

T. S. ELIOT SOCIETY

NEWS & NOTES

Number 7

Spring 1989

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LEONARD UNGER WILL DELIVER 1989 ELIOT MEMORIAL LECTURE

Professor Leonard Unger, author of *Eliot's Compound Ghost* (1981), *T. S. Eliot: Moments and Patterns* (1966), not to mention his many other distinguished studies of major British and American poets, will deliver the next (1989) Eliot Memorial Lecture. The lecture will be the keynote of the Society's next meeting, September 23-24, 1989 in St. Louis. (Details within; hotel reservation forms enclosed.) Professor Unger's work has long been important in Eliot studies, richly informed as it is both by his scholarship and by his keen sensitivity to literary values.

DUES BADLY NEEDED!!! MEMBERS IN ARREARS!!!

A number of active and valued members of the Society have not paid their dues for 1989. If you are among them, we feel sure that there has been an oversight. Please do not wait to attend to this matter until you come to St. Louis in September but rather send your dues in *now*. Our reserves have been depleted by the festive celebrations of last year's centenary, and our expenditures for the newsletter and for the preliminary planning for the fall won't wait. Indeed, we will experience severe cash flow problems if we do not collect your dues money (and perhaps a small donation, if you are so moved) promptly.

To remind you of the fees: Regular Membership for the calendar year 1989 is \$15-\$24; Supporting Membership is \$25-29; Sustaining Membership is \$50-\$99 and Patron Membership is \$100 and above. Dues should be sent to Earl K. Holt III, Treasurer, T. S. Eliot Society, 5007 Waterman Boulevard, St. Louis, Missouri 63108, U.S.A.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF 1989 ANNUAL MEETING OF THE T. S. ELIOT SOCIETY

The T. S. Eliot Society will meet on September 23-24, 1989, in St. Louis, Missouri. Most meetings will take place at the Jefferson Memorial Building of the Missouri Historical Society and most out-of-town members will be staying at the Forest Park Plaza Hotel. Enclosed with this issue of *NEWS & NOTES* is a reservation card for the hotel. You should send this card in promptly to the hotel to be assured of your reservations. The 10th Annual Memorial Lecture by Dr. Leonard Unger will be given in the morning of September 23 (Saturday morning). Saturday afternoon we'll have a session of short papers by leading Eliot scholars, designed to be of interest to critics and researchers, followed by an open discussion. Further papers and programs have been arranged for Sunday morning.

We are in the final stages of planning both for a repeat of the popular and fascinating bus tour of St. Louis late Saturday afternoon and for a dramatic performance of *The Family Reunion*, sure to be one of the highlights of the conference. Further details will be forthcoming in the summer newsletter.

SOCIETY PEOPLE

Vinnie-Marie D'Ambrosio, the Society's new secretary, has published her *Eliot Possessed: T. S. Eliot and Fitzgerald's Rubaiyat* (New York University Press, 1988) and Robert F. Fleissner, a long time member, his *Ascending the Prufrockian Stair: Studies in a Dissociated Sensibility* (Peter Lang Publishers, 1989). D'Ambrosio, a poet as well as a teacher and Eliot scholar, has shed new light on Eliot's early work and sensibility in this study, and Fleissner, who has written on Dickens, Shakespeare and Henry Constable as well as on Eliot, has devoted close attention to a single poem, long in need of more extensive treatment.

Allen J. Koppenhaver, the Society's historian, was honored at Wilmington College on October 2 by an anniversary concert commemorating his twenty-five year musical collaboration with Robert James Haskins. The pair have written operas, oratorios, song cycles, symphonies, a cantata, a musical comedy, and much incidental music, with Koppenhaver writing the lyrics, Haskins the musical scores. We congratulate Dr. Koppenhaver on this great occasion!

T. S. ELIOT SOCIETY OF JAPAN HOLDS INAUGURAL MEETING

The T. S. Eliot Society of Japan held its inaugural meeting last November, with about a hundred scholars in attendance and a starting membership of two hundred and forty. Professor Ann C. Bolgan, well known to Eliot scholars world-wide for her work on Eliot's philosophy, was invited to give the first memorial talk.

Professor Shoichiro Yasuda, who has studied the work of Eliot, Hopkins and Wilfred Owen, will be the Society's first president, with Professor Tatsuo Murata, translator of Eliot's *Knowledge and Experience*, acting as host to the new society, which will have its headquarters at Baika Women's College. The T. S. Eliot Society of Japan will meet in Tokyo in December, 1989.

The T. S. Eliot Society here welcomes the T. S. Eliot Society of Japan to the circle of Eliot readers and scholars. While we are not formally affiliated, each welcomes members from the other, and we look forward to many years of fruitful exchange. For more information, write to T. S. Eliot Society of Japan, c/o Prof. Tatsuo Murata, Baika Women's College, 19-5, 2-cho-me, Sukunoshō, Ibaragi, Osaka, Japan.

FURTHER CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

The Boston Athenaeum sponsored a series of events devoted to Eliot during December and January called *Remember Thomas Stearns Eliot, Poet*. The series featured a reading directed by Roger Curtis, a talk by William Alfred of Harvard University, and an evening of reminiscences by the distinguished actress Irene Worth.

CANDIDATES FOR T. S. ELIOT SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

There are four new candidates for the board of directors of the T. S. Eliot Society this year, each with a distinguished record of literary and scholarly achievement. They are:

Mildred Myer Boaz, Professor of English, Millikin University, Decatur, Illinois. Mildred Boaz has published articles on Eliot in *The Centennial Review*, *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, and the 1988 MLA volume, *Approaches to Teaching Eliot's Poetry and Plays*. She acted as coordinator of the special music for the Society's 1988 Centenary meeting, a substantial and unforgettable contribution to that occasion.

Ann P. Brady, Associate Professor of English, Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota. Ann Brady has published a number of books and articles on Eliot, including *Lyricism in the Poetry of T. S. Eliot* (Kennikat Press, 1978) and her contribution to *Approaches to Teaching Eliot's Poetry and Plays*. Her most recent book is *Pompiilia: A Feminist Reading of Robert Browning's The Ring and the Book*. She is also among the Society's many musicians, having performed her own transcriptions for zither, dulcimer and autoharp of Irish, Scottish and Appalachian folk music.

Lois A. Cuddy, Associate Professor of English, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, R. I. Lois Cuddy has published articles on Eliot in the *Yeats/Eliot Review* and *Studia Neophilologia*, with more forthcoming in the *T. S. Eliot Annual* and in Shyamal Bagchee's *Centenary Essays*. She is co-editing with Professor David Hirsh a volume called *Critical Essays on T. S. Eliot's "The Waste Land"* for G. K. Hall's series on American authors and is on the editorial board of *Modern Language Studies* and *American Transcendental Quarterly*. She has also published on Emily Dickinson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edith Wharton and Samuel Beckett.

George T. Wright, Professor of English, University of Minnesota. Ted Wright, also a long-time Society member, has published extensively on Eliot and on poetry in general, notably in his *The Poet in the Poem: The Personae of Eliot, Yeats, and Pound* (University of California, 1960). His most recent book is *Shakespeare's Metrical Art* (University of California, 1988). He has twice won the MLA's William Parker prize for an outstanding article in the PMLA (1974 and 1981). He currently serves on the Advisory Committee of the PMLA, where he regularly reviews articles on modernist and contemporary poetry.

CORRECTION

Drs. Ann Brady and Linda Wyman both have contributions included in Jewel Spears Brooker's *Approaches to Teaching T. S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays*, Modern Language Association, 1988. For a full list of contributors, see the Fall 1988 newsletter.

T. S. ELIOT SESSION AT SYMPOSIUM ON AMERICAN LITERATURE

The T. S. Eliot Society will be well represented at the California State Symposium on American Literature to be held on June 2, 1989 at California State University in Los Angeles. The session on Eliot, to be chaired by Grover Smith, will include the following papers:

"T. S. Eliot in the Temple of Modern Criticism," James Torrens, S. J.

"Reconsidering Eliot's Women: Images of 'carefully caught regrets' in the Early Poems," Lois Cuddy.

"Eliot in the Music Halls," W. Ronald Schuchard.

The session promises to be excellent and the occasion will provide opportunity, as well, for further discussions on possible affiliation of the T. S. Eliot Society with a newly forming council on American authors. See next newsletter for details.

A REPORT ON THE MUSIC AT LAST FALL'S CENTENARY CELEBRATION

Often music is viewed as a background, a supplement to conference activities. At the Eliot Centenary last September, it was a significant part of the program. The musical performances were designed to enhance the participants' appreciation of the physical setting of St. Louis, the musical settings of the poetry, and the themes of the major talks. Some of the works were well-known; others were new to the audience and in some instances even new to the performers several months earlier when they were asked to perform them.

At Thursday's opening reception in the Missouri Historical Society building, the music was in keeping with the place and the memories. Giacomo Oliva and his colleague Guy Hargrove played and sang ragtime, blues and "You Came a Long Way from St. Louis," the latter reportedly enjoyed by Eliot when some students sent him a recording. At Friday's luncheon, the speaker was Senator Michael B. Yeats, and Dr. Hargrove sang a setting of a Yeats poem by Benjamin Britten. Dr. Oliva accompanied for the Britten and for a stirring rendition of "Memories" from the popular musical *Cats*, with lyrics adapted from Eliot's poetry by Trevor Nunn and music by Andrew Lloyd Webber.

On Saturday, Helen Gibbons, mezzo-soprano, and Bruce Gibbons, pianist, performed "Five-Finger Exercises" by Paul Reif and "Four Preludes" by Howard Swanson. Both works illustrate the modernity of Eliot's poetry in their varied moods, rhythms, and harmonies. The musicians are to be applauded for volunteering to learn these contemporary works for a first-time performance for Society members. Later, A. D. Moody's lecture on Eliot's American strain was underscored by pianist Oliva's haunting performance of Scott Joplin's "Solace."

In the evening, the Society heard choral works sung by the St. Louis Chamber Chorus, under the direction of Peter Tkach. Again, appropriate to the topic of Russell Kirk's remarks on Eliot's Christian imagination, the music and text reflected religious themes. Particularly stunning were the chorus's rendition of Stravinsky's "The Dove Descending Breaks the Air," a setting of the fourth section of *Little Gidding*, and Antonia Rodriguez-Pavao's "Time and the Bell" and "With the Drawing of This Love," both commissioned by the First Unitarian Church of St. Louis, the latter including text read by Joan Boaz.

Laurie Ryan, music director and organist for the First Unitarian Church, selected musical works for the Sunday morning sessions of the conference, including Persichetti's "The Hollow Men" played by Tom Brawner, trumpet. Commissioned works by Rodriguez-Pavao were also sung by the choir and Ms. Ryan performed Robert Schumann's work "The Poet Speaks" during the offertory.

For its great finale, the Society was privileged to hear Graninne Yeats, distinguished Irish harper and soprano, give a poignant and deeply accomplished recital to close the centenary celebration.

—Contributed by Mildred Boaz

PROCEDURE FOR VOTING

Members in good standing may vote by detaching the ballot below, marking and signing it and mailing it to:

Dr. Vinnie-Marie D'Ambrosio
405 Parkside Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11226

Ballots must be received by June 1, 1989. DO NOT MAIL THEM TO THE SOCIETY'S ST. LOUIS ADDRESS.

BALLOTING FOR BOARD MEMBERS

There are two openings for a three-year term on the Board of Directors of the T. S. Eliot Society due to occur on June 1, 1989. These openings will be filled by vote of members in good standing who complete and forward their ballots. The two successful candidates will serve from June 1, 1989 through May 30, 1992.

The present members of the Board are as follows:

Grover C. Smith, Chair
Leslie Konnyu
Earl K. Holt
Jewel Spears Brooker
Cleo McNelly Kearns
Linda Wyman
Vinnie Marie D'Ambrosio
Allen J. Koppenhaver
Peter J. Michael (term expiring)
Glenn P. Wright
Melanie Fathman
Ann P. Brady (term expiring)

Four candidates for the two openings have been nominated in accordance with the By-laws. They are:

Mildred M. Boaz
Ann P. Brady
Lois A. Cuddy
George T. Wright

(For brief descriptions of the candidates' qualifications, see elsewhere in the Newsletter.)

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T.S. Eliot

Celebration Calligraphy and Design by Margaret R. Rigg.

**MEMBER'S BALLOT FOR ELECTION TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE
T. S. ELIOT SOCIETY
(Term ending 1992)**

You may vote for two:

- Mildred M. Boaz
- Ann P. Brady
- Lois A. Cuddy
- George T. Wright

Signature _____ Dated _____ 1989

Mail to: Dr. Vinnie-Marie D'Ambrosio, 405 Parkside Avenue, Brooklyn, New York, 11226