

T. S. ELIOT SOCIETY

NEWS & NOTES

Number 12

Fall 1990

Published by the T.S. Eliot Society (incorporated in the State of Missouri as a literary non-profit organization), 5007 Waterman Boulevard, Saint Louis, Missouri 63108

D'AMBROSIO NEW VICE-PRESIDENT, BOAZ SECRETARY, IN SPECIAL ELECTION

Vinnie-Marie D'Ambrosio, previously the secretary of the Society, has been elected vice-president by the Board of Directors to complete the unexpired term of Cleo McNelly Kearns, who resigned on September 29. The Board, convened for its regular annual meeting, chose Mildred M. Boaz for a full term of three years to take the office vacated by Dr. D'Ambrosio. Dr. Kearns, vice-president and editor of NEWS & NOTES from January 1989, resigned for personal and family reasons.

Dr. D'Ambrosio's service as vice-president will continue until January 1, 1992, when in accordance with the Bylaws of the Society she is in line to become its president. She is a professor at Brooklyn College of the City University of New York and has published *Eliot Possessed: T.S. Eliot and FitzGerald's Rubáiyát* and various papers notably on Eliot in relation to contemporary poets, as well as poetry of her own collected in book form.

Dr. Boaz, who with her husband, Society member John K. Boaz, teaches at Millikin University, is a musicologist and among other contributions has compiled a check-list of Eliot-inspired musical compositions and settings. At present she is researching music performed in the English music halls, an early stimulus to Eliot's poetry. Dr. Boaz was a candidate for a seat on the Board of Directors in the spring of last year.

SOCIETY PEOPLE

Two recent books by officers of the Society will soon be available in paperback: *Reading The Waste Land: Modernism and the Limits of Interpretation*, by Jewel Spears Brooker in collaboration with the late Joseph Bentley, from the University of Massachusetts Press; and *Eliot Possessed: T.S. Eliot and FitzGerald's Rubáiyát*, by Vinnie-Marie D'Ambrosio, from New York University Press.

Robert F. Fleissner, of Central State University in Ohio, has added another Eliot article to his rapidly multiplying publications: "The Weakness of T.S. Eliot's J. Alfred: More of Verdenal in 'Prufrock,'" *Names* 38, 1-2 (1990), 43-48. Dr. Fleissner will chair a four-paper panel at the MLA meeting in Chicago, on the subject "T.S. Eliot and Ethnicity: The Influence of and on Black Culture." During the session he will present "Eliot's Appropriation of Black Culture: A Dialogic Analysis." Dr. Fleissner is meanwhile developing further his rebuttal to the defamatory accusations of anti-Semitism brought against Eliot.

Leslie Konnyu, the founder of the T.S. Eliot Society, has produced more than fifty published books. His latest is *The Dancing Girl* (poems), issued also in Hungarian under the title *Összegyűjtött Versek III*; either text may be ordered at \$5.00 a volume postpaid from the *American Hungarian Review*, 5410 Kerth Road, St. Louis, MO 63128. The *Review* has in stock a variety of

books on Hungarian geography and literature and on transplanted Hungarian culture, list sent on request.

Yutaka Koshizawa, of Seikei University, has published an essay collection *T.S. Eliot and English Literature* (Tokyo, 1988). The work is in Japanese.

Jeffrey M. Perl's *Skepticism and Modern Enmity Before and After Eliot*, noted here last spring, is discussed by Jewel Spears Brooker in a forthcoming number of the *Southern Review*. It has been evaluated also by Grover Smith in the *Sewanee Review* (Spring 1990).

Richard Shusterman, of Temple University, who for more than a decade has been publishing on Eliot's philosophy and is the author of *T.S. Eliot and the Philosophy of Criticism* (London, 1988), has brought out "Eliot's Pragmatic Philosophy of Practical Wisdom," *Review of English Studies* N.S. 40 (1989), 72-92, and "Aesthetic Education or Aesthetic Ideology: T.S. Eliot on Art's Moral Critique," *Philosophy and Literature* 13 (1989), 96-114.

Too late for the summer issue of NEWS & NOTES, word was received of a *Four Quartets* celebration, "'Time past and time future'" announced for October 20 at the Yale Center for British Art, New Haven. Listed for the conference, which was scheduled in conjunction with an exhibition of David Finn's "Evocations," were papers by Society members Louis Martz and W. Ronald Schuchard, with others by Lyndall Gordon, Hugh Kenner, and A. Walton Litz, and commentary by Ronald Bush.

Allen J. Koppenhaver, formerly the historian of the Society, whose abundant photographs taken at past annual meetings were deposited in the archives last year, has left the hospital and is recovering from a massive coronary suffered several months ago.

CALL FOR ALA PAPERS—Final Notice

The call for American Literature Association papers, announced in the summer issue of NEWS & NOTES, is here repeated. The 1991 conference of ALA will be held at the Mayflower Hotel, Washington, DC, the week end of May 24-26. The T.S. Eliot Society, as an affiliate of ALA, has the responsibility of providing two sessions of Eliot papers. Any member of the Society with 1991 dues paid by January 1 may have papers considered.

The only regulations are as follows:

- (1) Reading time must not exceed 20 minutes.
- (2) Papers must not have been read or published previously or used elsewhere in a different form.
- (3) Papers must be suitable either for a session on Eliot and his own work or else for a session on his *literary* influence.
- (4) Papers submitted must be *mailed* and must reach Grover Smith, P.O. Box 6043, Durham, NC 27708, no later than January 7, 1991.
- (5) Papers not selected will be returned if postpaid.
- (6) The Society cannot underwrite attendance at the conference.

Last spring's inaugural meeting of the American Literature Association saw participants from the Eliot Society join others from more than thirty other American-author societies and similar groups for a highly diversified program of scholarly presentations. Whether offering papers or not, our members may attend papers offered by any author society and enter into the discussions integral to ALA sessions. There are no ALA membership dues; the only fee is a conference-registration charge of \$30 (less for students and retired persons). The Mayflower Hotel has offered a special nightly rate of \$60 s/d for this occasion.

CALL FOR SEPTEMBER PAPERS First Invitation

At the 1991 annual meeting of the T.S. Eliot Society in St. Louis, September 27-29, papers by Society members will be featured in sessions like those of the recent 1990 meeting. As always the central event of the occasion remains the delivery of the T.S. Eliot Memorial Lecture, by a scholar to be identified a few months hence. The sessions composed voluntarily are, however, intended to take up a greater proportion of the meeting time than this year. The Board of Directors at its last meeting voted to increase for 1991 the number of members' panels from two to three, each to last about an hour and a half. The interest aroused last September by the opportunity for protracted discussion of papers led to this decision in part. The plan remains experimental; another year the Society may have to go back to a more usual format for the meeting.

In 1990, besides the hour-long Memorial Lecture and the Forum paper of Sunday morning, members heard altogether six 20-minute presentations. In 1991 it is planned to offer nine. One session will take place on Friday evening and two sessions on Saturday morning; then after luncheon on Saturday the Memorial Lecture will fill a separate session. Time for open discussion, which the Board concurred in terming essential, will be provided after each panel.

Papers to be considered for the September 1991 meeting may deal in a scholarly way with any Eliot topic, but must be new in substance (never published or otherwise used). Please mail your completed paper, timed for 20 minutes only, so that it may be received by June 15, 1991. Abstracts cannot be comparatively evaluated. Address: Eliot Society Papers, %P.O. Box 6043, Durham, NC 27708. Decisions may be expected by July 1.

Letter Forum Proposed For Back Page of "NEWS & NOTES"

Acting upon a suggestion voiced at the September meeting of the Board of Directors, the editor plans to give space, initially in the Spring 1991 number, to a department of letters from Society members. This could cover as much as a full page, the back page. One item already waits in the back-up file!

Letters on any topic pertinent to the Society's purposes or operations will be considered; but their length should be kept to 200 words at most. The editor reserves the usual right to abridge. The deadline for the first batch to be received is April 15. Address: Editor, NEWS & NOTES, %P.O. Box 6043, Durham, NC 27708. Some of the possibilities latent in the feature are examined elsewhere in these pages.

1991 DUES REMINDER

Your 1991 dues fell due on November 1. Help keep the Society solvent by responding now if you did not do so then. Dues in the category you select (Patron \$100-up, Sustaining \$50-\$99, Supporting \$25-\$49, Regular \$15-\$24) should be sent to Linda Wyman, Treasurer, 613-5 Woodlander Drive, Jefferson City, MO 65101. The Society is a non-profit organization registered with the IRS.

REFLECTIONS

By the President of the T.S. Eliot Society

In this, the second successive number of NEWS & NOTES for which lately I have returned to the editorship on a temporary basis, I had hoped to record that a large number of the Society's members would be reading papers at MLA or elsewhere this winter, or that they had collectively published a large variety of exciting articles. The items I have learned of, set forth in this issue's "Society People," are interesting and worthy of congratulation, but rather few considering the length of our membership roll. As I may be continuing as guest editor until our new vice-president, Dr. D'Ambrosio, can take on the job, I urge everyone who participates or publishes Eliot-wise (nay, even Eliot-foolish) in the next quarter to send me printouts from programs, offprints from journals, or other evidences so that they may become celebrated next spring.

The prospect of receiving "letters to the editor" carries a certain excitement in itself. The chance of getting to fill up a page with such multiple points of view as, otherwise, are represented in the far more ambitious forensic undertakings of journal and conference—the chance of your constructing something upon which we may all rejoice—could portend the more substantive gain of enabling this newsletter to become a means of complex intercommunication among our members. What sort of intercommunication? Well, I have been trying to think of topics for letters I might send if I planned to send any, and nothing has come into my head but some facetious trifle such as: "*To the Editor: What on earth is a Pollicle Dog? Can any of the members say? My dictionary lists 'pollical' but not 'pollicle.' Still may I infer that such a dog is a dog with thumbs?—(Signed, etc.)*" To this polite but desperate missive I could perhaps yield an immediate editorial reply, that a Pollicle dog is probably a Hop o' My Thumb dog, or a General Tom Thumb dog; or wisely I could leave the puzzle to the readership. What fun! But no fun really, for it is all taking place in my head. I await real letters, real queries, about matters that stump me but that will bring lots of answers from people who know lots more. I cannot write letters for others, but I can guess at the categories into which the letters will sort. There will be letters of complaint (perhaps to be faced heroically); letters of constructive exhortation; letters of inquiry or petition; letters of philosophical observation. And not to have to answer most of them!—but to let them be answered, if possible, by respondents in the next issue! The prospect of letters to clarify uncertainty and broaden knowledge, without oneself having to find the answers—this will be a pleasing prospect indeed. I can only salt the claim and leave it to other prospectors to prove my stratagem needless.

From the still distant riches of letters conceivably in preparation during the months ahead it is worth while to look back upon the Society's 1990 meeting in St. Louis, to see what it can tell us about the state of our common interests. As noted at one of the sessions, it was the first meeting at which we heard short papers submitted competitively. (In 1989 the short papers had been individually invited, like the Memorial Lecture.) The experiment (for I regard it as that) was highly successful from the point of view of my intellectual stimulation. Having papers to pick and choose from, so as to get breadth of subject matter and some diversity of technical depth, confers a distinct advantage by comparison with having to select program material from abstracts only (I have even been offered general topics). Exceptions occur: sometimes a topic by its nature can be handled by no one but its proposer, or conceivably even by the one to whom it may be proposed. I intend to maintain the plan of requiring the complete texts of all papers so that I may compare them alike. I do not think it is fair to people who send their papers to allow parity to people who only send abstracts. To invite a group of scholars of tested skills to make up a program as best they can—this is quite a different procedure, in no way suggesting that competition has been opened to everyone interested. But when papers are invited, papers ought to be examined and compared. The

equity principle obtains in this policy, and is any principle better to follow? There may be occasions when a fund of usable material is so scarce that some expedient must be adopted to supply the deficiency; but "expedient" has, to my ears, a somewhat disagreeable kinship with "expediency."

The success of the papers at the 1990 meeting can best be measured by the quality of the audience response. The papers were provocative and in most cases illuminating; the question periods were prolonged not by garrulousness but by incisive commentary. The discussion periods were every whit up to the standards, mainly high, of the papers themselves, *mutatis mutandis*. That, as the saying is, is saying a lot.

The Memorial Lecture, Professor Shyamal Bagchee's "Eliot and Coleridge: 'Rather a Man of My Own Type'?" had the very remarkable distinction of addressing a topic virtually new to the Eliot industry. I say "addressing" because the lecture made no pretense of exhaustively analyzing the link between Coleridge and Eliot, so as to leave the audience with a distinct impression that, detail by detail, the affinities, critical and poetic correspondences, and conflicts had been reduced to comprehensible order. What the lecture did rather was to exhibit the apparent discontinuities of the relation. It does not follow that Professor Bagchee's exploration, because it was new and original on the one hand and because on the other hand it did not purport to be conclusive, missed critical definitiveness. Its definitiveness came precisely in the conviction it left its audience with, that the Coleridge-Eliot relation formed an inconclusive texture. The trenchant character of Professor Bagchee's mind can provide a model of value to us all, encompassed as we often are, at less disciplined conferences, with only rough-hewn notions.

At the 1990 meeting the tables displaying books in print by Society members were managed by Larry C. Melton, of Union, MO, whose fidelity to the hard work of annual arrangements in St. Louis has made him one of the best known members of the Society. The book exhibit, normal at meetings several years ago, seems to have attracted the right kind of attention—involving the jotting down of titles and publishers' names. Next year it is possible that we shall see at least an advance copy of *The Placing of T.S. Eliot*, Jewel Spears Brooker's edition of selected Society lectures including half a dozen of the recent Memorial Lectures. The volume, to be issued by the University of Missouri Press, is expected in print some time in 1991. Meanwhile great thanks, voted by the Board of Directors, go to Mr. Melton for making sure that members present at the annual meeting find spread before them the tempting wares of Eliot scholarship. Though the social events planned for the 1990 meeting underwent drastic change owing to the commercial dithering of the riverboat proprietors, causing our members to seek meals and entertainment elsewhere than on the *President*, at least the amenities at Mayfair Suites left nothing to be desired in point of quality. A wonderful old hotel. Incidentally the jazz brass ensemble on board a moored riverboat restaurant, Lieutenant Robert E. Lee, includes a moonlighting college professor of English from the State of Illinois; the group is superb.

The Rev. Sunichi Takayanagi, whose third book in Japanese on Eliot, *The Formation of T.S. Eliot's Thought*, has recently been published, writes that the T.S. Eliot Society of Japan is about to inaugurate its journal, the *T.S. Eliot Review*. The first issue will contain an article by Fr. Takayanagi on the condition of Eliot studies. It occurs to me that NEWS & NOTES might very usefully initiate a regular column, under a title such as "New Eliot Studies," to list the books, articles, and eventually editions we ought to know about as readers attentive to Eliot. Such a feature (which someone less busy than I would have to volunteer to keep up) might also present at intervals a guide to the best new scholarship, from Society members or others. Perhaps brief digests of articles and books—not reviews but succinct abstracts—might be provided. I do not know of anyone ready to undertake this task, or if comments on the suggestion will arrive in letters to the editor this winter.

A gentleman in South Carolina, Michael Hoover Eliot, who is T.S. Eliot's first cousin twice removed (*i.e.*, the grandson of a first cousin), writes concerning the Eliot interest of his mother, Mignon E. Eliot, a member of our Society and at 91 its oldest member, apparently. No Eliots are any longer alphabetized in the St. Louis directory, but the Society has one St. Louis member related to the poet, C. Landon Martin II, whose degree of relationship is the same precisely as that of the South Carolina Mr. Eliot.

GROVER SMITH

PHOTOS WANTED FOR ARCHIVES

For the archives, any photographs taken of the Society's events on the final day of the 1988 meeting (Sunday, September 25) are needed to complete the historian's collection. Members with items to spare are asked to send them to the Rev. Earl K. Holt III, 5007 Waterman Boulevard, St. Louis, MO 63108. Though material illustrating that particular day is most in request, snaps of any of the Society's meetings, including especially those in the early years, will be gratefully accepted whether or not labeled in detail.

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Please address orders to the T.S. Eliot Society, % P.O. Box 6043, Durham, NC 27708.

THE APPROACHING BOARD ELECTION

A place on the Board of Directors, now held by Glenn Patton Wright, will become vacant on June 1, 1991. Nominations for the three-year term must be sent in the mail by members of the Society and must be received no later than April 1, 1991. Address: Jewel Spears Brooker, Supervisor of Elections, 501 68th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33705. Candidates, who must be members of the Society, require a minimum of five members' nominations so as to be listed on the ballot, which will be printed in the Spring 1991 number of NEWS & NOTES.

The Board of Directors at present is composed as follows:

Grover Smith, *President and Chairman*
Vinnie-Marie D'Ambrosio, *Vice-president*
Linda Wyman, *Treasurer*
Mildred M. Boaz, *Secretary*
Earl K. Holt III, *Historian*
Jewel Spears Brooker, *Supervisor of Elections*
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Melanie Fathman
Leslie Konnyu (Founder)
W. Ronald Schuchard
George T. Wright
Glenn P. Wright

Members of the T.S. ELIOT SOCIETY

This list is complete as of November 27, 1990, according to the Society's records. The names of members in each contributing category who are in good standing for 1991 in addition to 1990 are marked with an asterisk (*). Members for 1991 become entitled to submit nominations for the announced Board election, and papers for the ALA conference next spring and for the annual meeting of the Society next September. Honorary Members, who have been elected by the Board at various times, are exempt from the payment of annual dues and have full membership privileges.

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- *Jewel Spears Brooker, St. Petersburg, FL
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