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# The Key Reporter

VOLUME 51 □ NUMBER TWO □ WINTER 1985-86

Annual ØBK Senate Banquet

**Books on the Elegy, Crystals, and Race Win 1985 Gauss, Science, and Emerson Prizes**

The 1985 Phi Beta Kappa book prizes of \$2,500 each for outstanding contributions to humanistic learning were awarded at a festive Senate banquet held at the Embassy Row Hotel in Washington, D.C., December 6, 1985.

Peter M. Sacks, a native South African who teaches English at Johns Hopkins University, won the Christian Gauss Award for *The English Elegy: Studies in the Genre from Spenser to Yeats*, published by Johns Hopkins University Press.

Norma E. Emerton won the Science Award for *The Scientific Reinterpretation of Form*, published by Cornell University Press. Emerton, who specializes in crystallography, teaches in the Department of History and Philosophy of Science at Cambridge University.

Joel Williamson, professor of history at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, won the Ralph Waldo Emerson Award for *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation*, published by Oxford University Press.

In presenting the Gauss Award to Sacks, Committee Chairman Quentin Anderson said, "One of the most fascinating aspects of the book is the evidence it provides of the survival, beyond the period in which appeals to cosmic order carried reassurance, of certain recurrent motifs in the elegy, almost as if the form

Triennial Council Meeting

**Norman Ramsey Heads United Chapters, Otis Singletary Elected Vice President**

Norman F. Ramsey, Higgins Professor of Physics at Harvard University, was elected to a three-year term as president of the United Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa at the triennial Council meeting held recently in Baltimore. Otis A. Singletary, president of the University of Kentucky, was elected vice president.

Twelve Phi Beta Kappa senators are now serving for the 1982-88 term, and 12 additional ones were elected at the meeting to serve from 1985 to 1991. In addition, the delegates approved charters for three new chapters: University of California, Santa Cruz; University of Puget Sound; and Villanova University.

President Ramsey, who succeeds Catherine S. Sims, has been vice president of the United Chapters since 1982. He has been on the faculty at Harvard

since 1947 and has been senior fellow, Harvard Society of Fellows, since 1972. He is chairman of the governing board, American Institute of Physics, and a fellow of the American Philosophical Society and of the American Physical Society (he served as its president in 1978-79). He is a member of the Association for the Advancement of Science (he was chairman of the physics section in 1977) and of the National Academy of Sciences. He is a trustee of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Rockefeller University. The author of four books, he also taught at Columbia University, University of Illinois, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Mount Holyoke College, University of Virginia, and Oxford University. From 1966 to 1981 he was president of the Universities Research Association.

an inevitable way of registering and controlling our experience of mortality." In presenting the Science Award, Committee Chairman David A. Park called Emerton's book "a landmark in the modern history of ideas," characterized by "balance, scientific understanding, and clarity of style."

Peter Gay, Emerson Committee Chairman, said of Williamson:

"He has written a magisterial work, captive neither to ideology nor to special pleading. Hence I predict that . . . *The Crucible of Race* stands a good chance of outliving this age."



Norman Ramsey

since 1947 and has been senior fellow, Harvard Society of Fellows, since 1972. He is chairman of the governing board, American Institute of Physics, and a fellow of the American Philosophical Society and of the American Physical Society (he served as its president in 1978-79). He is a member of the Association for the Advancement of Science (he was chairman of the physics section in 1977) and of the National Academy of Sciences. He is a trustee of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Rockefeller University. The author of four books, he also taught at Columbia University, University of Illinois, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Mount Holyoke College, University of Virginia, and Oxford University. From 1966 to 1981 he was president of the Universities Research Association.

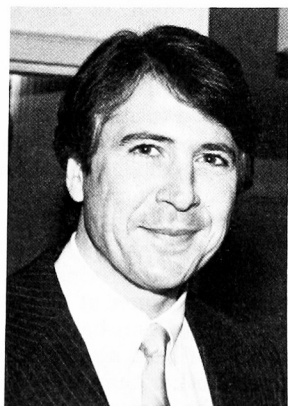
Vice President Singletary has been a Phi Beta Kappa senator since 1976, serving as chairman of the Committee on Policy between 1979 and 1982. He taught history at the University of Texas and was executive vice chancellor for academic affairs for the University of Texas system before becoming president of the University of Kentucky in 1969. He has also been director of the American Association of Higher Education since 1969, and has served several terms on the Rhodes Scholarship Committees in North Carolina and Kentucky.



Otis Singletary

The reelected senators at large are Joan M. Ferrante, professor of English and comparative literature, Columbia University; Norman F. Ramsey; Judith Lynn Sebesta, professor and director of classics, University of South Dakota; Catherine S. Sims; and J. D. Williams,

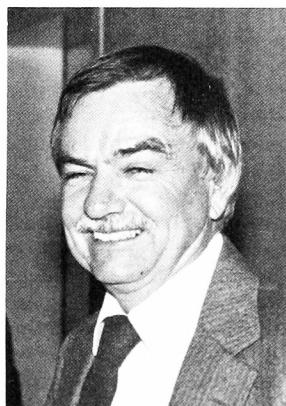
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Peter Sacks



Norma Emerton



Joel Williamson

# THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASES OF SOVIET SPACE EXPLORATION

By Michael Holquist

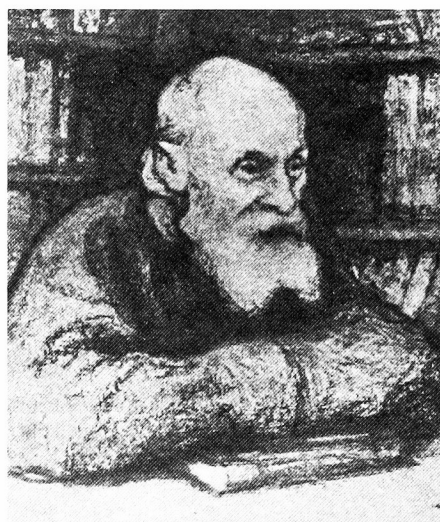
ON OCTOBER 4, 1957, headlines of a size usually reserved to announce declarations of war gave us news that the Russians had placed a man-made satellite into orbit around the Earth. Instantly a new word entered the English language—sputnik. It spawned a host of other words when on December 6, 1957, Vanguard I, the rocket attempting to place the first American satellite into orbit, wobbled a few inches off the pad and then blew up, inspiring journalists to call it “flopnik,” “stayputnik,” and, in a burst of macaronic excess, even “kaputnik.” People were as amazed by the Soviet success as they were bewildered by the United States’ initial blunders in what was immediately perceived to be a “space race.”

Such widespread surprise was the result of several factors, not least of which was an abysmal ignorance of Russian history in general, and of the role played by science in Russian culture in particular. For the first sputnik was not a fluke, an achievement enabled by “captured German scientists,” as we so hypocritically maintained in the immediate aftermath of the launch. The fact is, there is a tradition of government-sponsored rocket research in Russia going back at least to the time of the Crimean War.

As new histories of international rocketry appear, they report increasingly early dates for the point when such research began. Walter A. McDougall, in what is probably the best account of developments in both the United States and the Soviet Union, . . . *The Heavens and The Earth* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), begins his political history of the Space Age with a Russian rather than an American invention: the sketches and mathematical equations for a jet propulsion engine which Nikolai Kibalchich completed in 1881, the same year Dostoyevsky died. This was not Kibalchich’s only invention: as chief chemist to terrorists of “The People’s Will” he also created the ingenious bombs that killed Tsar Alexander II earlier the same year. As McDougall points out, “Modern rocketry and social revolution grew up together in tsarist Russia” (p. 19).

But the connection between rockets and revolutionaries is both more intimate and more complex than has been chronicled even in McDougall’s excellent book. Although he differs from many other Western historians in perceiving the importance of ideology in scientific progress, McDougall is nevertheless concerned with the interworkings of the two only at the most immediate points of contact, the level of “command technology,” where a highly centralized, totalitarian

government supported rocket research as a tool and symbol of the modern scientific state. That is an important story, but it far from exhausts the ideological origins of Soviet space research. For it is the “official” side of the story, and one that the Soviets themselves have gone out of their way to highlight, for reasons that are not difficult to perceive. But behind the official account there are seminal figures and ideas that have been ignored in both Soviet and Western accounts. The most important of the neglected links in the chain of influences that led to the launch of Sputnik I is the one that joins the philosopher Nikolai Fyodorov (1828–1903) with the inventor Konstantin Tsiolkovsky (1857–1935).



Fyodorov

It is really Fyodorov’s story that needs telling, because Tsiolkovsky is a well-known figure in his own right, regarded by scholars everywhere as the greatest pioneering genius of modern space research. Tsiolkovsky was first to do most of the things necessary to make, launch, and sustain life inside rockets as we now know them. The list of his original contributions is overwhelming: he developed aerodynamic test methods for rigid air frames; he solved the problem of rocket flight in a uniform field of gravitation; he calculated the amount of fuel needed to overcome the Earth’s gravitational pull; he invented gyroscopic stabilization of rocket ships in space; and he discovered a method for cooling the combustion chamber with ingredients of the fuel itself (a method still widely used in most jet engines). As early as the 1870s he designed and built a centrifugelike contraption to test the effects of rapidly increased gravitational acceleration on living organ-

isms, demonstrating principles that would enable the Soviets to launch the dog Laika in their second sputnik and, in 1961, to send the first man into space. Tsiolkovsky also did original work on solid fuels, multiple-stage rockets, and space stations.

A man with such a list of firsts to his credit has not gone unclaimed even in the West. But a peculiar fact about Tsiolkovsky has been overlooked in this country, a fact of which much has been made by the Soviets (for their own purposes): for all his contributions to science, Tsiolkovsky was not in the narrowly professional sense

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a scientist at all. On the contrary, he lacked formal degrees of any kind: he was a poor boy who managed, without going to university, to pass the examinations to be certified as a school teacher. And he spent most of his life teaching school in obscure provincial towns such as Borovsk and Kaluga, far from laboratories, libraries, and academic centers. He is similar in many ways to his American contemporary, Thomas Edison, even in certain personal particulars: Tsiolkovsky, too, was deafened at an early age.

But among other great differences between the Russian and American self-made men is the fact that Tsiolkovsky was not actually self-made: he was educated by Nikolai Fyodorov, one of the greatest geniuses—if also one of the greatest eccentrics—that Russia, not short of geniuses or eccentrics, ever produced.

## *Fyodorov’s Influence on Tsiolkovsky*

Tsiolkovsky’s mother died when he was young and his father, who was an itinerant forester, was seldom home. Because Tsiolkovsky was deaf, he was in danger of receiving no formal education of any kind in a time and place where schools for the handicapped were unknown, but he managed to educate himself at home by dint of extraordinary effort to roughly high school level. But the university education for which he thirsted was out of the question. Nevertheless, in 1873 at the age of 16, he left Vyatka, where he had been living, and set out for Moscow, determined at least to study in a great library. As it happened, the chief cataloguer at that library (the Chertkov) was none other than the philosopher Fyodorov, who immediately recognized something special in the ragged young provincial.

Fyodorov himself was one of history's great autodidacts. Although he was the illegitimate son of Prince Pyotr Gagarin, scion of one of Russia's noblest families (one of whose collateral descendants, Yuri Alekseyevich, was the first man to be rocketed into orbital space flight), he early chose to educate himself, a habit that stayed with him all his life. Never satisfied with the conventionalities of formal education, he left the lycée without a diploma but passed with distinction the tests necessary to qualify as a high school teacher. After a brief period of itinerant teaching, he ended up in Moscow, where he worked as a librarian for the rest of his life.

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During the day, Fyodorov, who lived with the utter simplicity of an anchorite, modestly catalogued books, along the way inventing a much more efficient way of doing so. After the library closed, he devoted himself to prodigious reading and presided over a discussion club that included over the years many of the most distinguished names in Russian culture. Dostoyevsky in his later years was an admirer of Fyodorov, as were Tolstoy, Leonid Pasternak (artist-father of the man who wrote *Dr. Zhivago*), and many others who considered Fyodorov to be not only the most erudite man in Russia (in addition to cataloguing the books, he read them all), but the wisest. Even philosophy professors such as Vladimir Soloviev listened to him as to a guru, not only a teacher, as Soloviev wrote, but also a comforter.

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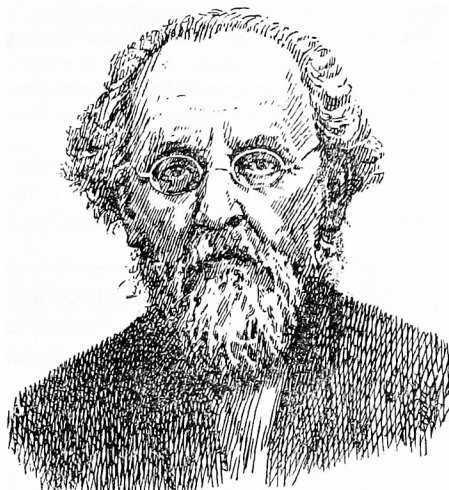
*In Fyodorov's view, everything is alive, from the gigantic suns of distant galaxies to the smallest pebble under our feet here on Earth.*

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Fyodorov took the teen-aged Tsiolkovsky under his wing, providing him not only with food and clothing, but, what is more important, with an education: he set up a plan of study that roughly paralleled courses in the math and physics departments at the University of Moscow but far exceeded those courses in their breadth and depth. The philosopher and the boy were in daily contact for the next three years; Fyodorov encouraged the budding scientist's dreams, while not neglecting practical assistance, helping Tsiolkovsky pass the qualifying exams

and find teaching jobs, first in one of Fyodorov's former posts at Borovsk, and then in Kaluga, where Tsiolkovsky taught until he died.

Tsiolkovsky was thus influenced at an early age by the ideas of Fyodorov, and Tsiolkovsky's great achievements in science were in fact exercises in applied philosophy. But what kind of a philosophy is it that would inspire a young man stuck in the provinces to begin drawing as early as July 1878 (in one of the 18-page exercise books still used by Soviet students) sketches of the whole known solar system, of asteroids with men floating in the weightless world inside them?



Tsiolkovsky

What philosophy might impel such a young man to think of himself as a "gravity hater," who would take gravity itself as a bitter personal enemy and who would conceive "free space" (the name Russians use for what we call "outer space") less in its normal sense as free of gravitational pull, than as an environment in which freedom could be realized as a political metaphor, and in which the "poor would be equal to the rich"?

### *The Philosophy of the Common Task*

A philosophy that would have such effects is the body of ideas Fyodorov called "the philosophy of the common task." The root idea, the one that attracted so many people to Fyodorov in his lifetime, is that human beings do not have their natural home on Earth: rather, they are organisms whose ecosystem is more properly the whole cosmos. If, as Fyodorov did in his posthumously published works, one takes this point of view to its extreme, everything begins to take on a new appearance. In Fyodorov's view, everything is *alive*, from the gigantic suns of distant galaxies to the smallest pebble under our feet here on Earth. Everything is organic: the biggest difference between the life of

rocks and the life of human beings is that they live at different velocities in time and at different degrees of consciousness in space. Because people have consciousness in the highest degree, it is their task to "regulate nature," not just here on Earth, but throughout the universe.

Humanity conceived as the center of everything that exists gains both in dignity and in responsibility. Human beings not only attain the prerogatives formerly attributed to God but shoulder His cares

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*The regulation of nature, the point at which the human mind would introduce design and purpose into the workings of a formerly blind and chaotic nature, represents a new epoch in the evolutionary process: the conscious stage of evolutionary development.*

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as well. All that is living is connected, as members of a family are related. Therefore the task of "regulating nature," to be successful, must be undertaken only with compassion and love, for inasmuch as everything has life, we are related both to all other human beings and to matter as well. As human beings we have a moral as well as a scientific imperative to introduce order into the workings of the natural world. In Fyodorov's thought, ethical categories are inseparable from logical or mathematical categories; there is no split between the so-called human sciences and the natural sciences.

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*Fyodorov's thought is in some sense a combination of Orthodox teaching about the holiness of matter and a Frankenstein-like conviction that, through science, man may become what Mary Shelley called in the subtitle of her novel, "The New Prometheus."*

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The "common task," then, is for people first of all to stop wasting time, effort, and lives killing one another: the great enemies in the cosmos are chaos and chance, which find their most powerful expression in death, death conceived as entropy in the universe and as death of the person for human beings. Death is the enemy; it is what we should bend ourselves to overcoming, both for ourselves and all other people now living, and for our dead ancestors as well. This is perhaps the most radical aspect of Fyodorov's thought: the search for ways to bring back—*physically* to resurrect—all the people who have throughout time passed into the grave. It was precisely this call to the common task of bringing back all our ancestors that attracted Dos-

tojevsky to Fyodorov, and this idea permeates *The Brothers Karamazov*.

Fyodorov was so interested in all aspects of science, and science plays so central a role in his thought, because he felt that only through science would the means ultimately be found to raise the dead. The regulation of nature, the point at which the human mind would introduce design and purpose into the workings of a formerly blind and chaotic nature, represents a new epoch in the evolutionary process: the conscious stage of evolutionary development.

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Fyodorov's thought is in some sense a combination of Orthodox teaching about the holiness of matter and a Frankenstein-like conviction that, through science, man may become what Mary Shelley called in the subtitle of her novel, "The New Prometheus." This strange mix is reflected in Fyodorov's style, which brings together elements of the archaic language of Old Church Slavonic and the latest professional jargon from the newest sciences. It is as if one were to describe subatomic physics in the style of the King James Bible. Cosmonautics in particular interested Fyodorov, because he foresaw the need to find on other planets *Lebensraum*, as well as new sources of food and other necessities, for the immense population that would result from mass resurrection.

Ideas such as these lie behind all Tsiolkovsky's technical achievements: the utopian dream of colonizing space, where the abundant raw materials of new planets will create a prosperity that will wipe out want; the burst of scientific energy will result in discoveries that will ultimately permit human beings to live forever, as all the old evils of life on our own gravity-imprisoned planet—war, disease, poverty, death itself—fall away.

It is a beautiful dream but not a new one, of course. Not even in Russia, where something like it can be found in the utopian aspirations of the so-called God-building movement at the turn of the century, especially in some of the effusions of Gorky in his Capri phase, and in the 1908 fantasy about communal living on Mars by Bogdanov, *The Red Star*. Such men also dreamed of the day when

space flight, the release of men into "free space," would usher in a new phase of human history as men turned themselves into gods. But it is in the philosophy of Fyodorov and the technical breakthroughs of Tsiolkovsky that this utopian aspect of space travel finds its most potent manifestation, for without Tsiolkovsky there would have been no Soviet space program.

That program has, of course, its Janus face: on the one side it is a peaceful program of scientific exploration directed toward the outer reaches of the known universe, involving not only the first man but the first woman in space, and including joint flights with other countries, such as the U.S.-U.S.S.R. Soyuz mission, and flights on Soviet rockets by nationals of other countries. The other face of Soviet rocketry, like the dark side of our own space program, is a strictly military program involving the most mind-boggling engines of destruction in history. The Soviets have come a long way from Tsiolkovsky's sketches in a schoolboy's notebook in the 1870s; in fact the Soviets have

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the capacity to come all the way to our own cities and homes. There is a tragic irony in the fact that Fyodorov and Tsiolkovsky would regard the current state of poised ICBMs with the greatest sorrow.

In the current climate of suspicion vis-à-vis the Russians, it is important to remember the life-affirming vision that played so crucial a role in the development of the Soviet space program. We need some of that vision now, for in an age when we and the Russians have rockets poised as engines of death rather than as ships of discovery, as a means to destroy this world rather than a means to open new ones, we face a common task, if not as in Fyodorov's vision of it, to bring back our parents from death, then surely in the service of providing life to our children.

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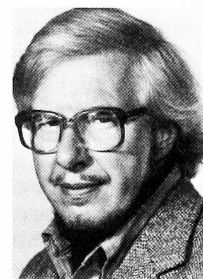
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*Michael Holquist has appointments in Slavic languages and literatures and comparative literature at Indiana University, Bloomington. He is coauthor, with his wife, Katerina Clark, of Mikhail Bakhtin, a biography of the Russian thinker published by Harvard University's Belknap Press in 1984. This article is adapted from lectures he gave last year as a Phi Beta Kappa Visiting Scholar.*



# 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, RICHARD N. CURRENT, LEONARD W. DOOB,  
ANDREW GYORGY, MADELINE R. ROBINSON,  
VICTORIA SCHUCK, ANNA J. SCHWARTZ  
RONALD GEBALLE, RUSSELL B. STEVENS

## RONALD GEBALLE

**Beyond Vision.** Jon Darius. Oxford, 1984. \$29.95.

A collection of 100 photographs of historic significance and esthetic appeal, drawn from all fields of science and from the 150 years since the beginning with daguerrotype and calotype. In each field, some photographs will be familiar but probably not all will be. Many were the subjects of careful pioneering measurement. Each is accompanied by a page of explanation and photographic data; an introduction traces the history of scientific photography.

**Niels Bohr: A Centenary Volume.** Ed. by A. P. French and P. J. Kennedy. Harvard, 1985. \$27.50.

"He led science through the most fundamental change of attitude it has made since Galileo and Newton, by the greatness of his intellect and the wisdom of his judgments," said the Niels Bohr Memorial Lecturer in 1962. This well-illustrated volume includes essays on Bohr's life and work and his philosophy, excerpts from his most influential papers, and his own presentation of his continuing duel with Einstein over "Epistemological Problems in Atomic Physics," that is, complementarity. Bohr's Institute for Theoretical Physics was one of the two centers in which the quantum mechanical picture of the world was hammered out; it also became a haven for refugees from Nazi persecution. His role as searcher for deeper meanings and for clarification of the imperfect language in which we are constrained to describe concepts on the atomic scale is emphasized on almost every page. His "Open Letter to the United Nations" and the award to him of the first Atoms for Peace prize testify to his abiding concern for humanity.

**Measuring the Universe: Cosmic Dimensions from Aristarchus to Halley.** Albert Van Helden. Univ. Chicago, 1985. \$30.

Copernicus's heretical astronomy, Brahe's precision measurements, Kepler's hard-won analysis, and Galileo's matchless observations yielded no objective information about the dimensions of the solar system, its sun and extra-terrestrial planets, or the universe. Aristarchus had a geometric method correct in principle for determining the absolute sizes and distances of the moon and sun, but two millennia had to elapse before the precision of measurement would catch up with him. The telescope per se was not enough. It was more than a century after its introduction that observations of the transits of Venus led to a reasonably accurate determination of the solar parallax. The Earth-sun distance and the enormous scale of the universe then were revealed to surpass by far the imaginings and estimates of all the intellects of the preceding centuries. Van Hel-

den narrates this history in a manner that should interest anyone curious about the unfolding of the grand vista.

**Total Eclipses of the Sun and Moon.** J. B. Zirker. Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1984. \$22.50.

Most of humanity has been liberated from the superstition of earlier times that equated eclipse with disaster. The most dramatic eclipse story of our era was the confirmation in 1919 of Einstein's prediction of the bending of the light from a star as it grazed by the sun; however, eclipses have taught much more. Over the past century or so, investigators have gleaned information about solar evolution, composition, and structure; the nature of interplanetary dust; reactions in the Earth's atmosphere; the motions of the Earth and the moon; and more. Zirker explains in simple terms the causes of eclipses, the different kinds, their durations, and their paths across the Earth's surface.

**Songs from Unsung Worlds.** Ed. by Bonnie Bilyeu Gordon. Birkhauser, 1985. \$14.95.

This is an anthology of 130 poems that in one way or another invoke science; most are by widely known contemporary poets, a few are by scientists who have successfully practiced poetry writing. The several kinds of connection presented here are direct and compelling and might surprise readers who have not realized the extent to which poets are "up" on science, finding its subject matter worthy of treatment in their terms. We see here that science offers poets an apt vocabulary for metaphor and a source of ideas and images for expressing emotion, love of life, and love of nature. The collection is introduced by a dialogue between two of the contributors; it ends with brief biographical sketches. Many of the poets are quoted on the affinity they perceive between the realms of science and literature.

## LAWRENCE WILLSON

**The Experimental Fictions of Ambrose Bierce: Structuring the Ineffable.** Cathy N. Davidson. Univ. Nebraska, 1983. \$15.95.

"Bierce more than any other nineteenth-century writer anticipates the revolutions in ideas of art and life that characterize the innovative and experimental fictions of the present era," says Davidson. His obtuse characters are caught up in crises of the macabre and the fearful that "dramatize the limits of perception and reveal the fatuity of much language and most reason." Bierce was skeptical of the objectivity of the observation of his characters and of practically everything else, including logical conclusions. His characters are not aware of any truth, and he is no wiser than they are. The focus of his fictions is "what the

perceiver . . . thinks he perceives, how he puts nebulous thought into nebulous words and then reacts to what he thinks he thinks." His techniques—the dislocation of linear plot lines, the disruption of chronological time, the juxtaposition of multiple points of view—had their influence on Stephen Crane and Ernest Hemingway and even more markedly on such contemporary writers as Ryunosuke Akutagawa, Julio Cortázar, and Jorge Luis Borges.

**Animals in American Literature.** Mary Allen. Univ. Illinois, 1983. \$14.95.

Animals play a greater role in American literature than in any other national literature. As protagonists and symbols they range from such heroic creatures—wild, celibate, fighting to be free, even of sexual involvement—as Moby Dick, Faulkner's Old Ben, and Hemingway's big fish to Mark Twain's "unforgettable menagerie of scrounging beasts": the jumping frog, the jackass rabbit, the mule (much admired by Faulkner), and the coyote, creatures who "surpass man in being free from those emotions that reduce him to a miserable fool—competitiveness, greed, ego." There is, indeed, "a tantalizing view . . . at play in American literature that animals are better than people." Jack London's Buck "is as exuberant a hero as may be found in our fiction" and the rat who struggled heroically in the sewer with Bigger Thomas "screams his way into the rank of most memorable animals in American literature." The situation is grimmer in the works of Steinbeck and Hemingway, where animals exist to be slain by men for whom the hunt is "therapy—ritual—art." Hemingway's animals meet the heroic ideal: they face death boldly. "Through death the respected and loved animal is preserved."

**The Sage in Harlem: H. L. Mencken and the Black Writers of the 1920s.** Charles Scruggs. Johns Hopkins, 1984. \$21.50.

**H. L. Mencken and the Debunkers.** Edward A. Martin. Univ. Georgia, 1984. \$22.50.

Scruggs and Martin perform the valuable service of placing Mencken where he doubtless belongs: at the center of the literary and intellectual life of the nation between 1910 and 1930. He was, wrote Walter Lippman, "the most powerful personal influence on this whole generation of educated people." For the black writers of the Harlem Renaissance he was important because he treated them simply as writers, without regard to color. He taught them the liberating use of satire, he persuaded them to write positively about the strong points of their race instead of complaining that they were mistreated, and he opened the pages of the *American Mercury* to them. His concern was for the craft of writing, not for racial politics. Says Scruggs, he "did more for black writers than any other white intellectual of his generation."

For the cultural muckrakers and debunkers of the period he was a seminal influence, from Ambrose Bierce through Nathanael West and including such writers as Sinclair Lewis, Don Marquis, Ring Lardner, and the original staff of the *New Yorker*. With them he shared a love and respect for the language, "which matters uniquely as the instrument of human progress." The abuse of language, he believed, expresses the deterioration of the authority of values, traditions, and institutions, and creates a sense of the "eternal meaninglessness of life," for which the antidote is "the exercise of skill, the mediating, amoral, joyful effects of

devotion to art." "His love of the art of writing," the proper treatment of the language, "was the organizing passion of his life." The weakening of that passion in others in favor of a provincial and puritanical gentility was the source of his sacred rage and his call to the like-minded to follow his lead.

**Henry James: Letters, 1895–1916.** Ed. by Leon Edel. Vol. IV. Belknap-Harvard, 1984. \$30.

Henry James had the incomparable gift of an imagination that turned almost every phrase he wrote to purest gold. That happy knack of genius extended to his letters, which are works of art. "The best letters seem to me the most delightful of all written things," he declared, adding that if a correspondence has "the real charm . . . I would give it all the glory of the greatest literature." These letters have "the real charm" straight to the end. It is unfortunate, however, that the letters of so meticulous an artist should have been so poorly edited, marred by so many errors of fact in the annotation that one begins to look for—and to find—errors in the text. The annotation itself adds little to and subtracts much from the reputation of Edel. Such an obvious reference as Moliere's *M. Jourdain* is several times identified, but what *was* the bearing of Jean du Breuil's death "on poor B[essie] L[odge]'s history" and who was "the complacent hard-eyed critic of Onslow Square"? But the letters themselves remain a constant source of pleasure.

**Becoming William James.** Howard M. Feinstein. Cornell, 1984. \$24.95.

Here is one of those books which, as the saying goes, it is impossible to put down. This chronicle of the struggles for power—and freedom from its ravages—in the James family begins with the determination of the first William James (William of Albany), grandfather of the philosopher William and the novelist Henry, to dominate their father, Henry James, Sr., and goes on to recount the efforts of that apparently benign and benevolent Transcendentalist to shape the younger William's life in a mold of the parental choosing. It is a tale fraught with terror (and by no means atypical of the relations of American fathers and sons, especially artistic sons, in the 19th century) as Feinstein discusses "the politics of invalidism" in the family: Henry's famous bad back, William's hypochondria and fear of mental derangement, Wilky's bitterness and early death, Bob's alcoholism (like his father's) and confinement in asylums, poor Alice's retreat into lesbianism and early death from cancer. The theme of the prodigal carries into still another generation when Bob's son Ned is rejected by his father as Bob and Wilky were rejected by their father, who had been rejected by *his* father. It took a lot of becoming to become William James, but the game was clearly worth the candle. Henry was the lucky one: he got away—3,000 miles away—early.

MADELINE R. ROBINTON

**Balfour: Intellectual Statesman.** Ruddock F. Mackay. Oxford, 1985. \$29.95.

**Lloyd George: From Peace to War, 1912–1916.** John Grigg. Univ. California, 1985. \$30.

Two men more different in personality, background, and approach to politics could scarcely be conceived, yet both served in the same Cab-

nets and both were prime ministers of Britain. Balfour, the nephew of the third Marquess of Salisbury, austere, intellectual, and withdrawn, became the Leader of the House of Commons in his uncle's Cabinet and then succeeded him as prime minister. David Lloyd George, a Welsh Nonconformist, an extrovert, an astute and instinctive politician, whose real passion was politics, became prime minister by a series of remarkable political maneuvers. Mackay's one-volume life of Balfour reflects the character of the man, thoughtful and judicious. The third volume of Grigg's multi-volume biography of Lloyd George deals with only four crucial years. It also reflects its subject, the colorful, energetic, and passionate politician, and provides "a good read."

**Lord Liverpool: The Life and Political Career of Robert Banks Jenkinson, Second Earl of Liverpool, 1770–1828.** Norman Gash. Harvard, 1984. \$20.

Gash's biography of a prime minister who is a "shadowy figure" in most history books is a brilliant evocation of an interesting human being, an able politician, and a skillful Cabinet colleague and head of government. The book reads like novel and yet it is a most careful weaving of biographical data into the historical tapestry in all its complexity. Gash has again done a masterly job!

**Endangered Lives: Public Health in Victorian Britain.** Anthony S. Wohl. Harvard, 1983. \$20.

This interesting book opens with a stark picture of the conditions under which even the British Royal Family lived in the 19th century—overflowing cesspools, poor drains, the polluted Thames, and the attack of typhoid that caused the death of Prince Albert. Pollution of the air, streets, and water supply; the lack of water and sanitary facilities; the spread of cholera and other contagious diseases affecting not only slum dwellers but the whole population are well illustrated by copious reference to contemporary sources.

**Queen Victoria in Her Letters.** Christopher Hibbert. Viking, 1985. \$25.

This selection offers a fascinating insight into the mind of Victoria. Her reactions to the books she read, to the plays she saw, to the ministers she dealt with, and to domestic politics and international crises reveal remarkable common sense and shrewdness. Her criticism of and advice to her children and her comments on family members and matters, recorded almost daily, read like a Victorian novel.

**The Lisle Letters.** An abridgement ed. by Muriel St. Clare Byrne, with Bridget Bland. Univ. Chicago, 1983. \$25.

This abridgement of the six volumes that caused such a stir on its publication in 1981 is the correspondence of Arthur Plantagenet, the illegitimate son of Edward IV, his wife, and his associates when he was lord deputy of Calais, 1533 to 1540. The letters deal with family matters, education of the children, personal business, life in Calais, the court of Henry VIII, religion and politics. In form and substance, the letters reveal the writer's problems and fears against the backdrop of political intrigue and arbitrary rule in early Tudor England.

**The French Revolution in Miniature: Section Droits-de-l'Homme, 1789–1795.** Morris Slavin. Princeton, 1984. \$55.

This study seeks to present the French Revolution *d'en bas*, from below. Dealing with one neighborhood in the Marais, Slavin describes the revolution in microcosm. Starting with a detailed analysis of the social structure of the Section, he provides a breakdown of numbers in specific categories: the social classes, occupations (including the professions), the numbers of employers and employees. He is able to identify the participants in the Section's assembly and its committees and follow them through. He presents the stuff of day-to-day activities of people who lived through the upheavals, describes the roles they played in bringing about the changes, and shows how they were affected. All this is based on intensive and perspicacious use of local records.

**The Improvement of Humanity: Education and the French Revolution.** R. R. Palmer. Princeton, 1985. \$30.

Using four themes—nationalization, politicization, democratization, and modernization—Palmer traces the changes in educational policy in France in the late 18th century and shows how these concepts motivated and guided the policymakers. Implicit in all the plans proposed and put into effect from the Rolland Plan in 1763 to the debates in Napoleonic times was the faith that education could achieve the goal of social improvement, that the human mind at birth was a blank page and environmental influences determined the results. Palmer explores the changes in the schools and universities brought about by specific reforms in theory and practice and by the social changes, independent of the reforms, caused by the revolution and its attendant wars. His final note: "Most of the problems and objectives are still with us today."

RICHARD N. CURRENT

**Before the Trumpet: Young Franklin Roosevelt, 1882–1905.** Geoffrey C. Ward. Harper & Row, 1985. \$19.95.

F.D.R. once observed that the biographer too often concentrates on the period "after the trumpet of fame" has sounded. Ward now presents not only F.D.R. before the trumpet but also the people then most important to him. These include his grandfather, the opium trader Warren Delano; his mother, the over-protective Sara Delano Roosevelt; his cousin, the inspiring Theodore; and his wife-to-be, the rather unhappy Eleanor. All the characters come vividly to life in a thoroughly researched account that reveals how F.D.R. grew up to be the man he was.

**To the Halls of the Montezumas: The Mexican War in the American Imagination.** Robert W. Johannsen. Oxford, 1985. \$25.

We usually think of the war with Mexico as one of the three most unpopular American wars (along with Vietnam and the War of 1812). Taking a fresh look, Johannsen avoids the "frequently overworked" utterance of politicians and focuses on widely read periodicals and books. From these he ascertains "some of the ways in which Americans perceived the war" and shows "how these perceptions re-



vealed some of the characteristics of mid-19th-century American thought and culture." On the whole, he finds a positive response, one that helped Americans to realize their "self-identity."

**Without God, Without Creed: The Origins of Unbelief in America.** James Turner. Johns Hopkins, 1985. \$26.50.

In the early 1600s, disbelief in God would have been a "bizarre aberration" in either Europe or America. By the late 1900s, it was an option exercised by millions. How did this come about? The answers usually emphasize Darwinism, scientific naturalism, industrialization, urbanization, and technological change. But Turner finds the explanation not in these developments themselves but in the response of religious leaders to them. "In trying to adapt their religious beliefs to socioeconomic change, to new moral challenges, to novel problems of knowledge, to the tightening standards of science, the defenders of God slowly strangled Him."

**The Lost Life of Horatio Alger, Jr.** Gary Scharnhorst with Jack Bales. Indiana Univ., 1985. \$17.95.

The creator of the "Horatio Alger hero" had no such hero's life himself. Starting as a Unitarian minister near Boston, he was dismissed for molesting boys. He then moved to New York City. There, frequenting the Newsboys' Lodging House and the Y.M.C.A., he befriended homeless youths and drew inspiration for his rags-to-respectability (not rags-to-riches) novels. After his death in 1899, his life was "lost" because he and his relatives had destroyed his correspondence so as to hide the early scandal. A 1928 pseudobiography became the main source for subsequent biographers. The present authors have rediscovered enough of Alger's life to set the record straight.

**Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States.** Kenneth T. Jackson. Oxford, 1985. \$21.95.

The "deconcentration" of people began early in America and has gone much further here than in Europe or Asia. This suburbanization has resulted partly from America's abundance of land, improvements in transportation and house construction, and emphasis on domesticity. But "suburbanization was not an historical inevitability created by geography, technology, and culture." It has been stimulated by government policies: highway subsidies, housing programs, tax deductions, and the like, almost all of which have favored the white middle-class or upper-class suburbanite at the expense of the black or immigrant denizen of the inner city. The author regrets the decline of the urban community but sees hope for its recovery.

#### ANNA J. SCHWARTZ

**The Fatal Equilibrium.** Marshall Jevons. MIT, 1985. \$10.95.

In this academic whodunit, the murder of two members of the Harvard Promotion and Tenure Committee following the apparent suicide of a candidate who had been denied tenure is the mystery that a potential Nobel laureate solves by applying economic principles. Psychologists, anthropologists, and environmentalists

may find instructive the way economists think about issues with interdisciplinary dimensions. The two professors identified on the jacket as the composite pseudonymous author deftly portray campus personalities and politics.

**The Structure and Reform of the U.S. Tax System.** Albert Ando, Marshal E. Blume, and Irwin Friend. MIT, 1985. \$16.95.

**Blueprints for Basic Tax Reform.** David F. Bradford and the U.S. Treasury Tax Policy Staff. 2nd rev. ed. Tax Analysts, 1984. \$12.50.

**Assessing Tax Reform.** Henry J. Aaron and Harvey Galper. Brookings, 1985. \$22.95; paper, \$8.95.

**The American Tax System: A Call for Reform.** Barry J. Hershey. Philosophical Library, 1984. \$15.

**Making Tax Choices.** Joseph J. Minarik. Urban Institute, 1985. \$26.95; paper, \$12.95.

Four plans to overhaul the U.S. tax system have recently been proposed. The complexity of this undertaking is illustrated by this selection of books dealing with the economic and political ramifications of altering the existing individual and corporate income taxes. Ando, Blume, and Friend and Bradford provide guides to alternative modifications of the tax system, indicating the economic effects of each approach, one a plan for broadening the income tax base and integrating corporate and personal income taxes, the other a plan for imposing a national personal consumption tax. Aaron and Galper advocate a graduated tax on consumption, gifts, and bequests to replace the individual income tax, and a tax on cash flows to replace the corporate income tax. Hershey proposes a reduction in marginal tax rates financed by eliminating deductions, exemptions, and credits, and the imposition of sales and excise taxes to replace Social Security taxes. Minarik's concerns include not only restructuring the existing tax system but also raising the necessary revenues to narrow the federal budget deficit. Given that change will gore some oxen, it is an open question whether Congress will indeed pass a tax reform bill.

**Politics and Economics of External Debt Crisis: The Latin American Experience.** Ed. by Miguel S. Wionczek with Luciano Tomassini. Westview, 1985. \$37.50.

This collection of articles, which expresses the interests and views of Latin America, supplements the views of the international banking community and financial agencies on remedial actions to solve the difficulties associated with the region's huge external indebtedness. The authors study the regional difficulties, including their political and social aspects, in the context of worldwide developments, and prescribe ways to free both the region and the world from their present predicament. In the second part of the book, the process of external debt accumulation and the defects of attempts in 1982-83 to renegotiate the debts are reviewed through case studies. In a concluding chapter, the editor expresses pessimism about the outlook.

**Economic Theory in Retrospect.** Mark Blaug. 4th ed. Cambridge, 1985. \$49.50; paper, \$19.95.

This work, now in its fourth edition, has helped to restore the history of economic thought as a subject for study in British and American universities. The focus is on the

connections between past and contemporary theory, hence the need for updating the work as contemporary theory has developed in new directions. The new edition takes account of the rise of monetarism and the new classical macroeconomics and emphasizes links with older theory.

**Pioneers in Development.** Ed. by Gerald M. Meier and Dudley Seers. A World Bank Publication. Oxford, 1984. \$29.95. 1985, paper, \$12.95.

After World War II a new field of economic inquiry—the sources of economic development—attracted a cohort of economists. Two broad approaches emerged: One stressed foreign aid and government planning as indispensable for development; the other stressed enterprise, trade, and access to world capital markets as sufficient for development. These polar positions and intermediate ones are represented in these World Bank-sponsored lectures by 10 economists who were pioneers in the field of development. They reminisce about influences on the positions they adopted and assess their contributions to policies affecting Third World growth. One or two younger development economists comment on the views of each pioneer, in some cases censuring them.

**Removing Obstacles to Economic Growth.** Ed. by Michael L. Wachter and Susan M. Wachter. Univ. Pennsylvania, 1984. \$29.95.

**World Economic Growth: Case Studies of Developed and Developing Nations.** Ed. by Arnold C. Harberger. Institute for Contemporary Studies, 1984. \$22.95; paper, \$9.95.

These conference volumes, one addressed to U.S. problems, the other to problems of a selection of countries, offer policies to encourage economic growth.

The U.S. study covers the 1973-82 period, attributing the poor performance of output and productivity to such factors as the oil price shocks that reduced potential output, the decline in the quality of the capital stock, the rapid growth in the labor force unmatched by capital growth, and the destabilizing effects on output of high inflation rates. Recommendations include (1) private sector improvements in the motivation of labor; (2) public sector policies to increase incentives for savings and investments, to reduce the government budget deficit, and to mitigate the business cycle; and (3) promotion of international financial harmony.

The unifying theme of the individual studies in the multicountry volume is the relation of economic policy to economic growth. A program to promote growth includes liberalization of trade; control of the fiscal budget and of inflationary pressures; choice of prudent income tax rates and limited use of tax incentives; sparing resort, if any, to wage and price controls; application of the same rules to public and private sector enterprises; and avoidance of erratic policies.

According to the editors of both studies, the assumption that faster economic growth is always desirable may be challenged by income distribution effects. In developing countries the problem lies in the presence of a huge group of disadvantaged people alongside governmental elites and other power groups that are the main beneficiaries of economic growth. Efforts to improve human capital are essential in such societies.

## New Officers

(continued from page 1)

professor of political science and director of the Hinckley Institute for Politics, University of Utah.

Reelected district senators are Robert Allen Fowkes, professor of German and linguistics, emeritus, New York University (Middle Atlantic District); Virginia Rogers Ferris, professor of entomology, Purdue University (East Central District); and Hazel E. Barnes, Robert B. Hawkins Distinguished Professor of Humanities and Professor of Philosophy, University of Colorado (Western District).

Newly elected senators at large are Neil Harris, professor of history, University of Chicago; Jaroslav Pelikan, Sterling Professor of History, Yale University; and Darwin T. Turner, University of Iowa Foundation Distinguished Professor of English and chairman, Afro-American Studies, University of Iowa. Newly elected to represent the North Central District is Carole Okun Brown, professor of English, Hamline University.

Four new members were elected to the Council Nominating Committee, which

selects the slates for the offices of president, vice president, senators at large, and members of the Nominating Committee for the term 1985 to 1991. The new committee members are William J. Bouwsma, Sather Professor of History, University of California, Berkeley; E. David Cronon, professor of history and dean of the College of Letters and Sciences, University of Wisconsin, Madison; Robert M. Lumiansky, professor of English emeritus, New York University; and Adalaide Kirby Morris, professor of English, University of Iowa.

## Other Council Highlights

At the Council banquet, Robert Lumiansky received the Phi Beta Kappa Award for Distinguished Service to the Humanities. He was chairman of the board of directors of the American Council of Learned Societies from 1959 to 1974, when he became president, a post he held until 1983. He is now serving as president pro tem for that organization. He has been active in Phi Beta Kappa committees since 1956, was elected senator in 1961, and served as vice president from 1973 to 1976 and as president from 1976 to 1979.

Special tributes also were paid to two senators who have just completed the maximum Senate term—18 years. Robert B. Heilman, who was unable to attend the meeting, delivered the tribute to Edgar F. Shannon, Jr., via an electronic link to the Hyatt Regency Hotel ballroom, and Lawrence Willson gave the tribute to Robert Heilman. (Both Heilman and Willson are members of the *Key Reporter's* Book Committee.)

The Council festivities began with a reception at the National Aquarium in Baltimore, which was reserved for the occasion. A jazz trio provided background music for the raw oyster bar and buffet on the top floor.

## MacIntyre Gives 3rd Annual Romanell Lectures in Nashville

"Issues of Truth-telling and Lying" is the title of the three-part series of lectures delivered by Alasdair MacIntyre in



Alasdair MacIntyre

Nashville, Tennessee, November 6, 7, and 8, 1985. MacIntyre, the 1985–86 Romanell-Phi Beta Kappa Professor of Philosophy, spoke at Vanderbilt University, where he is W. Alton Jones Distinguished Professor of Philosophy. The three lectures were subtitled "Moral Issues," "Political Issues," and "Metaphysical Questions."

## 1986–87 Recipient Named

John R. Searle, professor of philosophy, University of California, Berkeley, has been appointed to the Romanell-Phi Beta Kappa Professorship in Philosophy for next year. The professorship is intended to recognize the recipient's distinguished achievement and contribution or potential contribution to public understanding of philosophy.

## Psychologist Will Lecture at AAAS Meeting in Philadelphia

Richard L. Solomon, James M. Skinner University Professor of Science at the University of Pennsylvania from 1975 to 1985 and now professor emeritus, will deliver the annual Phi Beta Kappa Lecture at the spring meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. The lecture is scheduled for 1:30 P.M. on May 29 in the Franklin Plaza Hotel, and all Phi Beta Kappa members in the area will receive invitations to attend.

### New $\Phi$ BK Senator Featured in Summer 1947 Key Reporter:

"Elected to Phi Beta Kappa at 15, Darwin Turner is one of the youngest members ever to receive this honor. He was elected by the Society's chapter at the University of Cincinnati, where he enrolled as a freshman in the fall of 1944 and followed an accelerated program, majoring in English. He will graduate from the university in the spring."



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