

# Humanities

## Film on Campus

### *The New Illiteracy?*

One Thursday last January, Dr. Charles Thomas Samuels of Williams College in Williamstown, Mass., headed for New York City to do some research. By the next Monday, he was finished: he had seen three movies.

Movie-watching, whether in a theater or on TV, is part of most Americans' lives. For Samuels, it is part of his career as one of the growing corps of academics who teach film. According to the latest American Film Institute survey, about 525 U. S. colleges and universities are offering courses in film during the 1972-73 academic year, up from 427 last year. More than 50 offer degree programs, ranging from a two-year Associate in Arts to a full-fledged Ph.D. AFI tallied 2,818 courses in the production, history, and aesthetics of film, more than a ten-fold increase over the 244 in 1963.

To optimists, this boom suggests not only the seriousness being accorded film as the youngest art form, but also provides evidence of the ability of higher educational institutions to adapt traditional curricula to changing student interests. It evokes talk of a new phenomenon on campus, "the film generation," and of "film literacy."

"I don't agree," replies Samuels, associate professor of English at Williams. "If anything, this rush to film courses is encouraging a new species of illiteracy. It threatens to undermine the culture that higher education is designed to uphold."

Dire predictions of cultural doom roll off the campuses with some regularity; Samuels' grumpy prognosis may make one wonder whether he does not fit Menck-en's definition of a Puritan, someone who has "a sinking feeling that someone else, somewhere, is having fun." But Samuels is no latter-day Cotton Mather, no academic wallflower viewing the revels from the sidelines and—because he doesn't dance or drink himself—finding it necessary to bad-mouth those who do. On the contrary, he has been teaching the appreciation and criticism of film for about five years, and is both enthusiastic and serious about the subject.

That is precisely why he objects to most of what passes for college instruction in film criticism. "At least part of the function of higher education in transmitting culture is to wean students away from the equivalent of the average best-seller, by exposing them to good

books, good music, good paintings, and helping them understand *why* they're good. What we have in many film courses, instead, is the celebration of trash as art."

Pressed for examples, he cites the reception accorded *The Godfather* and *Love Story*. "No literary critic took *The Godfather* seriously as a novel, but many film critics—and the academics who look to them for guidance—treated it with great respect as a film. No English faculty would hold up *Love Story* for admiration as a novel, nor would any music faculty propose Michel Legrand's score as a model for imitation. But I know of at least one first-rate college where *Love Story* was shown as an example of cinematic art.

"Cinema can be an art, as impressive and important as the arts that are traditional components of the curriculum. Yet too many film courses make no distinction between commercial films or artifacts or even trash and true examples of cinema."

But *Love Story* and *The Godfather* are rather easy targets. Presuming that the critics erred in praising them, what has this failure to do with "a new illiteracy"? Inferior work has had its day before, been acclaimed, gone into decline, and finally died a natural death—and Culture has struggled on.

Samuels agrees. "Bad craft never hurt anybody." But he believes that the student enthusiasm for film, and "the academy's indiscriminately enthusiastic response to it, pose a genuine threat to American education—for several reasons."

First, he says, film is the preferred art of undergraduates today. "I have noticed an emotional abandonment of books among my best students—not among my best English majors, but among my sharpest majors in something else. It's obvious that for them, film serves the same function that novels did for my college generation of the 50's: it offers them vicarious experience that they wouldn't otherwise have, helps them organize their emotional response to life.

### *Passionate about Film*

"Students are *passionate* about film. They still read books, but their analysis tends to be mechanical, going through the motions. When my literature classes are over, they're over. My film classes follow me all over campus."

Second, films are easier than books. "Really *seeing* a good film, understanding it, is hard work. But most films encourage a certain passivity, a sense that all you

have to do is lie back and receive impressions. So when students come in complaining that formal education is boring, irrelevant, and so forth, college faculties have found it easy to counteract their boredom with film courses that are exciting and a pushover to boot."

Last, the problem is not simply that, as Samuels contends, most films are no good. The problem is that "they are no good in a serious way." A prime example of the distinction he makes is *Bonnie and Clyde*, which he discussed in *The Hudson Review* in 1968—an article that has been reprinted three times. In it, Samuels conceded that the film was "well-acted, slickly paced, and brilliantly edited."

"Yet after granting its technical polish, one is left with its meaning, which is heavily obvious when not confused; its tone and characterization, which are both implausible and inconsistent; and its violence, which is stomach-turning. One who measures its cynical falsity will realize how worrisome is its success."

### Cynical Falsity

The "cynical falsity" he finds is revealed in comparing the characterizations of Bonnie and Clyde with those *dramatis personae* who, for lack of a less loaded term, must be described as "law-abiding citizens."

Clyde is presented as a victim of circumstances: the time is the Depression, and Barrows is surrounded with "an ambiance of social decay so palpable that mere presence might suggest causality." On his first attempt at bank robbery, Clyde is "nervous as a raw recruit," and has to be shamed into action by Bonnie. At one point, he invites a dispossessed farmer to shoot the sign placed before his house by the bank, intimating that, for all his mayhem, Clyde has a streak of the social reformer in him. During a visit to Bonnie's family, partly filmed in soft focus to heighten the "haze of nostalgia and family feeling . . . Bonnie romps with the children; Clyde, the good son-in-law, enjoys the vittles. We might be witnessing the family picnic of our dreams. . . ."

Through such scenes and techniques, wrote Samuels, the director "creates unmistakable identification between the Barrows and the audience," an empathy with an attractive young couple whose major fault seems to be bad luck.

The forces of law 'n' order, on the other hand, respond throughout the film with "excessive, even sadistic zeal." Clyde's brother, surrounded by deputies, is shot by them when he's down; they "shout like Comanche savages, in whose classic formation they have been staged." The sheriff and his men use 1,000 rounds of ammunition to kill Bonnie and Clyde. Symbolism reinforces the contrast: though everything about the Barrows, including their car, is white, the sheriff sports a devilish mustache and, in the death scene, wears a black shirt. A married couple kidnapped by the gang prove to be cowardly and prurient, but only one member of the gang itself is disloyal, dishonest, and greedy: Blanche, the daughter of a preacher.

Finally, though Bonnie and Clyde kill, too, "fast pacing and banjo music contrive to turn mayhem into zaniness and the bloody Barrows into charming hicks." Most

odd, when the criminals are shot, they bleed; the lawmen never do.

"You can always tell which side the director's on," says Samuels. "Just watch who bleeds."

It is this kind of distortion to which Samuels objects, a stacking-of-the-cards in which criminal violence is fun, a spoof, while that of police is psychotic; in which society comes off as clearly inferior to the loving fraternity formed by the criminals; and it is such distortion to which he refers when he says that "most films are not only no good, but no good in a serious way."

"I am not a pacifist, and I do not believe that violence has no place in art. But when you portray violence, you must also portray the fact that violence causes pain, no matter who does it. Any misrepresentation that gives an audience the pleasure of mayhem without reminding them that violence causes pain, weakens whatever impediment against violence has been built up in us by our own actual experience of being hurt."

"This is why bad art corrupts. The first job of any teacher is to teach students that lies can be dressed up technically and that the result isn't art but, rather, dangerous trash."

"Most film teachers are not doing this. Largely because they don't care to discriminate, they're accepting dishonest work. The barbarians are within the gates—and my colleagues are the ones who let them in."

That denunciation would be strong stuff coming from even such mandarins of liberal learning as Lionel Trilling and Jacques Barzun. Coming from Samuels, who was all of 37 in February, it runs the risk of being merely amusing.

### Solid Literary Scholar

But Samuels has heavy credentials, particularly for one so young, and particularly for a faculty member at an institution that has studiously avoided imposing any publish-or-perish pressures. His bibliography lists four books, 28 essays, and 48 reviews—more on literature than on film. Two of the books are on John Updike and Henry James. The journals in which he has appeared range alphabetically from *The American Scholar* to *Yale Review*, with *Atlantic Monthly*, *Life*, *National Review*, *New Republic*, *New York Times Book Review*, *Paris Review*, and *Vogue* representative stops along the way.

Moreover, though he has been disparaged by some film critics as "bookish" (*The Village Voice*) and "arrogant" (*Boston Globe*), he has been praised by some of the best. Stanley Kauffmann, film and theater critic for *New Republic*, told the National Endowment for the Humanities that he is "one of the few interesting new film critics to appear in the last few years." John Simon, a Ph.D. in comparative literature from Harvard, film critic for *The New Leader*, and drama critic for *Hudson Review* and *New York* magazine, wrote that Samuels' "background and interests are varied and thorough, his published writings show very considerable critical acumen and judiciousness, his dedication to film and literature is equally exemplary."

Understandably impressed by this barrage, NEH awarded Samuels a Senior Humanities Fellowship to  
(Continued on page 5)





## NEH Grant Profiles



### *Reducing a Coefficient*

In 1969, American University's College of Arts & Sciences abolished its foreign language requirement for the bachelor's degree. Surprisingly, the predicted sharp drop in FL enrollments failed to materialize.

The reason is a new approach to foreign language study at AU, dubbed "content courses" by department chairman Vadim Medish. Traditionally, he points out, advanced FL courses have applied language to only two fields: literature and philology. In consequence, continued FL study beyond the minimum requirement has appealed almost exclusively to language majors.

But majors in a number of other fields, such as political science, international affairs, fine arts and history, may also want to improve their knowledge of a foreign language—even though they are not particularly interested in its literature. With a grant from the Education Division of NEH, Dr. Medish and his colleagues developed a series of courses that blend non-literary content with advanced foreign-language instruction.

The courses, in French, German, Russian, and Spanish, are at two levels: "topics" for undergraduates with two years' college FL study or its equivalent, and "colloquia" for graduate and advanced undergraduate students. Sample courses in French include History of Art, Economic Development, and Overseas Commitments; in Spanish, Regions of Spain, Social Scene in Latin America, and *Proyecto Amistad* ("Project Friendship," involving students in services to Washington's Spanish-speaking community); and in Russian, Cultural Scene, Foreign Policy, and Political Dissent.

The danger in such an interdisciplinary effort is that language faculty specializing in literature may attempt to lecture on matters beyond their competence, producing watered-down chats that discourage students whose grasp of a language may be tenuous, but whose knowledge of French art or Russian politics may be quite sophisticated.

AU's program avoids this pitfall through joint faculty appointments between Dr. Medish's department and others (history, education, AU's School of International Service) that promote cooperation between language and content specialists, and through part-time "faculty" recruited from the District of Columbia's diplomatic community. By tapping embassy specialists—diplomats, cultural attachés, political and economic analysts—Dr. Medish has assembled a roster of native, foreign-language-speaking experts that would be virtually im-

possible to duplicate elsewhere. Not many students, for example, have the AU student's chance to attend lectures on Latin American affairs delivered in Spanish by the former President of Peru. As a result, even the name of the department has been changed from "Languages and Linguistics" to "Language and Foreign Studies" to reflect the new image.

Though the "content" concept could theoretically be expanded to embrace the University's entire curriculum, Dr. Medish feels it would be pointless. "In some disciplines, such as mathematics, it makes no difference which language is used as the vehicle for instruction. But in others, those with a high cultural content, instruction does lose something in translation.

"We are looking for these twilight areas, those in which the coefficient of distortion is of significant magnitude. This, plus the availability of talent, is our major guideline. We feel that we have successfully replaced the old language requirement with new language-use opportunities in our University's curriculum." ■

### *Resurrecting Cooper*

If any major American author ever tried to inter another, it was Mark Twain, writing on James Fenimore Cooper. Twain claimed that the creator of Natty Bumppo and Chingachgook violated 18 of 19 rules governing literary art, including the law that "the personages in a tale shall be alive, except in the case of corpses, and that always the reader shall be able to tell the corpses from the others. But this detail has often been overlooked in the *Deerslayer* tale."

Twain wasn't the last to lambaste Cooper. For a time, critics who found him interesting for his ideas and social criticism studiously avoided discussing him as an artist. As late as 1951, according to Dr. James F. Beard of Clark University, no reputable critic could be found to speak on Cooper as an artist at the author's Centennial (held in Cooperstown, N.Y., founded by Cooper's father).

It's not right, Beard contends, and—with the help of an NEH Research grant—he's trying to show why. He is in a good position to do so. Before Cooper's death in 1851, he ordered his family not to authorize a biography or make his papers available to scholars. Finally, however, his descendants appointed Beard Cooper's literary executor.

In that post, Beard has already completed six volumes of *The Letters of James Fenimore Cooper*, a compilation



of scattered papers that miraculously survived the author's ban on systematic collection. Now he is hard at work on a critical biography aimed at establishing Cooper's importance in American literary and cultural history.

By any standard, Cooper was an interesting fellow. Expelled from Yale in his third year for a prank, he went to sea, became an officer, gentleman farmer, promoter—and, in 1820, wrote his first novel, *Precaution*, on his wife's dare. Though it sold reasonably well, it wasn't very good—and Cooper knew it. The next year, departing from English models and drawing on his New York boyhood, Cooper published *The Spy*. With that, according to Carl Van Doren, "American fiction may be said to have come of age."

Cooper was the first American to achieve affluence and an international reputation by writing, and his interests and intellect ranged far beyond *The Last of the Mohicans*. Yet because of the strictures Cooper himself imposed on any biography, the facts of his life, as well as his artistic achievements, have become shrouded in the mists of half-knowledge and neglect. During the last 18 years of his life, he occupied a conspicuous role as a critic of American civilization. In two non-fiction works, *A Letter to his Countrymen* (1834) and *The American Democrat* (1838), Cooper conveyed his social and political reactions to American life as he saw it after a long sojourn abroad. In 1839 he wrote a *History of the Navy of the United States*, the first thorough, systematic history of our naval forces.

His vision of America's destiny, shaped by his father (an early Congressman and friend of Washington) and others with close affinity with 18th century ideologies, led him to vigorous efforts to keep that vision alive in the context of the realities of 19th century American life, when the emergent society seemed infected with "innate corruption." Although Cooper's reputation has been obscured by the shadows that Twain and others have cast on his literary merit, Beard claims that Cooper came closer than any other significant 19th century American writer to embodying in his work and thought the assumptions and attitudes of the Founding Fathers.

One writer epitomized the current neglect of Cooper's work when he wrote, with unwitting plangency, that his "stories are still read in many parts of the world." By preparing what promises to be the first complete, reliable biography, and by examining the cultural significance of this prolific (50 books) author's life and work, Beard hopes to revive interest in Cooper's stories in the part of the world that he cared about most. ■

## Brave New College

Considering the parlous finances of most private liberal arts colleges, this may seem the wrong time to start one—particularly one whose tuition is \$2,700 for a 30-week academic year. But in the conviction that there is a need for "different kinds of colleges responsive to the needs and interests of different kinds of students," College of the Atlantic in Bar Harbor, Maine, opened its

doors last September to an enrollment of 32.

COA is indeed different. For one thing, it's on an island. For another, it has at present no residential facilities; students live in a nearby motel or make their own arrangements elsewhere.

Most striking, however, is the difference in COA's curriculum: the College will offer only one degree: a Bachelor of Arts in Human Ecology.

Critical as they undeniably are, ecology and environment have become bandwagon topics; hence one need not be steeped in cynicism to wonder whether this is a serious academic enterprise or the exploitation of a national concern.

COA President Edward Kaelber, formerly associate dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, is serious. His curriculum, evolved from three years of planning by faculty, prospective students, and trustees, rejects some traditional features of higher education that many critics believe outmoded.

One is the "body of knowledge" approach, the notion that certain names, dates, poems, and atomic weights belong in everybody's intellectual kit. Because the amount of useful knowledge defies the data-conveying capacity of any four-year curriculum, COA's will provide "not the acquisition of a particular body of knowledge by itself, but—as Alfred North Whitehead expressed it—"the acquisition of the art of utilization of knowledge."

Another reject is the department structure, "in which organized subdivisions of knowledge are studied unrelatedly with the synthesis left to chance or somehow acquired later." Kaelber and his colleagues believe that this synthesis must be built into the program daily.

Accordingly, they have designed a curriculum whose informing principle is problem-solving, focused on overarching concerns whose solutions must be drawn from several disciplines. And for its "core" of problems, COA chose ecology—"not only because of the urgency of these problems (which makes them 'relevant' in the narrower sense), but because their very complexity provides the means for developing those habits of thought and feeling necessary for coping with a world of change."

The most important ecological problems, Kaelber believes, have "no purely technological solutions." Such questions as population growth, use of resources, and development or preservation of wilds also involve man's perception of his own nature, his obligations to others, his weighing of spiritual costs as well as economic—in a word, humanities, the *whether* of things as well as the *how*. ■

To insure that these perspectives would not be lost in COA's brave new curriculum, NEH awarded the College an Education planning grant to develop the humanities aspect of its ecology-centered program.

It is too early, of course, to decide whether COA will succeed in bringing "the humanities and the sciences into a true synergistic relationship." But it is clear that the College has aroused keen interest in academe: its eleven faculty (four full-time) were chosen from 1,800 applicants. ■

# HUMANITIES FILM FORUM

**Presented on PBS—Public Television**

*by KCET-Los Angeles through a grant from*

THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

	THURSDAY	SATURDAY
HAMLET	APRIL 12	APRIL 14
RICHARD III	APRIL 19	APRIL 21
OLIVER TWIST	APRIL 26	APRIL 28
BALLAD OF A SOLDIER	MAY 3	MAY 5
ALEXANDER NEVSKY	MAY 10	MAY 12
*THE BATTLE OF CULLODEN	MAY 17	MAY 19
THE RISE OF LOUIS XIV	MAY 24	MAY 26
**THE ANDERSONVILLE TRIAL	MAY 31	JUNE 2
UMBERTO D	To be announced	
THE CRANES ARE FLYING	To be announced	
GRAND ILLUSION	To be announced	
POTEMKIN	To be announced	

**Thursdays at 8:00 p.m. EST and PST, at 7:00 p.m. CST;  
and repeated the following  
Saturday at 8:00 p.m. EST and CST and at 9:00 p.m. PST.**

\*A BBC-TV Production

\*\*By Saul Levitt



(ILLITERACY?, Continued from page 2)

finance the travel and research necessary for him to undertake his most ambitious work: an aesthetics of the sound, narrative film. Aesthetics is the theory of beauty, but Samuels bristles at that definition: "beauty is so vague a concept that it's more an obfuscation than a helpful description. What I'm after is to develop some criteria on what's good and what's bad in film through examples."

## The Cinematic Techniques

His working method included interviewing every living director he considered major—Antonioni, Bergman, Bresson, René Clair, de Sica, Fellini, Hitchcock, Olmi, Renoir, Carol Reed, and Truffaut—and selecting from each a distinctive cinematic technique that he felt characterized the man's work. Hitchcock, for example, he chose for his "emotional rhythm," his habit of taking an audience up to a peak of suspense, releasing them through comedy, then bringing them up to a higher peak. "Hitchcock has very little interest in his characters or his story," claims Samuels. "The French idolize him for his symbolism, but he is purely devoted to effect."

Samuels' interviews—which took him to London, Paris, Rome, Stockholm, and Brussels—have already been published, in *Encountering Directors* (G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1972). Now he is trying to use the interviews, and an awful lot of film-viewing, as the basis for a general theory of film criticism. "It won't be the last word, but it's a start—and it's obvious that somebody had better start. The best critics writing today are journalists, writing under *ad hoc* restrictions that prevent their trying something like this."

But what would such a theory matter? So a student sees a film he likes. So he disagrees with Samuels. So what?

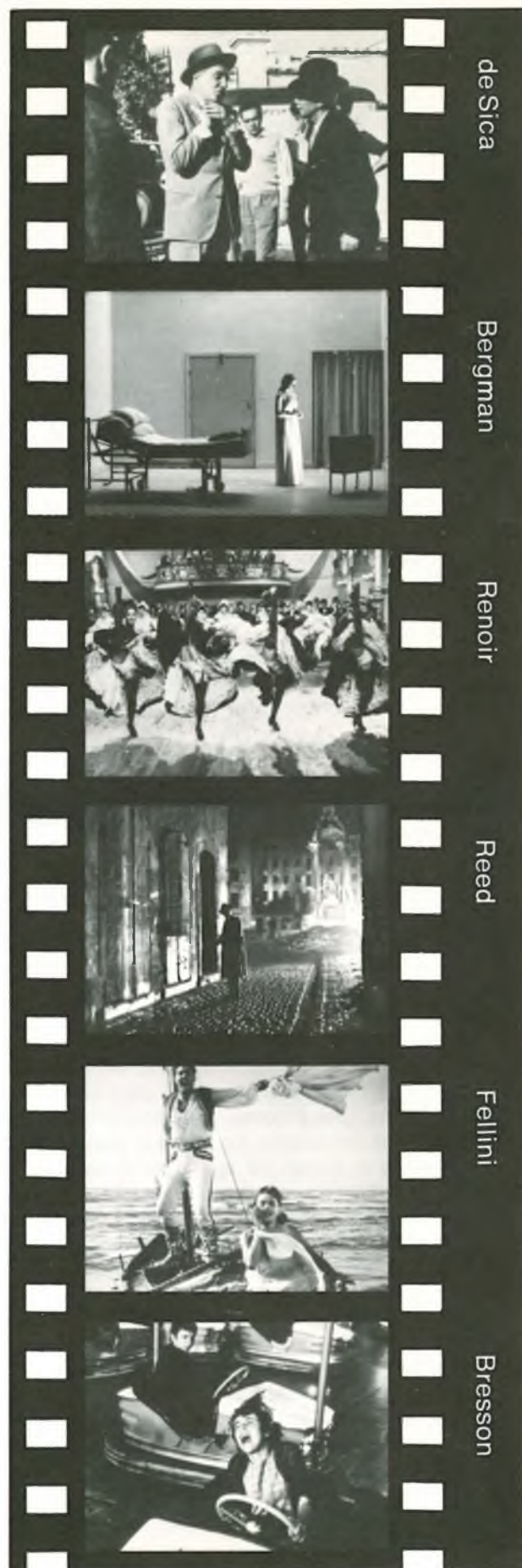
"There are levels of pleasure in anything, and I want to help my students heighten their pleasure. I want to help them see what they saw more clearly, even though they may not agree with my judgment.

"Further, I find that if a student does like a film, he usually can't explain why. But being able to explain why is what education is all about."

HUMANITIES is the Newsletter of the National Endowment for the Humanities, a Federal agency established by Act of Congress in 1965 "for the encouragement and support of national progress and scholarship in the humanities."

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## NEH Notes

### Soviet Loan of Western Art with Support from NEH

An exhibition of "Impressionist and Post-Impressionist Paintings from the USSR" is being shown throughout the month of April at the National Gallery of Art. Partially supported by NEH with a grant of up to \$100,000, the exhibition of 41 paintings from the Hermitage State Museum in Leningrad and the Pushkin Museum in Moscow will be augmented by related educational programs. Artists included are Matisse, Gauguin, Picasso, Cézanne, Van Gogh, and several others.

Upon leaving Washington, the exhibition will be shown in New York City at the Knoedler Gallery, whose chairman, Dr. Armand Hammer, was instrumental in obtaining the loan of the paintings. After its stay in New York, the exhibition will be shown in four other American cities before being returned to Russia.

In transmitting the works of art from the USSR for viewing in the United States, Dr. Brezhnev wrote:

"The exhibition in the USA of paintings from Soviet museums is a concrete manifestation of the growing ties between our countries.

"Soviet people regard exchanges and contacts in the field of culture, strengthening mutual understanding between nations. Therefore, Dr. Armand Hammer's initiative in promoting not only economic cooperation but also exchanges of artistic values between the USSR and the USA deserves full support.

"In extending greetings to the visitors to this exhibition on behalf of the Soviet people, I express my sincere hope that Soviet-American relations will continue to develop in the interests of the peoples of both our countries and for the benefit of consolidating peace throughout the world. (Signed) L. Brezhnev."

### Fiscal 1974

In the U. S. Government budget proposed for fiscal year 1974 President Nixon has requested an appropriation of \$72.5 for NEH. Of this total, \$65 million is for direct program support and \$7.5 million is to match private donations to the Endowment. These amounts nearly double the current year's appropriation.

As part of his appropriation request the President also recommended a three-year extension of the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act, which authorizes the activities of the Humanities Endowment and its associated agency, the National Endowment for the Arts. Congressional hearings on the appropriation and authorization proposals have been underway since March.

### Jefferson Lecture Broadcasts

The Jefferson Lecture in the Humanities, to be given by Dr. Erik H. Erikson on May 1 and 2, will be broadcast by National Public Radio beginning at 10:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Savings Time. Broadcast times should be checked with schedules in local communities.

## DEADLINES FOR APPLICATIONS FOR FISCAL 1974 AWARDS

*NOTE: A new, detailed NEH Program Announcement will be printed and distributed soon; meanwhile, this summary of coming deadlines may be useful to prospective applicants.*

*Applications due no later than:*

### DIVISION OF EDUCATION

Development grants—\*For action by March 1974

July 2, 1973

Program Support grants—For action by November 1973

July 2, 1973

### DIVISION OF RESEARCH GRANTS

For action by November 1973

May 8, 1973

### DIVISION OF PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Special Projects grants—For action by August 1973

June 1, 1973

### DIVISION OF FELLOWSHIPS

Senior fellowships—For action by November 1973

June 18, 1973

Summer seminars—For action by November 1973

July 2, 1973

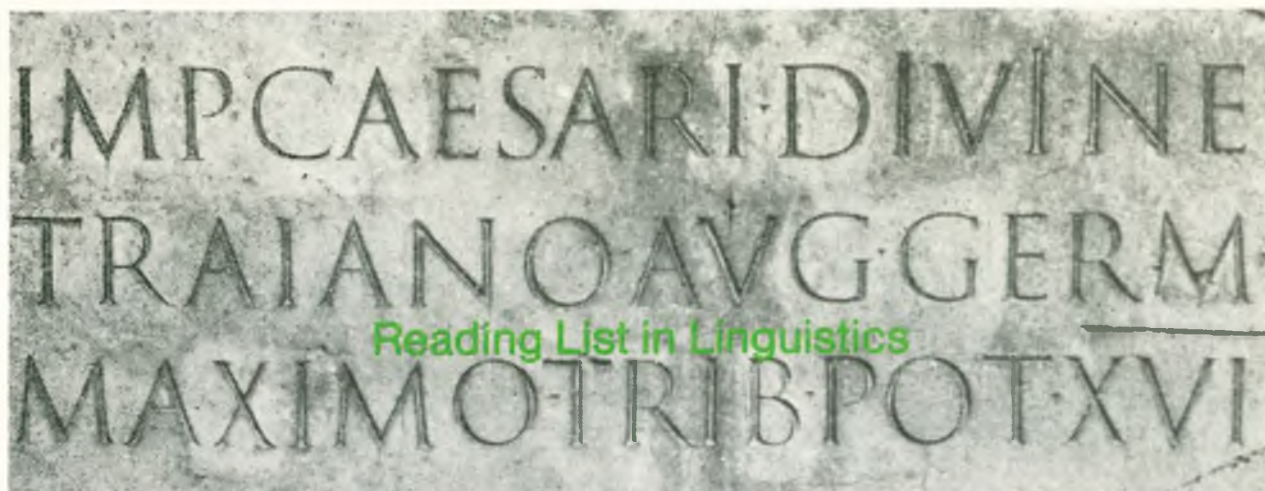
### YOUTHGRANTS IN THE HUMANITIES

For action by November 1973

July 31, 1973

\*Action means notification to applicant by the Endowment.





This list was prepared, under the auspices of the Linguistic Society of America, by a committee, consisting of Thomas A. Sebeok, Distinguished Professor of Linguistics and Professor of Anthropology, and Chairman of the Research Center for the Language Sciences, Indiana University (Chairman); Eve V. Clark, Professor of Linguistics, Stanford University; D. Terence Langendoen, Professor of English and Linguistics, City University of New York; and Professor Joel Sherzer, Professor of Anthropology, University of Texas at Austin.

### *The Subject*

The study of language belongs among the earliest branches of knowledge: the most ancient grammatical writings date from about four thousand years ago. Linguistic theory and empirical research have a varied and continuous tradition, in the West, from ancient India and Greece through the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the era of rationalism and Enlightenment, to the rich and manifold scholarly trends of the last two centuries; separate traditions, moreover, exist in several Oriental civilizations, and in the Middle East.

The readings that follow demonstrate what has been said many times, that linguistics is at once the most humanistic of the sciences, and the most scientific of the humanities. Their contents range from general philosophical speculation about the nature of human speech and its place in human life to reports of detailed and careful investigation into how speech is produced, transmitted and understood. Because of the breadth and complexity of the subject matter, it has been divided into three general categories: I. *General Linguistics* considers languages as autonomous objects of study; it deals with sounds, meanings, and the processes of change that affect them. II. *Psychology of Language* focuses on how we acquire, understand, and use language. III. *Language and Society* stresses the communicative aspects of language. These works relate language to the cultural framework in which it is used.

General Linguistics is the subject matter of the reading list presented below; a future issue will contain annotated readings on the Psychology of Language and Language and Society.

### *Good Reading*

MODERN LINGUISTICS. Manfred Bierwisch. *The Hague: Mouton. 1971. 105 pp. Available in paperback.*

This book gives a survey of the main contemporary linguistic theories, taking into account their history and their relations with other disciplines. The author discusses linguistics in the first half of the twentieth century in both Europe and America, and devotes about half his book to generative grammar, grammar construction and language acquisition, and language change. He then discusses linguistics in relation to poetry on the one hand and logic on the other, and the place of linguistics within both the humanities and the sciences.

LANGUAGE HISTORY. Leonard Bloomfield. In *LANGUAGE* [1933]. Edited by Harry Hoijer. *New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston. 1965. 232 pp. Available in paperback.*

These chapters, first published in 1933, are still the best introduction to the study of linguistic change. They deal with the interpretation of written records, dialectology, and the reconstruction of extinct languages. Bloomfield demonstrates that the principles of historical linguistics apply equally well to written and unwritten languages.

ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE. Dwight Bolinger. *New York: Harcourt, Brace & World. 1968. 326 pp. Available in paperback.* WORKING WITH ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE. Mansoor Alyeshmerni and Paul Taubr. *Accompanying manual, which provides further exercises and discussion of material. 1970. 231 pp.*

In his Foreword, Bolinger speaks of the "towering failure of the schools to inform ordinary citizens about language." This book provides not only an ample supply of information about language and about how people use language, but presents it in a thoroughly refreshing way. Most aspects of linguistic science are at least touched on, and each chapter is accompanied by a thoughtfully selected collection of problems and questions.

LANGUAGE AND SYMBOLIC SYSTEMS. Yuen Ren Chao. *New York: Cambridge University Press. 1968. 240 pp. Available in paperback.*



Like Bolinger's book, this is a personal guided tour through linguistics that answers the question 'what is a linguist?' as well as 'what is linguistics?' Here the concentration is on phonetics, writing systems, language in relation to other symbolic systems, and contact among languages. Among other resources, the book provides a discussion of the language families of the world, phonetic notation, and recent technological advances in the study of speech.

LANGUAGE AND MIND. Noam Chomsky. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World. 1968. 88 pp. Available in paperback.

This little book presents in capsule form the basic ideas and arguments that constitute Chomsky's contribution to modern linguistics and to the history and philosophy of science. Chomsky here maintains that the kind of linguistics he practices has much more in common with the work of the 'speculative grammarians' of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries than with that of the 'scientific linguists' of the earlier part of the twentieth century. Chapters 1 and 3 read easily and straightforwardly. Chapter 2, which discusses a number of difficult and unsolved problems of current linguistic theory, is a tougher nut, but if cracked will provide a lot of food for thought.

THE SPEECH CHAIN: THE PHYSICS AND BIOLOGY OF SPOKEN LANGUAGE. Peter B. Denes and Elliot N. Pinson. Bell Telephone Laboratories. 1963. 163 pp. Available in paperback.

This book presents "a discussion of the different forms in which a spoken message exists in its progress from the mind of the speaker to the mind of the listener." Included is a description of the anatomy and physiology of the speech organs, and the ear.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL LINGUISTICS: AN INTRODUCTION. Joseph H. Greenberg. New York: Random House. 1968. 212 pp. Available in paperback.

This extremely readable book makes the study of language seem easy and fun. It is aimed at the non-specialist and presents the basic principles of linguistics in a clear and simple way. In addition to an excellent treatment of the traditional areas of linguistics, the book benefits from an interesting discussion of the special interests of the author—linguistic change, classification of languages, and language typology and universals. In sum, this little book is a fascinating and painless introduction to a complex science.

LANGUAGE AND ITS STRUCTURE. Ronald Langacker. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World. 1968. 260 pp. Available in paperback.

This textbook is a basic introduction to the ideas underlying the transformational approach to language. The main emphasis is on syntax, but unlike otherwise comparable introductions, it touches also on phonology, semantics, language change, and writing systems.

ESSENTIALS OF ENGLISH GRAMMAR. D. Terence Langendoen. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston. 1970. 223 pp. Available in paperback.

One of the consequences of the vast amount of linguistic research that has gone on over the past decade has been the enrichment of our understand-

ing of the grammar of English. Naturally, that understanding has grown in stages and not all that has been argued for has been shown to be correct. This work provides a synopsis of developments in modern linguistic thinking as they have affected our understanding of English grammar, and a discussion of some currently controversial issues in the study of that subject. The work is based on lectures given to high school English teachers and has as an additional focus the demonstration that grammar is much much more than what is taught in schools.

NEW HORIZONS IN LINGUISTICS. Edited by John Lyons. Baltimore: Penguin. 1971. 336 pp. Available in paperback.

This collection of seventeen essays provides a broad survey of the different areas of research in present-day linguistics, ranging from speech perception to semantics, and from historical linguistics to word-associations. A short but useful glossary and an extensive bibliography round out the work.

PHONETICS. Third edition. Bertil Malmberg. New York: Dover. 1954. 123 pp. Available in paperback.

This is an elementary, yet comprehensive, introduction to the general field of phonetics, including acoustic phonetics and articulatory phonetics, and a discussion of how phonetic units combine and change.

FIELD LINGUISTICS. William Samarin. New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston. 1967. 246 pp.

This introductory text is a guide for the study of languages which have not yet been scientifically described. It teaches the student how to elicit materials to use as a basis for a scientific description of any language.

LANGUAGE. Edward Sapir. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World. 1921. 242 pp. Available in paperback.

A classic treatise, which anticipates many of the important issues of contemporary linguistics. Sapir decisively demonstrates that language, race, and culture rarely coincide, and that there is no such thing as a "primitive" language.

## Suggestions for Discussion

1. Do you agree with the statement: 'Linguistics is at once the most humanistic of the sciences, and the most scientific of the humanities'?
2. Have these readings enlarged your conception of the word 'grammar'? How?
3. Besides language, what other symbolic systems does man use to communicate?
4. What is the meaning of Sapir's statement that language, race and culture rarely coincide?
5. How does a study of linguistics counteract the 'melting pot' theory of American culture?
6. What do you think are the roles of language—to communicate with others? to express your feelings and ideas? to shape the world around you? what else?
7. Why is it that we understand more varieties of speech, or different languages, than we can produce? Can you tell where someone comes from by the way he speaks? If so, how?



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## NEH Notes

### Humanities Film Forum

The "Humanities Film Forum," beginning with *Hamlet* in mid-April, will feature film productions of major works concerned with human values. Produced by public television Station KCET-TV, Los Angeles, under a grant from NEH, the series will be hosted by Dr. James H. Billington, professor of history at Princeton. Guest humanists will explore "the enduring universal human questions" raised by the films. Besides *Hamlet*, the series will include *Richard III*, *Oliver Twist*, *Ballad of a Soldier*, *Alexander Nevsky*, *The Cranes Are Flying*, and others. For a complete schedule (as presently arranged) see pull-out announcement in this issue and consult your local listings for exact time of telecasts.

### Ethical and Human Value Implications of Science and Technology

NEH and the National Science Foundation have announced jointly that they will accept proposals for scholarly activities in this field—for research activities, as well as conferences, colloquia and seminars. Twin advisory committees of the two agencies will provide policy guidance and advice.

Proposals which have as their primary object the

illumination of areas of current concern about ethical or human values may be submitted to either organization, depending on primary emphasis, and may be transferred from one agency to another or jointly funded. Address inquiries to:

Program of Science, Technology and Human Values  
Office of Planning  
National Endowment for the Humanities  
Washington, D. C. 20506

Ethical and Human Value Implications Program  
National Science Foundation  
Washington, D. C. 20550

### New Deputy Chairman

In January of this year Robert J. Kingston was appointed Deputy Chairman of the Endowment after serving for two years as Director of the Office of Planning and Analysis at NEH. He succeeded Wallace B. Edgerton, who held the deputy chairman post for over six years before leaving to become president of the Institute of International Education in New York City. Previous to coming to the Endowment, Kingston had taught at several U. S. educational institutions and, prior to that, had written and presented literary programs for the BBC in London.