

Ephim Fogel

November 15, 1920 — June 13, 1992

Ephim Fogel's colleagues in the English Department remember and honor him for the energy, skill, and wisdom with which he chaired the department during four crucial years, 1966-1970. Ep not only steered it through the political crises of those years, but at the same time he successfully negotiated with an expanding College and University for the means necessary to bring to his department much of the strength, flexibility, breadth, and distinction that it enjoys today. His students during his forty years' service at Cornell are grateful to him for the searching and sensitive rigor with which he trained them. His fellow philologists acknowledge his many published contributions to the methodology of resolving cruxes of interpretation and documentation. He collaborated in editing two Cornell University Press books, *Evidence for Authorship* (with David V. Erdman, 1966), and *A Concordance to the Poems of Ben Jonson* (with Mario A. DiCesare, 1978), and at the time of his death he was revising his book-length study of Sir Philip Sidney's poetry. The audience of Ep's work as poet, both his original verse and his translations from Russian and German, admires it for its rich precision. His family and his friends throughout the University and beyond will profoundly miss his good counsel and the warm humanity of his presence.

Born in Odessa, Russia, Ep Fogel emigrated with his parents to the United States at the age of three. He was educated in the New York City schools, and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa in course at the City College of New York and was graduated *magna cum laude* in 1941. That June, he and Charlotte Finkelstein were married. Ep immediately started graduate study in English at New York University, but in July of the following year he enlisted in the Army of the United States. Indeed, both his love for pedagogy and, in particular, his devotion to Russian literature began while he was assigned to ASTP duty. During much of his service until his discharge in early 1946 as sergeant, Ep put to use his talent for teaching, first as an instructor in the Signal Corps and then as instructor-in-charge of educational therapy in the Army hospital at Camp Shelby, Mississippi. His experience at the hospital inspired one of his earliest and finest poems, "Convalescents." He completed residency requirements for his M.A. (NYU, 1947) by fall term 1946, when he entered the doctoral program in English at Ohio State University. Completing his course work there, in 1949 Ep accepted appointment as Instructor in English at Cornell, attracted to the institution at which his younger brother Robert had completed undergraduate study only the year before.

Ep's appointment was one of a notable series that renewed a department left greatly weakened during the war. Ep was promoted to Assistant Professor in 1955, received his Ph.D. in 1958, and was promoted to Associate Professor with tenure in 1961 and to Professor in 1966. Immediately before taking the chair that year, Ep had served for three years as Director of Graduate Studies; in 1970 recurring health problems obliged him to withdraw from what would have been his eighth year of uninterrupted administrative duty. For 1974-75 he was appointed Faculty Fellow in the Society for the Humanities. He retired as Professor Emeritus in 1990.

Certain qualities of mind and sensibility characterized Ep Fogel's scholarly writing from the outset of his career: toughness in assessing a hypothesis, scrupulous clarity and control in articulating it, trenchant curiosity, a resolutely independent critical imagination, exhaustively thorough learning, style, humor, depth. In conversation the Ep we remember also exhibited a prodigious memory—the envy of us all, and to every task he brought an absorbing interest and belief in what he did. He read and published numerous papers on the life and work of Sir Philip Sidney, on William Shakespeare, on the Elizabethan and the European renaissance more generally, on computer-assisted analysis of literary texts, and on modern poetry. He published his own poetry and his translations in such periodicals as *Atlantic Monthly*, *Granite*, *Poetry*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Voices*, and *Slavonic and East European Review*, and in *Cross Section*. His poem "Shipment to Maidanek," one of the earliest literary responses to the Holocaust, appears in several anthologies. The work that perhaps best displays the rich variety of Ep's talents as scholar-poet, and the work to which he increasingly turned in his later years, is his exemplary verse-translation from Russian of some hundred poems by Osip Mandelstam, with annotation and a critical introduction—a volume that in many ways constitutes Ep's *chef-d'oeuvre*.

The accomplishments of Ep Fogel's years of departmental administration were many and notable. Both undergraduate and graduate curricula were wholly revised. The Cornell Creative Writing Program, now generally recognized as one of the finest in the country, benefited greatly from Ep's sponsorship and strong support. Ep obtained a reduction of the far too heavy teaching-load in English. With the close collaboration of his dear friend, the late David Novarr, he oversaw the appointment of twenty-five tenured or tenure-track colleagues, fully half the membership of the department at the time he retired from the chair, and Ep involved that membership much more widely than before in the management of departmental affairs. The administrative achievements of which Ep remained proudest were the initiatives he undertook by which the first woman and the first African-American became full professors of English at Cornell. His leadership of the department he thus built was marked by a

patient fairness to which even dissenters within it paid tribute. Ep Fogel was painstaking, and at a time when it was most required, he devoted himself to virtually unintermitted labor at his desk.

Although Ep often felt that he was at his best working late at night to deadline, he ultimately found that his health could no longer sustain all the demands of his administrative regimen. When he returned to full-time teaching and his own writing, a new generation of students was able to enjoy the deeply engaged and sympathetic mind Ep brought to classroom and conference. Ep was, first to last, an extraordinarily fine teacher, one who exercised his every skill—and innumerable kindnesses—to encourage his students, graduate and undergraduate, in the life of learning.

Ephim Fogel leaves his wife Charlotte; their four children, in whom he took immense pride, Daniel, David, Rebecca, and Jessica, two of whom followed him into the professoriate; four grandchildren; his brother Robert; and us, his colleagues, students, and friends.

Dan McCall, Edgar Rosenberg, Charles S. Levy