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Human Relationship in the Plays of T. S. Eliot

DORIS BILZ

PREFACE

One of the primary aims of the English Honors program at Western is to create a situation which both stimulates and encourages the student to probe more deeply into literature than he normally could in the traditional undergraduate experience.

Freed from the limitations of the large class, we try in various ways to get beyond the benefits of the normal approach of regular reading assignments, short papers, lectures, and discussions. One possibility open to us in our special circumstances is to provide the time and the resources which allow the student to read intensively a small, isolated body of literature, to immerse himself in literary works of his own choosing and then to communicate carefully and at length what he has discovered. The third and final semester of Western's English Honors program gives him this chance.

For most of our students this has been a difficult, trying and highly satisfying experience. The preceding classroom-orientation has often been a hindrance to such independent work, and the lack of normal teacher-guidance a frustrating novelty; but the freedom (even when tempered with the demands of other courses) has borne some rich fruit.

Doris Bilz' study, "Human Relationships in the Plays of T. S. Eliot," is an outstanding result of that program. I can't recall how much she read or which draft this printed copy represents, and there is simply no way to measure her involvement in the paper; but I do remember her reaction that this study was the most satisfying college work she did and that it opened up for her aspects and depths of literature of which she had never previously been aware. That is good enough for me and for the rest of us involved in the English Honors program.

Apparently it was also good enough for the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters, who awarded her one of only three first prizes in their 1961 state-wide competition among all the undergraduates in Michigan's colleges and universities. Such recognition was doubly pleasing to me and to my colleagues: first, as a fitting and reserved reward for Doris; second, as a gratifying endorsement of our program.

Dr. Philip Denenfeld
Chairman, English Honors