Harold Bloom, David Park, and Peter Brown Capture 1989 Phi Beta Kappa Book Prizes

The three Phi Beta Kappa awards to authors for outstanding contributions to humanistic learning in 1989 were presented at the annual Senate banquet at the Embassy Row Hotel in Washington, D.C., on December 8, 1989. Each award is for $2,500.


Gauss committee chairman James Tuttleton said that Bloom's book offers "incisive critical analysis—touching on questions of inspiration and belief—starting with the Hebrew Bible and proceeding from Homer to Dante, and from there to Shakespeare, Milton, the writers of the Enlightenment and Romanticism, and then to Freud and beyond." Bloom, who is Sterling Professor of the Humanities at Yale University and holds the Albert A. Berg Chair in English at New York University, was unable to attend the ceremony but sent the following statement:

Ruin the Sacred Truths is an expanded version of the Charles Eliot Norton lectures that I gave at Harvard during 1987–88. Though my concerns included the perpetually vexed matter of poetry and belief, I suspect my principal purpose in the book was to make a rejoinder to our many current modes of literary dehumanization. I do not think that the Yahwist, Virgil, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, and the other great voices of the Western Sublime merely represent historical contingencies, or that their works conceal ideologies that enhance racial, gender, and class differences. Nor do I believe that the Western canon, from Homer to Beckett, reflects anything but an aesthetic supremacy. If the study of literature is to make a contribution to social change, then it must be by encouraging the imaginative powers of the individual reader.

Ruin the Sacred Truths attempts to remind us that the greatest authors cannot be subsumed by our politics, or by the critical fashions of any particular moment.

In presenting the Science Award, committee chairwoman Ellen Weaver noted that Park, professor of physics at Williams College, "makes a habit of writing marvelously on complex and sophisticated topics." She praised The How and the Why as presenting "a coherent picture of the development of understanding about the physical universe, from elementary particles to galaxies." Park is one of only two authors ever to win the science book prize twice, his first prize-winner being Image of Eternity: Roots of Time in the Physical World, which won the award in 1980.

Emerson committee chairman Robert C. Solomon described Peter Brown's Body and Society as "one of those rare books that succeeds in delving deeply into the details of history and putting together a portrait of an ancient age at once rich in learning and scholarship." He also called the book "thought-provoking, . . . shocking and fascinating in its depiction of extremes of life that most of us dare not even imagine." Because Brown, Rolls Professor of History at Princeton University, is doing research in Turkey, John D. Moore, president of Columbia University Press, attended the banquet in Brown's behalf and expressed appreciation for the award from the publisher's perspective.


New Phi Beta Kappa History Is on Oxford's Spring List

This spring, Oxford University Press will publish Richard N. Current's history of Phi Beta Kappa, Phi Beta Kappa in American Life, a project undertaken in part by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Current, a noted American historian and Phi Beta Kappa member, has told the story of the Society's first 200 years (1776–1976). Past president John Hope Franklin has brought the story up to the present with an afterward. The book also contains a preface by the current Society president, Otis A. Singletary.

On May 11, Current will address a joint meeting of the Phi Beta Kappa Executive Committee and the Alpha Chapter at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia.

This issue of The Key Reporter features a few excerpts from the new book, beginning on page 2. Copies of the history will be available from the publisher at a pre-publication discount price of $25, which includes postage and handling. (List price is $29.95.) An order form appears on page 7.

Philosopher Joel Feinberg to Give Romanell Lectures in April

The holder of the 1989–90 Romanell-Phi Beta Kappa Professorship in Philosophy, Joel Feinberg, will present a series of lectures at the University of Arizona on April 18, 20, and 23. The tentative title for the series is "The Ghostly Realm of Moral Rights."

The 1990–91 professorship has been awarded to Alexander Nehamas, professor of philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania. He is the eighth recipient of the award, which carries a stipend of $6,000.

Nominations for the professorship are made by Phi Beta Kappa chapters. Chapters are reminded that the deadline for nominations for the 1991–92 professorship is February 19, 1990.

The 1990 Phi Beta Kappa book awards are open to qualified books published between May 1, 1989, and April 30, 1990. Entries must be submitted, preferably by the publishers, by April 30, 1990. Inquiries and entries should be addressed to the appropriate award committee at 1511 Q St., N.W., Washington, DC 20009.
Some Excerpts
Phi Beta Kappa in American Life
By Richard N. Current

From Chapter I

JOHN HEATH [a student at the College of William and Mary in 1776] thought there ought to be yet another student society, one that would also be secret and select but would be much more serious-minded. The son of a prominent Virginia gentleman who had served in the House of Burgesses, Heath was only fifteen years old (as were most entering students in those days) when he got the idea. But he was excellently tutored in Greek as well as Latin, took pride in his reputation as a Hellenist, and possessed precocious qualities of leadership. He soon found four fellow students willing to join him in the project. The five met, as one of them recorded a few weeks later, on “Thursday the 5th of December in the year of our Lord God one thousand seven hundred and seventy-six, and the first of the Commonwealth, a happy spirit and resolution of attaining the important ends of Society, entering the minds of John Heath, Thomas Smith, Richard Booker, Armistead Smith, and John Jones.”

At that first meeting the youths agreed on a name, a motto, and a medal. The name, in Latin, was to be Societas Philosophiae, which could be translated as “Philosophical Society” or perhaps better as “Society of Lovers of Learning.” The motto, in Greek, was to be Φιλοσοφία βίου κυβερνήτης, meaning “Love of wisdom the guide of life.” The medal was to be a silver square engraved on one side with the initials S.P and on the other with the initials OBK.

From Chapter II

Politics threatened to wreck both Dartmouth College and the New Hampshire Alpha [of Phi Beta Kappa] when, in 1816, the Republicans got control of the state government and tried, in effect, to convert the private college into a state university. For a time the “university” authorities contested with the college authorities for the custody of the campus and the loyalty of the students. Undergraduates in the ΦBK society continued to meet, but on May 1, 1817, the date for choosing candidates from the junior class, the minutes said: “the peculiar state of the College rendered it impossible to elect at once.”

Some of the men on each of the rival boards of trustees and all members of the two contending faculties were ΦBK brothers. When the case of Dartmouth College v. Woodward went to the United States Supreme Court, the chief attorney for the college was Brother Daniel Webster, and the defendant personifying the “university” was Brother William H. Woodward, recently president of the New Hampshire Alpha. Three brothers—Joseph Story in addition to Bushrod Washington and John Marshall—were among the judges who finally decided in favor of the college.

After the Supreme Court’s decision, the Dartmouth Phi Beta Kappas on the winning side celebrated at an anniversary dinner, where Webster himself designed to appear and to speak as the orator of the evening. “A large number of our most distinguished brothers met each other with mutual congratulations for the delivery of our present institution from the arbitrary interposition of legislative power,” the minutes read: “and while the numbers present seemed to give strength and respectability to the Society, a luster was thrown around it by the presence of him, who had so dexterously and successfully wielded the Aegis of expansion beyond the Virginia borders would be feasible because the society, having ceased to limit its membership to William and Mary collegians, had admitted an alumnus of both Harvard and Yale. This was Elisha Parmele, a Connecticut native who had studied at Yale until its closing on account of the war and then had graduated from Harvard. At twenty-four, while hoping for a career in the ministry, Parmele went south to regain his health (he was to die an early death from tuberculosis). He found employment as a tutor in the family of a friend of [William] Short, [president of Phi Beta Kappa] and introduced him to the ΦBK.

THE KEY REPORTER
of the Law.” The ΦΒΚ members on the losing side took no part in these festivities. . . .

From Chapter X
Perhaps the United Chapters ought to have the power of disciplining chapters and revoking as well as granting charters. This proposition gained support as the society confronted threats to academic and intellectual freedom—threats that conceivably could eventuate in an institution’s loss of scholarly character.

A serious threat, as most members saw it, came from the proposal and the passage of state laws against the teaching of evolution. Oklahoma and Florida in 1923 and Tennessee in 1925 adopted such laws, while several other states seemed on the verge of doing so. According to the Tennessee legislation, which applied to all state-supported schools, it would be “unlawful for any teacher to teach any theory that denies the Story of Divine Creation of man as taught in the Bible.” . . .

State colleges and universities—and private ones with fundamentalist denominational ties—appeared to be in danger of repression like the public schools. This heightened the apprehensions of delegates to the 1925 Council. They adopted a resolution denouncing “the present tendency to suppress freedom of thought and speech in our colleges” and declaring it to be “the sense of this convention that no college that gives evidence of denying this freedom will be considered worthy of a chapter in Phi Beta Kappa.”

This resolution did not please every member of the society. “It places the society in definite opposition to all colleges maintained by Christian churches,” one member complained in a letter to the New York Times. He argued that Phi Beta Kappa was violating civil liberty rather than upholding it. “One of the essential elements in civil liberty is the right of voluntary association,” he wrote. “—the right of persons who have come to have any view on any subject whatever to associate themselves for the propagation of their view and to educate their children accordingly.” But another correspondent replied that Phi Beta Kappa ought to be entitled to the same right that the critic asserted for groups in general. “Surely he ought not to grant the ‘right’ to be intolerant to every organization except the Phi Beta Kappa.” . . .

From Chapter XII
If ΦΒΚ students had been mostly bookworms and drudges, they presumably would have had a rather poor chance of succeeding in later life. Actually, members of the society achieved success at a greater rate than nonmembers during the early twentieth century. So, at least, its defenders maintained, but critics disagreed. One’s view depended largely on one’s definition of success.

The most convincing evidence of high achievement came from the pages of Who’s Who in America, the first edition of which appeared in 1900, the same year that the first general catalog of Phi Beta Kappa members appeared. Soon educators here and there got the idea of comparing the listings in the two books. A University of Illinois professor looked into Who’s Who for graduates of institutions that had had a chapter for at least twenty years. There he found, as he reported in Popular Science Monthly for March 1903, fully 5.9 percent of the ΦΒΚ graduates but only 2.1 percent of all the graduates, high, medium, and low. “Our conclusion must be that the Phi Beta Kappa man’s chances of success are nearly three times those of his classmates as a whole.”

A Wesleyan University professor later discovered a somewhat greater statistical disparity between members and nonmembers among Wesleyan alumni in Who’s Who. As William T. Foster summarized the findings in his book Should Students Study? (1917), the Wesleyan professor “concludes that of the highest-honor graduates (the two or three leading scholars of each class) one out of two will become distinguished; of Phi Beta Kappa men, one out of three; of the rest, one out of ten.” Foster also cited similar studies that led to similar results at other colleges.

Each new edition of Who’s Who seemed to reconfirm the point. One investigator discovered that, of the 26,915 persons included in the 1927 edition, nearly 6,000 were members of Phi Beta Kappa. In the North American Review he gave national publicity to his conclusion: “. . . the total membership of Phi Beta Kappa is but one in three thousand of our population—that is, three one-hundredths of one percent—but that numerically insignificant minority has furnished many times, probably one hundred times, its quota of our men of fame, of our truly successful men, our leaders of the State, of the bench and the bar, of art and letters, of scientific achievement, of civic affairs in general.”

Not all commentators were equally impressed. “Although students of scholarly attainment are likely to become professors and professors have more than an ordinary chance of being entered in Who’s Who,” the New York Times observed in 1926, “these records are taken to show that there is a connection between scholarship and later distinction.”

No doubt the volumes did give disproportionately large space to educators, clergymen, social workers, and the like—and disproportionately little to businessmen or to celebrities in sports, entertainment, or the arts. . . .

There were other ways of estimating achievement. One way was to get the opinions of classmates or other contemporaries. Researching in 1908 and 1909 for a series of articles to appear in The Independent, a journalist undertook to compare the careers of “society men”—those belonging to the “senior societies” known as Wolf’s Head, Scroll and Keys, and Skull and Bones, none of which based its selections on scholarship—with the careers of Phi Beta Kappa men at Yale. “I asked seven Yale graduates in classes from 1872 to 1896 to mark in the directory of graduates the names of their classmates who (continued on page 4)
From Chapter XIV

From Phi Beta Kappa members and others, [AMERICAN SCHOLAR editor Hiram] Haydn kept getting letters demanding [Paul] Robeson's removal [from the Editorial Board of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR]. [One writer] protested against "adding communist collectivist inclined frontiers to the editorial staff" and said he could not understand why the Board came to elect leftwingers such as Paul Robeson and Max Lerner.

Haydn regretted that Robeson and Lerner had been appointed, like other board members, because of their distinguished achievements, their special knowledge, and their editorial ability. "Left wing, right wing, all around the block—it is utterly immaterial to me for the purposes of the AMERICAN SCHOLAR so long as they have the above qualifications and do not try to intrude doctrinaire political views upon the magazine." Lerner had been very helpful; Haydn said; Robeson, so far, had been preoccupied with other interests.

There was a preponderance of "Pinks" on the board, [the objector] reiterated, and the magazine was "considered quite pink in spots." The man wondered why "so many literati have so little of what Solomon called 'wisdom' or 'understanding.'" Apparently, the practical matters about seventy-five per cent of our Ph.D.'s are also d. ph.'s—that is, "damn phules." To this Haydn responded:

"Speaking for myself, I can add that the "big red scare" leaves me somewhat less than terrified. I am not a Communist; I am not a fellow-traveler; I am simply a very ordinary American who dislikes to be pushed around by people who decide that association with this or that other individual is dangerous. . . . Whether or not the AMERICAN SCHOLAR is considered "quite pink in spots" seems to me really unimportant. It has demonstrably no political message or line of any sort.

Haydn's right-wing correspondent insisted on the last word. He retorted: "I would say that this airy view of the red-pink menace to American institutions is a made-in-Moscow cliché for the cloistered—yes, the American scholar!"

Despite the continuing complaints of right-wingers and anti-intelectuals, Haydn and the majority of his editorial board pressed ahead in their insistence on freedom of expression. They published articles critical of repression during the 1950s when Joe McCarthy was alleging communist infiltration in the federal government, schools and libraries were censoring books, and state legislatures were requiring public universities to impose loyalty oaths on their faculties.

Excerpted from "Afterword" by John Hope Franklin

How is it that an organization, with relatively obscure and inauspicious beginnings and with nothing much in the way of a power base, is able to enjoy considerable respect and a reasonable amount of influence? Surely, one reason is that for more than two centuries Phi Beta Kappa has stood for the highest academic and intellectual standards. In a country that historically has placed such great stock in material and practical things, its people have always been able to muster some respect, however grudging at times, for things that exalt the mind and spirit. The very age of Phi Beta Kappa invites venerability, to be sure, and in a nation given to symbols, nothing epitomizes excellence more than an honors society born just five months after Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence.

Another possible explanation for the respect and influence enjoyed by Phi Beta Kappa is that it is regarded by many not merely as a symbol of excellence, but the very ideal of excellence to which so many aspire. Whether in the classroom or in the workplace, Americans have the highest regard for excellence, however much they might express public disdain for the outward manifestations of intellectual elitism. Any tolerance of mediocrity is more a confused gesture of lip service to the leveling process than any serious adherence to low standards.

Finally, the weight of the sheer size of the membership of Phi Beta Kappa has doubtless something to do with its standing. No other group whose primary interest is in the promotion and celebration of the constructive use of one's mental capacities can claim a membership of 425,000. There is a pervasiveness of the membership, moreover, that is a direct consequence of its size. While there are many colleges and universities that do not yet have chapters of Phi Beta Kappa, which most of them would be pleased to have, very few of them have a faculty with no members of the organization. When the numbers are few in a given community—collegiate or otherwise—their visibility seems all the greater.

Book Committee Loses Heilman, Gains Sudrann, McNaugher

With this issue, Robert B. Heilman retires as the Key Reporter's reviewer of books in English and comparative literature, in order to turn his attention to other writing. During his three decades of service on the Book Committee, he reviewed well over 600 books. In 1979, he won the Christian Gauss book prize for The Ways of the World: Comedy and Society. He also served 18 years as a DBK senator.

Two new reviewers have been named to the Book Committee: Jean Sudrann, Mary Emma Woolley Professor Emeritus of English at Mount Holyoke College, and Thomas McNaugher, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. McNaugher's latest book is titled New Weapons, Old Politics: America's Military Procurement Muddle, published by Brookings in mid-1989.

The Key Reporter
Leonard W. Doob


A lucid summary of empirical research concerning the responses of individuals (perforce, unfortunately for generalizability, largely Northern American) to "nature" defined broadly to include "parks and open spaces, meadows and abandoned fields, street trees and backyard gardens" as well as "plants and various forms of vegetation, settings or landscapes or places with plants," and waters. The primary data come from subjects' preferences concerning a "sampling" of photographs and slides reproduced in this volume from before- and-after interviews of young persons who have been more or less isolated in wilderness areas; and from urban and rural Americans who cultivate gardens. The secondary sources emphasize the physical and spiritual "restorative" results of such contacts, with "stress management" being a beneficial consequence. In these days of pollution and environmental destruction it is not surprising that nature is praised and the warning is repeated concerning the appalling effects of human intrusions.


A sprightly, somewhat glib updating of advice concerning how to win creativity, ingenuity, and physical and mental health and to influence people. The information comes not only from the author's own personal and academic experience but also from well-planned experiments by herself and relevantly cited studies by others, which, commendably, are informally reported without the use of jargon and the usual imperative if boring details. The tone is not self-effacing and the concept of mindfulness (in contrast with mindlessness) almost emerges as a neologism, so skillfully is it stretched to embrace behavior that is both praiseworthy and productive—at least in America.


An impressive, if jerky, history, not by an American but by a competent Japanese writer, of the Japanese efforts toward the close of World War II tocrip the American advance in the Pacific by having small piloted planes crash into enemy ships and explode. Despite problems in designing and servicing the planes, bureaucratic tangle, bad weather, and faulty communications, more than 3,000 pilots deliberately persisted according to plan. It is possible to extract from this book a glimpse of how the men who "voluntarily" sacrificed themselves for the sake of their emperor, their country, their families, and their own self-esteem. During the training period they were honored and entertained. "I'm afraid it will hurt when I crash," one of them said; and then he was comforted by his officer, "No, you won't feel anything. You'll be scattered into a million pieces before you feel anything." After every element of a "Reserve Sub-Lieutenant 1st Class," a university graduate, was, "My body will collapse like a falling cherry blossom, but my soul will live and protect this land forever."


A didactic, cocksure, facilely written review of the authors' procedures that have been and can be employed to reduce and even to resolve conflicts between labor and management in large-scale industries. Unfortunately for generalizability, largely not arbitration but a form of mediation in which the two parties interact—in descending order of significance—in order to reconcile their interests, to determine which side is right, and to gauge the distribution of power in the disputed scale. Although most of the exposition is phrased in general, almost universal terms, the countries of reference is almost exclusively the United States, and primarily the coal-mining industry. Almost half of the book is devoted to a case history of one company's disputes in which the authors (whose primary disciplines are anthropology, psychology, and law) participated strenuously and apparently fruitfully and from which most of their procedures and generalizations are evolved.

Richard N. Current


Our concern is with the present naturally raise questions about the past, and so we now find a new emphasis on environmental or ecological history. The Johns Hopkins University Press is sponsoring a "Creating the North American Landscape" series, one volume of which is The American Backwoods Frontier. Cambridge University Press is publishing "Studies in Environment and Society," one of which is Americans and Their Forests.

Harold R. Shurtleff partially anticipated Jordan and Kaups when he demonstrated in his three-volume biography (1948–64) of Henry Adams that the Log-Cabin Myth is an "invented tradition" and a "reinvented history," "breeding illusory words" and "out of which the most laudable of our institutions" and "the most praiseworthy and productive—at least in America—emanate." Acknowledging the evolution of the American landscape as "a fact of life, lumbering, other industries, agriculture, business, commerce, and conservation, and reforestation.

Fighting for the Confederacy: The Personal Recollections of General Edward Porter Alexander. Ed. by Goodrich/Allenger. Univ. of North Carolina, 1989. $34.95. Alexander's Military Memoirs (1907) is a Civil War classic but tells little about the author's own experiences. Now his Personal Recollections are available in book form after having lain for many years in scrambled and improperly identified bunches of manuscript. One of the most candid and revealing of all such accounts, this one provides vivid battle scenes as well as frank characterizations of generals on both sides, including Robert E. Lee. Not that Alexander's a doting general; he remained a sentimental devotee of the Lost Cause. Especially touching are his reminiscences of Union officers he knew and liked at West Point and in the prewar army.


The Education of Henry Adams, published posthumously in 1918, has long been considered a classic of American autobiography. As a factual record of the man's life, however, it had serious limitations, which Samuels made clear in his three-volume biography (1948–64). The author's one-volume condensation retains the power and beauty of the original. Here, fully realized, is Adams the historian, novelist, philosopher, and, after his wife's suicide, widower with a passionate though platonic attachment to another man's wife. Not all Adams's theories have held up, but he foresaw today's predicament accurately enough when he wrote to his brother Charles in 1900: "Our scientific age may have the existence of mankind in its power, and the human race commit suicide by blowing up the world."


"It is the thesis of this book that George Horace Lorimer set out to create America in and through the pages of the Saturday Evening Post." Lorimer edited the magazine from 1899 until his death in 1936. Readers old enough may remember it as a weekly trove of short stories and installment fiction by some of the best writers of the day. But, as Cohn discloses, the editors, articles, and even stories were often slanted rather far to the right. In those pre-television days the Post exerted a tremendous influence on the making of the self-image of America. Here was an image patterned on the ideals of the businessmen.


When World War I stopped immigration from Europe, hundreds of thousands of blacks left southern farms for jobs in the war-stimulated industries of the North. Grossman tells...
the story of those who looked to Chicago as the promised land. He uses letters, newspapers, and government documents to show not only the movement and the adaptation to the new life but also the feelings of those who took part in the process. The migrants were hoping to share the American dream in the fullest sense. “What most would eventually recognize, however, was that there still remained a journey longer than the Great Migration and strewn with greater obstacles.”

Victoria Schuck


When completed, these documentary collections— the products of meticulous research—will constitute one of the valuable legacies of the bicentennial celebration of the U.S. Constitution. These are reviewed here for two important reasons: First, because they often afford more drama than historians or political analysts convey, they may be of considerable interest to lay readers. Second, the new publications fill long-standing gaps in knowledge. Established as documentary projects in the late 1960s, they were originally conceived in the sesquicentennial of the Constitution in 1937. The collections follow in sequence from Max Farrand’s four-volume edition of the records of the 1787 convention, reissued during this bicentennial with a supplementary volume of letters and other materials edited by James Hutson of the Library of Congress.

The documentary history of the ratification of the Constitution is planned for 20 volumes in three series. The first of these, which includes mainly the publication of official state records in the order of the states’ approval of the Constitution, is an invaluable record. The second series, titled Commentaries on the Constitution, adds a vast quantity of material about public opinion. The third series will contain records of the Bill of Rights. For the past 130 years, scholars have had to rely on the incomplete records of Jonathan Elliot’s work (published from the 1830s to 1860s).

When completed, the history of the first federal elections (four volumes) will include some of the debates of the Confederation Congress.

Documents of the first federal Congress (1789–91) and will contain journals and legislative histories of all bills, petitions, and letters received. These should contribute greatly to our understanding of the whos and whys of Congress’s implementation of the Constitution.

Free of the gems coming out of the research on Congress is the new edition of the diary of feisty Sen. William Maclay, whose revelations profile the upper body in machinations as fresh as those in late-20th-century Senates. When completed, the history of the first federal elections (four volumes) will include some of the debates of the Confederation Congress.

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When all the volumes of letters of the 343 members of the Continental and Confederation Congress are published, they will exceed 600 per volume. The concluding volume (no. 16) covers the period September 1, 1780, to February 28, 1781. Another documentary of note is the Kur- and Lerner five-volume history with new materials from the 17th, 18th, and early 19th centuries focusing on English and colonial origins and hard-to-come-by letters and Court documents relative to the Constitution. These volumes carry the documents through 1835. The Levy, Karst, and Mahoney four-volume encyclopedia on the Constitution contains 2,000 alphabetically arranged articles by 230 lawyers, political scientists, and historians. It doesn’t constitute much new knowledge, but should be useful to students.
Adler Wins Associates Award, Couper Elected President

Mortimer J. Adler, philosopher, author, and teacher, received the second annual Phi Beta Kappa Associates Award at the group’s annual dinner meeting at the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston on October 7, 1989. Adler is director of the Institute for Philosophical Research in Chicago and serves as chairman of the Board of Editors of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica.*


A careful account of the complex development of the uses of alphabetic literacy in Classical Athens. The author emphasizes the relationship between written and oral, both previous and contemporaneous, communication. She demonstrates the fallacy of simplistic views of “oral” versus “literate” cultures. An overriding concern of hers is with historiography and oral tradition, but the book should be of wider interest to readers with anthropological and sociological interests as well.


Students of Homer will receive much pleasure, enrichment, and enlightenment from this book. It is free of jargon, translates all Greek, yet explicates the acoustic patterns of the language so that even the Greekless will understand, and has a most humane style. Dimock reveals the unity of the poem and the intensely ordered world of the poet, as well as the artistic principles by which he presents that unity and order.


This is a 64-page essay, well translated from the 1986 French edition, on the manifestations and the very essence of the god. Dionysus epitomizes in these pages through the analysis of his images and semantic homologies as the spurring, leaping, dancing force in wine, blood, and sex. The essay is itself vigorous and will appeal to a general audience.


The book is as crafty and resourceful as its topic, and very challenging to the reader. It transcends the question of “oral” versus “written” composition through careful application of modern literary theory, and offers new interpretations by showing how the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* allude to one another (if they are contemporaneous) or, at least, have profoundly revealing interrelationships and differences. Difficult reading, but much excitement.

*The Key Reporter*

Volume 55 • Number Two • Winter 1989–90

Editor: Friscilla S. Taylor
Consulting Editor: Douglas W. Board

The *Key Reporter* is published quarterly by the Phi Beta Kappa Society at the Garamond Pridemark Press, Baltimore, Maryland. Send all change-of-address notices to The *Key Reporter*, Phi Beta Kappa Editorial and Executive Offices, 1811 Q Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20009. (Note that the ZIP Code for incoming mail is different from the 20077 code used only for postal returns.) No responsibility is assumed for views expressed in articles published.

For nonmembers, single copies are $1.00; one-year subscription is $3.00.

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ISSN: 0029-0864

**The Unity of the Odyssey.** George E. Dimock. Univ. of Massachusetts, 1989. $30.

Students of Homer will receive much pleasure, enrichment, and enlightenment from this book. It is free of jargon, translates all Greek, yet explicates the acoustic patterns of the language so that even the Greekless will understand, and has a most humane style. Dimock reveals the unity of the poem and the intensely ordered world of the poet, as well as the artistic principles by which he presents that unity and order.


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**Dionysos at Large.** Marcel Detienne. Tr. by Arthur Goldhammer. Harvard, 1989. $18.95.

This is a 64-page essay, well translated from the 1986 French edition, on the manifestations and the very essence of the god. Dionysus epitomizes in these pages through the analysis of his images and semantic homologies as the spurring, leaping, dancing force in wine, blood, and sex. The essay is itself vigorous and will appeal to a general audience.

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