

IWLSP Advisory Committee Meeting: January 16, 1969, Luncheon

Present: GF, RKB, John Hersey, Mark Smith, Robert Penn Warren, Robert Coles, James Dickel, Woodie King (for part of meeting)

Absent: Saul Bellow

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GF gave a short history of the Literature Program.

GF said that at the last meeting of 1968 (June dinner meeting) it was decided that the RF should obtain information from past grantees of what they have been able to accomplish during and following their grants. He then gave general rundown of what they said along with specific criticisms the grantees listed.

Criticisms of Program: Many felt more younger writers should receive grants under this program. Writers under the age of 25 should be given particular attention. Some point out that we should also support established writers. Just because they are established does not necessarily mean that they do not need financial help. Many felt that fictional writers should have more flexible-type grants. Warren said that this is also true of poets not just fictional writers. GF continued that many grantees felt that the Foundation lacked in courage because we seemed to insist on university-administered grants. Academic writers thought that we might not try ~~to put them on full-time leave from their~~ to put them on full-time leave from their university but let them teach part-time and the rest of the time devote to their writing work. GF summarized that the Program, according to some grantees, met all needs but financial ones. This is very true of writers not academically connected. GF said that anyone who would like copies of these letters could receive them. It was decided that Coles, Warren, Hersey, and Smith would like copies.

Smith pointed out that the RF program was really the only one of its kind in existence that was doing anything for writers.

There was discussion as to whether we should consider those writers who have not published or who have not graduated as yet. The policy on this was not changed.

Future of the Program: Dickey wanted to know the real purpose of these grants: charity, reward, etc. GF said that writers make contributions to society and that these may be most important to society. Also, the Foundation should have some sense of responsibility in assisting writers to contribute what they want to since they might find it difficult to do without outside assistance. Dickey said it almost resembled a lottery made only for the winners. RKB said that RF is philanthropic but not charitable. If it were the latter, Foundations would not survive. The questions was raised as to whether a grant was for reward or what had been done or for the purpose of enabling them to do what they wanted? GF pointed out that to many of these writers grants represented recognition and thus gave them the initiative to continue, but it was not necessarily for reward.

Nominators:

GF asked if the Committee was prepared to have us write to the 1968 nominators and get suggestions this Committee should consider? Are they prepared to act as the Advisory Committee has in the past years based on your reading nominee materials and then recommending to the RF which should receive support. What should the program cover?

GF said the purpose of nominators was twofold: diversity in the group and representation of different geographic regions. Warren pointed out that geographic representation was vital to our program. Hersey feels that if this is the last year, we should have a long list of nominators; however, if the program will continue he suggested that the list of nominators be cut back thus enabling the Committee to give more attention and consideration to the candidates. GF explained why this could possibly be the last year of the program. He also pointed out that less than 50 per cent of the nominators actually made nominations *in 1968*. Guidelines for whom should be nominators should be the Committee's personal feelings as to whether they feel these people are worthy of it. It was decided that if there was only one person representing a certain geographic area but yet the Committee did not have that much faith in him, he should not be cut since he is the only connection we have to this region. If we did cut him, the program would become narrow and exclusive.

Suggested New Nominators:

Vance Bourjaily, Iowa (Smith)
Brewster Ghiselin (U. of Utah) (RPW, Dickey)
Peter Mayer (Avon Books) (GF)
R. V. Cassill Verlon Castle (Dickey)
Ray West, San Fran State (Dickey)
Lewis Cox, Bowdoin
George Hemphill (U. of Conn) (RPW)
Richard Kim (U. of Mass) (Smith)
John Hicks (Mass. Review) (Smith)
V. V. V. V. T. Hornsby Farrell, Denver (Dickey)
Peter Virich, Mt. Holyoke (Dickey)
Lambert Davis, N. C. Press (Dickey)
Richard Wentworth (La. Press) (Coles)
Austin Clarke (Yale) (Hersey)
M. L. Rosenthal - Dickey

Nominators to be cut:

Moynihan (Coles)
Rainwater (Coles)
~~W. H. Auden (GF)~~
Dickey (on AC)
Dudley Fitts (deceased)
~~Paul Horgan (Dickey)~~
Sullivan (Dickey)
Allan Seager (deceased)
Fred Hoffman (deceased?)
W. T. Scott
Lawrence Wylie (GF)
C. Vann Woodward (GF)

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Letter to Nominators:

GF to dictate new one to JH. Hersey suggested cutting out sentence suggesting that nominators might give two names if both were worthy.

The Committee was told to call in names of nominators they would like to be added to the list.

NOMINEES:

- NO Appleman: Dickey has personal dislike for the man. Says he is good poet but not a strong one. Was a vote of NO
- ? Bowers: Dickey does not like him; says he is neoclassical. Warren does not know him.
- YES Cohen: (Self Devoted Friend) Committee to receive this book
- YES Cooper: WK: Cooper came out of Detroit. Has written 4 or 5 published novels (The Weed, The Dark Messenger, Black, The Scene, The Farm, One Easterly Place, The House). Was in prison on narcotics charge and has been straight since. The Farm to be made into a movie. All books have received very positive reaction. Committee to read BLACK (collection of short stories) and THE FARM (both books are by Crown)
- YES Crawford: WK: he is working on a novel and living in Mexico. Random House is supposed to publish it. WK will try to get part of the manuscript and this material will be sent to the Committee.
- NO Crews: Smith and Hersey were not for him: RPW was not strong for him and Coles feels should be dropped. If there is a significant publication we have not seen, he will be considered again if the AC brings him up.
- NO Dawson: (Six Mile Run) Dickey says NO
- NO Drake: Smith said he was turned down last year.
- NO Garwick: Warren said he should be dropped; now studying psychology.
- NO GEHMAN: (Haphazard Gourmet) Dickey says he is an old-line generalist but wants to read one of his books.
- YES GOLD: (Nickel Miseries) Dickey says he is a man of force and talent. Book to committee.
- ? Gregor: GF will find out if his remunerative job is preventing him from doing work he wants to do. Dickey says he is very good poet.
- YES Haag: Dickey says definite yes. Should be considered again this year. Get work to the Committee.

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- Yes Hall: (Stowaway) GF felt he should be dropped, but Committee wants to read book.
- Yes Irving: Smith and Bellow read book (Since Setting Free the Bears) last year and Smith feels he should be considered again. Very powerful and a great visual eye. Now working on a book of which a chapter was read last year by Committee. (Book to Committee)-not to sent to Smith or Bellow)
- ? Justice: Dickey very much against him
- NO Kazin: pointed out that Kazin is going to VS. RPW feels that Kazin should go somewhere else for support (Guggenheim). Coles and Warren feel we should not support strictly academic work. So does Hersey. GF will tell Kazin that we cannot inform him of any decision now but probably can in late spring or early summer.
- YES Kelly: Dickey and Warren anxious to read material. Send to Committee.
- RUSH YES Kgositsile: WK elaborated on him. Poet from S. Africa now here in US. Ties in African poetry with American poetry. In very bad financial shape. Wants to do a collection of S. African-American poetry and feels he can do this in Nigeria (not S. Africa because he is a political criminal). To get material to the Committee immediately. Committee to give us reactions before next meeting!
- ① (4 March ansian)
- YES Lentz: Bellow supports Lentz greatly. RPW said the book is very powerful for someone only 24 years old. Smith feels that he should have been on the top of the fictional list last year but definitely this year. Hersey and Dickey to receive book.(The Falling Hills)
- Yes Maloff (Happy Families) Dickey against him but RKD, Hersey, Smith RPW, Coles to read book.
- Yes Masterson: Dickey knows him but we cannot get bio/bib material on him. Dickey will send whatever he has on him and also ask him for more material.
- YES Mazor: Coles says yes: Send Washington and Baltimore (collection of short stories) to the Committee.
- YES McElroy: (Smuggler's Bible) send to Hersey, Warren, Dickey, Coles and WK.
- NO McMurtry: Neither Dickey nor Hersey impressed by him. NO
- NO McNamee: Warren: student at yale (poet) and RPW says he is taken care of for next year. Will put him on the "shelf"
- YES MEYER: Warren very impressed and says we should ask her to give us what she considers her best work and then distribute this to the Committee.
- NO Michelson: Read two pieces of his last year. NO

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- YES Oates: Keep her in the running. Smith likes her; RPW and Dickey don't read her with any pleasure.
- ? Polite: WK: her novel was accepted with high praise. To find out her financial circumstances; if well fixed will drop her. If to consider her, send copies of work to Dickey, Coles and Warren.
- YES Rogers: Dickey interested in reading his book THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS. Book to Committee.
- YES Routsong: Hersey to read one of the her two novels.
- YES Rubin: (Last in Line) RPW and Dickey feel it should be read by the Committee
- YES Rudnik: Should get poetry to the Committee
- NO Salomon: Not very exciting and not that great of a poet, NO
- YES Seidman (Hugh): Get material to the Committee
- NO Seidman (Robert): Smith and Hersey said it is an academic project and not worth considering.
- NO Sherrill: Coles withdrew his nomination of him.
- YES? Sissman: Will bring his name up again. Great discussions over whether an amount less than \$25,000 would actually help him or not.
- YES Taylor: Dickey says best poet on the list. Would recommend her. Will not ask her to fill out an application. Coles says she is really only known by other poets. Committee will consider her.
- YES Thelwell: (Nat Turner and 10 Essayists - article to be sent to the Committee along with an article from the Mass. Review (Delta))
- NO Todd
- NO Van Wolleghe
- YES Waggoner: Dickey and Warren like him better as a poet; not a novelist. Send two books to the Committee (Staying Alive, Indiana Press; The Nesting Ground (1963 book))
- YES Weesner: Smith says "extraordinarily young writer and possibly the best shortstory writer coming along." Material to Committee. Stories picked up by the Atlantic Monthly, The New Yorker, Esquire.
- NO Williams: Not of outstanding quality.
- NO Wright: NO
- YES Wright (James): GF going to try to contact him and find out needs and circumstances. Will not drop him as yet.

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New Committee-Nominated Nominees:

James T. Farrell (Smith) financially in bad shape; does not know much about his work.

Warren: has not heard of him for two or three years.
Bellow might know him. World used to be his publisher. New book of his out. (book of essays)

Seymour Krim (Dickey) ^{view of a Marginalized Canon} ~~Shortsighted Canon~~ Get book to RPW and Smith

Leroy Letherman (Dickey) fiction; RPW has read The Other Side of the Tree.
Has also written on dance.

Crawford Power (Dickey) fiction The Encounter

David Richard (?) Shaber (RPW) Warren has manuscript of his which he will read and report to us.

P. M. Pasinetti (Warren) Professor of Literature at U. of Cal. (UCLA) and rewrites Italian novels into English. Random House is his publisher. Warren will try to get a copy of his manuscript from Random House. He is a devoted novelist and RPW has soon of his books.

Robert Hapgood (Smith) U. of N.H. Professor. Smith says that he wrote "the best critical piece on English last year." Professor of Shakespeare. Now trying to do a book of literary criticism using fictional techniques. Smith will send us a copy of his critical piece, which appears to be entirely "academic."

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be held during the first two weeks of March. (Hersey and Warren not ~~availab~~ available the last part of March.)

TATE: in 1968 meeting discussed his post-retirement plans. Writing personal memoirs. This is not adequate thought but purely literary work. In the same class as Kazin. Would not really invite an application from him. Would be a similar case to Dabbs. RPW feels that since Tate is 70 years old that maybe we should aim to decide at our next meeting if we should give him a grant. Should find out the state of his work and of the possibilities of it. GF says he is not quite in the same class as Josephine Herbst.