

T. S. ELIOT SOCIETY

NEWS & NOTES

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ROSTER OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS TWO BOARD ELECTIONS ANNOUNCED

On January 1, 1992, the composition of the Board of Directors will be as follows:

Vinni Marie D'Ambrosio, *President and Chair*
Sanford Schwartz, *Vice-president*
Linda Wyman, *Treasurer*
Mildred M. Boaz, *Secretary*
Earl K. Holt III, *Historian*
Grover Smith, *Supervisor of Elections*
Ann P. Brady
Leslie Konnyu (Founder)
Virginia B. Phelan
W. Ronald Schuchard
George T. Wright
(One seat undecided)

The undecided seat, held at present by Melanie Fathman, will be occupied either by the incumbent or by Robert H. Canary, who is contesting it. In order to choose between Dr. Canary and Ms. Fathman, complete and mail the ballot below (or a photocopy of it) to the Secretary, Mildred M. Boaz, 603 Radliff Road, Bloomington, IL 61701. The votes will be tallied on December 31.

Robert H. Canary is an administrator at the University of Wisconsin, Kenosha, and has published *T. S. Eliot: The Poet and His Critics* (1982). Melanie Fathman lives in St. Louis, where she is active in historic preservation, is a docent at the St. Louis Art Museum, and lectures periodically on art history at St. Louis University.

The Board terms of Ann P. Brady and George T. Wright will expire on June 1, 1992. Dr. Wright has decided not to seek renomination. Any member of the Society named in five nominations received prior to April 2, 1992, will be included on a ballot to be printed in the Spring number of NEWS & NOTES. Nominations should be sent by members in good standing to Grover Smith as Supervisor of Elections after December 31; address P.O. Box 6043, Durham, NC 27708.

CHANGE OF OFFICERS JANUARY 1 D'AMBROSIO PRESIDENT, SCHWARTZ VICE-PRESIDENT BOARD AMENDS BY-LAWS

On New Year's Day 1992, Vinni Marie D'Ambrosio, currently Vice-president of the Society, will succeed Grover Smith as President. Sanford Schwartz, elected by the Board of Directors at its September meeting, will be the new Vice-president. Linda Wyman was re-elected and will continue as Treasurer. Each term of office runs for three years.

Dr. D'Ambrosio, Vice-president since the special election of 1990 to fill the unexpired term of Cleo M. Kearns, is widely known for her book *Eliot Possessed: T. S. Eliot and FitzGerald's Rubáiyát* (1989), in which are set forth her discoveries, established in her doctoral dissertation a decade earlier, concerning the significant intertextual relation between FitzGerald and Eliot's poetry. Dr. Schwartz is the author of *The Matrix of Modernism: Pound, Eliot, and Early Twentieth-Century Thought* (1985), a work showing Eliot as the apogee of a contemporary development in the history of ideas.

The Vice-presidential election, conducted by secret ballot, was the first in the Society's recent history to engage more than one candidate. As a result of Dr. Smith's initiative last July, proposing an Amendment to the Society's By-laws to create a more democratic election procedure (now ratified by the Board for formal implementation on January 1), Dr. Brooker as Supervisor of Elections identified anticipatorily two candidates this year. She first invited from Dr. Smith and from Dr. D'Ambrosio suggestions for possible candidates. By coincidence the two willing Vice-presidential contenders, Dr. Schwartz and Dr. Robert H. Canary, were both suggested by Dr. D'Ambrosio.

Under the By-laws the current Vice-president succeeds to the Presidency automatically. The incumbent President, Dr. Smith, becomes Supervisor of Elections. Dr. Jewel Spears Brooker leaves the Board, after service totalling six years. Beginning in 1992, the new By-laws Amendment on elections will require the Supervisor of Elections, after consulting with the President and the Vice-president, to provide the Board, if possible, with two qualified and willing candidates for each office except the Presidency and the Supervisorship of Elections. The Board will then have forty-five days to find additional candidates prior to a set election. The Board adopted at Dr. Smith's request five further Amendments, two of which innovate special elections in certain cases of resignation from office.

SOCIETY PEOPLE

By Grover Smith

Society member Lois A. Cuddy, with David H. Hirsch, has recently brought out a large volume entitled *Critical Essays on T. S. Eliot's The Waste Land* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1991), in the series "Critical Essays on American Literature." The collection presents both reprinted and new writings in the categories "Reviews," "Publishing History," and "Criticism," with chronological treatment under each heading. The older material is salted with a certain amount of critical ineptitude deliberately, but mainly comprises standard critiques, many of them hard to consult hitherto and welcome in this familiar compendious arrangement for their usefulness. Thus along with familiar items by Edmund Wilson, Conrad Aiken, I. A. Richards, and Cleanth Brooks there are for
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JANUARY CALL FOR ALA PAPERS— Final Notice

The 1992 conference of the American Literature Association will take place at the Bahia Resort Hotel in San Diego, California, May 28-31, 1992. As an affiliate and founding member of the ALA (enrolling some forty American-author societies), the T. S. Eliot Society has the responsibility of providing the one session of Eliot papers at the conference. Any paid-up member of the Society may have papers considered. Members are encouraged to attend ALA; its meetings are serious in literary content and lively and convivial as well; the immediate surroundings of the hotel are paradisiacal. The Society cannot, however, subsidize attendance.



Papers submitted should be suitable for a session on Eliot and his own work; their presentation must not exceed 20 minutes; they must not have been read or published previously or used elsewhere in a different form.



Please mail papers to arrive by January 6, 1992, to Vinni Marie D'Ambrosio, 11 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10003. Papers not selected will be returned if postpaid.

FIRST CALL FOR SEPTEMBER PAPERS

At the annual meeting of the T. S. Eliot Society in St. Louis, scheduled for September 25-27, 1992, approximately seven papers by Society members will be featured—probably three on Friday night, three on Saturday morning, and one at the Forum on Sunday morning. Papers submitted should not exceed 20 minutes' reading time.

The T. S. Eliot Memorial Lecture, which will be given on Saturday morning in accordance with our pleasurable and often exciting tradition, is not included in this call for papers. The identity of the scholar invited to be the Memorial Lecturer will be announced.

In a later NEWS & NOTES you will read more about our plans for next year's meeting. In the meantime, please keep in mind our need for seven papers. You may submit more than one paper, or one only; a generous scale of submissions is desired—but bear in mind, please, that June 15, 1992, is the deadline for their receipt in finished form. Send unsubmitted and unpublished material only, and mail to: Vinni Marie D'Ambrosio, 11 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10003. A second call will appear in NEWS & NOTES next spring.

UNGER BECOMES HONORARY MEMBER

Leonard Unger, the T. S. Eliot Memorial Lecturer in 1989, has recently accepted Honorary Membership in the Society. The distinction, tendered by the Board of Directors, recognizes Dr. Unger's many decades of scholarship on Eliot. Dr. Unger's books include *T. S. Eliot: A Selected Critique* (1948), *The Man in the Name: Essays on the Experience of Poetry* (1956), *T. S. Eliot: Moments and Patterns* (1966), and *Eliot's Compound Ghost: Influence and Confluence* (1981). He was the original editor of the series "University of Minnesota Pamphlets on American Writers," which he later re-edited into Scribner's *American Writers: A Collection of Literary Biographies*.

Dr. Unger, as an Honorary Member, joins Donald Gallup, Eliot's distinguished bibliographer; Mrs. T. S. Eliot, editor of *The Waste Land: A Facsimile* and her late husband's *Letters*; Robert Giroux, Eliot's final American publisher of choice; the sculptor Andrew Osze; and the scholar-critics Cleanth Brooks and Russell Kirk.

ELIOT'S MURDER IN DUBLIN'S CATHEDRAL By Jewel Spears Brooker

As the official European City of Culture for the summer of 1991, Dublin was the scene of a series of outstanding events ranging from street festivals to art exhibits and virtuoso performances and concerts. One of the most impressive offerings was the production of T. S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*, directed by Ronan Wilmot and Cicely Berry.

Eliot's powerful play was performed during July and August in Christ Church Cathedral, a magnificent medieval church in the heart of Dublin. The historical and stylistic resonance of this cathedral is perfect for Eliot's portrayal of the conflict between Crown and Church. On Christmas Day in 1171, just one year after the murder of Archbishop Becket, King Henry II in public penance for his sins received Holy Communion at Christ Church. In the austere beauty of this cathedral, Eliot's stylized play almost seemed realistic, evoking the language and style experienced in every high church service and pointing to the origins of drama in religious ritual.

A few problems—poor sightlines, for example, and imperfect acoustics—are inevitable with a cathedral performance, but in this case, there were benefits which would have been impossible in any commercial theatre. Becket's sermon, crucial as the still point on which the action turns, was preached convincingly from a richly carved contemporary pulpit, and in this homily on the meaning of Christ's peace, there were no acoustical problems at all. In this setting, the violation of the sanctuary by the knights was more than an abstraction, and the murder on the great altar produced a special chill which both served the historical drama and enhanced the analogy between Thomas and Christ.

Thomas was brilliantly played by Owen Roe, a distinguished Dublin actor who projected passion and intelligence, sensitivity to the moment and faith in the God of history. The choral work of the Women of Canterbury was superb, involving the audience as witnesses to this murder most foul. The knights, played by David Wilmot, John O'Toole, John Cantwell, and Michael James Ford, were both funny and disturbing as they justified their dark deed and tried to implicate the audience in their crime. The play was performed against a backdrop of splendid music. As bright swords pierced the heart of Becket, oratorical-type chants filled the air and red lights bathed the high arches—creating shadows both horrific and beautiful. Such ritualization of death, offensive to some, is essential in Eliot's story, effectively uniting Thomas's murder to the slaughter of all the martyrs and of Christ himself.

Eliot's play, announced in one of the local cultural guides as a "premeditated murder," was fortunate in its directors. Following an apprenticeship in theatre administration, Ronan Wilmot made his mark as an actor and producer in England and Ireland. Formerly with the Royal Shakespeare Company, he now leads the Irish Portrait Theatre Company which undertook this production. Cicely Berry of the Royal Shakespeare Company is internationally known for her work as a director, voice coach, and writer. Her books include *The Voice and the Actor*, *Your Voice and How to Use It*, and *The Actor and His Text*. Her recent directorial work includes *King Lear*, performed last year at the Other Place in Stratford and the Barbican in London. In 1985 Cicely Berry was awarded the O.B.E. for her work in the theatre. Wilmot and Berry were at once inventive and respectful, taking their first cues from Eliot's text in this bold but traditional production.

For Ronan Wilmot, who had been hoping for years to stage this play in Christ Church, the production was the fulfillment of a dream. Wilmot and Berry have hinted that they might bring *Murder in the Cathedral* to the United States. What a boon it would be for lovers of fine theatre and modern poetry if this production turned out to be a moveable feast.

REFLECTIONS

By the President of the T. S. Eliot Society

Cleo McNelly Kearns's T. S. Eliot Memorial Lecture, at this year's meeting, was delightful. It was moreover "nourishing." In lucidity and charm of delivery it came over as pure verbal enlightenment, and it constituted a paradigm for elegant scholarship. An obvious personal bias towards "tradition," which I am for ever grateful to Eliot for so defining that I have learned to see myself by its light, makes me warmly admire Dr. Kearns's method. In distinguishing, particularly in *Four Quartets*, Eliot's "apocalyptic" from his "wisdom" rhetoric, Dr. Kearns not merely identified from scriptural traditions, East and West, two contrasting voice-adaptations, but also demonstrated the inseparability of Eliot's traditions from his text—and hence from any defensible reading of it. Another thing she did, indispensable to legitimate scholarship, was to provide the informed audience with linkage to prior scholarship.

Now, I react less with embarrassment than with gratitude when a scholar provides me with new facts that might have benefited my own past work. Crotchety I may some time become, but small-minded not. Thus, had I noted the wisdom-apocalypse convention in Biblical exegesis, I might have differentiated sharply (in an article written seven years ago for the *T. S. Eliot Annual*, finally issued in 1990) when complaining of the ruminative aberrations in the rhetoric of the *Quartets*. Obviously, in view of Dr. Kearns's analysis of the two kinds of scriptural utterance in Eliot, two kinds of rumination occur. Had I to write my article again, I should say that, for example, the maundering ruminations of "East Coker," part I, belong to the "wisdom" category, whereas the declamatory ruminations in "The Dry Salvages," part III (also voicing such longeurs but culminating in an intensification of feeling heightened quasi-dramatically), derive partly from the "apocalyptic." The difference determines the contrast.

I am grateful to Dr. Kearns for her scholarly fidelity to the historical and intentional modes, without which no reading of Eliot or any other writer can avoid fatuous subjectivism. It is not that Dr. Kearns has worried over the use to which other readers of Eliot should put her scholarship, but that she has achieved scholarship that other readers can put to use. This scrupulosity is called "dialogue"; in its absence textual commentary or manipulation is dross. It is the scholarly counterpart of "tradition" itself, and like tradition it cannot know what it leads to for others but has no design on anyone, above all not the design of "concluding," forcing dialogue to an end. And if I had to choose between a demonstration of sources, allusions, and Eliot's process of poetic transformations of traditions, and a demonstration of reading and interpretation, I should unhesitatingly choose the former. With the facts about where the poet is coming from, an informed reading is possible, and without such knowledge a reading will be ignorant, "hermeneutic" in the bad contemporary sense; but even the best reading delimits by blocking the next reader's attention at some angle. Better, I say,

no reading at all, under the mask of scholarship: the only tolerable reading is the tentative, the dubitative, in the context of pedagogic dialogue that refrains from insisting. In my own early work, of thirty-five or forty-five years ago, I was more interested in the reading I could attain with some source I had stumbled on, than I was in the relation of the poetic process to that source. At a wiser time of life I value the process, not the reading; and I regret that my early work so much consists of reading heaped on reading. The dialogue of knowledge is what matters in scholarship. For her contribution I am profoundly respectful of Dr. Kearns and other Eliot scholars who quietly do the main job amid the distractions of hermeneutical babble.

Nevertheless it is as readers that we approach Eliot at all, whether as scholars or as fans. Only, we would not be told either which reading is finally right or which reading is immediately privileged with the prestige of the reigning academician. And if we seek for truth in interpretation instead of rollicking in the intellectual frivolity of an absolute empiricism, we need to observe due limits. These by the way are admirably set forth by Eliot in his "Introduction" to G. Wilson Knight's *The Wheel of Fire* (1930).

The T. S. Eliot Society, which for three years I have had the honor of watching over, can look forward from January 1 to its direction by Vinni Marie D'Ambrosio, a scholar fitted to uphold both the ideals of Dr. Konnyu as founder and the principles of scholarship in the tradition I have here been praising. As President, Dr. D'Ambrosio will have the task of encouraging our membership to participate in the Society's programs. Dr. Schwartz as Vice-president will bring to the editing of this newsletter henceforth a comparable talent and dedication. The Society is fortunate in these officers and (may I emphasize) in members of the Board of Directors with whose support I myself have been blessed.

Readers are asked to submit material for NEWS & NOTES to Sanford Schwartz, Department of English, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA 16802.

GROVER SMITH

Society People, continued from page 1

example elusive studies by R. P. Blackmur, Daniel H. Woodward, Society member James Torrens SJ, Genevieve W. Foster, and Lyndall Gordon that equally merit this easy access. The newer material includes previously unpublished papers by Society members—by Russell Elliott Murphy and, in a collaboration, by Jewel Spears Brooker and the late Joseph Bentley. The assemblage affords an overview of *Waste Land* studies methodologically; several of the most recent, and unpublished, essays exhibit remarkable idiosyncrasy appropriate to the recent evolution of the general topic. The volume is furnished with an Introduction by the editors, surveying developments in the field.

Other publications reported for Society members this quarter
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BALLOT

Society People, continued from page 3

include Shyamal Bagchee's "Subtle Souls and Dry Bones: Hopkins and Eliot," *Yeats Eliot Review*, 11 (1991): 48-55; Armin Paul Frank's "Ghosts from the What Might Have Been: T. S. Eliot's Plays of Anti-naturalistic Analysis," *Yeats Eliot Review*, 11 (1991): 7-13; and Yutaka Koshizawa's "An Essay on *The Waste Land*," *Bulletin of the Faculty of Humanities*, Seikei University (Tokyo), 26 (1990): 99-117 (in Japanese).

Through the good offices of Fr. Walter J. Ong of St. Louis University, Mr. Holt has received as a gift to the Society a copy of the inaugural issue of the *T. S. Eliot Review* (T.S. Eliot Society of Japan, 1990), presented by the Rev. Shunichi Takayanagi SJ. Fr.

Takayanagi, a member of our Society, is probably the most prolific Eliot scholar in Japan, having published three books in Japanese on Eliot; the *Review* contains his English-language article "T. S. Eliot Studies in Japan—Some Reflections" (pp. 62-74). The Society owes Fr. Takayanagi its thanks for the gift and for his Eliot scholarship.

The Rev. Earl K. Holt III has been honored with the establishment of the Earl Holt Endowed Scholarship at Starr King School for the Ministry, Berkeley, CA. The scholarship is one of nine for which the Starr King School is hoping to raise funds in contributions ranging to \$10,000 for the education of future Unitarian and Universalist clergy.

MEMBERS OF THE T.S. ELIOT SOCIETY, 1991

In this list of members in good standing for the present calendar year, the asterisk indicates a member's prepayment of dues for 1992. Unpaid dues should be sent to the Treasurer, 613-5 Woodlander Drive, Jefferson City, MO 65101. Contributing categories are: Regular \$15-\$24, Supporting \$25-\$49, Sustaining \$50-\$99, Patron \$100-above.

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YOU MAY VOTE FOR ONE:

ROBERT H. CANARY

MELANIE FATHMAN

Signature _____ Dated _____ 1991

Mail to the Secretary: Dr. Mildred M. Boaz, 603 Radliff Road, Bloomington, IL 61701.