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VOLUME 53 □ NUMBER TWO □ WINTER 1987-88

The Key Reporter

Annual ΦBK Senate Banquet

Bocks on Metamorphosis, Chemicals, and Ecological Imperialism Win ΦBK's Gauss, Emerson, and Science Prizes for 1987

The winners of the 1987 Phi Beta Kappa book awards for outstanding contributions to humanistic learning were honored at the annual Senate banquet at the Embassy Row Hotel in Washington, D.C., December 4, 1987.

Leonard Barkan received the Christian Gauss Award for *The Gods Made Flesh: Metamorphosis and the Pursuit of Paganism*, published by Yale University Press. Barkan, who is professor of English and art history at Northwestern University, has a Guggenheim grant to do research for another book in Rome.

The Science Award went to Hugh D. Crone, head of the Personnel Protection Group at the Materials Research Laboratories in Melbourne, Australia, for *Chemicals and Society: A Guide to the New Chemical Age*. The award was accepted by the counselor for defense science at the Australian embassy, A.J. Beatord.

Alfred W. Crosby, author of *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900*, received the Ralph Waldo Emerson Award [see page 2]. Both the Emerson and the science prizewinning books were published by Cambridge University Press. Each award is for \$2,500.

In presenting the prize for literature, Gauss committee chairwoman Thelma N. Greenfield praised *The Gods Made*



Alfred W. Crosby (left) is pictured with Leonard Barkan at the annual Senate banquet.

Flesh as "enormously ambitious and brilliantly achieved." The book, she said, "commands three ages, many languages, and a number of disciplines, especially literature and painting. With Ovid for his treasure house and the story of Arachne for his beginning and his key, the author shows us metamorphosis in its mysterious linkages and in its features of deception, alienation, libido, identity, fear, celebration, the importance of the female, and the creational, life-confirming aspect."

In presenting the award for science writing, committee chairman Charles Rosenberg praised Crone's "synthesis of materials from a dozen disciplines" and "lucid exposition" of the ways in which the production and applications of chemicals have altered and are altering our social and physical world. Rosenberg added that Crone's book "has illuminated—and made accessible to the common reader—the complex of interactions between pure and applied science, between corporate interests and national policy, between public health and economic perception, between civil and military sectors. Most strikingly he has managed to steer dextrously between the Scylla and Charybdis of polemical handwringing and interested apologetics."

In presenting the Emerson award to the author of *Ecological Imperialism*, committee chairman Robert O. Paxton

Columbia Professor Danto Presents 5th Annual Romanell-ΦBK Lectures

Arthur C. Danto, the fifth recipient of the Romanell-Phi Beta Kappa Lecture-ship in Philosophy, gave a series of three lectures on "The Philosophical Perception of Art" at Columbia University on October 19, 20, and 22, 1987. Danto, Johnsonian Professor of Philosophy at Columbia University, is also an art critic for *The Nation* and the author of several books on the philosophy of art. The titles of the three Romanell lectures were "Description and the Phenomenology of Perception," "Artifact and Art," and "The Politics of Imagination."

The professorship for 1988-89 has been awarded to Richard Rorty of the University of Virginia.

The Romanell-Phi Beta Kappa Professorship was created to recognize distinguished achievement in philosophy and contribution or potential contribution to public understanding of philosophy. Phi Beta Kappa chapters interested in making a nomination for the 1989-90 professorship are advised that the deadline for nominations is February 19, 1988.

said, "The reader never again looks at the human experience on this planet in quite the same way after reading it. . . . Heretofore we were inclined to believe that the European settler succeeded because of human qualities good or bad. . . . Perhaps, says Mr. Crosby. But what the European settler really had on his side was all the associated animals, weeds, and diseases that he brought with him, wittingly or unwittingly." Paxton concluded that Crosby's ultimate theme is ecological ignorance. "Although historians knew fragments of this material before, Mr. Crosby's great contribution is to make us understand ecological systems whole. Secondly, he warns that human actions can still have massive unintended ecological consequences."

The 1988 Phi Beta Kappa book awards are open to qualified books published between June 1, 1987, and April 30, 1988. Entries must be submitted, preferably by the publishers, by April 30, 1988. Inquiries and entries should be addressed to the appropriate award committee at 1811 Q St., N.W., Washington, DC 20009.



Science Award Winner Hugh D. Crone



Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900–1900

By Alfred W. Crosby

EUROPEAN EMIGRANTS and their descendants are all over the place, which requires explanation.

It is more difficult to account for the distribution of this subdivision of the human species than that of any other. The locations of the others make an obvious kind of sense. All but a relative few of the members of the many varieties of Asians live in Asia. Black Africans live on three continents, but most of them are concentrated in their original latitudes, the tropics, facing each other across one ocean. Amerindians, with few exceptions, live in the Americas, and nearly every last Australian Aborigine dwells in Australia. Eskimos live in the circumpolar lands, and Melanesians, Polynesians, and Micronesians are scattered through the islands of only one ocean, albeit a large one.

All these peoples have expanded geographically—have committed acts of imperialism, if you will—but they have expanded into lands adjacent to or at least near to those in which they had already been living, or, in the case of the Pacific peoples, to the next island and then to the next after that, however many kilometers of water might lie between. Europeans, in contrast, seem to have leapfrogged around the globe.

Europeans, a division of Caucasians distinctive in their politics and technologies rather than in their physiques, live in large numbers and nearly solid blocks in northern Eurasia, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. They occupy much more territory there than they did a thousand or even five hundred years ago, but that is the part of the world in which they have lived throughout recorded history, and there they have expanded in the traditional way, into contiguous areas.

The Neo-Europes are intriguing for reasons other than the disharmony between their locations and the racial and cultural identity of most of their people.

They also compose the great majority in the populations of what I shall call the Neo-Europes, lands thousands of kilometers from Europe and from each other. Australia's population is almost all European in origin, and that of New Zealand is about nine-tenths European. In the Americas north of Mexico there are considerable minorities of Afro-Americans and *mestizos* (a convenient Spanish-American term I shall use to designate Amerindian and white mixtures), but

over 80 percent of the inhabitants of this area are of European descent. In the Americas south of the Tropic of Capricorn the population is also dominantly white. The inhabitants of the "Deep South" in Brazil (Paraná, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande do Sul) range between 85 and 95 percent European, and Uruguay, next door, is also approximately nine-tenths white. Some estimations put Argentina at about 90 percent and others at close to one 100 percent European. In contrast, Chile's people are only about one-third European; almost all the rest are *mestizo*.

But if we consider all the peoples of that vast wedge of the continent poleward of the Tropic of Capricorn, we see that the great majority are European. Even if we accept the highest estimations of *mestizo*, Afro-American, and Amerindian populations, more than three of every four Americans in the southern temperate zone are entirely of European ancestry.

The Neo-Europes are intriguing for reasons other than the disharmony between their locations and the racial and cultural identity of most of their people. These lands attract the attention—the unblinking envious gaze—of most of humanity because of their food surpluses. They compose the majority of those very few nations on this earth that consistently, decade after decade, export very large quantities of food.

In 1982, the total value of all agricultural exports in the world, of all agricultural products that crossed national borders, was \$210 billion. Of this, Canada, the United States, Argentina, Uruguay, Australia, and New Zealand accounted for \$64 billion, or a little over 30 percent, a total and a percentage that would be even higher if the exports of southern Brazil were added. The Neo-European share of exports of wheat, the most important crop in international commerce, was even greater. In 1982, \$18 billion worth of wheat passed over national boundaries, of which the Neo-Europes exported about \$13 billion.

In the same year, world exports of protein-rich soybeans, the most important new entry in international trade in foodstuffs since World War II, amounted to \$7 billion. The United States and Canada accounted for \$6.3 billion of this. In exports of fresh, chilled, and frozen beef and mutton, the Neo-Europes also lead the world, as well as in a number of other foodstuffs. Their share of the international trade in the world's most vitally important foods is much greater than the Middle East's share of petroleum exports.

The dominant role of the Neo-Europes in international trade in foodstuffs is not simply a matter of brute productivity.

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics usually leads the world in the production of wheat, oats, barley, rye, potatoes, milk, mutton, sugar, and several other food items. China outproduces every other nation in rice and millet, and it has the most pigs. In terms of productivity per unit of land, a number of nations outdo the Neo-Europes, whose farmers, small in number but great in technology, specialize in extensive rather than intensive cultivation. Per farmer, their productivity is awesome, but per hectare it is not so impressive. These regions lead the world in production of food *relative to the amount locally consumed*, or, to put it another way, in the production of surpluses for export. To cite an extreme example, in 1982 the United States produced only a minuscule percentage of the world's rice, but it accounted for one-fifth of all exports of that grain, more than any other nation.

The parts of the world that today in terms of population and culture are most like Europe are far away from Europe—indeed, they are across major oceans—and although they are similar in climate to Europe, they have indigenous floras and faunas different from those of Europe.

The Europeans' proclivity for migrating overseas is one of their most distinctive characteristics, and one that has had much to do with Neo-European agricultural productivity. Europeans were understandably slow to leave the security of their homelands. The populations of the Neo-Europes did not become as white as they are today until long after Cabot, Magellan, and other European navigators first came upon the new lands, or until many years after the first white settlers made their homes there. In 1800, North America, [defined, for purposes of this book, as the United States and Canada] after almost two centuries of successful European colonization, and though in many ways the most attractive of the Neo-Europes to Old World migrants, had a population of fewer than 5 million whites, plus about 1 million blacks. Southern South America, after more than two hundred years of European occupation, was an even worse laggard, having less than half a million whites. Australia had only 10,000, and New Zealand was still Maori country.

Then came the deluge. Between 1820 and 1930, well over 50 million Europeans migrated to the Neo-European lands

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overseas. That number amounts to approximately one-fifth of the entire population of Europe at the beginning of that period. Why such an enormous movement of peoples across such vast distances? Conditions in Europe provided a considerable push—population explosion and a resulting shortage of cultivable land, national rivalries, persecution of minorities—and the application of steam power to ocean and land travel certainly facilitated long distance migration.

But what was the nature of the Neo-European pull? The attractions were many, of course, and they varied from place to place in these new-found lands. But underlying them all, and coloring and shaping them in ways such that a reasonable man might be persuaded to invest capital and even the lives of his family in Neo-European adventures, were factors perhaps best described as biogeographical.

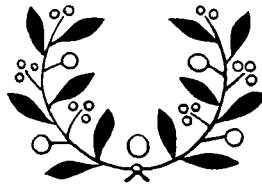
Let us begin by applying to the problem what I call the Dupin technique, after Edgar Allan Poe's detective, C. Auguste Dupin, who found the invaluable "Purloined Letter" not hidden in a book-binding or a gimlet hole in a chair leg but out where everyone could see it in a letter rack. A description of the technique, a sort of corollary to Ockham's razor, goes like this: Ask simple questions, because the answers to complicated questions probably will be too complicated to test and, even worse, too fascinating to give up.

Where are the Neo-Europes? Geographically they are scattered, but they are in similar latitudes. They are all completely or at least two-thirds in the temperate zones, north and south, which is to say that they have roughly similar climates. The plants on which Europeans historically have depended for food and fiber, and the animals on which they have depended for food, fiber, power, leather, bone, and manure, tend to prosper in warm-to-cool climates with an annual precipitation of 50 to 150 centimeters. These conditions are characteristic of all the Neo-Europes, or at least of their fertile parts in which Europeans have settled densely. One would expect an Englishman, Spaniard, or German to be attracted chiefly to places where wheat

Perhaps European humans have triumphed because of their superiority in arms, organization, and fanaticism, but what in heaven's name is the reason that the sun never sets on the empire of the dandelion? Perhaps the success of European imperialism has a biological, an ecological, component.

and cattle would do well, and that has indeed proved to be the case.

The Neo-Europes all lie primarily in temperate zones, but their native biotas are clearly different from one another and from the biota of northern Eurasia. The contrast becomes dramatically apparent if we look at some of their chief grazers and browsers of, say, a thousand years ago. European cattle, North American buffalos,* South American guanacos, Australian kangaroos, and New Zealand's three-meter-high moa birds (now, sadly, extinct) were not brethren under the pelt. The most closely related, the cattle and buffalos, were no better than very distant cousins; even the buffalo and its closest Old World counterpart, the rare European bison, are different species. European colonists sometimes found Neo-European flora and fauna exasperatingly bizarre. Mr. J. Martin in Australia in the 1830s complained that the "trees retained their leaves and shed their bark instead, the swans were black, the eagles white, the bees were stingless, some mammals had pockets, other laid eggs, it was warmest on the hills and coolest in the valleys [and] even the blackberries were red."***



There is a striking paradox here. The parts of the world that today in terms of population and culture are most like Europe are far away from Europe—indeed, they are across major oceans—and although they are similar in climate to Europe, they have indigenous floras and faunas different from those of Europe. The regions that today export more foodstuffs of European provenance—grains and meats—than any other lands on earth had no wheat, barley, rye, cattle, pigs, sheep, or goats whatsoever five hundred years ago.

The resolution of the paradox is simple to state, though difficult to explain. North America, southern South America, Australia, and New Zealand are far from Europe in distance but have climates similar to hers, and European flora and fauna, including human beings, can thrive in these regions if the competition is not too fierce. In general, the competi-

*American buffalos are really bison (buffalos are ox-like animals that live in Asia and Africa), but pedantically accurate terminology in this context would only lead to confusion.

**Joseph M. Powell, *Environmental Management in Australia, 1788–1914* (Oxford University Press, 1976), 13–14.

tion has been mild. On the pampa, Iberian horses and cattle have driven back the guanaco and rhea; in North America, speakers of Indo-European languages have overwhelmed speakers of Algonkin and Muskogean and other Amerindian languages; in the antipodes, the dandelions and house cats of the Old World have marched forward, and kangaroo grass and kiwis have retreated.

Why? Perhaps European humans have triumphed because of their superiority in arms, organization, and fanaticism, but what in heaven's name is the reason that the sun never sets on the empire of the dandelion? Perhaps the success of European imperialism has a biological, an ecological, component.

A Biogeographic Exception

Europeans can create Neo-European societies in the hot and humid tropics—indeed, they have done so—but the prerequisites are stiff. It is a valuable lesson in biogeography to examine them. Let us look at the early history of Queensland, the white and remarkably healthy state in tropical northeastern Australia. It had several special dispensations from fate, enabling it to become a Neo-Europe in an area quite as steamy as many where European colonies died of mildew, rot, and malaria. Ultimately, the problem of European settlements in the wet tropics was not the heat *per se* or the humidity *per se*, although these did contribute massively to the difficulties; the problem was contact with tropical humans, their servant organisms, and *attendant parasites*, micro and macro.

Queensland had as much moisture and warmth as an *Anopheles* or *Aedes* mosquito or a tsetse fly or a hookworm or any other kind of worm could want, but it did not have a large population of indigenes and their animals and plants teeming with tiny malevolent occupants. The Queensland Aborigines were few in number, and therefore they had fewer kinds of parasitic organisms; they had no crops and only one animal, the dingo, to provide a medium for the evolution of germs and what have you to prey on immigrant plants and animals.

When the white invaders imported laborers to work their sugar plantations, they brought them in from the relatively healthy Pacific islands, not from the disease-ridden continents. The "kanakas," as these contract workers were called, did bring some tropical infections with them, as did the few Chinese who came and British soldiers from India, but all together they did not arrive with as rich a selection of pathogens and parasites as, for instance, the Africans carried to Brazil and the Caribbean.

Malaria established itself in Queensland, but not firmly. The government pro-

hibited further immigration of nonwhites (for a variety of reasons, economic, humanitarian, and racist), greatly reducing the inflow of disease organisms, and the white Queenslanders accepted and applied the lessons of the sanitationist and bacteriological revolutions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to protect themselves, their livestock, and crops. Malaria faded away, and Queensland be-

An extraordinarily, perhaps frighteningly, large number of humans elsewhere in the world depend on the Neo-Europes for much of their food, and it appears that more and more will as world population increases.

came, as it remains, one of the healthiest areas on earth, inside or outside the torrid zone.

This has cost a great deal of money, which Australia, by one means and another, has supplied. Queensland's Neo-European society is not so artificial as the one the United States created in the Panama Canal Zone, but neither is life there so cool, comfortable, and easy as in southern and temperate Australia, where a reincarnated William Wordsworth could observe "the young lambs bound as to the tabor's sound," and in some locations he might be flimflammed into thinking himself home in the Lake Country.

Conclusion

An extraordinarily, perhaps frighteningly, large number of humans elsewhere in the world depend on the Neo-Europes for much of their food, and it appears that more and more will as world population increases. The trend is not a new one: Accelerating urbanization, industrialization, and population growth obliged Great Britain to give up hopes of autarchy nearly a century and a half ago, and in 1846 Britain repealed the Corn Law, lifting all duties on foreign grains. At the beginning of the next century, its farmers were producing only enough wheat to feed Britain for eight weeks annually; in both world wars, submarine blockade, constricting its access to the Neo-Europes, almost starved Britain into defeat. In the nineteenth century, a great deal of Britain's imported grain came from tsarist Russia, but many of the same demographic and economic factors that forced Britain to accept dependence on others for food have since had their effect on communist Russia, and in the 1970s the USSR began to buy enormous quantities of grain from the Neo-Europes, and continues to do so. Increasingly, the Third World also turns to the Neo-Europes for food. Often in defiance of ideol-

ogy and perhaps of good sense, more and more members of our species are becoming dependent on parts of the world far away where pale strangers grow food for sale. A very great many people are hostage to the possible effects of weather, pests, diseases, economic and political vagaries, and war in the Neo-Europes.

The responsibilities of the Neo-Europeans require unprecedented ecological and diplomatic sophistication: statesmanship in farm and embassy, plus greatness of spirit. One wonders if their comprehension of our world is equal to the challenge posed by the current state of our species and of the biosphere. It is an understanding formed by their own experience of one to four centuries of plenty, a unique episode in recorded history.

I do not claim that this plenty has been evenly distributed: The poor are poor in the Neo-Europes, and Langston Hughes's nagging question "What happens to a dream deferred?" still nags, but I do insist that the people of the Neo-Europes almost universally believe that great material affluence can and should be attained by everyone, particularly in matters of diet. In Christ's Palestine, the multiplication of the loaves and fishes was a miracle; in the Neo-Europes it is expected.

The responsibilities of the Neo-Europeans require unprecedented ecological and diplomatic sophistication: statesmanship in farm and embassy, plus greatness of spirit.

The Americas and Australasia have provided windfall advantages to humanity twice, once in the Paleolithic and again in the last half millennium. The profits from the first entry into these lesser divisions of Pangaea were largely used up in the first few thousand years of the Holocene.

Today we are drawing on the advantages accruing from second entry, but widespread erosion, diminishing fertility, and the swift growth in the numbers of people dependent on the productivity of Neo-European soils remind us that the profits are finite. We are in need of a flowering of ingenuity equal to that of the Neolithic or, lacking that, of wisdom.

Alfred W. Crosby, professor of American studies at the University of Texas at Austin, currently holds a Guggenheim grant and is doing research in Washington, D.C. This article is excerpted from the prologue, chapter 6, and the conclusion of Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900, which won the Emerson Award for 1987. The paperback version of this book has just been released by Cambridge University Press, at \$10.95.

United Chapters Receives Bequest of \$25,000 from Lawrence College Alumna

The United Chapters wishes to acknowledge a generous bequest of \$25,000 from Mary Jane McComb Zaug, who died recently. She was elected to Phi Beta Kappa in 1926 by the Gamma of Wisconsin Chapter at Lawrence College. The United Chapters is grateful to the many members who have remembered Phi Beta Kappa in their wills over the years. Members needing information about contemplated bequests should write to the Secretary of the United Chapters.

G. W. University ΦBK Chapter Plans 50th Anniversary Celebration in April

The George Washington University chapter will celebrate its 50th anniversary on April 23 at the Marriott Hotel, 22nd and M St., N.W., Washington, D.C. Dr. Alex Zwerdling, University Professor of English and a member of Phi Beta Kappa, will be the speaker. For more information, contact Julie Mangis, Columbian College Alumni Association, George Washington University Academic Center, T 107, Washington, DC 20052, (202) 994-6130.

Could we interest you in a middle-aged Scholar?

The American Scholar, published for general circulation by Phi Beta Kappa, is now beginning its fifty-seventh year of publication, always lively and still growing! Its new 160-page format (increased from 144 pages) offers even more of the outstanding articles, essays, memoirs, book reviews, and poetry that have made the *Scholar* one of the most widely read of the intellectual quarterlies.

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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

LAWRENCE WILLSON

Novels: The House of Mirth. The Reef. The Custom of the Country. The Age of Innocence. Edith Wharton. Selected and ed. by R.W.B. Lewis. Library of America, 1986. \$27.50.

Gradually Mrs. Wharton emerges from under the shadow of Henry James, who was her great good friend but by no means her master as observer and critic of American society. The shadow of James? Not in popularity, surely, for in two months after publication 140,000 copies of *The House of Mirth* were printed, whereas fewer than 7,300 copies of *The Portrait of a Lady* were sold in this country during the entire decade from 1881 to 1891. This volume should help to place her beside James in a new and more respectable context.

New England Literary Culture: From Revolution Through Renaissance. Lawrence Buell. Cambridge Univ., 1986. \$34.50.

In a narrative rich in historical lore, Buell resurrects for a moment such long-forgotten authors as Elizabeth Stoddard, Ellen Hooper (the Transcendental mother-in-law of Henry Adams), Tabitha Tenney, and St. John Honeywood, who stand beside the major writers of their time as contributing members of the literary culture. Despite, or perhaps because of, his idiosyncratic judgments, Buell deserves an audience. It was a wholly sound judgment to remind us that Mrs. Stowe stands beside Hawthorne as a chronicler of the Puritan past even though he may have numbered her among that "damn'd mob of scribbling women" who appear in this survey.

Theodore Dreiser: At the Gates of the City, 1871-1907. Vol. I. Richard Lingeman. Putnam, 1986. \$22.95.

The Life of Langston Hughes. Vol. I: 1902-1941. I, Too, Sing America. Arnold Ramperasad. Oxford Univ., 1986. \$22.95.

Wallace Stevens: The Early Years, 1879-1923. Joan Richardson. Beech Tree Books, 1986. \$21.95.

The three half-lives chronicled in the volumes listed above add up to considerably more than one life and a half, representing as they do the formation of the careers of three important American writers.

The early life of Dreiser, the ninth of 13 children of a rigidly Catholic German immigrant father and a superstitious Mennonite mother in Terre Haute, reads like one of his grimmer novels. As the family declined into financial disaster, moral disaster followed and the name of Dreiser became "a scandal and a by-word in the town." His sisters were described by their father, accurately, as "hell-bent harlots." One brother was a forger, another—an alcoholic wastrel, sometime burglar, and the composer of "On the Banks of the Wabash"—brought a transient affluence to the destitute family through the generosity of his inamorata, the madam of a prosperous bordello. *Sister Carrie* might well have been lifted, and probably was, from Dreiser's diary.

Very different was the cultural mulch of Arcadian Pennsylvania where Wallace Stevens was born, the second of five children of a schoolteacher mother and a father who knew Latin and Greek, read the works of C. S. Peirce, and was "able to support his family well above the average standard." But the home of the Stevenses was less happy than that of the Dreisers, the Pennsylvania Dutch piety was as oppressive as the Catholic, and Wallace became a writer of concealments rather than revelations, "one person on paper and another in reality," a master of "beautifully shimmering" language—as well as "the dean of surety claims."

Langston Hughes, of more distinguished ancestry, both black and white, than either Dreiser or Stevens, was the only son of a stage-struck mother and a father who hated other blacks. Unhappiest of the three, "a passed-around child who craved affection" but never got it, and then "a young man of mixed race caught disastrously between the black and white worlds," he found solace in "the wonderful world of books" and became famous before he was 20 as a major poetic voice of his people. By the time he was 40 he was infamous as a propagandist for communism.

The stories of their lives are so far completely absorbing.

William James: His Life and Thought. Gerald E. Myers. Yale, 1986. \$35.

Short on the life (but sufficient for all save the Freudians), long on the thought, Myers's scholarly work shows why Alfred North Whitehead's judgment was that "in Western literature there are four great thinkers . . . Plato, Aristotle, Leibniz, and William James." As a figure in American literature James ranks with Emerson, whose disciple he was to a greater extent than he (or his critics) would willingly admit.

American Literature and the Academy: The Roots, Growth and Maturity of a Profession. Kermit Vanderbilt. Univ. Pennsylvania, 1986. \$34.95.

Several, maybe too many, stories are told in this "biography of a profession," so that the mass of statistics congeals into temporarily indigestible lumps. But all the stories are worth telling, and the statistics are happily balanced by tales of internecine strife among the professional prima donnas stabbing one another front and back as they moved to put together cooperative histories of the national literature, and by informative and often amusing biographical vignettes of such personalities in the academic drama as Tyler of Michigan, Trent of Columbia, Wendell and Matthiessen of Harvard, and Parrington of Washington, to the last of whom Vanderbilt gives his most enthusiastic accolade as "the foremost single architect of a total American literary history our country has seen," a work of "unifying vision and brilliant execution," *Main Currents in American Thought*. A special commendation must go to the author himself for persevering

through 609 pages without once, I think, employing the term *Americanist*.

Alive and Writing: Interviews with American Authors of the 1980s. Conducted and ed. by Larry McCaffery and Sinda Gregory. Univ. Illinois, 1987. \$22.50.

Thirteen writers who as one of them says, "tell lies for a living," made this book possible by answering questions put to them by the editors. Since the writers are all better than average in the practice of their craft—Raymond Carver, for example, Ann Beattie, Barry Hannah, and William Kennedy—what they have to say is worth pondering, even the assertion of one of them that "of course, the greatest American writer, now or ever, is Thomas Pynchon."

ROBERT P. SONKOWSKY

Momentary Monsters: Lucan and His Heroes. W. R. Johnson. Cornell, 1987. \$17.95.

This is an exciting, witty, wonderful account of the *Pharsalia*, the extraordinary poem on the civil war between Julius Caesar and Pompey the Great, by the Roman poet Lucan. Johnson pours the rich light of his own literary experience and imagination on Lucan's caricatures of these two figures as well as on those of the stoic hero Cato and the fantastic witch Erichtho. The result is a refreshing rejuvenation of our understanding of the poet of decadence in the age of Nero, an age that resembles our own in so many ways.

Greek Tragedy into Film. Kenneth MacKinnon. Fairleigh Dickinson Univ., 1986. \$29.50.

A concise analysis of filmed versions, ranging from documentary films of theater productions (e.g., Guthrie's *Oedipus*) to films of plays in realistic settings (e.g., Cacoyannis's *Iphigenia*) and films whose makers become poets in their own right (e.g., Dassin's *Phaedra*, Pasolini's *Medea*). The book teaches film theory, provides summaries of films and plays, and exposes the shallowness of critics whose unexamined standard is "authenticity."

The Invention of Athens: The Funeral Oration in the Classical City. Nicole Loraux. Tr. by Alan Sheridan. Harvard, 1986. \$35.

Tragic Ways of Killing a Woman. Nicole Loraux. Tr. by Anthony Forster. Harvard, 1987. \$17.95.

The Black Hunter: Forms of Thought and Forms of Society in the Greek World. Pierre Vidal-Naquet. Tr. by Andrew Szegedy-Maszak, foreword by Bernard Knox. Johns Hopkins, 1986. \$28.50.

Loraux and Naquet are members of the increasingly influential *Centre de recherches comparées sur les sociétés anciennes* in Paris, a group of structuralist scholars. The first book by Loraux, originally published in French in 1981, is an important interpretation of the ancient Greek funeral oration, especially that of Pericles, as indicative of the Athenians' image of the city of Athens; the oratory of the "fine death" for the glory of the city reveals sociomilitary factors underlying Athenian democracy that have a bearing on modern times. The other book by Loraux, originally published in 1985, is an incisive and insightful study of the deaths of women in ancient Greek tragedy. Her analysis of the language associated with, for example, the brutal sacrifice of the virgin Iphigenia or the suicide of Jocasta, shows new ways of understanding the ancient plays and the social and psychological reality of women's lives, as well as the mutual and



contrasting conceptions of male and female deaths, in Classical Greece.

Vidal-Naquet first published the volume of his articles in 1981, carefully selecting and arranging them to cover the relationships between Greek forms of thought and social structures. The most famous of these articles, "The Black Hunter," gives the volume its name. The collection is a stimulating illustration of his use of structural analysis to interpret otherwise inscrutable facts.

Catastrophe Survived: Euripides' Plays of Mixed Reversal. Anne Pippin Burnett. Oxford, 1985. \$14.95.

Aristophanes: Poet and Dramatist. Rosemary M. Harriott. Johns Hopkins, 1986. \$22.50.

Aristophanes' Old-and-New Comedy. Vol. 1: **Six Essays in Perspective.** Kenneth J. Reckford. Univ. North Carolina, 1987. \$35.

The first is a paperback reprint of Burnett's 1971 volume, which has been so influential for its analysis of Euripides' manipulation of types of plot within individual plays, such as the *Ion* or the *Helen*. Harriott uses the same method in her book in the final chapter on Aristophanes' *Clouds*, the only play taken up as a whole. The rest of the book very usefully compares *Acharnians*, *Knights*, *Wasps*, and *Frogs*, aspect by aspect. Most highly to be recommended, however, is Reckford's leisurely and loving celebration of Aristophanes' comic vision and its power of renewal. The six essays and appendix are arranged to enrich our appreciation cumulatively by a process of increment and retrospect after the fashion of Aristophanes himself, but after 559 pages the reader longs for more. *Wasps*, *Peace*, *Acharnians*, *Birds*, and *Frogs* are treated most extensively; *Clouds* will be studied in volume 2.

Vox Graeca: A Guide to the Pronunciation of Classical Greek. W. Sidney Allen. Cambridge Univ., 1987. \$35.50; paper, \$14.95. **Introduction to Greek Metre.** M. L. West. Oxford, 1987. \$13.95.

Allen's book, here in its third edition, enlarged and improved, is absolutely essential for students of Classical Greek, both as a practical guide to the restored pronunciation and for an overview of the evidence. Since Classical Greek literature is in its nature and origin an oral literature, correct pronunciation is ignored at great loss, as are the meters and rhythm of Greek poetry. For the latter, West's book presents a compact explication of prosody and of the author's work on the meters with many examples through the 5th century, as well as a brief survey of meters to the 7th century.

Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve. Ed. by Ward W. Briggs, Jr., and Herbert W. Benario. Johns Hopkins, 1985. \$12.95.

The Letters of Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve. Ed. by Ward W. Briggs. Johns Hopkins, 1987. \$49.50.

The first is a set of essays on the familial, regional, educational background, the professional career, and the scholarly and literary work of a great founding father of Classical studies in America. The essays provide a setting, a description, and some assessment toward a historical understanding of the man and his contributions. The other volume contains about 200 of his surviving letters, which provide a fascinating portrait and reveal a fascinating style.

RONALD GEBALLE

The Dilemmas of an Upright Man: Max Planck as Spokesman for German Science. J. L. Heilbron. Univ. California, 1986. \$18.95; paper, \$7.95.

This book is about one of the classic moral dilemmas: a good man attempting to preserve something of lasting value in the face of authority for which he felt only contempt. In 1900, struggling to explain the spectral distribution of light emitted by a heated body, Max Planck found himself forced into adopting an uncomfortable assumption about the nature of light that changed physics forever and left him uneasy for the rest of his long life. This revolutionary idea, put forth by one of the least revolutionary of humans, made him the most respected of German physicists. His sense of responsibility for his nation and his discipline, together with a reputation as an absolutely honest man and as a natural philosopher, placed him in the position of shaping science in that land. For a man of his probity, given the horrors about him, the burden was almost intolerable. When his friend Einstein left, he stayed; temperamentally he could not do otherwise. Helbron ends with the query, "Did his worldview ennoble or betray him?"

Einstein as Myth and Muse. Alan J. Friedman and Carol C. Donley. Cambridge Univ., 1985. \$39.50.

In 1919 a British expedition photographed an eclipse of the sun and found that the position of a particular star appeared to be shifted by a tiny angle because the light that caused its image had passed close by the sun. This finding, publicized by major newspapers on both sides of the Atlantic, brought Einstein's name into the public arena; on the basis of his new theory of gravitation he had predicted with accuracy the previously unsuspected shift. Soon he was unwillingly miscast as a muse, inspiring experimentation in the arts and grotesque misapplication of his ideas to justify social and philosophical notions. A gigantic misunderstanding of his role led, after the invention of nuclear power, to a revision of the popular image of this humane, distracted figure. The authors provide a gently drawn explanation of 20th-century physics as an introduction to their study of the effects on literature of the two major revolutions in thought with which Einstein had so much to do.

Environmental Radioactivity: From Natural, Industrial, and Military Sources. 3d ed. Merril Eisenbud. Academic Press, 1987. \$55.

Indoor Radon and Its Hazards. Ed. by D. Bodansky, M. A. Robkin, and D. R. Stadler. Univ. Washington, 1987. \$20; paper, \$9.95.

Our Radiant World. David W. Lillie. Iowa State Univ., 1986. \$19.95.

The world over, people need a balanced approach to the problems posed by radiation, both natural and man-made. These books can help to make the subject more understandable. Eisenbud has been for 40 years a leader in the study of radiation effects, and he deals with them broadly. Indoor radon has only recently been recognized as a pervasive, important hazard. Now widely regarded as the largest single source of exposure to ionizing radiation in the environment, its prevalence has little to do with man-made radiation. Instead, it comes mainly from the decay of naturally occurring, ubiquitous uranium and ra-

Application Forms for New Chapters Available

Application forms for Phi Beta Kappa faculty groups wishing to establish new chapters may now be obtained from the United Chapters. Also available is a leaflet describing procedures for the founding of new chapters.

The deadline for applications for the 1988-91 triennium is November 1, 1988. Please address all inquiries to the Secretary of the United Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa, 1811 Q Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20009.

dium, and it enters our houses by the exchange of air, through basements from the underlying soil, from normal building materials, and perhaps in other ways. The three books provide the technical backup for their quantitative discussions. Lillie's treatment covers the field of radiation effects broadly and is more obviously directed toward nonmathematicians.

Symmetry: Unifying Human Understanding. Ed. by Istvan Hargittai. Pergamon, 1986. \$140.

This book is a phenomenon and a work of dedication. It consists of 65 papers by 70 or more authors, treating symmetry in art, music, dance, literature, archaeology, biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics, and even the current studies of chaos. Some authors treat symmetry in quantitative and applied detail, others in philosophical breadth and depth. Some papers are pages long, others little more than notes. Some deal with perfect symmetry, others with broken. Except for the initial essay by the editor, there is no overt attempt to tie the elements into a unified whole; readers (or browsers) must make what they can of the diversity. It's all there.

Entropy in Relation to Incomplete Knowledge. K. G. Denbigh and J. S. Denbigh. Cambridge Univ., 1985. \$34.50.

The statistical treatment of large collections of molecules is based on the reasonable notion that we cannot treat the behavior of each particle so that left alone, the behavior of each must be described as random. In the view of some, "randomness" became "missing information," which implied information that could in principle be obtained and used. Maxwell, Boltzmann, and Gibbs, the founders of statistical mechanics, at one time attributed the entropy of a system to an incomplete extent of knowledge, therefore possessing a basic subjectivity. A couple of generations later, G. N. Lewis was to write, "It is a subjective concept," and the qualification was strengthened by the advent of information theory and its equation of entropy with negative information. The authors here argue otherwise, that the thermodynamic entropy of a laboratory system is a function of macroscopic variables objectively measurable, so any surrogate entropy must also be objective.

Imagery in Scientific Thought: Creating 20th-Century Physics. Arthur I. Miller. Birkhauser, 1984. \$24.95.

Miller selected for study five scientists who, during the first half of this century, were chiefly responsible for transforming our notions of space, time, causality, and matter. His

purpose was to illuminate by exploring individual examples the creation of scientific concepts. He finds that "the progress of science is linked with transformations of perception and imagery." Led to attempt an explanation in the terms of cognitive psychology, he finds present theories inadequate for his purpose. The author hopes this initial effort will encourage more cooperation between cognitive psychologists and historians of science to further our understanding of creative scientific thinking.

EARL W. COUNT

Anasazi Ruins of the Southwest in Color. William M. Ferguson and Arthur H. Rohn. Univ. New Mexico, 1987. \$40; paper, \$20.

This splendid book roams the length and breadth of that exacting and spectacular country which hewed the forebears of the Pueblo Indians. Nature's resources were scant, but the perdurable folk made tremendous achievements in ground and water management, crafts, architecture, and communication despite linguistic diversity. Their societies have survived the Spaniards, Christian missionaries, and Anglo encroachments, for they never have conceded to chiefs. Their value systems remain egalitarian, their histories are unlettered. Yes, the Great Migration before A.D. 1300 resettled them in their abodes of today and wrought transformations; but *plus ça change plus c'est la même chose*. The old petroglyphs still inscribe the desert's profound instruction—from hoe to deity. And, yes, they have paid the price: malnutrition, disease, death, maraudings. Yet, overall, their capacity to survive wears well.

Shared Symbols, Contested Meanings: Gros Ventre Culture and History, 1778–1984. Loretta Fowler. Cornell, 1987. \$35; paper, \$14.95.

Rituals and paraphernalia are tribal heirlooms, and timeless; their meaning and value are restatable in time. Gros Ventre and Assiniboine are close and not-too-happy neighbors, each with a distinctive ethos; yet they intermarry, and they may adopt from the symbol stores of their in-laws, reinterpret the borrowings, and deny the importing. Since early contacts, the Gros Ventre have sought to adapt items from the whites—government and settlers have presented baffling problems—but only when they expected to amplify Gros Ventre-ism with them. Many embraced Roman Catholicism as they deemed its ritual to be more efficacious to their tribalism than their own traditional ones. Youthful Gros Ventres have attended high schools and even college; they and the elders interpret symbolisms differently, but both seek to promote tribal integrity.

This accomplished reportage draws on ethnohistory, indigenous tradition, and cohort analysis; it is admirable and interesting, regardless of whether the reader is a devotee of the Gros Ventre.

The Faroe Islands: Interpretations of History. Jonathan Wylie. Univ. Kentucky, 1987. \$26.

"The anthropologist who studies one of these small societies finds it far from autonomous and comes to report and analyze it in its relations, societal and cultural, to state and civilization."—Redfield, quoted by Wylie. The North Sea outlier islands for centuries have been beaten by seas and by governments: erstwhile Celtic-Norse, eventually cloven into Scottish-

English/Danish-Norwegian-Icelandic domains. Idiologically, the Faroese are Icelanders, although they understand Danish; politically, they are Danish. Their religion is Lutheran. Fishermen and farmers, smugglers and small-town folk—their poetry and prose today are modest, low-keyed, vital—an Anglo-Saxoneseque Scandinavian. An undramatic, rugged history penned by an able archaeologist-anthropologist.

Sex in Middlesex: Popular Mores in a Massachusetts County, 1649–1699. Roger Thompson. Univ. Massachusetts, 1986.

What is on the statutes is not necessarily what the court records reflect. Patriarchal family authority underwrote societal stability but was often circumvented. The legal documents, a goldmine for a history felicitously wedded to social science, include depositions by rank-and-file folk—frequently prolix, mildly literate, juicy and explicit, tragicomical. There were adolescent fornication, pregnant brides, bastards, sexual abuse, bestiality, and adultery by both sexes. Constant immigration replicated the contemporaneous and changing mores of Old England. Civil penalties were likely to bring sympathy for the sentenced person. Yet just as clearly, 17th-century Middlesex society and people were a stable and decent lot. Some of us own them as forebears.

Widows. Helena Znaniecka Lopata, ed., 30 contributors. Vol. I: **The Middle East, Asia, and the Pacific.** Vol. II: **North America** (United States and Canada). Duke, 1987. Vol. I, \$37.95; paper, \$15.95. Vol. II, \$40; paper, \$16.95.

Widowhood is a human universal—beyond the universality even of widowerhood. Life's epilogue. Why has it not received this consideration before?

Here is the social science of it—its styles; its self-concepts; its support systems: economic, social, personal (here, termed "service"). The humanness is worldwide, but so is the variance. And so—the head, not the heart of the matter. The contributions invite endless comparisons, but a formal comparative sociology of widowhood is not yet ours.

Lindow Man: The Body in the Bog. Ed. by I. M. Stead, J. B. Bourke, and Dan Brothwell. Cornell, 1986. \$25.

This is probably the most comprehensive investigation of its kind ever undertaken. Of course it is technical, yet not beyond an interested nonspecialist's capture. (Won't you join us?)

Iron Age "burials" in peat have surfaced over much of boggy northern Europe and the British Isles, notably in Denmark. (See P. V. Glob: *The Bog People*.) Often the men and women appear to have been elaborately executed in much the same way. A female skull at Lindow (1983) suggests decapitation. Lindow Man was struck from behind, garrotted, his throat slit, his carcass forced down. Perhaps a religious ritual? The Romans, upon arrival, put a stop to human sacrifice.

Here, briefly, are the excavation procedures; medical, other biological, and forensic reports; dietary analyses from gastrointestinal content; contextual archaeological and folkloristic notes.

Several carbon-14 datings, not considered definitive, converge on an estimated 300 B.C.: La Tène, Celtic.

Awards for Scholarly Translations Offered by National Endowment

The National Endowment for the Humanities Translations category invites applications for scholarly translations into English of works providing insight into the history, philosophy, and artistic achievements of other cultures, from ancient times to the present. Awards usually range from \$3,500 to \$100,000 depending on the scope and magnitude of the project. The deadline is June 1, 1988.

For application material and further information, write or call:
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Measures of Wisdom: The Cosmic Dance in Classical and Christian Antiquity. James Miller. Univ. Toronto, 1986. \$60.

This work is a tremendous edifice—particularly if you have stepped in from the sunlight of Frazer, Eliade, Campbell, and company. It no longer is our way of grasping the cosmos—yet we still have not left Plato and Plutarch behind, or the Christian fathers, or the heretical and pseudo-Christian ponderers.

In the beginning was the dance—the cosmic harmony into which the ancients before the Greeks merged their own kinestheses. To its poetics the Greeks conjoined their rational order. There issued mysticophilosophical world views. Amid these a young Christianity made its way to a throne of empire. Miller takes us finally into Hagia Sophia—where the Cosmic Dance has been arrested yet perpetually mobilized in stone, inviolate despite its uncomprehending Islamic overlay.

Religion in Context: Cults and Charisma. I. M. Lewin. Cambridge Univ., 1986. \$37.50; paper, \$9.95.

Witchcraft, shamanism, cannibalism (usually fictive, yet convincing) in sociocultural context. Hardly all of religion, but enough to go on. Lewin, a very readable authority, remarks that even able field ethnographers fail to realize that extrareligious social dimensions critically shape religious positions and practices. For example, in male-dominated societies, spirit-possession of women—malevolent, controllable, exploitable—may lend the women offsetting power and prestige. Our perspective widens and deepens further from cross-cultural comparisons. So Lewin ranges from Siberian Tungus across North Africa; but he dwells particularly on his areas of specialty: Somalia and folk-Islam.

Stone Age Prehistory: Studies in Memory of Charles McBurney. Ed. by G. N. Bailey and P. Callow. Cambridge Univ., 1986. \$69.50.

The majority of contributors are McBurney's quondam students: they dot England, France, Spain, Africa, Australia; Oldoway, Acheul, Mesolithic. The techniques of contemporary prehistory are sophisticated, but so are the questions posed. Hard evidence becomes case study for ecological circumstances, social structure and relation, mental caliber. Stone tools are vestiges of extinct culture patterns; what, then, do they tell?

Brademas Addresses ΦBK Associates at Annual Dinner in New York City

John Brademas, president of New York University, spoke to the Phi Beta Kappa Associates about "Higher Education: Prospects and Problems" at the Associates' 47th annual dinner meeting on October 24, 1987, at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City. Brademas, a member of the Associates, is a former Phi Beta Kappa senator and former U.S. congressman from Indiana.

During the weekend meeting, the Associates also visited the United Nations, the Theodore Roosevelt birthplace, and the AT&T InfoQuest Center.



John Brademas

Associates Invite Chapters And Associations to Make Nominations for New Award

Phi Beta Kappa chapters and associations have been invited to select nominees for an award to recognize distinguished intellectual achievement, to be presented by the Phi Beta Kappa Associates. The deadline for nominations for the first Phi Beta Kappa Associates Award is March 1, 1988. Alvin Edelman, chairman of the Awards Committee, reports that the award will consist of a plaque to be presented at the annual meeting of the Associates in October. Inquiries and nominations may be directed to Alvin Edelman at One N. LaSalle St., #1714, Chicago, IL 60602.

Ovid and Metamorphosis

(From *The Gods Made Flesh: Metamorphosis and the Pursuit of Paganism*, p. 19, by Leonard Barkan.)

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is a book of changes, a great poem explaining the origins of the world, of human personality, and of organized society all through the image of change. Metamorphosis of the kind one usually associates with the poem—magical alteration of physical form from one species to another—stands as the ruling poetic fancy of the poem, designed to capture the imagination through shock and wonderment. But this particular poetic fancy is only the most graphic form of the poem's obsession with changes. Ovid names his poem after what is little more than a mythological absurdity; but no metamorphosis in the poem is ever left entirely in the realm of the magical. Magical change is always closely tied to a transforming spirit in the real world of cosmos, society, and human personality. At the same time, no transformation in the poem is ever allowed to be completely "real," scientific, or logical: all changes in the world, whether natural or mysterious, have an element of magic. The extraordinary fascination that the *Metamorphoses* has exercised over two millennia can be traced in large part to this paradox: it proves the natural world magical and the magical world natural. It ought to come as no surprise, then, that for so many ages this was the poet's poem, because the paradox that Ovid takes as his main expression is at the heart of all poetry.

The Dawn of the Chemical Age

(From *Chemicals and Society: A Guide to the New Chemical Age*, pp. 8–9, by Hugh D. Crone.)

What is important to recognize is that this Chemical Age is very new, and therefore presents very new problems to our society. The War of 1939–45 probably separates the Chemical Age from the New Iron and Steel Age. The synthetic chemicals can be divided into four groups: the structural chemicals, the pesticides, the synthetic drugs and the process chemicals. . . . The structural chemicals (in common terms the plastics and synthetic fibres) were developing slowly before 1939, but received a great boost during the war. Perspex, for example, became important for aircraft canopies, and nylon for parachutes. Volume production began with the post-war economic recovery. Similar considerations apply to the pesticides. Organophosphate insecticides were being discovered just prior to 1939. The war nearly caused them to be diverted to military use and certainly increased interest in their chemistry. The phenoxyacetic acid herbicides (2,4-D; 2,4,5-T) had a partly military origin, and DDT had its first major use among troops in controlling typhus in Naples in 1943–44. The development of process chemicals was apparent from the advertising wars fought by detergent manufacturers. Immediately after the war the pattern of development was set. The chemists were able to diversify the number of useful chemicals very rapidly and the chemical engineers had no problem in expanding production. The Chemical Age is therefore at most 40 years old.

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