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1988 Book Awards

ΦBK Prizes Go to Books on American Renaissance, Science, and Labor History

Three authors of new books that were judged to have made outstanding contributions to humanistic learning received the 1988 Christian Gauss, Science, and Ralph Waldo Emerson book awards from Phi Beta Kappa at the annual Senate banquet at the Embassy Row Hotel in Washington, D.C., on December 9, 1988.

David S. Reynolds, Henry Rutgers Research Fellow and Director of Whitman Studies at Rutgers University, Camden, received the Gauss Award for his book *Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville*, published by Alfred A. Knopf.

In presenting the prize for literature, Gauss committee chairman Howard Nemerov said that the committee was impressed by Reynolds's "breadth and thoroughness of learning . . . , by his willingness to explore the little known and unknown authors of the period as a means to illuminating the received and great, and by his finely discriminated balance between the two classes; by his gentle insistence . . . that we must learn to say, whenever possible, 'both/and' instead of 'either/or.'"

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Science Award winner Freeman J. Dyson

35th Triennial Council Changes ΦBK Name; Approves Dallas, Millsaps, Tulsa Chapters; Elects Otis Singletary and Joan Ferrante

Boasting the largest turnout ever—363 participants—the 35th triennial Council of the United Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa, meeting October 27–30, 1988, in balmy San Antonio, voted to change the name of the organization to the Phi Beta Kappa Society. The change reflects the fact that the constitution identifies both the chapters and the associations as the constituent members of the organization. The chapters, which are made up primarily of faculty members at academic institutions, select new members of Phi Beta Kappa; the associations, which are made up of alumni in communities, provide programs of intellectual and cultural interest for their members and often provide scholarships or other recognition for promising students.

The Council, which is the legislative body of Phi Beta Kappa, also voted to establish new chapters at the University of Dallas, Millsaps College, and the University of Tulsa, bringing the total number of chapters to 240. Frederick J. Crosson, Cavanaugh Distinguished Professor of Humanities at Notre Dame, who chaired the Committee on Qualifications, noted that 81 colleges and universities had applied for chapters in the triennium.

The new president elected for the current triennium is Otis A. Singletary, president emeritus of the University of Kentucky. The new vice president is Joan M. Ferrante, professor of English and comparative literature at Columbia

University. John Hope Franklin, professor of history at Duke University and a former president of the United Chapters, chaired the Nominating Committee.

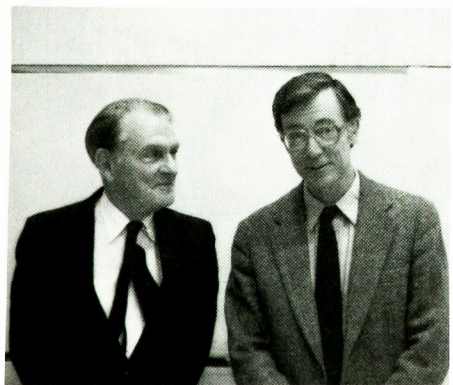
Nine ΦBK senators at large and three district senators were elected for six-year terms: Ruth M. Adams, professor of English emerita, Dartmouth College (New England District); Carl L. Anderson, pro-



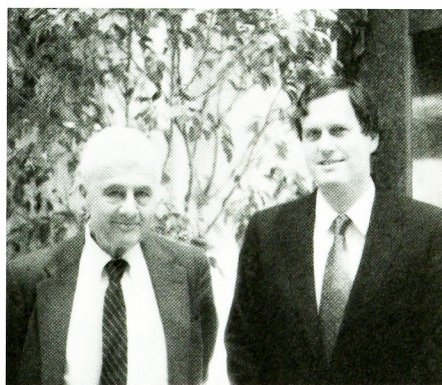
Vice President Ferrante and President Singletary are pictured at the reception preceding the triennial Council banquet in San Antonio.

fessor of English, Duke University (South Atlantic District); Charles Blitzer, director, Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars; Frederick J. Crosson, Cavanaugh Distinguished Professor of Humanities, University of Notre Dame; LeRoy P. Graf, Distinguished Service Professor of History Emeritus, University of Tennessee; Doris Grumbach, novelist and critic; David W. Hart, professor of English and associate dean of the Graduate School, University of Arkansas (South Central District); Vera Kistiakowsky, professor of physics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; David E. Pingree,

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Emerson Award winner David Montgomery, right, poses with Emerson committee member Joseph G. Brennan.



Gauss Award winner David S. Reynolds, right, is shown with Gauss committee chairman Howard Nemerov.

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Triennial Council Meets

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professor of the history of mathematics, Brown University; Otis A. Singletary, president emeritus, University of Kentucky; Joseph F. Wall, professor of history, Grinnell College; and Eugen Weber, Joan Palevsky Professor of Modern European History, University of California at Los Angeles.

Newly elected members of the Nominating Committee are Nina Baym, professor of English, University of Illinois; F. Carter Philips, associate professor of classics and chairman of the Department of Classical Studies, Vanderbilt University; Edgar F. Shannon, Jr., Linden Kent Memorial Professor of English, University of Virginia; and Aileen Ward, Albert Schweitzer Professor of Humanities, New York University.

Some Council Highlights

On the opening night of the Council, delegates and guests attended a festive reception and buffet supper at the Institute of Texan Cultures, where they circulated among the exhibits of the artifacts of the many national groups that settled San Antonio. The buffet featured a variety of foods representing the diversity of the settlers, including French, German, Italian, Mexican, and Swiss. The affair was cohosted by the ΦBK Associations of San Antonio and Greater Houston, Trinity University and its ΦBK chapter, and the United Chapters.

On the first full day of meetings, Norman F. Ramsey, who has headed the United Chapters for the past three years, presided over sessions at which the name change was approved and the current provisions for establishing sections of existing chapters were eliminated from the constitution. (The only sections now in existence, at Columbia University and Rutgers University, were not affected by the change.)

Another proposal, to extend to Council delegates representing associations all the rights of chapter delegates, including voting on new chapters, did not obtain the two-thirds majority required to pass.

On October 30 the Council elected new officers and heard reports from the Finance Committee and the Conferences of Chapter Delegates and Association Delegates. The report of the chapter delegates focused on chapter election practices as reflected in the Stipulations Concerning Eligibility for Membership in Course.

The banquet at which John Hope Franklin presented the triennial Phi Beta Kappa Award for Distinguished Service to the Humanities to Daniel J. Boorstin, Librarian of Congress Emeritus, took place on October 29 at the Hotel Palacio del Rio, which was headquarters for all the meetings.

In making the presentation, Franklin said that he was "delighted to join in the celebration of a humanist's humanist who, after becoming a barrister at law in Britain's Inner Temple, and receiving the degree of Doctor of Juridical Science at Yale University, could well have spent his life amassing a great fortune either on Fleet Street or on Wall Street. Instead, he . . . opted for the more austere life" as a humanist scholar.

Franklin cited Boorstin's *History for Young People* as one of his favorite Boorstin books, along with, at the other extreme, Boorstin's "tribute to mankind's remarkable and valiant attempt to understand everything about the world in which it exists," *The Discoverers*. Franklin also paid tribute to Boorstin's leadership in transforming the Library of Congress into a "national library for the people." He said, "In 12 years the stamp of that man was indelibly impressed on the greatest institution of its kind in the world. From the Center of the Book inside to the picnic tables outside, from the Council of Scholars to the establishment of the Poet Laureate, the Boorstin imprint is unmistakable."

Daniel Boorstin's acceptance is printed in full on page 6 and 7.

Some Farewells

The Council expressed particular appreciation to retiring ΦBK Senator Mina Rees, a noted mathematician and educator, whose 18 years of participation in Phi Beta Kappa at the national level were marked by her distinguished leadership of the Visiting Scholar Program. The Council also thanked Hugh McCullough Davidson, Renée C. Fox, and Howard K. Smith, each of whom had completed six years of service as a ΦBK senator.

Also retiring at this Council was ΦBK Historian Irving Dilliard, who served in that capacity for three decades following

Philosopher Richard Rorty Gives Romanell-ΦBK Lectures at University of Virginia in January

Richard Rorty, the 1988-89 recipient of the Romanell-Phi Beta Kappa Professorship in Philosophy, gave a series of lectures on "Anti-Essentialism" in Charlottesville, Virginia, on January 23, 24, and 25, 1989. Rorty, University Professor of Humanities at the University of Virginia, subtitled the three lectures "From Things to Relationships: The Essence of Anti-Essentialism," "From Souls to Mechanisms: Anti-Essentialism and Humanity's Self-Image," and "From Truth to Freedom: Anti-Essentialism in the Theory of Culture."

The 1989-90 Romanell Professorship has been awarded to Joel Feinberg, professor of philosophy and law at the University of Arizona.

The Romanell-Phi Beta Kappa Professorship was created to recognize distinguished achievement in philosophy and contribution or potential contribution to public understanding of philosophy. ΦBK chapters interested in making a nomination for the 1990-91 professorship are reminded that the deadline for nominations is February 18, 1989.

In 1988, lectures by 1984-85 Romanell lecturer Robert Paul Wolff were published by the University of Massachusetts Press under the title *Money Bags Must Be So Lucky: On the Literary Structure of "Capital."* In the same year, *Heavy Drinking: The Myth of Alcoholism as a Disease*, an elaboration of the first Romanell Lectures by Herbert Fingarette, was published by the University of California Press.

a term as senator. In announcing his retirement, Dilliard paid a warm tribute to John Hope Franklin's contributions to Phi Beta Kappa.



Norman F. Ramsey, left, immediate past president of Phi Beta Kappa, is pictured with his predecessor, Catherine S. Sims, and the Secretary of the Society, Kenneth M. Greene, at the triennial Council.



1988 Book Awards Presented

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Freeman J. Dyson, professor of physics at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, received the ΦBK Award in Science for his book *Infinite in All Directions*, published by Harper & Row. George M. Halsey, chairman of the Science Award committee, praised Dyson's book as a "wide-ranging study of the most remote questions such as the origin and future of life in the whole universe down to interesting and practical methods of saving energy for heating and cooling the house." He also praised the book for its "lack of tired and predictable attitudes."

David Montgomery, Farnam Professor of History at Yale University, won the Emerson Award for *The Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, the State, and American Labor Activism, 1865–1925*, which was published by Cambridge University Press. In presenting the award for the Emerson committee, Joseph G. Brennan quoted one of his fellow judges as saying, "It is hard to find a flaw in this product of masterly research in U.S. labor history. Montgomery knows more than anyone else about the variegated scenes in which laborers worthy of their hire sweated during that crucial period when the United States was changing from a rural agrarian society to a great industrial power, with consequent massive demographic changes."

Each winner received \$2,500. Brief ex-

Recommended Reading

Book Committee

Humanities Frederick J. Crosson, Robert B. Heilman, Robert P. Sonkowsky, Lawrence Willson **Social sciences** Earl W. Count, Richard N. Current, Leonard W. Doob, Madeline R. Robinton, Victoria Schuck, Anna J. Schwartz **Natural sciences** Ronald Geballe, Russell B. Stevens

Ronald Geballe

The How and the Why: An Essay on the Origins and Development of Physical Theory. David Park. Princeton, 1988. \$35.

This superb book treats the history and the findings of physical science profoundly and with great sympathy for the humanity of the enterprise. It probes 2,500 years of man's struggle to imagine the world, drawing on works of philosophers, religious figures, and scientists. Park traces the changing "truths" that have been taken for granted at different times. He treats controversies and paradoxes and what they have elucidated for us. As our under-

cerpts from each book appear below and on page 8.

The 1989 Phi Beta Kappa book awards are open to qualified books published in the United States between May 1, 1988, and April 30, 1989. Entries must be submitted, preferably by the publishers, by April 30, 1989. Inquiries and entries should be addressed to the appropriate award committee at 1811 Q St., N.W., Washington, DC 20009.

Introduction

(Excerpt from *The Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, the State, and American Labor Activism, 1865–1925*, pp. 1–2, by David Montgomery. Copyright 1988 by David Montgomery. Reprinted by permission of Cambridge University Press.)

To write about the working class is to discuss many disparate individuals. At any moment in the American past the researcher encounters such variety in personal aspirations, talents, and sense of self among working people as to defy stereotypes. Moreover, socially prescribed differences in gender, race, religion, and nationality have influenced various workers' behavior in powerfully different ways. Instead of listening for the "voice of the working class," therefore, we must be attuned to many different voices, sometimes in harmony, but often in conflict with one another.

Nevertheless, it remains not only possible but imperative to analyze the American experience of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in terms of conflicting social classes. The human relationships structured by commodity production in large collective enterprises devoted to private gain generated bondings and antagonisms that were, in one form or another, the daily experience of everyone involved. . . .

Those daily experiences and visible social distinctions taught many workers that although others might wield social influence as individuals, workers' only hope of securing what they wanted in life was through concerted action. Although the personal bondings of families, migrant groups, young wage-earning women, craftsmen, strikers, voters, and rioters defined people's loyalties in different and often conflicting ways, all attachments were rooted in the shared presumption that individualism was appropriate only for the prosperous and well-born. Nevertheless, to organize concerted action and to fashion a sense of social goals shared by all workers required deliberate human agency. Class consciousness was more than the unmediated product of daily experience. It was also a project. . . .

The development of that project during the six decades between the abolition of chattel slavery and the closing down of mass immigration from Europe and Asia is the subject of this book. Its three basic points of reference are the human relationships that wage labor generated at the workplace, the changing structures of economic and political power fashioned by the evolution of nineteenth-century competitive industrial capitalism into twentieth-century imperialism, and the diverse styles of thought and activity by which working-class activists sought to interpret and improve the society in which they lived.

standing developed, we needed a developing language of science; he shows how this language affects what we consider "understanding" to be. An original, searching, lively treatment, it stands nearly alone. For anyone interested in reading other recent works on the nature of the physical world, it is a valuable prologue.

Was Einstein Right? Putting General Relativity to the Test. Clifford M. Will. Basic, 1986. \$18.95.

During the past two decades, several refined astronomical tests have been carried out with the intent of probing the accuracy of the General Theory as a description of gravity. Einstein's basic ideas are not at fault, but modifications have been suggested that demand small observational deviations from Einstein's original predictions, and new techniques permit more stringent probing of them and of the newer ones. Will, an active Relativity theorist, gives a clear, nonmathematical description of the tests and includes brief allusions to the personalities that have carried them out. Oh, yes—the answer, so far, is affirmative.

A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes. Stephen Hawking. Bantam, 1988. \$18.95.

An enlightening, popular treatment, by the Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge, the chair held some years ago by Sir Isaac Newton. Some of the most naive and penetrating questions humans have asked are about the nature of time, one being whether time had a beginning. Such questions are tied up with theories of the universe but extend also to the elementary particles. No one is more qualified to deal with these puzzling matters than Hawking, who leads contemporary thought about them.

Nuclear Fear: A History of Images. Spencer R. Weart. Harvard, 1988. \$29.50.

Images dominate the common perception of science, and especially of nuclear energy. Hopes for the utility of radioactivity and fears about its effects began decades before the Bomb. The author approached his subject "by trying to take into account every force that has mattered, from the known laws of physics to the largely unknown influences of psychology" in his effort to illuminate the many kinds of emotional, even inarticulate and sometimes deliberately introduced, associations that influence attitudes. His work is a dispassionate, nonpolemic effort to point out the danger of remaining bemused by nuclear imagery instead of altering the sorry reality of today and moving toward a clearer view of the choices that confront us.

Fearful Symmetry: The Search for Beauty in Modern Physics. A. Zee. Macmillan, 1986. \$25.

Longing for the Harmonies: Themes and Variations from Modern Physics. Frank

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Recommended Reading

(continued from page 3)

Wilczek and Betsy Devine. Norton, 1988. \$19.95.

Physicists since Galileo have tried to explain to the general reader what they are up to. Zee's theme, symmetry, and that of Wilczek and Devine, harmony, are guiding principles and, even more, are part of the armamentarium of theorists. Their attempts reach through metaphor, anecdote, whimsy, and clear exposition to make accessible the thought processes and the discoveries of today's physics. Zee and Wilczek are active, highly respected participants in the enterprise.

Paul Adrien Maurice Dirac: Reminiscences about a Great Physicist. Ed. by Behram N. Kursunoglu and Eugene P. Wigner. Cambridge Univ., 1987. \$49.50.

Tributes to Paul Dirac, Ed. by J.G. Taylor. Taylor and Francis, 1987. \$22.

These volumes celebrate the life of one of the greatest scientists of the 20th century, a Nobelist who held Sir Isaac Newton's Lucasian Chair for nearly 40 years. During the 1920s, Dirac was one of the chief architects of quantum mechanics; his casting of the wave equation into proper relativistic form had as consequences the explanation of the spin of elementary particles and a prediction of the existence of antiparticles. His influence on physics continued throughout his life, contrasting with his reputation as the most silent of all physicists.

Light. Michael I. Sobel. Univ. of Chicago, 1987. \$29.95.

The study of light is one of the oldest branches of physics and it remains one of the central themes. We learn about atoms and molecules largely from the light they emit and absorb; light is the principal messenger from stars and galaxies and from the Big Bang. Atmospheric optical effects delight us. Outside the small range of color to which our eyes are sensitive are the vast wavelength reaches of radio and infrared on the long side, and ultraviolet, x-rays, and gamma rays on the short. Applications of lasers and fiber optics continue to astound us. Sobel brings out in readable style the many manifestations of this all-important phenomenon.

Darkness at Night: A Riddle of the Universe. Edward Harrison. Harvard, 1987. \$25.
Coming of Age in the Milky Way. Timothy Ferris. William Morrow, 1988. \$19.95.

Two more fine books dealing with the cosmos and our place in it. Harrison takes off from the four centuries of puzzlement over the reason for the darkness of the sky and the many interesting although incorrect explanations for it. This unusual theme pervades his work. Ferris provides more depth, both historical and scientific, and a fuller treatment of late developments. Both books are well written and accessible to the general reader.

From Paradox to Reality: Our Basic Concepts of the Physical World. Fritz Rohrlich. Cambridge Univ., 1987. \$34.50.

This book is an antidote to those that attempt to turn the concepts of relativity and quantum physics into pseudo-science. Relativity and quantum physics do have features that appear curious, nonintuitive, and even paradoxical to the general public. Rohrlich attempts to dispel misunderstanding by offering an approach philosophical as well as physical.

He does not shrink from asking intellectual effort (but very little mathematics) from the reader. His main point: "common sense" is not a reliable guide to the world seen by today's physical science. Nature is more subtle and varied than we first imagine.

Symmetries of Culture: Theory and Practice of Plane Pattern Analysis. Dorothy K. Washburn and Donald W. Crowe. Univ. of Washington, 1988. \$35.

A mathematician and an anthropologist have joined in this merging of two disparate disciplines to provide insight into the aesthetics of culture. Symmetry classes, first recognized by crystallographers, govern the development of all designs whose parts are repeated in a regular manner. The classification of symmetries is explained in simple terms, and its application to patterns is illustrated with examples from a great diversity of cultures. Designers unwittingly obey geometric strictures when they create repetitive patterns.

Earl W. Count

The Dynamics of Polyandry: Kinship, Domesticity, and Population on the Tibetan Border. Nancy E. Levine. Univ. of Chicago, 1988. \$47.50; paper, \$17.95.

No end is in sight to the spate of ethnographic field studies, and their reviewing belongs properly to their trade journals. But polyandry is a topic that overleaps ethnographic compasses. Its distribution is cosmopolitan, yet never widespread; its origins are as diverse as the societies that observe it. At all events, accidents of sex ratios or quirks of economics, wherever they may occur, are not enough to explain its incidence.

The Nyinba are ethnic Tibetans who have dwelt for centuries in Nepal. Their neighbors (let us call them that, by courtesy, for theirs is a rugged, vertical country) are not polyandrous, nor are the trans-Himalayan Tibetans. And the author of this very readable study of several years—undaunted by the formidable emprise of grasping the language of her hosts—places before us an involved social architecture.

Briefly, a village is an aggregate of prestigeful households, *trongba*, plus some adjunct lesser ones. The *trongba* itself is imposing; it signals the standing of the lineage within a group of brothers and their wife plus the offspring, whose paternal parentage is of some, but apparently not crucial, concern. The oldest brother exercises a head role to some degree, but this seems not to rub off on his (presumed) sons. A brother may for various reasons "partition," that is, detach himself and set up a household of his own. Nevertheless the original *trongba* strives to maintain its material fundament intact as a tangible part of its broader image in the community. The broader image embraces the status and role of the household in its execution of public rites that symbolize the community. Its head further mediates to the state the collection of taxes, but the village engages very little in "public works." It must be obvious that the household maintains its status and its wholeness by keeping the brotherhood intact. On the economic side, the brothers engage in trade, animal husbandry, and agriculture. Women administer domestic activities.

The brothers may take in secondary wives, preferably but not exclusively younger sisters

of the senior wife. Of course, each wife devotes special interest to her own offspring. Quite as understandably, the women are never so bonded among themselves as are the brothers. Clearly, polyandry does not exclude polygyny. Monogamy does occur, but it is circumstantial and not socially prescriptive.

Nyinba society includes also slave and freedman households, and these are consistent with the wider Asiatic pattern. They do not advance to *trongba* status; they have no incentive to engage in polyandry.

I find the author's concluding chapter the strongest and clearest explication of the rationale of polyandry yet written. The Nyinba have found their social identity in kinship, to a degree and in ways that decidedly set them apart. They are strongly endogamous and pronouncedly distinguishable from all surrounding Tibetan communities; even their dialect is idiosyncratic.

Naturally, polyandry does act to restrict population numbers; but this is anything but a handicap in this environment. The author wisely refrains from speculating as to whether it is cause or effect. Indeed, by now it is many centuries too late for that. As of today, the dynamics of kinship and subsistence reciprocate, and the pattern is not coming apart at the seams.

Aztec Warfare: Imperial Expansion and Political Control. Ross Hassig. Univ. of Oklahoma, 1988. \$29.95.

Let our perspective of time and place sweep native Mesoamerica, before we narrow upon its late and last episode, that of the Aztec empire.

There was a succession of civilizations in the Mexican basin over seven centuries; then about A.D. 900 the Toltecs took over. For three further centuries they built upon those that had gone before them and spread beyond. Although the historic records are imprecise, it is tolerably clear that gradually polity passed from a priestly theocracy to one of warrior dominance. Then, about the mid-14th century, the barbarous Chichimecs, invaders from the north, settled Tenochtitlan (where an eagle perched with a snake in its beak) and extinguished the Toltec dominance. Their Aztec empire was hardly a century old when the Spaniards, invaders from a quite alien world, abruptly ended this dynasty of indigenous cultural venture. So the author—he is quite aware of this temporal chain—treats only the last act, whose death was not a natural one.

We seek in vain in the Old World we know for an empire that built into its polity the methodical conduct of aggressive warfare as a perpetual means of aggrandizing its interests. The author devotes a good portion of his book to the historical achievements of the Aztec emperors. Over the brief period of Aztec sway, these were usually men of stature. They institutionalized warfare. The noble class gained therefrom, but not so the commoners.

The main theme of the book explicates the rationale of Aztec imperialism and warfare as a standing instrument of policy. Weaponry and the techniques of its usage seem not to have progressed a great deal; for that matter, this may also be said of the Toltec. Furthermore, the Aztec warrior usually found his match in his antagonist. The Aztecs won more often than they lost, by virtue of superior numbers and the tactics that could take advantage of this superiority. Incidentally, two distinct kinds of warfare were recognized by both sides

—“flower wars,” where the objective was to secure captives for sacrifice, not to kill, and the universal kind of war.

The author recognizes that the Spanish conquest was one of the great exploits, militarily and otherwise, in human history, yet he finds that in both weaponry and military prowess the Aztec warrior was the Spaniard's equal. A fatal weakness actually was an asset, so long as there was no foreign power to invade: the Aztecs did not garrison the communities they conquered; they left them essentially to govern themselves, so long as they paid tribute and traded to the Aztecs' advantage. If they rebelled, the Aztecs sent in an army, and the results were dire. It was an economical way of controlling. But as the Aztecs became preoccupied with the invading Spanish, their ancillaries reverted to independence. The Spanish understood the maxim *divide et impera*. Despite the author's explanation, this reviewer remains puzzled that so few Spaniards could outfight so many Aztecs.

The Idea of a Town: The Anthropology of Urban Form in Rome, Italy, and the Ancient World. Joseph Rykwert. MIT Press, 1988. \$15.

In the beginning was the thought. Rome *ab urbe condita* declared a way of life. It began urban. It was not a village grown up. A city is a commune of people. They share a world view and live by it. It is their myth. Buildings and roadways externalize what of it they may or must. Communal rites argue further.

A professor of architecture expounds the idea of a town; the idea gives (or should give) meaning to the architecture. The layout of original Rome concentrated in microcosm the visible universe as it was then pictured, so humans never left it. Humans sought their comfort in Rome's design. Let us not dismiss early Roman conquests of Italy as mere commercial self-aggrandizements; they amounted to expanded self-content. The conquered gods shared the enhanced fortune, or the other way around. Thus the deities of conquered cities might join the Roman pantheon with a hospitable shrine.

The architectural layout survives in archaeological digs, in coins and other castings, and in cruciform orientations to the four quarters of the Earth. Indeed, every feature of the *urbes*, from its placement of cemeteries, dungeons, and temples with altars to the stampings on coins, has a context that lends it meaning.

The author also takes excursions to far-flung sites of the globe, and he is sure they corroborate his thesis; but I believe his thesis can stand on its own merit without the excursions. Consider his closing words:

“It is difficult to imagine a situation when the formal order of the universe could be reduced to a diagram of two intersecting coordinates in one plane. Yet this is exactly what did happen in antiquity: the Roman who walked along the *cardo* knew that his walk was the axis round which the sun turned, and that if he followed the *decumanus* he was following the sun's course. The whole universe and its meaning could be spelt out of his civic institutions—so he was at home in it. We have lost all the beautiful certainty about the way the world works—we are not even sure if it is expanding or contracting, whether it was produced by a catastrophe or is continuously renewing itself. This does not absolve us from looking for some ground of certainty in our attempts to give form to human environment. It

is no longer likely that we shall find this ground in the world which the cosmologists are continuously reshaping round us and so we must look for it inside ourselves: in the constitution and structure of the human person.”

The Decline of the Russian Peasant Household. William T. Shinn, Jr. Praeger, 1987. \$29.95; paper, \$9.95.

The Russian peasant household has maintained Russia for more than a millennium. The Soviet master plan purposes to turn the peasant into a worker. Simplistically, hammer replaces the sickle; let the hammer become the machinery on a gigantic field. Transfer the product of that field to a huge processing factory. The control tower is lodged in the city. The peasant is paid a wage. He lives with his family in the village, but an urban bureaucracy tells his community what to produce.

This is an exceptional monograph, for the author, a professional diplomat and academic, had access to doctoral dissertations at Moscow University, and he was allowed to live for a fair time in peasant villages. He witnessed the dissolution of the peasant household's legal status; the peasant remained on the soil but was no longer identified with a patch of it.

Whereas American social innovations start from grass roots and build upward (We are the people . . .), the Russians start from the top and impose downward. Yankees founded Harvard University. Peter the Great founded the Russian Academy of Sciences. America has had yeomen, but never serfs. Our inefficiencies may be hard to cope with, but they are our own, and we can attempt to remedy them. Russian inefficiencies start from above. At best, we the people may complain upward about them, hoping for improvement.

The Russian polity never underwent the centuries of constitutional struggle that write so large a chapter of English history. Instead, there is a tough resiliency that has passed from serf to peasant (by a decree from above) but will not readily proceed from peasant to socialized employee. Perhaps this fine author will take comfort that a reader is not ready to share his gloom.

And don't fail to read his appendix B: Christmas on a Farm near Moscow.

Lawrence Willson

Novels: Democracy, Esther. Mont Saint Michel and Chartres. The Education of Henry Adams. Poems. Henry Adams. Texts sel. and **The Education** ed. by Ernest Samuels and Jayne N. Samuels. Library of America, 1983. \$27.50.

History of the United States of America During the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson.

History of the United States of America During the Administrations of James Madison. Henry Adams. Texts sel. and ed. by Earl N. Harbert. Library of America, 1986. \$27.50 each volume.

Writings 1902–1910: The Varieties of Religious Experience. Pragmatism. A Pluralistic Universe. The Meaning of Truth. Some Problems of Philosophy. Essays. William James. Texts sel. and ed. by Bruce Kuklick. Library of America, 1987. \$27.50.

Complete Plays: 1913–1920. 1920–1931. 1932–1943. Eugene O'Neill. Texts sel. and annotated by Travis Bogard. 3 vols. Library of America, 1988. \$27.50 each volume.

With the seven volumes listed here the Li-

brary of America continues its stately progress toward establishing the canon of the national literature. Adams and James are two of our wisest and wittiest forbears as well as major masters of literary style. *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres*, a work of rare sophistication and charm, may well be our premier classic; *The Education* set a new tone in autobiography; and the volumes of history set a standard unsurpassed during the century since they were published. James is as responsible as any man for the way Americans think. Such essays as “The Social Value of the College-Bred” and “The Ph.D. Octopus” are as fresh as when they were written and have much to say to those who nowadays wonder what is wrong with American education. *The Varieties* is indeed “a slumming tour through the New Jerusalem,” as Santayana called it; but that is the Jerusalem we need to know about as we ponder its excesses. O'Neill is hardly a master of style; he takes a steady look at the harsh realities of human life, and his mastery is in his unflinching depiction of “old sorrow, written in tears and blood.”

Skeptical Engagements. Frederick Crews. Oxford, 1986. \$19.95.

Crews is a rare and encouraging example of the professor who is willing to admit that he has been wrong about the doctrines he once held dear. He first declares his recantation from an acceptance of psychoanalysis as valid, relegating it to the faded company of mesmerism and phrenology. Then, perhaps more important, he attacks the currently popular brand of literary criticism which argues that “meaning is conferred not by authors but by readers, and that a work's meaning is therefore constantly subject to change.” “I would hope,” he says, “that before long, no one will wish to call himself a poststructuralist or a deconstructionist, and we can all maintain that we have recovered from a virus that was just passing through our community.” Not since before the days of the New Criticism, so-called, has such a gush of fresh air penetrated into the English departments of the land.

Images of America: Foreign Travelers in the New World. Robert B. Downs. Univ. of Illinois, 1987. \$24.95.

Forty images are presented in brief summary here, the observers ranging from Peter Kalm in the 1750s to Denis Brogan in 1944. Most of them are familiar: Tocqueville, the Trollopes, Harriet Martineau, Matthew Arnold, Dickens, Kipling, Fanny Kemble; but a few are less so: Henry Wansley, for instance (who describes his breakfast in Washington in 1794 with the president and Martha), Yukichi Fukuzawa, Eyre Crow (who accompanied Thackeray to America), and Aleksandr Lakier. There is nothing original or striking here, but the images grow ever more interesting as they agree in their characterizations of Americans and their country. Almost all express disgust at the then universal habit of chewing tobacco and spitting the juice abroad (some spitters showing remarkable skill at hitting the target), and all before Emancipation express their sorrow and horror at the institution of slavery. Many note the widespread contempt for the laws (perhaps because of their proliferation) and the resulting frequency of crime. The travelers note “the ingrained habit of bragging” of Americans, their intolerance of criticism, the constant drinking (“apparently nothing could be done without a drink”), and

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Remarks on Receiving Φ BK's Distinguished Service to Humanities Award

By Daniel J. Boorstin

MY THANKS FOR YOUR generous recognition of my work, and for putting me on this honorable list. It adds much to this occasion and to this prize to receive it from my old friend John Hope Franklin, whose every word has for me a special meaning. And also I must recognize that whatever this is a recognition for could not have been done without the collaboration of my wife, Ruth, who has shared my hopes and efforts and improves everything with her poetic editorial pencil.

Tonight we celebrate the humanities. In my brief remarks I would like to share with you some of my own recent reflections on the magic of the humanities, as I have moved in my writing from *The Discoverers* to *The Creators* in my current reading and research. The humanities, we are told, are the branches of learning that study human constructs and concerns as opposed to natural processes.

In *The Discoverers*, as I followed the progress of man's search to know the world, I found myself dazzled by the advance of the great Discoverers and impressed by how much each added to human understanding. A leitmotiv of that book was that the great obstacle to progress is not ignorance, but the illusion of knowledge. I described in turn the seductive illusions of knowledge that long haunted, engaged, and delighted mankind—the charms of the Jerusalem-centered medieval Christian cartography, the appeal of Galenic medicine, the gratification of the Biblical account of the creation of fixed species in the six days of Genesis. These were disintegrated or dissolved by the bold ventures of Columbus and Vespucci, of Leonardo and Harvey, of Darwin and Wallace.

As I have moved on from the sciences to the arts, from the Discoverers to the Creators, there has dawned on me a new view of the other side; perhaps we should call it the *underside* of discovery. As a displacer of erroneous old views, each new view, of course, adds to human understanding. But it also somehow subtracts—for it dissolves the elegant structure and self-evident symmetry of previous thought and imagination and fantasy. It robs us of a comforting pattern of illusions. With our love of progress we have focused naturally on the pleasures of the new and paid scant attention to the pains of withdrawal from the old.

There is hardly a great scientific advance that has not produced these pains—and with them infected us with new self-doubts. Freud observed that many of the spiritual disorders of modern man come from our losses in self-esteem

from the great modern discoveries—finding out that this Earth is not the center of the universe, that man was not specially created in the Beginning. And now we are shocked to learn that the proverbially unbreakable, the atom, is not only breakable but actually explosive.

When I turn to Man the Creator I see quite another story. The works of Man the Creator seem somehow to be additive without being subtractive. In the world of literary creation, the world of the humanities, the world that man has made, there is always addition. *Beowulf* was not displaced by Dante, nor was Dante displaced by Milton. This is the magic of the humanities, man's power to expand his creations "infinitely in all directions." This



Daniel J. Boorstin, left, inspects the medal presented to him by John Hope Franklin at the triennial Council.

magic was described by T. S. Eliot about sixty years ago ("Tradition and the Individual Talent," 1917). The sense of tradition, Eliot said, requires

the historical sense . . . and the historical sense involves the perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. . . . And it is at the same time what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his own contemporaneity.

The distinctive magic of the humanities is the art of pure addition. And perhaps this helps us distinguish between literary scholarship and literary creation. The works of scholarship do tend to be cumulative, but they are often displacive. We are grateful to scholars who can give us an even slightly better text of

Chaucer or Shakespeare, of Keats or Proust or Joyce. And their work displaces that of their predecessors. Parker's *Life of Milton* adds something to Masson, and in some respects probably displaces him. We are grateful to them both. But a hallmark of literary creation is precisely that it adds without subtracting. We cannot say that *Paradise Lost* displaces any earlier work or that it will ever be displaced.

This capacity for cumulative continuity—I hesitate to use the word Tradition, which in the age of disputes over Core Curriculum has acquired the aroma of polemics—we owe, of course, to the immortal word. Literary creation, unlike scientific discovery, and despite some contemporary claims by computer enthusiasts, requires nothing more complicated than the word. And the word—the pristine word—unlike the stone products of architects, the oil and fresco of painters, the marble of sculptors, survives.

This was dramatized in the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The manuscripts accidentally found at Qumran eight miles south of Jericho by an Arab shepherd in the spring of 1947 provided Biblical documents covering the whole Hebrew Bible, with the unexplained exception of the Book of Esther. These documents proved the capacity of a text to remain unchanged for two thousand years, for the Scriptures recorded in them are the Bible we read still in the Hebrew today.

Yet with our scholarly perspective we are likely to underestimate the significance of this continuity. Whoever made a scholarly reputation by ignoring minor textual variations? On the contrary, scholars thrive by variorums. But the Literary Tradition and the great creations of the past survive and enhance our world by their relatively unchanging words. We owe a debt to the scholars who purify texts and redress the whimsies of the generations. But proliferating scholarship tempts us to be more interested in the tantalizing variations of successive texts than in the grand miracle of the work of creation itself and its substantial survival.

The world's great religions recognize the awe-inspiring power of the word to conquer time, by preserving and revering their sacred texts. Losing our awe for the sanctity of those texts, we risk losing our awe of the immortal word. The printing press also has tempted us to forget that the spoken word survives in memory, to be reborn in the written record.

The capacity to be infinitely multiplied in identical form gives the word an uncanny power to diffuse its virtues and its

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Recommended Reading

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the undying spirit of electioneering (because of the short interval between elections). It all sounds very contemporary.

The Italian Americans. Allon Schoener. Commentary by A. Bartlett Giamatti. Macmillan, 1987. \$49.50.

This large and handsome book is the culmination of Schoener's lifelong love affair with Italy, the Italians, and the Italian Americans (without a hyphen). It is a heart-warming book, filled with marvelous photographs of Italian Americans alone and in groups—weddings, family gatherings, club meetings, parades—telling their story from their escape from rural poverty and city slums in the old country to their arrival in circumstances just as bad in New York, Boston, and rural Jersey. Very moving are many of the pictures, among them the front end-paper showing emigrants awaiting their ship in the port of Naples, c. 1900, juxtaposed against the back end-paper of the healthy, obviously prosperous, and happy generations of the Troiano family in Wyckoff, New Jersey, in 1984.

Interspersed among the pictures are the personal chronicles of Constantine Panunzio, Luigi Barzini, and Mario Puzo, and the equally eloquent testimony of the humble, not to mention a perceptive introductory commentary by A. Bartlett Giamatti. In turning the

Boorstin's Remarks

(continued from page 6)

beauties. All technologies for reproducing the word—from the clay tablet to the printing press to the typewriter and now the computer—are transient. The word, the infinitely portable word, is permanent, always finding new ways to travel through space and time. And the capacity to be translated—not found in the other arts—gives every verbal creation a polyglot immortality, with the capacity always to be reborn and rediscovered in countless new costumes.

The immortal word, the iridescent word, gives us paradoxical powers to conjure with time. Present and future can enhance the past. Copernicus does not enrich Ptolemy. But Shakespeare enriches Chaucer, Milton enriches Shakespeare. With the word, the alchemical ingredient of the Humanities, we can dissolve past, present, and future into a single community—a universe of dead and still unborn contemporaries. We could not put this better than Milton did in his final academic exercise, *Pro Arte*, at Cambridge in 1632, here translated from the Latin:

This, my hearers, is to live in every epoch, to be as it were coeval with time itself. Indeed, as we have looked into the future for the glory of our name, this will be to extend and stretch our lives backward from the womb—to wrest from Fate a kind of retrospective immortality.

(Copyright 1989 by Daniel J. Boorstin)

pages one often sympathizes with the girls at Yale who envied their Italian classmate simply because she was Italian.

Willa Cather: A Literary Life. James Woodress. Univ. of Nebraska, 1987. \$35.

Willa Cather and France: In Search of the Lost Language. Robert J. Nelson. Univ. of Illinois, 1988. \$22.50.

Those readers who have accepted as established fact the story of Cather's life as told by Sharon O'Brien in *Willa Cather: The Emerging Voice* (mentioned in these columns in the issue of Summer 1988) should surely read the differing interpretation of "fact" of Woodress, who has another tale to tell, especially about Cather's alleged lesbianism, of which he notes in one instance that "there is no external evidence to support it," and, perhaps equivocally, of Cather's "crush" on Louise Pound, that "to call this a lesbian relationship . . . is to give it undue importance." He concentrates, quite properly, on the literature, brushing aside the irrelevant "facts." To decide which of the two biographers is the naive one may also be irrelevant.

The title of Nelson's monograph seems to say that French was the "lost" language for which Cather was searching, but it turns out that French was simply the "prism" through which she conducted her search: "the 'lost language' is neither script nor utterance; it is perception" (what is not actually on the page but is "really" there, as she said). "The French language and culture are, in a Thomistic sense, occasions of access or obstacle to the lost language." Fortunately, the reader of this basically sound and perceptive book can overlook the author's bemusement with Lacanian psychoanalysis and deconstruction in developing his theme. A touch of lesbianism is much healthier than Nelson's comments on Jim Burden's introduction to Cuzak's boys in *My Antonia*: "It is their phallic energy, symbolized by their 'flashing little naked legs' . . . which has dis-Burdened him in this phallogocentric and phallogocentric passage." Nelson would profit from an hour of perusing *Skeptical Engagements*.

Studies in the American Renaissance, 1987. Ed. by Joel Myerson. Univ. of Virginia, 1988. \$35.

Here is another series that, like the Library of America, merits our attention and approval

for the excellence of what it produces. In this 11th volume a few essays command special attention: Eleanor M. Tilton's "The True Romance of Anna Hazard Barker and Samuel Gray Ward" (which has its poignancy in the fact that Margaret Fuller thought that Anna Barker had usurped her place in the life of Ward), Barton Levi St. Armand's "Veiled Ladies: Dickinson, Bettine, and Transcendental Mediumship" (one of the varieties of religious experience), Nancy Craig Simmons's "Philosophical Biographer: James Elliot Cabot and *A Memoir of Ralph Waldo Emerson*," and Bradley P. Dean's remarkable piece of detection in "Reconstruction of Thoreau's Early 'Life Without Principle' Lectures."

Equivocal Endings in Classic American Novels: The Scarlet Letter, Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, The Ambassadors, The Great Gatsby. Joyce A. Rowe. Cambridge Univ., 1988. \$29.95.

Putting a severe strain on the Emersonian doctrine of self-reliance, each of the major protagonists of these novels learns from his experience a lesson of failure (partly because of his own limitations, partly because of the nature of society) but at the end refuses to accept it, preferring to retain a redemptive dream of perfection. Hester Prynne looks toward a future which she is confident will see the realization of her hopes, Huck Finn determines to "light out for the Territory," Lambert Strether "takes back to America . . . not a new recognition of himself and his limitations, but quite the reverse: a more absolute vision of ideal possibility and a deeper disgust with the world as it is." The effect of these equivocal endings, so oddly characteristic of the major American novels, is, Rowe says, "to preserve the image of a hero who is even more of a mystery at the end of his story than he was during its course." "And to the end, each . . . remains an exile, not only from the common affections of others, but from vital aspects of his or her own nature."

Correction

The transliteration of the Phi Beta Kappa motto, which was cited in the Autumn 1988 issue, page 3, should have read: *Philosophia Biou Kubernetes* (Love of wisdom, the guide of life).

the American Scholar

Thoughts for winter . . .

Settle down with *The American Scholar* this winter for a taste of contemporary writing at its best. Among the articles featured in the Winter 1989 issue are a look at the diversity and discontinuity of the political map of the Middle East; a study of the biblical story of the city and tower of Babel, and its significance to modern times; a reappraisal of Edwardian literary figure G. K. Chesterton; and a visit with Edd Roush, the oldest living member of the Baseball Hall of Fame. The issue also features the writing of Joseph Epstein, the *Scholar's* well-known editor and essayist, as well as poetry, memoirs, and excellent reviews of books.

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ΦBK Associates Honor Eudora Welty, Hear Speech By HUD Secretary Pierce

Eudora Welty received the first Phi Beta Kappa Associates Award at the Associates' annual meeting in Wilmington, Delaware, the weekend of October 21–23, 1988. In making the presentation at the Brandywine River Museum at Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, Alvin Edelman, vice president of the Associates and chairman of the Award Committee, presented the Pulitzer Prize-winning author with a plaque inscribed with the citation "in recognition of excellence, creativity, and outstanding intellectual achievement that uniquely enhance the scope of knowledge or the depth of human understanding, in keeping with the ideals of Phi Beta Kappa."

In accepting her award, Eudora Welty expressed appreciation for the "unique honor" of receiving an award from Phi Beta Kappa. She paid tribute to her family in Jackson, Mississippi, who sacrificed to educate her. "They gave me books, they encouraged me in every way, and they would



Eudora Welty

have been so happy at this moment for me." More than almost anything else, she said, her parents would have felt that this award fulfilled their idea of what people should do with their lives: "to learn . . . and to try to participate in the world and understand their fellow human beings."

Samuel Pierce, secretary of housing and urban development in the Reagan administration and a member of the Associates' Board of Directors, was the speaker at the annual banquet.

The Associates' 1989 annual meeting will take place in Boston in the fall.

The Open Text: American Writers and Their Environment

(Excerpt from *Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville*, pp. 3–4, by David S. Reynolds. Copyright 1988 by David S. Reynolds. Reprinted by permission of Alfred A. Knopf.)

The pre-Civil War period, identified by F. O. Matthiessen as the "American Renaissance," has long been recognized as the richest in America's literary history, the period that produced Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, Poe, Whitman, and Dickinson. This study compares the major literature with a broad range of lesser-known works, combines literary analysis with social history, and discusses writings of various geographical regions and of both sexes. It attempts to bridge the gap between criticism that treats literature as self-referential and cultural history, in which the uniqueness of the literary text often gets lost. American literature was generated by a highly complex environment in which competing language and value systems, openly at war on the level of popular culture, provided rich material which certain responsive authors adopted and transformed in dense literary texts.

Delving *beneath* the American Renaissance occurs in two senses: analysis of the process by which hitherto neglected popular modes and stereotypes were imported into literary texts; and discovery of a number of forgotten writings which, while often raw, possess a surprising energy and complexity that make them worthy of study on their own. An understanding of the antebellum context questions the long-held notion that American authors were marginal figures in a society that offered few literary materials. The truth may well be that, far from being estranged from their context, they were in large part created by it. Each of their careers illustrates in a different way Emerson's belief that the writer "needs a basis which he cannot supply; a tough chaos-deep soil, . . . and this basis the popular mind supplies. . . ."¹

¹*Emerson in His Journals*, edited by Joel Porte (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. 344.

Preface and In Praise of Diversity

(Excerpt from *Infinite in All Directions*, pp. vii and 5, by Freeman J. Dyson. Copyright 1988 by Freeman J. Dyson. Reprinted by permission of Harper & Row.)

This book is a revised version of a series of Gifford Lectures given at Aberdeen in 1985. The lectures were given under the title "In Praise of Diversity," which gave me license to talk about everything in the universe. Half of the lectures were about the diversity of the natural world, and half were about the diversity of human reactions to it. The title is now changed so as to focus more sharply upon the message I am preaching. Boiled down to one sentence, my message is the unbounded prodigality of life and the consequent unboundedness of human destiny. As a working hypothesis to explain the riddle of our existence, I propose that our universe is the most interesting of all possible universes, and our fate as human beings is to make it so. . . .

The lectures were given in two series, and this book is accordingly divided into two parts. Part 1 is about life as a scientific phenomenon, about our efforts to understand the nature of life and its place in the universe. Part 2 is about ethics and politics, about the local problems introduced by our species into the existence of life on this planet. The two parts do not come in logical sequence. I do not pretend that the scientific understanding of life will help us to solve political problems. Nevertheless, the two parts are not entirely disconnected. The connecting link is a general point of view. I look both at scientific and at human problems from the point of view of a lover of diversity. Diversity is the great gift which life has brought to our planet and may one day bring to the rest of the universe. The preservation and fostering of diversity is the great goal which I would like to see embodied in our ethical principles and in our political actions.

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