles and reviews. He has written several books on literature, including his most noted publications, "The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding," which has been translated into German, Hindi, Italian, Polish and, in part, into French, Japanese and Braille; and, "Conrad in the Nineteenth Century" (University of California Press, Berkeley, and Chatto and Windus, London, 1980).

The latter book won the prize awarded by the Warsaw magazine, "Poland," for the most valuable book about Polish culture written outside Poland.

Born at Windermere, Cumbria, England, and educated at St. John's College, Cambridge, from 1935-39, Watt later served in the British infantry during World War II, from 1936-46. He was wounded in a skirmish defending the Singapore Zoo from the Japanese, and was listed as "missing, presumed killed in action."

Watt was taken prisoner after being shot by the Japanese, during the capitulation of Singapore. While a prisoner of war, Watt found himself participating in the building of the celebrated bridge on the River Kwai, and working on a railway from Bangkok to Moulmein. He did this, he said, "without excessive zeal." He was released from captivity in Thailand in 1945.

After World War II, Watt did graduate studies in English at UCLA and at Harvard. He taught at St. John's College from 1948-52, at the University of California, Berkeley, for the next 10 years, and at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, from 1962-64, where he was dean of the School of English Studies.

Watt has taught at Stanford since 1964, serving as chairman of the English Department from 1968-71, and served as chairman of the Program in Modern Thought and Literature from 1977-80.

Apart from teaching, Watt is engaged in three major projects: completion of the second of a two-volume critical study of Joseph Conrad; a shorter work on modern Western myths ("The Myths of Individualism: Faust, Don Quixote, Don Juan and Robinson Crusoe"), and a book about the Gothic and Comic Traditions in English Fiction, 1764-1847.

For further information, contact the Department of Literature, (619) 452-3214.

For information about telephone interviews with Dr. Watt, contact Alixandra Williams, Public Information Office, 452-3120.

(March 27, 1986)