

T. S. ELIOT SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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24th MEMORIAL LECTURER: PROFESSOR LEON SURETTE

Dr. Leon Surette will deliver the 24th Eliot Memorial Lecture at the Society's Annual Meeting in St. Louis this September. A professor of English at the University of Western Ontario, Leon Surette is the author of several books, including,

- *A Light from Eleusis: A Study of the Cantos of Ezra Pound* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press)
- *The Birth of Modernism: W.B. Yeats, Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, and The Occult* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press)
- *Literary Modernism and the Occult Tradition* (Orono, Maine: The National Poetry Foundation)
- *I Cease Not to Yowl: Ezra Pound's Letters to Olivia Rossetti Agresti* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press)
- *Pound In Purgatory: Ezra Pound's Descent from Economic Radicalism into Anti-Semitism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press).

He has published numerous articles in journals such as *Critical Inquiry*, *University of Toronto Quarterly*, *Twentieth Century Literature*, *Philosophy and Literature*, and *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature*. Professor Surette is currently working on a book entitled *Two Harvard Poets: Wallace Stevens and T. S. Eliot*. From 1997 to 1999, Professor Surette served as the President of Canadian Society for Aesthetics. He is also an active contributor of lively and penetrating commentary on the contemporary Canadian literary and cultural scene. The title of his lecture is "Eliot, Pound, and 'Pale Ramon.'"

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The Board of Directors will be electing two new officers at the September meeting to fill positions that will become vacant at the beginning of next year. We will need to elect a Treasurer and a Vice President (who would in three years automatically become the President). All members of the Society are welcome to make nominations for these two positions. Please send your nominations to the Supervisor of Elections, Dr. Linda Wyman. Her e-mail address is wymanl@lincolnu.edu.

LONDON IN 2004

Next year's meeting will be held in London, and the chair of the planning committee, Dr. Chris Buttram, has made excellent progress toward that end. The dates chosen for the meeting are June 5-11, 2004. The likely location of most sessions will be the Institute of U.S. Studies at the University of London. Excursions to Burnt Norton, Little Gidding, and East Coker are projected, as well as a tour of Eliot locales in London. Any member who has contacts that might be helpful to us in further organizing this meeting or who knows of a reasonably priced hotel in the vicinity of the University of London is asked to communicate with Chris Buttram (chrisbuttram@hotmail.com) or Ben Lockerd (lockerdb@gvsu.edu).



*It is always wondered like this, but this is nothing to the Curia that are daily buying out a to the Bismarck about forget that office of Peak Treat for have you tried any of the Bismarck yet? That Bismarck-bone is worth having
A.M.T.*

Twenty-fourth Annual Meeting
The T. S. Eliot Society
St. Louis, MO
September 26-28, 2003

Friday, September 26

3:00 p.m.

Board of Directors Meeting
The Inn at The Park

6:00 p.m.

Registration
William Charron, Treasurer

7:00 p.m.

Opening Session

Welcome
Shyamal Bagchee, President

Presentations

Elisabeth Däumer, *Eastern Michigan University*
"Blood and Witness: The Reception of *Murder in the Cathedral* in Germany"

Chris Joyce, *University of Surrey*
"From Lilac to Larkspur: Spiritual Appeasement in Eliot's Poetry"

Frances Dickey, *University of Missouri, Columbia*
"The Confidential Clerk in the Gray Flannel Suit"

Saturday, September 27

9:00 a.m.

Second Session

Greetings
Benjamin Lockerd Jr., Vice-President

Presentations

Ronald Schuchard, *Emory University*
"Eliot and Ted Hughes: The Hughes Archive at Emory"

Anju Dhadha, *University of Rajasthan*
"Cubical Time: Quantized Experience in *The Waste Land*"

Carole Seymour-Jones,
"On Writing *Painted Shadow: The Life of Vivienne Eliot*"

11:00 a.m.

Twenty-fourth T. S. Eliot Memorial Lecture
Leon Surette, *University of Western Ontario*
"Eliot, Stevens and 'Pale Ramon'"

Saturday, continued

12:30 p.m.

Lunch
(advance registrants only)

2:30 p.m.

Special/Peer Seminar on *The Waste Land*

Will Gray, *Bob Jones University*

Melissa Lingle-Martin, *Indiana University*

Katie Parker, *Bucknell University*

Charles Sumner, *University of California at Berkeley*

Abid Vali, *Loyola University of Chicago*

William C. Van Esveld, *Cornell University*

7:00 p.m.

Dinner (advance registrants only)
Fathman Home, 4967 Pershing Place

Sunday, September 28

9:45 a.m.

Third Session

Greetings
David Huisman, Secretary

Eliot Aloud Allowed . . . and Encouraged!
Readings by attendees

10:30 a.m.

Presentations

Man-Sik Lee, *Kyungwon College, Korea*
"T. S. Eliot and Jacques Derrida"

Randal Woods, *Northwestern University*
"Kant, the Art for Art's Sake Movement, and the Aesthetics of Eliot"

Nurten Birlik, *Middle Eastern Technical University, Ankara*
"The Solipsist's Search for Coherence in the Modern Wilderness: 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock'"

ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS
AMERICAN LITERATURE ASSOCIATION
BOSTON (CAMBRIDGE) 2003

Rebekah Keaton, *Michigan State University*
"Cavalier Posturing in T.S. Eliot's Antifruition Lyric: 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock'"

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" describes the figure of Prufrock, the would-be lover, as he journeys on a quest for love. Engrossed in interminable sufferings, Prufrock fears the object of his affection will spurn his advances, with her "That is not what I meant at all." Despite Prufrock's imagined rejection, we never fully meet the woman. Almost non-existent, she appears merely as Prufrock's fantasy, an enabling character in his dramatic monologue. In this sense, the poem participates in a lengthy and familiar tradition of courtly love poetry, perfected by the fourteenth-century Italian poet Francesco Petrarch, in which the speaker pines away for the affections of his beloved. Petrarchan love poetry expresses and explores the male perspective. The male is self-tormented by the female who is depicted as an unobtainable object of his desire. Prufrock's pursuit of his beloved falls into this category of love poetry; however, this paper argues that Eliot's treatment of courtship is more in the fashion of the seventeenth-century cavalier lyric than in the style of Petrarch's love poems to his beloved, Laura.

Ilona Bell in "Milton's Dialogue with Petrarch" argues that all "Renaissance love poetry was either Petrarchan or anti-Petrarchan or pseudo-Petrarchan." Cavalier love poetry adopted the Petrarchan tradition to explore the changing social and political dynamics between men and women in seventeenth-century society. Thomas Carew and Richard Lovelace manipulated the Caroline Court's Platonic love cult (known as *préciosité*) and refashioned it into an affected idolization of women. This pseudo-Petrarchanism placed the female on a pedestal, not to valorize her virtues, but to flatter her into yielding her virtue to her adoring suitor. The *préciosité* of the court also degenerated into the antifruition poem. It pushed the Platonic cult to its extremes, denying any physical manifestation of love. Sir John Suckling adopted this stance. His antifruition poems are the antitheses of Petrarchan poems; they do not seek to seduce the woman at all, rather, to avoid consummation at all costs. Antifruition poems purport that the *jouissance* of the affair resides in the expectation of the consummation and not in the sexual act itself. Suckling's antifruition poems argue not to make love, but to "imagine"; for love is diminished when love is consummated.

...Sure I should die,

Should I but hear my mistress once say, "Aye."

• That monster expectation feeds too high

For any woman e'er to satisfy. (Antifruition (1))
Death denotes sexual orgasm and the belief that the woman's actual succumbing would literally "kill" his illusions. Suckling's poem draws our attention to the fact that the rally cry of *carpe diem* is grounded in the knowledge that time passes and with its passing the individual moves closer towards his or her death.

We find this very same manipulation of the *carpe diem* lyric in "Prufrock." Prufrock's song is a one-sided dialogue, which employs mock-heroic imagery to produce a male fantasy of courtship where consummation is not achieved. Donning self-protective wit, Prufrock with great bravado declares that it is not the consummation of the affair that counts, but the seduction. When he posits, "would it have been worth it?" Prufrock's rhetorical question is an ambiguous discourse function. On the one hand, Prufrock is asking if consummating his love would have been worth the risk of rejection, and on the other, he asserts that it would not be worthwhile period. Either way, he risks nothing. Prufrock engages in a variety of other rhetorical antics (adopted from cavalier poetry) to distance himself from his fears of rejection and death. Hyperbolic prophesizing creates a comic distancing. He predicts that there will be time yet for a hundred indecisions, / And for a hundred visions and revisions, / Before the taking of a toast and tea. He further distances himself with wry humor, resorting to overt self-mockery. He laments, I grow old ... I grow old... / I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled. To mock himself is easier than to risk rejection just as the rhetorical question allows him to avoid any possible action. Prufrock's self-mockery playfully parodies the Petrarchan tradition where the lover asserts that without the affections of his beloved he will waste away and die. Prufrock's imagined death is less gallant. Instead of a martyr's death, he will grow old, perpetually impotent. He believes that by mocking what he will amount to in the future, he protects himself in the present. Nevertheless, protection comes at a high cost. A failure to consummate his love also fails to produce any linguistic achievement. His song, like his love, is impotent; it does not lead to fruition, only to Prufrock's frustrated lament, "It is impossible to say just what I mean!"

Kinereth Meyer, *Bar-Ilan University, Israel*

"For us, there is only the trying": An Intertextual Reading of Ecclesiastes and *Four Quartets*"

Hugh Kenner's observation that commentators tour the Eliot territory in chartered buses rings true even today, par-

ticularly in reference to *Four Quartets*. Post-deconstructionist criticism has perhaps taken us beyond Dame Helen Gardner's orotund 1949 assessment of the poem as beautiful, satisfying, self-contained, self-organized, complete, but the chimera of critical mastery—the perfect tour of Eliot territory—persists.

The use of critical maps encourages the illusion that the reader can resolve the entanglements of the text and thus evade, perhaps, what Eliot himself called the fear of possession by the language of the poem. While such readings contribute to an understanding of the poems' etiology and their links to extratextual sources, the reader of *Four Quartets* still finds it difficult to recover a clear narrative. A discussion of broader hermeneutical processes may be more to the point. As Myrna Solotorevsky said of Borges, "What we need here is an exegesis that actively abets the story."

As I have argued elsewhere, Gadamerian and Ricoeurian hermeneutics may be one approach that abets, rather than displaces, the story of *Four Quartets*. For Paul Ricoeur, the practice of hermeneutics is neither an attempt to discover intention nor a dismantling of structures, but praxis and action. Meaning does not inhere in what you find behind the text, but in what you do. Texts do not picture reality (conventional *mimesis*) but throw light on the situation in which we find ourselves historically and open up a path for us to follow in the way of action and conduct. The world of the text is, above all, the world of the reader. To interpret, claims Ricoeur, is to explicate the type of being-in-the-world unfolded in front of the text. In such a context, understanding is the projection of our ownmost possibilities at the very heart of the situations in which we find ourselves. For what must be interpreted in a text is a proposed world which I could inhabit and wherein I could project one of my ownmost possibilities. That is what I call the world of the text, the world proper to this unique text.

In regard to *Four Quartets* in particular, how does one enter and inhabit the world of the text and, at the same time, project one's ownmost possibilities? How can we respect that world proper to this unique text—its integrity, its otherness—and still project the equally valuable integrity of our own reading? A more important point, perhaps, is how this reading opens a path to follow, a particularly salient question for those readers who find it impossible to identify with the abstract or spiritual level of the poem. The various structural motifs of *Four Quartets* ("the prayer of the one Annunciation," "*Figlia del tuo figlio*,/Queen of Heaven," "Sin is Behovely," "the gift half understood, is Incarnation") may mark a proposed world in this poem, but it is a world that the non-Christian reader ultimately regards, in Eliot's words, from outside the belief. My paper argues that if we read the *Quartets* as Wisdom literature, we may begin to understand ourselves in front of the text. Al-

though, wisdom writing can be found in a variety of cultures, in Western literature, it refers primarily to the biblical books of Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes. The combination of highly personal meditations on morality and ethics, philosophical questioning, and pedagogical intent in these books provides them with a unique status in the biblical canon. Ecclesiastes, in particular, gives us a view of a mind contemplating—a mind thinking, questioning, testing, rejecting, affirming. The questions Ecclesiastes asks are both personal and applicable to issues central to the human condition: what is the significance of a human being's life on earth? What is the value of human endeavor? What does God expect of us? Can we know the work of God?

What is remarkable about Ecclesiastes is that even though the speaker is a wise man (The King James Bible calls him The Preacher), this does not automatically elicit a style characterized by elegant periods and clearly elucidated dogmas. The language of Ecclesiastes is skeptical, circular, contradictory, disjunctive. Ecclesiastes demonstrates that wisdom literature is not a list of useless sayings and proverbs which were popular with our ancestors, as the negative view might put it, but words which engage in a search for wisdom, with all the hermeneutic hesitation that this implies. Ecclesiastes is not a finished product, but a blueprint for further philosophical exploration and scrutiny. Meaning inheres not in the words of the text, but in the continued interpretive and ethical behavior of its readers.

In *East Coker*, the most Ecclesiastes-like section of *Four Quartets*, Eliot confronts human limitations in strikingly similar language: "There is only the fight to recover what has been lost / And found and lost again and again: and now, under conditions / That seem unpropitious. But perhaps neither gain nor loss. / For us, there is only the trying. The rest is not our business." When read in conjunction with Ecclesiastes, only the trying may seem a deliberate understatement. For the trying, the search rather than the conclusion, is a great deal. For the religious consciousness, the trying may, in fact, be enough.

My intention here is neither to argue for influence nor to force *Four Quartets* into a new generic category, but to bring my own textual and theological orientations to bear on the poem. It is impossible to argue for an exact fit between these two great poems. The theological emphasis of each, not to mention the historical and literary contexts, differ widely. But in the ways in which orthodox religious belief is wedded to a skeptical consciousness, in which absence and death—"the vacant interstellar spaces"—must be contemplated together with one's behavior in life, and in which negative affirmations can be used to articulate positive belief, both Ecclesiastes and *Four Quartets* demonstrate that wisdom is the very reason that we take the trouble to frequent these texts. Among other benefits, an intertextual

reading of these two texts highlights the humanist underthought beneath the official mystical position of *Four Quartets*.

Elizabeth Brewer Redwine, *Emory University*
"Outside the Ivory Tower: Boston Sources of Eliot's 'Vision of the Street'"

This paper examines the roots of "Preludes"; Eliot purposely situated his first drafts away from the rarified air of Milton Academy and Harvard, choosing Roxbury and Dorchester (sites of urban activity) instead. "Preludes" was composed in two cities. Eliot wrote the first two sections in Cambridge, in October 1910. He composed the third section in Paris in July 1911 and completed the poem with a fourth section in Cambridge in November 1911. Originally, the sections were entitled, "Prelude in Dorchester (Houses)," "Prelude in Roxbury," "Morgendämmerung Prelude in Roxbury," and "Abenddämmerung," respectively.

Roxbury and Dorchester are situated between Milton, where Eliot attended high school, and Cambridge. Eliot distances his poetry from the Harvard section of Cambridge in the early "First Caprice in North Cambridge" and "Second Caprice in North Cambridge," and from literary Bloomsbury in the City of London imagery of *The Waste Land*. Eliot felt enlivened by the city outside of academia; he wrote to Conrad Aiken, "In Oxford I have the feeling that I am not quite alive . . . How much more self-conscious one is in a big city!" With these original subtitles to the "Preludes" sections, Eliot places the poem in the vital, squalid parts of early twentieth-century Boston between his boarding school and university.

Eliot's decision to exclude these subtitles contributes to the tension in his urban poetry between the specific local area and the universal city. The original French subtitle comes from Charles-Phillipe's novel, *Bubu de Montparnasse*, "about the ravages of venereal disease" and the "character Pierre (who) rises to walk the sordid streets by night" (*Inventions of the March Hare* 179). Though he chose to remove all the subtitles, the combination of local Boston-area allusions and French and German words describes the roots of the "Unreal City," an anywhere outside of the university and filled with specific images and common rituals.

Debra San, *Massachusetts College of Art*
"Burbank, Bleistein, and Herakleitos: A Close Reading of Eliot's Punctuation"

Herakleitos' great insight that the way up and the way down are one and the same underwrites many of Eliot's poems,

not just "Burnt Norton," for which it serves as an epigraph. The body of Eliot's work is replete with up-and-down imagery, risings and fallings, ascents and descents. But notice how strange it would sound to say: down-and-up imagery, fallings and risings, descents and ascents. Our language moves our thoughts not only in a sequence rather than in a circuit, but also in only one direction per axis: from top to bottom but not bottom to top, from left to right but not right to left.

Poetry creates exceptions. The unexpected appearance or the reprise of an image, a word, or a sound sends us up the page to a precursor, a source, an earlier instance; the turn at a line break, particularly if enjambed, sends us reading, not just travelling optically, from right to left. These counter-movements, so suggestive of the Herakleitan reversibility that a later age would call "the wheel of fortune," are valued by Eliot for their possibilities of spiritual redemption: the closer one gets to a spiritual bottoming out (not just on the wheel, but under a rock, in the sea, or in the depths of slime or mud), the nearer the opportunity to start upward again, in a kind of rebirth.

Hence, in "The Hippopotamus," the beast who "rests on his belly in the mud" is seen to "take wing." Such counter-movements are often set in motion by Eliot's punctuation, which he held to be of central importance; in *The Times Literary Supplement* of 27 September 1928, he declared: "Verse, whatever else it may or may not be, is itself a system of punctuation." The intimate relation between Herakleitan reversibility and punctuation in "Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar" begins with the poem's title, which is both punctuated and symmetrically structured. Were it expressed as a mathematical statement, where the ratio X is to A as Y is to B is written $X : A :: Y : B$, the title would have a single colon for each "with a" and a double colon where there is now one. Working in concert with the syntactical symmetry, the colon at the center establishes a relation of parity between Burbank and Bleistein, much like the relation of parity between Gentile and Jew in Eliot's parable of Phlebas the Phoenician.

In the poem itself, however, Burbank, a Gentile on the way down, entirely misconstrues his Herakleitan relation to Bleistein, a Jew on the way up. This misconstrual explains why the famous (or notorious) cross-stanza enjambment at the end of the poem is not punctuated as a single statement ("She entertains Sir Ferdinand // Klein, who clipped the lion's wings / And flea'd his rump and pared his paws."), but as a statement followed by a question ("She entertains Sir Ferdinand // Klein. Who clipped the lion's wings / And flea'd his rump and pared his paws?").

Paul Robichaud, *Yale University*

"Between Identities: T.S. Eliot, England, and the West"

A central paradox of literary modernism is that this cosmopolitan movement was shaped by so many writers from the cultural peripheries of London, New York, and Paris. In Britain in particular, the Americans Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot provided a major catalyst for modernism, as did Dublin's James Joyce. Women writers like Virginia Woolf show that this challenge to the centre can emanate from those marginalized by gender as well as by geography.

Whereas traditional discourses of the nation stress a stable centre, dominant language, and progressive history, modernism questions these through its formal innovations and choice of subject matter. Fragmentation, stream-of-consciousness, and allusive obscurity are techniques that problematize narratives of the culturally unified, historically progressive nation. Modernist writings also challenge these narratives by foregrounding marginal experiences, such as Leopold Bloom's Dublin wanderings in *Ulysses*, or by evoking a larger civilization of which the modern nation is an historical fragment, as in Eliot's *The Waste Land*. As Alex Davis and Lee M. Jenkins observe, although "margins can be empowering, this does not preclude the centre, or international, as a place of power" (*Locations of Literary Modernism* 8). The local and the civilizational conspire in modernism to overturn nationalism's cultural and political domination of modernity.

In this reading of modernism, history assumes new importance as a usable past with which to confront narratives of nationality. In my paper, I read the poetry and critical prose of T.S. Eliot as a challenge to nationalism, focusing on his increasing preoccupation with "civilization" and its problematic relationship to contemporary England. I argue that his emphasis on western culture as a whole stems in part from Eliot's need to reconfigure England as part of a larger civilization in which the emigrant American can play a vital part.

Although history is a means of dispossession in *The Waste Land* (1922), it may also be seen as a means of imaginatively recovering an irrecoverable past. Eliot's growing identification with England in *Four Quartets* (1935-42) is balanced against his arguments that stress the value of Europe's common heritage in *Notes toward the Definition of Culture* (1948) and other prose writings. The opposition between the local and civilizational creates a major creative tension in Eliot's work, prefiguring contemporary cultural concerns over globalisation and multiculturalism.

Julie Goodspeed, *Ball State University*

"Sexual Politics in *The Waste Land*: Eliot's Treatment of Women and Their Bodies in 'A Game of Chess' and 'The Fire Sermon'"

Rape in *The Waste Land* works on one level to allow for a connection between the traumatized rape victim and the traumatized modern world. Trauma is elucidated by Kalif Tal in *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma*: "An individual is traumatized by a life-threatening event that displaces his or her preconceived notions about the world. [T]he subject is radically ungrounded. Accurate representation of trauma can never be achieved without recreating the event" (15). Here is an appropriate place to consider the parallels between trauma and Modernist literature. World War I was the impetus for the trauma literature that followed it, a life-threatening event which caused a generation of writers to grapple with the displacement of their notions about their world. The subjects in these writers' texts are usually radically ungrounded as a result. In other words, it was difficult to determine at times what belief system a person adhered to, if any at all, which fosters a sense of panic in the writing of this period. Although 1922, the year *The Waste Land* appears, is termed "a time of unparalleled linguistic futility," trauma can be read in the gaps in the text. In *The Waste Land*, the panic of the postwar years is recreated through the invocation of rape in "A Game of Chess" and "The Fire Sermon."

Eliot depends heavily on the outside world around 1922 for *The Waste Land*. The poem addresses the social ills and unhappiness Eliot perceived in both his personal life and the outside world. *The Waste Land* is very much a poem rooted in the conditions of its time, with an emphasis on economic conditions. According to Stan Smith, "Eliot's knowledge of [postwar] Central Europe's economic and social collapse was both intimate and professional" (170) because, by this time, he was living in Europe and working for Lloyd's Bank and so had first-hand knowledge of the social and economic conditions. One of Eliot's economic insights consists of the realization that London is functioning on "a sexual economy where there is more money chasing more bodies" (Levenson, "Does the *Waste Land* Have a Politics?" 8). With an economy that is still gendered as a result of a sexual division of labor in the early twentieth century, it is little wonder that those with money (primarily men) desire that which cannot be bought against the owners' will—bodies, particularly women's bodies. In "A Game of Chess" and "The Fire Sermon," women's bodies are depicted in terms of commodification, and this commodification connotes the panic and trauma of rape.

What is more important than Eliot's personal traumatic experiences is a close reading of how rape, the epitome of

sexual trauma, works in the influential *Waste Land*. Why is it important to discuss and analyze the use of rape in literature? If it is true that *The Waste Land* served to “shape the perception of Central Europe for a whole generation of British and American writers” (Smith 167) and perhaps for generations to come, then it is not only necessary but crucial to understand how Eliot treats rape and how it functions in his poetry.

Olga Ouchakova, *Tyumen State University, Russia*
“T.S. Eliot and Modern Russian Poets”

The problem of T.S. Eliot's interactions with Russian culture has not yet been thoroughly investigated. The different aspects of this theme could be interesting from the point of view of productive interchanges between Western and Russian cultural traditions. The aspect touched upon in this paper is the appreciation of Eliot by modern Russian poets, and first and foremost by Anna Andreevna Akhmatova, the most famous woman poet in twentieth-century literature, a “Russian Sappho.” Many modern Russian poets knew Eliot's art quite well. For example, Boris Pasternak was an admirer of Eliot's and carried on a correspondence with him. In his letter to Eliot of the 14th of January of 1960 Pasternak praised Eliot as the most distinguished poet of the 20th century who became the voice of the epoch that spoke the new language of the time. It was Boris Pasternak who gave Anna Akhmatova *Four Quartets* soon after the Second World War.

The starting point to research the links between Akhmatova and Eliot is the epigraph from *East Coker* to “Obverse” (“Reshka”), the second part of *Poem Without a Hero*. *Poem Without a Hero* is a poem in many voices. Akhmatova wrote in the dedication about “The word of others” which sounds in a poem (“a word which is not mine”), and Eliot's voice is one of the most important in this poem. The issue of similarities between the two poems has been studied by several Russian and non-Russian scholars: “On the Echoes of Western European Poetry in Akhmatova (T. S. Eliot)” by a Russian scholar, Viktor Toporov, 1973; “A Baroque Poem” by a Belgian scholar, Zhorzh Niva, 1989; “‘Poem Without a Hero’ by Anna Akhmatova in the Context of *Four Quartets* by T.S. Eliot” by a Hungarian researcher, Zhuzhanna Siladi, 1995; “Eliot and Akhmatova: ‘—mon semblable,—ma soeur’ by an American scholar, Ethan Lewis, 2001. In his article Toporov considered different aspects of the concept of time in Eliot and Akhmatova's poems and the relevant themes and motives. He stated that such issues as unity of three time levels with eternity, connection of the time theme with the problems of memory, redemption and confession were very im-

portant for Akhmatova in the beginning of the 1940s.

But it should be noted that Akhmatova's interest in Eliot was caused not only by her preoccupation with ideas of “time, death and confession” but also by her search for a new poetics. *Poem Without a Hero* was constructed as a work of high modernism. Akhmatova used such specifically modernist principles as non-linear chronology, various cultural allusions, intertextual links, mythological patterns, transformations of characters, metamorphosis and others. She became much more impersonal and objective than in her early poetry. Clips of quotations, a wide cultural context, and ironical author's notes to the poem all resemble the constructive principles of *The Waste Land*. In *Poem Without a Hero* we can see the parallels not only with *Four Quartets*, but also with *The Waste Land*, *The Hollow Men*, *Ash-Wednesday* and other Eliot poems.

All these analogies can be regarded as signs of a profound interest in Eliot on the part of the of “late” Akhmatova. What's more she felt some kind of kinship with Eliot. There are very important references to T.S. Eliot in her diaries. On the 8th of August 1965, she wrote: “This month I needed consolation, the only one who brought it was Eliot,” and later she cited these lines from “East Coker”: “The only wisdom we can hope to acquire/ is the wisdom of humility: humility is endless.” Earlier she intended to use this line as an epigraph to one of her poems. Both artists, Eliot and Akhmatova, belonged to the same generation with the same historical experience, aesthetic tastes, cultural and educational background. But the most important thing uniting them was the literary tradition in which they placed themselves. Both used the same sources: Dante, Shakespeare, Baudelaire, Laforgue etc.

The figure of Dante, in particular, is a key for understanding numerous parallels in Eliot's and Akhmatova's art. We know that during all his life Eliot considered Dante to be the greatest European poet and emphasized the permanent influence of Dante on his art. Similarly, the last public speech of Akhmatova in 1965 was “A Word on Dante,” a kind of testament in which she confessed that “all my life was lightened by this great name.” She began her life as Beatrice: her first husband, poet Nikolay Gumilyov wrote a poem in 1906 in which Akhmatova is seen as Beatrice. She then shared the fate of Dante as an exile in her motherland. During the period of silence when she suffered personal hardship and critical abuse she wrote a poem “Dante” (1936), in which, using her own words, she explained “all her thought on art.” Both poets, Akhmatova and Eliot, created their modern versions of the *Divine Comedy*. The circumstances of life in Russia caused Akhmatova to create her own *Inferno* in *Requiem* and *Poem Without a Hero*. The creation of phantom cities—London in the *Waste Land* and Petersburg/Leningrad in *Poem Without a Hero*—

was inspired by Dante. The key images of *Poem Without a Hero* echo the key images of Eliot, which originated in Dante—river, garden, rose, shadows, sea, gates, stairs/ladder, flame etc. However the same images take in content specific to each author. The epigraph to *Poem Without a Hero*—"Deus conservat omnia"—also rings out as a fitting epigraph to the art of both of the twentieth century's greatest poets—Anna Andreevna Akhmatova and T.S. Eliot.

SOCIETY PEOPLE

Dr. Jayme Stayer has been accepted by the Society of Jesus (known as the Jesuits) and will begin his training for the priesthood in August of this year. His new address will be Loyola House, Jesuit Novitiate, 2599 Harvard Rd., Berkley, MI 48072. Jayme has our best wishes and prayers as he follows his calling. He says he will still be able to continue his service to the Society as a member of the Board of Directors during his novitiate, which is good news.

FOR HELP WITH SOCIETY MATTERS

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