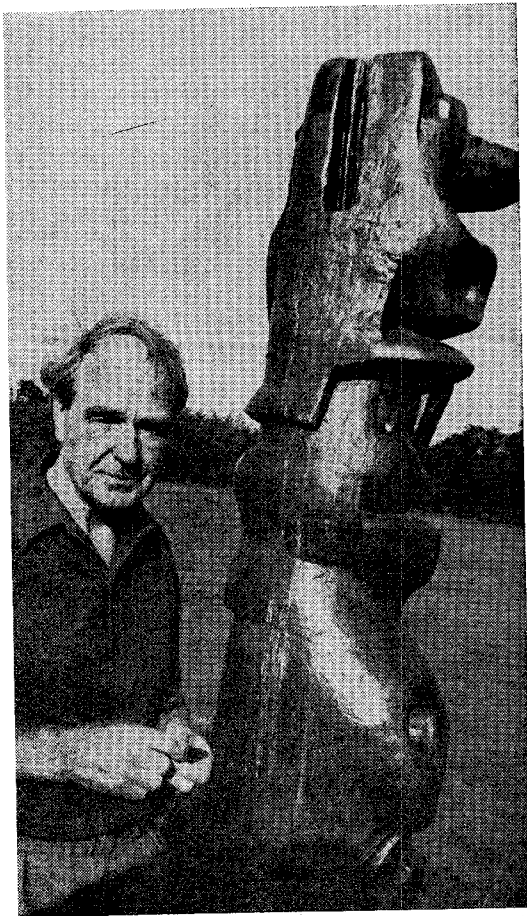


Why We Need a National Humanities Foundation

By BARNABY C. KEENEY, *President of Brown University, and Chairman of the Commission on the Humanities.*

"THE HUMANITIES are the study of that which is most human. . . . They not only record our lives; our lives are the very substance they are made of. Their subject is every man. We propose, therefore, a program for all people, a program to meet a need no less serious than that

This article is based on an address delivered at the Triennial Council of the United Chapters, Phi Beta Kappa last August 31.



—Freund (Monkmeyer).

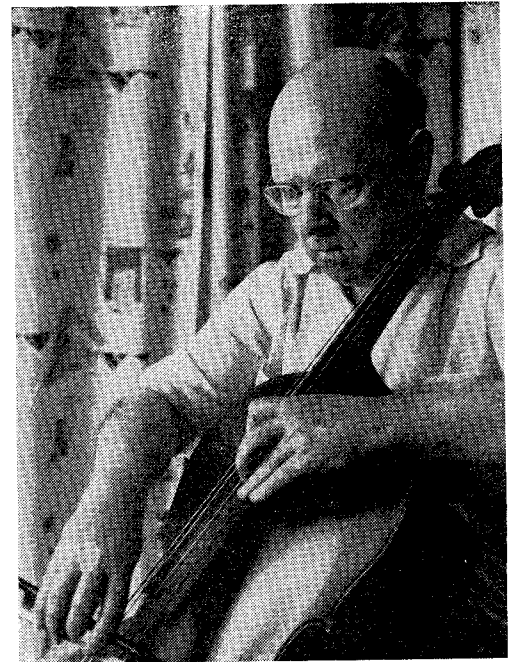
Sculptor Henry Moore. "Most enduring literature and art are the product of individuals who possess a body of humane knowledge about which to think, write, or paint."

for national defense. We speak, in truth, for what is being defended—our beliefs, our ideals, our highest achievements."

With these words we opened the Report of the Commission on the Humanities, the first detailed proposal to establish a National Foundation for the Humanities. The Report calls for a foundation to provide the kind of support for the humanities and the arts that the National Science Foundation has given the sciences and mathematics. It is the product of two years of the Commission's work.

The Commission—established by the American Council of Learned Societies, the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States, and the United Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa—met frequently during 1963 and 1964. Its members are humanists, scientists, educators and educational administrators, and business and professional men.

We very quickly agreed upon the principal recommendations and thus had ample time to discuss the illiteracy and folly of the several successive members who attempted to draft the report. We defined the humanities as the study of languages, literature, history, and philosophy; the history, criticism, and theory of art and music; and the history and comparison of religion and law. We placed the creative and performing arts within the scope of the Foundation on the grounds that they are the very substance of the humanities and embrace a major part of the imaginative and creative activities of mankind. We proposed that a National Foundation, supported largely but not entirely by federal appropriations, be established to promote the development of these activities, but by no means to control them. We proposed that the Foundation be authorized to support humane studies and artistic activities through the whole of our national life—in the schools, in the colleges and universities, in the libraries, museums, art galleries, and in the theater and the concert hall. In short, we envisaged the Foundation, not entirely or even primarily as an academic enterprise, but rather as one that would attempt to touch every facet of American life. We proposed that the Foundation be empowered to help institutions and organi-



—Fritz Henle (Monkmeyer).

Pablo Casals. "The humanities and the arts are at the center of our lives and are of prime importance to the nation and to ourselves."

zations develop their programs and to help individuals develop their scholarly and creative competence, and to provide facilities where each might function. So much for the proposals.

The proposals were received with unbounded enthusiasm in some quarters, limited approval in others, and silence in some. As expected, most humanists favored the proposals, although some felt that it was more in their interest and in the interest of scholarship to remain aloof from federal support. It was not surprising that scientists endorsed the proposals (particularly through an editorial in the influential publication *Science*) for perceptive scientists have long realized that their work is best carried on in a humane environment. In December 1964, the Directors of the American Association for the Advancement of Science endorsed a program of federal support for the humanities.

TWO important questions recur in the discussion: the first, Should federal funds be used for the humanities and arts? and the second, Should an independent foundation be established or should a program be carried on through existing governmental agencies? I propose to concentrate of these two fundamental questions.

Should federal funds be used for the humanities and arts? This is, of course, the question that must be answered first. The arguments that federal funds should not be so used are based on grounds that run from principle through economics to tactics and expediency. The

SR/March 20, 1965

basic fear is that the use of federal funds in these sensitive areas will lead to control of thought in science and technology. There are good grounds for such a fear. The painting and sculpture approved by the Soviet Union do not inspire the same admiration as Soviet achievements in physics and in space. On the other hand, however, art subsidized by the French government has in our times occupied a more important place than science subsidized from the same source. One may suspect that the nature and purpose of the government doing the subsidizing will have something to do with the degree and effect of control. I myself feel that if the federal government in this country ever takes control of the humanities, the arts, and the social studies—or the sciences themselves—it will not be primarily because the government has spent money on them; it will be because the people of the United States tell their representatives that they wish control to be exercised. If the people make that decision, there will be control whether funds are expended or not. I do not believe they will wish to reach such a decision.

It is sometimes asserted that funds should not be expended on the humanities because we have problems of higher priority and limited funds. The amount that could prudently be expended in a decade would not exceed the amount necessary to get a man on the moon a year earlier than we otherwise might.

THE Los Angeles Times approves the humanities, but questions the need of additional expenditures for them on the grounds that an appropriate number of students study them. This conclusion may have been based upon statistics published by the United States Office of Education on earned degrees conferred. In 1962-63 some 88,000 bachelor's degrees were conferred in the arts and humanities, including arts education, whereas 140,000 odd were conferred in the social sciences, mathematics, engineering, the physical sciences, and the biological and health sciences. This would seem to be an appropriate distribution. However, it is a splendid illustration of the danger in reading only the first column of the statistics. Over in the fourth column one finds that only some 1,800 doctorates were conferred in the humanities, while about 7,000 were conferred in the other fields, a most inappropriate distribution of an inadequate total. One must conclude from these data that the undergraduates studying the humanities a decade from now will be less well taught than students in the other fields, and that the numbers of their teachers will exceed their training.

An argument of expediency is that federal expenditures in the humanities

will discourage private, and particularly foundation, giving. The record, however, shows that private foundations have expended more money and a greater percentage of their funds on the sciences and engineering since the establishment of the National Science Foundation than before. Anyone who has raised money knows that money goes where money is, and he is likely to suspect that abundance of funds, from whatever source, will increase rather than decrease the flow of additional funds.

One of the tactical arguments is based upon the fear that a new foundation will make blunders in its initial gifts, will become the target of Congressional criticism and the laughingstock of the public, will quickly disappear and set back rather than advance the cause of the humanities and arts. I see no reason to believe that the sort of board and director proposed for the Foundation would make any more stupid mistakes than any other board and director, and I suspect that they would be able to defend themselves and their decisions.

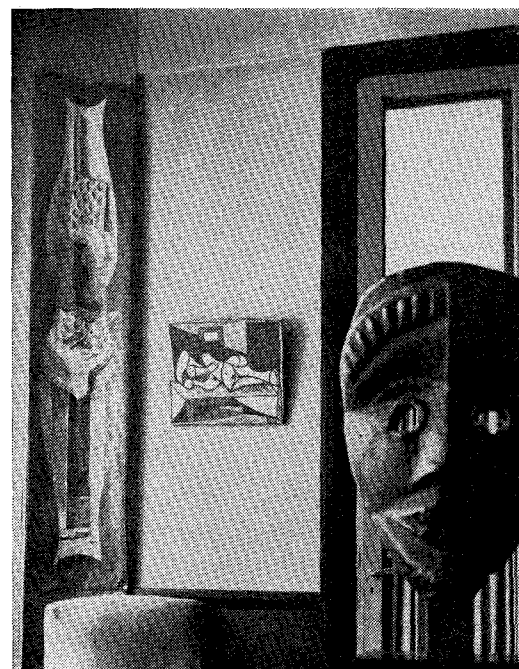
Finally, some mature humanists have argued that funds are not necessary at all, that they themselves starved in their youth and it was good for them, and that their intellectual offspring should starve as well. Poverty is a virtue greatly overrated by those who no longer practice it.

The arguments for the use of federal funds to support the humanities range likewise from principle to expedience, and even to nonsense. I shall start with the last. Some humanists are likely to say in private and in public: "I am a humanist. I like doing my research. I am as important as the scientist. Do not ask me what my research is good for, because any consideration of utility would destroy its purity. Just give me some money." The more often this argument is asserted, the less likely is the establishment of a National Humanities Foundation, because our Congress has no right to spend federal funds for anything that does not offer some promise of advancing the national interest.

Then it is argued that the development of technology and automation and a greatly increased national product will reduce the labor force, and the working day of those who remain in it, to the point where the use of leisure will become an increasingly serious problem. Therefore, we must educate ourselves and our children to use leisure properly and profitably, particularly through the improvement of our minds, and we must provide greater opportunities for study of the humanities and artistic appreciation. This is an important argument, but perhaps a second-rate one. The real problem is not the utilization of leisure, important as that may be, but rather the development of an ethic and an outlook

appropriate to new circumstances. We have now an ethic in which work is equated with virtue. Before long we shall have to develop one in which not to work very long for a living and to be content in leisure is as virtuous as labor itself. This will require hard thinking by some well-trained philosophers who have competence outside the area of symbolic logic. We are going to need those philosophers very badly. The use of the freed time is more important than its existence. We can employ it trivially or constructively. Despite the interesting work of intellectual primitives, most enduring literature and art are the product of individuals who possess a body of humane knowledge about which to think, write, or paint, and most social advance is accomplished by persons who know the society and its background.

Then it is argued that history will judge us by our culture rather than by



—Henle (Monkmeyer).

A corner in the home of Georges Braque. "The humanities and arts are as important as men's minds and souls, and must be nourished as they are."

our material accomplishments; therefore, we must polish up our image for the greater edification of future generations and also for the admiration of the underdeveloped nations that are alleged to have great respect for culture and none at all for bathtubs. It is probably a sound rule to believe that one's image will take care of itself if one does what he should—provided always that he has a good public relations man. This argument, therefore, is at best peripheral. Let us instead concentrate on what we should do.

The humanities and arts are of central importance to our society and to ourselves as individuals. They at once express and shape our thoughts. They give

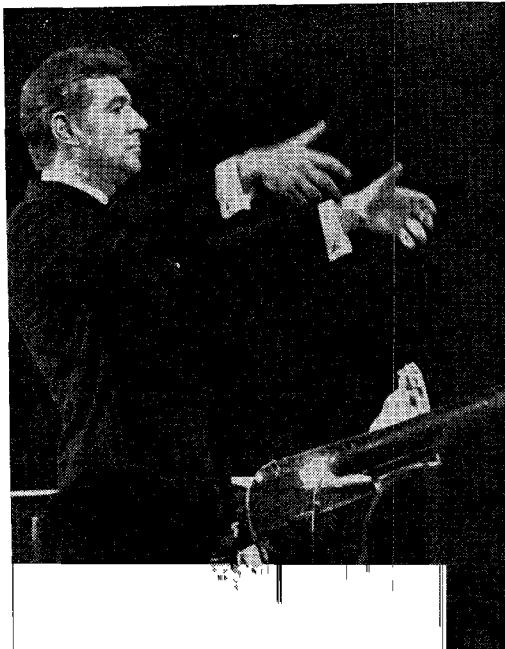
us the beautiful to see and teach us what to look for. The development of thought undoubtedly reflects institutions and circumstances, but these are shaped by ideas. The two are, in fact, inseparable. Our relations to one another as individuals and to our society are formed and determined by what we know and think. Our use of knowledge is inseparable from our ability to express it in words or in shapes. Only through the best ideas and the best teaching can we cope with the problems that surround us and the opportunities that lie beyond these problems. Our fulfillment as a nation depends upon the development of our minds, and our relations to one another and to our society depend upon our understanding of one another and of our society. The humanities and the arts, therefore, are at the center of our lives and are of prime importance to the nation and to ourselves. Simply stated, it is in the national interest that the humanities and arts develop exceedingly well.

Finally, an argument of expediency: as in all matters relating to education and our development as a nation, we must move rapidly. We cannot postpone the solution of central problems. We must, therefore, produce massive support quickly. The most likely source of massive support today is the federal government.

Now the second question is: Should there be an independent foundation or should the humanities and the arts be supported through an existing agency? Congressmen have a natural disinclination to proliferate the already large number of independent executive agencies. It has been proposed, therefore, that support of the humanities be achieved through the enlargement of the charter

Conductor Leonard Bernstein. "It is in the national interest that the humanities and arts develop exceedingly well."

—Schnuck. (Monkmeier).



of the National Science Foundation, or by an increased appropriation to the United States Office of Education, or through the Smithsonian Institution. It has been alleged, and with good reason, that those agencies with which a cabinet officer is directly concerned are more likely to flourish, year in and year out, than those that depend directly upon the President. The past two years have been more abundant for the National Institutes of Health, under the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, than for the National Science Foundation, responsible directly to the President.

THE National Science Foundation has done a remarkable job and has plenty to do. Its board and its staff are oriented toward science, although many of them have a humane outlook as broad as most humanists and broader than some. The Commission believed that it would distract the National Science Foundation from its primary aims to have its task enlarged and diversified, and that its work might thereby be hampered. It is quite true, however, that the sciences and humanities can be, and for many years have been, developed together in our universities. As for the Office of Education, it has long been associated with secondary and primary education, but in recent years, particularly since the passage of the National Defense Education Act, it has concerned itself increasingly with higher education and has served it very well. It now has power and funds to conduct limited activity in the humanities, and should be encouraged to do so. Were the Commissioner of Education a cabinet officer instead of a second-echelon officer in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, there would be greater validity in the argument that no foundation is needed, and that all that is necessary can be done by the Office of Education. (In January 1965, bills were introduced into the Senate by Senator Ribicoff and into the House by Representative Fogarty to raise the Commissioner of Education to cabinet rank.) Moreover, the Office of Education is intended to be concerned exclusively with education. We envisage the National Humanities Foundation as having a much broader charter in activities extending into other facets of public and private life. Therefore, the Commission on the Humanities believed that it would be best to advocate a separate Foundation.

How shall one proceed from this time on? When the Commission wrote its report, it seemed unlikely that any powerful member of the executive branch would advocate the establishment of a Foundation for the Humanities in an election year. However, President Johnson in an address at Brown University on September 28, 1964, said. "The values

of our free and compassionate society are as vital to our national success as the skills of our technical and scientific age. And I look with the greatest of favor upon the proposal by President Keeney's Commission for a National Foundation for the Humanities." It did not seem probable that legislators seeking reelection would feel it timely to make a very strong case, but Representative Moorhead of Pennsylvania introduced legislation to establish a Humanities Foundation and the proposal of Senator Pell of Rhode Island to establish an Arts Commission and Foundation was enacted, but inadequately funded.

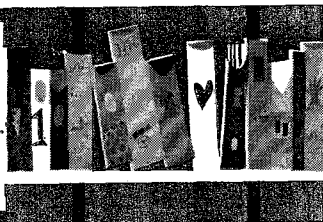
In the 89th Congress, there was an immediate growth of support. Sixty-three representatives introduced a revised version of Representative Moorhead's bill. Senator Gruening of Alaska, on behalf of himself and twenty-nine other senators, introduced substantially the same bill into the Senate. On behalf of himself and nine other senators, Senator Pell introduced a considerably expanded proposal, giving more prominence to the arts, and establishing two divisions, one for the humanities and one for the arts. The same bill was introduced into the House by Representative Fogarty of Rhode Island and others. By January 13, eighty-three congressmen had introduced or endorsed one bill or the other and thirty-five senators had endorsed one or both. Each bill has great merit. Representative Moorhead's is simpler; Senator Pell's is more comprehensive.

Considerable public support has been marshaled, and more is being sought. The Association of American Universities has endorsed the establishment of a foundation for the humanities, as have other educational associations. Numerous learned societies have done the same. On December 16 the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois voted "to support the action of the Association of American Universities endorsing the idea" of the Foundation. Members of Phi Beta Kappa, including many members of Congress, have been active. Advocates of the legislation are seeking the support of the alumni of colleges and universities, and of the even more numerous alumni of schools. Teachers in schools and colleges are working together to develop a climate of opinion favorable to support of the humanities and the arts.

As these developments occur, it is essential that humanists and artists and amateurs believe and act as if we believed that what we study, write, create, and advocate is relevant to our whole society. We shall not go far unless we do, and we shall be misrepresenting what we do unless we realize and proclaim that the humanities and the arts are as important as men's minds and souls, and must be nourished as they are.

SR/March 20, 1965

the Editor's Bookshelf



The great mass of educational writing that reaches the general public falls roughly into three categories: Bland defense of the status quo, sharply critical attack, or enthusiastic endorsement of the latest innovation. Favorite titles in each category are variations on three familiar themes: "What's Right With Our Schools?" "Catastrophe in the Classroom," or "Teaching Machines (or Phonics or Montessori) Will Save Us."

By now, school board members and others concerned with educational quality have heard about the innovations and are familiar with the views of both critics and defenders. Their need is for calm analysis and interpretation of the changes that have taken place and must take place in the schools. *Schools in an Age of Mass Culture*, by Willis Rudy, (Prentice-Hall 374 pp., \$6.95) is one such book. Rudy, who is professor of history at Fairleigh Dickinson University, explores the history of the child study movement, the development of child-centered schools, and the concept of "adjustment" as an educational goal. He gives some attention to the influence of PTAs and philanthropic foundations and deals at some length with the church-state-school and segregation issues. He offers an interpretation of the deluge of criticism that kept the educational pot boiling through the decade of the Fifties. His book is an excellent analysis of the maincurrents of educational thought in the twentieth century, interpreted in the light of social change.

Despite the fact that human learning is the central problem in both the discipline of psychology and the profession of teaching, theoretical psychologists in recent years have not given as much attention to educational applications as did those of two or three decades ago. During the first thirty years of this century, such noted psychologists as James, Dewey, and Thorndike gave a substantial portion of their energies to the applications of learning theories in the classroom. Although many of the most distinguished American psychologists have continued their explorations of the nature of learning, the gap between laboratory research and classroom practice has widened. Most of the recent innovations in teaching have not been based upon psychological knowledge of the learning process, partly because experimental psychologists have been less willing to translate their findings into

specific recommendations to teachers.

A new book by Robert M. Gagné, *The Conditions of Learning* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 308 pp., \$5.50) is a step toward closing the gap. Gagné, a well qualified psychologist who is thoroughly familiar with recent research, does not offer specific recommendations as William James did seventy years ago in his *Talks to Teachers*, but he does take the first essential step of interpreting evidence from research in terms of the environmental conditions under which learning will be most effective.

Readers who recall an offbeat piece titled "From a Teacher's Wastebasket" which we published two years ago will be glad to know that the author, Bel Kaufman, has incorporated that bit of whimsy into a new book titled *Up the Down Staircase* (Prentice Hall, 340 pp., \$4.95). Miss Kaufman, described by one of her students as "the only teacher that ever learned me English real good," survived fifteen years as teacher in New York City high schools with her sense of humor intact. She presents a fascinating view of life in those schools in a hard-to-classify book (the publishers call it a novel) made up of excerpts from student papers, teachers' notes, official directives, and other assorted trivia. Perhaps it is a novel—a story emerges and characters are developed—but we prefer to think of this as a different and as yet unnamed literary form. Whatever it is, we like it and recommend it to our readers.

—PAUL WOODRING.

Choosing a college still remains one of the most difficult tasks for college-bound students, their parents, and their guidance counselors. Determining which colleges within the enormous diversity of American higher education will best serve the needs of a given student is a hard and often frustrating choice. Happily, guides offering the kind of analytical information so desperately needed are now beginning to appear.

Who Goes Where to College, by Alexander W. Astin (Science Research Associates, 295 East Erie Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611, 125 pp., \$4.25, paperback \$2.25) is just such a volume. Starting from the premise that one of the most important factors in the successful pursuit of an education is the environment in which it takes place, and that "the character of the student body

is a major factor in determining the college environment or 'climate,'" Astin sets about analyzing the nature of student bodies in 1,015 institutions.

Five student attributes are measured as a means of viewing the "freshman input" which plays such a powerful role in determining the campus climate. They are:

Intellectualism, a measure of academic aptitude, especially mathematical aptitude, and student aspiration for graduate study.

Estheticism, a measure of the degree to which students have achieved in literature and art during high school and aspire to careers in these fields.

Status, a reflection of the socio-economic backgrounds of students and the degree to which they are aiming toward careers in the professions, as business executives, or in politics.

Pragmatism, an indication of the percentage of entering students planning careers in fields such as engineering, agriculture, physical education, in contrast to those entering such "social fields" as teaching, sociology, and nursing.

Masculinity, an indication of the degree to which students plan to seek professional degrees in law, medicine, etc., and do not plan to enter the "social fields."

Who Goes Where to College also offers relative measures of eight qualities which help to characterize the college environment itself. They are: estimated selectivity, size, realistic orientation, scientific orientation, social orientation, conventional orientation, enterprising orientation, artistic orientation. Each of these qualities is carefully defined for the reader.

Mr. Astin, director of research for the American Council on Education, brings to his task a broad background in research and teaching. And his study is firmly based on the wide-ranging studies of higher education that have been pursued in recent years. A limitation of his volume, from the layman's point of view, is that it is conceived and written as a scholarly study, which offers a veritable jungle of statistical data. He has also, however, provided very clear explanations of what he is about, which give the reader well-defined paths to follow through the jungle. He has, in addition, collected his results in one highly informative table, and provided a form on which comparative profiles of colleges can be drawn.

Who Goes Where to College does not pretend to be a complete college guide. But no high school guidance counselor or principal can afford to be without it. And students and parents who have the necessary persistence will find it highly informative indeed. —JAMES CASS.