

SPEECHES AND PAPERS

JOSEPH DUFFEY

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE - 1977

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES 1977 - 1978

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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY TO

THE CONFERENCE BOARD

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

OCTOBER 20, 1977

BY

JOSEPH DUFFEY

CHAIRMAN, NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

MR. SCALLON, FELLOW GUESTS:

I SUSPECT THAT THIS MEETING, SOMEWHERE AND SOMEHOW, WILL BE DESCRIBED AS AN "INTERFACE." YET IN SPITE OF THE LINGUISTIC PERIL, I WELCOME WALTER HAMILTON'S INVITATION TO SPEAK WITH YOU TODAY.

THIS IS A HISTORIC CONTACT, BOTH FOR THE ENDOWMENT AND THE CORPORATE COMMUNITY. I BEGIN MY NEW WORK WITH THE HOPE FOR A DIRECT, VIGOROUS, CLOSE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES -- AND THE CORPORATE COMMUNITY.

I HAVE BEEN CHAIRMAN OF THE HUMANITIES ENDOWMENT FOR LESS THAN A MONTH. I HAVE SPENT THIS TIME LEARNING SOMETHING ABOUT THIS UNIQUE AGENCY OF GOVERNMENT.

PERHAPS THE MOST STRIKING FEATURE OF THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES IS THAT IT EXISTS AT ALL. AMERICANS HAVE BEEN NOTORIOUSLY WARY OF EVERY HINT OF GOVERNMENT INTRUSION IN THEIR LIVES, AND HOW MUCH MORE IN THOSE INTANGIBLE REALMS -- THOUGHT AND IDEAS? I CANNOT IGNORE THE TENSIONS OF THE ENDOWMENT'S MISSION WITH ITS POTENTIAL FOR PUSHING NARROW IDEALOGY ON ONE SIDE, AND ITS EXPRESSED EGALITARIAN INTENTIONS ON THE OTHER.

I HAVE LOOKED AT THE CONGRESS' DECLARATION OF PURPOSE, 12 YEARS AGO STATED IN THE PREFACE TO THE ACT THAT CREATED THE AGENCY:

"DEMOCRACY DEMANDS WISDOM AND VISION OF ITS CITIZENS."

TO PROVIDE THE BASIS FOR THIS VISION AND WISDOM, CONGRESS LOOKED TO THE HUMANITIES, WHICH IT FELT ALLOW US TO "ACHIEVE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE PAST, A BETTER ANALYSIS OF THE PRESENT AND A BETTER VIEW OF THE FUTURE."

A CASUAL, NOT TO SAY CYNICAL VIEW OF THE CREATION OF THE ENDOWMENT MIGHT SEE IT IS SIMPLY AN ADJUNCT OF THAT EDUCATIONAL DRIVE FOR SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL SUPREMACY WHICH WAS SPAWNED BY THE COLD WAR. IT COULD BE SEEN AS A HANDY AND NOT VERY EXPENSIVE POINT OF GLOBAL PRESTIGE.

A LOT HAS HAPPENED SINCE THIS AGENCY WAS CREATED. PERHAPS WE SEE MORE CLEARLY NOW. WE HAVE FINALLY CONCLUDED THAT OUR TECHNOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC ADVANCES HAVE FAR OUTRUN OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR POTENTIAL FOR DISCOMFORT AND ACTUAL EVIL. IF THIS PAST, BITTER DECADE HAS TAUGHT US NOTHING ELSE HOME, IT HAS BROUGHT HOME THE CATASTROPHIC CONSEQUENCES OF OUR MISTAKES, MISTAKES OFTEN MADE IN THE FACE OF AVAILABLE KNOWLEDGE.

WE HAVE BECOME MORE AWARE THAN EVER THAT THE PRODUCTS OF MEN'S MINDS AND IMAGINATIONS ENTER SOCIETY AND NATURE. IDEAS AND VISIONS CAN AND OFTEN DO ALTER SOCIETY AND NATURE IRREVOCABLY. THE IDEA OF THE IMPORT OF HUMAN CREATIONS UPON HISTORY AND NATURE IS EASY ENOUGH TO GRASP WHEN THE PRODUCT IS A BOMB, BUT IT IS NO LESS TRUE IF THE PRODUCT IS A POEM.

YET A POEM IS NOT A BOMB, FOR IT CONTAINS THAT ESSENTIAL HUMILITY THAT IS PART OF AN OFFERING OF WHATEVER KIND. WHERE THE TECHNICIAN IS SEEKING TO REDUCE UNCERTAINTY, EVEN ELIMINATE IT, THE POET BOWS TO IT, MAKES IT INTO A MYSTERY, A MEANING NOT YET CLEAR TO HIM, BUT WHICH HE WAITS TO RECEIVE. THIS UNCERTAINTY AND REVERENCE MAKES THE POET A HUMANIST. IT IS AN ATTITUDE OF MIND CHARACTERISED BY FEARLESS KNOWLEDGE OF UNCERTAINTY, RECEPTIVENESS, EMPIRICISM.

WE FEEL WE KNOW WHAT ART IS, BUT WE ARE LESS SURE ABOUT THE HUMANITIES; THIS FEELING HAS BEEN REINFORCED FOR ME IN MY BRIEF TIME AT THE ENDOWMENT. WE ARE SUFFERING FROM AN IMAGE PROBLEM, AND IT'S NOT BECAUSE THE HUMANITIES HAVE A NEGATIVE IMAGE -- THAT WE COULD HANDLE, AS OSCAR WILDE ONCE SAID: "THE ONLY BAD PUBLICITY IS AN OBITUARY." RATHER, THE PROBLEM IS THAT YOU CAN'T JUST WANDER INTO A MUSEUM ON A SUNDAY AFTERNOON AND SEE SOME HUMANITIES. AND YOU CAN'T PUT



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YOUR MONEY DOWN AND TAKE IN AN EVENING AND DINNER AFTERWARDS. PEOPLE DON'T KNOW WHAT TO MAKE OF THE HUMANITIES, WHICH ARE EITHER CONFUSED WITH UNIVERSITY SURVEY COURSES THAT STUDENTS SLUMBER THROUGH ON THEIR WAY TO THE LABS, OR ASSUME TO BE THE PROVINCE OF THE AUTOCRATIC SCHOLAR.

AND YET THE INFLUENCE OF THE HUMANITIES IS ENORMOUS, AND FAR REACHING, EVEN IF ILL-DEFINED. HISTORY, LITERATURE, POETRY, ARCHEOLOGY AND THE REST ARE SIMPLY THE MEANS BY WHICH OUR CIVILIZATION IS RECORDED, EVALUATED, AND PASSED ON. CALL IT A DIALOGUE IF YOU WILL, A DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE FUTURE AND THE PAST. WE IN THIS COUNTRY HAVE ALWAYS BEEN CONCERNED WITH EXCELLENCE, YET THE CONCERN FOR EXCELLENCE IN OUR SYSTEMS OF THOUGHT, OUR MEANS OF PRODUCTION AND OUR TECHNOLOGY IS CONFRONTED BY THE EVER MORE PRESSING NEED FOR THE DETERMINATION OF GUIDING VALUES, VALUES THAT ARE PROPER, VALUES THAT ARE HUMAN AND HUMANE.

THE DISCIPLINES OF THE HUMANITIES ARE BY THEIR NATURE SUITED TO PROVIDE THE LANGUAGE FOR THESE DIALOGUES, AND THE KNOWLEDGE NEEDED TO CONSTRUCT CIVILIZED VALUES.

BUT IT IS NOT SCHOLARS OR ACADEMICS WHO WILL PARTICIPATE IN THESE DIALOGUES. I WOULD HOPE NOTHING COULD BE CLEARER TO YOU THAN THIS: IT IS THE PRIVATE SECTOR, THE CORPORATIONS

IN PARTICULAR, THE SECTOR OF OUR SOCIETY WHICH IS THE MOST ACTIVE AND MUSCULAR, RATHER THAN THE GOVERNMENT, WHICH MUST BY ITS VERY NATURE, REACT, WHICH MUST RESPOND TO THE NEED FOR ATTENTION TO HUMANISTIC LEARNING AND INQUIRY.

THERE IS A FUNDAMENTAL SIMILARITY, BETWEEN CONFLICTS (OR DEBATES) WHICH ARISE IN ONE PART OF OUR CIVILIZATION -- CALL IT THE THEORETICAL, AND THE OTHER PART -- PRACTICAL EVERY-DAY LIFE. WHY IS IT WE SEE WORKERS TODAY NO LONGER CONTENT SIMPLY TO MAKE A LIVING, DEMANDING SOME MEASURE OF SELF-FULFILLMENT AND SELF EXPRESSION IN THEIR DAILY WORK? AT THE SAME TIME ON EVERY STRATA OF SOCIETY WE SEE WHAT AMOUNTS TO AN ARTISTIC FLOWERING, A REVIVAL OF INTEREST IN HISTORY AND THE PAST NOT SOLELY PRODUCED BY THE BI-CENTENNIAL, AND ON EVERY HAND, A TURNING TOWARD SOURCES OF LEARNING AND CULTURE.

THIS WOULD BE REASON ENOUGH FOR THE EXISTENCE OF A NATIONAL ENDOWMENT, AND REASON ENOUGH FOR THE EXPANSION OF ITS PROGRAMS IN THE DIRECTION THEY ARE PRESENTLY TAKING -- TOWARD A DIFFUSION OF HUMANISTIC KNOWLEDGE TO THE WIDEST POSSIBLE AUDIENCE: HISTORY BY MEANS OF TELEVISION, ARCHEOLOGY BY MEANS OF DISPLAYS SUCH AS THE ENORMOUSLY SUCCESSFUL "TREASURES OF TUTANKHAMUN" EXHIBIT, PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS BY MEANS OF NEWSPAPER "LECTURES" WHICH APPEAR IN OVER 400 NEWSPAPERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

SCALLON

THE CORPORATION FINDS ITSELF COMPELLED TO RESPOND AND HAS RESPONDED; THE BEST OF ITS LEADERS ARE SHOWING NEW DISTASTE FOR THE BARE PHILOSOPHY OF PROFIT FOR ITS OWN SAKE, AND MEN WHO MIGHT NOT HAVE DONE SO A DECADE AGO NOW WINCE AT CHARLIE WILSON'S MISQUOTE "WHAT'S GOOD FOR GENERAL MOTORS IS GOOD FOR AMERICA."

IT IS GRATIFYING TO SEE THAT AT A PERIOD WHEN CORPORATE SUPPORT FOR THE HUMANITIES HAS BECOME LESS PROFITABLE IN THE NARROW SENSE, CONTRIBUTIONS CONTINUE TO RISE, PARTICULARLY GRATIFYING BECAUSE AT THE SAME TIME HIGHER EDUCATION IS FACED WITH INCREASING PRESSURE TO CONCENTRATE ON THE BASIC BREAD AND BUTTER ACTIVITIES OF INSTRUCTING THE YOUNG, AND FINANCIAL STRINGENCY TENDS TO MAKE INTELLECTUAL ENDEAVOR AMONG ADULTS SEEM LIKE A FRILL.

THE WAY TO JUSTIFY AND INCREASE OUR COMMITMENT TO THE HUMANITIES IS NOT, HOWEVER, TO CONCENTRATE ON THE UNIVERSITIES ALONE. THE TREASURE OF OUR COMMON LEARNING IS NOT SIMPLY PASSED FROM THE UNIVERSITY, THE LIBRARY AND THE MUSEUM, TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC. IT MOVES IN BOTH DIRECTIONS, AND IF THE RISE IN GENERAL INTEREST IN OUR PAST, OUR HISTORY AND ORIGINS AND OUR PLACES IS ANY CLUE, I WOULD SAY IT IS MOVING STRONGLY; THE EXPERIENCE OF THE SOCIETY INFORMS OUR UNDERSTANDING AS MUCH AS THE OTHER WAY AROUND.

I WOULD EVEN QUESTION WHETHER A HUMANIST NEED BE AN EDUCATED MAN. MIGHT HE NOT BE A FACTORY WORKER, WHO FINDS PERSONAL MEANING IN A BUILDING, OR A HISTORICAL STORY, OR A RESTORED COLONIAL SITE -- THE KNOWLEDGE THAT IT IS THERE, IT IS STABLE, IT IS PERMANENT AND AVAILABLE TO HIM -- AND THAT IT LINKS HIM TO A PAST OF GLORY, STRUGGLE, AND CONTINUITY.

IN NO OTHER WAY, I BELIEVE, CAN WE DEFEND OUR COMMON LEARNING THAN BY WIDENING THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN IT. THIS WIDENING OF OPPORTUNITY IS THE TASK THE ENDOWMENT IS UNDERTAKING.

TO USE ANOTHER EXAMPLE -- AN ORDINARY READER OF JANE AUSTEN, AND WHO DISCOVERS AND ARTICULATES SOMETHING PERSONALLY SIGNIFICANT ABOUT HER WORK, IS ALSO A CONTRIBUTING MEMBER OF THIS CULTURE. TO BE SURE, THE JANE AUSTEN WE UNDERSTAND IS NOT THE SAME ONE WHO WROTE IN THE WEST COUNTRY OF ENGLAND A CENTURY AND A HALF AGO -- FORTUNATELY WE HAVE SCHOLARS OF ENGLISH LITERATURE TO REMIND US OF THAT CONSTANTLY -- BUT WE ARE NOT UNFAITHFUL IN BRINGING OUR FULLEST ATTENTIVENESS (AND OUR FULLEST SENSE OF OUR OWN QUESTIONS) TO HER WORK. AGAINST THE ARGUMENT THAT SUCH LITERATURE HAS NO INHERENT SOCIAL VALUE AND MUST BE CHERISHED AS "ART FOR ART'S SAKE," WE HAVE TO PROTEST THAT SOCIETY HAS THE OBLIGATION TO SEEK WISDOM WHEREVER IT CAN. THE GREAT PLEASURE OF THE CLASSICS, AFTER ALL, IS THE WAY THEY SPUR NEW INSIGHTS, THE WAY THEY RESPOND TO NEW CONCERNS, IN

EACH GENERATION. WE HAVE, THEREFORE, NOT ONLY SHAKESPEARE'S HAMLET TO ENJOY, BUT COLERIDGE'S "HAMLET" AND HAZLITT'S "HAMLET," AND THAT OF ERNEST JONES AND GEORGE LYMAN KITTREDGE AND J. DOVER WILSON, AND THAT OF OLIVIER AND BURTON AND SCOFIELD. AND IF A YOUNG READER WERE TO LOOK AT HAMLET'S CONFUSION ABOUT PLAYING THE ROLE OF A LOYAL PRINCE, A REVENGING SON, A LOVER AND A MAN OF CONTEMPLATION, AND SEE IN THAT CONFUSION A MIRROR OF HIS OWN MODERN PERPLEXITIES ABOUT ROLE, THEN WOULD NOT THE HAMLET TRADITION ITSELF BE NURTURED BY SUCH USE?

THE AGENCY I WORK WITH IS CHARGED NOT ONLY WITH SUPPORTING HUMANISTIC LEARNING, BUT WITH ENCOURAGING AMERICANS TO USE THAT LEARNING IN THE QUEST FOR WISDOM. IT'S PROBABLY EASIER TO ACHIEVE THE FORMER THAN THE LATTER, EASIER TO ASSIST IN THE GROWTH OF OUR CULTURE THAN TO NURTURE ITS WISDOM. THE ACTS ESTABLISHING THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENTS, AFTER ALL, WERE ONLY A PART OF AN EXTRAORDINARY EXPLOSION OF THE CULTURAL RICHNESS OF AMERICAN LIFE IN THE LAST QUARTER-CENTURY. THE ECONOMIC VICISSITUDES PLAGUING ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS THESE DAYS SHOULD NOT OBSCURE THE REMARKABLE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF AMERICAN SCHOLARSHIP AND THE ARTS DURING THIS PERIOD. OR THE ASTONISHING GROWTH OF MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES, OF PUBLISHING AND THE MEDIA, AS WAYS OF MAKING THIS CULTURE ACCESSIBLE TO MORE OF OUR CITIZENS. OR THE SPLENDID EFFORTS TO PRESERVE AMERICA'S PAST -- IN OUR HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND DISTRICTS, IN THE ORAL HISTORY OF ETHNIC

AND FOLK SOCIETIES, IN OUR DOCUMENTARY AND ARTIFACT COLLECTIONS. OR, NOT LEAST, IN THE AMAZING ABILITY OF INSTITUTIONS LIKE THIS ONE TO QUADRUPLE ITS STUDENT POPULATION IN THE LAST TWENTY YEARS IN ORDER TO HELP YOUNG AMERICANS TAKE THEIR PLACES AS PARTICIPANTS IN THIS CULTURAL EXPLOSION.

BUT WISDOM? HAS THIS GROWTH MADE US WISER, MORE COM-PASSIONATE, MORE ATTENTIVE AS A PEOPLE? THIS MUST BE THE MEANING AND PURPOSE OF OUR HUMANISTIC LEARNING IN THE YEARS AHEAD. THE SURVIVAL OF OUR DEMOCRATIC COMMUNITY, ESPECIALLY IN A TECHNICAL AGE, IS DEPENDENT UPON THE SUCCESS OF THE HUMANITIES IN NURTURING OUR COMMON CULTURE.

PERHAPS THE MOST TELLING ANALOGY FOR THE TRANSFORMATION WE SEEK COMES FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION. TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO AND EARLIER, WHEN WE SAVED AN HISTORIC STRUCTURE, IT WAS GENERALLY TO BE MADE INTO A MUSEUM, A SHRINE, THE REPOSITORY OF AN OLDER AND OFTEN AN ELITE CULTURE, WHICH HAD TO BE RESCUED FROM THE DISRUPTIVE COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL GROWTH AROUND IT. TODAY WE ARE PRESERVING HERE IN BOSTON AND ELSEWHERE THOSE INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS WHICH WERE SO RECENTLY VIEWED ONLY AS EYESORES. AND WE PRESERVE THEM NOT

SCALLON

AS SANCTUARIES FROM MODERN LIFE BUT AS PLACES IN WHICH TO LIVE  
AND WORK, TO SHOP AND CONVERSE AND BE CREATIVE. IN THE SAME  
WAY, I HOPE THAT OUR WHOLE HUMANISTIC TRADITION CAN COME TO  
HOUSE OUR MOST CREATIVE EFFORTS TO MAKE THIS A BEAUTIFUL AND  
JUST SOCIETY.

THANK YOU.

REMARKS: OPENING OF THE  
BROOKLYN EDUCATION AND CULTURAL ALLIANCE

OCTOBER 21, 1977

by

JOSEPH DUFFEY

CHAIRMAN, NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

Congressman Richmond, Congressman Zeferetti, Mr. Lichtenstein, (others who need to be recognized?), ladies and gentlemen, I am honored to be with you on this occasion. I want to offer my congratulations to all the member institutions of the Brooklyn Educational and Cultural Alliance as you move forward with the Brooklyn Rediscovery Project. All of us at the Humanities Endowment are proud to be associated with you in this effort.

Your cooperative effort here in Brooklyn is a major example of an important trend around the country--cultural institutions getting together, combining their resources, and working cooperatively. During my tenure at the Humanities Endowment, I hope that we can find ways to be as supportive as we possibly can be of these cooperative efforts in every section of the country. As the needs of our cultural institutions grow and our resources to meet those needs remain quite scarce, this kind of cooperation among our institutions is needed everywhere.

Your association is a particularly important one. The combined resources which you bring to the Alliance are remarkable--in terms of human resources, fiscal capability, physical resources, and objects and archival materials. You serve a community which has a history as rich as any in America. The Brooklyn story is an important one for you and for all of us. Finally, you serve a people who rightly seek access to the cultural opportunities that the Alliance will provide.



From our point of view at the Humanities Endowment, your project promises to strengthen the capabilities of your institutions in the humanities and to make your combined resources more useful to the people of Brooklyn. The strengthening of the humanities is a central purpose of the Humanities Endowment. But not our only purpose. We want to make the humanities available to the public in ways that touch the daily lives of our citizens. That too, is one of our central purposes.

I would hope this effort will result in additional public support for your institutions. Let me say in closing that I am pleased also that the Endowment has been able to support other important endeavors in Brooklyn. I hope that Joan Maynard is here. The rediscovery of Weeksville is an important part of the rediscovery of Brooklyn. The Weeksville story is one of the most interesting of the many local history efforts taking place around the country now. You are fortunate to have some physical remnants of this early free Black community left and I hope that you continue to attract support for this work.

We are also looking forward to the opening next year at the Brooklyn Museum of the "Africa in Antiquity" exhibition. This promises to be one of the most spectacular educational exhibitions of African material that we have had in this country, and it is most proper that it should be developed and open here in Brooklyn.

Congressman Richmond, all of this means that I look forward to seeing more of your constituents here in Brooklyn in the years ahead. I wish you well as you proceed with the important work of the Brooklyn Rediscovery.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS: 44TH MEETING OF THE  
NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE HUMANITIES

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

NOVEMBER 3 - 4, 1977

by

JOSEPH DUFFEY, CHAIRMAN

When the agenda for this meeting of the National Council was being prepared, it was suggested that I consider opening this session with some "remarks."

The idea was inviting. If I have learned anything over the past few weeks of being variously, sworn at and sworn in, it is that as Chairman, I can anticipate being on the receiving end of a good many comments and remarks! That prospect, however, has not made me wary of speaking about my own hopes and expectations for the Endowment. It has served, rather, to reinforce my conviction that an open exchange of views by those who care deeply about the humanities and the humanistic dimension of learning can only bode good for the future of those concerns.

I thought it might be useful if I shared some reflections on the advice and counsel I have already received.

In many ways, the most important thing I have learned is that the place and well-being of the humanities continue to make a real difference to people from many walks of life. I have discovered strong and growing support for the work of the Endowment from many quarters. I have talked with no one who has suggested that the mission of this agency is not important or that the scope of its responsibilities should in any way be diminished. On the contrary, there are more thoughtful and exciting proposals for humanities programs and projects in circulation than our resources could possibly accomodate. Our task remains one of choosing from among many possibilities and opportunities.

New Orleans,

I am sure that it will come as no surprise to most of you that people have not been shy about offering me guidance on setting priorities for the hard choices that have to be made. While it is too early to respond to particulars, I have begun to think seriously about the notion that some sort of national conversation on the state of the humanities might well be in order and could contribute to a clearer understanding of the special role that this Endowment can play in meeting the most pressing needs of humanistic learning.

As you may know, the Congress has indicated its intention to hold regional hearings around the country on legislation calling for a White House Conference on the Humanities. Both these hearings and the Conference afford us an opportunity to interpret the important work of this agency.

The more I listen to the people who have expressed their hopes and expectations for the Endowment, the more I am convinced that public debate over the mission of this agency is useful. I have found no intractable views or embattled positions. It is true that people hold differing opinions about the role the Endowment should play. What is not true is the suggestion, proffered mostly by the New York Times, that those differences are irreconcilable. Indeed I am reassured by the counsel I have received—for much of what both our friends and critics would have us consider we are, indeed, already doing.

The Endowment's commitment to scholarly research cannot be seriously contested. Our support for educational and cultural institutions warrants no apologies. And the philosophy that underlies our public programs can withstand close scrutiny. I am not suggesting that we cannot do more or better, but I am arguing that our several programs rest on a firm foundation and that our footing is sure.

I do expect to take some initiatives in the months ahead. But I am confident that there will be none other than those that the Council, the staff and our constituencies would welcome and encourage. I have no blueprint for the future, but I do know that, in a time of tight resources, the Endowment will have to be increasingly attentive to a wide range of scholarly, institutional and public needs—all of them worthy, some of them pressing. We will not be able to support every project worthy of consideration, nor meet every pressing need. We will have occasion to make hard choices from among competing claims. As we set priorities, we will counsel broadly. We will acknowledge both regional and national tastes and standards. We will be aggressive in encouraging partnerships of purpose in both the private and the public sectors. Just as the various federal agencies that serve the cultural community must better coordinate their programs and husband their resources, so the Endowment must become more responsive to the opportunities for cooperative efforts in the humanities that exist on the state and local levels.

New Orleans, 2

Of the many good people who have counselled me these past weeks, none have impressed me more by their competence, their understanding and their dedication than the staff of the Endowment. In saying this, I tell you nothing that the Council does not already know--for you have long been on record with praise for the ability and hard work of my new colleagues.

The staff has been remarkably patient with me. They have so far gently protected me from my unbridled enthusiasm for the opportunities at hand and firmly guided me in the direction of what is possible as well as desirable. The thoughtful pre-Council review through which they have put me in recent days may not show as much as it should, but I come to this meeting with the firm conviction that the staff is commending for our collective consideration important and worthy applications many of which might not have come to fruition without their thoughtful efforts and determination.

Because I hope to establish an office of the Chairman which will help me to be responsive to the needs of the Endowment, I have asked Kay Elliott, B.J. Stiles, Andrea Anderson, Andrea Fowler and Tom Litzenburg to assist me in these beginning weeks. Most of you already know the 2 Andrea's and Tom from their tenure with the Division of Public Programs. B.J. and Kay come to the Endowment for the first time and I hope that before long you will have an opportunity to come to know them as well.

Shortly after arriving at the Endowment, I learned that one senior member of the staff had made an irrevocable decision to bring to an end what, by any standards, must be considered an exceptional career in public service. John Barcroft has been associated with most of the major accomplishments of this agency. He has been the principal architect and administrator of what is widely acknowledged to be one of the most successful national public programs undertaken by a federal agency. He conceived and implemented the program of state committees which has successfully reached millions of citizens across the country with new opportunities for learning in the humanities. John has been a close associate of two former chairmen, and I have come to value his advice and counsel as well. He has chosen to seek new opportunities for himself. In reluctantly accepting his resignation as Director of the Division of Public Programs, I have asked that he remain for a while as personal consultant and advisor to the office of the Chairman. He has graciously consented to remain for the next three months as a special consultant to my office and to devote all of his time and efforts to that end. I am very grateful I've had his counsel in these early days of my Chairmanship, and I look forward to having his advice and counsel available for at least the next three months.

John is here today, and I want to take this opportunity to thank him on behalf of the staff and the Council for a job that has been exceedingly well done. He has served this Endowment and all of us well.

It remains finally only for me to say that I have looked forward to this meeting with considerable expectation. To date my contacts with members of the National Council have been most stimulating and rewarding. I'm delighted that on short notice some of you found it possible to be present for my swearing-in in Washington several weeks ago. Bob Hollander and Mrs. Rockefeller accompanied me back in September when I went to the Hill for confirmation. Without your encouragement and support I would have been less certain than I am that my decision to accept the Chairmanship was the right one. Coming to know many of you has convinced me that my response to the President's invitation was indeed correct. I look forward to working with you in the months and years ahead. And with that I suggest that we get on with the business at hand.

Joseph S. Duffey - Arts Council - Sel. 112.

November 12, 1977

I have looked forward to this <sup>early</sup> opportunity <sup>early</sup> to meet the members of the Arts Council. I have great admiration for the work you've done. In the last few weeks I've come to know exactly how Goodrich must feel, since I've been trying to explain that there's another Endowment to the American Public! I have been flattered, that in a couple of cases, I have even been introduced as Livingston Biddle by people who didn't quite understand that there are two Endowments. I do look forward to a time of cooperation between the two Endowments, and I know that I speak for our National Council which met last week in New Orleans when I express our hope, and confidence, for a productive period of collaboration and cooperation.

I really have no special message to bring this morning and I'm not sure that to describe to you the activities of the National Endowment would be appropriate. Let me just share a few ideas that have to do with ~~matters~~ ~~of policy~~ ~~that~~ I would think that together, we will be discussing in the months ahead. My concerns are not really difficult to identify; they have to do with what the proper role of the government <sup>ought</sup> to be in the area of <sup>The</sup> arts and <sup>The</sup> humanities, and they really center around three related issues. The need to insure the dissemination of learning and culture; ~~and~~ the obligation to provide for public participation in the shaping of cultural legacy; and the propriety of establishing standards of excellence by which to measure the worth of what we support and encourage.

I have long believed that it makes little sense, indeed it is absurd, to argue that humanistic scholarship and artistic effort have great merit regardless of whether they are woven into the fabric of our common life.

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The Arts and <sup>the</sup> Humanities are finally forms of communication by which we convey to one another what we consider to be of worth and of value. They express our deepest convictions, and they serve to define how we view ourselves and the world around us.

In a democratic society, to my way of thinking, they should never become the privilege <sup>?</sup> of a few, or simply badges of class or <sup>of</sup> status. We are not together the patrons of the arts and the humanities and ~~where~~ scholars and artists are not in our employ, (although some people keep suggesting otherwise) ours, I think, is a responsibility of insuring that scholarly and artistic works enjoy their rightful place in the society. And that place certainly is not a cluster of celebrated institutions in a particular region of the country, but instead it is <sup>every</sup> place where people who believe that our destiny rests finally with what we achieve and what we share together in the realm of the ideas and of the spirit.

That's not a small point I make, because I think ~~that~~ those who oppose it do so with vengeance. But I am persuaded that those who drafted the legislation were quite ~~prophetic~~ <sup>wise</sup> in bringing the arts and the humanities into an area where they touched—each work touches the other—and in suggesting that indeed they may properly serve in the <sup>the</sup> wisdom and the vision <sup>which</sup> our original legislation suggests is essential for a democratic society.

It may be that the humanities travel more easily than the arts, I don't know. In any case, there are more, I think, centers of higher education, higher learning across the country today where we can make

strong connections between advanced learning and the most humble inquiry into the humanistic tradition. And that's essentially the way I see the role of the Humanities Endowment. We have learning library programs in Boston and Chicago and New Orleans, which bring together an <sup>1205</sup>extraordinarily diverse audience, in an effort to provide opportunities <sup>for</sup> education and culture that are not, and indeed should not, be limited to the college or the university classroom. Here in Washington, the Dunlap society is beginning to document and interpret architectural landmarks in the Capital. Their photographs and drawings are going to be made available in microfiche to high schools and universities and colleges across the country, so that not simply scholars, but students, can work with these original sources. I don't think ~~that~~ that work is less scholarly or less excellent because of the breadth of its out-reach.

the  
We are more and more seeing the need and opportunity to support the further development of regional and local centers of culture through collaborative programs: ~~In~~ Illinois, for example, to urge institutions which have played a role in the life of Abraham Lincoln to work together on a project of the interpretation of that life and that heritage, ~~In~~ Texas, to bring universities and museums together with local communities for interpretive exhibits.

These examples, I think, make my point: ~~That~~ the dissemination of learning and of culture is intrinsic and not extrinsic to our common quest for knowledge and understanding.

I think those who insist upon the separation of these, this false



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division between cultural institutions/ and a concern for the needs of the public that those institutions exist to serve, are confounding clear thinking and sound public policy. The public must never be perceived as passive recipients of a culture that simply comes to them. We all give a shape and a substance to our heritage. Scholars who write for those people who will read and who will challenge their thoughts, ~~and~~ artists perform and create for those who will attend to and assess their efforts. And so, public access is important and essential to the arts and the humanities, and I think we have to continue to do what we can to insure it. But that means more than opportunities for attending ~~lectures~~ <sup>lectures</sup> or visiting museums or watching performances. It is not simply physical access, it is intellectual access, and I think that's where the humanities essentially comes in and touches the work of the arts. Culture thrives where people think about what they read and where they interpret and weigh what they see or hear. The partakers of culture ~~everywhere~~ <sup>everywhere</sup> are also its critics. And criticism ~~everywhere~~ is informed and circumscribed by whatever knowledge and learning we possess. That's why the arts and the humanities are related and where they relate.

There is no appreciation for the works of culture that is unaccompanied by reflection. Our appreciations will vary, however, and our backgrounds vary. What is of great cultural importance to the citizens of Sante Fe may not be quite the same as what is celebrated in New York City. But they both have symphonies and museums and institutions of higher learning. There are divergent tastes and opinions and judgements and these must be respected and protected. Without that pluralism, there will finally be

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no incentive for scholars and artists to do other than to emulate one another and to strive for contrived norms. Books are to be read, and concerts attended, by people of all sorts whose tastes and judgements admit of no common characterization.

I think appreciation and learning go hand in hand, and once that's admitted, we can begin to understand how these two Endowments can work together.

We have to encourage people of quite different tastes and views to become active rather than passive participants in our cultural life. For our concern is for the basic social and economic health of cultural activity.

Those who argue that there is or should be some single set or group of standards whereby excellence and achievement in the arts and the humanities can be measured, are, I think, wrong. When we are thoughtful about that question and we put aside our own provincialisms, we have to acknowledge that our judgements about what is of worth are rarely secure when first made. The only true test of excellence is the test of time. I think I tell you nothing that you do not already know, in reminding you that many things that we now consider the treasure trove of high culture were ridiculed and rejected when they were first born, and that much that <sup>was</sup> once thought <sup>to be</sup> of great and lasting merit has long since been forgotten. Changing tastes, shifts in opinions and judgements, are often the rule and not the exception. And those who would be platonists concerning the

idea of excellence / are bound time and again to be at loggerheads with those whose tastes they seek to circumscribe by their own judgements or their own philosophy.

I don't want to suggest here, by any means, they we ~~do~~ not use tests of standards <sup>of</sup> excellence in assessments we are required to make. But I'm suggesting that because we must do so, we indeed are charged with that responsibility, we should do so with some humility that befits the uncertainty that accompanies our judgements.

We decide, for example, in 1977 to celebrate the ~~late~~ work of *the late* Cezanne, but he would have had a very difficult time passing in his own day a group of peer judgements about the excellence of ~~that~~ <sup>his</sup> work *in his own days*.

Assessing the work of creative effort of scholars and artists carries a moral obligation always to exercise care and ever to try to avoid intellectual and aesthetic arrogance. For all the checks and the ~~balances~~ we have built into our review systems and for all the attention that we give to making our decisions, we may, more frequently than we'd like to admit, be bound by the proven <sup>initial</sup> ~~ism~~ or narrowness or myopic vision of our own time. So our task is not to provide an imprimatur, rather it is to support those activities and those projects in the arts and the humanities which, in our best ~~patronage~~ judgement, may ~~become~~ to be seen as important and worthy <sup>to</sup> ~~of~~ others, and ~~would~~ celebrate the joy and creativity of the human spirit.

It is true, I think, whether our support is for research projects,

curriculum innovation, scholarly conferences, interpretive exhibitions, performances, films, or television programs. We should use all the ~~advise~~ and counsel at our command, but we must always make judgements that have about them a certain tentative and humble quality, for they await the assessments of those who may choose to share in whatever we have encouraged with our assistance.

Now, quite frankly, these are important issues. They <sup>(have)</sup> preoccupied the press a great deal ~~a great deal~~ for the last few months and Liv and I have received a lot of ~~advise~~ about them. They will not go away by themselves. They'll not be resolved without a great deal of civil discussion and hard thinking, for they are basic issues of public policy. And they have to do with the fundamental questions of why and in what ways the federal government should be concerned with cultural life and with the arts and the humanities.

I find that these questions are challenging. I'm quite optimistic about the cultural flowering that we are witnessing in our society. Notwithstanding these rather complex financial and philosophical and policy questions. I'm challenged by the need to look, at this stage, at the work of the two Endowments, indeed at our whole cultural <sup>?</sup> problem, more coherently. For the Endowments' part, to look at a college students' education in its entirety and to understand the needs of the distinct cultural communities in this nation as a whole. And to look at different age, audiences for cultural programs in an integrated way.

Indeed, finally, I think that's what humanistic learning and knowledge is about, coherence and not fragmentation. And all our work today ~~And~~ our knowledge is becoming more specialized and the humanistic tradition we share is an increasingly more important bond. All the forms of culture in our society, I will be ~~so~~ bold to say, depend finally on the way the humanities preserves our cultural memory. Now, we have a saying between the Endowments, Liv, that I want to try to change only slightly, if I may. We speak of ourselves as the sister endowments. A little research of mine this week has discovered that the mother of the Muses was ~~MNEMOSYNE~~ <sup>MNEMOSYNE</sup> who was the Goddess of Memory, the essence of the Humanities.

And so on behalf of your Mother Endowment, I thank all of you for the opportunity of being with you. But I do bring you the greetings of our staff and our Council and our anticipation that these kinds of serious problems, (which I think in <sup>a</sup> sense we have perhaps been able to avoid in the first blush of a decade in which we ventured, as a <sup>g</sup>overnment, into this most delicate and sensitive area,) are the kinds of questions that are before us today. And the answers to those ~~problems~~ <sup>questions</sup> are not going to be found by looking to the older nations of Europe, for indeed many of them are perhaps lessons in paths that should caution us at the moment. We are working at something new. How in a pluralistic ~~and~~ democratic society, undergoing a tremendous, (I think almost unacknowledged) explosion in native hunger and enthusiasm for learning and for the qualities that celebrate the joys of creativity, the government may play a responsible role; the role of leadership, the role of support, <sup>of</sup> ~~exercising~~ <sup>exercising</sup> a deft and careful hand in this most sensitive but most important area of our national life. I look forward with relish to the opportunity of working with Livingston Biddle and I know that I speak for our Council when I say that

we look forward to the time ahead of cooperation between our two  
Endowments. Thank you.

STATEMENT BY JOSEPH DUFFEY, CHAIRMAN  
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES,  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

121.

TESTIMONY - - DALLAS HEARING  
NOVEMBER 14, 1977

Mr. Chairman:

I am grateful for the opportunity to join with this Committee in these hearings -- especially here in Dallas.

I have only recently come to the chairmanship of the National Endowment for the Humanities. I bring to you today the greetings of my new colleague at the National Endowment for the Arts, Mr. Livingston Biddle. Mr. Biddle cannot be here due to a conflict in schedule. He has asked me to extend his greetings to the Committee and the participants in these deliberations. For my own part I want to say that I look forward to working with Mr. Biddle in a new era of cooperation between the two Endowments. Tomorrow this committee will be hearing from able spokesmen for the arts. Our purpose today is to discuss concerns of the other endowment which I represent. I begin by noting the NEH has been lesser known and understood.

In 1965 the Congress established the National Endowment for the Humanities in an effort to seek a greater balance in our national resources for knowledge and learning.

It is appropriate that hearings on a proposal for a White House Conference for the Humanities should begin here in Texas. This is the state which gave to our nation the president who did more through his vigorous leadership to strengthen the commitment of our society to quality education for all our students than any other single individual in our history. It was under Lyndon Johnson's leadership that the National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities were created in 1965.

Texas has also become an important center of learning. Its museums and libraries, its private and public colleges and universities are major cultural and educational resources. This library in which we meet today is itself not without a significant history of contributions to learning.

When the foundation for the University of Texas was laid, Colonel Ashbel Smith dedicated that institution to the advancement of "practical knowledge" for the duties of "real life". Colonel Smith said at the time as well that his understanding of the University was that it should be a place which should educate people competent "to grapple with the great problems of political economy, statesmanship, the moral and social problems of society, finance, agriculture, manufacturers (and) with the political and industrial questions connected with them."

What links the Colonel to the Congress, what makes it fitting that these hearings should first convene in Dallas is the fact that public concern for humanistic learning knows no regional bounds. The health of the humanities and their place in the life of the nation is no less a matter of high importance to the Southwest than it is elsewhere.

It is not surprising that this is so in a society that so highly prizes independence of mind and spirit.

Humanistic learning is not the exclusive domain of the scholarly professions or the denizens of so-called high culture. The humanities are, instead, those habits of mind that serve to shape our daily lives and which may shape our moral and spiritual purposes as a people.

Congress has recognized this and acknowledged the well-being of the humanities to be a matter of public policy requiring Federal attention.

It was to this end that the National Endowment for the Humanities was brought into being. For more than ten years the Government has sought to provide that extra



margin of support for the humanities needed today to supplement private, state and local initiatives. We may all, I think, can take some pride in what has been accomplished. Regional and state museums, historical organizations, public libraries, community colleges, public and private universities, citizens groups and national organizations -- all these and more have enjoyed new and special opportunities in the humanities that might not have been possible without the active encouragement of the Federal Government.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that out of all this has come something of a renaissance in the humanities in America. Over the last decade, and especially the last five years, the public at large -- in communities and villages all across the land has an interest in humanistic learning. The investment of Federal funds has responded to an outpouring of public interest, support and initiative at the state and local levels in both the public and private sectors.

Much has been accomplished, but more remains to be done. Larry King, an eminent Texan and playwright, put it well in his testimony for this hearing when he said:

When I was a child in the Texas outback, I thought I had no material permitting me to spin tales of my own. The action and the world stories were lived in New York, Hollywood or in the distant places across the sea--or so I thought. But each time I was exposed to the art, or to the ideas of others, I came slowly to the understanding that the human experience is really universal. What happened to Ishmael off Nantucket Island, or to Huck Finn along the Mississippi, or to any number of any people in any other number of places, was happening and has happened in one place or another to me and to the people around me. People that I now have written about for most of my adult life.

Learning that the raw stuff of literature was all around me was a profound and valuable experience. Much of this discovery is owed to local and regional theaters, or local and regional libraries or publishing houses. In Texas, for example, in Dallas, Houston,

Midland, Odessa, Austin, or San Antonio. These opened my eyes to a larger world than I had dreamed existed, gave me glimpses of the London of Charles Dickens, of Eugene O'Neil and the faraway places with strange sounding names. They literally took me from the cottonpatch and from the oil fields to the typewriter.

My intention is that the National Endowment for the Humanities should respect the worth and taste of people in every section of the country. So, too, should we solicit their opinions and judgments as to how well we have fulfilled the mission entrusted to us on their behalf. We welcome the opportunity to listen to our constituency. Indeed, we are here today to test and understand how the Federal Government has touched the minds of and spirits of Americans, and to listen intently to the suggestions and criticisms of an impressive cross-section of society who feel deeply about the significance and impact of the humanities.

How this public conversation is sustained and expanded is a matter, Mr. Chairman, for all of us to consider as thoughtfully as we can. For my part, I will say that I have welcomed the opportunity to be here to listen and learn from what others may have to say.

As you know, the Administration is currently undertaking a full review of all federal support in the areas of the arts and humanities. The testimony that is given here will, I am sure, form part of the advice and counsel that our Vice-President welcomed in announcing the review.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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## GOVERNMENT AND CULTURE: IN SEARCH OF A FEDERAL POLICY

WHAT IS THE PROPER ROLE FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN THE AREA OF THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES? SOME TODAY WOULD ARGUE THAT THE ROLE SHOULD BE DEFINED CHIEFLY IN TERMS OF FUNDING. THEY PLEAD MAINLY THE CASE FOR GREATER PUBLIC SUPPORT OF THESE ASPECTS OF OUR NATIONAL LIFE. BUT THE REALLY SERIOUS QUESTIONS ARE THE DIRECTION AND THE SHAPE OF POLICY, NOT ANSWERED SIMPLY BY THE INCREASE IN FEDERAL SUPPORT -- AS IMPORTANT AS THAT MAY BE. WHAT FOLLOWS DOES NOT CONSTITUTE AN ATTEMPT TO DESCRIBE WHAT A FEDERAL POLICY OUGHT TO BE, BUT TO SUGGEST SOME CONSIDERATIONS THAT IT SEEMS TO ME ARE APPROPRIATE SUBJECTS OF A SERIOUS NATIONAL ART CONVERSATION ABOUT SHAPE AND DIRECTION OF FEDERAL POLICY -- A CONVERSATION WHICH WE VERY MUCH NEED TODAY AND WHICH THOUGHTFUL MEMBERS OF CONGRESS ARE SEEKING TO PROVOKE THROUGH A CALL FOR A WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES.

MY CONCERNS IN ATTEMPTING TO DEFINE THE PROPER ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT IN THE AREA OF THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES CENTER AROUND THREE RELATED ISSUES: THE FIRST IS THE NEED IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY TO ENSURE THE DISSEMINATION OF CULTURE AND LEARNING. THE SECOND IS THE OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE SHAPING OF A CULTURAL LEGACY

AND THE THIRD IS THE PROPRIETY OF A GOVERNMENT AGENCY OR ANY SMALL GROUP OPERATING UNDER THE AEGIS OF SUCH AN AGENCY ESTABLISHING STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE BY WHICH TO MEASURE THE WORTH OF WHAT IS TO BE SUPPORTED AND ENCOURAGED.

I HAVE LONG BELIEVED THAT IT MAKES LITTLE SENSE TO ARGUE THAT HUMANISTIC SCHOLARSHIP OR ARTISTIC EFFORT HAVE MERIT REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THEY ARE WOVEN INTO THE FABRIC OF OUR COMMON LIFE. I REALIZE SUCH ARGUMENTS TAKE UP MUCH SPACE IN THE JOURNALS OF AESTHETIC PHILOSOPHY AND PREOCCUPY THE SALONS OF A NUMBER OF CRITICS AND SCHOLARS. WITHOUT BEING DISRESPECTFUL OF THOSE WHO ENJOY SUCH FINE DEBATE, I BEGIN WITH THE PREMISE THAT THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES ARE FORMS OF COMMUNICATION BY WHICH WE CONVEY TO ONE ANOTHER WHAT IT IS THAT WE CONSIDER TO BE OF VALUE AND WORTH. THEY ARE EXPRESSIONS OF OUR DEEPEST CONVICTIONS AND THEY SERVE TO DEFINE HOW WE VIEW OURSELVES AND THE WORLD AROUND US. IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY, THEY SHOULD NEVER BE THE PRIVILEGE OF A FEW OR SIMPLY WORN AS BADGES OF CLASS OR STATUS.

THE TWO NATIONAL ENDOWMENTS -- ONE FOR THE ARTS, ONE FOR THE HUMANITIES -- ARE NOT THE PATRONS OF SCHOLARS AND ARTISTS -- ALTHOUGH SOME PERSIST IN SUGGESTING OTHERWISE. RATHER THE

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE TWO ENDOWMENTS IS TO ENSURE THAT SCHOLARLY AND ARTISTIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS ENJOY THEIR RIGHTFUL PLACE IN OUR SOCIETY. TO THAT END THEY ARE PARTICIPANTS WITH INDIVIDUALS AND INSTITUTIONS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR WHO SHARE A SIMILAR CONCERN. THE RIGHTFUL PLACE IN A SOCIETY SUCH AS OURS FOR SCHOLARLY AND ARTISTIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS IS NEITHER A CLUSTER OF CELEBRATED INSTITUTIONS NOR A PARTICULAR REGION OF THE COUNTRY. IT IS, INSTEAD, WHEREVER THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE THAT OUR DESTINY AS A PEOPLE REST FINALLY WITH WHAT WE ACHIEVE AND SHARE TOGETHER "IN THE REALM OF IDEAS AND OF THE SPIRIT."

THERE ARE TODAY MANY CENTERS OF HIGHER LEARNING AND CULTURAL ACHIEVEMENT IN VARIOUS REGIONS OF OUR NATION. THROUGH THE WORK OF THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAS PLAYED A ROLE IN THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF SUCH CENTERS. THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES HAS BEEN SEEKING TO MAKE STRONG CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THOSE CENTERS OF KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING IN AREAS OF HISTORY, LITERATURE, THE DISCIPLINES WHICH HAVE TO DO WITH OUR COMPREHENSION AND APPRECIATION OF THE PAST AND ALL THOSE CITIZENS WHO INQUIRE INTO THESE TRADITIONS.

THROUGH PROGRAMS IN LIBRARIES WHICH BRING TOGETHER DIVERSE AUDIENCES IN EFFORTS TO PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES THAT ARE NOT AND SHOULD NOT BE LIMITED TO COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY CLASSROOM. THE HUMANITIES ENDOWMENT SEEKS TO MAKE SUCH CONNECTIONS. THESE "LEARNING LIBRARY" PROGRAMS HAVE BEEN FUNDED IN BOSTON, CHICAGO, NEW ORLEANS, AND DOZEN OF SMALLER CITIES AND TOWNS.

OTHER PROJECTS SEEK TO DISSEMINATE LEARNING. THE DUNLAP SOCIETY IN WASHINGTON IS CURRENTLY DOCUMENTING AND INTERPRETING ARCHITECTURAL LANDMARKS IN THE CAPITOL CITY. PHOTOGRAPHS AND DRAWINGS WHICH ARE BEING COLLECTED WILL BE REPRODUCED ON MICROFICHE AND MADE AVAILABLE TO TEACHERS, SCHOLARS, AND STUDENTS ALIKE IN EVERY SECTION OF THE NATION. THIS IMPORTANT WORK IS NONETHELESS SCHOLARLY OR EXCELLENT BECAUSE OF THE BREADTH OF ITS OUTREACH.

THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES ENCOURAGES LOCAL INSTITUTIONS RELATED TO HUMANISTIC INQUIRY -- SUCH AS MUSEUMS, COLLEGES, HISTORICAL SOCIETIES -- TO ENGAGE IN JOINT EFFORTS WHICH NONE OF THEM COULD SUSTAIN INDIVIDUALLY. IN LUBBOCK, TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY AND ITS MUSEUM ARE DEVELOPING A REGIONAL CENTER FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF WESTERN HISTORY THROUGH ARTIFACTS, ENCOURAGING TEACHERS FROM SMALL COMMUNITIES IN THE

AREA TO CONSTRUCT CURRICULA AND ORGANIZE EXHIBITS WHICH FOCUS ON SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS OF AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE HISTORY OF THE REGION. ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS IN NEW MEXICO AND ILLINOIS HAVE BEEN THE FOCUS OF COMMUNITY AND, INDEED, STATE INTEREST. THESE PROGRAMS ORIGINALLY CONCEIVED AS SCHOLARLY PROJECTS HAVE ACHIEVED BROAD PUBLIC OUTREACH.

THESE EXAMPLES SERVE TO UNDERScore MY CONTENTION THAT THE DISSEMINATION OF LEARNING IS INTRINSIC AND NOT EXTRINSIC TO OUR COMMON SEARCH FOR KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING. TEACHER AND STUDENT, SCHOLAR AND CITIZEN ALIKE NEED TO SHARE TOGETHER WHATEVER THERE IS TO KNOW, TO APPRECIATE, AND TO EXPERIENCE.

THOSE WHO INSIST UPON A FALSE DIVISION BETWEEN THE SUPPORT FOR CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS AND A CONCERN FOR THE NEEDS OF THE PUBLIC THAT THOSE INSTITUTIONS EXIST TO SERVE CONFOUND CLEAR THINKING AND SOUND PUBLIC POLICY. THE PUBLIC MUST NEVER BE PERCEIVED AS PASSIVE RECIPIENTS OF A RECEIVED CULTURE.

AS A SOCIETY, ALL OUR CITIZENS MAY GIVE SHAPE AND SUBSTANCE TO OUR HERITAGE. SCHOLARS WRITE FOR THOSE WHO WILL READ AND CHALLENGE THEIR THOUGHTS. ARTISTS PERFORM AND CREATE FOR THOSE WHO WILL ATTEND TO AND ASSESS THEIR EFFORTS. PUBLIC

ACCESS, THEREFORE, IS ESSENTIAL TO THE ARTS AND TO THE HUMANITIES AND IT IS THE ROLE OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO DO WHAT IT CAN TO ENSURE SUCH ACCESS.

BUT PUBLIC ACCESS AMOUNTS TO MORE THAN ATTENDING LECTURES, VISITING MUSEUMS OR WATCHING PERFORMANCES. IT IS NOT SIMPLY A QUESTION OF PHYSICAL ACCESS, BUT INTELLECTUAL ACCESS AS WELL. BY THIS, I MEAN THAT CULTURE THRIVES ONLY WHERE PEOPLE THINK ABOUT WHAT THEY READ, INTERPRET AND WEIGH WHAT THEY SEE OR HEAR. THE PARTAKERS OF CULTURE ARE ALSO AMONG ITS CRITICS -- AND CRITICISM IS, EVERYWHERE AND ALWAYS, INFORMED AND CIRCUMSCRIBED BY WHATEVER KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING WE POSSESS. THIS IS WHY THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES ARE INEXTRICABLY RELATED.

THERE IS NO APPRECIATION FOR THE WORKS OF CULTURE THAT IS UNACCOMPANIED BY REFLECTION. OUR APPRECIATION, OF COURSE, WILL VARY JUST AS OUR LEARNING AND OUR BACKGROUNDS VARY. WHAT IS OF GREAT CULTURAL IMPORTANCE TO THE CITIZENS OF SANTA FE MAY NOT BE QUITE THE SAME AS WHAT IS CELEBRATED IN NEW YORK CITY -- THOUGH BOTH HAVE SYMPHONIES, MUSEUMS AND INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING.

THERE ARE DIVERGENT TASTES, OPINIONS AND JUDGMENTS, AND THESE MUST BE RESPECTED AND PROTECTED FOR WITHOUT THIS PLURALISM



THERE WOULD BE LITTLE INCENTIVE FOR SCHOLARS AND ARTISTS TO DO OTHER THAN EMULATE ONE ANOTHER AND STRIVE FOR SOME CONTRIVED NORM. BOOKS ARE READ AND CONCERTS ARE ATTENDED BY PEOPLE OF ALL SORTS, WHOSE TASTES AND JUDGMENTS ADMIT OF NO COMMON CHARACTERIZATION.

APPRECIATION AND LEARNING, THEN, GO HAND-IN-HAND -- A FACT WHICH COULD NOT BE OTHERWISE. ONCE THIS IS ADMITTED AND UNDERSTOOD, THE TASK OF THE TWO ENDOWMENTS BECOMES CLEARER. WE MUST SEEK TO PROVIDE WHAT SUPPORT WE CAN TO ENSURE BROAD ACCESS TO THE WORK OF SCHOLARS AND ARTISTS.

WE MUST ENCOURAGE PEOPLE WITH QUITE DIFFERENT VIEWS AND TASTES TO BECOME ACTIVE RATHER THAN PASSIVE PARTICIPANTS IN OUR CULTURAL LIFE. OUR CONCERN, AFTER ALL, IS FOR THE BASIC SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC HEALTH OF CULTURAL ACTIVITY AND WE MUST REMEMBER THAT OUR SOLICITUDE FOR THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES IS ON BEHALF OF ALL WHO MAY WANT TO SHARE IN AND CONTRIBUTE TO THEM. THOSE WHO ARGUE THAT THERE IS OR SHOULD BE A SINGLE SET OF STANDARDS WHEREBY EXCELLENCE AND ACHIEVEMENT IN THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES MAY BE MEASURED ARE SIMPLY WRONG. WHEN WE ARE THOUGHTFUL ABOUT THIS QUESTION AND THEN PUT ASIDE OUR PROVINCIALISM, WE HAVE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT OUR JUDGMENTS ABOUT WHAT

IS OF WORTH ARE RARELY SECURE WHEN FIRST MADE.

THE ONLY TRUE TEST OF EXCELLENCE IS THE TEST OF TIME. MUCH OF WHAT WE NOW CONSIDER THE TREASURE TROVE OF HIGH CULTURE WAS BOTH RIDICULED AND REJECTED WHEN FIRST PUT FORWARD AND MUCH THAT WAS ONCE THOUGHT TO BE OF GREAT AND LASTING MERIT HAS LONG SINCE BEEN FORGOTTEN.

CHANGING TASTES, SHIFTS IN OPINIONS AND JUDGMENTS, ARE OFTEN THE RULE, NOT THE EXCEPTION. THOSE WHO WOULD BE PLATONISTS CONCERNING THE IDEA OF EXCELLENCE ARE BOUND, TIME AND AGAIN, TO BE AT LOGGERHEADS WITH THOSE WHOSE TASTES THEY SEEK TO CIRCUMSCRIBE WITH THEIR PHILOSOPHY. I DO NOT MEAN TO SUGGEST THAT WE USE TESTS AND STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE IN THE ASSESSMENTS WE ARE REQUIRED TO MAKE. I AM SUGGESTING THAT BECAUSE WE MUST DO PRECISELY THAT, WE SHOULD DO SO WITH A HUMILITY BEFITTING THE UNCERTAINTY THAT ACCOMPANIES OUR JUDGMENTS.

ASSESSING THE WORTH OF THE CREATIVE EFFORTS OF SCHOLARS AND ARTISTS CARRIES WITH IT THE MORAL OBLIGATION ALWAYS TO EXERCISE CARE AND EVER TO AVOID THE INTELLECTUAL OR AESTHETIC ARROGANCE.

FOR ALL THE CHECK AND BALANCES WHICH WE HAVE BUILT INTO OUR PEER REVIEW PROCESS AT THE TWO ENDOWMENTS, FOR ALL THE ATTENTION

WE GIVE TO MAKING OUR DECISIONS, WE MAY MORE FREQUENTLY THAN WE CARE TO ADMIT TURN OUT TO BE WRONG.

OURS, THEN, IS NOT THE TASK OF PROVIDING AN IMPRIMATUR; RATHER IT IS THAT OF SUPPORTING THOSE ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS IN THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES WHICH, IN OUR BEST BUT TRANSIENT JUDGMENT, MAY COME TO BE SEEN AS IMPORTANT AND WORTHY BY OTHERS.

THIS IS TRUE, I THINK, WHETHER OUR SUPPORT IS FOR A RESEARCH PROJECT, A CURRICULAR INNOVATION, A SCHOLARLY CONFERENCE, AN INTERPRETIVE EXHIBITION, A PERFORMANCE, A FILM OR TELEVISION PROGRAM. USING ALL THE ADVICE AND COUNSEL AT OUR COMMAND, WE MAKE TENTATIVE JUDGMENTS AND WE AWAIT THE ASSESSMENTS OF THOSE WHO MAY CHOOSE TO SHARE IN WHATEVER WE HAVE ENCOURAGED WITH OUR ASSISTANCE.

THESE ISSUES ARE NOT GOING TO GO AWAY BY THEMSELVES, THEY WILL NOT BE RESOLVED WITHOUT A GREAT DEAL OF HARD THINKING, FOR THEY ARE BASIC QUESTIONS OF PUBLIC POLICY. THEY HAVE TO DO WITH THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS OF WHY AND IN WHAT WAY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE CONCERNED WITH CULTURAL LIFE, WITH THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES.

REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY TO  
THE REOPENING OF THE ST. LOUIS ART MUSEUM  
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, DECEMBER 2, 1977

BY JOSEPH DUFFEY, CHAIRMAN  
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

I'M GRATEFUL FOR THE INVITATION TO BE WITH YOU THIS MORNING AT THE RE-OPENING OF THE ST. LOUIS ART MUSEUM. WHEN THE CITY ART MUSEUM CAME TO THIS SITE ORIGINALLY, AT THE CLOSE OF THE 1904 WORLD'S FAIR, IT WAS A VERY DIFFERENT PLACE FROM THIS. THE COLLECTIONS WERE NOT NEARLY SO RICH AS THEY ARE TODAY. CONSERVATION WAS VIRTUALLY UNHEARD OF. IT WASN'T AGAINST THE RULES TO SHOW REPRODUCTIONS OF SCULPTURE IN THE GALLERIES WHEN THERE WEREN'T ENOUGH ORIGINALS TO FILL THE SPACES. THE MUSEUM'S GREAT TREASURE, ONE VISITOR REPORTED, WAS SOROLLA-Y-BASTIDA'S PAINTING, "ANOTHER MARGUERITE." (AT A TIME NEW YORK WAS SAID TO BE "GOING WILD" OVER THIS SPANISH MASTER.)

BUT IF THE RULES OF GOOD MUSEUM PRACTICE HAVE BECOME MORE PROFESSIONAL, AND IF OUR TASTES HAVE CHANGED ENORMOUSLY SINCE 1904, SOME THINGS REMAIN CONSTANT. THE BASIC PURPOSE OF THE MUSEUM THEN AND NOW WAS AN EDUCATIONAL ONE. IN 1904, THIS MEANT OFFERING CITIZENS OF A BUSY MERCANTILE AND INDUSTRIAL CITY, ESPECIALLY THOSE DESCRIBED BY ONE WRITER AS: "DISSATISFIED WITH A STRICTLY UTILITARIAN EXISTENCE, " THE CHANCE TO SEE MANY THINGS

OF GREAT BEAUTY. TODAY, JUST AS ST. LOUIS HAS CHANGED, SO TOO ARE THE MUSEUM'S PUBLIC ROLES CHANGING, TOWARD A MORE ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT OF MEMBERS AND VISITORS AND SCHOOLCHILDREN AND COMMUNITY GROUPS IN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS, TOWARD TRAVELING AND LOAN EXHIBITS AND FILMS AND CONCERTS FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC. ART IS NEVER SEPARATED FROM A SOCIAL WORLD, AND THE CHANGES IN THIS MUSEUM ARE A MIRROR OF THE TRANSFORMATIONS IN OUR CULTURE AT LARGE. IT IS FITTING THAT AS ST. LOUIS IS UNDERGOING A RENAISSANCE, A REBUILDING, SO TOO SHOULD ITS MUSEUM. AND INsofar AS THE ST. LOUIS ART MUSEUM BELONGS TO A NATIONAL COMMUNITY, IS IN FACT ONE OF OUR NATIONAL TREASURES, I TAKE GREAT PRIDE IN YOUR ACHIEVEMENT.

STATEMENT OF JOSEPH DUFFEY  
CHAIRMAN, NATIONAL ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE HUMANITIES

TESTIMONY -- H.J. RES. 639

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS  
JANUARY 16, 1978

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ALTHOUGH I HAVE ONLY RECENTLY COME TO THE CHAIRMANSHIP  
OF THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES, I HAVE ALREADY  
LEARNED TO APPRECIATE THAT PUBLIC CONCERN FOR THE CONSERVATION  
OF OUR CULTURAL RESOURCES KNOWS NO REGIONAL BOUNDS. THE HEALTH  
OF THE HUMANITIES AND THEIR PLACE IN THE LIFE OF THE NATION  
ARE MATTERS OF IMPORTANCE TO ALL OUR CITIZENS. I CONTINUE  
TO BE IMPRESSED WITH THE FACT THAT A GROWING NUMBER OF  
THOUGHTFUL PEOPLE THROUGHOUT AMERICA ARE CONCERNED WITH MORE  
THAN JUST THE CONSERVATION OF THESE RESOURCES. THEY ARE ALSO

CONCERNED WITH THEIR DISSEMINATION, THEIR USE AND THEIR INCREASED ACCESSIBILITY.

A QUESTION THAT DESERVES CAREFUL ATTENTION IS THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE GUIDED IN ITS POLICIES BY THESE CONCERNS. THAT KIND OF QUESTION IS ONE WHICH A WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON THE HUMANITIES MIGHT WELL ADDRESS.

THERE ARE OTHER QUESTIONS WHICH NEED CLARIFICATION AS WELL:

-- HOW ARE THE HUMANITIES TO BE DEFINED AND UNDERSTOOD?

-- HOW ARE RESOURCES FOR LEARNING IN THE HUMANITIES TO BE CONSERVED?

-- WHO IS TO ASSURE THEIR ACCESSIBILITY?

THESE ARE BASIC QUESTIONS. WE MUST NOT BE RETICENT ABOUT TRYING TO ANSWER THEM.

NOW, AFTER MORE THAN A DECADE OF EXISTENCE, BOTH ENDOWMENTS NEED TO EXAMINE THEIR FUNDAMENTAL PURPOSE AND DIRECTION.

I WILL SEEK SUCH RE-EXAMINATION OF THE ROLE OF THE HUMANITIES ENDOWMENT.

THE HUMANITIES DEAL WITH THE PROVINCE OF LIFE'S MEANING AND PURPOSE, NOT WITH THE TECHNIQUES AND MECHANICS OF GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS. AT THIS HEARING TODAY, AND AT A FUTURE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE, I HOPE THAT ATTENTION WILL BE GIVEN TO WHAT MEANING AMERICANS ASCRIBE TO HUMANISTIC THOUGHTS AS WE ENTER THE LAST YEARS OF THIS CENTURY.

AS A START, LET ME OUTLINE BRIEFLY MY OWN CONCEPTION OF THE MEANING AND PURPOSE WHICH UNDERLIE ALL THE DIVERSE PROGRAMS AT THE N.E.H.

ONE WAY OF SEEING THE MEANING OF THE HUMANITIES IN OUR LIVES IS TO VIEW THEM AS THE BASIS FOR OUR COMMON CULTURE. IN A TECHNOLOGICAL AGE LIKE OURS, NEW FORMS OF EXPERTISE ARE CONSTANTLY EMERGING AS EACH FIELD DIVIDES INTO SPECIALTIES AND SUBSPECIALTIES.



WHOLE AREAS OF ORDINARY LIFE HAVE PASSED INTO THE REALM OF HAVING THEIR OWN LANGUAGE AND MANNERS, UNINTELLIGIBLE TO OUTSIDERS AND DISCONNECTED FROM OTHER ASPECTS OF A PERSON'S LIFE. THE CONSEQUENCES FOR OUR POLITICAL AND MORAL LIVES AS AMERICANS HAVE BEEN GREAT:

IN RECENT YEARS FOR EXAMPLE, WE HAVE SEEN THE DANGERS OF THINKING THAT ENERGY DECISIONS COULD BE MADE ONLY BY ENGINEERS AND BUSINESSMEN, THAT MEDICAL CARE COULD BE SAFELY RELEGATED TO THE DOMAIN OF PHYSICIANS AND INSURANCE COMPANIES,- THAT URBAN PLANNING COULD BE LEFT TO PROFESSIONAL PLANNERS AND DEVELOPERS.

WE NEED TO RECOGNIZE THE LEGITIMACY OF ALL AMERICANS TO SPEAK TO THESE ISSUES. NOT, OF COURSE, TO ALL THE TECHNICAL PROBLEMS WITHIN THEM WHICH CAN'T POSSIBLY BE MASTERED BY LAYMEN. BUT TO THE HUMANISTIC DILEMMAS AT THE CORE OF THESE ISSUES WHICH ARE OFTEN OBSCURED BY THESE TECHNICAL ARGUMENTS.

WE NEED THE HUMANISTS AMONG US TO SHOW HOW THE ISSUES OF CONTEMPORARY LIFE ARE ROOTED IN HUMANISTIC QUESTIONS.

HOW, FOR EXAMPLE, THE ISSUE OF ALLOCATING PRECIOUS RESOURCES LIKE ENERGY OR MEDICAL CARE IS PART OF AN AGE-OLD INQUIRY INTO POLITICAL JUSTICE.

HOW THE SHIFTING BOUNDARIES OF THE SACRED AND THE PROFANE IN OUR LITERATURE, OUR MANNERS AND OUR CHILDREARING MAY BE UNDERSTOOD BY REFERENCE TO OUR LITERARY AND RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS, OR THROUGH AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON OTHER CULTURES.

HOW THE DEMOCRATIC ETHOS OF THIS SOCIETY CAN OR CANNOT BE RECONCILED WITH THE PERSISTENCE OF HIERARCHIES, EVEN HIERARCHIES OF MERIT.

HOW THE COMPLEX INTERRELATEDNESS OF OUR LIVES IN MODERN SOCIETY AFFECTS OUR VIEW OF INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY.

HOW OUR AESTHETIC IDEALS OF THE GOOD LIFE OR OF THE BEAUTIFUL LANDSCAPE AFFECT GOVERNMENT POLICY TOWARD ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING OR PUBLIC WELFARE.

THESE ARE DIFFICULT QUESTIONS, I AM NOT ABOUT TO SAY THAT THE HUMANITIES WILL GIVE US EASY ANSWERS TO THEM. THE ROLE

OF THE HUMANIST IS NOT TO BE AN EXPERT WITNESS OF EACH SIDE OF EVERY CONTEMPORARY DISPUTE, BUT RATHER TO SEE THAT THE DEBATE TAKES PLACE IN AN OPEN COURTROOM IN WHICH THESE LARGER CONCERNS OF MEANING MAY BE INTRODUCED IN TESTIMONY.

IF WE, ON THE OTHER HAND, BECOME FATIGUED AS A CULTURE WITH ASKING THE LARGER QUESTIONS, THEN EVERY PROBLEM IS REDUCED TO ONLY A TECHNICAL PROBLEM. AND EVERY TECHNICAL FAILURE, BY ITS VERY NATURE, BECOMES A TEMPTING INVITATION FOR US TO FOREGO OUR HIGHER ASPIRATIONS FOR BEAUTY AND JUSTICE.

BEYOND PROVIDING A COMMON LANGUAGE AND REFERENCE FOR MEETING OUR CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL AND MORAL DILEMMAS, THE HUMANITIES ARE CRUCIAL IN GIVING AMERICANS A SENSE OF OUR CONTINUITY AS A CULTURE. WE HAVE OFTEN BEEN FOND OF DESCRIBING OURSELVES AS A FUTURE-ORIENTED PEOPLE, AND OUR BOOKSHOPS ARE WEIGHED DOWN WITH PREDICTIONS ABOUT THE YEAR 2000 AND NOSTRUMS FOR TREATING "FUTURE SHOCK." APOCALYPSE AND MILLENIUM ARE HAWKED ON EVERY STREET CORNER.

BUT THE MORE INTERESTING FACT IS THAT AMERICANS ARE NOW COMING TO UNDERSTAND THAT THIS IS NO LONGER A YOUNG AND NAIVE NATION. WE HAVE BEGUN TO PRESERVE THE BUILDINGS AND OPEN SPACES OF OUR HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT, AND TO COLLECT THE FOLK AND ETHNIC HISTORIES OF OUR DIVERSE PEOPLES.

IT IS THE RELATIONSHIP OF THIS "SEARCH FOR ROOTS" TO THE HUMANISTIC TRADITION WHICH SAVES IT FROM BEING A FRIVOLOUS CULTIVATION OF NOSTALGIA. IT IS THE RECOGNITION THAT WHAT WE HAVE BUILT AS A NATION--IN OUR NEIGHBORHOODS, IN OUR CONSTITUTIONAL FORM OF GOVERNMENT, IN OUR HABITS OF WORK AND FAMILY LIFE--IS DEEP, RICH AND COMPLICATED.

I HASTEN TO ADD THAT THESE HABITS ARE NOT UNCHANGING: TO RESPECT THESE TRADITIONS IS NOT TO CONSIDER THEM TIMELESS VERITIES. BUT WE DO HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPLICATIONS OF OUR INSTINCTS FOR CHANGE IN LIGHT OF THESE CONTINUITIES.

SOME WILL ASK, OF WHAT VALUE IS IT TO US, WHO HAVE LIVED THROUGH THE HOLOCAUST AND OTHER MISERIES, TO TURN TO

SOPHOCLES IN ORDER TO DISCOVER THAT "THROUGH SUFFERING THERE IS WISDOM"? WHO AMONG US WHO LIVED THROUGH WATERGATE NEEDS TO LEARN ABOUT POLITICAL EXPEDIENCY FROM MACHIABELLI?

BUT OF COURSE WE DON'T GO TO THE GREAT MINDS OF THE PAST TO GAIN RELIEF FROM OUR PAINS. INSTEAD THEY OFFER A SENSE OF OUR CONNECTEDNESS TO THE TRAVAIL AND THE TRIUMPH OF THE HUMAN CONDITION. IN THIS WAY, WE LEARN TO SEPARATE THE IMMEDIATE AND UNIQUE CIRCUMSTANCES OF OUR OWN CASE FROM THE LARGER AND MORE PERMANENT WAYS MEN AND WOMEN HAVE MADE SENSE OF THEIR LIVES.

BUT AS MUCH AS I WANT THE HUMANITIES TO PROVIDE OUR CITIZENS WITH SOME HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THEIR LIVES, I WANT IT ALSO TO PROVIDE THEM WITH A CHANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MAKING OF THE CULTURAL WORLD WE SHARE TODAY AS AMERICANS.

I DON'T ENTIRELY SUBSCRIBE TO THE "TRICKLE-DOWN" THEORY OF HUMANISTIC KNOWLEDGE, WHEREBY THE RESULTS GATHERED BY SCHOLARS IN NEW FIELDS OF RESEARCH GRADUALLY MAKE THEIR WAY DOWNWARD TOWARD THE POPULAR CULTURE. MOST OF WHAT COMPRISES HUMANISTIC STUDY IS NOT NECESSARILY NEW KNOWLEDGE, IN ANY CASE,

BUT RATHER THE RECASTING OF OUR OLD QUESTIONS ABOUT MAN AND HIS WORLD, THE CONTINUING SEARCH FOR THE MEANING OF OUR COMMON LIVES.

THE BEST SCHOLARSHIP, I BELIEVE, IS NOT ISOLATED FROM ITS SOCIAL WORLD, BUT IS INSTEAD A REFLECTION OF AND A COMMENTARY UPON IT. IN THAT SENSE, IT IS SIMILAR TO THE WAY ANY THOUGHTFUL CITIZEN STEPS AWAY FROM THE NARROW CONFINES OF HIS OWN LIMITED BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE, OF THE WAY HIS PROFESSION OR OCCUPATION THINKS, AND ACCOMODATES THE LEARNING OF THE PAST TO HIS OWN QUESTIONS. TO BE SURE, THE CITIZEN'S REFLECTIVENESS DEPENDS UPON THE WORK OF SCHOLARS IN PRESERVING AND INTERPRETING THE CLASSICS IN EACH GENERATION. BUT BY THE SAME TOKEN, THE SCHOLAR DEPENDS UPON THE CITIZEN AS THE ULTIMATE AUDIENCE FOR HIS WORK, AND MOST IMPORTANT, AS A FELLOW-PARTICIPANT IN ARTICULATING THE BASIC QUESTIONS OF OUR AGE.

THE KEY WORD FOR ME IN THE HUMANISTIC LEXICON IS ATTENTIVENESS. AT ITS BEST, THE HUMANITIES CALLS US ALL, PROFESSIONAL HUMANISTS AND CITIZENS ALIKE, TO A HEIGHTENED

ALERTNESS ABOUT OURSELVES. IT IS WELL TO RECALL THAT THE ROOT OF THE WORD "ATTENTION" IS AN OLD FRENCH VERB MEANING "TO STRETCH TO" SOMETHING.

THE HUMANITIES ARE NOT, I BELIEVE, A REFUGE OR AN ENTERTAINING DIVERSION FROM THE WORLD'S CARES, BUT THE AVENUE BY WHICH WE STRETCH BEYOND OURSELVES TO FIND A LARGER MEANING FOR OUR LIVES.

THANK YOU.

WHAT ARE THE HUMANITIES?

WHY DO WE NEED THEM?

EXCERPTS FROM TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE  
ON ARTS AND HUMANITIES OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES ON A BILL INTRODUCED BY  
REPRESENTATIVE JOHN BRADEMAS  
CALLING FOR A WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON THE HUMANITIES

By  
JOSEPH DUFFEY, CHAIRMAN  
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES



TWELVE YEARS AGO THE CONGRESS ESTABLISHED NATIONAL ENDOWMENTS FOR THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES. THE HUMANITIES ENDOWMENT, WHICH I HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF SERVING IS CHARGED WITH A BROAD RANGE OF RESPONSIBILITIES WHICH ARE QUITE DISTINCT FROM THOSE OF THE ARTS AGENCY.

WHAT WE CALL THE HUMANITIES REPRESENT A QUALITY OF LEARNING, A DIMENSION OF KNOWLEDGE WHICH SERVES NOT SO MUCH OUR NEED FOR MORE FACTS OR TECHNICAL KNOW-HOW AS OUR NEED FOR UNDERSTANDING AND PERSPECTIVE, FOR THAT ILLUSIVE QUALITY WE CALL WISDOM. INDEED, IN THE ORIGINAL LEGISLATION CREATING THE AGENCY THE CONGRESS DECLARED THAT "...DEMOCRACY DEMANDS WISDOM AND VISION IN ITS CITIZENS."

THE DISCIPLINES OF THE HUMANITIES INCLUDE HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE.

THE HUMANITIES DEAL WITH THE PROVINCE OF LIFE'S MEANING AND PURPOSE, NOT WITH TECHNIQUES OR MECHANICS OF PROBLEM SOLVING. ONE WAY OF DESCRIBING THE MEANING OF THE HUMANITIES IN OUR LIVES IS TO VIEW THEM AS THE BASIS FOR

OUR COMMON CULTURE. IN A TECHNOLOGICAL AGE LIKE OURS, NEW FORMS OF EXPERTISE ARE CONSTANTLY EMERGING AS EACH FIELD DIVIDES INTO SPECIALTIES AND SUBSPECIALTIES.

OVER THE LIFE TIME OF MANY ADULT AMERICANS WHOLE AREAS OF ORDINARY LIFE HAVE PASSED INTO THE REALM OF HAVING THEIR OWN LANGUAGE AND MANNERS, UNINTELLIGIBLE TO OUTSIDERS AND DISCONNECTED FROM OTHER ASPECTS OF A PERSON'S LIFE. THIS INCREASING SPECIALIZATION HAS HAD PROFOUND CONSEQUENCES FOR OUR POLITICAL AND MORAL LIVES. IN RECENT YEARS FOR EXAMPLE, WE HAVE SEEN THE DANGERS OF THINKING THAT ENERGY DECISIONS COULD BE MADE ONLY BY ENGINEERS AND BUSINESSMEN, THAT MEDICAL CARE COULD BE SAFELY RELEGATED TO THE DOMAIN OF PHYSICIANS AND INSURANCE COMPANIES, THAT URBAN PLANNING COULD BE LEFT TO PROFESSIONAL PLANNERS AND DEVELOPERS.

TODAY WE NEED TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE LEGITIMACY OF NON-SPECIALISTS AND NON-TECHNICIANS TO SPEAK TO THESE ISSUES. NOT TO THE TECHNICAL PROBLEMS WHICH CANNOT OFTEN BE MASTERED

BY LAYMEN. BUT TO THE HUMANISTIC DILEMMAS AT THE CORE OF THESE ISSUES WHICH ARE OFTEN OBSCURED BY TECHNICAL ARGUMENTS.

WE NEED THE RESOURCES OF THE LEARNING IN THE HUMANITIES TO REMIND US HOW THE ISSUES OF CONTEMPORARY LIFE ARE ROOTED IN QUESTIONS OF HUMAN CHOICE AND VALUE.

-- HOW, FOR EXAMPLE, THE ISSUE OF ALLOCATING PRECIOUS RESOURCES LIKE ENERGY OR MEDICAL CARE IS RELATED TO AN AGE-OLD INQUIRY INTO POLITICAL JUSTICE.

-- HOW THE SHIFTING BOUNDARIES OF THE SACRED AND THE PROFANE IN OUR LITERATURE, OUR MANNERS AND OUR CHILDREARING MAY BE UNDERSTOOD BY REFERENCE TO OUR LITERARY AND RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS, OR THROUGH AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON OTHER CULTURES.

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BUT A MORE INTERESTING FACT ABOUT OUR NATION TODAY IS THAT AMERICANS ARE NOW COMING TO UNDERSTAND THAT THIS IS NO LONGER A YOUNG AND NAIVE NATION. WE HAVE BEGUN TO PRESERVE THE BUILDINGS AND OPEN SPACES OF OUR HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT, AND TO COLLECT THE FOLK AND ETHNIC HISTORIES OF OUR DIVERSE PEOPLES.

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THANK YOU.

SUGGESTED REMARKS AT ANNOUNCEMENT OF GRANT  
TO THE ALLIANCE FOR CITIZEN EDUCATION

At the time it established a National Endowment for the Humanities over a dozen years ago, the Congress made a special point of emphasizing that the humanities are fields of study which have something to say in understanding and resolving public issues.

This point developed, I think, from the widely shared view that America's technological achievements since the Second World War had tended to create an imbalance in our national priorities. The technical ability to get something done seemed in too many cases to be justification enough for going ahead and doing it. Little attention was being paid to the sharpening of our abilities to ask whether or for what purpose something should be done, or to look systematically at the historical background of issues or at judgments about human values or the quality of life.

Congress was convinced that the humanities -- the fields of study which deal with history, values, and ideals -- could have and ought to have a more useful place in the public arena. One of my personal goals since becoming Chairman of the Endowment has been to strengthen the role of the humanities in helping to understand and deal with public policy dilemmas. A good many of our grant programs are directed toward that end, and they are drawing imaginatively on the knowledge and

insights of our historians, legal scholars, philosophers, political theorists, and other humanists. The most widespread of these efforts are the state humanities programs, which support town meetings, forums and other activities bringing the humanities to bear on important local concerns. The Endowment also supports programs at the national level which deal with values in public life. For example, we offer fellowships to enable lawyers, journalists, public administrators, physicians and business and labor leaders to do some systematic reading and analysis of the choices they confront in their working situations. We work directly with groups such as the National League of Cities, the League of Women Voters, and the Foreign Policy Association to encourage wider use of humanistic resources in dealing with public issues.

All of these programs deal in one way or another with citizen education, a fundamental need for intelligent decision-making in a free society. This is a goal which the Humanities Endowment shares with many other groups and individuals. You will hear a little later today about some important new efforts to encourage citizen education programs in the schools. My own participation is for a somewhat different but related reason.

Last summer a group of sixty people who are concerned with this question came together to share their experiences

and to develop a strategy to strengthen the citizen education movement throughout the country. They formed a coordinating board, the Alliance for Citizen Education, and they agreed upon two important goals:

- to emphasize an understanding of a commitment to principles of human dignity and justice through representative democracy and to work toward their realization through active citizen participation; and
- to integrate the efforts of various groups in citizen education, such as schools, government agencies, community organizations, unions, political parties, religious institutions, and the media.

Today, it is my great pleasure to announce that the National Endowment for the Humanities is awarding a grant of \$100,000 to the Alliance for Citizen Education to assist in a year-long program on citizen values and civic involvement. With the cooperation of the AFL-CIO, the National Council of Churches, the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial, and the National Association of Neighborhoods, this new network of citizen education practitioners will conduct two national conferences and five regional meetings intended to create a continuing dialogue on citizen participation. Political philosophers, historians and educational theorists will help to guide the discussions and provide a context for analyzing public issues.

I have watched the development of the Alliance for Citizen Education with a good deal of interest, and I have strong hopes that this venture will prove to be an exciting and valuable new way to bring the humanities into the public arena, and to give strength and depth to the citizen participation movement. My best wishes for success to Ed Schwartz and to the many dedicated people who have made the Alliance for Citizen Education a reality.