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Asides

Publish and Perish

We note the latest turn in the ideological and partisan struggle over the Carol Iannone nomination to the Humanities Endowment’s advisory council. Endowment Chairman Lynne Cheney took the nominee up to the Senate temple yesterday so the men could hear for themselves the woman described as insufficiently academic, as academia is defined by current standards in the organized humanities. The new turn is the report that Ms. Iannone has provided her critics with “more ammunition” by the publication of an article in the March issue of Commentary titled “Literature by Quota.” We thought it was mainly in the pre-Gorbachev Soviet Union where a writer’s willingness to publish her opinions under her own name provided “more ammunition” for state authorities. But this is the post-Bork era, and in various redoubts of Congress and a few other circles, published opinions are cause for professional exile.