

Humanities

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#1

The National Endowment for the Humanities is authorized by law to "foster the interchange of information in the humanities." This is the first issue of *Humanities*, an occasional report intended (1) to inform educators and others interested in the humanities of projects supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities that might be adapted elsewhere, and (2) to stimulate the submission of meritorious proposals to the Endowment. Communications about the Endowment, its purpose, and the projects it supports are invited. Address Miss Laura Olson, Public Information Officer, NEH, Washington, D.C. 20506.

Razing the House That Shlock Built

NEH Grant to Princeton Civil Engineers Aims at More Humane Cities

Driving into Washington across the Teddy Roosevelt Bridge, one can survey an interesting range of design: the Lincoln Memorial, the graceful curves of the Watergate apartment-hotel-office complex, the gray face of Georgetown University's new library rising austere but handsome above the Potomac. Also, right at water's edge on this historic American river, a gray cement factory.

Standing on the Michigan Avenue Bridge over the Chicago River, one can see the striking twin columns of Marina City, Colonel McCormick's Gothic *Chicago Tribune* tower, and an office building designed by Louis Sullivan, one of America's first skyscraper architects and mentor of Frank Lloyd Wright. Also, right at water's edge, a red-brick warehouse.

This juxtaposition of good and bad structures probably characterizes every city in the United States, reflecting an unspoken, perhaps unconscious conviction that some buildings are worth designing attractively and some aren't. Whatever its rationale—supposed economy or just plain apathy—shoddy design adds a kind of visual pollution to an environment already burdened with other man-made wastes.

So who looks at a factory?

We all do—and at railroad viaducts, electric generating stations, municipal incinerators, expressway cloverleaves, bridges, and all the other utilitarian works that bisect our common, urban living-room. You can't *not* look at them.

The point is not that cement factories and warehouses should be prohibited in scenic areas. The point, rather, is that cement factories and warehouses can be attractive, too—at no added cost.

"Good design does not have to be expensive," argues David Billington, professor of civil engineering at Princeton, "but I think that much of urban decay can be directly traced to the assumption that it does. We've accepted the idea that, while airports can be beautiful because they're expensive, public housing has to be ugly because it must be cheap."

Neither he nor colleague Robert Mark agrees, and—with grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations—the two have set to work designing a new educational program intended to produce "a new kind of engineer who . . . will center his career on a union of technology with the humanities."

Rather than adding electives in the humanities to the traditional civil engineering curriculum, they intend to reshape the civil engineering program from within by in-

roducing students to their own humanistic tradition—the tradition of men such as Gustave Eiffel, John Roebling, Robert Maillart, and Pier Nervi who, while spanning chasms and erecting towers, created at the same time structures that blended “efficiency and elegance.”

In addition to supporting the daily travels of hundreds of millions of commuters since its completion in 1883, for example, the Brooklyn Bridge inspired poetry by Hart Crane, almost a lifetime of painting by Joseph Stella, and praise by a contemporary architectural critic as “this aerial bow . . . perfect as an organism of nature.” Clearly, Roebling built something more than a bridge; the Princeton program aims at telling students not only what, but how and why.

The program, titled “Humanistic Studies in Engineering,” is designed not only to improve education in civil engineering for Princeton students, but to refine an experimental approach that may later effect the 5,000 civil engineers whom American universities graduate each year. It has four components.

First, a series of research projects leading to dissertations by Ph. D. candidates on the thesis that “within the constraints of structural efficiency there exists a wide range of reasonable forms, some ugly, many bland, but a few truly elegant.” Technical work for the dissertations will include experimentation on small-scale models of existing structures; Professor Mark has refined a technique for reproducing models of noteworthy buildings in plastic, simulating in them the stresses produced in the real structures by forces such as gravity and wind, and then analyzing with polarized light the ways in which design elements accommodate those stresses. The principal aim of the Ph. D. research will be to produce teachers who understand how an engineer can create technically superior structures which are also acknowledged works of art.

Second, a series of scholarly documents that provide “a deeper understanding of culturally significant buildings through a technical analysis of their structural behavior.” As an example, Professor Mark was able to demonstrate through his work with models that many seemingly ornamental features of the 13th Century Gothic cathedral at Amiens—the stately pinnacles on the outer buttresses, for example—served an essential, technical function; that is, they were there not just to make the cathedral pretty, but to help it stand up. This scholarship might also deal with more recent problems in civil engineering, such as the impact on structural design caused by the introduction of steel in the mid-19th Century.

Third, the program will yield a series of new textbooks that marry technological rigor with cultural perspective. The first, a text on concrete structures, is already being

prepared by Professor Billington; two others will concern structural analysis and steel structures. Each will follow the same, three-part pattern: (1) proper structural performance through rigorous mathematical and scientific analysis; (2) efficiency in proportioning materials through the systematic study of alternative approaches to optimum design, and (3) the “expressive elegance” of completed structures and their relation to architecture.

Fourth and last, a series of critical essays on contemporary structures to help the public realize that large-scale civic works can be beautiful as well as big. Though denunciations of public works abound, virtually none combine technical analysis with social and artistic criticism in a way that will both stimulate the public to demand better buildings, and help the engineer understand how better buildings can be built. A new tradition of criticism that includes general appraisals of major civil works projects and evaluations of specific buildings is essential, Billington and Mark feel, if the public is to demand and get more humane structures. “Public works should, in a free society, be subjected to carefully reasoned criticism . . . based on both technical competence and cultural perspective, and directed not only to professional colleagues but to non-technical private citizens as well.”

Can the public really be aroused to influence the specialized worlds of engineering and architecture, or is this just well-meant but futile huffing and puffing?

The public already has been so aroused, Billington points out in a lucid, eloquent article of his own:

Victor Hugo signalled the beginning of a new concern for old buildings when he interrupted the narrative of Quasimodo in his novel, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, to describe the ill-kept and crumbling cathedral of Notre Dame de Paris. For Hugo, the cathedral was the hero and its restoration his real purpose for writing the novel. He described man’s neglect for his own works; Hugo’s call for restoration was echoed through the literary circles of post-Bourbon France . . .

The literary circles, in turn, roused wider public interest in France’s medieval structures and culminated in the formation of a commission on historical monuments chaired by Prosper Mérimée, author of *Carmen*. And in 1845, 14 years after Hugo published his novel, the commission awarded a contract for the restoration of Notre Dame to a young architectural student, Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, “with whom modern ideas on building might properly be said to have begun.”

It can happen here. Americans have no medieval cathedrals, and we will probably never choose to restore a cement factory. But we can, at least, hope for better-looking ones—“elegant and expressive of their function,” in Billington’s phrase—to be built in the first place.



Grant Profiles

National Humanities Faculty

Have Ideas, Will Travel

Many school teachers who know that their humanities teaching needs invigorating simply cannot do much about it; heavy teaching loads, low salaries, geographical location or a combination of these factors make it difficult for them to seek the new ideas or meet new people who could supply fresh perspectives on courses that have started going stale. In other cases, school systems suspect that the humanities could offer significant insights on special educational problems—but want the guidance of scholars in devising a course or developing new curricular materials.

To provide such help, the National Endowment for the Humanities instituted the National Humanities Faculty through Phi Beta Kappa, the American Council on Education and the American Council of Learned Societies. With financial support from the Endowment and the S & H Foundation, the Humanities Faculty in its first year dispatched 22 representatives to five school systems that had requested assistance.

Schools in Gainesville, Ga., for example, wanted advice on developing a program in human values and attitudes in preparation for the system's transition to desegregation; teachers in Minneapolis wondered if the humanities have anything to say to the current crop of rebellious young, and brought in four Faculty members to assist in closing the generation gap; other Faculty representatives traveled to Utica, N.Y.; Grosse Pointe, Mich.; and San Francisco to help teachers develop approaches to such topics as social diversity, contemporary urban problems, and the individual search for meaning and identity in a mass society.

Originally, the Faculty intended to stress teaching content rather than teaching technique—not so much *how* to teach as how to select *what* to teach, and how to draw upon several thousand years of human experience in interpreting today's headlines. After its pilot year of operation, however, the NHF decided that "it is a grave mistake to try to make the distinction between concern with subject matter versus pedagogy—the two cannot be separated, since attitude toward subject matter and students is so

important, and that very attitude will influence pedagogical techniques."

This year (1969–70), the NHF is cooperating in humanities projects with 13 more school systems and is continuing last year's work with two of the original five. Inquiries about the Faculty should be addressed to its director, Dr. Arleigh Richardson, III, 49 Main Street, Concord, Mass. 01742.

Tulsa Library Program

Controversy in Tulsa

Many citizens tend to regard their libraries as a passive civic resource, strait-laced repositories of high-mindedness that one really should visit more often—maybe next week. One antidote for this misplaced tolerance is controversy, such as that sparked by a 3-month program named "Change: Discovery, Discussion, Decision" sponsored by the Tulsa City-County Library System last spring.

Library director Allie Beth Martin and her staff set out to prove that the humanities can suggest answers to contemporary problems, and that a library system can ventilate local mustiness by acting as an open forum for all points of view. The theme of the program was chosen, reports Mrs. Martin, "under the assumption that failure to understand basic issues involved in change leads to many of today's conflicts." The conflict-producing changes chosen for analysis by a "think group" within the library and three advisory committees were: Morality and Religion; The Generation Gap; Racial Minorities; and The Individual and Society.

Each of these issues formed the core for a week-long presentation ranging in political complexion from left to right. The lecture on racial minorities, for example, was delivered by Dr. James Farmer, former director of the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE) and now Assistant Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare—while that on "the individual and society" was presented by Dr. Russell Kirk, author of *The Conservative Stand*. Integrated with these keynote speeches were "Experiment-in-Theater" readings pertaining to each of the four major topics (selec-

tions from *King Lear*, *Death of a Salesman*, and *The Lion in Winter* illuminated “the generation gap”); “Controversy with Coffee” sessions that invited—and received—lusty audience participation, and panels such as “A Requiem for Christianity” conducted by Methodist, Baptist, Unitarian, and Catholic clergymen. By the time the smoke cleared, the Tulsa libraries project had managed to involve black militants, Indians, the Oklahoma Bar Association, and the Anti-Communist Crusade.

One measure of the program’s success is that it reached 10,000 metropolitan-area residents directly, earned the equivalent of \$55,000 in publicity from local newspapers, radio and TV stations, and boosted the circulation of books by authors ranging from Barry Goldwater to James Baldwin. Tulsa publications, which had originally opposed the library’s enthusiastic plunge into such touchy issues, wound up backing the experiment: “. . . an action-packed project being run by a vital organization functioning as a community catalyst!” commented one.

NOTE: A detailed description of the Tulsa project and other experiments such as the one at the University of California at Davis and at South Dakota State University is available from Mr. Richard Hedrich, Director, Public Program, NEH.

Hiram College

Making “Relevance” Work

Relevance is an English word, all right, hanging in there with all those other swell dictionary R’s from *Ra* (Egyptian god) to *ryotwary* (something to do with land-tenure in India). Despite this evidence of respectable upbringing, *relevance* has probably given educators more trouble than any concept since the square root of minus-two. Everybody agrees that relevance is desirable—but what on earth is it?

Small (1,100 students) Hiram College in Hiram, Ohio, got into the relevance business years before an honest idea became a slogan, and established a tradition of “quiet innovation” whenever it felt that change would produce better education. In 1934, it adopted an intensive study

plan that set each student to probing only one subject at a time; in 1961, it became one of the first American colleges to adopt the 3-3 plan, under which students took three courses during each of three quarters; and now, with a development grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, it has embarked on a new freshman-year program intended to work a discreet revolution in liberal arts education.

The program consists of seven parts: (1) the *Freshman Institute*, a 2-week session prior to fall term during which groups of 10–12 students work with a faculty member and an upperclassman on oral and written expression, and learn that the College values clarity and logic over most other things; (2) the *Freshman Tutorial*, in which small groups of students matched with a congenial faculty member explore a particular theme (e.g., “The Varieties of Life: Cultural Diversity”)—not as an introduction to a specific academic discipline, but to “scholarship in the liberal arts tradition;” (3) *The Twentieth Century and Its Roots*, a year-long course contrasting 19th Century man’s belief in human perfectibility through science with 20th Century man’s suspicion that science-run-riot may ultimately do him in; (4) *interdisciplinary courses* that bring faculty members from several departments to offer different perspectives on a single problem; (5) *an area of concentration*, chosen in the sophomore or junior year, that may correspond to the traditional college major but can be tailored to more individual interests, such as Urban Studies or Psychobiology; (6) *participation activities* outside the formal curriculum, such as music, debate, and tutoring poverty-area pupils, and (7) *revised graduation requirements* that give each student an unusual degree of leeway in designing his own educational program.

“In summary,” writes Hiram Dean George A. Morgan, “the new curriculum . . . undertakes the task of seeing that its liberal arts education is precisely that: a free and sensitive response to persons and to the world in which they live.”

NOTE: Information on this program is available from Mr. Herbert McArthur, Director, Education Program, NEH, as is information on other experimental programs at Boston University, Florida Presbyterian College, the University of Nevada, the University of Vermont, and others supported by the Endowment.

Education To Meet a Changing Society

In the following condensation of a speech delivered as one of the Centennial Lectures at Oregon State University in February 1969—Dr. Barnaby C. Keeney, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, suggests some methods for applying the humanities to contemporary problems.

Like our political society, the university is under severe attack today and perhaps for the same reason; namely, that we have accomplished much of what we have set out to do in this generation, that we have done so imperfectly, and while we have been doing so, we have said a lot of things that simply are not true. For example, we have earnestly declared that full equality of opportunity in universities exists for everyone, regardless of his economic circumstances, his race, or his religion. This has never been true. When it was least true the assertion was not attacked. Now that it is nearly true, not only the assertion but the university itself is locked in mortal combat with the seekers of perfection.

In another sense the university has failed. It has stored great quantities of knowledge, more than have ever been stored before. It teaches more people and despite its faults it teaches them better. It has created enormous quantities of knowledge; and it has taught us to apply part of this knowledge, *but it is in the application* that the failure has come.

Of the great branches of knowledge, the sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities, the sciences are applied, sometimes almost as soon as they are learned. Strenuous and occasionally successful efforts are being made to apply the social sciences, but almost never are the humanities well applied. We do not use philosophy in defining our conduct. We do not use literature as a source of real and vicarious experience to save us the trouble of living every life again in our own.

The great tasks of the university in the next generation are to search the past to form the future, to begin an earnest search for a new and relevant set of values . . . and finally to learn how to use all the knowledge we have for all the questions that come before us.

I have some suggestions . . . I would take about a fourth of the student's time throughout the undergraduate years and organize it into courses which I would call

history, and literature, and philosophy, and anything else that seemed appropriate and organize these courses around first-rate problems. The difference between first-rate human problems and second- and third-rate ones is that they tend to be around for a long time, whereas second-rate ones tend to get solved and become of antiquarian interest.

One first-rate problem, for instance, is that of interfering with what some call human destiny, and others call biological development of the human individual, which is partly the result of genetic circumstances and partly the result of accidental environmental conditions. Throughout its history, that part of the population which has dedicated itself to the medical arts has systematically sought to interfere with human destiny by lengthening life and done so with the enthusiastic support of most of the population. Others, of course, have dedicated themselves to shortening human life, through crime and war.

Now it is anticipated that the next generation, and perhaps this one, will be able to interfere chemically with the actual development of an individual and perhaps biologically by interfering with his genes. We have a long history of speculation going back to antiquity on the consequences. There are first-rate ethical, moral and philosophical implications to interfering with human development. Obviously, there would be benefits both to individuals and to society from eliminating, or at least improving, mentally and physically deformed persons. On the other hand, there could be very serious consequences if this knowledge were used with premeditation to produce superior and subordinate classes, each genetically prepared to carry out a predetermined mission. Both Aldous Huxley and I suspect that this can be done. What happens then to free will, to democracy, and to the rights of the individual? Human destiny is a first-rate scientific, philosophical, and moral problem today. It will still be a first-rate problem when all of us are dead.

Now I shall list but not examine some other obvious examples. Can we be excellent and equal, too? What is an appropriate concept of virtue for contemporary society, with all the social, scientific, and technological changes that have occurred? What are appropriate forms of organization of human living today? Is the city obsolete? All of these involve many of the humanities and the social sciences. All of them could be taught with reference to specific knowledge and evidence. They could also be taught, of course, through idle speculation—through bull sessions in which students and professors stated their preconceptions and argued on the basis of conclusion rather than evidence, and I am sure some of them would be. I am also sure that in all of them there would be a tendency to do so, and in overcoming it, students would learn that the reiteration of a conclusion without the examination of evidence is not an effective way either to reason or to contend. They would have to learn a great deal in order to examine these questions with any degree of adequacy. I am quite sure that they would not complete the syllabus for History 101 as it currently is written, but in the course of 4 years they would learn a great deal of history, and above all they would learn what it means.

Even given a qualified faculty, such courses would be extremely difficult to teach. There would always be the danger of superficiality, of repetition, of domination by aggressive students or professors. Finally, the traditional members of the faculty would say, "But the students won't learn enough to go to graduate school." Certainly they would not learn everything that we are in the habit of making them learn, but they would learn some things that we are not. I think that one could assume that in the

other three-quarters of their time, they would learn what they usually do, and they might even learn to think about it by carrying new habits into their more conventional courses.

I believe the advantages would be overwhelmingly greater than the disadvantages. The purpose of education, after all, is not only to impart knowledge—this is simply a step upon the way—but to teach students to use knowledge which they either have or will find, to teach them to ask and seek answers for important questions, and in short, to live rationally, as our founding fathers assumed that we would. A generation of men and women in the habit of thinking and behaving thus would direct serious questions to our disappearing assumptions and our values, and would perhaps produce appropriate norms for present and future conduct.

In the same way they would develop new goals for themselves and for our society. They would quickly find new areas in which constructive innovation is necessary and possible. They would not become obsolete intellectually and educationally, as we quickly do now, but would constantly seek and find new areas for investigation. They would, of necessity, form the habit of using all parts of our knowledge to deal with all of our first-rate questions. The present mood of destructive criticism would be coupled with a constructive and creative effort, which is really what the world needs today. The tensions of the dichotomies between revolutionary and conservative education, assumption and fact, revolution and conservatism, would, for the moment at least, resolve these all into a newly creative America.

NEH: What It Is and How It Works

In 1965, feeling that Federal support for science and technology should be complemented by encouragement for cultural advance as well, the 89th Congress established the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities. For operating purposes, the Foundation was divided into two "endowments," one for the arts and one for the humanities.

The National Endowment for the Humanities was assigned responsibility for developing the nation's humanistic resources through financial support of individual and institutional projects involving "language, both modern and classical; linguistics; literature; history; juris-

prudence; philosophy; archaeology; the history, criticism, and theory . . . of the arts and those aspects of the social sciences which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods." Though it supports projects from the familiar humanistic tradition of pure scholarship and general knowledge, it particularly invites proposals that relate the humanities to contemporary problems: urbanization, foreign policy, civil liberties, war and peace, government decision-making and, in sum, "the wider application of humanistic knowledge and insights to the general public interest."

The four broad areas in which NEH provides support

are research, education, public programs, and fellowships.

Public Program

Purpose: to stimulate programs that will make humanistic knowledge and insights more available to the general public—those who are neither humanities specialists nor advanced students. Grants are made to non-profit institutions such as museums, libraries, historical associations, educational TV stations, colleges and universities. Grants for local or regional impact generally range up to \$40,000; those with national impact, up to \$60,000.

Research Program

Purpose: to advance and disseminate knowledge about the humanities, and to develop the nation's ability to conduct such research. Small grants usually limited to \$10,000 and 1 year are offered to individuals, educational institutions, and professional or research organizations, and a few larger grants are awarded for cooperative research or editing projects.

In preparation for the 200th anniversary of the American Revolution, the Endowment's Research Division is particularly interested in research and writing projects that relate the ideas and experience of the Revolutionary period to the nation's current concerns.

Education Program

Purpose: to help educational institutions improve instruction in the humanities and make better use of their resources for teaching them. NEH offers three kinds of support for education programs:

Project Grants

Grants averaging \$20,000–\$30,000 are made to educational institutions and organizations for carefully defined projects of limited scope—e.g., experiments, conferences, institutes, or evaluations and revisions of curricula—that will not only improve humanities instruction in the recipient institution, but can also be adapted for use by other colleges, universities, and schools.

Planning and Development Grants

Institutions that have already completed analyses of their own strengths and weaknesses, and identified areas in which significant improvement can be made, may

qualify for planning grants averaging \$30,000, and for development grants of approximately \$200,000 covering one or more years, though few of the latter can be awarded.

Elementary and Secondary Education

The U.S. Office of Education (400 Maryland Avenue SW., Washington, D.C. 20202) is the principal Federal agency responsible for advancing education in the schools; however, NEH will consider some proposals for humanities programs in the schools, particularly programs involving cooperation between schools and institutions of higher education.

Fellowship Program

Purpose: to enable faculty members, independent scholars, or others “whose occupations engage them as interpreters of the humanities” (e.g., editors, critics, curators) to pursue uninterrupted, full-time study that will enhance their competencies as teachers and scholars.

Faculty Development Program

Colleges and universities with predominantly Negro enrollments may qualify for grants of \$5,000 to \$10,000 to support projects aimed at improving faculty capabilities in the humanities.

Prospective applicants are invited to request “Program Information for Applicants,” a more detailed brochure on eligibility and types of proposals encouraged, from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Gifts and Matching-Fund Opportunities

Prospective applicants for NEH grants are encouraged to seek other, non-Governmental gifts to support their projects; in certain circumstances (described in “Program Information for Applicants”), NEH will match such outside support with Federal funds up to 100 percent of each gift. The Endowment is authorized to accept gifts from private and institutional donors either for general purposes or for specific projects.

NOTE: NEH does *not* support original, creative work in the arts—such as musical compositions, painting, the writing of poetry or fiction, or performance in the arts. Inquiries about Federal support for creative and performing artists should be addressed to the National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, D.C. 20506.

President Nixon Proposes Doubling Funds for the Arts and Humanities

On December 10 President Nixon asked the Congress to extend the legislation creating the Foundation for an additional 3 years. He also proposed "that the Congress approve \$40 million in new funds for the National Foundation in fiscal 1971 to be available from public and private sources. This will virtually double the current year's level."

In this message to the Congress, President Nixon said "At a time of severe budget stringency, a doubling of the appropriation for the arts and humanities might seem extravagant. However, I believe that the need for a new impetus to the understanding and expression of the American idea has a compelling claim on our resources. The dollar amounts involved are comparatively small. The Federal role would remain supportive, rather than primary."

The President pointed out that these additional funds "would begin to redress the imbalance between the sciences and the humanities in colleges and universities, to provide more opportunity for students to become discerning as well as knowledgeable; we would be able to broaden and deepen humanistic research into the basic causes of the divisions between races and generations, learning ways to improve communication within American society and bringing the lessons of our history to bear on the problems of our future."

The President noted that "studies in the humanities will expand the range of our current knowledge about the

social conditions underlying the most difficult and far-reaching of the Nation's domestic problems. We need these tools of insight and understanding to target our larger resources more effectively on the solution of the larger problems."

He concluded that "few investments we could make would give us so great a return in terms of human understanding, human satisfaction and the intangible but essential qualities of grace, beauty and spiritual fulfillment."

Barnaby C. Keeney, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, applauded the President's message as "a bold and positive effort to improve the quality of American life. The great need of the future is to choose wisely and creatively among the abundance of things we can do, an abundance which we have never known before and which we may never have the opportunity to know again."

Mr. Keeney continued, "Increased funds for the humanities, for example, will permit the development of new educational programs for all ages. Increased knowledge of history, philosophy and literature, and its application, is essential to understanding the present, which has after all grown out of the past and is in some cases a direct consequence of the past. Education and research in these subjects and in all of the humanities are essential to planning the future in such a way that we can live in it."

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