

The CENTENNIAL REVIEW of Arts & Science

112 MORRILL HALL · MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY · EAST LANSING, MICHIGAN

October 11, 1956

Professor Leo Szilard
Institute for Nuclear Studies
University of Chicago
Chicago 37, Illinois

Dear Professor Szilard:

At the suggestion of Professor Richard Schlegel, who is a member of our editorial board, I am taking the liberty of addressing you to solicit your interest in a forthcoming quarterly magazine which is to be published under the auspices of the College of Science and Arts of Michigan State University. This will be a general magazine of the liberal arts for the "scholarly" reader. Our intention is to carry articles in all the major disciplines in the sciences and humanities, with the view to disseminating specialized knowledge over a range of fields.

Enclosed you will find a tentative statement of the scope and purpose of the publication. A more concise announcement will be presented soon in a printed prospectus which I will send you.

To come to the point of my letter, I am hoping that we can enlist your assistance in this project. You will notice that the "working" editorial board consists of faculty at Michigan State University. We wish to augment this group with a few "editorial consultants" from other universities. Our reasons are several: (1) To demonstrate that this is not conceived as a local house organ; (2) To add a degree of distance and impartiality in the appraisal of manuscripts; (3) To get "outside" criticism, comment, and suggestions.

You have probably already guessed that I am about to ask you if you will be willing to associate yourself with this project in such a capacity, and I am. To allay a fear of serious intrusion upon your time, let me say that with a large enough "inside" editorial board (in addition to other available experts) and with a relatively small number of articles in any one field in any one year, it will not be necessary to call on "outside" readers frequently. We would hope, however, that our outlying consultants would be willing to keep an eye out for likely looking manuscripts. (Incidentally, we expect to be able to offer at least a small honorarium for articles accepted.) Against apprehensions about associating yourself with a quarterly of an unknown and not entirely predictable character, I have no persuasive arguments, except that our intentions are good, and that we do have enough money and an assurance of enough staff time so that at least we don't have to spend all our energy just keeping alive. So far we have been successful in eliciting a number of very interesting articles, and will have the initial boost of some splendid papers presented at a Symposium here by Henry Margenau, Yale physicist; E. C. Stakman, Minnesota biologist; Talcott Parsons, Harvard social scientist; and Douglas Bush, Harvard literary historian. We now plan to start publication this Fall. You might be

Professor Leo Szilard

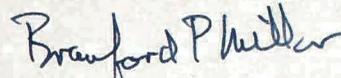
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interested to know that the following have already consented to be editorial consultants: Professors J. Douglas Bush, Harvard, literature; Donald J. Grout, Cornell, music; Allen S. Weller, Illinois, art; William H. McNeill, Chicago, history; and George W. Beadle, Cal Tech, biology.

If you would be willing to lend your name and a measure of your time and judgment, we would be most grateful for assistance in this venture.

Very truly yours,



Branford P. Millar
Editor

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To the Staff of the College of Science and Arts:

As you may have heard, the College of Science and Arts is going to launch a new magazine. This letter -- and another to follow -- is to acquaint you with plans for it, and to invite your participation in it.

The magazine is to be a quarterly issued on a subscription basis. It will be called THE CENTENNIAL REVIEW OF ARTS AND SCIENCE. The word "Centennial" is to give local provenience. The rest of the title is intended to declare the scope of our intention. The magazine derives its purpose, tone and contents from its sponsorship by the whole College, as a spokesman for the business of such a college. The intention is for the magazine to distinguish itself from other existing quarterlies by dealing with the arts and science broadly and inclusively, and by being forthrightly academic and scholarly; it will not, however, address itself exclusively to an academic audience, and it aims to avoid both narrow specialization and popularization.

Several fundamental editorial assumptions are being made: primarily that the readers of the magazine would like to know what is going on in fields of learning not ordinarily within their purview, and that these readers would like to be addressed as nearly as possible at the peak of their comprehension. Further, we trust that there may be some scholars who will risk horrifying or stimulating their fellow-specialists by taking the broad view of their body of knowledge, and who are not unwilling or unable to communicate some parts of their particular discipline to readers who, though unenlightened in this and other subjects even to the point of obliviousness or downright error, are nevertheless trained in or habituated to other equally learned disciplines and are possessed of comparable curiosity and acumen.

In bringing together such readers and authors, THE CENTENNIAL REVIEW will seek to accomplish several objectives which at the present time seem to be particularly desirable: a kind of inventory of knowledge in the arts and sciences, a description of the frontiers and shifting internal alignments, and a demonstration of the methods, techniques, and attitudes of scholarly inquiry and speculation. In a sense, we are attempting to provide a showcase for exhibiting, both to the academic community itself and to others, the variety and scope of the achievement of contemporary scholarship in the broad area of the liberal arts. The effect of such an ambitious -- perhaps even pretentious -- design might be in a little measure to overcome the fractionalizing of knowledge and the division and estrangement of scholars; to educate within the academic walls and reaffirm what might be called the comity of scholars and even broaden somewhat their base of operations; and, by tracing the main outlines of the conceptual framework of our times and the part of academics in erecting it, to strengthen the community of academics and intellectuals with men of affairs and others to whom the persistent exercise of the trained intelligence and responsible imagination is not uncongenial or absolutely repulsive.

To be specific, the magazine seeks articles under the following heads, and solicits contributions accordingly:

1. The state of knowledge in the principal areas of the various fields of study, including new and important developments; also the description, characterization, or

exemplification of particular scholarly methods and techniques or intellectual attitudes -- especially those with implications for other fields.

2. Historical or critical perspective on current problems, ideas, or "knowledge."
3. Interrelationships between established disciplines.
4. "Interesting things" -- i.e. essays which may treat quite limited subjects but which have intrinsic merit by reason of style or for mere intellectual curiosity, or which deal with fundamental observations or premises; adventures in scholarship; the byways and backstairs of learning, etc.
5. Review articles, not book reviews but a limited number of short essays which in considering two or more significant books in a field make a real contribution to broader awareness of the subject; or articles which consider important trends in a field over a period of time.

For your information, THE CENTENNIAL REVIEW, supported by what appears to be an adequate appropriation from the State Board, is directly controlled by the Dean of the College. The magazine is governed by a Board of Trustees consisting of the Dean and Division Directors of the College, the Dean of the Basic College, and the Editor, the latter appointed by the Board and responsible to it. An Editorial Board has been appointed to advise the editor, to assist in planning contents, and to review and judge manuscripts:

Arthur E. Adams, History	Donald M. Johnson, Psychology
Robert S. Bandurski, Botany	Allen Leepa, Art
Edward B. Blackman, Humanities (Basic College)	Max T. Rogers, Chemistry
J. Murray Barbour, Music	Richard Schlegel, Physics
Allen S. Fox, Zoology	James W. Trow, Geology
Alan P. Grimes, Political Science	John Useem, Sociology
(Business & Public Service)	Herbert Weisinger, English

This board will be augmented with several consultants from other universities. For typographical design we have the assistance of Professor Charles Pollock of the Art Department, and for other matters of publication, Mr. Lyle Blair of the Press.

In another letter to follow shortly, I will try to describe in more detail the nature of the articles which we hope to carry, and of which we trust our own staff will contribute a good share. In the meantime, I will be glad to receive comments or questions about the project. And I would be especially happy to talk with any member of the faculty who may already have finished or projected an article which we might use.

Branford P. Millar
Editor

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To the Staff of the College of Science and Arts,
and colleagues in allied fields:

In an earlier letter I tried to describe the general aims, scope, and organization of THE CENTENNIAL REVIEW. We are now organized to the point where we can accept manuscripts, and these we now invite you to submit. What follows is intended to provide further information and guidance for prospective contributors (and potential subscribers) to a magazine which, since it hasn't appeared yet, is something of an unknown character.

The magazine will be open to contributors anywhere, but we are depending on our own staff to furnish a substantial portion of the contents. Except for review articles, papers may run up to 5000-6000 words or so; in very exceptional cases longer pieces might be used, perhaps split for two issues. We want to avoid a large number of very short papers.

The general design and intended audience of the magazine naturally put limits on subject matter and treatment. Otherwise the editorial restrictions will be minimal. While the magazine does have a purpose, it will not require or maintain any special "point of view." Opinions and theories will be subject primarily to the scrutiny of scholarship, and controversy and unorthodoxy to reasonable standards of good taste and judgment.

Since this is a general quarterly, a "common reader" and not a specialized journal, material for it must be such as may be presented in a straightforward manner: relatively free of footnotes, difficult and complicated charts or diagrams, and the exclusive jargon, symbolic language, learned assumptions, and other impedimenta of specialized studies. It is hardly expected, though, that an author can write effectively without using the essential vocabulary of his subject-matter, even if he may at times have to explain it, a task sometimes embarrassing but rewarding.

We recognize that the desired articles do not constitute the routine reporting of investigation and research, however excellent. Such work will nevertheless often have constituted the preliminary stages for articles for this quarterly, and there is not only no objection to the revamping of material previously presented or forthcoming elsewhere, but a hope that such material may be drawn upon widely by this magazine.

We are reasonably certain that there is in this College a pretty good reservoir of published and unpublished studies which can very profitably be tapped by our quarterly. The reworking that such material -- often highly specialized -- may require to be suited to this publication is likely to be of several sorts, such as consolidation of studies with limited objectives; broadening of the application of premises to provide an "overview" of a field; a detailed explication of a particular methodology or technique; suggestion of the relevance of facts, methods, or viewpoints in one discipline or subject-area to others; and not least important, revision for presentation to readers not trained in the special field.

In this last respect, it is perhaps not impertinent to remind our potential authors that what may be taken for granted by fellow-specialists, both in fundamental

knowledge and methodology, may be to some colleagues areas of considerable darkness or uncertainty which they would be willing and even anxious to have dispelled, even though by the same token there will be limitations on their ability to comprehend many intricacies of a subject. Yet it is not impossible, nor altogether mutually unprofitable, to talk about many of these things as if they were fairly plain and accessible facts and not impossibly recondite hypotheses. Paradoxically, too, top-level speculation in one branch of learning may sometimes be to the outsider more comprehensible and interesting than the lower and middle stages of detailed study. In effect, then, despite these restrictions, the actual range of topics for any one author is very broad.

As has been suggested earlier, one of the editorial functions will be to maintain a somewhat balanced coverage of fields over a period of time. For this reason, we hope that we may at times approach individual staff members and departments for their assistance in developing material for the magazine, especially when a field has not been adequately represented by voluntary contributions. On the other hand, some excellent articles may not be acceptable for publication merely because of an over-supply in a field. Every manuscript will, however, be given careful appraisal. Incidentally, manuscripts intended for THE CENTENNIAL REVIEW would qualify for free typing service by the Central Stenographic office. Needless to say, we expect one original copy of manuscripts in final form; however, the submission of an additional copy in carbon would be greatly appreciated and would expedite editorial review. When manuscripts are accepted for publication we expect to be able to provide some editorial services by way of style, clarity, etc.

The editor will welcome the opportunity to consult with any staff member about a projected article and to receive suggestions about desirable articles. He will be grateful too if he may call on the faculty for occasional assistance to the editorial board in reviewing manuscripts. When the quarterly appears, comments, criticisms, animadversions, indignant denials, or restrained approval of the contents will be received cheerfully, and if sufficiently spirited, constructive or demolitionary -- as the case may be -- may bring into being a letters-to-the-editor department.

The first issue of THE CENTENNIAL REVIEW will appear some time in 1956, as soon as we are assured of a continuous supply of good papers. We hope that the faculty of the College will look upon its establishment as a genuine and important intellectual enterprise. With your interest and participation there would seem to be a reasonable prospect that we can continue to publish the magazine for some years in such a way as to be a credit to the institution and a real service to academics and kindred minds.

At a later date, you will be given a chance to become a "charter" subscriber. In the meantime we look forward to your suggestions and your manuscripts.

Branford P. Millar
Editor