

0208-1

PROFESSION 81

selected articles from the *Bulletins*
of the Association of Departments of English
and the Association of Departments of Foreign Languages

CONTENTS

From the Editors	iii
Recommendations from the Working Paper of the Commission <i>MLA Commission on the Future of the Profession</i>	1
The Common Aims that Divide Us; or, Is There a "Profession 81"? <i>Wayne Booth</i>	13
Curiouser and Curiouser <i>William D. Schaefer</i>	18
Men, Women, Theories, and Literature <i>Carolyn Heilbrun</i>	25
On International Curricula and Interdependence <i>Charles W. Bray III</i>	30
The Need for Language Planning in the United States <i>Joshua A. Fishman</i>	34
Managing a Zoo: The Total Foreign Language Department <i>Jean-Pierre Barricelli</i>	37
Toward Education with a Global Perspective <i>National Assembly on Foreign Language and International Studies</i>	43

G208-2

CURIOUSER AND CURIOUSER

And here Alice began to get rather sleepy, and went on saying to herself, in a dreamy sort of way, "Do cats eat bats? Do cats eat bats?" and sometimes "Do bats eat cats?" for, you see, as she couldn't answer either question, it didn't matter which way she put it.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

THIS paper—in five parts and an epilogue—is a sequel to a paper I wrote in the seventies when, as executive director of the Modern Language Association, I counted the sins of the sixties and concluded that, as a profession, we were (after all those years) still crazy. Perhaps "crazy" was a bit excessive, but today, looking before and after, I continue to find our behavior somewhat curious. Moreover, as Alice noticed in *her* descent down the rabbit hole, things seem to be getting curiouser and curiouser. I should like to pose a few questions, propose a few answers, and generally explore the state of our profession as I see it today.

I. On Being a Humanist

I am not sure when we all became humanists, but I suspect it was sometime after 1965, the year in which, with little fanfare, Congress created the National Endowment for the Humanities. Before then, most of us had just been English (or French or German or Spanish) teachers, further identified, without a trace of humor, by our special interests: "I'd like you to meet Professor Buckley; he's a Victorian. And this is Professor Wallerstein, a Metaphysical. And of course you know Professor Frye; he's a critic." But none of us, as far as I can remember, was ever called a humanist, and none of us suspected that we were part of a grand humanistic alliance.

Today, however, we are constantly reminded of our obligations as humanists ("Let's hear it for the humanities!") and are urged, with what at times approaches missionary zeal, to bring a humanistic perspective to all kinds of unlikely subjects ("Today, my friends, we are going to shed some humanistic light on the economic forecasts"). A recent article in *Humanities Report*, published by the newly formed American Association for the Advancement of the Humanities, describes in great detail how NEH-funded state programs in Maine and Oklahoma have attempted to get humanists to strike at the grassiest of their grass roots by attending local meetings on various public policy issues. Moreover, in Maine, we are told, there is a humanist-in-

William D. Schaefer*

residence at the Department of Mental Health and Corrections, and in Oklahoma the state committee sponsors a program in which humanists and prison inmates meet to analyze their perceptions of confinement. Indeed, several months ago I participated in a humanistic conference at which someone seriously suggested we pass a resolution urging colleges to hire only those faculty members who, regardless of discipline, possess a "humanistic temper."

Please do not misunderstand. I am not knocking the NEH, which I feel has done an admirable job in maintaining a sane balance between political exigencies and the genuine needs of the humanistic disciplines. I also support the AAAH and commend its efforts to provide a public voice for our private interests—although I regret that so few of us humanists have been willing to put our memberships where our mouths are. I do not, for that matter, object to the NEH state committees; many of the state programs, even some of the grassiest, are valuable, and some do provide support for humanistic scholarship and teaching. But what I fear is that all this carrying on about humanistic perspectives and humanistic values, far from enhancing our professional concerns, tends to make mush out of clearly defined disciplines. The study and teaching of literature, language, history, and philosophy are not enhanced by lumping the disciplines together and pretending there is some kind of transcendent humanistic sensibility that can provide an antidote to—well, to what? To the scientists? To those who merely discover while we reveal, who isolate while we relate, who destroy while we preserve? Or is it, perhaps, that the humanist protects us from politicians and business people ("Only connect the passion and the prose")? No wonder that otherwise well-informed people, in the light of such pretentious claptrap, confuse humanitarianism, or secular humanism, or human rights with those studies we cherish.

*The author is Executive Vice Chancellor and Professor of English at the University of California, Los Angeles. This paper was the keynote address delivered at the 1981 ADE Summer Seminar in Los Angeles.

My fear, then, is simply this: that in trying so hard to "be" humanists, in stressing those attitudes and values that may (but also may not) evolve from humanistic studies and implying that they are the main reason to undertake such studies, we endanger the studies themselves. Even the best of historians or philosophers may be narrow-minded, prejudiced, thoroughly nasty people; familiarity with Shakespeare's plays neither guarantees goodness nor endows one with the ability to comment wisely or well on the state of the nation. The more we pretend to be something we are not—pretend to be able to do things for which we have no special qualifications, give a false impression of the scholar rather than an accurate impression of the scholarship—the more we cheapen our disciplines and jeopardize their futures. I suggest we come off it and talk less about what we are, which really isn't all that much, and begin to stress what we do. What we do is important. Studying the best known and thought and said in this world needs no apology.

Moreover, and in spite of all the self-congratulation about our humanistic sensibility, we seem to be slowly but steadily removing the human element from humanistic studies. Our fascination with technology—computerized concordances, Hinman collators, elaborate research data banks—is understandable. A tool is, after all, a tool, and humanists too are living in the twentieth century. Our concern with structures to the virtual exclusion of ideas and emotions is also understandable (if not entirely forgivable) since it is in part a logical outgrowth of earlier critical emphases on the creation rather than the creator, on the artifact rather than the artist. But I think we may have gone too far in excluding the human element from our efforts to share our research and critical thinking. If, for example, you have recently submitted an article to *PMLA*, you have no doubt discovered that your work will not be considered if it bears even a trace of your identity—I would say, of your humanity—for you must now not only remove your name from your manuscript but also refer to yourself in the third person where an "I" would let an author know who you are. I may be old-fashioned, but I feel that it is of some importance to have an article written by a human being, someone with a name, an identity, a history. As we occupy two positions at once, busily "being" humanists while denying our humanity, I am reminded of the Cheshire Cat telling Alice she may visit either the Mad Hatter or the March Hare. "Visit either you like: They're both mad." When Alice objects, "But I don't want to go among mad people," the Cheshire Cat replies, "Oh, you can't help that. We're all mad here. I'm mad. You're mad."

II. Planning for the Nineties

During these past three years I have spent most of my time planning for the eighties. I have held hands with colleagues in public health and social welfare, in business administration and urban planning, in engineering and, to be sure, in the humanities, as we have propelled ourselves into the future, trying to imagine all the terrible things that could—and very likely will—happen to us in the years ahead. As a result, I am quite sick of the eighties, have lost all interest in that particular decade, and in a fit of pique have recently decided that from now on I will worry only about the nineties.

I shall spare you my prognosis for dentistry a decade hence, shall not linger over what I fancy to be the future of law. But I should like to speculate on what I think will happen to departments of English ten to fifteen years from now, by which time the appointees of the sixties (of which, you will recall, there were a great many) will have metamorphosed into the retirees of the nineties. Patterns obviously differ from institution to institution, but I suspect that the situation at my university, UCLA, is not uncommon. Our English department currently has more than fifty tenured faculty members. Assuming that none of them dies, resigns, or retires before the mandatory age of seventy—such events being unlikely here in Wonderland—we will have a grand total of nine retirements between this date and 1997. In the nine years that follow, however, we shall have a total of twenty-seven retirements, and ten more shortly after that. What this means—and I suspect it means the same thing in many English departments across the country—is that this large number of vacancies will primarily be filled by those who begin their graduate work by 1990, students who will be entering college within the next five years, youngsters who are now starting high school. The questions, then, are these: What kind of undergraduate education are we proposing to offer these students? What kinds of graduate programs are we planning to establish by the end of this decade? What kinds of academic positions will we be training such students to hold?

I think these are important questions to ask at this time, although I see little indication that they are being asked. Since diagnosis is always easier than prognosis—and we in higher education have a dismal track record in predicting the future of anything—we might begin to answer such questions by stating what we know about today's students. For instance, it is now common knowledge that our high school students, with a handful of exceptions, are ill-read, inarticulate, and largely unconcerned about their intellectual well-being. The most prom-

ising of our undergraduates tend to concentrate their studies in the sciences, and of those students who do major in a humanistic discipline, the best usually go on to medical law, or business school. Graduate enrollments in your English department may or may not have stabilized—nationally we are producing a third fewer doctorates than we did a decade ago—but my guess is that in most departments the number of students will continue to decline throughout the eighties. I also have some reason to believe that today's graduate students are less bright, and certainly less well prepared, than students were a decade or two ago. And, be that as it may, it is easy to document the major change in the kinds of positions—however few—that are open to new doctorates. Analysis of tenure-accurring assistant professorships advertised in the *MLA Job Information Lists* shows that in 1971-72 there were 166 openings for specialists in the traditional British and American periods, compared with only 66 such positions in 1978-79—a 60% decrease. During the same period, however, jobs for specialists in rhetoric, composition, TESL, and “communications” increased from 27 to 99, up more than 250%. The numbers are highly suspect, but the trend seems irrefutable and, at least during the eighties, irreversible. Moreover, with fewer undergraduate English majors and, consequently, most of our teaching occurring in nonmajor elective courses, it is significant that the traditional courses in British and American literature—the survey, period, genre, and major-author courses—have considerably lower enrollments than other kinds of courses—popular literature (especially science fiction), film, women's and ethnic studies, world literature, the Bible as literature, folklore and mythology, and children's literature.

How, then, does all this translate into our current research and publication? How has it altered our graduate programs? The answers, I fear, are that it doesn't and it hasn't—not nationally, not enough to have noticeably affected what we do and how we do it. Some years ago I suggested that, in developing a language and a manner of presentation to ensure that the layman could not understand what we are talking about, we have nearly perfected the art of unintelligibility, to the extent that in many cases we no longer understand ourselves. Perhaps it is simply that I am out of touch with reality, but I continue to see evidence that the literacy crisis begins at home. Note, for example, this random selection of statements from abstracts of articles published this year in *PMLA*:

The proponents of modernism, in their putative wish to be free of inherited patterns, release a

compensatory reaction, an anxiety over the sense of a lost relationship with tradition. In this context, the critical dogma lamenting the “anxiety of influence” may be seen as one modernist's attempt to regain a relationship with the past at the expense of the equally recalcitrant doctrine of originality.

By creating a text on two levels, a level of unsuccessful referentiality and a level of language as an autonomous entity, he replaces the notion of a vertical relation between text and referent with the notion of the book-to-be-continued.

Accordingly my discussion moves from substances to events; it moves, that is, from a consideration of how excess is embodied in certain emblematic substances to a consideration of the repetitiveness of the novel's events.

Realist plotting typically juxtaposes background tableau and foreground coup de theatre; realist style typically consists of multiple silhouettings. Realism is a semiosis by silhouetting.

The tracing and retracing of quasi-linguistic markings on surfaces establish personal identity, but only from outside, ex post facto, and through a draining tension between the code and its material support. The repetitious, fixating process of ocular confrontation by which characters recognize themselves and one another is like the process by which readers recognize thematic conventions.

All these articles are, I am sure, the result of intensive study and profound deliberation, and they exemplify our most contemporary, if not our best, selves. But is this the climate, the context, within which we should be training graduate students for the realities of the present decade? For that matter, do articles as specialized, as esoteric, as these justify a print order of 31,000 copies? Do 31,000 people read *PMLA*? Do 3,000? Even 300? There is a tremendous gap, a grand chasm, between what we write and what we teach, between what we produce and what the market demands, between perception and reality. Had we, as a profession, agreed on a goal of self-destruction, then I could understand and applaud such behavior. But I don't think we have agreed on anything of the kind. Why are we doing this to ourselves? Who dared frame this fearful lack of symmetry?

III. Reeling and Writhing

The Mock Turtle, you will recall, only took the “regular course” in school, a course that included the different branches of Arithmetic—Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and Derision—but began with Reeling and Writhing. He also studied ancient

and mod
not go t
and Grie
literature
division
teaching

I have
teaching
century,
whether
graduate
deed tea
the Vict
my stud
and sop
own wri
suade m
read it,
about w
help me
reading
is to eng
in worki
imagery
make th
they tru
My job
dents as
ture it i
finally
equally
what te
about.
making
teaching

I the
literatur
explain:
frequen
to talk
when ti
fundam
profess
because
increasi
training
ing. Th
tering e
late six
warmly
Los A
market
teach
why ei
country
grams

and modern Mystery but, unlike the Gryphon, did not go to the Classical Master to learn Laughing and Grief and thus, with no experience in studying literature, could not have understood the current division between the teaching of literature and the teaching of reading and writing.

I have never really understood it myself, for in teaching English courses for nearly a quarter of a century, I have always had the impression that, whether the course is freshman composition or a graduate seminar in the Pre-Raphaelites, I am indeed teaching reading and writing. When I teach the Victorian poets, at whatever level, I try to help my students develop sensitivity in reading the works and sophistication in writing about them. In my own writing about the Victorians I attempt to persuade my audience to read the poetry the way I read it, with the assumption that others will write about what I have written about and will in turn help me to be a more sensitive reader. My subject is reading and writing. My job as a teacher of poetry is to engage a class, freshmen or Ph.D. candidates, in working with a poem—its language, its form, its imagery, its meaning, its magic—and to try to make that poem come to life for my students as they truly read it, make it happen, for the first time. My job as an English teacher is to work with students as they struggle to clarify their thinking, capture it in writing, shape it through rewriting, and finally succeed in conveying it to others and, equally important, to themselves. That to me is what teaching in an English department is all about. It is what our profession is all about—making literature accessible, trying to make it real, teaching how to read and write.

I therefore find the division between teachers of literature and teachers of composition confusing, explainable only in part by the recognition that it is frequently more difficult to teach composition than to talk about Pre-Raphaelite poetry, especially when the students are innocent of even the most fundamental concepts of language. Many English professors are not qualified to teach composition because in the extreme cases (and extreme cases are increasingly the norm) teachers need specialized training if they are to help students with their writing. This is why open admissions had such a shattering effect on the English faculty at CCNY in the late sixties, why even today a Berkeley Ph.D. is not warmly welcomed at a community college in East Los Angeles, why there is currently a lively job market for anyone who has truly been trained to teach composition or to direct a writing program, why enlightened graduate departments across the country are developing new kinds of graduate programs designed to produce such teachers.

My point is therefore a simple one. All of us in higher education, not just those of us in English or in a foreign language department, have to teach reading and writing. We in literature, however, need especially to do this, not only because it is right and necessary but because the study of literature cannot survive unless—to borrow a phrase from affirmative action—we develop an availability pool of qualified applicants. Reading and writing is our stock in trade. Until we admit this, until we recognize and reward those who teach—and those who do research in teaching—reading and writing, until we restore to or introduce into our graduate programs courses in rhetoric and stylistics, we can forget about declining enrollments in Chaucer, because we soon won't have any Chaucer enrollments at all. It's as simple as that.

There is no panacea for the writing crisis, which becomes more serious each year. Only the upper eighth of California's high school graduates are eligible to enroll as freshmen at UCLA, and yet, of this elite group, nearly 75% now score below 550 on the verbal SAT and nearly 60% are unable to pass our entrance examination in composition. Perhaps the problem is not as serious in other institutions; I hope it is not as serious in yours. If it is, however, then I trust that by now your college or university is among those that have declared war on illiteracy, as we have done at UCLA. We have established a campus-wide writing program that includes summer remedial courses for entering freshmen; a carefully programmed first-year sequence in composition; interactive computer programs and video cassettes that can be used for tutorials or in conjunction with regularly scheduled courses; a series of what we call "writing intensives," two-unit courses offered to groups of twenty students as adjuncts to upper-division courses in the various disciplines; special writing components built into other upper-division and graduate courses in the sciences and social sciences; advanced composition courses, not only for the general undergraduate but for graduates in the professional schools of law, engineering, library science, dentistry, public health, architecture, and management; writing workshops for TAs, regardless of their discipline; and—as part of a program that, should it succeed, would subvert the university as we know it today—a basic composition course for campus administrators.

I do not know if we will win this war. At present we are in dubious battle, with a growing realization that they are too many, we too few. But like other colleges and universities, we have recognized that until we address the literacy crisis, the future of what we call higher education is very much in doubt.

IV. We Perished, Each Alone

If in the sixties the catchword was "relevance" and in the seventies "accountability," I suspect that in the eighties it will be "articulation." That may not be the fashionable term in your part of the forest, but whether it's "interaction" or "interinstitutional relations" or just plain "connections," the smart money in this decade is on reaching out to touch someone.

The plea is to develop closer working relations between elementary and secondary schools, between secondary schools and colleges, between community colleges and universities, between research universities and industry, between—in short—us and them. We are beginning to recognize that no educational institution is an island sufficient unto itself, that we somehow have to restore coherence and a logical sequence to the educational process. Because of the literacy crisis, we "in English" are inevitably drawn into this effort, and even those who are reluctant to enter the combat zone are beginning to realize that someone will have to infiltrate the elementary and secondary schools to help restore sequence, K to 12, in the teaching of composition. We also realize that we need programs like the California Writing Project to retrain the elementary and secondary school English teachers whom we have accredited, over the past twenty or so years, without requiring them to know anything about teaching composition. The most important feature of UCLA's writing program is, therefore, none of the things I have mentioned so far but the efforts we are making to revise the writing curriculum in the Los Angeles schools and to offer composition courses for retraining school teachers.

The task, to be sure, is immense, but all of us can take heart from the realization that at no time in our history has so much attention been directed to the need for coordinating the various segments of education. From the *Wall Street Journal* to *Science* magazine, from the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies to the Rockefeller Commission on the Future of the Humanities, from the AAC to the AAU to the ACE, from ACTFL and ADFL to NCTE and ADE, at an uncountable number of regional and local conferences, the plea is being made to connect, coordinate, cooperate, collaborate, relate, integrate, articulate. Indeed, *The Humanities in American Life*—although it is the report of a commission dominated by university professors and university presidents—gives short shrift to higher education and highest priority to improving conditions in the elementary and secondary schools.

Castaways all, we now recognize that we must unite, not to conquer, but to survive.

The Rockefeller Commission on the Future of the Humanities has also recognized that conditions in the schools will probably not improve unless community pressure is exerted on them to restore the humanistic disciplines to their rightful place in the curriculum, and thus the commission's report places almost equal emphasis on developing better relations with the community, with cultural institutions, and with the media. To a frightening extent—more, I suspect, than most of us realize—our elementary and secondary schools, like so many of our community colleges, have become vocational schools, stressing training for employment rather than liberal education. Unless we convince the adult community of the importance of liberal education, especially of courses in the humanities, we shall be talking only to ourselves, joining distressed schoolteachers at the wailing wall and sending up cries that fall on deaf ears. This is why I continue to argue, as I have in the past, that we need a voice, a number of voices, thousands of voices, explaining to the public what we do, sharing what we do with society at large. But even though NEH has at long last supported a project that will keep the American literary classics in print and make them available to the public in reasonably priced editions, we still do not have a national periodical to call our own, a *Humanistic American* or a *Humanities Today*. In its first two years, the AAAH has spoken only to fellow travelers; the new National Humanities Center in North Carolina has spoken only to itself; and the proposed White House Conference on the Humanities, which might at least have provoked an article in *Newsweek* or *Time*, rests in peace with the former administration. Little wonder that there is no public outcry when the current administration proposes that funding for the National Endowments be cut in half. Little wonder that the White House, confusing the arts with the humanities, turns to Charlton Heston for advice. I doubt that Heston will lead us out of the wilderness. I'm not sure he even knows we're in it.

We have, in any case, also failed to make connections at another level, and thus even on our own turf, within academe, we increasingly find ourselves to be unloved orphans. I have in mind our failure to relate effectively with other academic disciplines and with other professions. Wherever I turn in today's university, I see that the action is occurring at those points where two disciplines have merged, bringing new vitality to both and, not infrequently, creating an entirely new discipline in the process. One cannot but look with envy on the intellectual

excit
biok
phys
num
that
work
vant:
a dis
been
and
havin
to be
curre
the j
other
divis
But
have.
cours
simil
as S
harm
we n
fresh
holdi

In
of in
sure l
ture
core
rounc
not a
into t
ever
mittec
are fi
justin
movei
friend
inrea
we've
recent
1981)
large
one d
would
Cub &
people
we're
Wall :
by an

excitement in fields such as molecular biology, biological chemistry, medical engineering, geophysics, planetary physics, psychobiology, and any number of others one might name, especially those that involve computer technology. But we who work in language and literature have not taken advantage of such mergers. Comparative literature as a discipline is still pretty much what it has always been ("I have come to compare the literatures"), and our many "literature and X" courses, while having the potential for fruitful marriages, continue to be little more than mild flirtations. Much of our current critical theory does, to be sure, incorporate the ideas of seminal minds that have worked in other fields, and the MLA now has a number of divisions concerned with "approaches to" literature. But in our day-to-day teaching of literature we have, for the most part, remained pure, our 1980s course titles and descriptions bearing a depressing similarity to those of the 1930s and 1940s. Mildew, as Stephen Sondheim has reminded us, will do harm. Were we to open the windows and reach out, we might not only get a breath of sorely needed fresh air but just might touch something worth holding on to.

V. The Idea of an Education

In recent years there has been a healthy revival of interest in liberal education, though I am not sure how much credit, if any, language and literature departments can take for it. Harvard's new core curriculum—with all the hoopla that surrounded its adoption—is of course a symptom and not a cause; as we know, by the time Harvard gets into the act a movement is far advanced. But whatever the cause, whoever deserves the credit, committees of concerned colleagues across the country are fine-tuning their breadth requirements and adjusting the focus on their cores. The interest in this movement also extends beyond academe, for our friends in commerce and industry remind us, with increasing frequency, that what they want is what we've got and have not always been giving. In a recent article on business schools (*Time*, 4 May 1981), for example, a senior vice president in a large corporation states that, could he choose but one degree for the people he hires, that degree would be in English: "You can teach a group of Cub Scouts to do portfolio analyses. . . . I want people who can read and speak in the language we're dealing with." Even more to the point is a *Wall Street Journal* article (2 Feb. 1981), written by another senior vice president, that explores the

intriguing relation between success in business and a strong liberal arts background:

Nearly every major company can identify key executives with unexpected academic backgrounds. At American Can, our recently retired chairman was a chemical engineer who read Latin and Greek and had a strong interest in the humanities. The new chairman holds a master's degree from Harvard, but it's from the department of economics, not the business school. Our corporate controller is an MIT engineer without academic training in either business or accounting. One of our executive vice presidents was educated as a historian, and the recent head of the technology group for our metal can business majored in saxophone as an undergraduate.

For its executives of the future, business will want to select from a cadre that is diverse and versatile. It will want MBAs and engineers and communicators, sociologists and historians and even a philosopher or two. It will need dreamers and realists and pragmatists, drivers and moralists. It will want candidates with imagination and organization, confidence and humility. Above all, business needs people who are smart, who know to use their brains and how to work well with others.

It is not difficult to document the resurgence of interest in liberal education, on campuses as well as in business and industry, in government and the professions. My point, however, is that we in English and foreign language departments are not taking advantage of this opportunity to advance our interests. There are obviously exceptions to such a generalization; on many campuses English and foreign language departments are indeed taking the lead in efforts to restore liberal education, to see that students receive a balanced diet of both letters and science. But I see no evidence that we are engaged in a *national* effort to make sure that—whatever else might be included—the study of language and literature is at the core of the core.

I would argue that no college or university with pretensions to higher education should allow its students to graduate unless they can read, write, and converse in the English language with enough sophistication to deal effectively with complex ideas; unless they can read and converse in at least one language other than English, can have a basic understanding of how language works, and can discuss literature with some degree of sensitivity and full awareness of the creative process. This may not sound like all that much, but I believe that these requirements are at the heart of a liberal education and are therefore central to an *idea* of an education. In our mad scramble to define the breadth of

the curriculum and to discover the holy core, we lack a common understanding of goals. Lacking goals, lacking an *idea* of a liberal education, we also, I feel, lack an idea of education.

In the present climate we have a splendid opportunity to revitalize education and, in so doing, to renew our own discipline. Here's our opening. We have our cue. The problem is that most of us don't know our lines, have not even received copies of the script. It is important that we support an American Association for the Advancement of the Humanities, that we participate in our new National Humanities Center, that we continue to cry havoc when funding for the National Endowment is cut. But it is to our *own* national organizations—the Modern Language Association, the National Council of Teachers of English, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, the Associations of Departments of English and of Foreign Languages—that we must turn for a voice that can be heard throughout our land, for a manifesto defining a liberal education that includes, first and foremost, goals similar to those I have listed above. Formulating the manifesto is relatively easy. Meaning it, believing it, carrying it out on our campuses present the real challenge. And yet I think we must begin again at the beginning, restoring an *idea* of an education and defining the place of our studies within it.

Epilogue

I have no fears that we may cease to be. On the contrary, I continue to believe with Matthew Arnold that we poor humanists may possess our souls in patience, knowing that mankind's need for "Greek"—the sense in us for conduct and the sense in us for beauty—will eventually triumph and re-

store our studies to their former high place. And although it is discouraging to realize that more than a century has passed since Arnold advised patience, we humanists are by nature a patient lot and know full well (who knows better?) that they also serve who only stand and wait. My fear is that we have grown accustomed to waiting and—since tenure doth make cowards of us all—are increasingly reluctant to shape the course of humanistic events.

Is there a *unum necessarium*, a one thing needful? Probably not. Our problems are so complex and diverse that no single solution is possible, and we unfortunately cannot, like Alice, awaken from our nightmare simply by announcing that "you're nothing but a pack of cards." But if, in concluding this miscellany of thoughts about the state of our profession, I chose to stress but one thing, that one thing would be the need for tough-minded realism. Whether we are talking about the idea of an education, enriched relations with the schools and with society, or the need to maintain sanity in our research and publication while meeting our obligation to prepare teachers for present and future classroom exigencies, I urge that we not kid ourselves, that we be willing to ask the hard questions and believe the hard answers.

I think we know both the questions and the answers, and I do not think it much matters how we put them ("Do cats eat bats? Do bats eat cats?"). But I am less certain that we are willing to heed our own advice, to listen to our best selves, and then to act accordingly. If we do, I see no reason why a promising past and a disappointing present could not become a joyous future:

"And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!"
He chortled in his joy.