

Permanent Things



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- Annette Y. Kirk
President, Russell Kirk
Center
aykirk@kirkcenter.org
- Editor: Benjamin G.
Lockerd, Department of
English, Grand Valley
State University,
Allendale, MI 49401
(616)331-3575
FAX: (616)331-3430
lockerdb@gvsu.edu
- Editorial Assistant:
Kristina Persenaire
Department of English,
Grand Valley State
University
knpersenaire@yahoo.com

ART, CULTURE, AND RELIGION: A CONFERENCE ON T. S. ELIOT

To celebrate the release of the new edition of Russell Kirk's book *Eliot and His Age: T. S. Eliot's Moral Imagination in the Twentieth Century*, the Russell Kirk Center, in conjunction with Grand Valley State University, hosted "Art, Culture, and Religion: A Conference on T. S. Eliot" on August 14-16, 2008. Papers presented at this conference focused on the cultural and religious ideas in Eliot's poetry, plays, and prose.

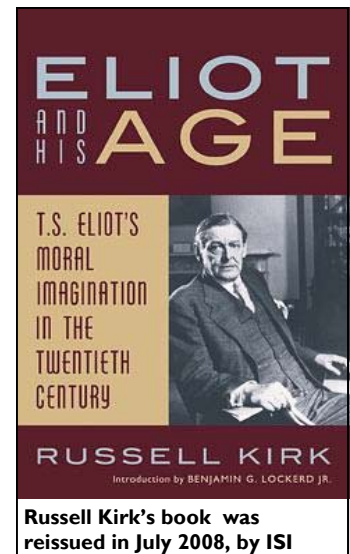
This scholarly conference welcomed speakers from across the United States as well as international contributors from Japan, Taiwan, Great Britain, and Canada. Talks given covered a variety of subjects including: Russell Kirk and Eliot, Eliot's cultural and political thought, his Anglican faith, and his influence on later writers. Speakers explored connections between Eliot and a wide range of other writers, including Allen Tate, Evelyn Waugh, Christopher Dawson, Donald Davidson, Wendell Berry, C. S. Lewis, Edmund Burke, and George Santayana.

Following a day of panel sessions, guests and speakers were officially welcomed at Grand Valley's DeVos Building in downtown Grand Rapids by GVSU's Associate Vice President, Jon Jellema. In an event that was open to the public, Benjamin G. Lockerd spoke of the friendship between Kirk and Eliot, after which

Annette Kirk spoke on "Life with Russell Kirk." The evening ended with a photographic presentation of the locales described in Eliot's *Four Quartets*, given by David Huisman (Professor Emeritus, GVSU).

The second day of the conference was also held at Grand Valley's downtown campus. Papers were presented in several concurrent sessions. Topics ranged from "Debate Between Body and Soul: T. S. Eliot and the Catholic Revival in 1910-1911 France" (John Morgenstern, Oxford University), to "Sex in the City: Urban Passions in Flannery O'Connor and T. S. Eliot" (Avis Hewitt, Grand Valley State University). Plenary lectures were given by Lee Oser, College of the Holy Cross ("Poetry in the Cathedral: T. S. Eliot and John Henry Newman"), Dominic Manganiello, University of Ottawa ("Dante, Charles Williams, and TSE"), and William Blissett, University of Toronto ("Eliot and Catholicity").

Conference speakers and guests were welcomed at the Kirk Center in Mecosta for the third and final day. The following papers were presented: Russell Elliott Murphy, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, "T. S. Eliot: Reconciling His Catholicism and Social Criticism"; David Huisman, Grand Valley State



University, "A Long Journey Afoot: T. S. Eliot and Paul Elmer More"; William Charron, St. Louis University, "Medieval Theories of the Soul in 'Tradition and the Individual Talent'"; James Matthew Wilson, Villanova University, "Style and Substance: Jacques Maritain, Neo-Thomism, and Eliot"; and Patrick Query, U. S. Military Academy, "The Problem with Ritual: Eliot's *The Family Reunion*."

A wine and cheese reception at the Kirk home followed the day's presentations. Guests were encouraged to stroll about and view the many treasures on display, from Kirk family memorabilia to an eclectic collection of art. A banquet at the Tullymore Club concluded the conference.

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FALL 2008 WILBUR FELLOWS

In September the Kirk Center welcomed the arrival of the Fall Wilbur Fellows.

Michigan native Joseph Stuart is currently a Ph.D. candidate who will write his doctoral dissertation on Christopher Dawson for the Department of History at the University of Edinburgh. He received his Master's Degree in Modern History from the University of St. Andrews, Scotland. He has published several articles in *The University Bookman*.

Arriving from France is Robert

Asch, co-founder and co-editor of the literary magazine *StAR (The St. Austin Review)*, who is completing his dissertation on Lionel Johnson. Mr. Asch is also the editor-in-chief of *The Saint Austin Press*. He is currently on a leave of absence from his duties as Headmaster at Chavagnes International College in France. Mr. Asch has also edited a collection of Roy Campbell's poetry.

The Kirk Center also welcomed Spasimir Domaradzki of Poland, who is revising his doctoral dissertation,

"Restriction of Civil Liberties Protection with Regard to National Security in the United States," for publication as a book. He received his Ph.D. in Political Science from the Institute of International Relations and Political Studies at the Faculty of International and Political Studies of the Jagiellonian University. Dr. Domaradzki is Associate Professor of Political Science and International Relations at the Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski Krakow University College.

SHAKESPEARE SEMINAR WITH LADY CLARE ASQUITH

On October 10-11, the Kirk Center hosted a seminar on Shakespeare led by Lady Clare Asquith. The topic was "The Mystery of Shakespeare's Sonnets," and the mystery in question has to do with the influence of Shakespeare's religious beliefs on his writing.

For quite some time, most scholars believed that Shakespeare was indifferent to religion, and some even claimed he was an atheist, but more recently several scholars have taken seriously the evidence that Shakespeare grew up in a Roman Catholic region and was raised by parents who were resistant to the new church (for instance, his father left behind a spiritual testament witnessing to his faith). Stephen Greenblatt (Harvard University) points out in his biographical work *Will in the World* that Shakespeare's teachers at the grammar school in Stratford were all of the old faith. The question becomes, then, what influence his religious upbringing had on Shakespeare's works. Lady Asquith's book, *Shadowplay: The Hidden Beliefs and Coded Politics of William Shakespeare* (2005), is one of the most thorough and authoritative explorations of this fascinating topic.

In this seminar, attended by Shakespeare scholars from all over the U.S., Lady Asquith focused on the coded references to religious and political issues in the Sonnets. In addition to her presentations, Ben Lockerd spoke on "Discursive and Intuitive Knowledge in Shakespeare," and Stratford Caldecott, Director of the Center for Faith and Culture in Oxford, U.K., and author of *Secret Fire: The Spiritual Vision of J.R.R. Tolkien*, gave a presentation on Tolkien.

This program was co-sponsored by Thomas More College of Liberal Arts, and several students from the college were in attendance.

"Life with Russell Kirk"

Mrs. Kirk Addresses Eliot
Conference at GVSU in August



RUSSELL KIRK CENTER: SELECTED ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS-2008

- Jan. 18:** Calvin College Students came to tour the Center and to participate in a full day of lectures as the last activity for their class on "American Conservatism."
- March 8:** Seminar on "Theory and the Humanities" with Professor James Seaton from Michigan State University and Professor Lee Trepanier from Saginaw Valley State University. Also, Chuck Chalberg performed Chesterton and Mencken.
- March 27:** Representative Thaddeus McCotter (R. Plymouth, MI) and his chief of staff, Andy Anuzis, came to tour the RKC.
- April 4:** Mrs. Kirk attended memorial Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral for William F. Buckley.
- April 10:** Mrs. Kirk attended reception at the Polish Embassy, sponsored by the Chesterton Institute, to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Chesterton's book *Orthodoxy*, and its recent publication in Polish.
- April 18-19:** RKC hosted a dinner for students in the Russell Kirk American Studies Program at Hillsdale College, followed by lectures by Annette Kirk on the work of the RKC and by Gleaves Whitney (Senior Fellow) on "What You Should Know About Russell Kirk."
- April 24-27:** RKC hosts an ISI-Liberty Fund conference on "Shaftesbury, Mandeville, and Smith on Liberty, Virtue, and Prosperity." Facilitators were: Dr. Randy Simmons, Professor of History at Utah State University and Dr. James Stoner, Professor of Political Science at Louisiana State University.
- May 2:** Three-hour interview of Annette Kirk about the work of the RKC and tour of the Center for the magazine *Communiqué*, by reporter Chris Noe.
- May 18:** Arrival of Marsha Brito and Alex Catharino from Brazil. Translators and journalists, they are researching Kirk's concept of the moral imagination for articles in international journals, including *Communio*.
- May 20:** Arrival of Summer Wilbur Fellow, Jason Baxter, and family. Jason worked on a translation of Dante and on his dissertation at Notre Dame University.
- May 29-31:** ISI-Liberty Fund conference on "Liberty and Hayek." Facilitators were: Nicholas Capaldi, Professor of Business Ethics and Philosophy at Loyola
- University New Orleans and Graham H. Walker, Professor of Government at Patrick Henry College.
- June 1:** Arrival of Summer Wilbur Fellow, Gabriel Rossetti, a law student, and his wife and baby. Gabriel researched Kirk's understanding of natural law.
- June 7:** Presentation by Wilbur Fellow Amy Richards on her dissertation for the Divinity School at the University of Edinburgh, followed by dinner and music.
- July 24-27:** At the CIRCE Institute's annual conference for classical school teachers (co-sponsored by the Center for the American Idea), in Houston, the first annual Russell Kirk Paideia Prize was awarded to Dr. Peter Sampo, founder and president emeritus of Thomas More College.

August 21-24: ISI-Liberty Fund conference on "Liberty, Commerce, and Character in Hume's Essays." Facilitators were: Richard Gamble, Professor of History at Hillsdale College and Jonathan Jacobs, Professor of Philosophy at Colgate University.

October 3-5: ISI Annual Intellectual Retreat for ISI Regional Ambassadors. Attendees were Collegiate Network campus leaders. Speakers were Dr. Gary Gregg, the Director of the McConnell Center for Political Leadership at the University of Louisville, who spoke on "Leadership and Imagination," and Dr. Richard Gamble, Professor of History at Hillsdale College, who spoke on "Russell Kirk and the American Identity."

October 18: Tour of the Russell Kirk Center for Congressman David Camp and staff.



In September, the Kirk Center and the Center for the American Idea (Houston) co-sponsored a Liberty Fund Seminar, *The American Founding and the Western Intellectual Tradition: Education and the Free Society*. Participants from many parts of the U.S. took part in the two-day colloquium. The discussion leaders were Professor Timothy Fuller (Colorado College) and Professor Ben Lockerd (Grand Valley State University). Topics of discussion included state control of education vs. parental control, school choice, and liberal arts education.

THE RUSSELL
KIRK CENTER
NEWSLETTER

The Russell Kirk Center
P.O. Box 4
Mecosta, MI 49332

Phone: 231-972-5590

Fax: 231-972-8078

www.kirkcenter.org

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ELIOT SEMINAR FOR
CENTRAL MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

A dynamic group of students at Central Michigan University recently formed a study group under the auspices of the Intercollegiate Studies Institute. For the first semester of this year, the students have been exploring the cultural thought of T. S. Eliot, with guidance from Mr. Bruce Walker of the Mackinaw Center for Public Policy. On October 25 the Kirk Center offered a seminar for the CMU students—open to the public as well. Mr. Jim Person of Gale Research delivered a talk entitled "To Renew and Rebuild Civilization!: An Introduction to T. S. Eliot and His Significance." Dr. Ben Lockerd spoke about the friendship between Kirk and Eliot and also addressed the subject of Church and State relations in the thought of Christopher Dawson and Eliot.

PETER STANLIS LECTURE ON ROBERT FROST

On August 30th, Dr. Peter Stanlis gave a public lecture at the Kirk Center on Robert Frost's philosophical dualism. Dr. Stanlis is Professor Emeritus of English at Rockford College. He is best known as a leading authority on Edmund Burke: his book *Edmund Burke and the Natural Law* (1955) corrected a serious misunderstanding of Burke that had been prevalent up to that time. He found a like-minded understanding of Burke in the work of Russell Kirk, and the two collaborated for many years after. Dr. Stanlis also enjoyed an enduring friendship with Robert Frost, whom he met in June, 1939, at the Bread Loaf School of English. His book *Robert Frost: The Poet as Philosopher* was published in 2007, and it is likely to have as big an influence on Frost scholarship as his book on Burke did in that field. During this lecture at the Center, Dr. Stanlis presented some of the central ideas in his book. The lecture took place in the new library conference room.



CELEBRATING PETER STANLIS'S 89TH BIRTHDAY

Seated: Peter Stanlis. Left to Right: Wilbur Fellows Spasimir Domaradzki and Robert Asch, Senior Fellow Bruce Frohnen, Stanlis's wife Joan, Micheline and Ben Lockerd, and Annette Kirk.