

In an elegant speech on "History as Literature" before the Society of American Historians in Washington, former Secretary of State Dean Acheson, 72, told a wry tale. "Some years ago," he said, "a colleague in the State Department wrote papers in such beautiful prose that I found myself influenced toward conclusions which, when challenged, I could not justify. Protection against this siren proved simple. Another colleague rewrote the paper in telegraphese, leaving out most adjectives, inserting the word 'stop' for periods. This exorcised the magic. Too much art in the mixture and, in Sir John Seeley's contemptuous words, 'history fades into mere literature.'"