



## THE UNITED CHAPTERS: A CENTENNIAL REVIEW

by Kenneth M. Greene

*In an informal survey of Phi Beta Kappa members, many of them, when asked what they understood the United Chapters to be, said, "The people in the Washington office." That is, to be sure, partly correct. The Washington people are, at any rate, laborers in the vineyard. But the United Chapters is, in the constitutional sense, composed of all the chapters and the associations, which are represented by delegates to the triennial council meetings. The Council, which is the legislative body of the United Chapters, elects the Senate, which is the general administrative body. Recommendations for Phi Beta Kappa actions and programs are usually initiated by the Senate and are submitted for consideration by the Council. The decisions of the Council are then implemented by the Senate and its committees and by the Washington staff. Since announcements and pronouncements generally emanate from the Washington headquarters, it tends to stand, symbolically at least, for the United Chapters. But credit for the accomplishments of the United Chapters, which celebrates this year the one-hundredth anniversary of its first meeting, belongs to the Council and to the Senate—and ultimately to all of you who make it possible for the national organization to function and flourish.*

### Beginnings

On the morning of September 6, 1882, representatives of fifteen of the then twenty-two active chapters of Phi Beta Kappa met in the Town Hall at Saratoga Springs, New York, to consider the adoption of a constitution that would help to bring the chapters together into a national organization. The meeting culminated in the adoption of the constitution, although only seven of the representatives had the authority of their chapters to ratify it at that time. It was resolved that as soon as fourteen ratifications had been obtained, the first National Council would be convened at Saratoga Springs in September 1883.

Precisely when the idea for this constitutional convention originated is not certain. As early as 1856 the Trinity College Chapter had proposed a general meeting of the members of Phi Beta Kappa, and two years later the Amherst Chapter raised the question of holding a general convention. The first materialization of these impulses, however, did not occur until the Alpha of Massachusetts at Harvard University issued an invitation to all the other chapters to meet together at the Alpha's centennial celebration on June 30, 1881.

This invitation was prompted by more than social and ceremonial motives. The Alpha was concerned about variations in the form of the charters being granted to establish new chapters and, no doubt, by implication, about the lack of uniformity in the whole process of granting charters. It therefore requested the invited chapters to give their delegates such power that the assembly might act as a convention of Phi Beta Kappa and specifically might vote on changes in the charter.

Twenty-nine delegates, representing twelve chapters, came to Cambridge for the celebration. Prior to the ceremonies they met in convention in Gore Hall. Although mindful of the need to consider the question of the charters, the delegates agreed on the necessity of first effecting a permanent organization that should serve the interest of Phi Beta Kappa on a broad scale. This purpose is clearly indicated in the preamble and resolution brought forward by Francis P. Nash, the delegate from the Hobart Chapter:

Whereas the Phi Beta Kappa Society has not hitherto exerted upon the intellectual life of America an influence commensurate to its true and legitimate importance, having been precluded therefrom by the lack of any regular method of ascertaining and expressing the views of the Society as a whole;

And whereas it is highly desirable that a voice and utterance should be given to the collective learning, wisdom, and experience of the Society in order that the Society may



The Town Hall in Saratoga Springs, New York (above), was the birthplace of the United Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa—the first National Council was convened there in September 1883. (Photograph is from the original negative taken in 1887 by Seneca Ray Stoddard and was obtained from the collection of George S. Bolster of Saratoga Springs, New York.)

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obtain that influence and moral power which legitimately belong to it;

And whereas this object cannot otherwise be attained than by entrusting the expression of the opinions of this Society to some sufficiently representative body delegated by the several chapters; therefore,

Resolved, That this Convention do hereby earnestly recommend to all chapters of the Phi Beta Kappa Society to choose delegates . . . to meet together . . . who when thus assembled shall constitute the National Council of the Phi Beta Kappa Society, and shall have power to express the opinion and sentiment of this Society upon all such questions as may from time to time be presented to said Council for consideration.

The Nash resolution was accepted, and in October 1881 there was a meeting of a constitutional committee in New York City. This led to the meeting already alluded to in Saratoga Springs in September 1882, and finally to the meeting of the First National Council of the United Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa in September 1883.

The meeting of the First National Council, the one-hundredth anniversary of which is being celebrated this year, was made possible by the ratification of the constitution by sixteen chapters—namely, the Alphas of Massachusetts (Harvard), Vermont (University of Vermont), New Hampshire (Dartmouth), New York (Union), and Maine (Bowdoin); the Betas of Connecticut (Trinity), Massachusetts (Amherst), Ohio (Kenyon), New York (New York University), and Vermont (Middlebury); the Gammas of Connecticut (Wesleyan), Massachusetts (Williams), and New York (City College); the Delta of New York (Columbia); the Epsilon of New York (Hamilton); and the Zeta of New York (Hobart). The meeting was held in the Town Hall at Saratoga Springs, on September 5, 1883, with 24 delegates present, representing 13 chapters. Without delay the delegates elected the first Senate, as provided for in the constitution. Among the 20 elected were Edward Everett Hale, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Charles W. Eliot, James B. Angell, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, and Joseph H. Choate. Charles W. Eliot, then president of Harvard University, was elected president of the Council.

### The Challenge of Chartering New Chapters

The first task of the Senate and the Council was to regularize the procedures for granting charters. Prior to the establishment of the United Chapters, the system—if it can fairly be called that—of granting charters had been erratic. Theoretically, all the Alphas were supposed to agree on the granting of a

new charter to a petitioner. In practice, however, this did not always occur. The secretary of the Alpha of New York wrote to a petitioning correspondent at Cornell in 1881 that it has “of late years . . . been tacitly construed that the Alpha of each State shall have jurisdiction in this matter over its own State.” But there is no evidence to indicate that even this tacit understanding was widely accepted.

After the United Chapters was formed, a procedure was adopted whereby charter applications were submitted to the Senate for its recommendation and then to the Council for the determining vote on the granting of charters. Until 1922, each application had to be supported by five endorsements from existing chapters. As applications piled up before the Senate and chapters were inundated with requests for endorsements, the need for a more efficient procedure became clear. In 1922 the Senate proposed to the Council a new plan, which gave to chapters within specified geographical districts the responsibility for recommending charter-worthy institutions to the Senate. This plan, however, caused sharp disagreements and rivalry among the districts, and it was dropped after two triennial experiences. In 1931 the National Council (or Triennial Council, as it came to be called) established the Committee on Qualifications, which ever since has been responsible for investigating and selecting institutions to be recommended for charters.

The authority of the United Chapters to establish new chapters of Phi Beta Kappa is, of course, one of the important ways in which it affects education in America. President Clark S. Northup did not, perhaps, overstate the case in his remarks to the Seventeenth Council in 1931. Speaking of the need for a truly efficient way of granting charters, he said:

This is particularly important because of the increasing desire for Phi Beta Kappa approval by both individuals and institutions. More than 200 institutions have indicated a desire for charters and have not yet received them. Institutions are willing to alter their faculties, curricula, endowments, libraries, and other elements or facilities to gain our recognition. . . . Phi Beta Kappa can set a gold standard for liberal education in America.

Although 120 new chapters have been established since President Northup made these comments, the records of the United Chapters in Washington, D.C., currently contain files for more than 400 institutions that at one time or another have applied for chapters and have not yet received them. College

presidents, academic vice presidents, provosts, deans, and faculty members still make their way to the Washington headquarters of Phi Beta Kappa, seeking advice on how they can improve their chances of gaining a charter. As the Committee on Qualifications has tried to make clear, however, there is no magic formula. Indeed, there are no absolute standards, and Phi Beta Kappa should not be thought of as an accrediting agency. As stated in a Phi Beta Kappa brochure entitled “The Founding of New Chapters,”

Because of the great differences among institutions . . . such as the number and kinds of books in the library, the nature of the teaching and the publications of the faculty, the character of the students . . . and the general attitude toward scholarship, no absolute standards can be formulated. The Society is above all interested in the development of liberally educated men and women. In measuring the success with which institutions work towards this goal, the Committee evaluates each institution individually.

The quality of the institutions currently sheltering chapters of Phi Beta Kappa does, to be sure, set a kind of standard against which applying institutions are inevitably measured. Awareness of this standard of excellence certainly figures in the deliberations of the Committee on Qualifications and the Senate as they undertake their assessments of applicant institutions and prepare their recommendations for the Council. And the Council must then determine if the excellence achieved warrants the granting of a charter.

### Quest for Stability

To translate noble aims into active projects requires, of course, money and labor, even for Phi Beta Kappa. In the early days of the United Chapters, money was in very short supply, and those who labored in behalf of the society did so voluntarily and in the time they could spare from the duties that earned them their bread. In its infancy the United Chapters derived a small income from a triennial fee (\$5 at first, raised to \$10 in 1904) collected from each chapter. In 1910 the smaller, more impecunious chapters having complained that such an assessment was inequitable, the chapter fee was replaced by a fee of \$1 charged for the registration of each newly elected member. Since everyone thus registered received a one-year subscription to the society's newsletter, the net income to the United Chapters was effectively reduced by half. In 1916 the process of ordering Phi Beta Kappa keys was centralized in the hands of the United Chapters, which received a royalty from the official jeweler for each key pur-

chased and thus managed to augment its income in a modest way.

Nevertheless, this was a precarious way in which to mount programs or to run an organization. The leanness of the treasury made anything like a permanent headquarters for the United Chapters impossible in these early days. Indeed, the headquarters was wherever the secretary, himself a volunteer, happened to be. Until the end of the nineteenth century, it was at Williams College, where Eben Parsons, the United Chapters secretary, was registrar. Dr. Parsons was succeeded by Oscar Voorhees, during whose tenure the headquarters shifted from one parsonage to another, as Dr. Voorhees served in churches in New Jersey for several years and then moved to the Reformed Church of Mott Haven in New York City in 1909.

Between 1917 and 1939 the United Chapters undertook three endowment fund drives. None of the three succeeded in reaching the declared goals, the first and last suffering from having been launched on the eves of America's entrance into World War I and World War II, respectively. Nevertheless, significant benefits to Phi Beta Kappa emerged from these efforts. The welfare of the society aroused the interest of Francis Phelps Dodge, who, insisting on anonymity, provided a headquarters for the United Chapters for five years during the 1920s and funds sufficient to pay the salary of a full-time secretary for three years. In December 1921, Oscar Voorhees was elected to that office, and in the new headquarters in a suite of rooms in the neighborhood of Carnegie Hall work went forward with plans to launch an endowment fund drive in connection with Phi Beta Kappa's forthcoming sesquicentennial celebration in 1926.

The plan of the sesquicentennial campaign incorporated an earlier proposal, originated by the Alpha of Virginia and endorsed by the Senate, to raise funds for a memorial to the fifty founders of Phi Beta Kappa—a memorial building to be erected on the campus of the College of William and Mary. The endowment fund, it was stipulated, should provide the \$100,000 needed for the memorial building, and the balance was to be used

for encouraging true scholarship in the high schools, colleges, and universities of our land, and also for encouraging and developing high character and inspired leadership among our members by pointing the way to this end by systematized practical idealism in ways to be outlined, and perhaps superintended by committees appointed by the Senate of the United Chapters.

The goal of the 150th Anniversary Memorial Endowment Fund was placed at \$1 million. Little more than a third of that amount was reached at the end of the campaign, but the gift of \$100,000 to the Memorial Building was made, and the Senate never lost sight of its obligation to find practical ways of exercising Phi Beta Kappa's idealism.

One practical and necessary measure immediately adopted was the incorporation by the Senate of the Phi Beta Kappa Foundation. The reason for incorporation was to enable the United Chapters, through the Foundation, to hold and administer trust funds. As soon as the organization was completed in 1924, the funds that had been accumulating were turned over to the Foundation. Ever since, the Foundation has held the society's endowment funds and overseen their investment.

The granting of the charter to the Foundation in 1924 was considered by the Senate to be an appropriate occasion for a celebration, which was duly held in New York City on February 26. To his account of this celebration, Oscar Voorhees adds the following interesting postscript:

This occasion, notable in itself, had as a sequel an incident of rare importance. . . . W.A.R. Goodwin, pastor of Bruton Church at Williamsburg, spoke in behalf of William and Mary College. Dr. Goodwin laid stress on the difficulties through which the College had passed, the importance of its special contribution through the Phi Beta Kappa to higher education, and the appropriateness of the proposed Memorial to the College and the Society.

Senator John D. Rockefeller, Jr. was present, and at the conclusion [was introduced] to Dr. Goodwin. The events of the evening and the continuing friendship between Mr. Rockefeller and Dr. Goodwin later resulted in the restoration of Williamsburg, the value and importance of which, to the citizens of this country, it would be impossible to estimate.

Although the Society's small endowment suffered from the constricting effects of the depressed conditions of the 1930s, support for Phi Beta Kappa was by no means lacking. Early in 1940, a small group of members met at the Harvard Club in New York City and organized the Phi Beta Kappa Associates with the intention of increasing the society's endowment so as to provide an assured source of income to assist the United Chapters in the realization of its objectives. Through regular and substantial contributions to the Foundation, the Associates have helped significantly to increase the endowment from \$290,000 in 1940 to over \$4 million today.

By 1954 the society's financial position was stable enough to permit it to purchase a building in the Dupont Circle area of Washington, D.C., to serve as a headquarters. Thus the United Chapters, which had occupied rented offices in New York from 1921 to 1951 and temporary quarters in Williamsburg for the next three years, at last acquired permanent headquarters to house its staff and the staff of *The American Scholar*. Here, amidst such interesting neighbors as the Argentine Embassy and the Woman's National Democratic Club, in a location now designated as a historic preservation area, the work of the United Chapters goes on. A staff of nearly thirty sees to the maintenance of membership records, the provision of services to the chapters and associations, the conduct of financial business, the editorial work and subscription services of *The American Scholar* and *The Key Reporter*, and the staff work required for the Visiting Scholar Program, the Associates Lectureship, and the various award programs, as well as the staff support for the dozen or more committees of the Senate and the Council.

### Programs and Publications

Even as the quest for financial stability was going on, the Council had been undertaking programs to keep the society vital and to encourage scholarship on a broad scale. As early as 1910 the United Chapters began publishing *The Phi Beta Kappa Key*, a quarterly that carried in addition to news of the chapters and the Council, poetry and occasional articles on topics of intellectual interest. Although it was primarily an interchapter bulletin, it did attempt to stimulate interest among the members in promoting the cause of scholarship generally.

Still, *The Key* was primarily a house organ. It printed chatty accounts of chapter and association activities and in a column entitled "In the Busy World" carried brief news notes about individual members. In general it conveyed a sense of family intimacy that was, perhaps, possible only because the society was then very small, in contrast to its current living membership of over 400,000. Even the President of the United States was part of the family, as suggested in a paragraph recounting how United Chapters President Edwin Grosvenor went to keep an appointment with President Theodore Roosevelt at the White House and found Roosevelt keeping him beyond his scheduled time in order to talk about Phi Beta Kappa. Holding out his key and saying to Grosvenor, "This is one of my most valued possessions," Roose-

velt went on to declare that every college in the country ought to have a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa. "And after they get it, make them live up to it," he added. Grosvenor was charmed but not convinced.

The Key continued until 1931, at which time it was dropped, partly for financial reasons and partly because the Council had approved a Senate proposal to replace it with a journal that would publish scholarly articles of a general nature and would promote liberal education and culture by the interchange of ideas among scholars. It was to be a quarterly publication and was to be called *The American Scholar*. The *American Scholar* was, indeed, brought forth in 1932, but by 1933, its success notwithstanding, the need for something like the old *Phi Beta Kappa Key* became evident. The Senate proposed that the need be met by the publication of an annual report designed to stimulate interest in the society and to constitute a permanent historical record. Such a publication was duly produced, under the title *Phi Beta Kappa Annals*, in 1934; but it proved to be an expensive enterprise and a generally inadequate substitute for a quarterly. Accordingly, a new quarterly in a newsletter format was given the blessing of the Council, and in December 1935 the first issue of *The Key Reporter* appeared.

It should be noted, too, that three sets of Phi Beta Kappa orations were published between 1915 and 1962 as part of the society's aim to enhance the nation's culture. The orations embrace diverse themes and convey the thoughts of serious thinkers. Ralph Waldo Emerson's famous "The American Scholar" is among them, and Bliss Perry's "The Amateur Spirit." So, too, are Josiah Royce's "What is Vital in Christianity" and Marjorie Nicolson's "The Romance of Scholarship."

No doubt the boldest publishing venture undertaken by the United Chapters was the launching of *The American Scholar* in 1932. The times were hard, and the society had very little money. But the senators who proposed the publication of "a non-technical journal of intellectual life" were confident and enthusiastic about its prospects, and with the endorsement of the entire Senate before it, the Council of 1931 approved the plan.

The appeal of *The American Scholar* was from the first issue in 1932 so remarkable that the United Chapters has never begrudged the expense of supporting it. Much of the early success can be attributed to the Editorial Board, which then played a more prominent

part in the actual editing than is the case today. Members of the board such as Ada Louise Comstock, Will Howe, John H. Finley, and William Allen Neilson devoted a great deal of time to the development of the magazine and attracted manuscripts from many writers of distinction. In the first years of its existence, *The American Scholar* had a paid circulation of just under 5000. Its current circulation of over 27,000 is larger than that of any other intellectual quarterly.

Among other projects initiated in the 1930s by the United Chapters and still flourishing is the address, jointly sponsored by Phi Beta Kappa and the American Association for the Advancement of Science, given at the annual meeting of the AAAS. The purpose of this address, as it was conceived in 1936 and still obtains today, is to stress the interdependence of science and the humanities. The series has featured many of the world's most eminent scientists and scholars, among them Arthur Compton, George Lyman Kittredge, Margaret Mead, René Dubos, and Freeman Dyson. Also in the mid-1930s, the first Mary Isabel Sibley Fellowship was awarded by the United Chapters. Made possible by a bequest from Mrs. Sibley's daughter, the fellowship provides funds to assist young women who are completing scholarly projects in either Greek or French studies.

### Policies and Reforms

The constraints of the depression years did not allow the United Chapters to do as much as it wished to encourage scholarship, but it did what it could. The Council meetings in those years gave needed attention to general policy and constitutional reform and dealt with such weighty matters as the approved pronouncement of Phi Beta Kappa, settling in favor of Phi Beta Kappa (123 votes at the 1937 Council meeting) over Phi Beeta Kappa (31 votes) and Phee Bayta Kappa (11 votes).

The United Chapters, recognizing the worth of a strong alumni organization, sought ways of encouraging the formation of associations, and the associations, the oldest one of which—the Phi Beta Kappa Alumni in New York—precedes the United Chapters by several years, continued their active support of Phi Beta Kappa goals.

In addition to the attention, noted earlier, given to the granting of new charters, the United Chapters also concerned itself to some extent with election practices in the existing chapters. In spite of periodic expressions of dismay over the variety of election practices, the Coun-

cil delegates generally agreed, as the records of the 1934 Council indicate, that the United Chapters achieves the "ideal of unity among independent and differing units."

The 1934 Council put the case more specifically in this way:

The chapters have adapted themselves to the peculiarities of their sheltering institutions. They should continue to do so. . . . The key should stand for approximately the same kind and degree of scholarship throughout the country, but this end should be attained, insofar as possible, by other means than general legislation.

Thus, although the Councils of the United Chapters have taken some measures to achieve uniformity in election practices—the adoption, for example, of a model chapter constitution (binding only on chapters founded since 1889), the adoption of requirements that amendments to chapter by-laws be approved by the Senate (binding only on chapters founded since 1925) and that the original by-laws be approved by the Senate (binding only on chapters founded since 1937), and the adoption of a set of stipulations for the election of members in course (binding only on chapters founded after 1952)—the individual chapters have generally thought the functions most appropriate to the United Chapters to be the initiation and conduct of projects for the encouragement of scholarship, such as fellowships or prizes or the publication of scholarly writing, and the provision of services necessary to the chapters and associations. In short, the role of the United Chapters, in the view of many, should be less to dictate than to facilitate.

### Visits and Awards

As the resources of the United Chapters increased, new programs were developed. In 1951 the Christian Gauss Award was established for books of literary criticism. This was followed in 1959 by a second book award—the Phi Beta Kappa Award in Science—and in 1960 by a third—the Ralph Waldo Emerson Award for studies in history, philosophy, religion, and the social sciences. Each award is made annually and carries with it a prize of \$2500, as well as the prestige of Phi Beta Kappa's recognition.

In 1956 the Senate initiated the Visiting Scholar Program, which has enjoyed enormous success in the 27 years of its existence. Each year, twelve or more distinguished scholars, selected by a committee of the Senate, visit institutions that have asked to participate in

(continued on back cover)

# reading recommended by the book committee

humanities

social sciences

natural sciences

FREDERICK J. CROSSON, ROBERT B. HEILMAN,  
ROBERT P. SONKOWSKY, LAWRENCE WILLSON  
EARL W. COUNT, LEONARD W. DOOB,  
ANDREW GYORGY, MADELINE R. ROBINTON,  
VICTORIA SCHUCK  
RONALD GEBALLE, RUSSELL B. STEVENS

## ROBERT P. SONKOWSKY

**Plato's Parmenides: Translation and Analysis.** R. E. Allen. Minnesota. 1983. \$25.

An exhaustive study of a very difficult and complex work. Allen calls his elegant approach code-cracking. This gradually reveals the relation between the structure of the dialogue and the perplexities it treats concerning Plato's theory of forms. The appendix on modern set theory analysis of infinity helps the less mathematical reader.

**Publica Carmina: Ovid's Books from Exile.**

Harry B. Evans. Nebraska. 1983. \$23.50. This clear and persuasive study of Ovid's *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto* fills a gap in our understanding of one of the greatest poets of antiquity. Avoiding mere biography, Evans shows how the poet of the *Heroides*, *Ars Amatoria*, and *Metamorphoses* continues to develop artistically during the final years of his life in exile. The exile poems reflect poetic departures unparalleled in classical literature and include sufficient literary merit to repay close study. Good bibliographical notes.

**Before Pastoral: Theocritus and the Ancient Tradition of Bucolic Poetry.** David Halperin. Yale. 1983. \$26.

A highly instructive treatise, based on the author's dissertation and directed to the difficult task of offering a definition of bucolic poetry as invented by Theocritus in the third century B.C. Halperin clears away the post-classical theories by means of an historical discussion of their development down to Northrop Frye and distinguishes between more general, "pastoral" features and a more specific, albeit flexible, definition of "bucolic" poetry applicable in Theocritus' own times. Intelligently and persuasively organized.

**Technique and Ideas in the "Aeneid."** Gordon Williams. Yale. 1983. \$27.50.

One of the best critics analyzes the best

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Robert P. Sonkowsky, of the University of Minnesota, has recently been appointed to the Book Committee and will recommend books on the classics.

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poem of the best Roman poet. First, Williams analyzes Vergil's techniques in isolation from questions about the poet's point of view, studying figural uses of fate and the gods, various structural devices, and uses of literary allusion. Only then does Williams get into deeper complexities involving connotations about Augustan Rome, human universals, Vergil's own comments, and the like. The result is shining clarity, in which Vergil emerges as a poet, not of ideology, but of ideas.

**The Idea of Lyric: Lyric Modes in Ancient and Modern Poetry.** W. R. Johnson. California. 1983. \$7.95.

An analysis of the essence of lyric poetry, rather than its accidents, as exemplified in Greek, Roman, and modern poets, and as revealed in ancient and modern theory. In these imaginative and profoundly witty essays, Johnson shows how the personal and the public, experience and rhetoric were fused in the ancient lyric mode, and he makes ancient and modern lyricists illuminate each other through comparison. Avoiding discussion of particular meters or music, Johnson selectively traces the idea of lyric genres, monody, choral lyric, lyric drama, lyric pastoral, from Greek and Roman to Western European and American poets. Among theorists he relies mostly, and rightly, upon those whose eras look back in time upon the poetry they are analyzing, as the Alexandrians and the postmoderns, and he attends carefully to audiences, real and imaginary.

**Greek Tragic Poetry.** Albin Lesky. Tr. by Matthew Dillon. Yale. 1983. \$50.

Two earlier translations of books by the late German classicist, Albin Lesky. *Greek Tragedy* and *History of Greek Literature*, especially the latter, have been useful to English readers, and now this translation of his 1972 work will serve students needing a comprehensive reference tool and history of Greek tragedy from its origins to its decline in the Hellenistic period. The extant plays, fragments, and other relevant evidence, the specific argumentation of scholars, as well as broader interpretations and conclusions, are thoroughly summarized, with detailed bib-

liographical notes and comments. Lesky's own opinions are succinctly expressed.

**The Art of Aeschylus.** Thomas Rosenmeyer. California. 1983. \$34.95, \$12.95.

A broad, penetrating study, avoiding questions of connections between this ancient tragedian's plays and the events of his times and focusing upon his theatrical practices. Rosenmeyer's analysis and arguments concerning the gods, the human characters, and plot are fresh and stimulating, and they are illuminated by comparisons with later playwrights. He carefully counters much received opinion on these matters, as also on the subject of human and divine responsibility in the plays.

**The Heroic Temper: Studies in Sophoclean Tragedy.** B. M. W. Knox. California. 1983. \$7.95.

This first paperback printing of Knox's 1964 Sather lectures volume will be a valuable acquisition for more and more seekers of a truly fundamental understanding of Sophocles. Readers of his earlier *Oedipus at Thebes* as well as those who have not yet discovered Knox will find no truer, more entrancing guide to the heart of Sophocles nor a more illuminating expositor of the exquisite and mysterious details of his plays.

## RUSSELL B. STEVENS

**The Discovery of Insulin.** Michael Bliss. Univ. Chicago. 1982. \$20.

Chances are very good indeed that books such as this one—another example is James Watson's *Double Helix*—come far closer to telling the true story of scientific discovery than more orthodox accounts of what we are accustomed to speak of as the "scientific method." Bliss shows that science advances in the context of real-life situations and that it is done by real people, with all the strengths, shortcomings, and idiosyncracies this implies. He also, in this account, reminds us that discovery as often as not leads to acceptance and widespread application only after painful delays and setbacks. Finally, it becomes clear how soon the public tends to forget, as it were, even a very great health hazard once an effective measure for its control or amelioration is widely and dependably available. In short, the story most of us encountered, early in our schooling, of the discovery of insulin is a remarkably incomplete and indeed misleading one—this volume redresses that balance.

**The Wolf in the Southwest: The Making of an Endangered Species.** Ed. by David E. Brown. Arizona. 1983. \$19.95, \$9.95.

The authors of this small volume are to be congratulated for providing a dispassionate account of the elimination of the wolf from the American Southwest, an episode about which, in hindsight, it is difficult indeed to be unmoved. Few who follow this story will fail to be troubled by this striking example of the unequal contest between the need for long-term conservation of wildlife species and the urgent economic pressures of everyday human activity. Once again, introduced livestock husbandry scored a complete victory over indigenous predators.

**Ageing: An Exploration.** David P. Barash. Washington. 1983. \$14.95.

Barash's examination of ageing is so

sprightly, contains so much relevant yet largely unknown information, and deals with a topic of such pervasive interest that most readers will be likely to accord it word-for-word examination. After all, of what process other than aging can it be said that everyone devotes full time, night and day, to it? But whereas we all devote our time to aging, few devote appreciable attention to it. It is the special virtue of this volume that aging emerges as a reasonable, an acceptable, and albeit inescapable, a modifiable phenomenon. Most will be more comforted than troubled by the knowledge to be gained from this work.

**Behavioral Energetics: The Cost of Survival.** Ed. by Wayne P. Aspey and Sheldon I. Lustick. Ohio. 1983. \$27.50.

To be fair, because it is a collection of research reports mostly by specialists for specialists, this book is rather too technical for the nonscientist. At the same time, it emphasizes one of the newer themes in the analysis of biological phenomena in that it deals with energy costs as an underlying and unifying factor. In so doing, it also exemplifies, for this reviewer at least, why science truth is so much more exciting than science fiction. Who would believe, for example, if it appeared in science fiction literature, that certain migratory birds fly 3000 kilometers in 80 hours nonstop, can detect altitudinal pressure changes equivalent to less than one inch, are sensitive to radiation frequencies as low as three per minute, and operate at a gasoline-equivalent fuel efficiency of 720,000 miles per gallon?

**The Secular Ark: Studies in the History of Biogeography.** Janet Browne. Yale. 1983. \$27.50.

The current resurgence of support, at least in limited circles, for a closely literal interpretation of the Biblical account of the origins of life, under the guise of so-called "Creation Science," seems all the more bizarre once the fuller story is known. Browne has chosen the clever and provocative title, *The Secular Ark*, to underscore how early in the study of plant and animal distributions the Noachian flood was agreed upon as pure myth. Given that, however, it took well over a century of study and debate to come within even recognizable distance of the patterns and processes that do indeed determine the current geographic picture of the living world. *The Secular Ark* traces the gradual, almost painful, pathway along which the early geologists, biologists, and geographers unraveled that puzzle.

**The Diversity of Crop Plants.** J. G. Hawkes. Harvard. 1983. \$20.

**A Wealth of Wild Species: Storehouse for Human Welfare.** Norman Myers. Westview. 1983. \$27, \$11.95.

Like it or not, science is no less subject to the ebbs and flows of public interest and involvement than any of a myriad of other human activities. Over the past few decades we have seen a marked diminution in the support of research and teaching in the plant sciences. Predictably, this very neglect seems now to be generating a corrective counter movement, as the crucial importance of this sector of the living world is increasingly recognized. The two books here noted are among those that bolster this

trend. The one by Hawkes treats in general the resources represented by cultivated species and the need to insure those crops against a dangerous erosion of their genetic underpinning. He rightly underscores the fact that these are global issues, and ones that cannot longer be neglected. In the second book, Myers addresses a closely related but distinct matter. He examines the value, in terms well beyond simply the emotional and esoteric, of the enormously diverse plant communities of such relatively untouched areas of the world as still remain. For the most part, Myers's writings have decried the loss of natural vegetation and fauna from an idealistic view of our responsibilities as stewards of the globe as a habitat for mankind. He does this well and is to be honored therefor, but in the book here reviewed he openly keys his remarks to an economic yardstick, on the doubtless valid assumption that as an entering wedge such an approach will touch more readers than any other. In the long term, no issue in biology is more important than that addressed by Hawkes and Myers—the wise husbandry of our global plant resources.

#### FREDERICK J. CROSSON

##### **The Basic Problems of Phenomenology.**

Martin Heidegger. Trans. by Alfred Hofstadter. Indiana. 1982. \$27.50.

Perhaps the most generally accessible text that Heidegger published, this analysis for the "beginner" (it originated in a lecture course) deals with the inadequate conceptions of being in Kant, scholasticism, and Descartes and in theories of logic. Thus one has some more familiar guideposts when the author turns to his own thought in the last third of the book and explicates the meaning of being in terms of temporality. The translation is superb.

**The Meaning of More's "Utopia."** George M. Logan. Princeton. 1983. \$27.50.

No reading of and certainly no writing about More's imagined commonwealth should be ignorant of this scholarly and thoughtful essay. Logan shows decisively that *Utopia* is to be understood primarily in the tradition of classical political philosophy and not in that of Renaissance humanism. Moreover, the moral and political issues that are central to *Utopia* are still very much with us. Recommended.

**The Prevalence of Humbug and Other Essays.** Max Black. Cornell. 1983. \$16.95.

Amusing and enlightening, these essays for the general reader deal with such topics as being reasonable, what it is to be humane, and P. T. Barnum's delightful book on humbugs. Reading them, one is reminded of William James's similar essays, not to adulterate philosophy into chit-chat but to elevate common sense.

**Intentionality: An Essay in the Philosophy of Mind.** John R. Searle. Cambridge. 1983. \$39.50, \$12.95.

Verbs signifying psychological acts (like believing and desiring) have the peculiarity that they are intrinsically related to some envisaged contents (grammatically: they take an object) but that the content may or may not correspond to real objects. This peculiarity has been taken to be a defining characteristic of the mind, and Searle explores the

nature of such "intentional" states and how it is that words have this peculiarity imposed on them. The analysis is meticulous and imaginative and regularly engages opposing critics, both past and potential. First rate.

**The Shaping of Man: Philosophical Aspects of Sociobiology.** Roger Trigg. Schocken. 1983. \$14.95.

The subtitle suggests that this is a critique of sociobiology, but its focus is broader than that. It is a cogent critique of a number of views, philosophical and scientific, that deny that there is a constant human nature different in kind from the nature of other animals. The method is to exhibit the intrinsic inconsistencies into which any such views are inevitably constrained, and the author proceeds with admirable sobriety.

**Aristotle and the Renaissance.** Charles B. Schmitt. Harvard. 1983. \$18.50.

The conventional wisdom is that the Renaissance and Reformation shook off the fetters of Aristotle and medieval Aristotelianism, or at least preferred Plato. Quite the contrary was true, as this first overview of the accumulating research on the period demonstrates for the period 1400–1650. More translations of Aristotle were published in the sixteenth than in all the previous centuries; more Protestants than Catholics used his texts and arguments; more commentaries were written on them than in all previous ages; and even scientific inquiry continued to take its bearings from his natural philosophy. A deft and readable marshaling of the evidence for these claims marks this scholarly and even-handed book.

**Nietzsche and Philosophy.** Gilles Deleuze. Trans. by H. Tomlinson. Columbia. 1983. \$25.

The tidal waves from the volcanic explosion of Nietzsche's thought (long dormant) into continental philosophy continue to reach our shores, much diminished. This 20-year-old interpretation became a minor classic because it not only presents a "new" Nietzsche, but shows the import of his passionate critique for the binary premises of structuralism and dialectic. Not for the general reader without some knowledge of Nietzsche.

**American Catholics: A History of the Roman Catholic Community in the United States.** James Hennesey. Oxford. 1981. \$22.50, \$8.95.

A one-volume history of such scope has all of the merits and demerits of a family portrait: everyone is there, arranged in order, with some more visible than others, but the formal pose gives only a hint of the story within each face. The first parish was established in Florida in 1565. That the book traces the growth of that community through 415 years while remaining mostly readable is quite an achievement.

#### ROBERT B. HEILMAN

**A Woman.** Sibilla Aleramo. Tr. by Rosalind Delmar. California. 1980. \$10.95. Aleramo's autobiographic novel (1906), widely known in Europe, records the psychological turmoil of a creative woman's marriage to a cloddish businessman, her joy

in motherhood, and hence the double strain of walking out when such a move was largely unheard of. Halfway through the novel, Aleramo uses the word *feminism* for the first time, and thence on she sees her personal suffering in the light of general problems. The style is plain.

**Sex and Sensibility: Ideal and Erotic Love from Milton to Mozart.** Jean H. Hagstrum. Chicago. 1980. \$30.

**Literary Loneliness in Mid-Eighteenth Century England.** John Sitter. Cornell. 1982. \$19.50.

Two good but quite different books are based on the same general period. With a rare combination of erudition and ease, scholarship and vivacity, Hagstrum traces the varieties of erotic feeling from Milton (an advocate of sensuality in married love), Dryden and other Restoration dramatists, through Richardson and Rousseau, to Goethe and Austen. There are many references to music and painting, and 32 black-and-white reproductions of paintings on love themes. Sitter offers a fresh view of literary history by studying an unusual combination—Hume, Law, other figures in the 1740s and 1750s, Fielding's *Amelia* and Richardson's *Grandison*—and discovering a literary sense of "purity," of isolation from the public and from history, and, in this "pre-Romanticism," a link with recent views of literature as nonreferential.

**F. R. Leavis.** William Walsh. Indiana. 1980. \$15.

Walsh has written an excellent guide to the life and works of Leavis. It is comprehensive but compact, generally admiring but objective and independent. It provides the satisfying experience of following a major, if crochety, critic in judgments of major poets and novelists, and the none-too-frequent experience of an intellectual work in civilized prose.

**Literary Lifelines: The Richard Aldington-Lawrence Durrell Correspondence.** Ed. by Ian S. MacNiven and Harry T. Moore. Viking. 1981. \$17.50.

About 175 letters exchanged from 1957 to 1962 between the old writer in disfavor and exile and one just coming into fame reveal their personalities and contain many comments, often sharp and witty, on other modern writers.

**Romantics, Rebels, and Reactionaries: English Literature and Its Background 1760-1830.** Marilyn Butler. Oxford. 1982. \$17.95. This history of ideas strives impressively for a new look at the Enlightenment and Romanticism as it examines many facets of Romantic writing and thought. Butler is good at detecting the interplay of events and ideas in the lives of various individuals. The prose is disciplined and public.

**Fanny Kemble: Leading Lady of the Nineteenth-Century Stage.** J. C. Furnas. Dial. 1982. \$19.95.

Furnas's journalistic biography, jocose at times but generally adult rather than "popular," laces together numerous quotes from Fanny Kemble's books to make a lively picture of an unusually attractive, intelligent, and independent woman—despite her family tradition a somewhat taut actress but enthusiastic and successful in one-woman

Shakespeare performances; equally at home in England and America; a divorcee before divorce was acceptable; and a friend of many famous people, notably such writers as Henry James.

**Young Charles Lamb 1775-1802.** Winifred F. Courtney. New York University. 1982. \$30.

Despite a somewhat pedestrian style and a massive assemblage of facts that resist a fully controlling organization, this account of Lamb to age 27 is a quite readable story. Lamb triumphed over great difficulties, had a gift for friendship, and knew "everyone"—Coleridge, Wordsworth, Hazlitt, Godwin, Southey, and many radical eminences of the day. Courtney portrays them all.

**These the Companions: Recollections.** Donald Davie. Cambridge. 1982. \$22.50.

Davie's autobiographical work is not a conventional chronological affair but a series of reflections and meditations hung on sharply detailed impressions of experiences, scenes, and personalities at home, at Cambridge, at Dublin, in Italy and parts of America. Among literary figures portrayed, F. R. Leavis looms largest. Some 30 good illustrations from a family album.

**The Image of the Poet: British Poets and Their Portraits.** David Piper. Oxford. 1983. \$25.

**The British Dissonance: Essays on Ten Contemporary Poets.** A. Kingsley Weatherhead. Missouri. 1983. \$21.

**The Witness of Poetry.** The Charles Eliot Norton Lectures. Czeslaw Milosz. Harvard. 1983. \$8.95.

Poetry and poets are the subject of three books that are all good in very different ways. Piper's handsome book contains 225 illustrations—painted and sculptured portraits of many poets from the Renaissance to about 1930. The expository prose of the author, a first-rate art critic and historian who has been director of three major British museums, is always colloquial and urbane, and often witty. Weatherhead makes low-key, compact, and unaffected critiques of the works to date of ten British poets, the youngest aged 44; the best known are Ted Hughes and the late David Jones. Occasional understated or ironic judgments season the explication of poets' methods (especially American influences and the relation to graphic and plastic arts) and meaning (or the poet's flight from it). Brief biographical notes and ample bibliographies help place the poets. Sketching the relations among thought patterns, society, and poetry in various ages, Milosz, the 1980 Nobel winner, opposes bohemian alienation and insists that poetry be "faithful to reality" and maintain a "sense of hierarchy" of values. He predicts a revival of a sense of history, and hence humanistic progress. He is often profound, and his style shuns the esoteric.

**Twentieth-Century French Literature.** Germaine Brée. Tr. by Louise Guiney. Chicago. 1983. \$25.

Brée's thorough history of the period 1920-1970 pays attention not only to eight principal writers but to social, historical, and cultural forces that impinged on the literature. The volume has reference value in a "Dictionary of Authors" with 175 entries and in ample classified biographies.

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## UNITED CHAPTERS (continued)

the program. Visits last two days and permit exchanges of ideas between the scholars and the resident faculty and students. Scholars and host institutions alike have consistently expressed their enthusiasm for the intellectual stimulation engendered by this program. Since its inception, 2138 visits have been made by 239 Visiting Scholars.

At the meeting of the Thirty-third Triennial Council in Boston in 1982, the Phi Beta Kappa Award for Distinguished Service to the Humanities was presented to Dumas Malone, the noted Jefferson scholar. This was the fifth presentation of the award, which was first given in 1970 and was made possible by a gift from William B. Jaffe (Union 1926) and Mrs. Jaffe.

The most recent award to be administered by the United Chapters is the Romanell-Phi Beta Kappa Professorship in Philosophy. The inaugural lectures associated with the award are to be given in the spring of 1984 by the first recipient, Professor Herbert Fingar-ette of the University of California, Santa Barbara. The purpose of the award is to encourage public understanding of philosophy. It is to be given annually and carries with it a stipend of \$6000, which derives from the income of an endowment gift from Patrick Romanell, H. Y. Benedict Professor of Philosophy Emeritus at the University of Texas at El Paso, and Mrs. Romanell.

### Dedicated to the Ideals

Working behind the scenes with the United Chapters staff to effectuate these programs are many Council and Senate committee members, themselves distinguished in their respective fields. Members of the book awards committees

may read 65 or 70 entries in a given year in the process of selecting a winner. The Committee on the Visiting Scholar Program meets in intensive sessions to draw up lists of candidates for appointments to the annual panel. The members of the Sibley Fellowship Committee pore over stacks of applications, and the members of the Committee on the Romanell Professorship evaluate scores of nominations submitted by the chapters. These and others contribute their wisdom, time, and intellectual energy in the cause of "practical idealism." What compels them to devote themselves to Phi Beta Kappa is not easy to define precisely, but it certainly is in part a loyalty to an organization that has consistently been dedicated to excellence and in part, no doubt, the pride they feel in their membership. It is perhaps the same Phi Beta Kappa mystique that prompts members to carry on the society's work in the graduate associations and to be generous in their financial support of Phi Beta Kappa. The United Chapters exacts no dues from its members. It has, however, since 1939, conducted a low-keyed annual fund appeal (the suggested contribution of \$5 in 1939 has been edged upward over the past 44 years, with characteristic Phi Beta Kappa circumspection, to its current level of \$15) that produces almost half the United Chapters' annual operating income.

Speculating on the force of Phi Beta Kappa's reputation and its unique appeal, Oscar Voorhees wrote in 1920:

Phi Beta Kappa possesses a spirit that appeals to the imagination. . . . The fact that it has come down from the Revolutionary period and still retains a vigorous organization and an undisputed primacy among the intellectual organizations of our land somehow casts a halo about it, and gives it a reputa-

tion that is felt far and near. Its position is not manufactured. It is a growth of which its members may be proud.

The full extent to which the United Chapters is achieving the founders' goals remains to be assessed. Some instances of the society's influence on American intellectual and cultural life are obvious enough. In 1963, for example, when Phi Beta Kappa joined with the American Council of Learned Societies and the Council of Graduate Schools to form a Commission on the Humanities, the commission's recommendations resulted in the establishment by Congress of the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Not so obvious, however, are other kinds of influence, such as that previously alluded to in connection with the aspirations of colleges to achieve charters to establish new chapters. Also to be considered is the influence exerted by Phi Beta Kappa's insistence on competence in foreign languages and mathematics as a condition for election to membership, as well as its insistence on a liberal education that avoids excessively narrow specialization. These and other influences will no doubt be examined in detail when an up-to-date history of the United Chapters, a project now under consideration by the Senate, is written.

Meanwhile, it is perhaps appropriate to conclude with the hope that the current state of the United Chapters would, on the whole, not disappoint the expectations of the founders and that the present and future guardians of the United Chapters will carry on the honorable traditions of our venerable society by continuing to work for the enhancement of America's intellectual and cultural life.



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