DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 187 191 HE 012 601

AUTHOR Smith, James P., Ed.; Weiland, Steven, Ed.
TITLE The Extracurricular Curriculum. Academic Disciplines and Public Humanities Programs. Federation Resources 5.
INSTITUTION Federation of Public Programs in the Humanities, Minneapolis, Minn.
SPONS AGENCY National Endowment for the Humanities (NFAH), Washington, D.C.; Schwartz Paper Co., Inc., Muncie, Ind.
PUB DATE 80
NOTE 118p.; Papers presented at the National Conference of State Humanities Councils (October 1979)
AVAILABLE FROM Federation of Public Programs in the Humanities, 15 South Fifth Street, Suite 720, Minneapolis, MN 55402 ($3.00)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Learning; Community Programs; Community Role; Essays; Foreign Countries; Government Role; Government School Relationship; Higher Education; History Instruction; *Humanities; *Humanities Instruction; Intellectual Disciplines; Literature; Philosophy; *Public Policy; Rewards; Scholarship; *State Programs
IDENTIFIERS Denmark

ABSTRACT

Six essays exploring the uses of the humanities in public programs are presented. They relate to the traditional and current interests of the disciplines, and discuss matters that bear on the conduct of projects and the activities of participating humanists in state programs. They are the result of a study of the concepts and practices in the academic disciplines that can promote an effective "public pedagogy" in the humanities. The essays include: The Rebirth of Civic Culture through the Humanities: The Danish Experience (R. Oakley Winters); The Public Study of Literature (Alan Shusterman); Philosophic Tradition, Rediscovery and the Public (Fred Weber); Doing History in Public Places (Michael Sherman); Scholarship in the Humanities and the Public: The Case of Literature (Richard Lewis); Lively Wonder or Tangled Web? New Thoughts about Adult Learning (Charles C. Cole); and Pearls and Rubies to Their Discourse: Academic Rewards for American Scholars (Steven Weiland). Appended is a gazette of the contributors. (MSE)

The Extracurricular Curriculum

Academic Disciplines and Public Humanities Programs

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The Federation of Public Programs in the Humanities is a national organization of state humanities programs. Its purpose is to augment the state programs' efforts to bring the humanities to the public through shared inquiry, imagination and discussion with scholars so that the humanities can be recognized as central to the values of the people of this country and as a means of uniting the past, the present and the future.

The state programs, groups of citizens from academic and public life aided by professional staffs, receive basic grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities. They carry out their purpose by administering grants for projects planned and conducted by citizens of their states.

Through demonstrations of the applications of the humanities to the problems and possibilities of local, regional and national life, the state programs refute the notion that the humanities belong strictly to the college and university curriculum. In 1978 the state programs, the first of which began in 1971, spent over 22 million dollars, matched by cash and in-kind contributions, in support of more than 24,000 projects. Their combined efforts reached more than 23,000,000 people. Through public forums, lectures, debates, films and other forms of media, the state programs have made the purposes and methods of the humanities available to the public in ways as varied as the interests of the disciplines themselves.

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Federation of Public Programs in the Humanities
15 South Fifth Street, Suite 720
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402
(612)332-2407

This publication is made possible with financial support from the Division of State Programs, National Endowment for the Humanities and the Schwartz Paper Co., Inc., Muncie, Indiana.

THE EXTRACURRICULAR CURRICULUM:

ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES AND PUBLIC HUMANITIES PROGRAMS

Edited by

James P. Smith and Steven Weiland

15 S. 5th St., Suite 720, Minneapolis, Mn. 55402 (612)332-2407

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THE EXTRACURRICULAR CURRICULUM:

ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES AND PUBLIC HUMANITIES PROGRAMS

INTRODUCTION

The Extracurricular Curriculum originated in a resolution approved by Federation members at the 1978 National Conference of State Humanities Councils. Introduced by the North Carolina Committee for the Humanities, it proposed a study of those concepts and practises in the academic disciplines which can promote an effective "public pedagogy" in the humanities. In the words of the Oregon delegation, what was needed was scholarship in the public humanities which stressed the need to "improve the scholar's readiness to present and exchange ideas with the public as one knowledgeable about history, literature, philosophy and the other disciplines.'

The essays were presented at the October 1979 National Conference of State Humanities Councils. Slightly revised for publication here, the essays do not, of course, address all the issues or answer definitively the complex and difficult questions. They are meant to explore the uses of the humanities in public programs in relation to the traditional and current interests of the disciplines and to discuss related matters which bear on the conduct of projects and the activities of participating humanists. The papers also display the capacity for scholarship in the state programs themselves.* They are a contribution to the intellectual force of the programs locally and nationally. For as we encourage individual scholars to think about the direction of their work and its relation to the public we must as well reflect on the uses of public programs and their relation to the disciplines and institutions which support them.

In using the phrase "public pedagogy" at times in the essays we risk the introduction of a new debate over definition which would rival -- though it seems impossible -- that over the definition of the humanities. Our intention, however, is to suggest a variation on classroon pedagogy which has itself, of course, been the subject of considerable discussion. In an impressive statement on pedagogy in the humanities, literary critic Roger Shattuck has suggested a useful model.

> A class is a device for opening up the full resonance of a text. In it the sensitive teacher, through suggestion or a kind of elementary pointing, can induce a series of recognitions of real or imaginary experiences of one's own evoked by the text -- recognitions of greatness of mind or spirit, belonging not necessarily to the biographical author but to his creative persona. Ultimately a class

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* In all cases, however, the writers speak for themselves and not their organizations.

> helps a student reach a sense of participation in the text itself, in the whole tradition of human experience made available through literary art, and in a group going through the same process. Though he may later forget the specifics, the sense of variety and intimacy will probably remain.

The "text" of a public program in the humanities may be an idea, its history, or presentation in a work of literature. Public pedagogy, however, still requires the kind of participation, often called "dialogue" in project guidelines, central to traditional instruction. As the state humanities programs strive to create public counterparts to the classroom, significant issues emerge which call for careful deliberation.

The three papers in Part I attempt the important task of conveying an understanding of the current state of three of the disciplines which produce the "texts." Though certain tendencies in literature, philosophy and history are criticized (in particular those practices which insulate the humanities from the kinds of action in the public sphere that could sustain their humanistic character), the authors speak plainly as they insist that the humanities should not be used in public programs as collections of results or techniques to be applied to social problems. The authors show that what is needed is conceptual reorientation in the disciplines; they sketch alterations in direction and approaches that could reveal to the public the natural importance of the humanities even where they are not relevant or useful in the utilitarian sense. Alan Shusterman for literature, Fred Weber for philosophy and Michael Sherman for history suggest that the needed changes must be made on two fronts, for neither the topics for research and classroom instruction nor the professional policies governing participation by academic humanists in public programs will change independently of the other. They go on to suggest ways that the state programs can be catalysts in such a renovation, ways the programs can become more visible as public educators.

The same diagnoses, aspirations and rigor animate the three papers in Part II, which treat factors common to all the disciplines in their academic and public settings. For example, at times it is not just literature, not just philosophy or history which sits in the dock, but scholarship as such. Richard Lewis' paper treats the implications of this fact of contemporary culture, illustrating his analysis and proposals with examples from literary study. Charles Coles' paper focuses on the audiences which gather at public humanities programs. On their behalf, he criticizes a third party, the learning theorists, who have seriously neglected the situation of adults who wish quite particularly to attend to the humanities. The nuances and uncertainties of application involved in acquiring an understanding of the humanities have not been duly appreciated by those who

would take the lead in this aspect of adult education. Concluding the series is an essay which describes the traditions and policies of "rewards" in academic life, and their relation to the "service" interests of higher education and the state humanities programs.

The six papers are appropriately introduced by Oak Winters' essay on the story of the Danish folk highschool movement in the 19th and 20th centuries. He focuses on the role of the humanities in shaping the movement's leadership of the Danish renaissance in the 19th century; implicitly, he advocates the adaptation of the Danish model to suitable conditions in this country, as an approach to pedagogy in the humanities which could be practical, efficient, inspiriting -- and for the public.

The Extracurricular Curriculum is evidence, we hope, of the strong interest of state humanities programs in advancing public humanities scholarship, exploring the rationale beyond their efforts. Public programs will benefit as will the audience they serve.

Acknowledgements: Clarke Chambers, Professor of History, University of Minnesota and Chair, Minnesota Humanities Commission; and Carol Groneman, Executive Director, New York Council for the Humanities provided valuable assistance in the preparation of some of these papers and other features of the project. Credit for the title to Michael Sherman.

James P. Smith

Steven Weiland

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These papers are dedicated to the memory of

Charles Frankel

who in his teaching and scholarship set high standards of public utility and intellectual vigor.

PROLOGUE

THE REBIRTH OF A CIVIC CULTURE THROUGH THE HUMANITIES: THE DANISH EXPERIENCE

by

R. Oakley Winters

For fifty years -- between 1814 and 1864 -- Denmark was engaged in a continuing struggle against extinction. Disaster after disaster cut at the vitals of this once-proud kingdom: the sack of Copenhagen and capture of the royal fleet by the British in 1807, resulting in loss of control over the Baltic; national bankruptcy in 1813; loss of Norway (to Sweden) in 1814, an especially difficult blow to Danish pride; civil war, followed by war with Prussia, over the border duchies of Slesvig and Holstein in 1848; withdrawal of the monarchy in the same year under intense civil pressure; and loss of the two duchies to the German Confederation in 1864, which removed one-third of its remaining territory and forty percent of its population.

Effects on the national psyche were devastating. One Dane recalled the cumulative impact of these economic and military catastrophies as a literal paralysis of the Danish will: "...All activity stopped as dead as if the last day were expected tomorrow; the bookworm ceased gnawing and the thief no longer cared to steal. ... Outwardly we were dead, literally, by thousands from sleeping sickness."[1] Impoverished, partitioned and despirited, the prognosis for national survival was grim. Would the end come swiftly at the hands of the German military again, or would death move more slowly over the little nation through gradual acculturation?

As we all know now, Denmark survived. Moreover, she survived to flourish. The fifty years of darkness, the most desperate in her history, were followed by fifty of the most progressive enjoyed by any nation in the modern era. What occurred during this half-century was a remarkable transformation of Danish society, a self-conscious reformation aimed at establishing a distinct national culture, participation by all classes in the political and economic life of the kingdom, and regaining some of the respect she had lost in the arena of international affairs -- albeit through moral suasion rather than military power.

Prior to the loss of Norway in 1814, power was concentrated in the hands of a relatively small noble class which controlled the economy through large agricultural homesteads worked by peasant tenants. The hard-working small freeholder comprised the majority of Danes, but he was virtually excluded from participation in national life by limited suffrage and restrictive marketing and credit policies. While tenancy was a voluntary status under the law, access to land ownership and markets was severely restricted by minority controls. It was this restive and excluded majority of small landholders which led the reformation of Danish culture, taking advantages of military defeat, bankruptcy, and loss of national esprit to wrest power from crown and nobility to establish constitutional government with broad suffrage.

If life was moderately regressive by European standards when absolute rule was abolished in 1848, within just three generations Denmark would boast the most democratic economy on the continent,[2] the world's highest literacy rate, and an astounding average living standard. If one accepts a premise held by the great Irish humanist George Russell, that "a nation is cultivated only so far as the average man, not the exceptional person, is cultivated and has knowledge of the thought, imagination, and intellectual history of his nation," then Denmark, by the early years of the 20th century, had achieved an unusually high state of cultivation. When Olive Dame Campbell traveled from North Carolina to Denmark in 1926, she was impressed by the level of general culture, the industriousness of the average citizen, and the elan among people of the rural countryside. She observed:

> For after you have watched and studied and thought, you know there must be something behind all this intelligent activity. In our great country, the average farmer is not interested in planting or saving trees for posterity or in much else which may give more work or interfere with his income. How has it come about that the average farmer in Denmark knows the value of good stock and keeps careful account of the yields of his cows? How did the common man come to realize, ethically or economically, the importance of producing as high-grade a product as he was capable of producing; and of keeping his product at that grade or improving it? What is the secret of Danish cooperation? Without doubt some American farmers are better agriculturalists than the average Dane, but it is the high average that strikes one in Denmark, not only in agriculture but in general intelligence.[3]

What makes the Danish renaissance especially intriguing is that its seeds were sown in the nation's darkest hours, when she had lost her status as the northern continental power. Vulnerable after centuries of dominance, the Danes turned collectively inward

to find the will and resource to prevail against overwhelming odds. Equally fascinating is the geographical and social strength of the movement. Copenhagen and the large cultural centers of Aarhus and Odense were virtually by-passed; the small landholders and peasants from the rural countryside, especially the Jutland peninsula provided the leaders and the popular support for what has become known as the Danish Folk Enlightenment. Unlike the emergence of high culture in 5th-century Greece, the halcyon years of the Roman Empire, or during the 16th-century Italian Rennaisance, each of which corresponded with dominance by their respective governments in affairs international and drew their leadership from the privileged classes, the Folk Enlightenment in Denmark was a movement of rural commoners. While the Danish revival did not produce intellectual and artistic attainments to equal Greece, Rome and Venice at their respective heights, one is hard-pressed to find a popular culture with literacy, competence and civility so widespread as in 20th-century Denmark. British historian Richard Livingstone has called it "the only successful experiment in educating the masses of a nation."[4]

There was a third unique facet which marked the movement: its substance was rooted in the humanities, especially in language, history, mythology, literature, music, and religion. It is this aspect, along with the profound impact the national revival had upon virtually every countryman, that is the special focus of this paper -- and for those who are interested in relationships between the humanities and popular culture.

II

The theorist behind Denmark's Folk Enlightenment was Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig, Lutheran pastor, poet, composer, and, in his last years, statesman. Little known outside his home country, he is a hero among his people; no individual has been so influential in the development of modern Danish thought and culture.[5]

Grundtvig grew to adulthood during those dark years following 1813. Depressed by the indifference shown by the crown and the nobility in the face of pending national disaster, Grundtvig immersed himself in the study of cultures. He became especially interested in the relationship between nations' spiritual concepts of themselves -- their sense of special destiny -- and their civic lives. He was intrigued by the Israelites' covenant relationship with their God, as it seemed to provide a vision which influenced the everyday life and laws of the Jewish nation. Among the early Christians, prior to the recording of the Gospels, he discerned a similar relationship between spiritual and secular life: the presence of a living myth which was expressed through the community it served.[6]

Later, Grundtvig was influenced by Frederick W. J. von Schelling's idea of "anskuelse": a uniquely national character of shared expectations, traditions and aspirations. A people find their special destiny, their "anskuelse" by continuous search for meaning in the mythology which shapes its culture. "Assuming that the myths of every people are a pleasing expression of its spirit and that they form its spiritual temple," Grundtvig wrote, "they are necessarily prophetic. They forebode the destiny of a people."[7]

Denmark, he concluded, had lost its sense of special destiny; so he began to advocate the study of ancient myths from the Viking Era, convinced that all Danes -- not only the landed wealthy -- must search out a uniquely national "anskuelse," one which must be at once Nordic and informed by the Judaic-Christian concept of a covenant community. The tools for this search, in Grundtvig's words, would be:

> the language, history, statesmanship, political science, legislation and administration of the fatherland, but this is not enough... the people... must be approached. .. from the requirements of life itself, and this means the life of the people. There must be a concern for the very core of this life[8]...
>
> The idea that those who constitute the nucleus of the people -- agricultural workers, farmers, manual workers, sailors, and businessmen -- do not need any training than that which is gained behind the plow, in the shop, climbing the mast of a vessel, in a place of business may be all right for barbarians and tyrants...(but not for Danes).... The same potential for educational and cultural achievement is discoverable in both cottage and manor house.[9]

Humanistic study and discourse was to be the vehicle for the Danish awakening, but language, history and the like were not to be studied as ends in themselves. Instead, he discerned the humanities as means by which citizens could transcend their privatism and ignorance to reach higher levels of personal and collective meaning and purpose in being Danes. "He who wishes to ascend to the immortal gods must hear their songs in the cradle," Grundtvig said. "He must visualize them as images and models for what he is to become."[10]

III

Implementation of Grundtvig's theories has been realized through the folk highschool, a residential institution peculiar to its specific national purpose and without counterpart in western history. The school is designed for rural adults (eighteen years and older) to attend during the cold months, November

through March. Each is private, owned by church societies, political parties, agricultural cooperatives, trade unions, or, more commonly, by associations created expressly for the purpose. Grants for construction and operations, and to students for tuition, have increased over the years; these now amount to about seventy percent of the annual costs for operation.[11] In spite of the predominance of public funding, the eighty or so folk highschools remain under the control of private boards of trustees; government restrictions on programs virtually do not exist.

Folk highschool curricula reflect Grundtvig's concept of the eminent practicality of study in language, literature, history and world affairs: that it is the humanities which provoke questions of ultimate value and meaning. The curriculum at Ryslinge in 1850 was formed around courses in Human History, Biblical History, Church History, Myths of the North, Geography, Literature of Denmark and Music.[12] One hundred and thirty years later, the curriculum at Askov, the oldest and largest school, retains its humanistic core; there is less emphasis on church and Biblical history and more attention to world affairs and social problems. (Interestingly, only three courses in the sciences -- physics, biology, and chemistry -- are offered.)

Also retained is Grundtvig's idea that education for adults should be self-motivated. Folk highschools offer no examinations, no requirements for entry, no credit hours, and no certification upon completion of a term. This is consistent with Grundtvig's purpose "that all who attend and who already have found a vocation of their choice and competence could return to their task with increased desire, with clearer views of human and civic conditions. .. and with increased joy in the community of the people."[13] Applying external measurements or rewards to such an experience cheapen it, he reasoned.

To Grundtvig, a special type of teaching would be required to stimulate a national revival among the common people. Danes must wrestle with the concept of a national "anskuelse" -- a spiritual as well as an intellectual quest. Thus, education must inspire as well as describe. Teachers of a very special sort would be required, persons deeply learned whose knowledge has been tempered by practical experiences outside the academy.[14] They should reflect the nation's highest aspirations, as artists, public servants, clergy, philosophers, and writers. Even today, few folk highschool teachers are trained as pedagogues -- nor do many hold terminal research-oriented degrees from their universities. An American visiting several schools in 1977 concluded that unlike many cultures, the best of the population is chosen to teach in folk highschools.[15]

The impact of the folk highschool on life in rural Denmark has been, in a word, profound. Between 1880 and 1910, approximately one-third of the rural population had attended a folk

highschool. Currently, about ten thousand Danes each year attend "long terms" (five months), and thousands more take summer "short terms." If one examines the more significant reforms in Denmark over the past 125 years -- the cooperative movement in farming and agri-business, the reclamation of some 3,000 square miles of heath on Jutland, reforestation, expansion of common school education, development of the Social Democratic Party, family and medical services and the like -- the leaders share participation in a folk highschool program. Like a secular missionary society, Grundtvig's "school for life" has exercised an influence far greater than its numbers reveal, as noted by David C. Davis in his mid-1960's study of the movement:

> This easy relationship between the government and the highschools... has had much to do with the great influence which the highschool and highschool idea have exerted on the life of the country. With highschool people... in government and among the leaders in the voting populace, it was possible for the schools to keep their freedom which is so essential to their work.... At the same time the folk highschool people carried their... way of thinking into matters of government, so that ideas of cooperation, social welfare, conservation and the like were congenial to them. Thus the highschools, thriving in the supportive climate which their graduates and supporters helped to provide, were able to expose more... people to this same folk highschool idea -- these people then moved out into society... endeavoring to put the ideas into action.[17]

It is presumptuous to suggest that the folk highschool reformed Danish culture. More accurately, the folk highschool was an institutional embodiment of the thought which informed the Folk Enlightenment -- a popular response to Grundtvig's concept of a national search for a vision of its spiritual destiny. Attempts to export the folk highschool's institutional framework have failed to recognize this subjective reality: the folk highschool is a means, not an end in itself; it is a cultural vehicle designed to help Danes to know and reflect on the meaning of citizenship and national life in the broadest sense. In Grundtvig's words, the highschool "must strive to awaken, nourish, and clarify a higher concept of human living,... specifically of the life of the Danish people and the Danish citizen."[18]

IV

What lessons for public programs in the humanities can we draw from the Danish Folk Enlightenment? Perhaps there are a few concepts which are transferable.

Above all else, the Danish experience reveals the important relationship between spiritual and civic experience in human life. Spiritual not in the narrow sectarian expression so common to formalized worship, but spiritual as relating to man's need to transcend the material, the personal, and the mundane in reaching into the unknown toward a higher ideal. This Platonic concept of the Good, Grundtvig believed, could, when sought by an entire culture, inspire greatness in the routine civic life of that culture. Without a spiritual vision of what can be, there is no ideal to guide everyday life. The spiritual domain provides the vision, and the vision is interpreted and understood through myth. Myth, in turn, infuses language, history, literature, law, and religion -- the humanities -- with meaning. The humanities provide the parables through which the myth lives within the experience of citizens. This suggests that the humanities, when viewed as means rather than ends, may help even the most literal-minded of our fellows to move from private experience to the realm of shared experience, learning to see new meaning in the process. The transactions hold potential for enriching both the "student" and the myths.

The transcendental value of the humanities appears to be at the heart of the Danish Enlightenment. Literature, history and myth held a purpose: to allow the rural Dane to move beyond private experience. When undertaken on a broad scale in search of a corporate purpose, in closely-knit residential communities (folk highschools), the study of the humanities served to hone a national personality marked by unusually high competence and conscience. Important, however, was Grundtvig's notion that education must begin within the everyday life of the citizen and then challenge him to move beyond what he knows and understands.

The transcendental potential of the humanities, allowing for virtually anyone of average intelligence to move through the veil of privatism toward a new understanding of meaning and purpose in public life, is a powerful tool which we have at our disposal. If we look at all the humanistic disciplines as sharing this transcendent quality, could this be a first step in defining the essence of a public role for the humanities?

Footnotes

1. Quote from A.H. Hollman in 1910, recorded by Olive Dame Campbell in The Danish Folk School, (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1928), p. 32.

2. In 1850, 42.5% of the farmers in Denmark were tenants; in 1905, the percentage of tenant farmers was reduced to 10.1. In 1925, 92% of the farmers owned the land they cultivated; 66% of the agricultural land was in the hands of middle-class farmers owning 50-60 acres, and an additional 13.6% of the land was owned by 20,000 farmers working 20-25 acres. Thus, 79.6% of the agricultural land was owned and worked by small landholders -- in stark contrast to the predominance of large holders in 1850. While a modest increase in managed holding has taken place since 1925, the small, family-owned and operated freehold remains predominant in Denmark. Ib Frederiksen, "Agriculture," Denmark: An Official Handbook, (Copenhagen Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1974), pp. 461-468.

3. Olive Dame Campbell, The Danish Folk School, p. 5.

4. Richard Livingstone, On Education (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1944), p. 44.

5. Grundtvig's contemporary, Søren Kierkegaard, so renowned outside Denmark, is virtually unknown at home. Samuel S. Corl, The Danish Folk High School of the Seventies (Paper soon to be published by Michigan State University, 1979), p. 2.

6. The writings of Irenaeus, one of the fathers of the Christian church held special meaning for Grundtvig. Irenaeus proclaimed the role of the church in maintaining the "living word" through worship and the sacraments. Johannes Knudsen, Introductory Essay in N.F.S. Grundtvig: Selected Writings (Philadelphia Fortress Press, 1976), p. 3.

7. N.F.S. Grundtvig, "Introduction to Nordic Mythology," (1932). Translated and edited by Johannes Knudsen, N.F.S. Grundtvig: Selected Writings, p. 33.

8. N.F.S. Grundtvig, "The Danish Highschool," Ibid., pp. 161-162.

9. Grundtvig, "The School for Life," (1838). Ibid., p. 156.

10. Grundtvig, "Introduction to Nordic Mythology," Ibid., p. 38.

11. The importance of the folk highschool is revealed by the high level of public support. In 1975-76, per-student expenditure by the national government was $3,144. This compares to $1,340 per student in the commonschools and to $2,724 per student at the Gymnasium. At the University of Copenhagen, only natural science and medicine receive more per-student assistance than the folk highschools. Samuel S. Corl, The Danish Folk High School of the Seventies (unpublished paper, 1979), p. 15.

12. David C. Davis, Model for Humanistic Education: The Danish Folk Highschool (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1971), p. 9.

13. Grundtvig, "The Danish High School," Op. cit., p. 162.

14. "The matter is not solved by books but by an explanation of human living. Books cannot settle issues; they can only describe." Grundtvig, "Introduction to Nordic Mythology," Ibid, p. 25.

15. Corl, Op cit., p. 5.

16. Davis, Op. cit., p. 6.

17. Ibid, p. 7.

18. Grundtvig, "The Danish High School," Op. cit., p. 172.

PART I:

LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY, HISTORY AND THE PUBLIC

THE PUBLIC STUDY OF LITERATURE

by

Alan J. Shusterman

Public literature projects have not been at the center of the National Endowment for the Humanities state program. Scholars of literature raised theoretical and pedagogical objections to the program's first guidelines, which required that the humanities be used to discuss public policy issues. In response, some state programs interpreted the policy requirement broadly, permitting projects on contemporary issues rather than specific legislative questions. The 1976 congressional reauthorization of NEH permitted more extensive guideline revisions, but most of the resultant changes involve literature only peripherally. New grant categories deal primarily with local history, museums and media. Literature projects are particularly problematic because creative writing is considered an art form and assigned legislatively to the Arts Endowment and state arts commissions. Literature study is clearly part of the congressional humanities definition, but dramatic performances and poetry readings (excellent stimuli for study) are art forms. Even today, many state programs still express a strong preference for policy issue grant projects. Legislative and guideline changes have not yet produced a clear analysis of or direction for literature projects.

The problems are complex, and they extend far beyond the boundaries of the state program. They are rooted in the antipopulist and antibourgeois ideologies of the modern and postmodern movements in literature and criticism, and they have developed as an integral part of the profession of literature study, as practiced in American colleges and universities. To consider the public's involvement in literature study without reference to the state of the discipline is to remain limited to platitudes or proposals far from reality. When we discuss how the public should be encouraged to study literature, we must be certain we understand both the study and the public. No simple grant formula will make a difference.

I am grateful for the sabbatical leave granted to me for this project by the Indiana Committee for the Humanities in cooperation with the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Fortunately for the goals of the state program, serious writers and scholars are beginning to raise basic questions about literature, criticism and the profession. In this paper, I will look at those questions and then relate what I see to public literature study. Two warnings: First, because the issues are complex and interwoven, I will be forced to generalize in areas deserving more study, but I will give suggestions for further reading. Second, although most of what I say also applies to drama and poetry, I will draw examples from fiction, the area I know best.

The Condition of Literature

Ask three writers and three scholars what are the most important types of fictional writing today and you will probably come away with six different answers. The answers probably will fall on a continuum stretching from traditional fiction (which is usually mimetic, that is, it represents life, tells a story) through varying degrees of narrative complexity (juxtaposing to a story a self-conscious, usually non-chronological exposition), to the extremes of postmodern, avant garde or experimental fiction (where, generally, the artifice of the writer is all, little or no story exists, and the ideology or anti-ideological stance of the writer is carried through the performance in language). Traditional novels tend to be equated with a conservative or bourgeois political stance; experimental ones with radical politics. Along with the continuum from traditional to experimental is a continuum in readership. Generally speaking, the more traditional a novel, the easier it is to understand and the more it is likely to have a wide audience. The more experimental or avant garde a novel, the more it is intended for a smaller, self-conscious, or elite or educated audience. Writers of genius appear all along the continuum, but when a critic makes a judgment about the importance of a work or writer, he also makes a judgment about a view of society, about the audience for literature and about the modern/postmodern rejection of traditional narrative forms.

Beginning in France, in the nineteenth century, the task of writers became not to please but to challenge the reader, not to reflect society but to transform it. These were the roots of modernism. A bourgeois audience was assumed, but the work of art was written in opposition to the interests of the audience. The modern work subjects conventional ideas, characters and forms to the vision of the artist, usually with the purpose of leaving old meanings in fragments intended to represent the chaotic possibilities underlying normal life. For example, Leopold Bloom's day in Ulysses is to some extent an excuse and situation for James Joyce's linguistic performance which makes art of a banal life. Postmodern writing takes the basic principles of modernism further. Writers such as Alain Robbe-Grillet in France and William Gass, John Barth and Donald Barthelme in America in varying degrees reject the ideas of coherence, character and story. Robbe-Grillet argues

that the novel itself represents a social order whose time has passed. Along with the old social order, these writers reject its unenlightened populace and write for the audience educated by the modernists and by modern ideologies, particularly those of Freud and Marx. An educated readership has been prepared for experiments, and postmodern novelists can write for a specific--albeit small--audience.

Along with these twentieth century movements, the traditional novel has been maintained in many forms, and many novelists write for a less specialized readership. Early in the century Ford Madox Ford writes of his collaboration with Joseph Conrad, "We thought just simply of the reader. Would this passage grip him? If not it must go. Will this word make him pause and slow down the story? If there is any danger of that, away with it." Although both men were experimentalists, in their collaborations and apart they attend to common readers. Throughout the century serious American writers such as Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Wolfe and Bellow all draw from the experimentalists while maintaining story, character and the representation of society in their novels.

Another traditional strand in fiction of this century is found in popular literature. As literary art increasingly set itself in opposition to the interests and conventions of common readers, the readers found others more willing to please them. Romance, science fiction, mysteries, spy novels all are popular genres, all have some good writers, and all follow fairly straightforward or formulaic lines in the development of plot, character and narrative. These novels comprise most best seller lists, but they are not the literature treated seriously by academics and "good" writers. The splits in literary culture between "serious" and "popular" literature and between representational and non-representational literature are important to the public's involvement in literature study. One cannot assume general familiarity with common texts, and the works most frequently studied and written about by academics are not the ones most often read by the public. The scholar's relationship with popular fiction is likely to be different from his relationship with "serious" writing.

Some serious-but-traditional writers recently have begun to issue an open challenge to postmodern fiction, arguing that the avant garde itself has become the home of the most conventional and trivial ideas. The most vociferous challenger at the moment is John Gardner (author of Grendel, Nickel Mountain and other works), who argues in On Moral Fiction (New York: Basic Books, 1978) that both literature and criticism must return to a more traditional view of life. "The traditional view is that true art is moral; it seeks to improve life, not debase it. It seeks to hold off, at least for a while, the twilight of the gods and us" (p.5). Ideologies of writers, the cult of the avant garde, and the tenor of

literary discourse all come under attack. He criticizes most American writers, at times justifiably, at times not. What is important about his critique--and others such as Saul Bellow's 1976 Nobel Lecture (The American Scholar, 1977, pp. 316-325)--is that they argue against the postmodern literary forms most praised by educated and academic audiences and they argue for a view of life more open to the common reader. The attacks have been powerful and fundamental enough to raise a major dispute.

Both Gardner and Bellow use simple language to make their cases. Gardner: "True art treats ideals, affirming and clarifying the Good, the True, and the Beautiful. Ideals are art's ends; the rest is methodology" (p. 133). "Despite the labors of academic artists and those sophisticates who are embarrassed by emotion, it seems all but self-evident that it is for the pleasure of exercising our capacity to love that we pick up a book at all" (p. 84). Bellow: "What would writers do today if it would occur to them that literature might once again engage those 'central energies,' if they were to recognize that an immense desire had arisen for a return from the periphery, for what was simple and true?" (pp. 322-323). "With increasing frequency I dismiss as merely respectable opinions I have held--or thought I held--and try to discern what I have really lived by, and what others live by" (p. 324).

Harold Rosenberg, the art and social critic, pointed out twenty years ago in The Tradition of the New (1959; rpt. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965) that:

> The famous "modern break with tradition" has lasted long enough to have produced its own tradition. Exactly one hundred years have passed since Baudelaire invited fugitives from the too small world of memory to come aboard for his voyage in search of the new. Since then there has come into being an art whose history, regardless of the credos of its practitioners, has consisted of leaps from vanguard to vanguard, and political mass movements whose aim has been the total renovation not only of social institutions but of man himself (p. 11).

Gardner and Bellow now argue that postmodern literature has moved beyond these cosmic, and probably impossible, aims into a self-enclosed isolation. In sum, the acts of reinventing form, deconstructing reality, and discovering the new are themselves old fashioned, traditional and conventional, artifacts of early twentieth century western culture. Based on my experience with the public, I would argue that the postmodern neglect of the common reader has led to a failure to treat the central forces and issues of our time.

Criticism Today

What do scholars and critics of literature do? Like the 500 pound gorilla in the old joke, do they do anything they please?

Do they pursue information, facts, correct texts? Do they preserve literature? Do they create or work out theories or the vacuums left by theories? Do they look for meaning? Its absence? Do they promote and demonstrate literature? Do they just face literature down? Do they write fictions? Do they read or misread? Do they promote social revolution, cultural revolution, or do they improve, save or correct society? Are they moral or amoral, social or individual, defined by their society, their institution, their department, their family, their work, their love, their students, their therapist?

For our purposes, it will be helpful to look at the most respected forms of criticism and scholarship, since these set the standards by which the rest of the discipline measures itself. The issues are similar to the ones raised for writers. Like crooks and cops, writers and professional readers speak the same language, know some of the same intermediaries, study the same techniques. By and large they are adversaries, although many cross from one side to the other. It is important to realize that the contemporary critical debate concerns not only contemporary literature. It permeates the scholar's view of <u>all</u> literature, and it affects the way the history of literature is interpreted and taught. A work written in 1820 will be reinterpreted through the eyes of a critic who is reading new theories and new novels. The continual reinterpretation of literature has merits and problems. It helps an ever-changing world to see the ways in which current concerns were faced in different times and places; it can help literature stay alive. On the other hand, it frequently produces absurdities by imposing anachronisms on a work: the psychoanalysis of Hamlet is a famous lapse of judgment.

Gerald Graff's important new book, <u>Literature Against Itself: Literary Ideas in Modern Society</u> (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1979), stands in roughly the same relation to literature study as Gardner's book does to fiction writing. They both argue that, in spite of what we know about cultural relativism and the role of perception and language in shaping the world we see, reality still exists. Graff notes: "The first thing to be said is that the fact that our statements do not possess meaning apart from the codes and grammars which generate them does not mean that what these statements <u>refer to</u> is nothing but the codes and grammars themselves" (his emphasis, p. 196). After accepting the ultimate inexpressibility of reality, both argue that the obsession with this limit has trivialized writing and criticism. Both also are aware that talking about truth and meaning has, in some circles, become a radical act. Gardner brandishes the word "moral" in the title of his book. Graff notes that when mimesis survives in literature:

> it tends to go unnoticed. This is because our critical vocabulary either has no place for it or is committed to denying

> that it is there at all. Unlike the words for talking about things like "intertextuality" and "reflexive structure," the words for describing what literature says, what it is "about" are all marked with the stigmata of squareness and banality. There is no up-to-date jargon for talking about the referential values of literature (pp. 12-13).

For Graff, postmodern criticism is defined by its rejection of the claim of literature and art to truth value (p. 32). He finds the roots of the rejection in New Criticism, the major modern critical movement. Postmodernism, to him, is less a reaction to New Criticism than a different approach to the same end. .Graff sees New Criticism as attempting to rescue literature and the imagination from "the nightmare of modern history--from war, totalitarianism and exploitation" (p. 101). New Critics try to shield literature from those who would make direct use of it, who would reduce it to theory, sociology or biography, who would make it another object in a mechanical and technocratic world. In practice, though, New Criticism also helps to cut literature off from its social sources and helps professionalize interpretation. Postmodern critics, in Graff's view, choose personal self expression as a new means of resisting the same forces (p. 138), but by rejecting mimesis, they continue literature's alienation and lessen literature's value.

Graff believes that the time for alienated literature has passed. The avant garde in arts and criticism are not radical, but conventional: "The real 'avant-garde' is advanced capitalism, with its built-in need to destroy all vestiges of tradition, all orthodox ideologies, all continuous and stable forms of reality in order to stimulate higher levels of consumption" (p. 8). In America today, the middle of the road is not the work ethic of a stuffy conventional bourgeosie (the object of scorn for early modernists), it is the trend-conscious, fickle, ironic, consuming leisure public, accustomed to televised and printed absurdities far beyond the fantasies of experimental artists and critics. The public is not usually shocked by the avant garde but accepts the meaninglessness of it all and retreats into what Christopher Lasch calls a culture of narcissism. Graff sees the postmoderns not as a threat to the existing order but as a part of that order: they help condition people to the whirling pace.

He ties the academic world to this conventional radicalism:

> From the perception that "poetry makes nothing happen," as Auden in our century has said, we move to the imperative that poetry ought to make nothing happen, and finally to the axiom that it is not real poetry it if aims at practical effect. By this logical route, the alienated position of literature ceases

> to be an aspect of a particular historical condition and becomes part of literature's very definition (his emphasis, p. 46).

Literature and criticism are thereby coerced from dealing with issues and people are forced to live with ideas of a former time:

> The old understanding, the myth that we live in a "repressive" society and that patriarchy, authoritarianism and elitism are our main enemies, dies hard. Thus radicalism is diverted from legitimate targets--injustice, poverty, triviality, vulgarity, and social loneliness--to a spurious quest after psychic liberation (p. 101).

Graff suggests for universities a return to the study of history and literary history as a balance to an anti-historical society. He also advocates a literature and criticism of representation, of social concern--"a recovery of society by the artist" (p. 236).

Graff's rich book calls for changes which would open literature and criticism to more of the public. The modern and postmodern trends he describes have helped create a culture apart from, in opposition to, normal public life. Contemporary literature often advertises its inaccessibility. Contemporary criticism--whether advocating the multiplicity of reader responses, the analysis of deep structures or the impersonal interpretation of self-enclosed texts--often protects itself from social issues and immediately apprehensible meaning with a thick technical jargon or a science-like refusal to consider methodologically insoluble mysteries. Formal concerns are not rooted in life. (In these respects literature differs little from other humanities disciplines.) A non-professional public has little to say in the discussion, and little useful to learn from it. The public is expendable. Far from being only an accident of university economics, the exclusion of the public from modern and contemporary literature and criticism is the result of an intentional rejection by intellectuals of anyone not willing to take an arduous journey. The significance of Graff's book lies in part in its argument that the modern journey has become trivial, a pilgrimage to Levittown. Rather than being part of the great mystery of our time, it has become just another part of the cosmic sales pitch.

The Profession Today

A self-enclosed literature connects to a self-referential criticism and both have ties to a self-defining professionalism. The same social milieu which fostered the literature and criticism also produced the modern university and its English department. The demands of New Criticism, the challenge of experimental fiction, the professionalization of all academic life, the post World War II population bulge, the expansion of the university, the rise of science, Sputnik and the Vietnam War made English departments

what they are today, complete with their considerable intellectual achievements and current problems.

Although the profession and its content are as much a part of the social forces in the world as any other human phenomenon, professors often argue that it is completely their job to decide what the profession should be. Richard Ohmann's excellent book, English in America: A Radical View of the Profession (New York: Oxford, 1976), quotes a department chairman arguing that an English department meets "the major part of its obligation to society" by meeting its obligations to students and the profession. Ohmann compares this attitude with the notion that what's good for General Motors is good for the country. He comments, "To press the identity of one's own interests with those of the larger society is the normal task of ideology, and we teachers of literature have our own ideology" (p. 227). English departments share the limitations of other professions. Yet Ohmann sees the development of professional status in the twentieth century as an almost necessary response to impersonalization, "for to be a professional is to regain at least some control over the nature, the pace and the outcome of one's work" (p. 251). The profession establishes some order, some boundaries. But when the rules and needs of the society change, it is difficult for a profession to respond. Loyalty to members and to the original professional purposes may conflict with the social change

The idea of the professional can add to the distance between the general public and culture. For example, each profession develops its own specialized languages. As we come to understand the universe through the languages of statistics, physics, medicine, psychology, computers, linguistics--specialities all--we impoverish the words we speak in common. As we each take charge of some little part of the world and learn to control or understand it, we take away from what is shared by making specialization the major use of intelligence. Ironically, professionals subtract from public or common language what they add through the achievements of their profession. When professional scientists--say in the field of medicine--develop the appropriate language, techniques, equipment, training, and support systems, they can pursue objective knowledge, capture parts of it, and then with rigid controls put it to use. English literature scholars follow a similar pattern, and departments reward it, but the specialized knowledge triumphantly gained is of little use, except to other professionals. It is not progressive in the same way as medicine, and unless translated, it cannot be understood by the public. And just as one of the limits of medical training is that the doctor treats the test results, not necessarily the disease, certainly not the whole patient, so the expert scholar often treats the critical method, not necessarily the work, certainly not the student, the body of literature or the society. Some doctors, some scholars triumph over their training, but the professional pattern often discourages attention to the whole picture.

With professions strong, amateurs lose confidence in themselves. Parents a few years ago felt they could not raise their children witnout the advice of Dr. Spock. Similarly even educated nonspecialists lost confidence in their ability to relate directly to literary texts. Louise M. Rosenblatt in The Reader, The Text, The Poem (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University, 1978) observes:

> Lacking confidence or lacking interest in their own direct response and thus cutting themselves off from their own aesthetic roots, they turned for guidance to explications and criticisms and often devoted more attention to these than to the texts themselves. Literature became almost a spectator sport for many readers satisfied to passively watch the critics at their elite literary games (p. 140).

Public audiences, even educated ones, are likely to look to a professor of literature for correct interpretations of a work, for information, rather than for encouragement to read the work themselves. This problem is a familiar one to teachers of literature, but few realize how their own profession contributes to it.

As we have seen, the motivations for these "elite literary games" are often noble: an attempt to use close textual readings to protect literature and its study from simplistic reductionism, and an attempt to make professional life more humane for professionals. The profession also quite rightly has accepted responsibility for preserving and correcting literary texts and maintaining the history of literature. But too often there is a real tension between what the profession respects and rewards--the professionalism itself--and what would best serve both society and literature. George Levine writes, in "Notes toward a Humanist Anti-Curriculum," (Humanities in Society, 1:3):

> The life of most English departments in America, for example, depends on two things--the Freshman English course that nobody wants to teach, and the majors (who are disappearing). . . Most educated people do not imagine reading literature as a profession, and they see literature as a part of life askew from practical concerns. The primary objective of teaching literature, one would have thought, would have been to show how the experience of literature is humanly (not professionally or vocationally) important. Yet catalogues, and the [Harvard Curriculum Revision] Rosovsky Report, with whatever lip service paid elsewhere, enshrine the humanities in their separateness, not as an aspect of all intellectual experience, but as a detached equivalent of, for example, the sciences. English departments therefore develop on the model of the other "disciplines," promoting the sort of research that will have the same kind of status as the sciences (hence the structural imperative to systematize), and will lead to the same kinds of "contributions to knowledge" and the same kind of livelihoods (pp. 239-240).

In sum, the profession's sometimes noble, sometimes base attempt to enshrine literature as a source of fundamental, irreducible knowledge in and of itself, has run into hard times. Amid the din of ideology, exciting intellectual battles are being fought, and the battles have great implications for the way literature is written and read. But often the discussions seem to be taking place on the Titanic or in a language so obscure that nobody listens to it.

The work of Graff, Ohmann and others shows that the debate must be broadened to incorporate more discussants and to take in a more complete view of the society in which it takes place. They note that the demographics are changing. If departments train more professionals, the professionals will not find jobs. So majors are drifting away, the undergraduate liberal arts curriculum is being revised again, and administrators are paying more attention to writing and "service" courses. In many departments a strange schizophrenia exists: professional, specialized scholarship is rewarded; basic literature and writing are taught. Finally, at the edges of the struggles stand the very small state humanities programs and continuing education departments which occasionally pay a humanist some fragment of his regular salary to talk about literature with a cross section of the public. All these forces come into play as adjustments are made in the profession and as new generations take over. It is not clear, though, which literatures, which professionals, which students, which approaches to culture, society and the public will win out. Levin C. Schücking, in The Sociology of Literary Taste (tr. Brian Battershaw, rpt. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1966) coolly observes: "To the belief that the good wins through, the critic can only offer the sceptical reply that that which wins through will thereafter be regarded as good" (p. 58).

Literature in Public Programs

The public is no easier to understand than the profession. There is no common reader. The general public does not often exist. As Rosenberg argues:

> The image of the simple layman waiting on the doorstep of art is a morbid fancy of modern thought. If there is anyone in America who has managed to elude being educated by free compulsory schools and by the millions of pictures and written and spoken words poured into every crevice of this country hourly, he is so hard to catch he may as well be written off as prospective audience material. Today everybody is already a member of some intellectually worked-over group, that is, an audience. And in the sense that it is literate, selective and self-conscious in its taste, every audience is an audience of intellectuals. Science fiction, tabloid sports columns,

> rock 'n roll gab, the New Criticism presuppose various levels of technical preparation and familiarity with terminology on the part of their readers (I am not saying which way is up) . . . (The Tradition of the New, p. 60).

And, one may add, the economically disadvantaged minorities sometimes have a functioning culture and language richer than popular culture: the trick is to approach it on its terms. Rosenberg also notes that the public is the "sum of shifting groupings, each with its own mental focus," and that intelligence cannot be decided by the grouping. Some factory workers, for example, are history buffs; some housewives have Ph.D.'s in philosophy from Yale; soap opera aficionados may have a high intelligence channelled into low art; and a professor of literature may be an uncreative hack who slipped through the screening system. Finally the number of college-educated professionals is large and increasing. Each individual, each group stands in some relation to some literary artifacts, and the basic relations must be taken into account when an attempt is made to teach.

Discovering the public connections to literature requires analysis and hard work. There are two problems here: first, to create or find the public situation in which literature can be studied, then to work with the variety of students involved in the quest, to teach. In colleges the first problem is solved by limiting teaching to courses and by either mandating a course as part of a curriculum or allowing the audience to elect it. Reaching a public audience outside the university, however, often requires that the course format be abandoned. The door is open to television and radio, newspapers, conferences, luncheon speeches, performance-discussions, public forums, ad hoc commentaries, library discussion series, lectures, free universities, church sermons, seminars and on and on. Often in public the duration and concentration of study possible in a class are lacking.

Programs can be categorized according to their use of literature. In one type of program, literature is the subject, and audience members select themselves according to their interest in the type of literature presented. Examples include a community lecture series by a Thoreau scholar, a library great books discussion series, a discussion of a play before or after a performance by a repertory theater. A literary program topic will produce an audience more or less comfortable with a discussion of literature, but it will screen out people, usually less educated, who do not understand what literature study can be. If the text selected is considered "serious" (say, Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment), readers intimidated by the idea of the text will avoid the program. Possibly they could be enticed by a thematic program title, such as "The Literature of Alienation." When the texts selected are part of popular culture--for example, science fiction films--the audience will be more diverse, more technically sophisticated

(watch your quarks), but less sophisticated in relation to literature. In any of these situations, the good scholar-teacher interested in the public will have little trouble finding her way.

In another type of program, literature is used, sometimes with other humanities disciplines, to help people understand a culture, a moment in time, an event, a place or a phenomenon. Examples of these programs include seminars or other programs on subjects such as Chicano culture, Kentucky in the Civil War, the lessons of the Holocaust, or black holes. The teacher must accept the mimetic functions of literature to succeed in these programs; she must move back and forth between literary representations and the world outside. For example, participants in a symposium on the Holocaust will not be satisfied with an analysis of Elie Wiesel's writing as a response to twentieth century experimental fiction. What they want to understand is the Holocaust, and they believe Wiesel can help them. Similarly, a neighborhood seminar on Chicano culture must address social and personal topics--family life, language and power, economics--as literature illuminates and clarifies the experience of the seminar participants. By refusing to subsume literature to social theory while exploring the view of society within particular works of literature, the scholar can be true to her material while satisfying the participants' desire to understand the subject deeply. Broad, interdisciplinary topics do require the scholar to move between texts and society, but they usually leave enough freedom of subject for the literature to appear as literature. (A related type of project, the humanist in residence in a small town, defines a situation and allows the topics to grow out of the scholar's availability. Some topics will involve literary subjects; others relate literature to an interdisciplinary social inquiry. The scholar works within the existing cultural, social and educational institutions of the town to discover the best ways for people there to study literature.)

A final type of public program selects a topic which has no direct connection to the study of literature and then employs a literary scholar to illuminate it through literature. Examples include public policy discussions on subjects such as juvenile justice, land use, the ERA, or Presidential politics. In these cases, literary scholars are often in alien territory, and audience members have not come to hear about literature. The results are usually poor. When seen from the point of view of serious literature study, the history of the state and public programs shows an almost complete failure to relate literature to public policy issues. Works of literature which do address public policy issues almost always dismantle the issues into their human or linguistic components. A literary way of knowing is indeed essential to a deep understanding of public policy, but it cannot be applied like a bandage to a specific wound. An audience drawn to a discussion of nuclear power or taxation is an audience of

believers, pro and con. A live issue implies existing actions, commitments, plans and proposals. The potential for drawing back far enough to reflect is small; the chance of understanding the literature of the subject as literature is nonexistant. Literature is indirect, circuitous, complex, reflective when it touches problems, and it cannot be understood in white heat. In some cases, evaluators report, a resonance and depth is given to policy conversation by literature scholars, but this use of literature is a form of illustrated political analysis in which the argument must come first, before the literary work. In other cases scholars function successfully as moderators or discussion "facilitators," but these tasks have little to do with literature. Relating literature to specific public policy issues is not seen as especially valuable by any of the varied and conflicting theories of literature afloat today. (The only major exception may be the social utilitarian literature of doctrinaire Marxism.) More to the point would be an investigation of works of literature which, if read carefully, remind policy makers and partisans of the individuals their action touch. No wonder that state programs report difficulty involving literature scholars in public policy projects. Most successes have occurred when the public policy requirement has been bent or ignored. To find the relationship between the public and literature study, state programs must move as far as possible from their old requirements.

Teaching the Public

Teaching, never a simple matter to discuss, is a craft or art form itself. Much of what is written about undergraduate teaching is relevant to public teaching, and I can not review this immense body of material. Instead, I will try to point out some of the major problems specific to public situations. One caveat: many of my generalizations about audiences will be contradicted by specific groups. In my discussion, I minimize the highly literate audiences because these groups already share many of the scholar's interests.

The program subject and setting will define the motives and interests of audience members or students. Usually the scholar will not be able to steer a discussion from the topic to theoretical issues without losing his audience. The problem is imbedded in the words themselves "audience," "student," "teacher," or "scholar." Public programs tend to be short--conferences or single seminars. Few really are extended classes, and only in classes do the words "student" and "teacher" easily apply. In fact, in situations such as television shows, the scholar may act as a consultant or a performer. Participants in most public programs see themselves as members of an audience, and they see the presenter as an expert who will give information. They need to be enticed into becoming discussants or participants. Scholars must adjust their approach to the program duration, setting and audience interests.

Members of a public audience are seldom all familiar with great works of literature. The inferior popular works that almost everyone knows place limits on the discussion. Because no common integrated culture exists, the scholar must face the problem situationally. Even when an audience is sophisticated, there usually will be a tension between the scholar, representing literary or culture history, and the audience, representing some portion of the present. The task, in part, becomes to interest the audience in a historically significant text (you need not go far: D. H. Lawrence and Theodore Dreiser are part of history) or to draw historical or thematic analogues from a contemporary work. Graff argues that the function of the university should be "to make sense of history against the flow of anti-historical society" (p. 124), and I agree. Within the practical limits of the situation, scholars should work toward historical understanding. The job of feeding and cultivating whatever interest in history exists in an individual audience is not easy. Often the greatest texts will seem farther removed than the moon. I am touched by the scholar who is convinced of the contemporary worth of Coleridge and Wordsworth and would teach them to the public, but I doubt that he will find much of an audience away from the university. If he does--through special literary clubs, advertising, teaching in prisons or hospitals--more power to him: he should receive from his state program financial help and encouragement and, from his department, credit.

Fortunately the canon of academically acceptable texts has opened to include more than white English and American writers, and scholars are applying more diverse criteria of quality to texts. Ethnic and minority literature, Third World literature, "women's" literature, contemporary literature and regional literature all have their places. Film, television, popular literature, comic books all have some status, some criticism. Popular or specialized literature can be an excellent meeting ground between the profession and the public. The audience's ownership of a Mork and Mindy or All in the Family overcomes some of their initial resistance to analysis and fear of a scholar's confidence with ideas. Provided that a popular text is not made into an object for categorization or scorn, a skillful and unassuming teacher can use it to move to analysis of culture, dramatic method, historical analogues or sometimes critical techniques.

The limited duration of public programs presents the scholar-teacher with another type of challenge. Outside television, the teacher often must assume that the only common texts shared by the audience will be those presented or distributed and read on the spot. A scholar may be forced to comment in juxtaposition to performances of plays or film showings. These severe limits can be minimized by the teacher of the microcosm, the close analyst who can draw together an otherwise unconnected audience and

unconnected pattern of understanding through a specific passage or text. At its best, the experience of a work felt and understood can create a sense of unity and a shared interest among people who do not know one another or who have cooperated only instrumentally. I think of a project in which play excerpts were produced for a meeting of business men and women. The following discussion brought an intensity found nowhere else in the conference. Literature can be made to stand in opposition to the frightening separateness of so many lives, even if the subject of the literature is that very isolation.

As these examples show, public programs can force a scholar to simplify or dilute what is taught in the classroom. I am not speaking of the need for common language, which is not itself a diminution of substance. The problems arise when a scholar must distill his book on Sartre into a fifteen minute presentation, or when an analysis of modern culture must be worked up not from Georg Lukács but from George Lucas, or when the text is Brenda Starr, not Jane Austen. Nothing on television is as valuable as Shakespeare's plays and that includes the televised Shakespeare plays. There is no shame in teaching beginners, but the appropriate teachers and situations must be found. Some public involvement is of great academic and social value, and some is easy and trite. Academic scholars must use their power and ability to raise the level of discourse and to promote what they know is most valuable in the cultural tradition. They must look for ways to conduct sustained public teaching, not just single presentations. They should work with high school and grade school teachers and encourage them to give introductory presentations. And, lacking the protection of campus traditions, the public scholar must struggle to maintain academic freedom and integrity.

Scholars do benefit from their public experience. The public bears with it a wonderful and sometimes ghastly variety. Life's compelling necessity should affect criticism as it does literature. The public reminds the scholars that people much like the Victorians, the modernists, American romantics, seventeenth century villagers and nineteenth century farm families coexist today, in America, along with television, jumbo jets and Time magazine. Sometimes, for readers, literature represents a personal history lost; sometimes an escape from an oppressive history. It may offer new ideas, new possibilities or reinforce old ones; it may be therapy or challenge. The scholar can learn how complex is the relationship between each reader and each work, and he can learn how complex is the relationship between each literary movement and the many different cultures in which it is produced, flourishes, and, in spite of societal changes, survives. Avant garde literature, conventional now to Gerald Graff at Northwestern University, still is pretty damn avant garde in Jasper, Indiana or Boise, Idaho. Public teaching can be an introduction, for teachers and audience, to subjects deserving

further reflection or study. One teacher I know tried to explain poetry to deaf people and from the experience developed a new way to look at poetry and translation. A study of Isaac Bashevis Singer, begun because of Singer's Jewish subject, can lead easily into a study of modern literature and philosophy, religious syncretism, mysticism, folk tales or Western European literary experimentalism. Wisdom often meanders. New directions for thought are no less valuable because they are unexpected.

Considering Readers

One branch of subjective/deconstructive criticism seems to me to have particularly important implications for public literature teaching. This interpretive path approaches meaning through the relationship between the reader and the work. It admits a variety of audiences and readings to the world of acceptable interpretation. For example, Norman N. Holland, an investigator of the psychology of literary response, offers in Five Readers Reading (New Haven and London: Yale, 1975), a rationale which readily adapts to a variety of audiences:

> The point is to recognize that stories do not "mean" in and of themselves. They do not fantasy or defend or adapt or transform. People do these things using stories as the occasion (with more or less justification) for a certain theme, fantasy or transformation. The problem then becomes understanding, not the story in formal isolation, but the story in relation to somebody's mind (p. 39).

Rather than meaning, he refers to the reader's "achievement of the story" and relates it to the psychological processes going on in the minds of five real people reading works of literature. Working back to teaching from this point, one avoids questions of right and wrong reading (important questions in another context) and searches to find how literature works, how it is re-created each time it is read. The approach concentrates on literature as process. The expert may help a reader look at the process in himself; no preexistent correct reading is assumed.

A lucid analysis of the reading process, written in common language, is Rosenblatt's The Reader, The Text, The Poem. Her approach is valuable to nonspecialists and professionals not already immersed in the philosophy of language. She defines clearly the difference between what she calls efferent (instrumental or practical) reading and aesthetic reading, and she notes that a continuum exists between them. In aesthetic reading (reading literature) "the reader's attention is centered directly on what he is living through during his relationship with that particular text" (p. 25). The aesthetic, whether in reading or day to day life, "depends on a certain shift of interest, attention or awareness from the purely practical or referential to the

immediately experienced qualitative aspects" (p. 37). Citing William James' idea of selective attention, Rosenblatt argues that a work of literature cannot be understood without a recognition of the individual consciousness mediating between the symbol and its referent (p. 43).

In part because it grows out of her teaching experience, Rosenblatt's approach is useful to public teachers. It analyzes both texts and readers and by so doing changes some of the questions we ask of literature. Because the poem is neither the text nor its interpretation but the relationship between the reader and the text, each reader takes on a greater importance. The scholar is not the expert, the reader not the amateur: objective presentations of the "true reading" are not called for. Interpretation becomes "an attempt to describe the nature of the lived-through evocation of the work" (p. 70).

When we consider the actual life of a text in the world, we realize that no interpretive ideal exists except within the individual interpreters themselves. Take, for example, Flannery O'Conner's short story, "The Displaced Person." O'Conner specialists see the story in the nexus of her body of works, in relation to her life or her society, or in patterns of verbal structures and counterstructures. There are many readings. An immigrant to America would see something else in the story. Each immigrant would. So would each black reader, each social worker, each person afraid of being misunderstood, each extrovert. Some readers would see mostly themselves; some would read carefully and see more of O'Conner's intent. Many persons who know the work never have read it: they have seen the televised interpretation in the NEH/PBS series, The American Short Story. Where does their understanding fit in? Certainly qualitative discriminations can be made among the readings of the story, but such judgments often obscure something else of value: the story's actual life in society. An appreciation of the range of the story's effects is also worthwhile, and it cannot be captured without giving all interpreters a relatively free rein.

Rosenblatt is explicit:

> No one else, no matter how much more competent, more informed, nearer the ideal (whatever that might be) can read (perform) the poem or the story or the play for us. . . .Perhaps the reader should not be so ready to accept someone else's judgment about his own performance. "Poor" for whom and under what circumstances? The common reader may have concerns other than the criteria by which his performance is dismissed as "poor" (p. 141).

Judgment of quality then is faced as a social issue, taking into account the reasons for the reading and the society in which the

reading takes place. In her book Rosenblatt opens but does not take us through doors leading to some of the social observations made by Gardner, Ohmann and Graff, but in her broad view of interpretation, there is room for different literatures and different social understandings of them. This is not critical anarchy but another locus for criticism: "The situation is . . .to face the uniquely personal character of literary experience and then to discover how in this situation critical discrimination and sound criteria of interpretation can be achieved" (p. 105).

What Must Be Done?

We must continue the conversation. Until recently, these subjects were not addressed squarely. Within departments, on curriculum committees, on appointment and tenure committees, within public humanities organizations, at professional meetings and in journals we must look again at the way the profession serves literature and society. Literature teachers also should recognize their strengths. In spite of pressures of specialization and professionalism, English teachers, more than most academics, have maintained a broad involvement with the formsand meanings of culture. While Graff fights for a new recognition of mimesis, some good teachers never have left it. Many of these teachers work in small liberal arts colleges, and they form the core of the successful public program humanists. The profession is pluralistic too, and the interpretive battles I have described are going on, in part, within it.

Compared to the sheer numbers and budgets of academic departments and the pressures of the profession itself, the weight of state humanities programs is small. Likewise, in the array of influences facing the average citizen, a seminar on literature most often will be minor. Nonetheless, the state program can provide the risk capital and encouragement for examplary projects which may lead an audience member to study literature more seriously or which may encourage a faculty member (later a departmental chairman or dean) to think about the social role of what he teaches and studies. The relationship between the profession and society is changing, and small beginnings may lead far if they appear to have value. Adult audiences are increasingly important in overall college enrollments, so they carry economic as well as social force.

State programs should establish grant patterns which reinforce institutional changes at colleges and universities. Since research is rewarded so highly, programs should compromise with professionalism and encourage projects which serve the public and academic research interests together; publication of essays at the conclusion of projects should be supported. Especially for young scholars, research credits may be the only academic recognition for their public work. Working to change existing insti-

tutions also means that the state committees must walk a fine line, supporting experiments in continuing education--especially new formats and audiences--but steering away from outreach activities which in the past have been self-supporting. Support should be continued for public groups who wish to sponsor literature projects, but institutional changes should not be expected.

Perhaps most importantly, the state programs should attend to and foster the creative forces at work within the discipline of literature study. State committees legitimately can make decisions about preferred audience, geographical distribution and likelihood of success, but external criteria can not be used to decide what literature study should be. Public policy cannot be imposed on a discipline where it does not usually belong, and it is morally and intellectually unsound for grantors to try to steer the discipline's thought patterns. Provided that a public can be interested, the discipline should be allowed to define itself. Through experience, state committees will find certain intellectual and political allies within departments; some approaches will have more value in public teaching than others. But these judgments must grow strictly out of a sense of audience and possibility, not as a form of intellectual restriction. State programs have a social responsibility and a responsibility to the discipline. Administrators must mediate among professional, student and community needs. Practicing scholars and teachers must assume the job of looking again at how, what and where they reach.

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PHILOSOPHIC TRADITION, REDISCOVERY AND THE PUBLIC

by

Fred Weber

I. A Tradition Celebrated

Great philosophy can be traced back well over two millenia. In the early days, the name *philosopher* was worn proudly, but humbly, by those who were noted for their unceasing passion for the exercise of curiosity and intelligence. Their inquiries touched upon virtually every aspect of the human experience. The subtleties of specialization which abound today would have been lost on those early philosophers. Although by the time of Aristotle distinctions between *moral* philosophy, *natural* philosophy, *political* philosophy, and *first* philosophy (or metaphysics) were made, for over 2000 years philosophy was considered nothing less than "the true knowledge of things." Indeed, at the dawn of modern science when Locke wrote his Essay Concerning Human Understanding, he identified Boyle, Newton and Huyghens as the philosophers of the day and looked upon his own contribution as that of "an under-laborer clearing the ground a little and removing the rubbish that lies in the way of knowledge."[1] Today, it is Locke's Essay that is called philosophy and nearly all that he called philosophy is science.

Now, 2500 years since Pythagoras first used the term, philosophy suffers an identity crisis which places it in a position unique among academic disciplines. Although its history antedates virtually every other, no discipline is as incompletely or infrequently understood. For scholars of literature, physicists, historians, and sociologists, simply indicating their occupation is usually a sufficient characterization of the sorts of activities in which they are engaged. Philosophers, on the other hand, rarely get off that easily.

To each of the many questions which usually follow the identification of oneself as a philosopher, teacher of philosophy, or student of philosophy, the most expedient answer is a catalogue of problems which philosophers have traditionally addressed. This approach to introducing the discipline has been institutionalized in college curricula in the form of history of philosophy sequences

or introductory courses which offer a potpourri of traditional philosophical issues. It is argued that only by studying the works of those thinkers whose contributions to the field are generally recognized as seminal can one gain insight into the nature of philosophy. Undoubtedly this approach has met with some measure of success. Many students who are exposed to the classics of the field emerge with an understanding of a range of problems which may not otherwise have occurred to them.

But such a wide variety of questions and issues has paraded under the banner of philosophy that it is scarcely possible to distill from its history a feature that is at once general enough to encompass all that has worn the name and still narrow enough to exclude the acknowledged classics of other fields. Moreover, there is something systematically misleading about this approach. Its implicit suggestion is that philosophy is identical with its subject matter; that there is a set of problems which has been and always will be characteristic of the philosophical enterprise. Further, it supports the impression that philosophy depends upon a relatively small number of great philosophers in the way that painting depends upon the great painters or music upon the great composers. Both of these beliefs are false. Each reinforces a view of philosophy that betrays its heritage and undermines its importance to contemporary life.

Philosophy is not a body of doctrine. It is not a field of study. Philosophy is an activity; it is something that is done. To be sure, philosophy, like other intellectual disciplines, has an appropriate domain of application. Not every question provides an occasion for philosophical activity; not every issue may rightly be called philosophical. But, as a discipline, its range of application is much wider than a simple catalogue of philosophical issues might suggest and the names of some of its most influential practitioners cannot be found in its journals and texts.

In a sense partially obscured by the highly specialized character of contemporary professional philosophy, every person engages from time to time in activity which meets the traditional criteria of the philosophical. Behind the moral, social and political problems of every person and every age are issues and questions about which all thinking men and women have, if not philosophical theories, at least philosophical prejudices. During those relatively infrequent episodes in the intellectual lives of ordinary people when those prejudices are made the objects of sustained scrutiny, philosophy is being done. More often than not such homely philosophic activity is interrupted by the demands of the practical world. Still, the impulse of philosophy is not reserved only for those whom history has chosen to honor with the name.

The formal history of the discipline presents an astonishingly wide variety of skills and methods which has served the purposes

of philosophers. Although none of these skills and methods is uniquely philosophical, each has enjoyed a period of celebration during which philosophy itself was identified with its practice. Plato identified philosophical activity with a method he called "dialectic." This process of cross-examination of hypotheses and concepts aimed ultimately at eternal and immutable first principles which underlie the flux of the changing world of experience. Two thousand years later, Hegel espoused a different process by which the incomplete and abstract formulations of truths could be identified by the contradictions they generated. By revealing the contraditions, philosophers could construct more complete and concrete vfews which would, nevertheless, retain what was true in the original formulations. He, too, called his method "dialectic." Descartes believed that philosophers should imitate geometricians; Hume advocated the method of experimental inquiry. More recently, changes of fashion have brought skills of logic, analysis and phenomenological description to the fore.

Each new method has won adherents who have promoted its use with confident claims that it would subsume all that had gone before. The inescapable truth, however, is that the many methods of philosophy have never, and will never, become one. Notwithstanding that which has changed its name from philosophy to science, everything that has ever been called philosophy is still called philosophy and despite many methodological trends and fashions, still survives in our midst. Some consider this methodological pluralism a scandal; others, a cause for celebration. But, scorned or cherished, diversity of philosophic ways is a fact with which we must live. To identify philosophy with a single method is to violate a history and a tradition which will outlive all attempts at methodological unification.

In the final analysis, it is precisely philosophy's tradition -- not its methods, not its perennial problems -- which provides a unifying theme throughout its history and places it in the public sphere. It is a sense of this tradition that inspired the following fanciful description of a meeting of philosophy's great thinkers.

> If, in Elysium, Aristotle and Dewey ever meet over ambrosia with St. Thomas, Hegel, and Bertrand Russell, the complaint of the attendant spirits is not likely to be that, finding each other unintelligible, they sat in silence and parted early, but rather that they found an understanding so long awaited that talk and laughter went on incontinently till after dusk fell over Olympus.[2]

A great faith is expressed in these words -- a faith that beneath the methodological differences which separate philosophers and behind the issues which occupy them is a shared commitment to an

ideal which transcends idiosyncracies of context and method. Embodied in this ideal is a tradition that, when properly understood, includes what philosophers have been doing for over two millenia and which establishes congenial relations between the best and most diverse practitioners of the discipline today.

II. A Tradition Defined: The Critic of Institutions

Many have sought to articulate philosophy's tradition. Some have focused on its nature, others on its aim, function or place in intellectual history. Allowing for variations of style, peculiarities of place and time and methodological preferences, there is a remarkable similarity to these discussions. In their many ways, each seeks to establish a vital and essential relationship between philosophy as a process of inquiry -- an arduous and sometimes technical process for which some measure of professional training is usually required -- and the common view of the discipline which has developed over the centuries -- as the garnered wisdom of the ages which illuminates and offers direction to human thought and activity.

Max H. Fisch, in his Presidential Address to the 1955 meeting of the Western Division of the American Philosophical Association, presented some thoughts on this relationship that are broadly representative of the many attempts to define that which is uniquely philosophical. In his address, Fisch hoped to locate the rightful place of philosophy in a period of rapid expansion in American higher education and to recommend directions for the development of faculty and curricula. Although the situation of colleges and universities is markedly different today, the conception of philosophy he proposed is no less timely. What Fisch hoped to capture and express was the spirit of philosophy's tradition.

Fisch identified as the basis for his understanding of the discipline "the most general distinction in the history of philosophy" -- that between value and institution. To nature belongs the physical world -- its constitutents and laws. The natural sciences assume the burden of its study. For the sciences, the primary task is to develop causal theories which provide the bases for both explaining and predicting events. The social sciences share this aim with respect to their proper objects and thereby reserve their places in the world of science. By institution, Fisch intended "any provision or arrangement of means or conditions for subsequent activity, additional to or in modification of the means or conditions that are already present prior to the institution, whether present in nature prior to all institutions or present in nature only as modified by previous institutions."[3] This notion of institutions -- inherently tied to human activity -- is broad enough to include language and literature, law and the courts, family and church. It is the

most comprehensive of all classificatory concepts, standing in relation to the world of purposeful activity as the general concept of nature stands in relation to things and events in the physical world.

In a general way, institutions provide the means, opportunity, protection, effectiveness, forms or styles for vitually all human activity. So, for example, the institutions of agriculture, industry, and commerce provide the means for the production and distribution of the necessities and commodities of life. The sciences, together with libraries, laboratories and museums, supply the conditions of research. Language is the institution of communication. Schools are the institutions of learning. The institutions of a society embody its vision of the good life and a world-view which undergoes constant revision as institutions are established, developed and modified. At any given moment in history, a society's institutions represent the practical embodiment of its ideals and the relationships among them reveal its priorities. "To paraphrase Aristotle, the basic institutions come into being in order that men may live and they continue in being, and others are added, in order that men may live well."[4]

So understood, institutions are the matrices out of which values arise. "Every value is conditioned in one way or another by institutions, and all valuing tends to take on institutional forms, to strengthen or to weaken or otherwise to modify existing institutions, or to give rise to new ones."[5] Each institution has its particular values and develops its own rationale and characteristic structure. Throughout this dynamic process of development innumerable conflicts of value and style inevitably arise. Moreover, as each institution takes its place within the existing network of institutions, incompatible assumptions and objectives are revealed. The resulting tension provides much of the impetus for social change and a living framework within which the lives of individuals, nations and epochs may be understood.

Out of the conflicts between and within institutions and the pressures which are placed upon those who locate themselves within their context, there develops a "generalized rationality" which has as its institutional goal adjudication and reconciliation between institutions and the individuals whose patterns of living and world-views are informed and shaped by them. "It constructs the theory in terms of which the institutions of a society are justified to itself and to its neighbors, in terms of which internal conflicts are adjusted and dissatisfactions quieted, but also in terms of which the existing institutions are weighed and found wanting, and alternatives are conceived, advocated, and instituted."[6] It raises questions of meaning and interpretation. It is concerned with how things ought to be and why they ought to be that way. It conceives alternatives to existing institutions, for the tasks of analysis, evaluation and justification cannot proceed without a vision of what might be but is not. In short,

its function is fundamentally and generally critical. This generalized rationality and continuing critic is philosophy.

III. A Tradition Lost: The Alienation of a Profession

What Fisch accomplished, although in somewhat unconventional terms, is a restatement of what may be the oldest of all ways of thinking about philosophy, the Greek. Even if Whitehead exaggerated when he characterized the entire history of Western philosophy as "a series of footnotes to Plato," it is certainly true that the problems, themes, and to a great extent even the terms of most subsequent philosophy have their origins in the Platonic dialogues. It is therefore instructive to look behind the particular issues which occupied Plato (and behind him to Socrates) and discover, if we can, an impulse or motive which integrates them. To do so, it seems appropriate to turn to The Apology of Socrates, not only because in his apology Socrates sought to explain in a general way what his philosophical activity was about, but also because Plato's account seems historically true -- that is, it tells us, by and large, what Socrates actually said before the Athenian court.

Socrates' apology, delivered modestly and fearlessly, was simple. Insisting that his wisdom consisted of nothing more than an acute awareness of his own limitations, he presented himself as a friend to Athens, a dedicated and good citizen and most importantly a critic:

> God has specially appointed me to this city, as though it were a large thoroughbred horse which because of its great size is inclined to be lazy and needs the stimulation of some stinging fly. It seems to me that God has attached me to this city to perform the office of such a fly; and all day long I never cease to settle here, there and everywhere, rousing, persuading, reproving every one of you.[7]

And so, with characteristic simplicity, the objectives of Socrates' "divine mission" were described.

In the cause of these fundamentally critical ends, Socrates developed metaphysical, epistemological and ethical theories to guide his questioning. His role as a critic led him along a path of inquiry which demanded unceasing dedication and the utmost rigor. Concerned with the educational, military, legal and social institutions of his beloved Athens, Socrates engaged all who would tolerate his uncompromising standards of precision and clarity in dialogue aimed at promoting the conditions necessary for establishing "the greatest possible happiness of the city as a whole." Behind the practical and immediate problems which occasioned these dialectical forays, Socrates saw questions of a different order -- questions concerning

the nature of justice, the relationship between true knowledge and mere opinion, and the character of that which is ultimately real. Only upon a foundation of "first principles" discovered by and through the process of answering such questions could "the good life" be solidly and lastingly built.

Although in the strictest sense, Socrates' political influence in Athens was negligible, his advice on matters of practical conduct and educational problems was prized by many. He was a man of essentially pragmatic aims, described by Cicero as "the first to call philosophy down from the heavens." The most subtle and abstract philosophical problem was significant for Socrates only to the extent that its solution was a necessary prerequisite to arete -- excellence in the conduct of life. While laying the foundations and setting the standards for much of what was to follow in the discipline, he never lost sight of its essentially practical goals.

Subsequently, the questions which occupied Socrates assumed a life of their own as philosophical problems. Their implications and scope were enlarged beyond his imagination. New approaches, reflecting the various styles of different thinkers and the changing contexts in which the problems were embedded, gave impetus and direction to the discipline's history. At the same time, however, the tradition of criticism was becoming less and less apparent in philosophical reflection. Absorbed with the magnitude of their problems and fascinated by the subtleties of their inquiry, it was easy for philosophers to forget that behind the earliest philosophical speculations was the desire to inspire or inhibit innovations in the institutions of the city states of Asia Minor and of Southern Italy and Sicily.

Today, it seems, philosophers have lost sight of the purposes of such criticism altogether. So specialized and complex have their techniques and problems become that their relationship to the broader questions out of which they grew is not only rarely discussed, but hardly discoverable. Michael Novak, in his introduction to American Philosophy and the Future (1968), comments:

> Philosophy today seems timidly ingrown and inward-turning, just at the moment when the excitement of an exploding world of knowledge cries out for immense efforts of appropriation.[8]

Pressured by the demands of a competitive profession, today's practitioners follow in the footsteps of those Berkeley used to call the "minute philosophers." No longer is there any evidence that philosophy is inspired by the seriously felt need to solve urgent problems of human existence. Instead, every argument in every essay in every scholarly journal justifies the writing of another critical philosophical paper. Karl Popper laments: "Scholasticism, in the worst sense of the term, abounds; all the

great ideas are buried in a flood of words,"[9] Detached from their tradition, the refined logical, analytical and speculative skills which mark philosophic activity have lost their sting.

Theodore Roszak, in a scathing indictment of academics which has lost only little of its Vietnam-era poignancy, decried "the cultural default" of American universities and scholars. "Corrupted ideals of service and scholarship," he charged, "have reduced the American academic to being either a henchman of the military-industrial complex or a recluse in an apolitical ivory tower."[10] He recognized scholarship in the humanities by its characteristic "social irrelevance" -- a feature "so highly developed that it would be comic if it were not sufficiently serious in its implications to stand condemned as an act of criminal delinquency."[11]

That Roszak's charge applies most tellingly to philosophers is apparent from his choice of a model for the highest aspirations and accomplishments of humanistic scholarship. Searching for a "deeper and more exciting ideal of intellect," he turned to the French philosophes of the Enlightenment. For Diderot, Voltaire and D'Alembert, intellectuality pivoted on the point where knowledge worked. They sought to clarify the social context of values so that their fellow citizens could apply reason to the solution of their problems. The philosophes, in short, renewed and revitalized the climate of criticism which was first inhabited by the ancient philosophers and embodied in the life of Socrates. Diderot's analysis of philosophy faithfully echoes the spirit of Socrates' apology:

> The magistrate deals out justice; the philosopher teaches the magistrate what is just and unjust. The soldier defends his country; the philosopher teaches the soldier what a fatherland is. The priest recommends to his people the love and respect of the gods; the philosopher teaches the priest what the gods are. The sovereign commands all; the philosopher teaches the sovereign the origins and limits of his authority. Every man has duties to his family and his society; the philosopher teaches everyone what these duties are. Man is exposed to misfortune and pain; the philosopher teaches man how to suffer.[12]

For the philosophes, it was a necessary characteristic of <u>real</u> philosophy that it should make a difference -- and, to them, philosophy was synonymous with criticism.

This noble tradition has not been without more recent representatives. The "golden age" of American philosophy -- the age of Dewey, Peirce, James and Santayana -- was infused with the same sense of social relevance and service. The motif of reconstruction which runs throughout this age and particularly in Dewey's work -- articulating the basic principles and values of a culture, pointing

the way to new ideals and exploring the means of realizing them -- marks the impulse of philosophy during this age as fundamentally and essentially critical. The challenge of philosophy was understood to be the continuing task of understanding and criticizing evolving civilizations -- a task modest by comparison to that which the great system-builders of the nineteenth century set for themselves, but requiring courage for its intrusion into the heart of social and political matters. But, as Dewey declared, "a combination of such modesty and courage affords the only way I know in which the philosopher can look his fellow man in the face with frankness and humility."[13]

It is difficult to unravel the network of factors which have collaborated to obscure this tradition. Michael Novak rather simplistically attributes it to "a failure of nerve." It is more likely a combination of overlapping factors. Professionalism and the process of socialization which accompanies it must bear much which absorb scholars as "very, very small micro-problems... which often are only questions that are worth taking seriously because others have said in the past, 'Here's something that we in the discipline think about.'"[14] The academic reward system does much to reinforce this kind of scholarship. Specialization within the discipline exacerbates the problem. Here, high sounding jargon not only excludes the non-professional from philosophical inquiry, but creates a barrier to discussion between the professionals themselves. Conferences and journals on philosophy of science are frequently as inaccessible to social and political philosophers as they are to lay people. Finally, we must not discount the possibility of failure of nerve; after all, we cannot forget the fate of Socrates.

Whatever the reasons, the dissimilarity between the products of philosophical inquiry today and those of earlier days is clear. Equally clear is the unfortunate fact that motives for a return to the traditional are not forthcoming within the profession. Fortunately, motives within the profession are not here my major concern. Opportunities outside the profession are.

IV. A Tradition Rediscovered: Philosophy and State Programs

It has been only nine years since the National Endowment for the Humanities established the state-based programs as "an experiment" designed to "promote public understanding and use of the humanities and to relate the humanities to current conditions of national life." Socrates, who recommended himself as the first regrantee,[15] surely would have wondered what philosophy unrelated to the current condition of national life might mean. Of course, that was one age and this is another. What was for Socrates a way of life is, indeed, an experiment for his academic offspring.

In many respects, the history of philosophy's involvement in the state programs is symbolic of the rise and fall of the tradition

I have tried to sketch. Behind the state programs' initial public policy orientation seems to be the same principle of criticism which integrates Socratic inquiry, the tradition of the French philosophes and the golden age of American philosophy. Although the notion of institutional criticism which Fisch developed is much broader than the range of issues which are encompassed by public policy, the latter is easily subsumed by the former. Efforts to define the proper role of philosophy in discussions of public policy issues (and since the 1976 reauthorization legislation, in public programs generally) have been many. The varied attempts have all, however, included references to the very sorts of activities -- examining implications, analyzing relationships, explicating assumptions -- which are constitutive of Fisch's concept of criticism.

Richard Wasserstrom, in a paper delivered at the 1978 national meeting of state humanities programs, located the relationship between philosophy and public programs in "the questions of justification," i.e., "how things ought to be, what things are better than others, what things are defensible or desirable and what are not, and in each case not just simply to give an answer but to examine the arguments."[16] Such questions, Wasserstrom notes, are the traditional concerns of philosophy. From this critical perspective, state programs are essentially conservative; they give institutional form and external support to the very activities which define the basic function and principle objectives of the discipline. So, against a backdrop of the history of philosophy, it is ironic that state programs should be hailed as bold, imaginative and experimental.

It is doubly ironic that despite the inherent sympathies between state programs and their discipline, philosophers have, by and large, shunned public programs. This is not to say that professional philosophers have refused to participate in state committee-supported projects; in fact, only historians participate in greater numbers. My comment pertains more to the type and quality of contributions philosophers have made than to the frequency of their involvement. In my experience in the state programs, albeit limited, I have seen only a few philosophers undertake a piece of original research -- the kind they might submit to a scholarly journal -- under the aegis of a state committee grant. The prevailing attitude seems to be that involvement with the non-academic public vitiates the standards of rigor, clarity, depth and insightfulness which ordinarily govern professional work in the discipline.

While it is true that professional philosophers may have to eschew some of their esoteric terminology in order to broaden the scope and range of their activities and audiences, it is inexcusable to suggest that their work in any context need not stand the test of criticism which comes from within the discipline itself. The most damaging charge that may be leveled at philosophers who have

deigned to participate in public programs is that they have not been philosophical enough -- that they have been too timid to ask that non-professionals get fully and effectively involved in the process of philosophical inquiry. In short, though philosophers have been amply represented in the state committee projects, they have not fully and rigorously participated qua philosophers.

On the side of the state committees, there has been a parallel failing which as further weakened the role of philosophy in public programs. State committees have not demanded, or even expected enough from professional philosophers. In the early days of the state programs, essays describing what and how humanists could contribute to discussions of public policy issues were common. Although such papers have become less fashionable, their prescriptions are interesting. The preponderance of advice recommended philosophers to the role of "discussion facilitators" -- clarifying issues, identifying implicit assumptions and separating questions of fact from questions of value. While each of these activities contributes to what philosophers have traditionally done as scholars, emphases of application in public programs seemed always to be on impromptu participation. That the recurring problems of ethics, epistemology, aesthetics and the other fields of philosophy were directly relevant to the more immediately problematic issues under discussion frequently went unacknowledged. The notion that original scholarly work in any of these fields was appropriate was not even entertained.

Both philosophy and state programs have wasted tremendous opportunities to further their respective ends. For philosophers, state programs can be the national forum for reordering their priorities and rediscovering their tradition. In the process, it is conceivable that they will experience some of the sense of excitement and urgency which motivated earlier philosophers and that they will discover in the large problems of human affairs new questions of the same order as the perennial ones which characterize their discipline. Should this happen, philosophy may again become as dynamic and flexible as the varied institutional life of human thought and activity which demands its criticism.

For state programs, their support of serious and rigorous scholarship may one day place them in a leadership role in the philosophical community. Meanwhile, the self-proclaimed "experimental" status of the state programs ought not inhibit the aggressive and legitimate appeal to the discipline's most accomplished practitioners. Nor should it inhibit the state programs from joining with their academic colleagues seriously, permanently and proudly as educators -- as public teachers of the humanities. Charles Frankel once said:

> I don't think the National Endowment for the Humanities is trying to save America by bringing the humanities to

> bear on public issues. Maybe it is, maybe not. But it might do something to revive the humanities.[17]

Indeed, the state programs are doing many things to revive the humanities. But they are just beginning to exploit their chance with philosophy -- to provide the opportunities and the challenge for philosophers to resuscitate their discipline's two-thousand-year-old tradition as generalized rationality and continuing critic of our institutions.

Notes

1. John Locke, Essay Concerning Human Understanding, New York: Dover Publications, 1959, p. 14.

2. Brand Blanshard, Philosophy in American Education, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1945, p. 106.

3. Max H. Fisch, "The Critic of Institutions," Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association, 1955-56, p. 44.

4. Ibid., p. 45.

5. Ibid., p. 46.

6. Ibid., p. 46.

7. Plato, Socrates' Defense, trans. by Hugh Tredennick, from The Collected Dialogues of Plato, N.Y.: Bollinger Foundation, 1961, 30e.

8. Michael Novak, American Philosophy and the Future, New York: McGraw Hill, 1968.

9. Karl Popper, "How I See Philosophy," The Owl of Minerva, New York: McGraw Hill, 1975, p. 54.

10. Theodore Roszak, "On Academic Delinquency," in The Dissenting Academy, New York: Pantheon Books, 1967, p. 21

11. Ibid., p. 12. Several years of relative peace make Roszak's comments appear unduly harsh; however, today's academics still provide a vulnerable target for his critique.

12. Peter Gay, The Enlightenment: An Interpretation, New York: Vintage Books, 1966, p. 128.

13. John Dewey, Philosophy and Civilization, p. 12.

14. Richard Wasserstrom, "'Justification' and State Humanities Programs," Federation Reports, Vol. 2, No. 8, June 1979, p. 29.

15. When the verdict was quilty and no penalty for the crime was fixed by law, the procedure in the Athenian court required the defendant to propose one. Socrates suggested that his just desert was "some reward... and what is more, a reward which would be appropriate for a public benefactor who requires leisure for giving moral encouragement. Nothing," he reasoned, "could be more appropriate for such a person than free maintenance at the State's expense." (36d) His proposal was rejected.

16. Wasserstrom, "Justification," p. 31.

17. Charles Frankel, "The Philosopher," Proceedings of the National Meeting of State-Based Committees. 1973, p. 50.

DOING HISTORY IN PUBLIC PLACES

by

Michael Sherman

If there is any group in society professionally equipped to convince people about the reality of the past and the importance of investigating the past, it ought to be the army of professional historians who have dug for centuries in the archives, attics, libraries and other repositories of old documents and materials of this and other nations. On the whole, however, professional historians of the last few generations have not sought public audiences nor considered those audiences a significant -- least of all primary -- recipient of what knowledge they have gathered about the past. This unfortunate situation has been openly acknowledged only a few times in recent years; but among the most candid statements is that of J. H. Hexter. Hexter's book on historiography, Doing History (1971), contains an essay which is promisingly entitled "The Historian and His Society." In the essay, however, he carefully excludes consideration of the term "society" in its broadest sense and says instead:

> ... preeminently the society which professional historians are members of, belong to, work in, is the society of professional historians.... The most important consequence of entry into the society of historians is that the entrant is thereafter called upon to write [not teach] history... [and the] central institution of the society of historians is judgment by other accredited members of that society.
>
> (Doing History, 80-81)

Implicit in Hexter's formula -- and it becomes more explicit as the essay progresses -- is the conviction that historians write if not exclusively then certainly primarily to and for other professional historians. To questions like, "What about the society outside the closed one of professional historians?" or more important, "To what end, finally, is the past studied and written about?" Hexter has no answers. Indeed, he seems to have little interest in those questions.

Some initial disclaimers are in order here. First, I do not claim that Jack Hexter writes on behalf of all professional historians, although I am convinced that he expressed in an extreme way what many historians feel in a general and understated way. Second, I am not about to suggest the opposite of Hexter's position -- to wit, that all history should be written primarily for non-professional historians or non-historians. Third, although I believe that there is and ought to be some relationship between the problems and issues historians study and those they confront in their contemporary lives and settings, I am not about to suggest that serious study of history should always be subordinated to some practical goal or aimed at the solution to a currently pressing social need. My purposes instead are to soften the emphasis of Hexter's definition of the historian's society, to broaden it, and to suggest how and why historians have a significant role to play in public education. Specifically, I am concerned that, relative to the number of practicing historians, so few of them contribute their knowledge and analytic expertise to public programs in the humanities. Although Alex Haley, Barbara Tuchman and the Bicentennial Commission have whetted the appetite of the general public for historical study, much needs to be done to continue the task of transmitting knowledge about the past and the methods of studying the past. Professional historians ought to have some interest in seeing that this work gets done. They ought to be concerned that history be widely accepted as the sympathetic study of a human past and that efforts are made to overcome a fundamental disbelief in history which characterizes American thought, culture and politics. As a profession, however, historians have not shown these concerns and it is about time that the state committees for the humanities -- now well past their infancy -- exert themselves to move the historical profession off its dead center of splendid isolation.[1]

A good deal of work has already been done to provide public forums for historians by the adoption in may state committees of grant guidelines for regional and local history projects. It is to be anticipated that the continuing special emphasis on such projects in many committees will draw large numbers of professional historians into public programs.

Even before the new guidelines were adopted, starting in 1976, historians had been significantly represented and welcome in state programs. Implicit in that fact is the recognition by both humanists and public audiences that historical knowledge is important in the political process; that discussion of social and political issues can benefit from the addition of the historical perspective; and that this role, rather than being in conflict with, is complementary to the academic historian's more accustomed work of investigating the past outside the context of pressing social issues and in the context of "knowledge for its own sake." Thus, Hexter, in the title essay of his book, Doing History, may

have overstated the universal sense of relief when he wrote that:

> historians have been able to renounce, if they chose (perhaps have had to renounce, even if they did not choose) the overdemanding conception of their function that required them to demonstrate that all their work was immediately germane to and provided clear directions for dealing with the current problems, dilemmas, and crises of the contemporary world.
>
> (Doing History, p. 141)

Indeed, the French historian, Marc Bloch, in his posthumously published essay on historiography, The Historian's Craft (published in English, 1953), offered a more subtle and useful analysis when he wrote:

> No one today, I believe, would dare to say, with the orthodox positivists, that the value of a line or research is to be measured by its ability to promote action....
> However, it is undeniable that a science will always seem to us somehow incomplete if it cannot, sooner or later, in one way or another, aid us to live better.... [Nonetheless,] the question of the use of history, in the strict and 'pragmatic' sense of the word 'use' is not to be confounded with that of its strictly intellectual legitimacy. Moreover, the question of use must always come second in the order of things, for, to act reasonably, it is first necessary to understand.
>
> (pp. 9-11)

Among the effects of the first seven years of the state programs in the humanities has been a demonstration that there is, in fact, some demand for historical knowledge and understanding outside the society of professional historians and that some professional historians are willing to respond to this demand (although not, perhaps, many of the most stellar members of the society in question nor, overall, as many as one could wish). In addition, there has been some questioning in these programs of the social role of historical knowledge and an acknowledgement of the need to protect historical research from becoming enslaved to such a role. These are, of course, sometimes contradictory tendencies. We can add to them the cross-currents of professional activities and demands. Foremost among these is, as Hexter and others have pointed out, the legitimate one of presenting scholarly research to the profession for its judgment and further use.[2] Others include more troublesome debates within the historical

profession itself: debates about methodologies, disciplinary and subdisciplinary commitments (humanities vs. social sciences; literary vs. quantitative analysis; narrative vs. analytical history; cultural vs. social vs. diplomatic vs. political history) and even arguments over epistemology -- what, if anything, does an historian know? Given this whirlwind of debate within the historical profession itself, it may be useful to try to sort out some ways in which historians can present whatever it is they do know to audiences of non-professionals. It is useful, too, to explore in a general way both the ends and means of historical research as they relate to the goals of the public programs in the humanities. Knowing what we want from historians may make it easier for them to do history in public places.

The legislation establishing the National Endowment for the Humanities identified as one of the Endowment's primary purposes to "foster... an awareness of the crucial issues in the humanities and of their importance for contemporary life in America." In its program announcements for 1978-79 the NEH restated that goal to read "To promote public understanding and use of the humanities and to relate the humanities to current conditions of national life." It is primarily this goal that has provided the rationale and guidance for the state committees over the last six or seven years. The goal itself, however, contains some significant ambiguities, chief among which is the failure to distinguish clearly between promoting the humanities as an end in itself -- just as the arts might be supported for the sake of art -- and undertaking to support humanities research or programs as instrumental ends toward a rather different goal, i.e., the broad-based discussion of issues of public and political concern. This confusion has been compounded at the state level by committees which have not been and are not yet sure themselves if it is the humanities or the public issues that are of primary importance. Prospective project directors, armed only with grant guidelines, have not been capable of resolving this issue and humanists, approached at the last stage of confusion, have often brought the wrong kinds of questions to programs or tried to address both sides of the problem at once. Inevitably in such circumstances, the audiences have lost track of what is going on. This is not uniformly the case, to be sure, and the state programs have enjoyed some great successes. But failure to communicate adequately what is wanted, what is the appropriate emphasis in public programs, has caused frustration and eventually reluctance of some humanists to participate in them.

So the question of the role of the historian in public programs seems to start with an inquiry into the kind of knowledge historians can offer the public. At the simplest level, an answer recapitulates one of the great debates in modern historiography. On the one hand, historians are said to note and narrate facts from the past in order to reconstruct that past "as it actually happened," to quote the

famous and abused phrase of the nineteenth-century German historian, Otto von Ranke. On the other hand, historians are seen as critics and mirrors of their own times, whose researches and writings reflect for us critical issues of the society and times in which they write. This view is neatly summarized by E. H. Carr in his book What Is History? (1961). "Before you study the history," Carr admonishes us, "study the historian. Before you study the historian, study his historical and social environment" (What Is History?, p. 54). Elsewhere in his book, Carr rephrases this dilemma with a juxtaposition of two definitions of history: it is either a hard core of facts surrounded by a disputable pulp of interpretation, or it is a hard core of interpretation surrounded by a disputable pulp of facts. Carr has made his choice in favor of the latter; presumably we are left to make ours and forge doggedly ahead from there.

The dilemma posed by seeing the historian as being either a non-committal and totally impartial recorder of facts about the past or a social critic who happens to look backward as a way of making oblique commentaries on the present, reproduces the difficulties most historians have faced in their participation in public programs. They have been cast either as dedicated but somewhat unimaginative annalists and antiquarians, rooting around in dusty archives in order to come up with a chronological survey of this movement or that one, this nation or that one, this county or that one; or they have been seen as semi-prophetic figures projecting from the past into the future, issuing warnings and offering guidance with the assumption that "those who do not remember the past are doomed to repeat it." Rarely, if ever, have historians had the opportunity in the context of public programs to talk about the methods of historical research, the criteria for judgment or even the criteria for excellence in historical research and writing. Rarely have historians had the opportunity to cut through the false dichotomy of narration vs. analysis to suggest that history is a reflective discipline, one which tries to recreate what it was like to be alive when some set of events in the past took place and discuss how those events affected or altered the lives of individuals who lived through them.[3] Rarely, in short, have historians had or taken the opportunity to suggest that their reflections on the past naturally lead to reflections on the present and future. If the public programs in the humanities have a serious and almost debilitating flaw which has hampered their ability to attract good humanists as participants, it is their tendency to force the humanities to appear in public only as some routinely recited facts or abstract statements about "values and life-styles" and rarely as the products of methodical and complicated study. In the case of history, the professional historian -- who knows better -- is forced to become mainly and merely a narrator of the past, reluctantly accepting the definition of history as the core of facts with the pulp of interpretation. Having accepted that role or that definition, the historian may

indeed be able to inform an audience of the chronological development of modes of taxation or the trade union movement in America; but that historian will have failed miserably in educating the audience about history as a discipline of the humanities, and the main purpose of these programs -- to bring the humanities as disciplines or modes of thought to bear on issues of national, local, or regional concern -- will also have essentially miscarried. In short, thus far in the history of the state programs we have taken it for granted that non-professional audiences have no interest in the process of historical research and explanation; that they are interested only in "results." The contrary, however, may very well be closer to the truth. As Marc Bloch noted in The Historian's Craft,

> Every historical book worthy of the name ought to include a chapter or... a series of paragraphs... entitled "How can I know what I am about to say?" I am persuaded that even the lay reader would experience an actual intellectual pleasure in examining these 'confessions.' The sight of an investigation, with its successes and reverses, is seldom boring. It is the ready-made article which is cold and dull.
>
> (p. 71)

I think this tendency to discourage historians from showing and explaining how history is done has in fact created a frustration which is the chief among several barriers keeping them out of public programs. To invite and attract historians into public programs, the NEH and the state committees are going to have to make it clear to them that there is interest not just in what they know but how they know it.

The benefits for everyone in such a conceptual shift are potentially enormous. We are already beginning to see them in the programs emerging from the new categories devoted to local and regional history and in the growing interest in historical preservation as a public policy issue.

Programs in local and regional history offer professional historians many opportunities to explore with audiences several aspects of the art of doing history. In several states, some attention has been given to working on the many and substantial technical problems of local history research: what kinds of records exist? how are they used and in what ways are they useful? The rising popularity of oral and visual history has created a new set of research and collection problems, some of them merely mechanical, some of them conceptual and related to analytical methods typically employed by working professional historians. Here, finally, historians can claim to have found an audience of

non-professionals who -- as Bloch suggested -- need, can appreciate, are eager for and can begin to use historical method.

There is, however, another and perhaps more important lesson to be learned from professional historians working in local history projects: that there is, in fact, no history without questions about the past. It is this point which separates the professional historian from the inquisitive and as yet only promising amateur or from the antiquarian. Historians, unlike antiquarians, are inherently selective, cautious and, at their best, skeptical about what they take from the past. Indeed, "the past" contains so many and so many different things that it is essentially mute. It is only by framing significant questions that significant information can be drawn from the past.[4] The historian has been trained above all to ask the significant question, locate and isolate a significant issue, idea, institution or problem. Secondarily -- though still important -- the historian has been trained in the many and varied techniques and tools of research which will yield data and suggest modes of analysis to answer the questions.

Along with asking questions, the historian's training emphasizes constructing and thinking in terms of contexts. Historians, unlike natural scientists, cannot offer causal explanations in the form of laws or law-like statements. The data historians deal with is not, in any exact sense, replicable. Therefore, cause and effect cannot be finally or assuredly determined. The best an historian can rely on for explanation is context, a larger setting for unique, individual events which suggests both pattern and explanation for the one as well as other similar events.[5] The development of labor unions in La Crosse, Wisconsin, for example, is explicable largely in terms of its congruence with a similar development nationally, and vice versa. It is the reciprocity and interdependence of micro and macro historical analysis which yields pattern, significance and ultimately explanation in history.

The rising interest in local and regional history at last offers historians an opportunity to demonstrate both the way they do their work and the significance of that work precisely because of the necessity to do comparative study in order to draw out what is significant and what is explanatory in local history. The collaboration of local amateurs with professional historians presents, in fact, a happy prospect of mutual benefit: the professionals get to see what amounts to small-scale laboratory samples of what they know in general and this allows them to refine their general knowledge; at the same time, local amateurs get to see on a larger scale what they have discovered about or experienced in their own community, thereby identifying and refining what may be unique to their community and what represents the "typical" for a given time and place. Lacking any more scientific way to manipulate data, this micro/macro analysis becomes the key to identifying what is

significant in the past. The professional historian thus has much to learn from engaging in or at least cooperating with local history projects. But in return for what is learned there is an obligation to teach, and what the historian can teach -- the content as well as the method -- will surely help others learn about history as both content and a mode of thought.

Lest we become too comfortable with this rosy picture of sweet reciprocity of learning, let me also suggest that the good historian is also, and perhaps above all, a good critic. Part of establishing context is bursting balloons of intellectual, or in this case historical, isolation. Part of establishing good questions is dismissing insignificant ones. And part of assigning significance to facts or artifacts is branding others as insignificant. While this debunking must be done carefully and tactfully, it must nonetheless be done effectively. The other side, indeed the underside, of history is nostalgia, and as a society we are presently in some danger of succumbing to that intellecually flaccid substitute for real historical appreciation and understanding of the past. This danger is most prevalent in the current fad for what is called historical preservation.

Now I would not be misunderstood here. I am no foe of historical preservation. But not everything can or ought to be preserved. No society -- least of all our own -- has prospered and grown culturally or intellectually by hanging on indiscriminately to everything in its past. There are choices to be made as we move from moment to moment, era to era. To be sure, those choices must be made with care, but they must assuredly be made. A careful and appreciative study of the past is perhaps one of our best guarantees that the choices we make will be as good as we can make them, that what we tear down will not prove to have been worth saving and that what we save is worth the expense and effort. This is as true for ideologies, ideas and institutions as it is for buildings. Indiscriminate preservation of worn out buildings, institutions or ideas may have some nostalgic charm but it will also create physical, social and intellectual clutter and stagnation. Part of the usefulness of history, and one of the social roles of the historian, is to help establish the criteria of significance which will help us choose what to save and what to scuttle. Historians, in fact, have more experience than any other discipline with that kind of thinking for they constantly deal with societies that have left only fragmentary remains, and they constantly observe -- at second hand and through the eyes, words and deeds of others, to be sure -- the process of tearing down and building up. Historians must therefore be called upon and must consent to serve not as remote arbiters of taste but as involved, knowledgeable critics and guides in the process of change. Not for them is the role of dictating with thumbs up or thumbs down, like some ancient Roman emperor, the fate of yet another late nineteenth-century rural school house. But surely for historians

is the role of helping their fellow citizens understand why it is or is not important to preserve the old building and to explore with them what else goes or stays with it -- what traditions, what statements about individuals and society, ways of supporting institutions, regulating communities and transmitting information from generation to generation.

All of this leads history into the public arena, where I contend it properly belongs. It also leads historians inevitably into debates on public policy, where I also contend they properly belong. I hope by now I have sufficiently described the criteria and methods which the historian can bring to discussions of public policy issues -- using a combination of narrative and analytical techniques to draw from the past data about significant questions; establishing contexts for understanding how and to some extent why events proceeded as they did; establishing above all the criteria for significance of data and questions; serving as social critics with longer memories than most of their contemporaries. A few points should be added here, especially on behalf of the historians who claim to be humanists rather than social scientists. Making that claim implies giving up most pretenses at outright prediction. The historian who is a humanist distrusts any law-like formulations about human history as a dim reflection of human nature because the implications of such an approach are that the nature and therefore the continuing history of human beings are somehow stagnant, regular or predictable. The humanist as historian clings to the notion of human individuality and autonomy, both in time and in society. And the historian as humanist, while accepting the idea of the typical in history, sees typicality as time bound, as something which is itself changeable and changing. The historian as humanist goes even further, however, looking beyond the typical into what is unique in the human beings who are encountered in and retrieved from the past.

It is that approach to history by the humanist which suggests more arguments for a role for the historian in public policy debates. We may draw out the lesson by attending to ancient comments on the value and purpose of history. In the introduction to his world history, the second-century B.C. Greek historian Polybius wrote the following encomium on the usefulness of history in understanding public affairs.

> If previous historians had failed to award due praise to history itself, possibly I should have to urge everyone to acquire and study works such as this one, since there is no more ready corrective for mankind than the understanding of the past. In fact, however, it is not only a few historians who have awarded history such praise, nor have they done so only in a limited way. On the contrary, they nearly all make such praise the be-all and

> end-all of their work: they state that the knowledge gained from history is the truest education and training for political action, and that the memory of other people's calamities is the clearest and indeed the only source from which we can learn to bear the vicissitudes of Fortune with courage.
>
> (Polybius, 1,1)

Polybius' understanding of the proper sort of events for historical narrative -- other people's calamities -- is somewhat exclusive and perhaps not entirely in tune with current practices. On other matters, however, he is a fairly representative and reliable guide, for the tradition of using the past as a corrective to the present and as a way of planning for the future was neither new with Polybius, nor did it end with him. In fact, only recently have historians disengaged themselves and their work from the sphere of contemporary politics and the process of social change, and then only tenuously and not necessarily (as Hexter claimed) with a sense of relief. So recent an historian as Barbara Tuchman, for example -- possibly the best known of our contemporary public historians -- has used the past as a way of reflecting on the present in just the way Polybius prescribed. Her reconstruction of the fourteenth century is held up to contemporary America as "a distant mirror" of a society whose ideologies were disintegrating, whose institutions were becoming empty of meaning; whose ideals failed to sustain themselves in the crush of events.

Though rare in her appeal to and success with popular audiences, Tuchman is not alone in that achievement. In fact, the most successful writers of so-called popular history have also frequently been writers of excellent scholarly and "professional" history, which Tuchman is not. In this country, George Bancroft, Francis Parkman, Garrett Mattingly and Samuel Eliot Morrison have had enormous impact on both professional and non-professional historical taste and writing. The American Heritage magazine has been an institution serving the public and maintaining very high standards of historical scholarship and achievements while also maintaining consistently high subscriptions -- higher, I am told, than those to the American Historical Review or the Journal of American History. And in recent years, historians like Eugene Genovese and Christopher Lasch have continued, though altered, the political inclinations and the tradition of scholars speaking to a general public through their books.[6] In England, the Whig historians -- Thomas Babington Macaulay and George Macaulay Trevelyan -- shaped historical thought and established literary standards for the writing of history for well over a century. In France, the Annales school continues to explore the connections between local and national history while having considerable influence on the writing of French prose.

In a forum devoted to questions of public pedagogy, it is appropriate to acknowledge the accomplishments of such writers and institutions and try to analyse their success. They have reached wide audiences of professionals and non-professionals alike not only through their erudition and in most cases their obvious and total mastery of the evidence of the periods they wrote about, but also because of their ability to make the past come alive by portraying it in human terms. Few professional historians have cultivated the eye for human details, the taste for human pathos and the sympathy for characters in their accounts that historians like Parkman, Mattingly and Tuchman developed and demonstrated in their books. Few historians so brilliantly articulated and built narratives upon the values and beliefs of their society as did Macaulay and Trevelyan. Few contemporary historians have been so involved in the politics and events of their times as Macaulay, Bancroft, Marc Bloch, or the late Admiral Morrison. Those very accomplishments, and the failure of many contemporary historians to match them, point to what is perhaps the great failure in the current practice of history. Lacking that ability to make human contact with the past, most professional historians have proven ineffective in convincing policy makers to glance over their shoulders occasionally into the past as they resolutely forge ahead into and plan for the future. Lacking the taste for genuinely human contact with the past, most professional historians have also failed to convince public aud.ences -- who already are conditioned to reject the past as nothing more than quaint -- that it in fact holds meaning for their present and future lives.

Historians and their real society, the public of which they are members by reason of their shared citizenship and -- more important -- their shared humanity, have thus approached each other timidly and distrustfully in the public programs sponsored by state humanities committees. The historians, like other humanists, have been reluctant to accept the challenge to use their knowledge and ways of dealing with information to discuss publicly, as humanists, the directions our society has taken. Public audiences, for their part, have failed to demand of humanists in general and of historians in particular that they set their minds to drawing out the implications of what they know and how they think about the past as it relates to the present and future. This mutual failure to challenge each other has produced many insipid public programs in the humanities. It has confined humanists to the podium and audiences to the hard-backed folding chairs. It has exaggerated the already intellectually wide and emotionally deep gap between the past and the present in our society.

The opportunities for real exchanges of ideas and information are almost endless, however, and where they have been seized they have fulfilled the hopes and expectations of both the NEH and the state committees. I once saw a fairly traditional lecture on the

Pullman strike, delivered to an audience of trade union men and women, interrupted by a dispute in the audience over the notion of a "legal strike." The dispute had poignancy because of a recent and bitter strike in the city where the lecture was being delivered. Some members of the audience had obviously been intimately involved in that strike and were deeply committed to the various issues which had surrounded it. These issues were raised anew in the historian's account of the Pullman strike and boycott of 1894. That was a rare moment, judged by almost any criteria, where past and present fused and locked onto an as yet unresolved conflict in a community, an as yet unresolved issue in labor union tactics. The historian, pulled off the podium in a figurative way, had the intelligence to stay off and think about the issue with those in the folding chairs. He recognized and, for a while, gave full play to the emotional content of what he said and what the audience was saying to him as well as to each other. It was a good moment; one I wish we could duplicate many times in public programs in the humanities.

The American medievalist Charles Homer Haskins is said to have remarked at some point in his long and distinguished career in the first quarter of this century that the real difficulty in writing and speaking about the past is to convince audiences that history didn't take place on the moon. The challenge remains in the fourth quarter of the century, complicated by methodological and epistemological disputes, the legitimate but sometimes abused and often misunderstood pressure to publish in the academic press or depart from the academic life, and other institutional barriers which keep professional historians from dealing carefully and conscientiously with the public part of their society and research. Yet the challenge to bring history down to earth, to make it a humane study of the human experience in the past and to explore the implications of the past for the present and future, must never be forgotten or ignored as the true complement to the scholarly academic life. Doing history in public places is important for a society which is constantly making public choices about its future. And doing history in public places must come to be seen as an important part of the scholar's role, both as a member of a larger society than the one including and enclosing his profession and as a complete scholar. Furthermore, the public role must be seen as important by both the scholars and the public itself, with each recognizing and respecting the kind of knowledge needed by and available from the other. The state programs in the humanities are in a position to reissue Haskins' challenge and invite scholars into the public arena. Let us hope that a carefully formulated and vigorous challenge, such as the one implied by this collective discussion of public pedagogy, will call forth in response the best efforts of historians and of all humanists.

NOTES

1. An interesting addendum to this point is contained in a recent exchange in the American Historical Association Newsletter (January and May, 1979), where academic historians have been taken to task for neglecting and scorning "public historians" -- those who do not have academic appointments but serve as historians for government agencies, industry, or in other professional capacities. The challenge apparently touched a sore spot, for the editors of the Newsletter report in May that the January issue drew the largest volume of comments and replies ever recorded by the Association.

2. On this point see especially, Edward Shils, "The Academic Ethos," The American Scholar (Spring, 1978).

3. See Hexter, Doing History, 131-134.

4. Marc Bloch, again, makes the same point when he says "... even those texts or archaeological documents which seem the clearest and the most accommodating will speak only when they are properly questioned.... In other words, every historical research supposes that the inquiry has a direction at the very first step. In the beginning, there must be the guiding spirit. Mere passive observation, even supposing such a thing were possible, has never contributed anything productive to any science." (The Historian's Craft, 64-65). Recent work in the philosophy of science by Michael Polanyi and Thomas Kuhn affirms Bloch's proposition for the natural sciences.

5. On the unscientific nature of historical knowledge, note the following comments from a recent New Yorker "Talk of the Town" (July 16, 1979):

> It is one of the peculiarities of most historical events that no one ever really knows why they occurred. Unlike events in the natural world, which have proved remarkably susceptible of explanation, historical events seem to emerge from an impenetrable obscurity. We know why water boils and why light-beams curve in a gravitational field, but no one can explain unequivocally what the causes were of the French Revolution, of the First World War, or of the Depression. Even to speak of "causes" of such events -- as the writers of questions for college exams have long been fond of doing -- suggests an unduly mechanistic understanding of history.

On the study of events in context, see Marc Bloch, The Historian's Craft, p. 27. Bloch here defines history as "the science of man in time."

6. I am indebted to Professor Clarke Chambers for reminding me about the more recent contributors to this tradition and calling my attention to the continuing success and excellence of American Heritage.

PART II:

SCHOLARS, STUDENTS AND ACADEMIC REWARDS

SCHOLARSHIP IN THE HUMANITIES AND THE PUBLIC:

THE CASE OF LITERATURE

by

Richard Lewis

The future of literary study is challenged by a number of non-literary realities: uncertain university budgets governed by marketplace priorities and departmental -- even institutional -- merging; a marked decline in literacy and literary interest among students; an increasing percentage of undergraduates in their 30's and 40's and more institutional attention to the adult learner; the pre-eminence of film as mediator of ideas; the shift toward experiential and interdisciplinary learning in high schools; a flurry of recent critiques of the profession from inside the ranks, attacking its narrow academism and questioning the worth of a validation process and reward structure largely unconcerned with the relationship between what scholars do and the rest of society.

How all of this will affect the study of literature depends on how the profession responds. One thing seems clear: as an area of specialized categories of description (romanticism, post-modernism, rhyme royal, couplet), the field of literary study is destined -- probably within the careers of most of today's scholars -- to become a small corner of electives, like Greek and Latin. Persons interested in a career based on the study and teaching of literature should take seriously the likelihood that before long (assuming that the humanities remain at all central to higher education) at the undergraduate level literature will be melded into a broadly focused, cross-disciplinary program of learning about human history, culture, values, ideas, etc., be thought of, in fact, not as a field of study so much as one of many ways in which a society documents itself. In such a case, the idea of a graduate degree in literature -- certainly a Ph.D. -- will seem extravagant. And the notion of what it means to "study literature" will have changed, not necessarily for the better.

What is at stake in the way things are changing is both the appreciation of literature and regard for the formal study of literature. Much might be written, is written, to stress the

humanizing role of literature and to explore ways to encourage student and public interest in reading good writers. But we should also be concerned with demonstrating how informed, critical response to what writers produce can give depth and shape to its significance. It is the transmission of a literary culture that is at stake.

As one professionally involved in promoting public use of the humanities, I am concerned with how to encourage literary scholars to participate effectively in public programs. Yet I know that how one performs in the community is closely related to how one functions as a scholar and teacher on campus. The future of humanistic interest within the community (on which the future of humanistic study largely depends) depends itself very much on how the humanities -- literature, for example -- are taught and on how the structures that guide the teacher's approach to literature and scholarship work. The town/gown dichotomy is, unfortunately, real. But it needn't be.

What is happening to literary study in school reflects not only a general disinterest in such study among students but a gap between the interests of scholars as scholars and the interests of almost everybody else. Two years ago, Douglas Bush, the noted Renaissance scholar, wrote: "... a glance over the modern evolution of scholarly criticism makes clear its increasing, self-created isolation from the general reading public."* This isolation is evident in the small fraction of active literature scholars interested in participating in community-based projects and in the difficulty many of those who do participate have in fitting their scholarly knowledge to a public audience. It is evident in the difficulty many of those who direct public humanities projects have in understanding what a literature scholar could possibly contribute to their event.

It is also evident in the effort by teachers and administrators to rescue enrollment by developing new courses and reorienting existing ones so that what is offered will fit the interests and the expectations of students. Film, pop culture, relevance, interdisciplinary and experiential learning, ideology and identity emerge as the main lines of a strategy for attracting students since these are becoming the shape of secondary school humanities programs and are what students coming to college are prepared to value -- if they value the humanities at all. This effort to adapt the college program, while humanistic in purpose and often very well carried out, poses a real problem for the profession as it does for the role of scholarship in public humanities programs. Since most college literature teachers are not active scholars and since most scholarship, in the sense of what professors competing for tenure do, is not written to accommodate the interests

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* Daedalus, Fall, 1978, p. 170.

and expectations of students, preserving a scholarly approach in this adjustment effort is not a high priority, if it is a priority at all. So we have a situation in which changes in the society are changing the sensibilities of persons coming into the colleges and universities. Course work and study majors are adapting, but scholarship for the most part is not. Thus, the split mentioned above between the academy and the community is being reinforced by a developing split between the norms of graduate education, which guide the certification of teachers and scholars, and the priorities of undergraduate learning.

This should be a serious concern for those who value the continued transmission of a literary culture. Much valuable knowledge about writers and the meaning of significant literature will be stranded if the trend away from literary study is strengthened by a combination of the disposition of teachers to move with the times and the understandable inability of most students and community residents to see why it's necessary to know that much about literature. If literary study has become disconnected from the community because of scholarly priorities, we should not now make that disconnection permanent by uncritically adopting the priorities of the community. Yet, if literary study is to have more than an antiquarian future, the priorities of the community must begin to influence the certification process by which people are prepared to teach and carry out scholarly research.

We need a public orientation to literary scholarship, a balancing of priorities, by which judgment developed with regard to the general reader matters as much as judgment developed for the specialized scholar. And this is a good time for the academy to balance things by leaning toward the community: there are more funds than ever available to support public use of the humanities and more community residents are responding to the notion of "life-long learning." But the profession must also respond. Given the state of things -- needs and opportunities, it is time to look at graduate study and college teaching to determine how scholarship might be preserved by adaptation to these changing realities. The following paragraphs cover a few areas in which basic adjustments seem called for.

1. The place to begin is the basis on which a scholar establishes his or her approach to the study of literature. At present, scholarly goals are determined mainly by received scholarship, by what the thesis advisor or committee or the field in general has decided is important. This is not inappropriate, but it is the main reason why scholars get disconnected from their society. Couldn't there be room in the process of setting scholarly goals for a more deliberately, personally established relation to the humanistic significance of literature and literary details? A great service to students and the community would be performed

if those in charge of the validation process by which a scholar is certified to go out and teach and write would give central attention to why he or she wants to be that kind of scholar and on what basis he or she expects to successfully appeal to those who are not substantially trained in literary study.

How far off the point of the Ph.D. process would it be for advisors and committees to explore with the candidate, in addition to what will be contributed to the field of scholarly knowledge, his or her own sense of the humanistic point of the study? And further, to not be content with generalizations about truth, death and capitalism, but to require a demonstration of how the work of other scholars underpins the candidate's own humanistic goals? The point wouldn't be to make the awarding of certification dependent on any special brand of humanistic purpose, but to build into the graduate education process space and value for considering the candidate's own humanistic purpose.

Similarly, the hiring of teachers should include the same focus: how has the applicant prepared himself or herself to fit literature and critical judgment to the concerns of students and readers in general and what promise is there of significant scholarship related to stated humanistic goals?

2. Graduate study and teaching should give much more attention to biography, to non-literary details about writers and about critics that can serve as a basis for feeling some human kinship. What had the writer's personal life to do with his or her distinctive voice and themes? What has drawn certain critics to the work of certain writers?

Because identity is becoming a prime learning orientation for students, as it is the main value orientation for most community residents, there is more readiness to value the writing of someone about whom the student knows something personal than writing which the student is expected to regard as important because it is in the curriculum. Biography has been woefully underused by those who study and teach literature. If we must have requirements, let one of them be a knowledge of the lives of the best writers, especially since most of the biographies of such writers offer a good demonstration of scholarly enquiry without so much attention to critical categories and jargon that defuse student interest.

3. Much more use should be made of literary criticism that is politically, philosophically and culturally framed. A point of criticism of the profession, especially recently, has been that scholarship is insular, jargon-ridden, overly scientific or pseudo-scientific, etc. And because such criticism is largely deserved, the act of scholarly enquiry is felt to be inherently insular, etc., as though any shift toward a more humanistic criticism would mean abandoning systematic study. In fact, the

history of criticism is filled with examples of scholarship that is lucid, well researched and written not for the specialized scholar but for the general student of literature. This, in fact, is what critical study used to be for. It will adapt very well to the interdisciplinary and culturally-oriented bias of today's student.

Teachers of literature should give more class time to the reading and discussion of such criticism, not to show what the student should think or give back on an exam, not to lobby for a particular reading, but to demonstrate how a critic cares about, say, poetry, and how he or she finds in poetry meanings to value. Moreover, this attempt to show how some people pay serious attention to literature should draw upon those observers of the literary scene who are not primarily literary critics -- historians, scientists, philosophers, justices, legislators, economists, political theorists -- who have discovered in the best literature models for ideas and perceptions about experience.

The purpose or the use of criticism should be to focus on what can invoke an informed, personal appreciation, one based on philosophy, religious conviction, national pride, whatever draws the critic to the writer and flavors his or her study. Graduate programs should deepen this emphasis by requiring that the scholar relate his or her scholarly goals to the humanistic use of critical judgment.

4. Graduate study needs to broaden the lines of enquiry on which one bases course work and dissertation study, lines that relate to significances outside the traditional discourse of scholars. For example, the widespread interest in local and regional history might provide a centering focus for studying writers as diverse as Austen, Wordsworth, Hardy, Faulkner, Flannery O'Connor and Robert Lowell: all, in relation to the study of literature as something that is pre-eminently local or regional. The line of enquiry would be simply the local-ness of writing. This line could be applied as well to medieval and Renaissance literature. Indeed, a major concern in any effort to foster student and general interest in literature is the status of the study of literature that is not modern. Certain lines of enquiry based on present-day areas of concern but explored in terms of cultural realities of another time may be essential to fostering interest in pre-twentieth century writers, areas such as family, global community, death and dying, science, conflict and religion.

5. Naturally, if scholarship is to have meaning for persons other than specialized scholars, it must use language they can understand. Accordingly, those training to teach literature and those submitting manuscripts for publication should be held to standards of clear and concrete speech. Otherwise the profession will continue to be represented -- and therefore misrepresented --

by language such as the following from a recent PMLA article:

> ... the literary referent is a cultural ideological unit that, by virtue of its unrepresented relation to other non-identical cultural units, furnishes in a mode of a dialectical absence the materials requisite for a conceptual understanding of both certain properties of the text and the structure of historical reality to which the test alludes.*

No scholar-teacher's job should be based entirely on how he or she says things, but the profession should be concerned about the growth of a kind of scholarship that teachers are required to translate in order to use and hasn't the slightest chance of being understood outside the university.

Ironically, the same issue of PMLA quoted above contains the following statement by Joel Canarroe, Executive Director of the Modern Language Association: "... we are divided into new, newer and newest schools of critical theory, and some of our jargon-riddled scholarly prose is incomprehensible to large numbers of our colleagues; we have failed to put persuasive words around what we do, what it means to be humanists." To the extent that this is an accurate characterization of the profession, language should approach the top of the list of high priority matters to be considered by those who guide professional training and publication. There is no doubt that the most important challenge faced by scholars who venture to address a public audience is how to talk.

6. One place to make important adjustments in graduate school, classroom instruction, exams, and papers and in the preparation of public presentations is in the use of "literary terms." This is where the exclusivity of scholarship is most apparent and least serviceable to the appreciation of literary study. For too many people the study of literature is felt to be a matter of learning what labels to give things. Overcoming this handicap will call for restraint on the part of scholars who, for example, care very much that "Ciceronian" and "Senecan" be properly applied to 16th century prose styles and that "free verse" not be confused with "blank verse." Such distinctions turn the study of literature into the study of critical taxonomy. They disaffect students without giving them anything to value. Some terms are helpful; criticism would be cumbersome without occasional labels. But frequent reliance on them amounts to a kind of kiss-of-death. Teachers should use them sparingly and always with considerable discussion, exemplification and latitude for acceptance. They should be avoided entirely in public lectures. Most of them will have to be sacrificed as scholarship adapts to new circumstances.

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* PMLA, May, 1979, p. 473.

The problems faced by the academy cannot be solved by simply adjusting existing courses or making greater use of film. The structures that produce scholars and that shape the orientation of teaching and publication must undergo basic reorientation to society. This includes the professional reward system. Real encouragement in the form of pay and tenure and esteem should be given those actively and effectively seeking ways to give sound scholarship and significant literature a public presence.

Some in the profession may wish to settle for the current situation, to prefer a small but selective and highly disciplined literature program to one that has "democratic" aims. This means accepting reduced status, lower enrollments, fewer courses, smaller faculty and a significant cutback in the number and scope of graduate programs. It means accepting the isolation of the academy.

Others seems ready to move toward the community by setting serious scholarship aside and treating literature along cultural and ideological lines, discovering its meaning in relation to events in society, to the content of other disciplines and to the values and experience of students. This means letting go of the idea of a "field" of literature and merging with film and other areas along issue-oriented lines. It probably means the rapid decline of attention to most pre-twentieth century literature.

The coexistence of these impulses within the profession, considering the distance that lies anyway between the community and higher education, contributes to what must be a confused sense of mission for many. Yet, idealistically speaking to be sure, they are exactly the opposites out of which could develop a variable approach to the systematic study of literature that is fairly seamless, meaningful on and off campus, relevant to the consideration of details of form and to the interrelation of literature and politics.

One scholar who provides an excellent model for this synthesis is F.O. Matthiessen, who found in the wisdom of an architect, Louis O. Sullivan, language with which to epitomize the goal of his own monumental study of Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville and Whitman:

> "If, as I hold," Sullivan wrote, "true scholarship is of the highest usefulness because it implies the possession and application of the highest type of thought, imagination, and sympathy, [the scholar's] works must so reflect his scholarship as to prove that it has drawn him toward his people, not away from them; that his scholarship has been used as a means toward attaining their end, hence his."*

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* American Renaissance, xv.

LIVELY WONDER OR A TANGLED WEB?

NEW THOUGHTS ABOUT ADULT LEARNING

by

Charles C. Cole, Jr.

Introduction

How do adults learn? Do adults learn in the same way that children do? Are there new perceptions of adult learning theory that have applicability for public humanities programs? How can one learn about learning? Until recently, if we thought of these questions, they were given a low priority because of other considerations that seemed more compelling. In the early years after state humanities programs were established, primary attention had to be devoted to administrative details, to establishing policies and procedures, to building foundations. Furthermore, there was understandably more concern about humanities content and public policy issues than about pedagogical matters.

There may be other reasons why state humanities committees and staffs paid little attention to learning theory. We worked and thought and wrote in the fields of the humanities. Views about learning theory seemed to be in the realm of psychology, a discipline that received more than its share of our suspicion and criticism. Could the behavior of pigeons and mice really tell us much about the teaching of literature and history? Furthermore, there was the assumption that questions about learning theory were not immediately crucial to what we were doing. It was not up to the staffs or even project directors to know how adults learned or how they learned best. Surely, the speakers selected for our programs must know how to teach the general public. Finally, since our programs did not carry academic credit, the issue of learning theory was not considered as important to us as it must be to those in colleges and universities.

As our programs matured, however, and as we reviewed the criticisms of some of the projects which state humanities committees funded, we realized that we did not know as much about the subject of learning as we needed to know. We discovered that

some humanities scholars were ineffective in a number of programs. We realized that some adults were dissatisfied with lectures which they found boring or unresponsive to their interests and needs. We were told that some of the projects we funded were too ephemeral or too academic or too limited in appeal. We encountered conflicting views on what we thought was a simple matter -- how most effectively to reach out-of-school adults.

Concern for this subject culminated in a decision at the 1978 annual meeting of the Federation of Public Programs in the Humanities to explore the question of "public pedagogy." What follows is a contribution to that study in the form of a summary of what one person learned about adult learning through a review of recently published books and articles.

Definitions of Learning

In "Love's Labour's Lost," Berowne declares,

> Learning is but an adjunct to ourself
> And where we are our learning likewise is;

Sidney Jourard defines learning "not a task or a problem -- it is a way to be in the world." Learning has been called as natural as breathing, "an activity which engages a major portion of every individual's life."[1]

Much of what has been written about learning is either simplistic or excessively technical. Most of the experts on the subject are in the field of psychology. There are about as many differences of opinions among them as there are among theologians. Much of the literature on learning theory is based on research on children and youth. Its applicability for adults can be questioned. Many of the books and articles written on the subject by educators are written from the perspective of educational institutions rather than of learners themselves. Some of the generalizations made about learning theory seem narrow, incomplete and self-serving.

Until recently, there has been relatively little conceptualizing of learning as experienced by the adult, out-of-school population. However, in the last decade there have been more than thirty surveys of the preferences and characteristics of adult learners. The bulk of these studies focus more on what and why people learn than on how they learn.

The problem with most definitions of learning is that they describe the results of the process rather than the process itself, the product rather than a special kind of experience. For instance, Patricia McLagan describes learning as "a change in

knowledge, behavior, attitudes, values, priorities, or creativity that can result when learners interact with information."[2] Learning is most frequently defined as a modification in behavior, a change in the way a person thinks, feels, and acts. Some who define the term focus on the fact that it is a process by which knowledge is acquired. One popular definition of learning is "a change in human disposition or capability, which can be retained, and which is not simply ascribable to the process of growth."[3] Hilgard and Bower define it as "the process by which an activity originates or is changed through reacting to an encountered situation..." They refine the concept further by equating it with the acquisition of knowledge as well as a change in a person's "behavior to a given situation brought about by his repeated experiences in that situation."[4] Many writers focus more attention on what learning is not than in analyzing what it is. Many emphasize the fact that as a result of learning the individual acts or performs in a different manner from the way he or she previously did

The fact that there are conflicting interpretations of learning helps account for the differences in definitions. The section on learning in The Encyclopedia of Education refers to two basic methods of learning. There is first the process by which an individual gradually builds up a skill or collection of knowledge. Second, there is the process by which the individual discovers that he or she can organize the information acquired into something meaningful. The dichotomy between these two concepts of learning must be acknowledged by anyone who seeks more than a superficial notion of the subject.

Perhaps it is more productive to conceive of learning as a series of steps or hierarchies as one moves from the simplest of experiences to the most complex. According to Robert Gagne, there are eight kinds of learning. He describes them as: signal learning, stimulus-response learning, chaining, verbal association, discrimination learning, concept learning, rule learning, and problem solving. The most complicated is obviously problem solving which involves "thinking out a new rule that combines previously learned rules." Each learning step rests on the previous activity and the experience of each ends with a different capacity for performance. There are phases in a learning sequence: apprehending, acquisition, storage, and retrieval.[5]

Some of those who write about the process of learning focus on the experience from the point of view of the learner. Others move quickly to examine the instructional means by which the learning is accomplished. Characteristic of the latter approach is Benjamin Bloom who describes a learning experience as "an interaction between the learner and the environment -- teacher, other students, learning material, and subject matter."[6] Whether one focuses on the experience itself or the instructional method by which the learning is encouraged, two things are clear:

1) educational experiences, to be effective, must be planned with reference to the characteristics, ability levels, personality differences, and backgrounds of those who will be the learners, and 2) all that is learned is not formally taught. Indeed, in the case of adults, most learning experiences result from self-teaching.

A number of writers make an important distinction between the learning which occurs as a result of formal instruction and that which results from experience. James S. Coleman has described the four steps in learning which occur in traditional classroom situations as being 1) receiving information, 2) assimilating and organizing it so that a general principle is understood, 3) inferring a particular application from that general principle and 4) taking action on the basis of the previous steps. In contrast, experiential learning, according to this approach, proceeds in a reverse sequence.

It is undesirable, if not impossible, to settle upon a single satisfactory definition of the word because there undoubtedly is more than one kind of learning. While the physiological changes may be well documented, there is wide disagreement with respect to what those changes mean and to the theories describing the changes in human terms. Since learning is partly a private act, can we ever expect to describe it fully in public, much less understand it to our complete satisfaction? Hilgard and Bower provide an eloquent caution for anyone who seeks to formulate a comprehensive definition: "Perhaps by using the common name 'learning' to cover the acquisition of motor skills, the memorization of a poem, the solving of a geometrical puzzle, and the understanding of a period in history, we are deceiving ourselves by looking for basic laws that explain processes that have little in common."[8]

The Conditions of Learning

Regardless of the definition or particular learning theory one supports, there is general agreement that the conditions under which learning takes place can either enhance or impair the experience. Persons as diverse as Harry Miller, Nathaniel Gage and Malcolm Knowles have written extensively on what circumstances serve to encourage learning. According to some persons, the conditions under which learning is to be accomplished are of more importance than understanding how that learning actually takes place.

One common denominator in the views of those writing on this subject is the assertion that the student must want to learn, or must feel a need to do so. According to Jerome Bruner, the will to learn is so deeply ingrained in humans that its motivation and its reward both occur in the learning process itself.[9] Nevertheless, classroom conditions and teaching methods can easily serve to blunt that intrinsic desire to know more.

Another common theme among those writing about the conditions of learning is that the learner must be an active participant in his or her own learning. Learners, according to Knowles, should "accept a share of the responsibility for planning and operating a learning experience, and therefore have a feeling of commitment toward it."[10] "If we are interested in having the student learn," asserts Miller, "he must be active in some appropriate fashion; he must have the opportunity to do what he is supposed to learn to do."

In addition to the learner's willingness and readiness to learn, and to his or her involvement in the process, the attitude of the instructor and the physical setting in which the learning is to take place can also influence the conditions of learning. Many writers speak of learning as a cooperative venture in which the instructor is more of a facilitator than one who knows all the answers or who ultimately determines what is to be learned or the means by which the learning is to be accomplished.

The Major Conflicting Interpretations

In a subject as complex as learning theory, one should expect differences of opinion. The divisions, however, are profound. The defense of some interpretations has produced controversy. There is no single grand design, no synthesis to reconcile the conflicting views that have developed out of the writing of Thorndike and Lewin, or, more recently, those of Skinner and Rogers.

One of the first divisions one encounters is that between those who believe that learning is the same regardless of age and those who assert that adults learn differently from children. Cyril Houle is representative of those who support the singularity of the learning experience. He believes that learning is the same for adults as it is for the young. He asserts that education deals always with such basic issues as the nature of the learner, the goals sought and the teaching techniques used and that "the essentials of the educative process remain the same for all ages of life and the basic design of learning is identical whenever or wherever it occurs."[12]

The bulk of the literature, however, is on the opposite side of the argument. As Jane Zahn put it, "Adults are not merely tall children. They differ from the young in many ways that influence their learning. They have different body characteristics, different learning histories, different reaction speed, different attitudes, values, interest, motivations and personality."[13]

A number of observers point out that adult personalities are more fixed. Adults approach learning with a wider variety of needs. They have a more complicated set of expectations. They can integrate their own past experience into learning something

new. They usually have some prior knowledge of the subject they are studying. They have greater maturity and, hence, want to make their own decisions. To a considerable degree, adult learning is likely to be voluntary and yet, many adults also come to the learning situation with negative feelings toward it. New learning presents a threat to the status quo. They may be more concerned about inadequacy and failure than children are. Adult attitudes are difficult to change. Since interests and values become more inflexible with age, there is a reluctance to view deeply held concepts in a new light.

While the physiological aspects of learning may remain constant, it does seem logical that adults learn in different ways than children. Certainly their attitudes toward the learning process differ. There is much more heterogeneity among them. They certainly are more capable of participating actively in whatever it is that they are learning.

Unfortunately, attitudes toward adult learning have been influenced over the years by a study Thorndike conducted in 1928 which was the first scientific research of adult learning. His results revealed more about how fast people learned than how much they learned. His notion that adults' learning abilities decline with age has been questioned as a result of later research by Sorenson, Lorge and others. Recent findings suggest that the aging process as such does not result in a decrease in learning. Learning ability, when it is measured without reference to time limits, does not seem to decline between the ages of twenty and sixty. Learning ability may decline through disuse. As they age, many people become more cautious; their confidence decreases; they feel more vulnerable to change. Therefore, they may need more persuasion to undertake new learning experiences. But the capacity for learning continues even though many adults may not value learning sufficiently.[14]

The most significant conflict among learning theorists is that which divides the behaviorists from the anti-behaviorists. This controversy is all the more crucial for education because it involves two contrasting images of men and women. The behaviorist pictures man as a passive organism acting as a result of stimuli originating in his external environment. The anti-behaviorist, or the person with a phenomenological orientation, views man himself as the source of his actions, one who is free to make choices in every learning situation. He believes that decisions on behavior are made within the context of a human consciousness and, therefore, are not basically governed by outside stimuli. Although it is an over-simplification, one might say that the behaviorist has a scientific orientation, the anti-behaviorist a humanistic one. The roots of both approaches to learning theory lie deep in the shifting philosophical sands of western civilization.

The most influential of the behaviorists is undoubtedly B.F. Skinner whose writings comprise the most systematic account of the behaviorist, environmentalist, determinist point of view. According to Skinner, there are two types of learning, respondent conditioning and operant conditioning. The first type is elicited by stimulus changes in the environment. The second type occurs when the human operates on his outside world and his behavior is controlled by its consequences, those stimuli which follow the response. Events following a response which tend to strengthen behavior are called reinforcers. Our learning occurs as our subsequent behavior is influenced by positive and negative reinforcers. Behavior strengthened in one situation is likely to occur in other situations. Through a series of processes known as discrimination, differentiation, and chaining, our learning is shaped and we respond to future experiences as a result of our earlier learning modes. Thus, the emphasis in behaviorist theory is on the role of reinforcement. To the behaviorists, thinking is a form of behavior that is learned and motivated much the same as other human activities.

The educational implications of Skinner's ideas are extensive. According to Skinner, teaching is an arranging of contingencies of reinforcement under which students learn. He believes that what is missing from the traditional classroom settings is positive reinforcement. Since teachers are not the most efficient instruments for controlling students, Skinner advocates the use of teaching machines and programmed learning. At the undergraduate level, the development of PSI courses (programmed system of instruction) is a good example of the popularity of the behavior modification approach to learning.[16]

Many of the anti-behaviorists are called cognitive theorists because they prefer to concentrate on knowledge and the way it is acquired and used. The cognitive theorists reject the notion that the individual merely responds to stimuli. They prefer to view him as reacting to and organizing the data assimilated. The cognitive approach emphasizes learning as a process in problem-solving. Cognitivists are interested in how the individual goes beyond the information gained rather than viewing him as being shaped by it. One of the best known critics of Skinner is Jerome Bruner. Bruner's cognitive construct instructional theory attributes a greater degress of autonomy and initiative to the learner. According to Bruner much of our behavior depends upon how we structure knowledge about ourselves and our world. To the cognitive theorists, individual insight is important and learning is "a process of discovering and understanding relationships, and of organizing and finding significance in the sensory experiences aroused by the external situation."[17]

Carl Rogers has emerged as the most persuasive of the humanistic psychologists. In some of his writings he is as critical of the cognitive theorists as he is of the behaviorists. He believes

that the only true learning is that which totally involves the student as a person. Rogers, who devoted many years to clinical therapy, has advanced a set of principles regarding human behavior. The most fundamental of these placed the individual at the center of his constantly changing world where he reacts to his environment as he perceives it. Behavior is viewed as the attempt of the individual to satisfy his needs and to develop his sense of self. The individual interacts with the world around him and cultivates values which are either part of his self-structure or are taken from others. Throughout life, an individual develops a continuing organismic value process.[18]

Although they differ among themselves, Skinner, Bruner and Rogers are all critical of the traditional educational system, its institutions as well as formal teaching methods. In his book. Freedom To Learn, Rogers has brought together his most important educational articles and addresses. According to Rogers, "... when students perceive that they are free to follow their own goals, most of them invest more of themselves in their effort, work harder, and retain and use more of what they have learned, than in conventional courses. Teaching and the imparting of knowledge make sense in an unchanging environment....We are, in my view, faced with an entirely new situation in education where the goal of education, if we are to survive, is the facilitation of change and learning. The only man who is educated is the man who has learned how to learn. The facilitation of learning rests upon certain attitudinal qualities which exist in the personal relationship between the facilitator and the learner. I have come to feel that the only learning which significantly influences behavior is self-discovered, self-appropriated learning."[19]

In his concept of instruction, Rogers puts great emphasis on the facilitation of learning. The attitudinal qualities of the teachers are more crucial, in his opinion, than his or her scholarly knowledge or specialized skills. The teacher as facilitator must discard the traditional role and become a "real" person with his or her students. The teacher must prize the student as a worthy, valuable individual. There must a close communication between the two. The kind of learning resulting from this relationship will be self-initiated and will involve the student extensively in the learning process. Rogers' favorite teaching method is the encounter group, sometimes called the "T" group or sensitivity training.[20]

Although the behaviorists may appear to have the weight of scientific evidence to support their views, those in the humanities are more likely to be convinced by the anti-behaviorist positions. As Harry Miller points out, "behaviorists insist on a description of motivation in the learning process which is difficult to apply sensibly to adult learning."[21] Although the stimulus — response model may adequately describe learning at an early stage, for higher levels of learning the cognitive theorists seem to have a more satisfactory description of reality.

Learning Styles

Another way to refine our understanding of how people learn is suggested by those who have written about learning styles. According to this approach, individual personality differences make a difference in how and what one learns best and these differences in the style of learning and thinking have significant implications for pedagogy. The term "learning styles" refers to a person's consistent way of responding in learning situations. The most useful research on this subject has been on what are called "cognitive styles." This term refers to how we go about perceiving, thinking, remembering and solving problems in a consistent, identifiable way.

There are at least eleven models of cognitive styles used by those conducting research in this area. One of the best-known is "field dependence -- field independence" and refers to whether one perceives in a global or analytical way. It is useful in identifying to what extent one perceives items without being influenced by background factors. Field independent personality types are attracted to scientific disciplines. Field dependent students are attracted to the social sciences and humanities because, as Arthur Chickering points out, "their strengths in social sensitivity and their orientation toward human interaction are more appropriate to those studies and to th[illegible]cupations which follow."[22] "Impulsivity -- reflectiveness" divides persons in terms of whether they are characterized by quick or slow responses. The "leveling -- sharpening" term refers to individual variations in assimilation in memory. The leveler tends to put new information into previous categories while the sharpener tends to differentiate new from old data. There is a term, "cognitive complexity -- simplicity," that refers to differences in how we view the world in a multi-dimensional way.[23]

One of the most useful models for describing learning styles has been supplied by David A. Kolb. He describes learning as a four-stage cycle. Out of 1) concrete experience, we make 2) observations and reflections which 3) we form into abstract concepts and generalizations, after which we 4) test the implications of concepts in new situations. The learner employs four kinds of abilities -- feeling, observing, thinking and doing. As we mature, we tend to deal with situations in characteristic ways and develop learning styles that emphasize particular abilities over others. Kolb has developed a Learning Style Inventory consisting of four styles. The "converger" moves quickly to find the one correct answer in a problem. The "diverger" views situations from different perspectives. The "assimilator" integrates diverse items into a whole. The "accommodator" adapts to meet new circumstances and focuses on doing things. Kolb brings together his theories on learning process and personality types into a synthesis that

shows to what extent adult learning is a continuing process of interacting with one's experiences, first through acquisition of skills and information, next through specialization, and finally, through integration in which there is a reassertion of learning styles that may have not been fully used in early stages of a person's career.[24]

One obvious conclusion, based on the evidence of wide differences in cognitive styles, is that teaching should be individualized. A less obvious one is that the personality relationships between instructor and students influence the learning experience. But what is most important of all is to realize that learning is a very complex process.

Research in cognitive styles has been useful in correcting some of the myths about the supposed sexual differences in ability and learning. Females score better on memory tests. Males score better in tests of mathematical skills. On the average, males seem to do better than females on tasks involving visual spatial skills. In terms of cognitive styles, males are more field independent and females are more field dependent. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that women tend to prefer activities that involve dealing with people and are more likely than men to be attracted to the humanities. None of these differences mean that males are intellectually superior. There is no difference in how the two sexes learn.[25]

Adult Learning Theory

Major contributions to our understanding of how adults learn have been made in recent years by Malcolm Knowles, Allen Tough, K. Patricia Cross and Arthur Chickering. Knowles is notable for having popularized the word "andragogy," the concept of a unified theory of adult learning. This term, apparently coined first in 1833 by a German teacher, Alexander Kapp, has been used extensively in Europe in connection with adult education. The major European exponent of the term is Dusan Savicevic.

According to Knowles, andragogical theory is based on four main assumptions that are different from those of pedagogy. These are: 1) as a person matures his self-concept changes from dependency to increasing self-directedness; 2) as an individual matures, he accumulates a reservoir of experience which provides him with a broadening base to which to relate new learnings; 3) as an adult matures, his readiness to learn is decreasingly the product of his biological development and increasingly the product of tasks required for his social roles; 4) adults tend to have a problem-centered orientation to learning. According to Knowles, when an adult is in a learning situation in which he is not allowed to be self-directing, his reaction is likely to be one of resentment and resistance. Action-learning techniques such as discussions, field

experiences, simulation and team projects are more appropriate to adult learning than lectures and other passive pedagogical methods. Furthermore, topics which are problem-centered and which contain more direct applicability to the learner are more attractive to adults than those related to the traditional academic disciplines.[26]

The principles of andragogy involve incorporating the learner as an active participant in the planning, designing and carrying out of the educational experience. The teacher is not the authority figure nor is the transmission of a given body of information the chief activity of the collaboration in the entire learning process.

As a learning and instructional theory, andragogy has serious defects. It idealizes the adult and the concept of experience. It is overly critical of traditional teaching techniques. It gives too much attention to the immediate, the practical, the vocational and insufficient attention to the role of ideas and values in the educational experience. It gives little attention to the humanities.

The major contribution in the writings of Allen Tough is in emphasizing how much of adult learning is self-directed. Tough has reported that most independent self-learning strategies are effective and result in significant accomplishment. As a result of his studies of the way adults learn, he has concluded that adults spend a remarkable amount of time each year at their major efforts to learn. It is his estimate that the typical adult spends some 500 hours a year on major learning efforts and that more than 70 percent of adult learning projects are self-planned.[27]

Tough was one of the first persons to make a sharp distinction between adult learning and adult education. There are some significant implications for educational institutions in his findings. He sees a shift of focus among adults in their attitude toward formal education. The traditional focus on relying upon formal instruction is being replaced by one which puts the emphasis on facilitating relevant learning. If only twenty percent of adult learning is channeled through college and university courses, one might conclude that the traditional instructional delivery systems are not meeting basic adult needs. One might also conclude that the humanities programs which utilize traditional institutional modes are not being responsive to adult needs. It is disconcerting to discover, however, that disco dancing currently is the most popular course in the learning networks and free universities which are expanding throughout the country. It is also disconcerting to learn that most adults downgrade the value of their self-directed learning projects because the work was not carried out or evaluated in an educational institution. To Michael Huberman, "This is a sad commentary on the influence of formal schooling in undermining self-reliance in self-instruction."[28]

K. Patricia Cross has written extensively about adult learners and on the reasons why educators should give more consideration to their needs, problems and personalities. She makes the following major conclusions about the subject: "Adults are highly pragmatic learners. Vocationally and practically oriented education that leads to knowledge about how to do something is chosen by more adults than any other form of learning.... Traditional -- discipline-oriented subjects are not popular with the majority of potential learners.... Adults with low levels of educational attainment and low-status jobs are motivated largely by external rewards. ... There seems to be a need for more active modes of learning."[29]

Cross has frequently pointed out that adults have special needs which educators do not always take into consideration when devising programs. For instance, they are unable to devote full time to learning because of jobs and other responsibilities. They have more and more varied experiences than young people have had. Their backgrounds are more diverse. They require a reorientation to learning and the educational system.[30]

Arthur W. Chickering has also made notable contributions to adult instructional and learning theory. His 1969 book, Education and Identity dealt with seven dimensions of young adult development -- developing competence, managing emotions, developing autonomy, establishing identity, freeing inter-personal relationships, developing purpose, and developing integrity. He advanced two basic principles, namely, that much significant human development takes place through cycles of differentiation and integration, and, second, that the impact of an experience depends upon the characteristics of the individual encountering it. Chickering and the other three scholars have codified and explained many important trends in adult learning theory. However, the fact that they do not address the particular interests of humanities suggests that useful work remains to be done in the application of learning theory to the conduct of public educational activities. The reverse is also probably true. Humanists can contribute to the debate over learning by making the case for the special qualities of their disciplines. An adult learning theory which incorporated the interests of the humanities would be more comprehensive and reflective of the contribution of the state humanities programs.

Implications for State Humanities Programs

As a result of my brief review of the recently published material on adult learning theory, I believe we must consider several implications for state humanities programs.

1. Most of those writing on the subject are highly critical of the institutional adult education programs which, in their opinion, are not developed primarily to meet the needs of adults. The state humanities programs have a unique opportunity to take advantage of the latest research findings and support projects

which respond more effectively to adult interests and needs. Malcolm Knowles' book, The Adult Learner: Neglected Species contains a table which cogently summarizes the characteristics and implications of adult learning theory. (See table 1 for a summary of this material.)

2. The current policies and procedures of state humanities programs lend themselves to implementing adult learning theory in a creative way. We expect representatives of the adult, out-of-school public to participate in the planning of funded projects. We encourage adult groups to identify the topics and problems of the humanities programs they propose. The public policy focus provides a type of relevance which means that the learners are gaining information immediately useful to them. According to Patricia McLagan, "the more interesting the content and the clearer its relevance to results the learner values, the greater the motivation to learn."[31] In reviewing guidelines and requirements, state committees and staffs should seek to encourage that motivation to learn.

3. Current attitudes of adults toward learning pose both an encouragement and a problem to state humanities programs. On the one hand, 75 percent of the adult population express some interest in continued learning of some kind. On the other hand, a relatively small proportion of adults are interested in academic subjects as compared to vocational and avocational topics. In one survey, only 16 percent of would-be learners reported any interest in the humanities and only 2 percent of them recorded a first choice in this area. Forty-three percent of them indicated a first choice in vocational subjects.[32] We cannot automatically rely upon extensive public interest in the liberal arts, public affairs or even environmental problems. We must find better ways to increase public interest in and appreciation of the humanities.

4. The state humanities programs serve as brokers bringing together humanities scholars and the general public. But there should be more concern on our part in respect to how that interaction takes place. Scholars and out-of-school adults are not necessarily compatible in their approach to learning. Scholars are accustomed to one set of assumptions, interpretations and methods; the public is more comfortable with another set. It must be our concern to bring the two groups closer together. As Paul Bergevin has expressed it, "Most adults are not scholars and they aren't interested in becoming scholars."[33] Therefore, it is desirable to give adults ample opportunity to select content and speakers, and determine time, place and format for their programs which will serve to enhance the learning process. We should discourage those who are professionally connected with the academic community from making all the decisions.

5. We must give more attention to the format of the projects we fund. We must be concerned with process as well as product. Is it unreasonable to expect project directors and key participants in programs to know something about adult learning theory? Most faculty members may be generally aware that there are variables in the learning process but few of them have any deep knowledge or understanding of how adults learn. At the least, we should insist that humanities scholars be briefed on the nature and background of the audiences to whom they are speaking and on the goals of the project in which they are participating.

6. As a corollary, committee members and staffs should be less passive in accepting the lecture format for humanities programs. Although there are different styles of lectures, and although some lectures can be outstanding learning experiences, the criticisms of the traditional lecture method are devastatingly extensive. The literature on learning theory is filled with observations such as these: "... there is no question that we over use it, that we use it inappropriately and that, seduced by the ease of arranging · have an expert talk to people, we often neglect to think through the particular problem of method for our particular purpose;" "Nothing is quite as boring to most adult learners as having to sit hour after hour and listen to somebody tell them what they need to know or what he thinks they need to know. The passive learning situation does not bring out the best in most adult learners;" "As a means of establishing conditions for learning, the lecture leaves much to be desired."[34]

7. It follows that we should encourage project directors to explore more innovative forms of group instruction such as discussion methods, buzz sessions, problem-oriented workshops, role playing, simulation techniques and even, possibly, sensitivity training if such formats would serve to encourage adults to learn more deeply. According to several surveys between 70 and 30 percent of adults would prefer to learn in some method other than a lecture.[35] However, we should be sure that those employing the most innovative teaching-learning methods are qualified to use them.

8. There is no single learning method applicable to all adults. Each person is unique. What works well for one person or group may not work well for another. Personality differences affect learning styles in a crucial way. Furthermore, different cultures employ different modes of thinking and, as Gerald Lesser points out, "ethnicity affects the pattern of mental abilities."[36] As our programs seek to reach a more diversified population, we must expect problems if our formats are limited to what is effective for a homogeneous, white, middle-class audience.

9. In the literature on adult learning, there is less emphasis given to learning through reading in comparison with that given learning through formal instruction and experience. How can public programs encourage adults to read more and to read more effectively?

Certainly the development of bibliographies and the distribution of books and articles to audiences should be justifiable methods for facilitating learning by the adult out-of-school population. The study of the humanities involves reflection, a suspension of final judgment, a weighing of conflicting values, attitudes and interpretations, an open-mindedness. These qualities are not given high priority by those who seek immediate answers and who are primarily concerned with practical affairs. Furthermore, the teaching of the humanities places great significance on the "text," the book, the poem, the painting, and on its analysis. Reading and reflecting are not passive exercises but some learning theorists seem to treat them as such. It is one thing to assert that adults who learn on their own initiative learn more than when they take a course but if we are to expect them to learn in the humanities, they cannot do it as readily without any guidance as they can vocational subjects.

Conclusion

Is adult learning, then, a lively wonder or a tangled web? Fortunately, it is both. There are no easy answers, for we are dealing with an internal process experienced in different ways by persons who have an exciting variety of personality traits and ability levels. If our humanities programs can help adults learn how to learn we will be making a major contribution to adult education. The key, however, is involving the individual adult in helping to shape his or her learning experience. As Alvin Toffler has observed, "Students learn best when they are highly motivated to do so."[37] There must be active participation rather than passivity if programs of adult learning are to be more effective. Malcolm Knowles expresses it aptly when he writes, "The principle of ego-involvement lies at the heart of the adult educator's art."[38]

Perhaps, in the centennial year of his birth, we should give that great learner, Albert Einstein, the last word: "It is in fact nothing short of a miracle that the modern methods of instruction have not yet entirely strangled the holy curiosity of inquiry; for this delicate little plant, aside from stimulation, stands mainly in need of freedom; without this it goes to wrack and ruin without fail."[39]

TABLE 1

CHARACTERISTICS AND IMPLICATIONS OF ADULT LEARNING THEORY

Characteristics of Adult Learners	Implications for Adult Learning	Implications for Presentors
Self Concept: adult capable of self-direction	Climat of openness and respect Adults plan and implement learning exercises Self-evaluation	Presentors recognize learners' self-direction A learning reference rather than traditional instruction Avoid condescension, seek to meet learners' needs
Experience: adults bring lifetime of experience to learning situation	Less use of transmittal techniques; more of experiential methods	Accepts utilization of learners' experience
	Mistakes are opportunities for learning	To reject learners' experience means rejecting the adult
Readiness to learn; more emphasis on social and occupational role competence; less on physical developmental tasks	Adults need opportunities to identify competency requirements of social and occupational roles	Presentors help learners identify gaps in their knowledge
	Adults can best identify their own learning readiness	No questions are "stupid;" all questions are "opportunities" for learning
A problem-centered time perspective	More emphasis on problems than on theoretical orientation	Involvement in solving problems, case histories and critical incidents rather than coverage of content
	Focus on finding out what learners need to learn	Primary emphasis on adults learning than on teachers teaching

Source: Adapted from Knowles, The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species, pp. 184-185.

FOOTNOTES

1. Garry and Kingsley, The Nature and Conditions of Learning, p. 3.

2. McLagan, Helping Others Learn: Designing Programs For Adults, p. 1.

3. Gagne, The Conditions of Learning, p. 3.

4. Hilgard and Bower, Theories of Learning, pp. 2, 13, 17.

5. Gagne, Op. cit., pp. 21-71.

6. Quoted in Gage, Handbook of Research on Teaching, p. 386.

7. Quoted in Keeton, Experiential Learning, pp. 50-51.

8. Hilgard and Bower, Op. cit, p. 26.

9. Bruner, Toward a Theory of Instruction, pp. 113, 127.

10. Knowles, The Modern Practice of Adult Education, pp. 52-53.

11. Miller, Teaching and Learning in Adult Education, p. 38.

12. Houle, The Design of Education, p. 5.

13. Zahn, "Differences Between Adults and Youth Affecting Learning," Adult Education, (Winter, 1967), p. 67.

14. See Deighton, ed., The Encyclopedia of Education, Vol. 5, pp. 451-455; Knowles, Op. cit., p. 50; Gross, The Lifelong Learner, pp. 49-50; Zahn, Op. cit., pp. 68-69; Cross and Valley, Planning Non-Traditional Programs, p. 2.

15. Deighton, Op. cit., p. 471; Milhollan and Forisha, From Skinner to Rogers: Contrasting Approaches to Education, pp. 48-72.

16. Milhollan and Forisha, Op. cit., pp. 73-79; Snelbecker, Learning Theory, Instructional Theory, and Pyschoeducational Design, pp. 389-407.

17. Garry and Kingsley, Op. cit., pp. 78-79; Snelbecker, Op. cit., pp. 410-426.

18. Milhollan and Forisha, Op. cit., pp. 98-115; Snelbecker, Op. cit., pp. 485-499.

19. Rogers, Freedom to Learn, pp. 95, 104, 106, 153.

20. Ibid, p. 304; Milhollan and Forisha, Op. cit., pp. 116-123.

21. Miller, Op. cit., p. 36.

22. Quoted in Messick, Individuality in Learning; p. 87.

23. Clayton and Ralston, Learning Styles: Their Impact on Teaching and Administration, pp. 7-9; Messick, Op. cit., pp. 14-22.

24. Clayton and Ralston, Op. cit., pp. 28-32.

25. See Maccoby and Jacklin, The Psychology of Sex Differences, pp. 59, 62, 349-351; Frieze, et. al., Women and Sex Roles, pp. 60-68; Messick, Op. cit., p. 53.

26. Knowles, The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species, pp. 48-59.

27. Tough, The Adult's Learning Projects, pp. 6-15.

28. Huberman, "Live and Learn: A Review of Recent Studies of Lifelong Learning," Higher Education (March, 1979), p. 215.

29. Peterson and Associates, Lifelong Learning in America, pp. 129-130.

30. Cross, The Missing Link: Connecting Adult Learners to Learning Resources, p. 19.

31. McLagan, Op. cit., p. 15.

32. Cross and Valley, Op. cit., pp. 14-18.

33. Bergevin, A Philosophy for Adult Education, p. 13.

34. Miller, Op. cit., p. 19; Bergevin, Op. cit., p. 153; Gagne, Op. cit., p. 370.

35. Peterson, Op. cit., p. 124.

36. Messick, Op. cit., p. 143.

37. Toffler, Learning for Tomorrow, p. 14.

38. Knowles, The Modern Practice of Adult Education, p. 51.

39. Quoted in Rogers, Op. cit., p. iv.

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"PEARLS AND RUBIES TO THEIR DISCOURSE": ACADEMIC REWARDS FOR AMERICAN SCHOLARS

by

Steven Weiland

When he outlined a program for "The American Scholar" (1837) Emerson sought to establish an indigenous form of learning and teaching independent of European models and a repudiation of the commercial spirit. He asked if the time had come "when the sluggard intellect of this continent will look from under its iron lids and fill the postponed expectation of the world with something better than the exertions of mechanical skill." Emerson proposed the balanced preparation of scholars in nature, books and action based on the need for what might now be called a well integrated personality and culture. He abhorred excessive specialization, whether in individuals or society. "The individual, to possess himself, must sometimes return from his own labor to embrace other laborers" and must, when a scholar, avoid the imposition of the social role of "delegated intellect." And though he was suspicious of academic institutions -- "gowns and pecuniary foundations, though towns of gold, can never countervail the least sentence or syllable of wit"-- he recognized the need for rewarding those who engage the world by making public use of their scholarship. According to Emerson, virtue was to be for the American scholar its own reward: "It is pearls and rubies to his discourse."

Few teachers and scholars today would claim that they entered the academic professions for fame or riches. It is passion for texts, for reading, writing and instruction which drives most. Yet, like others who work in organizations or institutions they expect recognition of their efforts through a rational and equitable system of incentives and rewards. Such an expectation, however, is about as realistic as Emerson's assumptions about the social satisfactions of scholarship. For there is no academic reward system in the sense that salary increases, instructional and committee assignments, and released time are awarded according to carefully justified policies and exact procedures. The "system" is actually a set of understandings shared by our colleges and universities about appointment, tenure and dismissal based on noble intentions to reward teaching,

research and service. These constitute the criteria for academic awards that are usually applied unevenly in most institutions. Hence the justice of the system is often at issue at the same time that there is a continuing controversy over the relative value of the criteria. Because they consider participation in public activities deserving of academic rewards, the state humanities programs claim an interest in the second issue. They do so in the belief that participation in the state program constitutes a distinctive form of public service akin to excellence in teaching and research. Yet indifference or resistance to this idea in colleges and universities suggests the need for an approach to the reward system which acknowledges the traditional academic virtues by seeking to integrate into them opportunities for service.

A national effort in Public Pedagogy will undoubtedly be enhanced by a corollary effort to influence the reward system so that it is adapted to include public off-campus forms of teaching and related research. In the sections which follow I have sought to outline (1) some pertinent factors in the history of American higher education (2) tenure guidelines and practices (3) attitudes toward service and (4) opportunities to influence the reward system. Altogether they constitute only a brief survey and not an inclusive account of the complex issues. The history of tenure debate deserves our attention because, as I hope is demonstrated in what follows, embedded in it are issues closely related to the mission of the state humanities programs. Efforts to influence the reward system should include sustained research on those features of its history related to public activities, and on current practices and their impact on institutions, the communities they serve, and the careers of humanists.

Utilities Higher and Lower

Ten years ago at the centennial celebration of the University of Michigan, Eric Ashby of Cambridge University presented "the case for ivory towers." A university, he said, is essentially "a mechanism for the inheritance of the western style of civilization." There are some, of course, who are for good reasons indifferent to such a bequest but who still may be sympathetic to Ashby's description of the mechanics of the inheritance: it preserves, transmits and enriches learning. Like many others he locates the origins of this mission in the great European universities, especially Berlin in the nineteenth century. Berlin was founded, he claims, on a new idea: "the disinterested pursuit of knowledge, uncontaminated by any obligation to train for a profession or to apply the knowledge to useful ends." This was, of course, education for an elite, but it was informed by principles familiar now in institutions which might justifiably be called open and democratic. "The essential conditions for this kind of education were to set up a society of teachers and students, existing not one for the other, but both for the sake of scholarship; a society sufficiently insulated from the world to be able to live according to its own inner logic; whose members

seek intellectual solitude and are given the freedom to pursue it; able to reflect without having to decide, to observe without having to participate, to criticize without having to reform."[1] Many American universities were founded on this nineteenth century ideal and have struggled to adapt it to twentieth century circumstances. Others, of course, have built alternative traditions, though the intellectual strength of the German ideal has retained its status as an implicit assumption in curriculum. It is an assumption, however, which has been challenged and modified almost from the time of its introduction into our colleges and universities.

The history of higher education in the United States is one of competing intellectual and professional interests. Lawrence Veysey, in his authoritative interpretation of the emergence of the American university in the nineteenth century, has identified those interests as piety, utility, research and liberal culture. Never altogether mutually exclusive, of course, these four themes reflect the struggle for a coherent curriculum and for public acceptance of the university's mission. For well after the curriculum had subordinated religious training to other activities, including public service (like that provided by the early land grant institutions) and European style research, Americans disdained higher education as irrelevant to the needs of everyday life. In 1889, for instance, Andrew Carnegie announced that college learning was a pointless frill.

> While the college student has been learning a little about the barbarous and petty squabbles of a far distant past, or trying to master languages which are dead, such knowledge as seems adapted for life upon another planet than this as far as business affairs are concerned, the future captain of industry is hotly engaged in the school of experience, obtaining the very knowledge required for his future triumphs... College education as it exists is fatal to success in that domain.[2]

Carnegie's well publicized and influential attitude was perhaps predictable; but academics themselves were unsure of the value of their work. A classicist at the University of Michigan remarked in 1883 that "the throbbing life of today demands from our colleges something besides learning and culture. It cares not for pedants steeped in useless lore. It calls for true men, who are earnest and practical, who know something of the problems of real life and are fitted to grapple with them." American educational institutions were looking for a social role which at once satisfied the requirements of intellectual tradition and the needs of a rapidly expanding, diverse and commercially oriented society.

There is evidence that influential academics set the requirements for careers in the liberal disciplines which deliberately omitted public service. George Santayana, for instance, said

with some irony buy also self-satisfaction that "There are always a few men whose main interest is to note the aspects of things in an artistic or philosophical way. They are rather useless individuals, but as I happen to belong to that class, I think them much superior to the rest of mankind." And Irving Babbitt declared, "What is important in man in the eyes of the humanist is not his power to act on the world, but his power to act upon himself." According to Veysey, the potential for public service was the issue which frequently divided innovative university presidents from ambivalent faculties. Both accomplished and neophyte scholars, working at low pay and with little recognition from institutions and the public, valued the distinctiveness of the campus as a sanctuary for higher learning. They cultivated a deliberately unpopular style -- Thorstein Veblen is a well-known 20th century example -- and sought to make the university in their image. The debate over the mission of the university and rewards for advancing it was shaped in its early years by professors largely indifferent to public claims on their pedagogy and scholarship.

Though service oriented higher education, epitomized by the land grant institutions created by the Morrill Act of 1862, was nominally the appropriate task of the newer public institutions, "elite" educators often spoke for the merger of utility and liberal culture. University presidents like John Bascom (Wisconsin), Woodrow Wilson (Princeton) and Charles Eliot (Harvard) emphasized the need for a strong public role for humanists. Eliot sounded very much like a college president today when he claimed in 1888 that liberal education needed "revival and reorganization, not in the interest of a few, a select and eminent class, but in the interest of many, of the whole community." Despite enthusiasm of this kind in the citadel of elite education most institutions struggled throughout the late part of the nineteenth century with the development of a coherent mission which incorporated research, liberal education and utility. Slogans about public service aside, most reflected the values of the faculty members who were best at the first two. It is no surprise that the reward system favored them also despite the well intentioned efforts of academic leaders to establish strong claims on higher education to be active also in the education of the general public. A hierarchy of values prevailed. As president Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia said in 1895, "there are utilities higher and utilities lower". Lower in most institutions meant public and while institutions and the academic professions claim to acknowledge all forms of academic enterprise they retain standards limited by neglect of the public uses of the academic disciplines.

It is the legacy of these divisions that accounts for what sociologist James Coleman calls the "structural fault" in the organization of higher education. In an ambitious analysis of the social demands on the university he claims that the campus cannot be both an intellectual community and purposive corporation, the combination of goals espoused by most institutions. The result is what could be termed a lack of discipline among

the disciplines. Coleman is hard on the faculty. "[They] have the rights of members of a community -- control over their own activities and their time -- without the normative constraints and demands that such a community provides. They have the rights of employees of a purposive corporation -- the security of a salary and other perquisites of such employees -- without the obligation to give up control over their time for use toward the corporate goal." The result is a unique kind of professional status which is extremely difficult to organize into a coherent reward system. It is, according to Coleman, "a status with special privileges, a status with the autonomy of a community member, the security of the corporate employee and the obligations of neither."[3] Early proponents of tenure recognized this fault, if not the source as described by Coleman, and sought to outline a system reflecting what they took to be the traditions of higher learning and social responsibility.

Professionalism and the Tenure Debate

The history of tenure, the cornerstone of the reward system, reflects the division of educational interests as it was expressed in the development of the academic professions. Tenure theory and practice in American colleges and universities is based on two important documents of the American Association of University Professors. The first, published in 1915, was actually an expression of the very reasons the association was founded in that year. It sought to codify tenure procedures and to protect independent teachers and scholars from capricious dismissal. In order, however, to accomplish these goals the association also established what amounts to the autonomy of a guild, a condition consistent with the medieval origins of the university system. Fear of what they saw as an unacceptable form of accountability prompted philosopher Arthur Lovejoy of the John Hopkins University and other AAUP founders to locate the need for a professional association in the right of experts to set and maintain their own standards. Lovejoy held that those "not trained for a scholar's ...ties could not intervene in cases involving ideas or the expression of ideas without destroying, to the extent of their intervention, the essential nature of the university."[4] He and his colleagues believed that the "dignity of a great profession" depended on public and institutional acceptance of the professors themselves as arbiters of standard of performance. Famous cases at Stanford, Wesleyan and other institutions convinced early AAUP members and supporters that a system of tenure was necessary to protect the prerogatives of scholarship and freedom of expression.

To their credit, Lovejoy and his colleagues included an important statement of their understanding of the social responsibilities entailed by the protection of tenure and academic freedom.

> The responsibility of the university teacher is primarily to the public itself, and to the judgement of his own profession ... in the essentials of his professional activity his duty is to the wider public to which the institution itself is morally amenable... One of the universities' most characteristic functions in a democratic society is to help make public opinion more self-critical and more circumspect, to check the more hasty and unconsidered impulses of popular feeling, to train the democracy to the habit of looking before and after.[5]

In the original AAUP conception this critical relationship between scholars and the public was an important feature of professional life. As the AAUP statement has been applied in the ensuing decades, however, it has been other features which have dominated the tenure system.

In addition to affirming the need for professional standards and public responsibilities, the 1915 statement also sought to establish a judicial framework for tenure and promotion controversies. The Association recommended a set of procedures which were designed to reward merit while urging upon academic administrators specific procedures for dismissals. No effort was made to stipulate academic merit or rewards. AAUP leaders resisted an attempt to specify standards and left to institutions flexibility in implementation and application. A similar restraint informs the second important AAUP statement on tenure and the reward system. In 1940 the Association joined with the American Association of Colleges (AAC) in issuing a new Statement of Principles which is still today the critical document in tenure and promotion policies at higher education institutions of all kinds. The new statement emphasized the routinization of job security for academics in a way that resembles civil service; it also underscored the notion of judicial tenure, that is the need for precise and uniformly practised procedures for appointment and dismissal. Under the new rules tenure was tied to years of service, a standard probationary period was set (seven years) and other details of the present system put in place.

The intentions of the brief but influential 1940 Statement are stated quite directly:

> The purpose of this Statement is to promote public understanding and support of academic freedom and tenure and agreement upon procedures to assure them in colleges and universities. Institutions of higher education are conducted for the common good and not to further the interest of either the individual teacher or the institution as a whole. The common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free exposition.
>
> Academic freedom is essential to these purposes

> and applies to both teaching and research. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Academic freedom in its teaching aspect is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the teacher in teaching and of the student to freedom in learning. It carries with it duties correlative with rights.
>
> Tenure is a means to certain ends -- specifically, (1) freedom of teaching and research and of extramural activities and (2) a sufficient degree of economic security to make the profession attractive to men and women of ability. Freedom and economic security -- hence, tenure -- are indispensable to the success of an institution in fulfilling its obligations to its students and to society.

These noble intentions are followed by particular policies on "Academic Freedom" and "Academic Tenure." The criteria for tenure are nowhere stated, no doubt for reasons familiar in the 1915 document. It is worth noting, however, that this Statement like the earlier one acknowledges the circumstances and some responsibilities of the public activities of scholars, if not the justification and rewards.

> The college or university teacher is a citizen, a member of a learned profession, and an officer of an educational institution. When he speaks or writes as a citizen, he should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but his special position in the community imposes special obligations. As a man of learning and an educational officer, he should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that he is not an institutional spokesman.[6]

Certainly the effects of the 1940 Statement are to be found in procedures governing appointment, promotion and dismissal rather than in definition of the qualities of academic and public service. Such judgements, ostensibly at least, are left to the institutions and various disciplines themselves.

Adoption of near uniform nationwide procedures without standards posed little problem for institutions as long as higher education was expanding, as it did between 1940 and 1972. In the mid-sixties many thought that the critical problem in humanities graduate education was the length of time it took to complete a Ph.D. There was a widely acknowledged undersupply of well qualified teachers and scholars. Promotion and tenure in a seller's market were less competitive milestones than near guaranteed checkpoints in the typical academic career. Though there was a good deal of hand-wringing about "publish or perish" attitudes at some

institutions - mainly the elite ones - the system absorbed (i.e., promoted) almost all competent instructors as it rewarded the best and the brightest.

Abundant opportunity for promotion shielded the system from criticism until early in this decade when critics began to challenge its legitimacy and especially its impact on younger scholars. The distinguished Columbia University sociologist (and NEH National Council member) Robert Nisbet, for instance, argued that the rationale for tenure was fundamentally dishonest. Academic freedom, he claimed, depends not on job security for the tenured segment of the faculty but on the determination of institutions to protect it. In relation to other forms of job security, Nisbet says, tenure is an unjustifiably "differential privilege of signal proportions." Good evidence for his views, Nisbet added, was in the literature of tenure itself, since "no one can write well when the motivation behind it is bogus or hypocritical."

Critics of tenure rarely cite the insufficiency of the criteria; most accept the AAUP approach at face value and attack tenure by contesting its value in protecting academic freedom and pointing out its protection of the incompetent or even merely adequate in a crowded job market. Yet what Nisbet calls the "iron doctrine of tenure" is probably the best known structural feature of academic life. "To a large degree," he says, "society's tolerance of life tenure for academics has rested on its acceptance of the academic dogma, the mystique of scholarship, the belief in a clerisy." Nisbet's own notion of "the ideal character of the academic community...above all science and scholarship," suggests that public service oriented critics of tenure require a different kind of approach.[7]

The defense of tenure in this difficult time has sometimes included original and deliberately critical statements of its value. Unlike James Coleman, Boston University president John Silber approves of tenure for the opportunity it offers for community among academics. He has proposed maintenance of the current policies since "tenure within institutions is not totally dissimilar to the claims made on one another by the members of a family... it is grounded ultimately in a human expectation that there be continuity in life, that there be a quid pro quo, that associations among individuals and between individuals and institutions be orderly rather than chaotic, responsible rather than capricious." Nevertheless, Silber has serious doubts about the rigidity of the AAUP policies and advocates instead a more flexible system based on different kinds of professional development and institutional mission.

> The natural laws of personal development by which mathematicians and lyric poets often reach peak achievements in their twenties or early thirties,

> while historians and philosophers, by comparison, crawl along at a snail's pace, have no place in the reckoning of the AAUP. All faculty members must develop in goosestep. Instrumental musicians and vocalists must march with composers, composers with literary critics, while in turn mathematicians march with sociologists and psychologists. The uniformity, though rigid, might be tolerable if it were not so totally insulting to human intelligence and aspiration. Far greater flexibility according to the complexities of human nature is called for; and the insistence of the AAUP on rigidity and mechanism where flexibility and intelligence are required is most unfortunate. This rigidity represents a substantial violation of the academic freedom of non-tenured faculty; its modification is long overdue.

Those who administer the tenure system (department chairpersons, deans and academic vice-presidents) no doubt recognize the truth of these sentiments. Their inability to develop a system based on realistic ideas of professional development, and including rewards for service oriented teaching and research, is due in large part to the peculiar relations between faculty members and their institutions. There is fault on both sides.

The history of tenure and the debate over its virtues reveal the central philosophical and functional problems implicit in the contrast (or conflict) between the detachment of influential scholars and the service interests of institutions. The academic vocation as it has developed at American colleges and universities is centered on the department and its organization and expression of the interests of the particular disciplines. Department members typically focus their attention on advancement of their intellectual interests and the needs of students, preferably majors and graduate students. They are part of a "profession" which is not really dependent on and only barely related to the needs or interests of the institutions where they happen to work. This explains the widely acknowledged indifference on the part of historians to what is going on in the English department on their own campus while they follow closely activities in their profession, that is, activities at history departments at other institutions. The fragmentation of the disciplines, their isolation from one another, is simply the evidence that humanists and others see themselves as professionally related to a loose network of regional and national interests that transcends the mission of the home campus. Only a few faculty members, therefore, take very seriously the institution's public service slogans which suggest particular local responsibilities having little to do with the larger networks of prestige and recognition.

This is compounded, however, by the frequent inclination of administrators themselves to favor implicit national standards, such as they are, rather than local (campus, city, county, state) needs in rewards for academic work. There is still a widespread fear of appearing to be provincial. It has often been noted that in their efforts to mimic the characteristics of elite institutions, many colleges and universities which expanded rapidly in the 1960's and early 1970's adopted tenure and reward policies poorly suited to their academic and public circumstances. Though indeed they have been more liberal in the awarding of tenure, they have done so largely within the habitual framework of excellence in research and teaching. Now, when there is some willingness to change, administrators face departments substantially tenured in and declining student enrollments, both of which seem to preclude experimentation with "new blood" and revised criteria for rewards.

Despite the plain division of interests ("professional" - "institutional"), efforts to unify them have typically proceeded under the guise of "service." Though widely adopted, at least in statements to legislators and in college and university catalogues -- "service" has simply become one of the pieties of academic life, especially at public institutions. Though we probably need a term to describe what faculty members do in addition to teaching and scholarship, we have perhaps gone astray in trying to establish a basis for reward commensurate with the other categories. Certainly the gap between the rhetoric of service and its actual importance in the life of departments, and their negotiations for rewards with upper level administrators, suggest that continuing resentment over status will be unproductive and frustrating. It will, further, detract from support for traditional features of professionalism in the humanities which might in the long run better serve the disciplines and the public service organizations, like state humanities programs, which seek to make them useful to the public.

Dilemmas of Service and the Academic Citizen

State humanities programs and other service organizations interest themselves in the academic reward system as a result of their belief in the need for academic rewards which reflect alternative forms of teaching and research. Participation in a public program is hence construed as a form of service with qualities sufficiently distinctive to merit its reward because it is an expression of the pedagogic and scholarly responsibilities of the college or university. But participation in public humanities programs requires talents different from those practiced on campus more in degree than in kind. It is probably the skilled (if not always widely published) scholar who can write an elegant and pointed proposal and the successful classroom teacher who is effective with out-of-school adults. There are probably very few cases of poor scholars and teachers who make real contributions to public programs. This suggests that service in public programs is

actually another form of what good academic humanists and others do anyway. And the futility of adequately defining and then rewarding service as a discrete virtue suggests the need for a more conservative and integrated approach to the reward system. Such an effort would also reinforce efforts to recognize instruction as the central activity in higher education. Success in pressing claims on behalf of on campus teaching -- still the major issue in the debate over rewards -- will enhance claims made on behalf of public pedagogy.

The tenure debate has only sometimes included serious attention to the lack of balance in the widely accepted criteria -- teaching, research and service -- though the relation of the first two has been the subject of much writing and faculty senate oratory. "Service" is the great obscurity: a mysterious category in a notoriously imprecise system of academic rewards. Professors have never been sure whether service meant participation in professional organizations, membership on university and departmental committees, or election to the local school board. Some combination of institutional and public and professional service is implied but has rarely been included in statements of standards. And the publish or perish controversy has diverted attention from the need to define appropriate kinds of service, their relation to teaching and research, and then suitable rewards.

The lack of such standards reveals a curious paradox in American higher education, since at the institutional level (as compared to the departmental) there is near universal agreement about the need for colleges and universities to serve society. Howard Bowen, for instance, in his thorough review of the goals of higher education, identified two basic categories of our national "investment in learning:" goals for individual students and goals for society. Cognitive learning, emotional and moral development and practical competence are the principal goals of the first kind. The goals for society are the following:

- Preservation and dissemination of the cultural heritage.

- Discovery and dissemination of knowledge and advancement of philosophical and religious thought, literature, and the fine arts -- all regarded as valuable in their own right without reference to ulterior ends.

- "Improvement" in the motives, values, aspirations, attitudes, and behavior of members of the general population.

- Progress in the broad social welfare as reflected in religion, health, order, justice, information, care of the underprivileged, etc. Progress toward the identification and solution of social problems.

- Economic efficiency and growth.

- Enhancement of national prestige and power.

- Progress toward human equality.

- Progress toward personal freedom and autonomy.

- Rendering of useful services to various groups of society.

- Direct satisfactions and enjoyments received by the population from living in a world of advancing knowledge, technology, ideas, and arts.[9]

Bowen adds in a note that "these goals may be achieved through instruction, research and related activities or through public services" and hence tacitly acknowledges the shape of the present reward system. Yet the significance of the social goals Bowen claims for higher education suggest that lack of recognition of public service as a criterion for academic rewards is merely an oversight awaiting the time when academic institutions take seriously their self-proclaimed service interests.

That moment appeared to be at hand a decade ago when Theodore Roszak criticized "academic delinquency" in his introduction to an influential collection of essays by leading American scholars, The Dissenting Academy (1968). That volume was both a source and reflection of the period's campus unrest and general questioning of academic values. Noam Chomsky's famous essay, "The Responsibility of Intellectuals," was representative of the contributors' dissatisfaction with the detachment of individuals and institutions from particular moral and political issues: war, poverty and civil rights. Roszak, a historian, suggests a form of "action" for humanists that Emerson would have endorsed. He distinguishes the special contributions, in analysis and discussion, that scholars can make to public life from the direct political action or outright advocacy that many administrators and faculty colleagues feared. "To think, to speak, to teach, to write: all these are forms of doing. They ought properly to be seen as integral components of action and as an indispensable part of the political process. Without going any further, an academic may help make the life of his society a little richer and nobler." Roszak proposes critical service to society as "citizenly conduct" deserving of recognition as a form of teaching and scholarship. "In assessing a scholar's intellectual quality," he states, "we [must] be prepared to ask what the man's thought or the example of his actions has been worth in the defence of civilized values. Has he sought to elevate public debate in our society to a level of intellectual and moral respectability?"[10]

Despite the high expectations of many teachers and scholars, these questions have not found their way into faculty evaluation procedures and criteria for academic rewards. The possibility that they might became an issue in the tenure debate. Definitions of "respectability" differ and evaluating it a task few welcomed.

Efforts to reevaluate tenure, sometimes as part of attention to higher education generally, have had only a negligible impact. The Presidential Commission on Campus Unrest -- the title recalls another era -- urged in its 1970 report a comprehensive review of tenure on grounds that current practices might be unjust to students but also might "detract from the institution's primary function... and grant faculty members a freedom from accountability that would be unacceptable for any other profession." Hence in 1971 the AAUP and the AAC merged forces again and created the Commission on Academic Tenure composed of distinguished scholars, administrators and lawyers. Its report, released in 1973, acknowledged with apparent resignation that "tenure, like so many other things these days, does not work as well as it once did," but recommended no radical changes in the system. Instead, institutions are urged to codify procedures when they are unclear and to accept more flexible standards of academic achievement including what the Commission, in a faint echo of Roszak, calls "academic citizenship." This signifies, among other qualities, "valuable professional service outside institutions." The Commission, however, accepted the fact that academic citizenship is often defined in "relatively trivial terms." It noted in "utilities higher and lower" fashion that rewards for "citizenship" can obscure a "lack of distinction or promise in the more exacting tasks of teaching and scholarship." [11]

Another mid 1970's review of dilemmas revealed similar attitudes as it considered the relation of "service" to teaching and scholarship. The comprehensive and earnest survey of "The Uncertain Future of Higher Education" undertaken by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences was based on the conviction that nothing less than "the continued viability of the concept of the liberally educated person was involved." The issues are posed as a collection of uncertainties. "Whether that person is characterized as civilized, cultivated, or learned, whether those qualities are looked for in the possession of certain concrete knowledge or in a capacity to reason in certain ways and to solve certain kinds of problems, or whether it is seen to inhere in certain life-styles that are not instinctive to the individual is a matter of great import. How any of these things can be taught, by whom, and with what incentives, are issues about which reasonable people will disagree." Yet despite the recognition by many of this survey's contributors that the rapidly changing circumstances of higher education will require modifications, if not radical alternatives, in the tenure and reward system, the Academy's prestigious Assembly on University Goals and Governance merely

confirmed current policies. "Despite the abuses common to permanent positions," the Report asserts, "professorial tenure needs to be retained as a guarantor of academic freedom against political and other pressures." And "the principle of differential rewards for merit in teaching and scholarship, which exists for very good reasons, should not be tampered with where it still prevails." [12]

Rewards for public service are nowhere considered, perhaps because the Assembly was somewhat ambivalent about the service capacity of higher education. This statement by a "blue-ribbon" group of teachers and scholars indicates some widely held attitudes.

> Universities have never been extensively involved in directly providing public service except in agriculture and medicine and to some extent in primary and secondary schools, and, of course, in their role of providing education and training to their own students. However, many thousands of professors, on an individual basis, working as consultants or volunteers, independently of their institutions, have served community, state, federal, and private organizations. Today, colleges and universities are urged to devote major resources to public service. The suggestion is made that they solve the difficult problems of modern society; poverty, racism, urban blight, and a deteriorating natural environment are a few of the matters that they are asked to deal with. Higher educational institutions, in fact, have neither the resources nor the political capacity to engage in such activities except on a modest scale. What they can do and should do, if invited, and if their professors and staff have the professional competencies and are in fact interested, is to contribute knowledge that may be relevant to these problems. Their major contribution ought to be an intellectual one; individuals and groups are in a position to outline courses of action worth considering by those with the responsibility for solving public problems. A larger direct institutional involvement is possible only in a limited number of circumstances. [13]

While it is certainly true that the public activities of scholars must be primarily "intellectual" and that service activities can never dominate educational institutions, the statement needlessly ties service to direct problem solving and seriously underestimates the interest of teachers and scholars in public activities. The two "ifs" do not suggest very much confidence in public service as an inevitable or appropriate role for humanists or others. Indeed, sociologist Martin Trow, himself an influential scholar on public policy, classifies the impact of colleges and universities on the cultural and political lives of the communities in which they are situated as one of the several "externalities" in higher education. They are not, he admits, ordinarily taken as "outcomes" to be measured or taken into account in assessing the productivity of institutions. [14] Bowen's social goals, in other words, and those

subordinated in the AAUP Report to procedural guarantees, have never really been institutionalized in American higher education.

Even a brief review of service as a criterion for academic rewards reveals the difficulties inherent in its application. And it has been proposed that colleges and universities are actually meeting their public service responsibilities in the traditional on-campus forms of teaching and research. Undergraduate and graduate students, after all, are part of the public and more and more students are adults beginning or resuming formal education.

Service is ignored as deserving of academic reward because it has been needlessly segregated from the mainstream of academic life. As Bowen only hints, teaching and scholarship can themselves be construed as public service when practiced in the appropriate formats; and service can be a form of teaching and scholarship every bit as rewarding (intrinsically and in other senses) as the graduate seminar. By accepting institutional definitions of service as a poor cousin to teaching and scholarship, we doom ourselves to a losing battle. The academic disciplines and institutions of higher education must, therefore, as the other contributors to these studies suggest, be met essentially on their own terms. We can recognize achievement in classroom pedagogy and specialized research as we celebrate the expression of these virtues in other insufficiently recognized forms which are at once traditional and innovative. Denigration of ivory tower habits will do little to enable public pedagogues, and the state humanities programs and other service organizations, to influence the reward system.

For there is no ignoring the fact that the effort to preserve liberal education in the schools is very much the same one we are making to demonstrate the utility of the humanities outside the schools. Not every scholar is a potential project director or participant; and many of those who aren't are making important contributions to liberal learning and expanding its role in our culture. Humanities programs can only be as good as the humanists and scholarship which are their sources and the uses of the humanities must include those which fall short of public impact but which make the humanities themselves richer. There is then no real conflict between public and private humanities activity, only the benefits of the debate between the two and their relation and integration in the service of important academic, cultural and social ends.

Conclusion: Integration and Influence

Judging by the very small number of institutions which have developed innovative reward systems, it is safe to say that even if they are not doing so deliberately, most have accepted the

recommendations of the Tenure Commission. Declining enrollments, high percentages of tenured faculty and other limits on institutional flexibility have also no doubt inhibited experimentation. With many fewer professors entering the system, the question will be how to adjust the expectations of experienced faculty members. And, in turn, professors who win tenure under the prevailing set of standards have the opportunity to influence departmental colleagues and institutional administrators to revise the criteria and accord value to underrecognized components. A few have tried to change the terms of the tenure debate so that it focuses less on matters of academic freedom and job security and more on opportunities for professional development and the improvement of higher education in teaching and research. Bardwell Smith, for instance, has declared that the issue is not tenure but accountability. "In what ways and to whom is the academic profession accountable for the allocation and use of its resources? What ends does it serve? What procedures and practices does it employ? What standards does it uphold? How and by whom is it evaluated? In what ways are renewal and the search for improved quality built into its common life? In what sort of tension or relationship does the academy see itself with respect to other publics, let alone other levels or stages in the educational continuum?"[15] According to Smith, a creative reward system would acknowledge as many different levels of accountability as possible in order to counteract public disenchantment with tenure and to provide the conditions necessary for a vigorous and adaptive faculty.

The ideal condition is integration of public service interests into the regular academic programs. The institution's division and departments must be convinced that service does not compete with teaching and research, and does more than complement them. It is, as I have suggested, a form of these traditional functions, a way to display zest for pedagogic and intellectual quality. Participation in public humanities programs should be justified, documented and rewarded as part of ordinary academic responsibilities.[16] It is futile to ask for, in effect, the integration of rewards in coin of the realm (salary, released time, etc.) without accepting and indeed promoting integration of the activities which they honor. And excellence in the conduct of projects, or simply service in them, should therefore be eligible for academic rewards. It is worth noting that many humanists are paid, however modestly, for their work in the state program and therefore administrators, with some justice, object to additional rewards to them as they do to faculty writers or editors of commercial textbooks. Hence, in order to distinguish participation in the state programs from summer or extension teaching or textbook preparation, it must be shown that it advances the arts of instruction and research as well as the cause of a better informed public.

The question remaining is how to influence higher education to accept a program of academic rewards that includes the social expression of pedagogy and scholarship. A few suggestions:

- Recognizing the work of successful project directors and program participants in ways that bring attention to the distinctive contribution of public humanists: letters to department chairs, deans and other administrators detailing the meaning and importance of particular contributions to successful projects. Such citations, however, must not be routine. They must acknowledge such achievements in detail and reflect high standards of public activity. Also, special statewide, even regional awards, and formal commendations of other kinds.

- Meetings of state committee members and staff with academic leadership (on an institution by institution basis, regional, or statewide) making the case for service activities through the state program as a significant part of the faculty members' record of academic achievement and development. In states where faculties are unionized this feature of the reward system should be proposed for inclusion in the faculty contract.

- Program activities designed to highlight the pedagogic and scholarly achievements of those scholars active in the projects. They might be assisted by the state program in providing on-campus workshops and other forms of consultation in teaching out-of-school adults.

- Scholarship could be recognized with publications supported through the regrant program (there are excellent examples in Nevada, Connecticut, Pennsylvania and other states). Regrant awards could, where appropriate, include funds for significant publications of local, regional and national interest.

- Direct assistance, especially to untenured faculty, in the preparation of tenure and promotion folders -- help in explaining the character of the state program, and the qualities and significance of the candidates contributions. State programs should be ready to document and support these efforts.

- A national effort to influence the system through joint activities which address the major professional associations and higher education organizations: attendance at national and regional meetings by committee and staff members of state programs, special publications.

- Research into 1) the changing circumstances of academic careers and the role of public pedagogy and scholarship in faculty development, 2) institutions which do value participation in the state programs, and 3) the character and impact of these reward criteria on institutions, departments and individual humanists.[17]

At both the state and national levels influence will, of course, also depend on the skill of committee members and staff in communicating their interest in the reward system and suggestions for its modification. Some will no doubt be accused of meddling in academic affairs which are, to the mind of Lovejoy's heirs, outside their ken. And efforts in this regard will be affected, like all other features of the state program, by the very limited resources available and the increasing demand for them. Yet there is good reason to believe that it is important nevertheless to make the effort. The success of individual projects and the long range impact of the state program will depend in part at least on teachers and scholars properly recognized for their efforts by project sponsors and academic institutions. And if service is not the best term to describe faculty participation in the program then it is the way to describe the contribution the state program can make to mediating the interests of the public and higher education.

Emerson, again, would find a reward and a homily even in the effort itself, for he says of the American Scholar that "he who has put forth his total strength in fit actions has the richest return of wisdom." He was optimistic because he believed that excellent teaching and learning would become important in America and hence properly rewarded by the sheer force of circumstance and intellectual talent: "Events, actions arise, that must be sung, that will sing themselves." That, alas, is unlikely as far as something as complex, diverse and confounding as the academic reward system is concerned. Hence there is a role for state humanities programs: documentation and criticism of the impact of the system and opportunities to improve it. That is, a role which offers the chance to employ the tools of the humanities and to display the social convictions which shape their use.

NOTES

1. Eric Ashby. "The Case for Ivory Towers." Algo D. Henderson ed. Higher Education in Tomorrow's World. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1968), p. 7.

2. Lawrency Veysey. The Emergence of the American University. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965, p. 13. The quotations which follow fron Santayana, Babbit and Eliot are also found in Veysey.

3. James S. Coleman, "The University and Society's New Demands on It" in Karl Kaysen ed. Content and Context: Essays on College Education. (New York: McGraw Hill, 1973.) This volume, one of the Carnegie Commission Reports on Higher Education also includes an excellent essay on the humanities by critic Roger Shattuck.

4. Cited by Walter P. Metzger, "Academic Tenure in America: A Historical Essay," in Faculty Tenure: A Report and Recommendations by the Commission on Academic Tenure in Higher Education, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1973), p. 149.

5. "General Report of the Committee on Academic Freedom and Academic Tenure," Bulletin of the AAUP, December 1915, pp. 26, 32.

6. Faculty Tenure, Op. cit., p. 250.

7. Robert Nisbet, "The Future of Tenure," Change, April, 1973, pp. 27-33.

8. John R. Silber, "Tenure in Context," in Bardwell L. Smith, ed., The Tenure Debate. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1973, p. 48.

9. Howard Bowen, Investment in Learning: The Individual and Social Value of American Higher Education, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1977).

10. Theodore Roszak, "On Academic Delinquency," in Roszak ed., The Dissenting Academy. New York: Vintage, p. 34.

11. Faculty Tenure, Op. cit., p. 40.

12. Assembly on University Goals and Governance, "Theses," Daedalus, Fall 1974-Winter 1975, Vol. II, p. 333. This double issue is titled, "American Higher Education: Toward an Uncertain Future."

13. Ibid., p. 338.

14. Martin Trow, "The Public and Private Lives of Higher Education," Daedalus, Op. cit., pp. 113-128.

15. Bardwell L. Smith, "The Problem is Not Tenure," Soundings, 57, Winter 1974, p. 459.

16. See James C. Votruba's, "Faculty Rewards for University Outreach: An Integrative Approach," Journal of Higher Education 49, November-December, 1978, pp. 71-78, a useful article addressed to university administrators, especially those in continuing education. See also Clyde Williams' pointed analysis of a hypothetical academic department and its "system" of rewards, "Therapy for Fourth-Class Citizens: Incentives/Rewards," Nebraska Humanist. Fall 1979.

17. The literature on faculty development is now quite large. It has not included attention to the place of public activities in the developmental pattern of academic careers. A good survey of the possibilities is in the recently published "Faculty Career Development" in The Current Issues on Higher Education Series (1979) published by the American Association for Higher Education. A follow-up of Votruba's work at the University of Illinois might reveal the utility of the "integrative" approach.

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CONTRIBUTORS

CHARLES C. COLE is Executive Director of The Ohio Program in the Humanities. He has a B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. from Columbia where he has taught and served as Associate Dean. At Lafayatte College he was Dean and Professor of History and he was also President of Wilson College. He is the author of several books and articles on history and higher education. His To Improve Instruction was published this year in the ERIC Higher Education Research Reports series of the American Association for Higher Education.

RICHARD LEWIS is Executive Director of the Oregon Committee for the Humanities. He has a B.A. from Gonzaga University (Spokane, Washington), an M.A. from Columbia and a Ph.D from Wisconsin in literature and historical linguistics. He was a fellow at Oxford University in 1969-70 and has taught at Wisconsin and Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh. From 1972-75 he was Associate Director of the Midwestern Center of the National Humanities Series. He has published several articles on medieval literature and language and edited collections of readings in the humanities for public programs. His Discussing The Humanities, a monograph for university teachers and others who conduct and participate in public programs, is being revised for publication by the Federation in 1980.

MICHAEL SHERMAN is the Associate Director of the Wisconsin Humanities Committee. He has his B.A. in General Studies in the Humanities and his M.A. and Ph.D. in history from the University of Chicago. Mr. Sherman has published articles on Renaissance France and book reviews on other topics in European history. He is a frequent contributor to Federation Reports and recently became a member of the National Humanities Faculty. Before joining the staff of the Wisconsin Humanities Committee, Mr. Sherman taught history and humanities at Lawrence University, where he was the director of that school's humanities program. He was also the organizer and project director of a two-term Humanities Institute for out-of-school adults at Lawrence which was sponsored by the Wisconsin Humanities Committee.

ALAN SHUSTERMAN is Executive Director of the Indiana Committee for the Humanities. He earned his B.A. at Duke and Ph.D. (in The Committee on Social Thought) at the University of Chicago. Mr. Shusterman has taught at Roosevelt University and Northwestern and has published articles on fiction and the relation between arts and humanities programs (Federation Reports). He chaired a session at the 1979 Conference of the Modern Language Association on "The Social Role of Literature."

CONTRIBUTORS continued

JAMES P. SMITH is Associate Director of the Federation and co-editor of Federation Reports. He studied the philosophy of science at the University of Denver and the London School of Economics and the history of philosophy at the University of Minnesota. He has taught at Hamline University and the University of Minnesota. Mr. Smith participated in several projects sponsored by the Minnesota Humanities Commission and gave a paper at the History of Science Society's 1979 meeting. With Fred Weber of Rhode Island and Michael Holland of Nebraska he wrote the booklet "The Einstein Centennial Celebration and Public Humanities Programs: A Guide."

FRED WEBER is Associate Director of The Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities. He holds a B.A. from Wisconsin and a Ph.D. (Philosophy) from Northwestern. He has taught at Northwestern and The University of Hawaii at Hilo. Mr. Weber has published several articles on philosophy, and he is especially interested in the application of existential themes and concerns to science. His "Crises, Freedom and Choice in the Philosophy of Science" will appear soon in Philosophic Forum.

STEVEN WEILAND is Executive Director of the Federation of Public Programs in the Humanities. He has a B.A. from the City University of New York and a Ph.D. (English and History) from the University of Chicago. He has held teaching and administrative posts at the University of Michigan and the University of Cincinnati. In 1975 he was Senior American Lecturer at Adam Misciewicz University in Poznan, Poland. He has published articles on literature, education, the humanities and psychiatry and is at work on a book. Witness and Spokesman: The Psychoanalyst in Society.

OAK WINTERS is Executive Director of the North Carolina Committee for the Humanities. He has a B.A. (History) from Dartmouth and an M.A.T. (History) and Ed.D. from Harvard in Educational Administration. He has held teaching and administrative posts at William Paterson College (New Jersey), Rhode Island College and St. Mary's College (Maryland). Mr. Winters has published several articles on education. He spent the fall of 1979 in Scandinavia studying the origins and practices of the Folk School.

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