

LITERATURE: Notes for preliminary discussion by Humanities staff

Our central problem in program in literature is to define clearly what contribution to "human welfare throughout the world" we expect to achieve through support to projects in this field.

Is it not probable that we can secure such a definition for the novel and short story more readily than for other forms of literature? If we succeed here, will not the transition to the other genres be easier? If we fail in this limited field, we are unlikely to succeed with the more difficult. If this is the case, could we confine our discussion initially to the novel and short story?

Is it reasonable to distinguish three types of contributions: to individual development; to a healthy, dynamic, and free society; and to international understanding?

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The communists assume that literature, properly "guided," is an asset to the development of communism. One can perhaps go further and say that they have adequately demonstrated the validity of this assumption, e.g., in China. Presumably this is not the kind of literature we wish to support. Presumably also we would not wish to see established elsewhere comparable "guidance" even if the intention is to defend "democracy," since this would involve a dangerous inconsistency between means and ends.

If the net influence of literature is nil, what justification is there for spending RF funds? If the influence is significant in amount but questionable in desirability, what justification have we for spending RF funds? Is there anything in the situation of literature in the US and other non-curtain

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countries which assures that the influence will be both significant and desirable? Will our aid increase either the significance or the desirability of the influence? Are there ways in which we can increase significance and desirability which are not subject to the criticism which authoritarian "guidance" deserves? What do we know about the influence of literature on either individuals or society?

CBF

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