

T. S. ELIOT SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

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Call for Papers

The 27th Annual Meeting of

The T. S. Eliot Society

St. Louis, MO

September 22-24, 2006

The Society invites proposals for papers to be presented in conference panels at the annual meeting in St. Louis. Papers on any topic related to Eliot are welcome. Proposals of approximately 500 words articulating clearly the central aim or direction of the paper or presentation should be forwarded to the President, Professor Benjamin Lockerd, Department of English, Grand Valley State University, Allendale, MI 49401, USA (or, preferably, by email to lockerdb@gvsu.edu). Please include a brief biographical sketch or short *curriculum vitae* as well. To be considered, proposals must be received by June 1.

Papers given at the conference by graduate students and scholars who received their doctoral degrees no more than two years before the conference date will be considered for the Fathman Young Scholar Award. If you are proposing a paper and fall within this category, please indicate that fact when you submit your proposal. The Fathman Award will be announced at the final session of the conference. It includes a monetary award.

Peer Seminars on T. S. Eliot

1. Eliot and the London Scene, 1914-1939
2. Eliot in the Theatre

This year the T. S. Eliot Society is offering two peer seminars at its annual meeting in St. Louis, 21–24 September 2006. Vincent Sherry will lead a seminar on “Eliot and the London Scene, 1914-1939,” in which participants are invited to consider the manifold ways in which Eliot interacted with the various cultures of London between the outbreak of the First World War and the beginning of the Second. The aim of the seminar is to project a composite picture of Eliot coming into his several roles as poet, critic, editor, and public intellectual in active exchange with the literary, political, and popular cultures of this particular locale, in this especially charged interval in history. Emphasis is expected to fall not only on the influence Eliot himself exerted on the London scene but on the impact a contemporary and developing public culture in London had on his maturing oeuvre.

Sarah Bay-Cheng will lead a seminar on “Eliot in the Theatre.” This seminar invites papers focused on any aspect of Eliot’s dramatic writing, with particular interest paid to his full-length plays and theatricality (either textual or performative) in his poetry. Possible topics may also include considerations of his theatrical collaborations, his plays as performance, the influence of popular theatre in his drama, and the role of adaptation in Eliot’s dramatic writing.

Professor Sherry is Distinguished Professor of English at Villanova University. His publications include *The Uncommon Tongue: The Poetry and Criticism of Geoffrey Hill* (1987), *Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis, and Radical Modernism* (1993), *James Joyce: ULYSSES* (1995, 2d ed. 2004), and *The Great War and the Language of Modernism* (2003). He has edited the *Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the First World War* (2005) and several volumes on post-Second World War British and Irish Poets for the *Dictionary of Literary Biography* (1984, 1985).

Professor Bay-Cheng is Assistant Professor of Theatre and Film Studies at the University at Buffalo/SUNY. She is the author of *Mama Dada: Gertrude Stein’s Avant-Garde Theater* (Routledge 2004) and essays on modernist drama, poetic drama, and avant-garde theatre and film. She is currently editing an anthology of modernist poetic drama.

The seminars are open to the first 12 registrants (each); registration will close July 1st. Seminararians will submit 4-5 page position papers to Professor Bay-Cheng or Professor Sherry by email, no later than September 1st.

To sign up for a seminar, or to inquire, please email Michael Coyle (mcoyle@mail.colgate.edu).

The 2006 Memorial Lecturer: William Blissett

William Blissett will deliver the Memorial Lecture at the Annual Meeting of the Society this year. Dr. Blissett is Professor Emeritus of English at University College, University of Toronto, where he taught from 1965 to 1987. He served as editor of the *University of Toronto Quarterly* from 1965 to 1976. He has written on an extremely wide range of literary topics, from Shakespeare, Spenser, and Jonson to Eliot and Jones. Professor Blissett has edited or co-edited several books, including *Reid MacCallum: Imitation and Design*; *Editing Illustrated Books*; and *A Celebration of Ben Jonson*. He was also a co-editor of *The Spenser Encyclopedia*. His book *The Long Conversation: A Memoir of David Jones* recounts his friendship with that poet and contains their correspondence. He has been the intellectual force behind a growing interest in the poetry of David Jones over the past few decades.

Dr. Blissett's first published essay on Eliot was "The Argument of T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 15 (1946), 115-26. This essay was written shortly after the complete publication of the *Quartets*. His "Wagner in *The Waste Land*" was published in 1968. More recently, his article on "T. S. Eliot and Heraclitus" appeared in a collection edited by Jewel Spears Brooker, *T. S. Eliot and Our Turning World* (2001). He has several times addressed the Eliot Society—at our sessions at the American Literature Association Conference and at Society meetings, including the London meeting of 2004.

Society Panels at the American Literature Association Meeting, San Francisco, California

(Both sessions organized by the Society and chaired by William Harmon)

Thursday, May 25, 2006, 2:30pm – 3:50pm

Session 5-I T. S. Eliot I

1. "Disturbing the Universe: T. S. Eliot, the Tradition, and Coffee Spoons," Aidan Wasley, University of Georgia
2. "Undone Futures: The Fetus in T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*," Julie Doxsee, University of Denver
3. "T. S. Eliot: His Metric and Poetry," William Blissett, University of Toronto

Friday, May 26, 2006, 2:00pm – 3:20pm

Session 12-I T. S. Eliot II

1. "T. S. Eliot and John Middleton Murry: Different Cultural Traditions," Shun-ichi Takayanagi, SJ, Sophia University, Tokyo
2. "Traveling through the Dark Night of the Soul: The Influence of John of the Cross in Eliot's 'Journey of the Magi,'" Joseph Muszynski, University of Denver
3. "Eliot's Chorus and the Traumatic Condition in *Murder in the Cathedral*," Richard Badenhausen, Westminster College

Call for Nominations: Board Member

Dr. Jayme Stayer's term on the Board of Directors is due to expire soon. Society members are invited to submit nominations. Five nominations are needed to place a name on the ballot. It is permissible to nominate more than one person, and self-nominations are accepted. Please send your nominations to both the supervisor of elections, Shyamal Bagchee, and the president, Ben Lockerd. Their email addresses: shyamal.bagchee@ualberta.ca; lockerdb@gvsu.edu.

BOOK REVIEWS

James E. Miller Jr., *T. S. Eliot: The Making of an American Poet, 1888-1922*, (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005); pp. xx + 468; \$39.95.

James E. Miller Jr. calls his newest book—*T. S. Eliot: The Making of an American Poet, 1888-1922*—a biography. The dates in the chapter titles, though overlapping, promise a conventional organization, but Miller says his book isn't conventional and "might be called a biographical interpretation" [xviii]. The sentence ends there, leaving open the syntax and the question "interpretation of what?". It soon becomes apparent that Miller means that he will read Eliot's poems by the light of the life, and the life by the poems'. His large concern—the relation of life and poems—contains more particular ones, most abidingly Eliot as a reader, as a writer of personal poems, and as an American, and Eliot's psychological states, focusing on those do to with family and with sex. But the method Miller employs is too often that of conjecture. He seems to have forgotten that there is no reason for Eliot to have led a life that was designed to be convenient for biographers. Miller assigns psychological motives for Eliot's writing based on what he read or might have read. Miller elaborates coincidence of place and time into what must have been or must have been felt by Eliot. Speculation so weakens Miller's claims and arguments (and even the trust a reader might have in his facts) that it becomes increasingly difficult not to wish this were a different sort of book altogether.

When writing in a conjectural vein, the better part of prudence is to establish trust early on. It is no good Miller's writing on page 8 "And I have tried to refrain from leaping hastily to conclusions," if in what precedes this claim there are demonstrations that he lacks restraint in such leaping or that for him there is only the trying. Which is it in this case?

"In his 1951 lecture, 'Virgil and the Christian World,' Eliot made perhaps his most intriguing statement about *The Waste Land* without naming the poem: 'A poet may believe that he is expressing only his private experience; his lines may be for him only a means of talking about himself without giving himself away; yet for his readers what he has

written may come to be the expression both of their own secret feelings and of the exultation or despair of a generation.'" [xii]

Here, on the top fourth of the second page into the book, Miller invites you to leap quickly with him. Beware. Although he has already quoted both the famous *rhythmical grumbling* and Eliot's brushing away the claims that he wrote in *The Waste Land* about the "disillusion of a generation," Miller hasn't set out enough of the matter to support his bald statement that Eliot is discussing *The Waste Land* in this sentence, printed in *On Poets and Poetry*. Why hasn't he asked if it isn't possible that "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" or "Portrait of a Lady" or "Preludes" (to begin at the beginning), as well as *The Waste Land*, were based on "only his private experience"—though any of them might become for readers "the expression both of their own secret feelings and of the exultation or despair of a generation"? Why hasn't he asked challenged Eliot on *only* or as to what constitutes private experience? Had he shown how he came to understand what Eliot wrote and came to conclude *The Waste Land* is likely to have been what Eliot was referring to, early trust would have not been harmed as it now is.

Still in the prefatory matter ("A Note on Sources"), Miller writes that the 1988 *Letters* is incomplete (he actually says "the letters ... are incomplete," but we know what he means), "because, as the editor of his letters writes," Eliot burned much of the correspondence with his mother and brother after their deaths [xvii]. I wondered about that *because*; was it Miller's or Mrs. Eliot's? One needn't know anything about Eliot or scholarly methods to want to put the *because* aside, for a moment, and ask if Eliot, like other people, didn't lose letters or throw them away thoughtlessly, or if his correspondents hadn't similarly been less than dutiful archivists, or if the impossibility of knowing the existence of letters one knew nothing about might lead an editor to acknowledge the incomplete state of the volume or to rejection of some of the letters as outside the scope of the volume. Checking the *Letters*, I find that Miller, not Mrs. Eliot, commits the too simple, and to no purpose, *because*.

I know, I know. I'm being pedantic. But, how can I trust what I can't research when I can't trust what I can. Miller is an habitual user of those small coercive words and phrases that are cognate with

his assumption that Eliot meant *The Waste Land* when he might not have. This time the strong-arm phrase is paired with an assumption. Writing about Charlotte Eliot's book on her father-in-law, the poet's grandfather, William Greenleaf Eliot, Miller says:

"Eliot's introduction, through his mother's book, to the complexities of the 'social evil' at such a young age most likely intensified his adolescent urge to write the humorous and sexually explicit poems, which he began at an early age and continued throughout his life in the epic King Bolo verses." [13]

Epic? Well, *most likely* is characteristic of the arguments Miller makes. No consideration of the millions of other dirty-poem-writing young people who did not, do not, and will not have a Puritanish Unitarian *paterfamilias* who was dedicated to the sexual lives of others (as WGE is painted). No consideration of the complexity of responses young Tom might have had to reading about his grandfather. What is the basis for this suggestion by Miller? And what's the point? Miller, in his excitement to say that Eliot's poems are "personal poems, written out of and about his personal experiences—physical, mental, and emotional" [2], forgets that Eliot is not alone in being a person (an animal, even) who is affected by his own life, his own truths, which, as I understand Eliot to say in "The Function of a Literary Review," include his literary life.

Coupled with his delight in finding what he sees as correspondences between the life and the work is Miller's decision that Eliot's "basic approach to poetic composition" is to have a "murky or hidden presence" in the poems [6]. And because Miller is both a fantasist and a literalist of the imagination, he thinks he knows some of what Eliot wants to hide. Ezra Pound's now-central-to-Eliot-studies throw-away poem, "Sage Homme," introduces "Uranian Muse" into the conversation; the adjective is a late 19th-century term for *homosexual*. Miller makes much of the poem and, oddly—though he says that Pound has turned his *labeling* of Eliot into a joke—he doesn't figure out that Pound's not publishing it might have something to do with the poem's having been written as part of a letter and so not being either a public one or one of sufficient quality for Pound to make it so [2, 388-93]. It misses the mark to deny a poet the mask of art if he wants to assume

it; no poet is obliged to reveal himself or to be concerned with the sort of speculations others make about him. Being a great poet, Eliot imagined into his poems the truths that he knew, in the ways he thought best.

I know some of you have a genuine interest in Eliot's genuine life—not in one presented in terms of *probably, without doubt, must have*. So you'll be interested that Miller says that for two years there were weekly visits to the dentist's, where the boy discovered and read Poe's writing. I'll bet you, like me, wonder what went on during those hundred dental appointments, and I'd like to tell you, but I can't, because Miller doesn't say. But he does speak authoritatively about Eliot and his awakenings to love. He first repeats Eliot's phrase from *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* about Fitzgerald's translation of the Rubáiyát:

"'Youthful experiences of love'? If there were such experiences in Eliot's youth, the curtain had been closed on them by the destruction of all of Eliot's early correspondence. Given the surveillance of his parents, and the nature of the all-male preparatory schools he attended, there seems little likelihood that he experienced such boy-girl love firsthand. Moreover, at Harvard, in all of the surviving accounts of friends and acquaintances (some as we shall see discussing his strong friendships), there is no mention whatever of dating or girl-chasing—or even a yearning for girls." [34]

What is special the nature of these all-male prep schools, compared to other such, that makes it likely that the boys who went to them didn't know love firsthand or holding hands? If the destroyed letters existed, would the surviving accounts then be of account? Who talks about a college friend's yearnings? Doesn't it bother you that guess is turned to fact, or that, here where Eliot uses a phrase within an essay, and uses it as if he knows what he means, Miller thinks he doesn't have any personal experience to back up the use?

It is tedious to read this book. But what about *this* book: *Harvard Episodes*, written by Macomb Flandrau, and published in 1897, by Oscar Wilde's publisher the tar brush announces.

"It was a very popular book whose appearance coincided with the arrival at Harvard in 1898 of T. S. Eliot's older brother, Henry. It is hard to believe that he, with his genius in capturing the personalities of Harvard's professors in a few telling lines of

verse, would not have taken delight in it and recommended it later to his younger bother.” [59]

This, and a similar sentence two pages later about Flandrau’s other book, *The Diary of a Freshman* (1901)—“it is entirely likely that Henry mentioned the book to his younger bother when he was preparing for Harvard”—help comprise the hit and run suspicions that Eliot was, or lived among, homosexuals. Dickey Dawson’s mother says, after all, about Dickey’s friends in *Harvard Episodes*, “They’re queer young men....” If Miller knows that the *OED*’s first recorded instance of *queer* as homosexual is in 1922 and still wants to ask if this was coded language in 1898, why not tell us. He does cite George Chauncey’s 1994 *Gay New York* for its “account of the various terms used for ‘homosexual’” [105], but he doesn’t let us in on the accounts of those terms he suspects of being used as code. And what if Eliot read these books, what then? What if he had been a homosexual? Because this is not, as Miller rightly says, a conventional biography (in which the sexual self would be placed within a full life), this supposition looms so large that it threatens to become more important than the poems and other writings, which are the very incitements to wanting to know more about Eliot.

Miller’s methods do not serve his ideas. Though the chapter titles include dates, Miller follows a chronology only in part—each chapter covers a broad time period, both before and after the years set, and the dates of the chapters overlap. In combination with the lack of biographical tissue (which Miller may have been wise not to include if he hadn’t much to add to the recent biographies which he credits), the instability of chronology suggests Miller might have done himself and his readers a favor had he found a structural principle that was more integral to his ideas.

Even the index is a poor servant. Vivien Eliot has more indexing space than does Eliot; so does Ezra Pound. Conrad Aiken, Richard Aldington, and “Homosexuality” each have at least half the space Eliot does. Given the title of the book and the blurb—“...showing that the emotional springs of his poetry did indeed come from America”—what about this entry under Eliot:

American “roots” of, 2-3, 419-25;

[Period.]

In what is becoming less unfamiliar as more au-

thors (or is it the presses?) do it, cited works are given acronyms that often require a key to decipher. These have not yet been standardized. Miller uses *OPP* to refer *On Poetry and Poets*, while the complementary *POO* is *Prufrock and Other Observations*. I’ll leave you the pleasure of recognizing *CPP* and *TPP* for yourself. *UPUC* is *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*. All straightforward. But *WLF*? (Hint: *TWL:Fac.*) Of our society, Ron Bush has written *TSESCS* and others; Lyndall Gordon has *EEY*, *ENL*, and *EIL*; and Grover Smith has both *PP* and (that most Eliotic of abbrevs) *TWL*. Alas, some of you are just referred to by last name—Hargrove, Loucks, Oser, Ricks, and Schuchard—but it is lovely to see so many members acknowledged by that name. If you grow weary in your reading—and if you aren’t happy that, having finally become inured to Lawrence Rainey’s *LOTSE* (Jim McCue makes note of its strangeness in his January 2006 *Essays in Criticism* review), Miller, subtly optimistic, uses *LTSE1*—just say *Shantih*, or *IOMH* (*Inventions of the March Hare*) or more simply, *UOM* (“Ulysses, Order and Myth”), or, most aptly, (Miller in 1998 on Eliot’s ‘Uranian Muse’) *UM*.

Marcia Karp

Massachusetts College of Art

T. S. Eliot: The Contemporary Reviews, edited by Jewel Spears Brooker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); pp. xliii + 600; \$140.00.

A prodigious reference work, *T. S. Eliot: The Critical Reviews* lives up to its billing as “the most comprehensive collection of contemporary reviews of T. S. Eliot’s work” (xxxviii). This volume, consummately edited by Jewel Spears Brooker, takes its place alongside Donald Gallup’s bibliography and Michael Grant’s *T. S. Eliot: The Critical Heritage* among the durable resources of the Eliot scholar or aficionado. The new book might even be said to supersede Grant’s 1982 collection of reviews, but since the two present somewhat different selections and apparatus, future readers, as Brooker generously acknowledges, will be grateful for both.

Brooker's compendium is divided into twenty-three chronologically ordered sections, each gathering selected contemporary reviews of one of Eliot's books. There are three exceptions to this rule. The largely overlapping *Poems* (1919), *Ara Vos Prec*, and *Poems* (1920) have been treated together quite logically in one section, and *Four Quartets* (as a unit) has been grouped with "East Coker," "The Dry Salvages," and "Little Gidding" in their separate publications. More oddly, perhaps, *Dante, Animula*, and *Marina* have also been grouped together, presumably because these slim 1929-1930 chapbooks garnered, collectively, only a few reviews. Each section of the book ends with a thoroughly researched "Checklist of Additional Reviews" not reprinted therein—an extraordinarily helpful feature unique to this volume.

Brooker's fine introduction surveys the reviews collected in the book and effectively assesses the state of Eliot criticism—its controversies as well as its general "trajectory"—at each point of his career. Beyond its immediate function as an introduction to this volume, Brooker's twenty-seven-page essay is a genuine contribution to Eliot scholarship in its own right. It strikingly demonstrates, for example, that even the earliest reviews anticipated the fissures that would jag across Eliot criticism for decades. Competing characterizations of Eliot as a highly objective or a highly subjective poet were present from the start in reviews by Ezra Pound and Conrad Aiken. Other dichotomies—personal / impersonal, psychological / social, Anglo-American / European, etc.—likewise showed up early and set the terms in which Eliot's work would be discussed and debated throughout his lifetime (xvi). Also on the mark is Brooker's observation that the early reviews of Eliot's poems, especially *The Waste Land*, carry an "urgent and polemical" tone, "as if something much bigger was at stake than the fate of a single poet and a single poem" (xx). Eliot's status as representative of something "bigger" than himself remains a feature of literary criticism even today.

Every reader, however well versed in Eliot criticism, will find new insight in the mass of reviews Brooker has collected. To offer an instance from my own experience, I was pleased to find Paul Elmer More's "Cleft Eliot" here in its entirety. The divide More expounded in this review of Eliot's *Selected*

Essays 1917-1932 lay, essentially, between Eliot's Apollonian criticism and his Dionysian poetry. "It is not," More marveled, "that we have to do with an author who is strong in one phase of his work and weak in another, but that [Eliot's] power is so differently directed here and there" (216). What I had not realized until *T. S. Eliot: The Contemporary Reviews* laid it out for me was how keenly previous critics had anticipated and even, in some cases, contested More's thesis. Although Henry Hazlitt's remarks about a cleft Eliot—"It would doubtless be absurd to imply that he has a split personality, in any pathological sense, *but...*" (200)—appeared only a month before More's and were inspired by the same publication, both an anonymous *TLS* reviewer in 1928 and Middleton Murry in 1926 had delineated a similar divide between the "professions" of Eliot's prose and his "practice" as a poet (134-35; 151-52). Other critics, meanwhile, would have none of this. F. R. Leavis, for one, maintained passionately that Eliot's "poetry and his criticism reinforce each other," so that the very existence of a "cleft Eliot" was a subject of dispute even before More named the issue (153). Ever on the spot, Brooker's introduction points out further examples of critics who either asserted or denied the presence of an incongruity within Eliot's work (xxvii).

Shrewd editorial decisions are responsible for many of the book's strengths. Surely the most important of these determinations was the selection of reviews to include in the volume. Brooker chose some for the quality of their insight, others "because the reviewer was especially important in Eliot's career," and still others because they constituted major scholarly assessments. (These categories are not, of course, mutually exclusive.) Brooker's judgment in making her selections is virtually unerring.

The sheer expansiveness of this volume must have made her task of selection easier. With almost 600 pages of double-columned print, the design of the book permitted an extremely generous sampling of reviews. Also paying dividends in comprehensiveness is Brooker's decision to excerpt many reviews—excising "long quotations of the poetry, plot summaries of the plays, and obvious redundancies," as well as parts of reviews dealing with writers other than Eliot—rather than fastidiously reproducing every piece in its entirety. Brooker manages her

excerpting skillfully, preserving relevant content without vitiating its context. Although it has been heavily cut, one quite gets the drift of Clive Bell's "Plus de Jazz," for example, even apart from what Bell has to say about Eliot (34-36).

Were I to quibble, I might question whether Helen Gardner's "The 'Aged Eagle' Spreads His Wings"—which, at three full pages, is among the lengthier pieces in the book—truly qualifies as a "review" of *The Elder Statesman* (it is an interview occasioned by Eliot's seventieth birthday and contains a total of half a sentence on this play). More significantly, I might wish that reviews of Eliot's later essay collections, particularly *On Poetry and Poets*, had been included. Brooker's decision to pass over these works on the grounds that they were "retrospective and thus contributed to the sense of closure at the end of his life's work" seems to ring down the curtain on Eliot's career at a time when he was still publishing important criticism. And I can't help but regret the volume's neglect of *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*, the major exemplar of a side of Eliot's work and character that critics have always slighted.

While *T. S. Eliot: The Contemporary Reviews* is impressively accurate, readers may wish to note a few points of clarification. "Portrait of a Lady" first appeared in the little magazine *Others*, and not, as the introduction implies, in one of its associated anthologies (xiv). Gilbert Seldes was not in fact the "editor of the *Dial*"—that title belonged in 1922 to Scofield Thayer—but its managing editor (xx). And Peter Monroe Jack's "review of reviews" of *Four Quartets*, published in *American Bookman* and correctly identified in the body of the book, is misattributed in the introduction to "Ian Jack" and relocated to the *New York Times* (xxxii).

But these are minor matters. In a world where Eliot's scholars and devotees are forced to make do with sadly limited resources, and where even some of those have dated, the importance of *T. S. Eliot: The Contemporary Reviews* is all too obvious. With its expansive scope and first-class editing, this book is a welcome addition to the scholarly canon, and it is certain to prove an indispensable research aid for students of Eliot for the foreseeable future.

David Chinitz
Loyola University Chicago

FIGURING by Ted Richer

Who once figured:

Only two ways in which a writer can become important.

Way one:

Write a great deal.

And.

Publish *everywhere*.

Way two:

Write very little.

But.

Make them *perfect in their kind*.

And.

Make every publication *an event*.

So.

Who figured it that way?

...

You once figured, too:

Any other way in which a writer can become important.

For.

You could never *write a great deal*.

And.

You could never publish *everywhere*.

Yet.

You could *write very little*.

And.

You could make them *perfect in their kind*.

But.

You could not make a publication *an event*.

So.

You figured it this way.

Ted Richer, a graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, currently teaches at the Massachusetts College of Art in Boston. In 2003 his book *The Writer in the Story and Other Figurations* (introduction by Christopher Ricks) was published in England by Apocalypse Press.

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St. Michael's Church
Russell Kirk Center

From the Treasurer

Dues update: You have recently received a notice for your 2006 dues, and may have already paid in conjunction with your registration form for the 2005 conference. Have no fear; any payments that are redundant will be credited to 2007. Thanks as always for your support.

John Karel

Leonard Unger, 1916-2006

[The following comes from materials graciously provided by Mrs. Sherley Unger.]

Leonard Unger died on February 23, 2006, at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Minneapolis, Minnesota, after a long illness. Born in 1916 in New York, he grew up primarily in Nashville, Tennessee, where he attended Vanderbilt University (B.A., 1937), with graduate work at Louisiana State University (M.A., 1938) and the University of Iowa (Ph.D., 1941). Those universities brought him into contact with Randall Jarrell, John Crowe Ransom, Robert Penn Warren, Cleanth Brooks, and René Wellek.

After Army service in Wisconsin and Texas during the Second World War, he taught for a year at Bard College and then at the University of Minnesota (Twin Cities), where he served as a Professor of English from 1947 until 1989. Among his colleagues at Minnesota were Joseph Warren Beach, Allen Tate, Saul Bellow, and Robert Penn Warren.

Unger's achievements were recognized by a Guggenheim Fellowship and two Fulbright Lecture-Research Awards in Italy and Greece. He was several times an invited resident at the Yaddo Colony in New York and a teacher at the Indiana University School of Letters. For a number of journals or series, he served as editor or member of the editorial board: *College English*, *The Yeats-Eliot Review*, the University of Minnesota Pamphlet Series, the Minnesota Monographs in the Humanities, and the Minnesota Library of American Writers.

Although known primarily as a critic of twentieth-century poetry, his first book had to do with the critical reception of a seventeenth-century poet: *Donne's Poetry and Modern Criticism* (1950). He published two collections of essays (*The Man in the Name*, 1956, and *T. S. Eliot: Moments and Patterns*, 1966) and the book-length study *Eliot's Compound Ghost* (1981). His 1961 pamphlet on Eliot, published by the University of Minnesota Press, was an international best-seller and was translated into several languages, including Arabic, Japanese, Korean, and Urdu. He edited various collections of academic criticism (chiefly on Eliot) and, with his friend William Van O'Connor, the influential textbook *Poems for Study* (1953).

Unger was also a notable poet himself, with work published in *The New Yorker*, *The Nation*, and *The Massachusetts Review*.

Cyrena Pondrom Elected Secretary

At the 2005 meeting the Board of Directors elected Cyrena Pondrom as Secretary. Her term is January, 2006 through December, 2008. Professor Pondrom received her Ph.D. from Columbia University. She is Professor of English and Women's Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She has published essays on several modern writers, including H.D., Zora Neale Hurston, and Marianne Moore. She is co-editor of *The Contemporary Writer* (1972) and has written the introduction and notes for a republication of Gertrude Stein's *Geography and Plays* (1993). Her book *The Road from Paris: French Influence on English Poetry 1900-1920* was published by Cambridge University Press (1974). Dr. Pondrom has given papers on Eliot Society panels on several occasions, both at the American Literature Association Conference and at the annual meeting. Her article "T. S. Eliot: The Performativity of Gender in *The Waste Land*" was published in *Modernism/Modernity* last year. We are grateful to her for agreeing to serve as secretary.

Honorary Membership: Ronald Schuchard

At the annual meeting in September, 2005, the Board of Directors named Ronald Schuchard an Honorary Member of the Society. Dr. Schuchard is Goodrich C. White Professor of English at Emory University, where he has taught since 1969. He is the editor of T. S. Eliot's Clark and Turnbull Lectures, *The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry* (Faber & Faber, 1993; Harcourt, Brace, 1994; Harvest, 1996). His book, *Eliot's Dark Angel* (Oxford University Press, 1999), won the Robert Penn Warren-Cleanth Brooks Award for Outstanding Literary Criticism and the annual SAMLA Studies Award for the best book published by a member of the South Atlantic Modern Language Association. A long-standing member of the Eliot Society, Professor Schuchard gave the Memorial Lecture in 1985 and has addressed the Society on a number of occasions since. One notable example was the profound talk he gave in the chapel at Little Gidding when members of the Society visited it in 2004.

For Help with Society Matters

To submit papers for any reading session sponsored by the Society, or to make suggestions or inquiries regarding the annual meeting or other Society activities, please contact the President. For matters having to do with the *T. S. Society Newsletter*, please contact the Vice-President and Editor. To pay dues, inquire about membership, report a change of address, or report failure to received the Newsletter, please contact the Treasurer. Those having business with the Secretary are advised to contact him directly. The Society maintains a website at www.luc.edu/eliot. The Society historian is David Chinitz, Loyola University Chicago, 6525 N. Sheridan Road, Chicago, IL 60626; (773) 508-2241; email: dchinit@luc.edu.

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