

Dr. Freund opened the discussion by asking the Committee, if the Foundation were to extend its literature program, what priorities we should follow. He specifically mentioned the Buffalo poetry center, the program at Stanford, and writing centers such as the one at Iowa. He also asked what ways the Foundation could help to develop a high quality of writing either through universities or other kinds of centers.

Mr. Kunitz replied that he was greatly impressed by the quality of the submissions to the RF program and this was due to the preliminary work. It is very important to have much room for this kind of a program. The program is less formalized; the candidates were not chosen on public achievement. There is a kind of freedom in this way of making awards. In schools of writing I am rather diffident. A single living intelligence in a community is more important.

Mr. Bellow said that writing establishments at universities have not justified themselves. The efforts to academize this particular trend have been very dismal. You cannot try to earn credits or earn degrees.

Mr. Kunitz said that these schools have produced competent performances.

Mr. Lowell mentioned John Crowe Ransom at Kenyon where they had a very modest program which worked brilliantly for some of the time. They had a very live man in charge of it. The program got extraordinary results even though some years it wasn't so successful. It certainly was worth while and it did need some support.

Kunitz: It was essential to have the single man - he made the program.

Bellow: At Iowa, Stanford, Syracuse, Michigan - the novelist trained there are not of the best.

Lowell: At Iowa it didn't have one person but it did go well.

Bellow: People in the U.S. are drawn to institutions - get neurotics and a low type of life. People are then entirely ignorant of what is going on in the other parts of the college. They build their own world and get into a community like the Village. This type of person won't be productive. The student needs to get into the broader part of the life of the university in order to get a better sense of writing. These students in the English departments don't live.

Kunitz: A good writer in the course of his teaching career probably produces as many writers of quality than a whole school does. Mr. Lowell has from his own experience had some remarkable poets in his classroom, but resulted only happened because of the encounter between the two.

Bellow: The university is the only institute which has come forward to protect the artist and this produces an isolation tendency.

Lowell: Feels the best students he has had were at Iowa so a center like that one would get results.

Freund: A writers workshop has not necessarily any virtue but if there is a person who has the kind of magnetism that can inspire someone - can he help build other writers?

Kunitz: Boulder wants someone but cannot attract anyone. The Foundation might be able to do something here of great benefit.

Freund: What about bringing writers into residence for some time say at North Carolina with Peter Taylor and Randall Jarrell?

Kunitz: The University doesn't have much relationship with the community so that idea wouldn't be very functional.

Lowell: Students going there would get money's worth.

Davidson: Is it better to keep a small number of people working with one person or have one person going out to many students?

Kunitz: I can visualize a program where various teachers at universities would recommend to the Foundation certain students who they think are potential writers or critics and who could then be through the Foundation directed towards studying with somebody who would be a great help to them. At that moment this scheme could be most valuable for them.

Freund: The Foundation could try to suggest individuals to such people. The decisions should be left to the individual in question as to whom should join him for a year or two.

Bellow: Very often young people just want to say that the thing they have in mind can be done. To come into contact with a writer gives them great confidence in the possibility of it. This is far more important than having a writing program with a great deal of students just funneling through them.

Kunitz: A student would take at least a year or more, probably two years. He needs to be in the stacks for one year and then another year to write. The difficulty would be in finding a teacher to stay in one spot for that long.

Davidson: What can be done as a whole for literature here and elsewhere - not only on a limited basis?

Bellow: A foundation should be able to help those writers who can't find other institutional help.

Kunitz: There is an unfortunate syndrome in our society now. Writers should stop thinking about Ph.D.s at 18 and their whole security.

Bellow: People feel that they need to have institutional affiliation these days to succeed.

Kunitz: It is too bad that they cannot be connected with some thing other than an academic institution. If you want to be a teacher then join a university, but if you want to be a poet then do something else to survive.

Bellow: There is a great difference between a university-bred writer and one who has found other means of establishing himself. The writer is becoming imprisoned in a university.

Kunitz: I would tell a writer to go into any other department at a university except English.

Freund: Can the Foundation or any other institution do something with the English departments?

Bellow: That is too much to dream for.

Freund: Is there someone like James Conant who could make a similar study of English departments?

Bellow: No one occurs to me.

Kunitz: Should have a reorientation of whole program. Don't have survey courses but have literature courses - should learn something that we can use now about human passion, life.

Kunitz: There is only one art that is appealing to the young and that is the art of the film. This is a generation brought up by the film and its culture comes from the film. It is the only art that they feel they have any knowledge of.

Bellow: This is too sweeping because some are interested in literature.

Kunitz: But this is a minority. Films are very accessible - if you have a revolution in literature then you have to think of the competition with films.

Lowell: Likes the idea the writers study in other areas than English and then get literature training on their own.

Kunitz: Students are discouraged even in secondary schools because literature is being taught by ignorant people. Betty Kray is good because she is teaching teachers how to teach - gives them insight about what the modern writer is doing. Writers should teach and explain what their writing is. Tapes can be made from dialogues between writers and then made available to students so that the impact is immediate.

Freund: What suggestions do you have for the Foundation's literature program?

Lowell: This program is more flexible than Guggenheim's. This is <sup>a</sup> more sensible program than giving money to Guggenheim.

Bellow and Kunitz: Agree

Kunitz: I don't trust Guggenheim. I wouldn't be here if I didn't think this was a good idea.

Lowell: It is very liberal and open.

Bellow: Before commenting on the program I would like to first find out who we decide on - a group of elderly people or a good number of new people.

Kunitz: I would like a fresh list of people. Given a limited number of awards it could be a safe list but if it wasn't such a safe list then it would be more valuable. I have learned a great deal from this system of finding nominations which I otherwise wouldn't have.

Davidson: We want to be conservative but not necessarily safe.

Freund: We want to establish throughout the country that we are aiming for a very high quality of awards, although that may mean that we give support to those who have never published a book. There are other ways of giving money, not necessarily to Guggenheim but to an organization such as the "little magazines."

Bellow: The absence of a real literary magazine is very dominate - it should have contributions from other fields. There is a need to establish communication of cultural importance and it could transform not only the literary culture of the country but also the other forms.

Kunitz: This is a major point in the lack of our culture - there is no good way of communicating. The "little magazines" have really run their course. It wouldn't help to pour more money into them. They should change their concept of what should be published. "Show" magazine is one that does what I feel should be done, but it can't do it because it doesn't have the money.

Dr. Freund raised the question about suggesting to applicants the possibility of spending some time with an individual or a professional group.

Bellow: We asked for a plan of work - we didn't really give them a chance to say that they would like to try something else.

Kunitz: At one time it was suggested that the consultants and officers were to meet with the potential writer and at that time it would be the time to mention that the writer join such a professional group. I would like to talk with these people about their careers. What about placing a young writer into a foreign spot to learn the language and life. The experience would be invaluable. Perhaps in another year the Foundation could be far more explicit about other avenues than just completing a novel.