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In pondering how to make my luncheon remarks ponderous enough to sound presidential, I seriously considered attempting a sober and objective analysis of our achievements to date and our goals for the future. I considered this seriously but very briefly, because as I thought back over my fifteen years in the organization I seemed to feel neither sober nor objective. Instead, I kept succumbing to my vivid recollections of Great Moments of Our Past.

I remembered the Controversy section of our first official meeting in Washington, D.C. in 1973, when Leslie Fiedler and Madeleine Doran squared off on “Shakespeare’s Attitude Toward Women.” Fiedler began with assorted revelations, then still startling, about revulsion against women in *Othello*, concluding with the clincher that Shakespeare’s animus was aptly illustrated by his choice of name for his “heroine”—Dis demon—only to be drowned out by a veritable chorus of erudite academics, responding almost with one voice: “It’s in the source.” And I shall always cherish the memory of the climax of Doran’s defense of the femininity of Shakespeare’s women with her moving rendition of Cleopatra’s

Peace, peace!
Does thou not see my baby at my breast,
That sucks the nurse asleep?

I remember, too, how after Fiedler’s disparaging comments on the asexuality of older women, the gallant Joel Hurstfield rose to declare that some of his best sexual experiences had been with post-menopausal women.

A similarly golden moment which lingers deliciously in my memory was when Norman Holland, elaborating on the nature of Jaques in *As You Like It* averred, “You won’t find many characters in literature named ‘toilet,’” only to be answered by an anonymous voice from the rear, “There are lots of Johns.” Holland sat down and never spoke word more—at least, not at that meeting.

Other tense dramatic moments occur to me: the one in New Haven when, in an open membership meeting, an eagle-eyed academic rose to announce that one of the papers read at the morning meeting had already appeared in print. Discreet silence masked considerable confusion, and I’ve noticed that we no longer have membership meetings of this kind. I remember Ruby Cohn rising after listening to an interminable discussion by at least ten panel members (on reflection this must have been Vancouver—surely the SAA never had such a panel) to cut it off by saying, “I do not congratulate the panel.” Again there was quiet confusion, but again we learned. There have been no more ten-member panels.

Our more recent meetings have, perhaps, been more decorous. But memorable meetings still abound: Michael Warren’s first paper on the Q and F texts of *Lear* in Washington, D.C. in 1976, followed at a later meeting by G. B. Evans’s splendid textual seminar on *Lear*, with Madeleine Doran, Stanley Wells, Gary Taylor, Steve Urkowitz, Michael Warren, and other notable experts all gathered together in one discussion. I remember the Howard Felperin / Jean

Howard clash on deconstruction, Stephen Greenblatt's forum on New Historicism, and Terence Hawkes's lively session on institutionalizing Shakespeare, and even Shakespeare and Political Criticism.

I confess also to recalling a few scenes of excruciating boredom, and some of embarrassed endurance—but they are few, and even those were somewhat alleviated by the wit and irreverence of my colleagues.

I remember quiet innovations like the invention of the seminar in 1976, the discovery of the Canadians in 1977, C. L. Barber's play readings, and Bob Ornstein's invention of the cash bar. And the glorious moment at the 1981 Congress in Stratford-upon-Avon when, as the *pièce de résistance* at the formal luncheon, we were served chocolate statuettes of Shakespeare for dessert. Sitting nervously between Werner Habicht and Jed Bentley, I waited to see who would be the first to bite the bard. Appropriately enough, it was the intrepid Jed Bentley, our organization's first presiding officer.

On a more purely social side (and I know from your responses to our questionnaire that many of you share my pleasant memories of this side of our activities), I remember the elevated events in Washington in 1976: the elegant picnic on the roof of the Kennedy Center and the magnificent reception at the top of the State Department. I remember the beautiful party at the Botanical Gardens in Montréal and the Easter morning tour of the city, and in Nashville the Southern dinner complete with GooGoo Clusters, and the expedition to the Grand Ol' Opry to hear country music.

I could go on and on, but my point is that our fifteen years of meetings have stayed astonishingly alive. I have no such memories of any scholarly organization that I have ever belonged to. When I think of MLA I think of elevators and meat markets, and when I think of AAUP my mind goes blank. The SAA is an organization that I cherish and one of which I feel very proud and happy to have been a President. We are, no doubt, imperfect, but we are *alive*, and the organization has repeatedly shown signs of life in its ability to grow and change. I see signs of continuing ability to respond to the needs of our members (such as with workshops) and thank all those who answered our questionnaire.

In 1973 our meeting started with four simultaneous sessions, incorporating twenty-five separate speakers in one day, apparently without even a coffee break. In 1974 we were down to twenty-two speakers, and by 1977 we had institutionalized the long coffee break and settled down to a format much like that of the present, combining fewer speakers with seminars in a more manageable, if still strenuous, pattern—one which greatly multiplied the number of active participants in our meetings while reducing featured speakers. Thanks to Ann Cook's glowing letters, the seminars have also greatly multiplied institutional contributions to air fare.

Inevitably, as a female President, I cannot let this occasion pass without commenting on changes in the participation of female members. In 1973 our President and Executive Secretary were male, but two of our first seven trustees, Dolora Cunningham and Mrs. Donald F. Hyde, were female. Although the chair of the Committee on Arrangements, Gail Paster, was female, all five members of the Local Committee were male. Of substantive speakers, thirty-two were male

and female—fewer than a seventh. Sessions were chaired by fifteen men and six women (they were called Chairmen). 1974 showed little change: there was only one female name on the Program Committee; of twenty-seven substantive papers, twenty-four were given by men and three by women—one-ninth—and of chairs, thirteen were men and one a woman. I should like to emphasize that I do not want to suggest that these figures reflected any particular prejudice or blindness on the part of our early organizers (one of whom was, of course, Madeleine Doran). On the contrary, I suspect that our record was considerably better than that of other scholarly organizations. Our patterns inevitably reflected those of our profession. At the 1976 combined meetings of the SAA and the ISA considerably fewer than a fourth of substantive speakers were women (and three of those spoke at a session called “Shakespeare’s Portrayal of Women: A 1970s View”), and only a tenth of the chairs were female. A fifth of the leaders of seminars, organized by Americans, were women. However, three of our eight trustees were women, whereas the International committee presented a solid phalanx of sixteen male members, mollified only by a female recorder.

By 1986 one third of our substantive speakers were women (a figure approximately proportional to our membership); female Chairs had become Chairwomen rather than Chairmen, and almost half of our seminars were led by women.

I note with some satisfaction that as early as 1973 we first heard from Ann Cook on Shakespeare’s audience, and that sessions in 1976 and 1977 presented the early work of Janet Adelman, Martha Andresen-Thom, Catherine Stimpson, Fran Teague, Gayle Green, Coppélia Kahn, and Jill Levenson, thus anticipating, and perhaps encouraging, the wave of Shakespeare criticism by women which crested in the early 1980s.

This seems to me an honorable record, supporting the belief, expressed on many of your questionnaires, that the SAA is one of the most open and receptive of American scholarly organizations.

A study of geographical patterns reveals a somewhat different story. I believe that, among our trustees past and present, only two other trustees, besides myself, have had degrees from universities below the Mason-Dixon line (the University of Virginia and Vanderbilt University). Among our presidents, seven have been teaching on the East coast, three on the West coast, and four in the Midwest. Their last earned degrees have been nine-to-four from East coast universities (the four were Midwest). I was going to say that we have never had a trustee or a president teaching at the time of election south of Washington, D.C., and of the trustees who have not become President, none is currently teaching in either the South or the Midwest. But I am happy to say that Alan Dessen has just proved an exception to this pattern. The pattern is hardly surprising considering the traditional domination of our profession by Ivy League universities, but times seem to be changing, and perhaps we should change with them in order to make our organization more genuinely representative of our membership and more useful to the larger communities. We need to keep working at ways of expanding our membership and extending our usefulness.

The Presidents of our organization have been uniformly brilliant and distinguished. But they can hardly be characterized as infallible. I remember our first President introducing Leeds

Barroll as Editor of *Shakespeare Stories*, and Jonas Barish introducing the wrong Richard Coe and then, with characteristic grace, transforming his mistake into a witty luncheon speech on the importance of middle initials. And I will, no doubt, soon discover more of my own lapses from grace. I expect at any moment to fall flat on my face—actually or metaphorically.

Fortunately for the welfare of the organization, however, during our fifteen years we had behind our frail presidential figureheads two Executive Secretaries of extraordinary competence. Several years ago we honored Leeds Barroll for his major role in launching the organization and setting its tone in its initial stages. But the accomplishments of Ann Jennalie Cook, though widely observed and appreciated, have not been adequately celebrated. She stepped into the role of Executive Secretary on very short notice in 1975 when Leeds Barroll resigned to join the NEH. Her first task, the organizing and coordinating of the 1976 World Congress, would have overwhelmed lesser mortals, but she carried it off with the grace, elegance, and efficiency which have been her hallmarks for the last twelve years. If, during those years, you remember superlative hotels, elegant receptions, efficient attention to details of transportation and scheduling, scrupulous handling of the multitudinous minutiae of programs, committees, seminars, newsletters, and ballots, credit Ann Cook—both for her own accomplishments and for her skill in commanding, cajoling, and charming the cooperation of our various committees. Most especially I would like to express appreciation for her high scholarly standards, her recognition of both eternal verities and new ideas, her sound judgment, and above all for the careful fairness and integrity with which she has performed her difficult job. If we take pride in the openness, collegiality, and quality of our meetings, we must give major credit to Ann Cook. All of us are profoundly indebted to her.

It is the hardest and least pleasant part of my role as President to announce that, after twelve years of tireless and distinguished service, Ann has communicated to the trustees her wish to retire from her position at the end of this meeting. The trustees have reluctantly accepted her decision. We have been fortunate in finding a successor who has worked with Ann since 1978 in arranging both SAA and ISA meetings and who has been serving as Associate Executive Secretary during the past year. Many of you already know and admire Nancy Elizabeth Hodge, who on Wednesday accepted the trustees' invitation to serve for a three-year term as Executive Secretary. Nancy had both an MBA and a PhD from Vanderbilt University, and her variety of academic interests and scholarly experiences will serve her well in this office. She is also willing to undertake the job as Ann has done, without financial remuneration. Vanderbilt University has agreed to continue to support us with office space and computer time, for which we are most grateful. For those of you who don't know her, I'd like to introduce Dr. Nancy Hodge.

Because the news of Ann's decision to retire came to the trustees only very recently, we have not had time to plan a celebration of her reign in the manner to which she has helped us become accustomed. We will postpone this to a future occasion. But because we do not want this moment to pass unremarked, we would like to present her with this plaque as a very small token of our esteem and gratitude.

With this, we will close, and look forward to next year in Cambridge.