

# Publishing A Book Is Hard Work!

## Reward Not Monetary; Merely Self Satisfaction



**KNOLL PAUSES FROM HIS WORK**—It took three years to "beat" his information into shape at a rate of about 200 words, or one page per day.



**PUBLISHER AND EDITOR AT WORK**—Bruce Nicoll (L.), director of the University of Nebraska Press and Herbert Hyde, associate editor, smile over a typographical error in a carefully written manuscript.



**THE FINISHED PRODUCT!**—Knoll's book passed the test and was sent to press to be bound in this finished form.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The following story was written for an advanced reporting class at the School of Journalism. Frank Partsch, who is interning at the Omaha World Herald this summer, served as editor of the Daily Nebraskan second semester of this school year.

By Frank Partsch

From the time when an author decides to write a book until the day his finished copy

appears on the bookstore shelf is a long, agonizing period, according to Robert Knoll, professor of history at the University of Nebraska.

The story of a book can take from one year up to a lifetime, according to Knoll, who has written and edited six books himself. His latest, "Ben Jonson's Plays," was released this spring.

The Jonson book took from 1959 until 1965 to research, write and publish, Knoll said. About three years of this time was actually spent in writing the book.

The other leading role in the story of a book is played by the publisher, in this case Bruce Nicoll, director of the University of Nebraska Press. It is the publisher who holds the power of life or death of the book, by saying whether or not it will appear in print.

"First of all an author must have something to say," Nicoll said. Knoll wanted to say that Ben Jonson's plays could be more "accessible to the modern reader." The urge to write on Jonson, he said, first came to him while a graduate student at the University of Minnesota. "I didn't get around to it until 1959, when I decided 'It must be now.'"

Knoll said the plays of Jonson are not so familiar to the modern reader as those of William Shakespeare. "I ask myself what was in the plays that people could like."

The next step was to find the theme of each of Jonson's plays and to explain it in modern terms. "I had to find what alchemy, usury and bestiary meant to the Elizabethan," he said.

Finding out what these terms meant required a trip to the British Museum in London, where Knoll determined if calling someone "chicken" meant the same in 1650 as it did in 1950 and whether alchemy held the same esteem then as physics does today.

A key to understanding "The Alchemist," therefore, is to know how much confidence the Elizabethan-on-the-street had in alchemy. "I had to know these attitudes in order to explain the plays," Knoll said.

Then came the three years of "beating the information into shape." Knoll estimated that he was able to turn out about 200 words per day—about one page.

When the rough draft of the manuscript was done, Knoll contacted Nicoll and asked him to look at his work. He

then received from the University press a long statement about accepted style and procedure.

At least one expert in the field must read the manuscript for style and content, according to a rule of the University Press. The names of these critics are kept anonymous from the author.

The critic reads the manuscript and returns it to Nicoll, accompanied by a critique on the work. "If this report is too negative we either refuse to publish the book or we find another judge," Nicoll said.

"We return the manuscript and critique to the author, who corrects and returns his work."

According to Knoll, this revision takes around six months. "The corrections are made according to the author's own judgment," he said. "If he doesn't want to follow the advice of the critic, he doesn't have to."

Knoll said a good editor makes a good author. The copy editors at University Press read over his finished and revised manuscript. They also may suggest corrections and revisions.

How does the author feel about so many different

people telling him how his book should have been written?

"The problem is to retain your own integrity while at the same time profiting from the advice of those whose opinions you value," is Knoll's answer.

University press sends out specifications to several publishing houses, after which the lowest bidder is usually chosen to publish the book.

The type is set in "about eight weeks," according to Nicoll, and the proofs of the manuscript are read by the proofreaders at University Press.

And then back to the author for his inspection and last minute changes.

Then the type is arranged into pages, more proofs are made, and the proofreaders and the author have another chance to make last minute changes.

During this time, the University of Nebraska Art Department is working on a jacket design and the author is determining what artwork he wants in the body of the book. This material is sent to the publishing house about the time the pages have been printed.

How does the author feel when the long birth of a book is completed?

"I remember the extreme letdown, after my first book," Knoll said. "I thought 'Thank God, that's over. It's more a sense of relief than anything."

"I'm glad to have them bound, because then I can't do anything more to them."

The book is held for release, allowing reviewers some time to read and review it before it is released to the public. It usually appears in the bookstore about two months after it is bound.

Without a hitch in the procedure, a manuscript could be received, printed and bound in about eight months, Nicoll said, but most authors take more time in reading their proofs.

And scholarly books, according to the author of "Ben Jonson's Plays, are not written for money. "It is not unusual for the writer of a book of this type to pay for his own book," he said.

"The profit from this book won't buy me a car; it might buy me a bicycle."

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### Non-Discrimination Move Prompts Action

Cont. from P. 1  
"Yet, Sigma Nu will continue to work through its national organization to delete the clause on a national level. This, we feel, is the proper democratic process."  
Phi Delta Theta president John Luckasen said "We are working to make the constitution of Phi Delta Theta compatible with the IFC state-

ment, which we strongly support."

**Regents Speak**  
The statement issued by the Board of Regents on June 11 stated that "Membership in student organizations at the University of Nebraska must be based on criteria which will not include race or color."  
According to Dean Ross, the statement was not a change in institutional policy but merely a move to define and clarify the University position formally.  
Ross pointed out that in their statements, Panhellenic and IFC indicated the "need for clarification and restatement of institutional policy in the area of racial discrimination."

**Sigma Nu Reaction**  
Sigma Nu president Mowbray said that steps were

taken by the fraternity two weeks before classes were out this June to obtain the waiver necessary to strike the chapter's "white clause."

He said that due to a mix-up, the papers had been misplaced between the national officers and the local chapter. However, he added, an additional set of papers is on the way.

Mowbray said he felt that the Regents' action in setting the deadline for removing such clauses at September 1 was "unfair."

He said he understood that Dean Ross had "originally gone to the Regents with a December 1 deadline, but the Regents turned this down."

"I am somewhat disappointed in this action," he said.

According to Mowbray, the fraternity cannot get the clause removed "before late October, even with a speeded-up process."

He said that changing the constitution involves three visits from national officers and three by the Regents, "and this is hard to set up with their schedules."

Mowbray expressed hope that the Regents would recognize that the fraternity is cooperating with them in trying to remove the clause just as quickly as they can.

He said he hoped that they would interpret the actions of the fraternity as indicating "their ability and desire to select members" on the basis stipulated in the Regent's statement.

Dean Ross was unavailable for comment last week.

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