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National Endowment for the Arts: News Articles (1980): Report 01

Humanities Report

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION for the ADVANCEMENT of the HUMANITIES

4 BLIND REFEREEING, a policy long employed by many social science publications, has recently been adopted by a few humanities journals under pressure to guarantee fairness in the review of articles for acceptance. Division over anonymous reviewing at the Modern Language Association, whose journal is the most recent convert, exemplifies serious and lasting differences.

7 COURSES BY NEWSPAPER, a California-based project which replaces the lectern with the local newspaper, has since 1972 offered millions of Americans courses on topics ranging from energy to taxation to the American dream. Its capability to coordinate with television programming or college coursework has made the project uniquely suited for a broad range of non-traditional students.

11 NEH PEER REVIEW POLICY continues to generate debate. Endowment officials are being pressed on at least two fronts to open up the NEH grant review process to public scrutiny.

12 BUDGET BALANCING EFFORTS have most federal agencies looking for fat to trim. Though NEH has not yet been asked to cut its FY 1981 budget, recent Senate appropriations hearings signaled the possibility of future cuts.

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COMMENT

Humanists Must Unite, Enlist Allies, in Junior Colleges

The mission of the nation's community and two-year colleges has undergone a dramatic transformation in the last 15 years. In 1965 the dominant curricular studies were in the arts and the sciences; career programs attracted only 13 percent of the full-time student population. By 1978, however, this figure had risen to 52 percent. Today the major curriculum interest of most full-time and part-time students in community colleges is career education.

The impact of this shift on the humanities was not felt for several years, largely because of the extraordinary growth of the community college system in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Enrollments in humanities courses were high; additional faculty members were employed; new courses were added.

Since 1975 the circumstances have changed significantly. In addition to the shift in curricular interests, the total student population in community colleges has leveled off. The combination of these factors now threatens the existence of the humanities as a vital educational component in the nation's

community colleges. The question naturally arises: What can—indeed must—be done to reestablish the humanities in community colleges?

We would do well to consider first what the present circumstances imply for the humanities. The broad implication is that advocates for the humanities in community colleges must come to terms with and support career education. This is intellectually defensible and politically prudent. We cannot afford to be hostile—or even to be perceived as hostile—toward this new and probably lasting curriculum trend. If we are perceived as hostile, then the humanities will not only have little role in career education, but they will also continue their general decline in community colleges.

At the intellectual level, we must make clear the essential contributions that the humanities can make to students' career prospects. The fundamental defect in current career education in community colleges is the systematic neglect of the capacities and attitudes enhanced through study of the humanities. I have in mind such things as the refinement of language, reasoning, and interpretive skills; the development of critical and analytical habits of mind; and an understanding and appreciation of the social and moral dimensions of life. The message humanists must get across to their colleagues in career education is that these qualities are indispensable for viable, lifelong careers. Otherwise the students are cheated; their reputed education is simply training for jobs in an uncertain marketplace.

Infusing the humanities into career programs will require, among other things, some reflection about the humanities curriculum and about pedagogy. What are the most effective means of achieving our goals? Many possibilities exist—the humanities module, the interdisciplinary core course, the disciplinary course that focuses on a particular topic. Whatever the form, teachers of the humanities should use their studies explicitly to expand those qualities informed by the humanities.

While ways to strengthen the humanities in community colleges are centrally linked to career education, there are important additional considerations. Humanists must think about the role of the humanities in honing basic academic skills; they must take initiatives in adult and community education programs; they must see to it that an appropriate humanities component is included in every degree program. Most important of all, humanists in the nation's two-year colleges must begin actively to make the case for the humanities within their schools. At stake is the future of the community college as a college.

How this can be done will depend to a great extent on the circumstances of individual colleges. But in general, the major step is for humanists in community colleges to overcome their isolation and diffidence. We must speak with those we need as allies, both within and outside our individual colleges: career faculty, administrators, community and business leaders, county boards, state and federal agencies, and funding bodies. Many of these individuals and institutions will be receptive to our arguments. After all, they too have a strong interest in the human quality of community college education.

We must also establish a strong community among ourselves and with those who share the concerns of humanities education generally. By and large, humanists in two-year colleges lack professional identity. Historically our concerns have been limited to local bread-and-butter issues. Important as these are, they must be balanced by a commitment to our disciplines, to the humanities, to our profession. To ignore this level of responsibility is to make the long-range prospects of the humanities in community colleges slim indeed.

Reestablishing the humanities in community colleges will not be easy. But given a proper analysis of the issues and a willingness to meet the challenges, the humanities can once again assume their rightful place. ■

—Donald D. Schmeltekopf

Donald D. Schmeltekopf is associate professor of philosophy at Union College in Cranford, New Jersey and president of the Community College Humanities Association.

Blind Reviewing, Hotly Debated, Taking Hold in Humanities Journals

It has been over a century since Mary Anne Evans packaged up the manuscript of *Amos Barton*, her first piece of fiction, and sent it off to Blackwell's, the London publishing house. The fact that she signed the manuscript George Eliot is taken today as evidence not that Evans was imagining prejudice but that she had accurately assessed the Victorian publishing world's inability to give a woman's novel a fair reading. The world of publishing was no meritocracy in the 1850s. Some argue that little has changed.

Recent developments in the world of scholarly publishing suggest that scholars who are women either are paranoid or face a publishing world based no more on merit than was Blackwell's. At the very least, it is a system that has some women hiding their identity much as Evans felt compelled to do.

In January 1980, the *Publication of the Modern Language Association (PMLA)* adopted and began using what is called "author anonymous review" or "blind refereeing"—a policy which requires that authors' names and identifying information, such as rank and institution, be removed from all manuscripts before their review for publication. The adoption of the policy caps what has been a long and not always collegial debate among MLA members.

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The change in *PMLA* is a victory for the MLA Commission on the Status of Women in the Profession, which has been pushing for an anonymous review policy since 1975, and a setback for, among others, former MLA director William D. Schaefer, who has just as energetically opposed the system. Both have their arguments well-honed. The MLA debate actually had its origins in the 1974 convention of the American Philological Association, the first at which the classicists used a system of anonymous review to select program participants. According to Wellesley classicist Mary Lefkowitz, it seemed that, although the discipline had always had a considerable number of tenured women, disproportionately few were reading papers at the annual meetings. In 1974, therefore, women philologists called for an experiment with anonymous review. The result, Lefkowitz says, was more dramatic than even the activists had anticipated —a 100 percent increase in the number of accepted papers by women.

It was these APA statistics, according to Domna Stanton, Rutgers French professor and MLA member, that inspired the debate at MLA, in which Stanton has from the beginning taken a major role. "The results of the APA experiment were my first contact with the incredible dimensions of the problem," Stanton says. "I pushed, using the Commission on the Status of Women as a catalyst, for *PMLA* to adopt such a policy, but there was enormous resistance—mostly from the editors, who were senior men. It took a lot of lobbying on our part."

It did, in fact, take four years and a lengthy study of the issue before MLA finally voted to adopt the policy. Schaefer, who was editor of *PMLA* at the height of the debate, was largely responsible for conducting the study, a detailed statistical analysis of the *PMLA*. The results of that study, Schaefer argues, did not justify a change of MLA policy—an opinion he put forth in the *MLA Newsletter* before leaving the association last year to become vice-chancellor at the University of California at Los Angeles.

The analysis, Schaefer argued, revealed many discrepancies in the journal's record of acceptances and rejections. It showed a higher acceptance rate for male full professors than for women of the same rank, but it also revealed that independent women scholars had a higher rate of acceptance than did their male counterparts. Furthermore, the study indicated a higher rate of acceptance for full professors than for assistant professors and graduate students; for articles on British Romanticism than for articles on Shakespeare; and for Yale scholars than for those from small colleges, many of whom had more acceptances than did scholars at Harvard or Duke. In short, Schaefer concluded, the statistics could easily be marshalled as evidence for divergent conclusions.

But Schaefer's argument against anonymous review is not based on statistics. "I have come to respect—indeed, to cherish—the openness of our

Even the suspicion of bias is demoralizing and more destructive to the sense of community than anonymity could ever be.

present system," Schaefer wrote. "I believe *PMLA*'s current procedures have helped create a vital community of scholars and have thereby strengthened our Association and our profession. To me, anonymous review would be like asking us all to wear masks and to disguise our voices when we speak at meetings at the MLA Convention, thereby 'ensuring' that colleagues would not be biased against our views because of who or what we are or are not. If we have come to that, what a sad commentary on our profession and the state of humanistic endeavor."

Pointing out that "as soon as I turned my back, the MLA adopted the policy," Schaefer says that his deepest regret is that the teaching function of the *PMLA* will be lost with its new anonymity. "One of the main purposes of the *PMLA* has always been pedagogical. There are as many departments as there are schools in the country, and getting an expert in the same field to read your manuscript is not easy. Often there will be no one else in the department who is an expert in your area. Those 600 to 700 manuscripts submitted to *PMLA* are read and criticized by experts. Normally, you just can't get Northrup Frye to sit down and criticize your manuscript." Others suggest that the tone of critical response may change, that readers may become more cautious in criticizing what might be the scholarship of a senior in the field.

Supporters of anonymous review—mostly women, though there have been complaints about institutional and age bias as well—dismiss the appeals for collegiality and pedagogy. Publication, they allege, means nothing less than promotion, and, for junior people, even the suspicion of bias is demoralizing and more destructive to a sense of community than anonymity could ever be. Furthermore, they argue, there is no good reason why a journal's instructive role must be diminished. A sound critique is a sound critique, one editor says, regardless of who pens it.

The *PMLA* is actually a latecomer in adopting a policy of anonymous review. A survey of the 43 constituent societies of the American Council of Learned Societies revealed that, of 24 respondents, nine, or 38 percent, endorse or use such a policy, and an additional three use it to select convention participants. The remaining 12—half the respondents—do not use anonymous review. The five largest associations that have such a policy, however, all fall within the social sciences: the American anthropological, economic, political science, psychological, and sociological associations.

"As a general rule," Schaefer says, "the harder the science the greater ease with which blind reviewing is accepted. As you move toward literature, the resistance to blind reviewing becomes more intense. It has to do with the degree of allowance for facts to speak for themselves. The more self in the article, the greater the difficulty for anonymous review."

A survey of humanities journals, conducted by MLA in the midst of the debate, tends to confirm Schaefer's assertion. It revealed that only six—less than 16 percent—of the respondents used a policy of anonymous review: *Victorian Studies, Journal of Asian Studies, Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, Italian Quarterly, General Linguistics,* and *Signs*. At least one other journal, *German Quarterly,* has since adopted such a policy, but the number nevertheless remains low.

□

The crux of the controversy seems to be the issue of what constitutes merit in humanities scholarship. Is a good essay a good essay, no matter who writes it? Johns Hopkins University English professor Stanley Fish insists that it is not. "The opposing sides in this debate," Fish explains, "actually agree more than they disagree. The supporters argue on the basis of fairness; the opponents argue that anonymity as policy would erode the humanity of the profession and make literary studies something less than a community. Both, however, support the idea of judgment on the basis of intrinsic merit.

"But there is no such thing as intrinsic merit. Merit is always defined according to the institution's needs, so we must consult the conditions within the institution—that is, the identities of those who are writing. If Northrup Frye writes an article attacking archetypal criticism, what he says is, ipso facto, important. It's a fact that the words of some count more than the words of others, but that fact is lamentable only if there is an eternal, rather than political, standard of merit—a standard that exists aside from the people."

That argument, according to Catherine R. Stimpson, Barnard professor of literature and editor of *Signs,* is fetching but also theoretical and offers little practical help in eliminating real bias in academic publishing. "If you

The crux of the controversy seems to be the issue of what constitutes merit in humanities scholarship. Is a good essay a good essay, no matter who writes it?

accept such an argument," Stimpson asks, "how are innovation, originality, and change going to be responded to?" The Northrup Frye example—a familiar example by now to everyone involved in the debate—is, according to Stimpson, nothing more than an extraordinary case. "Obviously there will be cases where anonymity is impossible. Frye would be identified by internal evidence in any case, but most people in the field do not fall into this special class."

Stanton agrees and adds that such special cases merely cause a technical problem that can be dealt with technically. "We recognize that merit is never objective and that we become carriers of ideological systems whenever we read, but the point is to take steps to try to combat that. Yes, we should all know what Roman Jakobson is saying at any given time. At some point the anonymous number must be translated back into a person's name. At that terminal point, if the author turns out to be Jakobson, the decision can be made to publish.

"It's a matter of how you go about it. Often the reaction of senior men is that something that is rightfully theirs is being taken away from them—as if seniors should be published as a perquisite of their position."

MLA president and Boston University professor Helen Vendler points out, too, that the *PMLA* can commission an article by Frye if the editors think it appropriate. The question of merit, she suggests, is a red herring that distracts from the real issue, which is that women are under-represented in the pages of *PMLA*. Bias is a very real obstacle, Vendler insists, and she points to a whole body of "identical dossier" research which, she claims, proves that anything with a woman's name on it is perceived as having less merit than the identical male counterpart. But, Vendler adds, the question of how and where to go about excising bias is complex. It is possible, she points out for example, that women are under-represented in the journals because they are, on the whole, receiving inferior graduate training.

Lefkowitz, similarly, underscores the complexity of academic bias. Not only do classicists who are women have a poorer rate of acceptance by journals, but they also tend to submit fewer articles, she says. The implication, according to Lefkowitz, is that women do not have positions at research universities where lighter teaching loads allow them the luxury of writing.

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Whether the composition of *PMLA* undergoes a dramatic change under the newly adopted system remains to be seen. It will take three years to assess the effects, and meanwhile the opponents and supporters of anonymous review are predicting different results. Jackson Cope, professor of literature at the University of Southern California and founder of *Studies in English Literature,* suggests that anonymity might actually encourage senior scholars, who may have been timid about rejection, to submit their work more regularly. Currently, he points out, it is only the senior scholars who are not anonymous. Ninety percent of what is published is written by young scholars who are, in fact if not by choice, anonymous. Schaefer, too, thinks the system may benefit the senior scholars. "If there has been any kind of bias in the past," he says, "it has been in favor of the younger, unknown person. When you read something by an established scholar, it's as if somebody sends you to a movie saying it's great. You're more likely to be disappointed."

Stanton and others who have advocated anonymous review tend to downplay the results of the MLA evaluation. What is important, they insist, is that a system of blind reviewing now exists and the suspicion of bias will be erased. "Even if there aren't cataclysmic differences," Stanton says, "the policy is a sign that the profession does believe in a meritocracy." ■

—Wray Herbert

Newspaper Courses: Seeking a National Student Body

When historian Melvin Kranzberg of the Georgia Institute of Technology was first approached about putting together a series of articles on energy for publication in local newspapers, he balked. He had other commitments. His own students and research demanded his time. But when it was explained to him that such newspaper courses have reached as many as 15 million readers, he did a few calculations and figured that, given the average enrollments in his seminars, it would take him 734,000 years to reach that many students. He reconsidered and agreed to supervise the project.

The dilemma of citizen education has always been how to make knowledge accessible to people who are not enrolled in school, and in the past decade few institutions have gone untried in the quest for non-traditional students. Union halls, homes for the aged, public libraries—each has played a part in bringing education to American citizens. But there is probably no single continuing education project that has, either in sheer numbers or in the range of students, matched the impact of the Courses by Newspaper (CBN) project.

For eight years, the NEH-funded CBN program, run out of the University Extension of the University of California at San Diego (UCSD), has been making non-traditional education available to anyone who can read a daily paper and whose local publisher has chosen to print the series. "Energy and the Way We Live," the twelfth and latest of the CBN courses, is currently appearing in 512 newspapers, including the *Chicago Tribune,* and is being offered as a credit course at 355 community colleges.

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The originator and early director of CBN was Caleb Lewis of UCSD, under whose leadership NEH support was first obtained in 1972. The first course, "America and the Future of Man," was offered in the fall semester of 1973 and involved 5200 students at 188 colleges and universities. By the fall of 1974, when the second course, "In Search of the American Dream," was presented, Lewis had been succeeded as project director by George A. Colburn.

A Ph.D. in history, Colburn brought to CBN ten years of practical experience in journalism as area editor for the *Chicago Tribune.* His impression then was that newspapers were generally so wary of the "ivory tower" that they tended to neglect the intellectual activity in academic communities. He came to CBN, he says, determined to change that and is convinced that he has.

According to Colburn, the opportunity to offer credit or non-credit courses is not the program's primary objective. He is more interested in presenting "exciting news features on significant and timely subjects" that are written by the most qualified academic scholars and then making it possible for newspaper readers to pursue the subjects further through the supplementary materials compiled by CBN.

The production of a single newspaper course is a lengthy process involving many people. There is first of all a five-member faculty advisory committee at UCSD chaired by vice chancellor for academic affairs Paul D. Saltman. With the faculty committee, the university's chancellor selects a national board including academic humanists, journalists, and academic administrators from around the country. Currently, the chairman of the board is David P. Gardner, president of the University of Utah. Other members are Saltman, professors Carl N. Degler of Stanford University and Robert C. Elliott of UCSD, columnist Georgie Ann Geyer, editors Richard Leonard of the *Milwaukee Journal* and Gerald Warren of the *San Diego Union*, and Thomas O'Connell, president of Bellevue Community College in Bellevue, Washington. It is the national board that selects the topic for each course from a short list suggested by the faculty committee.

Since 1975 CBN has produced two courses in each academic year. Accordingly, the national board in its June meeting adopts two topics and assigns a junior scholar to compose a prospectus for each, including proposals for appropriate sub-topics and a list of scholars in the field. The faculty committee and NEH may make additional suggestions before the national

It is the many aspects of the CBN program—ranging from credit courses and exams on one end to television programming on the other and including a variety of printed and audio-visual resources—that allow the program to reach citizens on whatever level they choose to be reached.

board chooses an academic specialist to serve as the national coordinator for the course. The national board and the coordinator then refine the course content and format. Because a single course takes approximately two years from conception to production the CBN staff is involved in the generation, management, and development of six different courses simultaneously.

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Colburn's original expectation was that 200 papers would affiliate themselves with each course, a record that would eclipse those of some nationally syndicated columnists and even some popular comic strips. There were predictable obstacles to such wide distribution. For one thing, a newsprint shortage causes editors to be jealous of every column inch. For another, the newspaper editors are not permitted to edit CBN articles. Each course requires the papers to carry weekly articles for four months—a long-term commitment that alarms some editors.

In spite of those problems, CBN has never had fewer than 240 newspapers subscribe to a course. Colburn's original goal of 200 is now merely the number of papers that participate regularly, and the articles are currently carried in every state, Canada, New Zealand, Guam, Puerto Rico, and Hong Kong. The military newspaper *Stars and Stripes* is a subscriber, and Colburn identifies the Zeitung Kollege program in the Federal Republic of Germany as a "direct clone" of CBN. For journalists, apparently, the most popular course was the 1978 course on "Taxation: Myth and Realities," coordinated by George F. Break of the University of California at Berkeley. A record 531 papers subscribed to the series.

The national coordinator is responsible for compiling the *Reader/Study Guide,* which is normally a volume of some 200,000 words collected from a variety of published sources. For "Energy and the Way We Live," Kranzberg and CBN staff members assembled 74 selections from sources ranging from the *Congressional Quarterly* to the columns of Russell Baker and articles by environmentalist Barry Commoner. Monographs, textbooks, technical journals, and popular magazines were all consulted.

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Colleges that participate in CBN do so more consistently than newspapers. Colburn's stated goal is 300 institutions per course, and the record reveals a low of 161—for "The Molding of American Values" in 1976—and a high of 359—for "Connections: Technology and Change" in 1979.

Virtually all institutions adapt the courses to their non-traditional programs, and more than 58,000 students received credit for the first 11 CBN offerings while the combined readership of subscribing newspapers exceeded 15 million. There is no predictable correlation between student and newspaper interest. The "Taxation" course, popular as it was with editors, enrolled only 3,500 students, compared to the 10,000 who enrolled in the January 1979 course on "Death and Dying: Challenge and Change," directed by Robert Fulton of the University of Minnesota.

Each institution in which ten or more students earn credit for the CBN course pays the program six dollars per enrollee and agrees to hold at least two class or "contact" sessions during the semester. Each also agrees to require students to use the CBN textbook. Beyond those conditions, the institutions are free to develop and staff the courses as they please and to set their own fees. To assist in the courses on campus, CBN provides a *Source Book.* Examinations are prepared by the instructors, although CBN may require that its own objective examination be used either in addition to or in lieu of other tests.

The program's operating budget is provided by NEH. Since 1972 such grants have amounted to several million dollars. Smaller amounts may supplement specific courses, such as the 1977 course on "Crime and Justice in America," coordinated by Jerome Skolnick of Berkeley, which was partially supported by the National Institute of Mental Health. The National Science Foundation is helping to fund the "Energy" course, and the Exxon Corporation has made occasional contributions. These supplemental grants, says Colburn, have amounted to approximately 5 percent of the total budget since the program began, and CBN is always seeking new sources of support. NEH funding has permitted CBN to devote its income from royalties and student fees to what Colburn calls "experimentation"—the expansion and development of the program.

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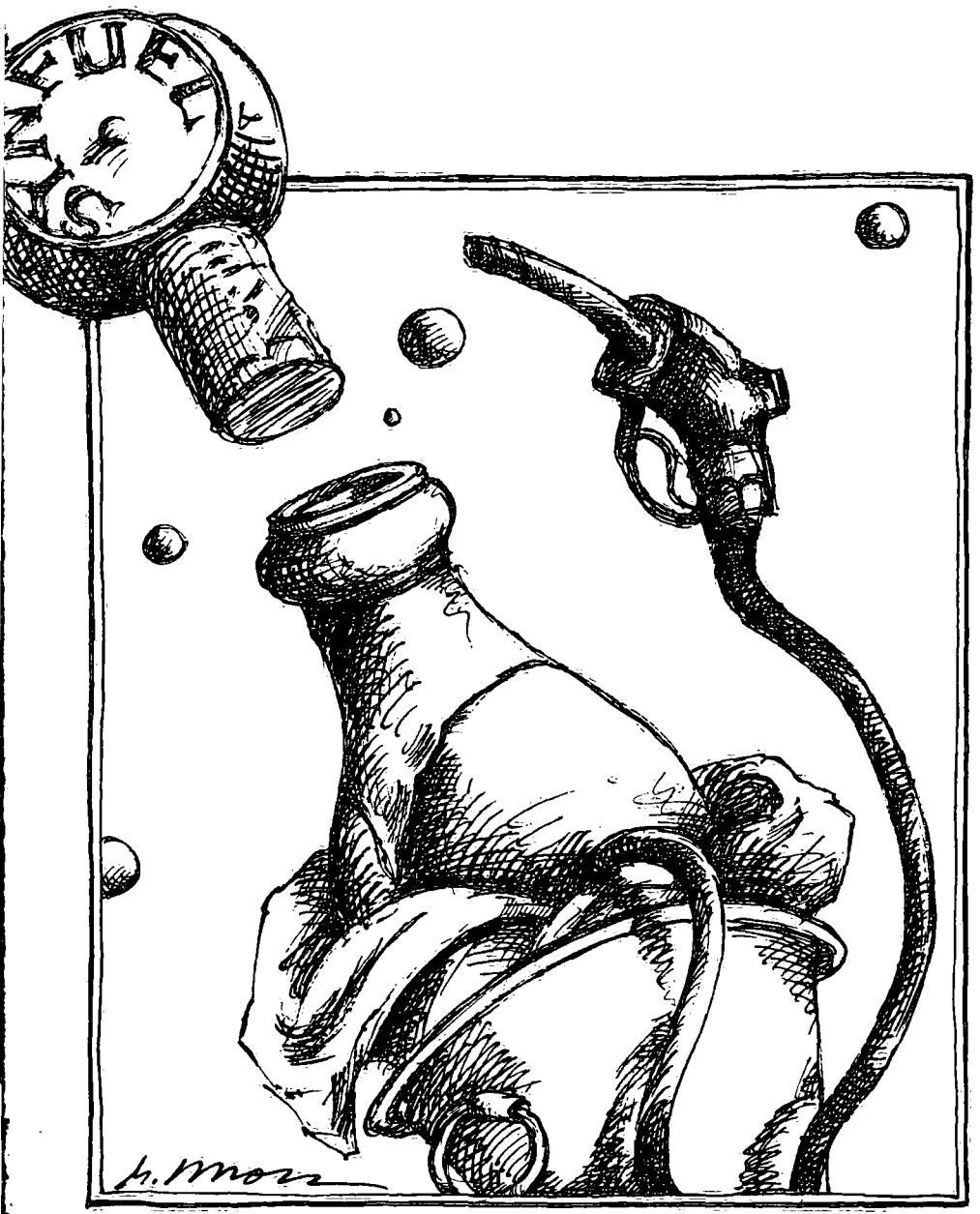
While only a few institutions or instructors have "recycled" CBN materials so that a course may be given



Geoffrey Moss, political illustrator with the Washington Post Writers Group, provided illustrations for the 15 lessons that make up the current course on "Energy and the Way We Live."

more than once, Colburn is seeking ways to make that practice more attractive. "Death and Dying," for example, is now being adapted to a forthcoming television series with the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), and CBN will prepare a viewer's guide. There is precedent for that approach. The "Technology and Change" course was in an early stage of preparation when CBN learned of the BBC series called "Connections" then being filmed under the direction of James Burke in England. CBN accelerated its schedule and presented the course in September 1979, when it was coordinated with the television programs airing over PBS. Colburn credits national coordinator John G. Burke of UCLA with the success of this approach, and the happy collaboration has led CBN to work again with James Burke in developing a course and television series for 1983 on the history of ideas, which the Briton describes as "the intellectual side of the great ages of man." The development of integrated audio and video tape components is now underway in connection with two upcoming courses: "The American Family in Transition," to be coordinated by psychologist Elizabeth Douvan of the University of Michigan in September 1980, and "Medical Science and the Nation's Health," to be directed by Philip R. Lee of the University of California at San Francisco in January 1981. Listings of audio-visual resources provided by the American Film Library Association is now a standard part of the CBN *Source Book*.

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It is the many aspects of the CBN

program, many say—ranging from credit courses and exams on one end to television programming on the other and including a variety of printed and audio-visual resources—that allow the program to reach citizens on whatever level they choose to be reached and combine to make CBN unique in its ability to educate the non-traditional student.

Since September 1975 CBN has also been connected with community forums on the course topics. The American Issues Forum, funded since 1977 by NEH as a program of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC), enables tens of thousands of people across the country to participate in community discussions and workshops. The "Energy" course is the focus of the first National Issues Forum, a culmination of the local forums, which is directed by Diane U. Eisenberg at the AACJC. The concept began with model forums at eleven community colleges in 1977 and 1978, according to Eisenberg's colleague Jeanne Picard. All of them used the then-current CBN courses. Eisenberg and Colburn evaluated the experiment and agreed on a national format for cooperation. Although it is associated with CBN, the National Issues Forum is distinct, with its own ten-week calendar. Colburn anticipates the American Library Association's sponsorship of a similar forum program which he believes could be a natural partner for the "History of Ideas" course in 1983.

As with the earlier forums, CBN materials will be used to stimulate public discussions in a variety of local settings. That the forums are coordinated by local colleges reinforces the community appeal and also opens the way for involvement of local and state agencies. The California Council for the Humanities in Public Policy, under the direction of Bruce Sievers, has been working with CBN since September 1978. In California the "Taxation" course provided an opportunity for the Council, the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, the state public radio network, and the state library system to work together to produce seminars and supplementary materials. A series of articles by California authors accompanied the regular CBN articles in many of the state's newspapers, sometimes expanding on the topic and sometimes providing a critical response. A weekly radio program was aired in conjunction with the newspaper series, and the CBN reader was among the six volumes on taxation provided by the Council to each of the state's libraries.

The role of such state agencies in the "Energy" CBN/National Issues Forum will vary from state to state. Siever's organization will be less directly involved than before, but it will allocate $48,000 in grants through Indian Valley College, which is the AACJC-designated coordinating center for the southwest. Nancy Tapper, regional coordinator at Indian Valley, expects some colleges to rely on their own resources. She points out that, except for California, the state humanities agencies in her region are not providing funds to the general program, although those in Arizona and Hawaii are responding to requests from individual colleges.

While Tapper's region involves relatively few colleges outside California, Bernice Regunsburg, the coordinator of the region including the seven Middle Atlantic states, is juggling programs at 60 institutions, working through a so-called lead college in each state. Based at Dutchess Community College in Poughkeepsie, New York, she is directly responsible for the forums in New York, where the state humanities commission is not funding the program. Each of the colleges in her region has committed itself to at least three and up to ten forums on energy, all of them connected with the CBN newspaper readings.

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The reaction to CBN of those people who have worked with it is strong and positive. Sievers describes the relationship between the California humanities council and CBN as a "very healthy partnership," although he retains a humanist's sympathy for academic authors whose work must be shaped into journalistic form. Tapper expects that the combination of the topical energy course with the forums will lead many newspapers to carry CBN pieces for the first time. If it works as well as its producers predict, the National Issues Forum-CBN association, many think, could be an important step toward the sort of innovation Colburn is seeking as a means of keeping his program fresh and provocative. ■

—Richard A. Harrison

Richard A. Harrison is assistant professor of history at Pomona College.

NEH advisers questioned on need for secrecy in peer review

The February meeting of the National Council on the Humanities was disrupted when a reporter disputed the Council's decison to close a portion of the proceedings to the public. The incident rekindles an old debate about whether or not the secrecy that has traditionally characterized the Council's work is necessary or appropriate. The Council advises NEH Chairman Joseph D. Duffey on policy matters and decides on most of the agency's spending.

Normally, the Council conducts a public session on general policy issues —as required by law—but then closes its doors for any substantive discussion of agency policy and for final grant review. Michael M. Mooney, a Washington editor for *Harper's Magazine*, argued, however, that the Council's reasons for sequestering itself from the public violate the law governing such federal advisory panels.

The Federal Advisory Committee Act prohibits secret meetings but provides a few exemptions to the prohibition. The Endowment, according to its general counsel, Joseph Schurman, cites two reasons for closing the meeting. First, Schurman explains, the meetings include discussion of "trade secrets," including privileged or confidential financial information. Second, the meetings are closed to protect applicants from "invasion of personal privacy." Mooney argues that Council business does not warrant either exemption. Exemptions, he argues, can only be applied if "overriding national interests" are at stake, and the personal privacy of grant applicants—salaries are the example of confidential information cited by Duffey—do not qualify.

Mooney's charges are part of a general debate about how to balance personal privacy and public accountability in peer review. The Senate Subcommittee on Education, Arts, and Humanities, chaired by Senator Claiborne Pell (D-R.I.), is also interested in the issue and in the full committee report accompanying the NEH reauthorization bill (S. 1386) states its position plainly: "It is the understanding of the Committee that all meetings of each Council be open to the general public. The Committee believes that the Council review of grant applications can be conducted in public meetings without jeopardizing the integrity of the review process. . . . The Committee is aware, however, that there may be occasional exceptions to justify a closed session, such as instances when sensitive personnel matters are discussed. The Committee believes that these exceptions to an open process should be infrequently exercised."

Most agree that the debate, which is government-wide, will probably not be resolved outside the courts.

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Other parts of the Senate report are also causing Endowment officials some consternation. At the February meeting, Cornell historian and Council member Mary Beth Norton questioned the committee's requirement that the names of grant reviewers be made public as soon as they are appointed. Small panels of specialists selected by NEH staff members conduct the initial round of review and make recommendations, through staff sum-

maries, to the Council. Currently the panelists' names are revealed only after awards have been made. There has been mounting pressure, however —including a report from House investigators to the House Appropriations Committee last year—to open up what the investigators characterized as a closed review system, and the Senate report reflects these arguments. Duffey, however, objects to the requirement and points out, as he did in response to Norton, that "applicants would be free to call for the names of reviewers and then free to lobby them." Such lobbying, he added, has taken place.

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The Senate report also makes some changes in the requirements for chairman's grants, which can be awarded without going through the normal process of peer review. "It is the intent of the Committee," the report states, "that these grants be made primarily to respond to emergency situations when, because of a pressing time factor, an application through the usual review process is impossible." Duffey testified before Pell's subcommittee last fall that "emergency" was too restrictive and that some deserving projects fell outside the Endowment's established funding categories—a sentiment he repeated to the Council. Like Pell, however, Council vice-chairman and Stanford University president Richard W. Lyman argued that the definition was not inappropriately restrictive. "Why isn't 'emergency' desirable in defining chairman's grants?" he asked. "As defined here—'because of a pressing time factor'—it would cover most cases."

The Senate reauthorization bill includes an amendment raising the ceiling for chairman's grants from the current $17,500 to $30,000, as requested by Duffey. It was after introducing the amendment—which Pell said he supported, "though not enthusiastically"—that the more narrow definition of discretionary grants was introduced.

The language in the Senate report is not binding unless the House report includes identical provisions. Most likely, a joint House-Senate conference will work out the differences between the two reauthorization bills and issue its own report to guide the implementation of the law.

DeConcini questions lack of private humanities support

Senator Dennis DeConcini (D-Ariz.), conducting March hearings on the FY 1981 budget appropriations for NEH, asked Endowment officials to identify which programs they would cut if a 5 percent budget cut should become necessary; and he queried NEH Chairman Joseph D. Duffey about the possibility of increased private contributions to support humanities activity.

DeConcini, the only member of the appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior Department and Related Agencies present, warned NEH officials that the mood favoring "intense budget cutting" may require that all agencies take cuts, not only in FY 1981 but in the current year, too. The administration, DeConcini also indicated, may eliminate all FY 1980 requests for supplemental appropriations.

The bleak funding outlook was reflected in DeConcini's major line of

Senator Dennis DeConcini (D-Ariz.), the only legislator present at recent NEH appropriations hearings, alerted Endowment officials to the possible necessity for future budget reductions.

questioning. What, he asked, is the current level of private funding? Does the Endowment have underway a concerted effort to get more corporate funding? Duffey responded that corporate funding has actually increased during the past five years, a result in part of the Endowment's use of challenge grants and matching funds to stimulate private support. Duffey pointed out, however, that during the same period foundation funding for the humanities has diminished considerably. "Do you think," DeConcini asked, "that the decline has occurred because of the increase in government funding?"

DeConcini also questioned whether NEH officials had considered increasing the level of cost-sharing for universities, which is currently between 15 and 20 percent. "The problem with such an approach," Duffey said, "is that it im-

mediately places certain institutions at a disadvantage in competing for funds."

On a different issue, the Arizona senator expressed dismay over the concentration of half the Endowment grants in four states—California, New York, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts. "What are you doing to balance the level of support in the Sunbelt states and other rural states?" he asked.

Duffey replied that, though the statistics are somewhat skewed by the fact that many national projects—public television projects, for example—are located in New York, equity of support is still a problem. The Endowment is increasing its technical assistance and consultation efforts, he said, to reach underserved groups. Duffey added, however, that sparsely populated states often receive higher average per capita funding than do densely populated states such as New York.

"I am not suggesting formulas for state funding," DeConcini stressed, "but isn't the need to promote the humanities greater in the rural areas outside New York? I think more attention should be given to the rural areas."

NEH exempt, for now, from budget balancing plans

The White House decision to submit a revised FY 1981 request to Congress, which requires the elimination of considerable federal spending in order to balance the budget, has apparently left NEH unscathed for the time being. Only cabinet level agencies were asked in a March memorandum from the Office of Management and Budget to identify dispensable programs. The original budget request, sent to the Hill in late January, allowed for a 9.5 percent growth in federal spending and a deficit of $16 billion.

According to Armen Tashdinian, director of planning and policy assessment at the Endowment, "Our expectation is that we will not be asked to make reductions during the next month or two." He adds, however, that cuts might be required in the future. Further reductions might be requested during the summer, as the budget begins to take shape through the Congressional appropriations process, or even as late as next fall, when the administration can request recisions.

NEH clarifies its fellowship guidelines —once again

NEH officials, searching for the most equitable way to define its two categories of independent fellowships, has once again altered the wording of its guidelines. The newly defined categories make a clear distinction between young scholars and college teachers, a troublesome distinction that has kept the application process out of kilter in the past.

Formerly, applicants could apply to either category "A" or category "B" fellowship programs. The former provided fellowships for study and research which would make "a significant contribution to knowledge." The latter provided fellowships that would, in addition to making a contribution to knowledge, enhance the teaching of undergraduates. These categories caused confusion, according to NEH fellowship director James Blessing. College teachers were applying to category "A" when they wanted to pursue scholarship unrelated to teaching and thus putting themselves in competition with senior scholars. At the same time, young university scholars were dominating category "B."

"Heretofore, we have been encouraging young professors in major universities to include themselves in category B," Blessing explains. Now, he says, they are being encouraged to apply to the category defined as "fellowships for independent study and research." The second category, which replaces category B, is called "fellowships for college teachers."

"The idea," Blessing says, "is to distinguish between those whose careers lie primarily in the area of teaching undergraduates and those whose careers will give them primary responsibility for research and the teaching of graduate students." He points out that the young university scholars will be given special attention within the category for research fellowships. The guidelines will also attempt to make clear to college teachers that fellowships are available for research unrelated to teaching.

The new formulation replaces a proposal, made last summer, to define categories A and B very strictly according to an applicant's institution and the time lapsed since completing a degree. But that plan was never put into effect. The over-representation of young university scholars in the fall list of awards convinced the advisory council and Endowment officials that a different approach was necessary. A major goal of the newly revised guide-

lines, Blessing explains, is to increase the participation of teachers from small colleges, black colleges, and two-year colleges who have been underrepresented in the past.

Javits requests more study of national periodicals center

Senator Jacob K. Javits (R-N.Y.) has introduced an amendment to the reauthorization bill for the Higher Education Act (S. 1839) which would establish a two-year corporation to study the feasibility of a National Periodicals Center, the controversial project favored by large research libraries as a means of expanding access to scholarly journals. The proposed clearinghouse, which is included in the House version of the Higher Education Act, has pitted scholarly publishers and research librarians against one another since its inception, and the Javits amendment is viewed as a compromise between legislating or scuttling the idea.

The Senate bill would establish a National Periodical System Corporation to study the pros and cons of a periodicals center and, if it is found feasible, plan such a center. It would also require a joint resolution by Congress actually to legislate any such system. According to Javits aide David Morse, "Although the idea has been studied for a long time, the House bill doesn't make clear just what a National Periodicals Center would be or how it would be administered." The bill, he adds, does not address the serious objections of those publishers who choose not to participate and of scholars who fear diminished opportunity for publication. No extensive congressional hearings on these issues have been held, Morse says, and the corporation would provide an opportunity for thorough review.

Senator Jacob K. Javits (R-N.Y.) has requested a more thorough analysis of the proposed National Periodicals Center.

Ralph McCoy, director of the Association of Research Libraries which has been backing the House bill, says that research librarians think the issues have been studied for long enough and that the bill provides adequate protections for copyright holders and users. The center, as written into the bill, McCoy says, is an outgrowth of two earlier studies—a general study by the National Library Commission and a highly technical study by the Council on Library Resources—the so-called "plum book"—which proposes an administrative plan for the center.

The research library community, Morse says, is assuming that the National Periodicals Center is a "fixed item, based on the plum book. But there is no mention of the plum book in the legislation. It is the article of faith in the research library community," he adds, "but neither I nor Senator Javits has seen a copy."

Columbia University's evaluation calls for "selective excellence"

Following an 18-month evaluation of Columbia University's academic programs, a special panel of scholars has recommended that the university diminish its investment in the humanities, that it make more flexible the rigid departmental organization of the humanities disciplines, and that it abandon programs in which it has not achieved excellence in order to concentrate on those in which it has.

The 19-member commission, chaired by Columbia professor of humanities Steven Marcus, concludes that Columbia must conceive of itself as "an admittedly elite institution" and "must articulate and pursue an idea of higher education that is humanistic and intellectual." In austere times, the commission adds, departments—"the guardians of our disciplines"—must seek more and more interdisciplinary faculty appointments. In addition, the report says, the university must find a way to replace retiring faculty members with equally distinguished scholars, while at the same time guaranteeing that "the most talented younger scholars of the current generation do not get lost because openings for them will not come into existence for five years or so in the future."

Columbia's distinction in the humanities, the commission states, "is

precariously held. It is threatened by losses of both graduate students and faculty." In recruiting faculty under such circumstances, the commission has recommended that only untenured professors be hired in fields that are currently popular and that tenured positions be allocated only in response to "the intellectual needs of the field." Such a strategy is necessary, the commission argues, "so as not to freeze past booms into our tenure array for a generation."

The commission report includes specific recommendations for future faculty recruiting in each university department and calls for reductions in a few humanities departments by attrition. The most dramatic recommendation is that the university abandon the "nineteenth century notion" that the study of language and literature be organized by departments corresponding to nation-states.

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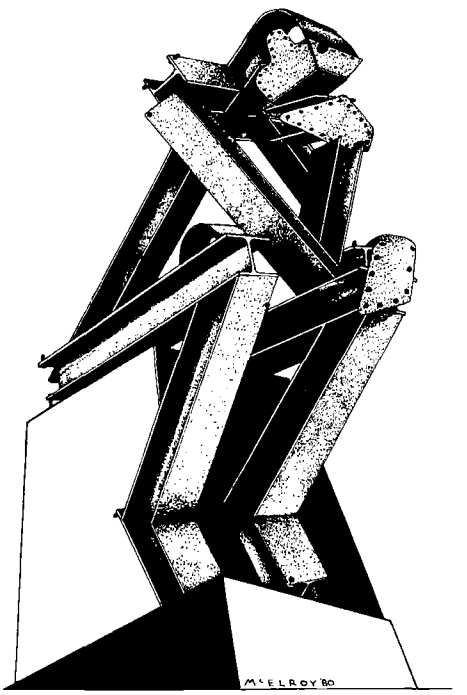

TO THE EDITOR:

William Poe's article on new moves in engineering education (*HR*, Jan. 1980) is valuable, but it does not adequately put its subject in context—a context that is encouragingly broad for humanists.

The effort to integrate the humanities and training for engineers represents but one example of growing attention in education to the relationships among science, technology, and culture. Hundreds of new courses of all sorts have been started within this general subject area during the last five years, and in a few cases they are linked to comprehensive programs of study or even to cross-disciplinary majors. While the focus of concern in these programs seemed at the beginning to be quite narrow, it has since widened. (The evolution of the Lehigh program described in Poe's article is typical.) "Service" courses for science or technology departments have grown into centerpieces of general education. Once humanists got their foot in the door, they quite rightly attempted to open it wider and are finding success. Today, I believe, the science-in-society area of many curricula is where most new growth is occurring, and it offers much intellectual and pedagogical promise to humanists of every stripe. For the foreseeable future, humanists who are actively concerned about science and technology will find their skills and knowledge not only more in demand but also more communicable to a wide audience.

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