



Panther Monster

The James Joyce Society of Sweden and Finland

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unfolded — like George Eliot's *Silas Marner* — from the merest millet seed of thought, sown in 1969 by Fritz Senn in the mind of Johannes Hedberg. The two had met at the Symposium of The James Joyce Foundation in Dublin and had expressed their strong dissatisfaction with the almost complete Americanization of that body. They felt that some kind of counter-action was *de rigueur*, beginning with the setting-up in Europe of active, non-cultic groups of Joyce amateurs for a study of James Joyce's works from linguistic, social and literary points of view. These groups should meet from time to time for exchange of ideas and, if possible, also arrange working sessions with clearly defined themes for which preparation would be paramount.

Not until January of 1976 did this tiny seed receive the first of the drops needed for its incipient growth: Miss Dorte Toft-Nielsen, then Secretary of the James Joyce Society of Copenhagen, wrote to Johannes Hedberg about his edition of "The Dead", enclosing vital information about her Society, founded in 1962. The contact thus established was strengthened in the course of a visit to Copenhagen at the end of May, 1976.

In June of 1976 Johannes Hedberg concocted an appeal inviting all those who might be interested in forming a James Joyce Society in Scandinavia and Finland to contact the author of the appeal. The appeal was sent to known "Joyceans" in the two countries and was later published in *Moderna språk* (a linguistic-literary journal). It was also puffed for in *Svenska Dagbladet*.

The appeal resulted in the founding of *The James Joyce Society of Sweden and Finland*. Before the end of 1976 eighteen Joyce amateurs had declared themselves interested in joining a Joyce society of the kind envisaged by Senn and Hedberg in 1969. These eighteen are thus the Founder Members of the Society. Among them is Professor Lloyd Fernando, who was asked to join and who gladly accepted to become a member, "to contribute to the flavour of the exotic which fascinated Joyce". He lives in Kuala Lumpur.

Owing to threshold difficulties the Inaugural Meeting did not take place until April 23, 1977, which date is to be counted as Foundation Day (it is of course also known as Shakespeare's Day). The membership figure had risen to 22.

Various suggestions were made as to how the Society was to function:

- (a) a workshop meeting should be held once a year, preferably in close connection with the annual meeting (April) and if feasible in collaboration with The James Joyce Copenhagen Society,
- (b) a James Joyce library should be set up, containing primary and secondary literature *re* James Joyce; the Library should of course include everything the members of the Society had produced,
- (c) lists of "work in progress" should be set up,
- (d) the study of Joyce should proceed in three sections or centres within the two countries, Section East (Stockholm, Åbo, Uppsala), Section South (Lund, Malmö), and Section West (Göteborg),
- (e) the Society should collaborate closely with the JJ Society of Copenhagen.

A Temporary Board was set up with the view of drawing up statutes, and preparing for the first Annual Meeting, which was to be held in the autumn of 1977.

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The First Annual Meeting of the James Joyce Society of Sweden and Finland was held at the Carlton Hotel in Stockholm, on November 19th, 1977. Fourteen representatives of the by then 33 members turned up and finally confirmed

- (a) that the Society's name should be *The James Joyce Society of Sweden and Finland*,
- (b) that the next Annual Meeting should be held in April, 1978, and in Lund; to this Meeting should be invited representatives of The James Joyce Society of Copenhagen; a workshop should be arranged in connection with the Annual Meeting — Liisa Dahl of Åbo was chosen to suggest a programme for the workshop,
- (c) that a Library should be set up; it should have as its Keeper Anders Ryberg of the Nobel Library in Stockholm; he should further be Keeper of the Society's records (archives),
- (d) that members should send their works on James Joyce to Ryberg and provide Hedberg with information of what work they might have in progress on James Joyce,
- (e) that three sections should be set up in Stockholm (Åbo, Uppsala), Lund (Malmö) and Göteborg,

- (f) that the Society should keep in close contact with the James Joyce Society of Copenhagen — and with other James Joyce Societies, as also with The James Joyce Foundation whose present President is no other than Fritz Senn, one of the two begetters of the present Society.

The Annual Meeting discussed the proposed Statutes of the Society and adopted them with some minor alterations, fixed the membership fees (50 *kronor*; 30 *kronor* for university students), and accepted the suggestion of the James Joyce Society of Copenhagen that membership of the one Society should entail membership of the other as soon as the fee had been paid. Mottoes were among the matters discussed, e.g. "Woe-men are lackthoughts mostly", "With the patience of a cat before a mousehole", "I feel a flame in my face" and "We can express our views". The Annual Meeting finally accepted as its Motto: PANTHER MONSTER, to be worked into the crest of the Mackintosh clan.

The Annual meeting elected the following officers to serve on its Board in these capacities:

Johannes Hedberg, Göteborg, Chairman; Liisa Dahl, Åbo/Turku, Deputy Chairman; Birgit Bramsbäck, Uppsala, Secretary; Sven Haag, Malmö, Treasurer; and Anders Ryberg and Eva Bruno, Stockholm and Göteborg. As auditors were elected Erik Eriksson, Eskilstuna, and Carl Johan Malmberg, Stockholm. The Inaugural Meeting was followed by a luxurious repast in Göteborg's (and perhaps Sweden's) best restaurant, the Johanna, the Annual Meeting was followed by a slightly less sumptuous meal at the Carlton, but while soft westerly winds blew along the canal outside the Johanna, icy gusts from the Siberian tundra swept down the cavernous thoroughfare outside the Carlton and crept in through the rattling windows into the banquetting rooms where the Northern Joyceans were fêting the incomparable Irishman, in furs and overcoats.

Johannes Hedberg

