

18th Century Discourse Subject of HC Lecture

By RON TERPENING
Emerald Staff Writer

Jean d'Alembert's "Preliminary Discourse to the Encyclopedia of Diderot," a work which possesses many of the characteristics of the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, and its relation to the science of that period were dealt with Monday by Thomas L. Hankins of the University of Washington.

Before treating d'Alembert's relation to the science of the Enlightenment, Hankins presented some of the problems facing a historian of the eighteenth century.

While it is customary for most historians to follow specific historical ideas, tracing them from one individual to another to show how their influence is transferred, this is impossible when one studies the Enlightenment, according to Hankins.

Because the thinkers of the Enlightenment spread their interests widely, historians of the science of this period, Hankins said, have to study a problem in relation to its entire environment. As an example, while d'Alembert was primarily a mathematician, he wrote in such varied fields as music, art, poetry, history, and theology.

Can't Isolate Thoughts

The "philosophes" had such wide-ranging interests that it is impossible to take any part of their thought in isolation. Hankins presented the "Preliminary Discourse" as an example of their interests. In the "Discourse" one sees an "attempt to deal with all the aspects of human life and thought."

In the "Preliminary Discourse," according to Hankins, one finds many of the characteristics of the Enlightenment. Some of these are a "violent anti-clericalism," and an "emphasis on natural law as opposed to revealed laws of religion."

Anyone who accepted these and other tenets could call himself a "philosopher," said Hankins. In the 18th century the term was applied somewhat loosely and almost anyone, if he wished, could call himself a "philosopher."

Although the philosophy of the 18th century is often thought of

as inferior to that of the 17th, the ideas of the 18th century writers became more widely known because they had a broad base of support.

Account for Success

Hankins held that the propagandization and the "missionary zeal" of the "philosophes" accounted for much of their success. Having much more popular support than the 17th century thinkers, the men of the Enlightenment reaped the harvest of the previous century.

The "Preliminary Discourse" of d'Alembert is a good example, according to Hankins, of the universal mind of the 18th century philosophers. In fact the "Encyclopedia of Diderot" was the "most important doctrine of the Enlightenment," being characteristic of the whole period.

Hankins explained d'Alembert's part in the "Encyclopedia" as necessary to add "the trappings of respectability" to the enterprise. Condillac, Rousseau and Diderot, fellow companions of d'Alembert, had all written heretical works.

D'Alembert, being highly respected, enabled the group to present the "Encyclopedia" with less worry of censorship.

Disagreement

Although all four of these men were involved in the "Encyclopedia" and agreed on many things, the document brought out some of the areas in which they disagreed. In fact, Hankins said that in 1758 d'Alembert left the enterprise.

It is possible, said Hankins, that his departure resulted from his "highly sensitive" nature since he was bearing the brunt of the attacks on the "Encyclopedia." However, he held that there was another more important source of discontent.

D'Alembert, believing that mathematics was the key to all sciences, insisted in rigid mathematical proofs for all truths. Experiments, he believed, were not valid. Diderot, however, having no enthusiasm for mathematics, turned to the liberal arts.

D'Alembert, although he opposed several of Descartes' ideas in the "Encyclopedia" in favor of Newton, actually, according

to Hankins, agreed with him in some areas. Like Descartes, d'Alembert held that the mind was responsible for forces in mechanics. He also believed that mechanics could be based on innate ideas. Diderot, agreeing with Newton, based mechanics on experimental evidence.

Rousseau, said Hankins, also diverged into another line of thought. He held that truth was not a creation of the mind but a sensation of the heart. Thus he began the Romantic movement. Rousseau's ideas eventually achieved greater popularity.

Kohistan Art Browsing Topic

Mark Sponenburgh, professor of art at Oregon State University and a former University faculty member, will deliver an illustrated Browsing Room Lecture Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.

Sponenburgh will speak on "Art Forms of Kohistan." Kohistan is a hilly region in Pakistan lying between Karachi and Sehwan in the Dadu District.

From 1958 to 1961 Sponenburgh was in Pakistan as professor of fine arts and Principal (head) of the Faculties of Art, Architecture, and Industrial Design at the National College of Arts there.

Educated at the Cranbrook Academy of Art, the Ecole Des Beaux Arts in Paris, the University of Cairo, and the University of London, he joined the faculty of the University of Oregon in 1946. He taught here for ten years.

CORE Plans Fund Raising

Two fund-raising projects have been scheduled by the Eugene Chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) to help finance a project set for this summer in Louisiana by the national organization.

A rummage sale will be held Thursday at 31 W. Seventh Ave. Anyone wishing to donate articles may contact Mrs. Arthur Hanhardt, 342-1526, or Mrs. Randal Cruikshanks, 345-4793. Financial contributions will also be accepted at Eugene CORE, Post Office Box 1544, Eugene. Checks should be made out to "CORE Summer Project."

A food sale will be held on April 22 at the New World Coffee House, between 10th and 11th avenues on Alder. The sale will start at noon.

Private Line 3

TUESDAY
7:00-7:15

"World War II: Background and Causes". Beginning special three part series designed as resource materials for Political Science and History. This special film deals with Versailles; rise of communism and fascism; German invasion of Poland.

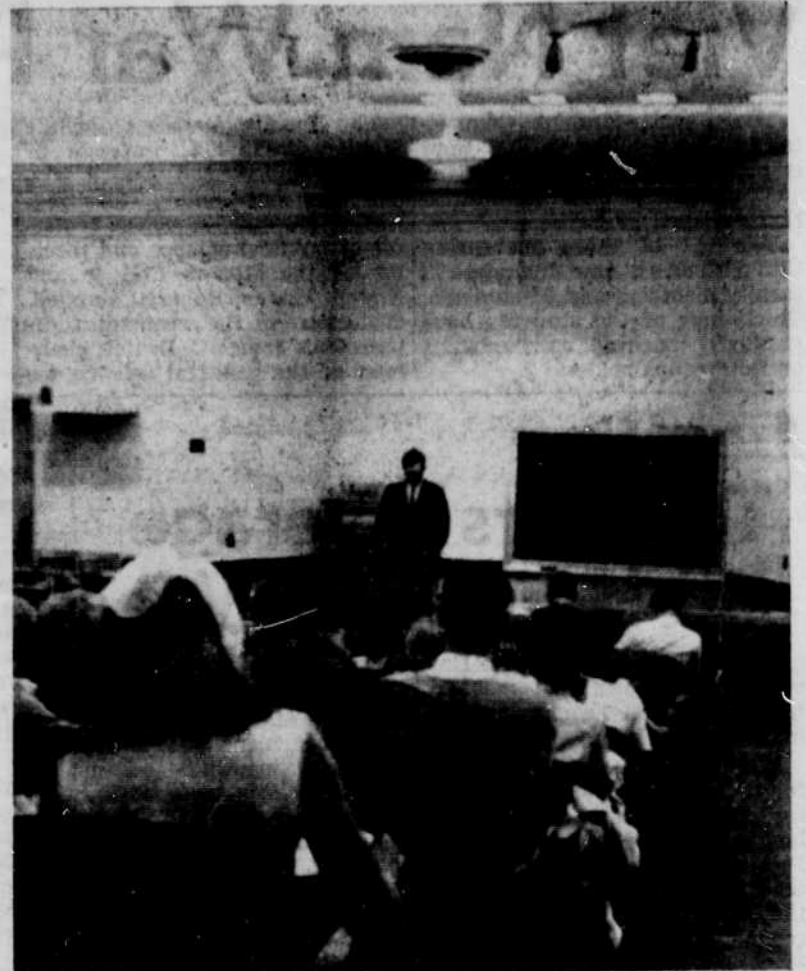
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"To Drive or Not to Drive—That's the Question" Now! the inside story on parking at the U. of O.! An imaginative film, developed by a group of U. of O. students dealing with the problem we all face—how to find a parking place at 9 MWF! Filmed on campus—you may be in it!

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THOMAS HANKINS, visiting lecturer from the University of Washington, delivered an Honors College lecture on d'Alembert's "Preliminary Discourse to the Encyclopedia of Diderot" and its effect on the science of the Enlightenment Monday.

Photo by Walt Biddle

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