

Minutes of the Annual Business Meeting of the Dreiser Society

American Literature Association
Westin Copley Place, Boston, May 27, 2005

1. Keith Newlin announced that the Herkimer County Historical Society intends to hold a conference in June 2006 commemorating the hundredth anniversary of the Gillette murder case (which provide the factual basis for *An American Tragedy*) and conference organizers have asked the Dreiser Society to participate. Logistics of transportation and lodging at the conference, which will be in upstate New York near the residence of Gillette's victim Grace Brown, were discussed. A suggestion was made that the date of the conference be postponed until late June to create some time between it and the ALA conference, which is scheduled for May 25-28, 2006 in San Francisco.
2. Newlin indicated that the publisher of a college literature anthology has been in touch with him regarding the choice of a Dreiser work for inclusion and solicited suggestions from the attendees. Recommendations included the following: a few chapters (perhaps three) from *Sister Carrie*; the stories "Nigger Jeff," "Free," "Second Choice," "Curious Shifts of the Poor"; "My Brother Paul"; another selection from *Twelve Men* or one from *A Gallery of Women*. Some members expressed reservations about whether "Niger Jeff" (though once widely taught) is still a good choice because of the title's negative connotations.
3. The Indian Theodore Dreiser Society, Kolkata, officers of whom have been in touch with the Society, was discussed. The Indian society was formed during spring 2005 and is seeking input, support, and guidance from the officers and members of our society. The Indian society asked for approval of their constitution and bylaws and for an official letter of affiliation with the International Theodore Dreiser Society. They plan to publish a journal with the tentative title *The Journal of Dreiser Studies and Research*. It was suggested that if they would change the name of the journal, removing the words "Dreiser Studies" from the title, this would avoid the possibility of confusion with our society's journal, *Dreiser Studies*. An alternative title, *Indian Journal of Dreiser Research*, was suggested.
4. Newlin noted that our society's bylaws call for an international advisory board comprised of seven members, with no less than four of those members being from countries other than the United States. He pointed out that the International Theodore Dreiser Society already has members from Portugal, Algeria, Israel, England, Canada, Italy, Japan, and Russia. Seven members were nominated to form this board, and they will shortly be invited to serve via a letter of invitation.
5. In the absence of the Secretary-Treasurer, Donna Packer-Kinlaw, who is on maternity leave, Newlin gave a brief report on the society's financial condition. He noted that the society has \$1,691 in the bank account and that out of a current membership of 70, only 27 have paid dues for the coming year.
6. Steve Brennan urged society members to publicize the Dreiser Essay Prize to graduate students and faculty outside the U.S. Particularly welcome are essays on topics other than *Sister Carrie* (which has tended to be an overworked topic).
7. The following Dreiser-related events were noted:
 - Tom Riggio is working on a documentary film about Dreiser.

- Composer Tobias Picker's opera "An American Tragedy" will have its premier in December 2006 in New York by the Metropolitan Opera. (It was noted that adaptation seem to be a trend; there have been already been settings of operas based on works by Dreiser's contemporaries, *McTeague* composed by William Bolcom and *The Great Gatsby* by John Harbison). Someone will be needed to review the opera for *Dreiser Studies*. In connection with this, the suggestion was made that the topic Dreiser and the Arts would be a fruitful subject for an upcoming edition of *Dreiser Studies* (in which the Picker opera would presumably be featured).
- Tom Riggio noted that the following publications are in progress for the Dreiser Edition: a complete and unexpurgated edition of *The "Genius"* (1911); a new edition of hitherto unpublished Dreiser letters (with a 2nd volume of the same to follow); an edition of Dreiser's political writings (just contacted for); and a new edition of *The Financier*.

—minutes by Roger W. Smith