Abraham Kaplan Collection SC2001.1

California State Polytechnic University, Pomona
3801 West Temple Avenue
Pomona, CA, 91768
(909) 869-3109
nmzagami@csupomona.edu
Title: Abraham Kaplan Collection
Identifier/Call Number: SC2001.1
Contributing Institution: California State Polytechnic University, Pomona
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 17.0 boxes
Date (inclusive): 1942-1989
Abstract: Abraham Kaplan (1918-1993) was a philosopher, an author and an educator. His collection contains correspondence, articles, lectures, speeches, book manuscripts, subject files, notes, and printed matter pertaining to his writings and academic career.
Location: California State Polytechnic University, Pomona: University Library Special Collections, Bldg 15, room 4434

Biography
Abraham Kaplan (1918-1993) was an American philosopher with a long and distinguished career. He was born June 11, 1918 to parents Joseph J. (a Rabbi) and Chava (Lerner) Kaplan in Odessa, Ukraine. Kaplan and his family immigrated to the United States in 1923 and he became a naturalized citizen in 1930. A student of philosopher Bertrand Russell, he graduated from the College of St. Thomas in 1937, did graduate study at the University of Chicago from 1937-40, and received his Ph.D. from the University of California, Los Angeles in 1942. He began his teaching career as an assistant professor for New York University from 1940-45. He then went on to the University of California, Los Angeles to become an assistant professor from 1946-49, an associate professor from 1949-52, a professor of philosophy from 1952-63, and the chair of the department from 1952-65. He also taught at the University of Michigan from 1962-72 before he moved to the University of Haifa in Israel, where he became professor emeritus in 1978. Besides giving many lectures across the globe, Kaplan held visiting distinguished professorships at over twelve universities including the California Institute of Technology, Harvard University, and California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. He devoted much of his time to organizations such as the American Philosophical Association (president of Pacific Division 1947-58) and the Association for Jewish Philosophy. He married Iona Judith Wax (a child psychologist) November 17, 1939 and had two children: Karen Eva Kaplan Diskin and Jessica Aryia Kaplan Symonds.

Kaplan traveled to and studied the cultures and beliefs of India, Israel, and Japan. As he himself put it: "I must identify myself: by training a positivist, by inclination a pragmatist, in temperament a mystic, in practice a democrat; my faith Jewish, educated by Catholics, an habitual Protestant; born in Europe, raised in the Midwest, hardened in the East and softened once more in California; psychoanalyzed, naturalized, denatured — in short, an American academician." He was also widely recognized for his endeavors — he was named one of the top ten teachers in the United States by Time magazine in 1966 and was both a Guggenheim (1945-46) and a Rockefeller (1957-58) Fellow. His written works include New World of Philosophy, American Ethics and Public Policy, The Conduct of Inquiry, and In Pursuit of Wisdom: The Scope of Philosophy. He died of a heart attack at the age of 75 on June 19, 1993 in Los Angeles.

Scope and Content
The range of the Abraham Kaplan Collection covers the earliest to the latest of his published works, lectures and workshops given around the world, and many unpublished writings. Items include manuscripts (both published and unpublished works), offprints of published articles, publisher's review copies, bound volumes, correspondence, travel files, research, newsclippings, lecture notes, personal files, and cassette and reel-to-reel recordings of his lectures.

The collection arrived in no discernable order and was rearranged into the following series:
Subject File
Writings
Publications
Recordings

The Subject File series comprises the largest portion of the collection, containing Kaplan's personal and professional files. Most of the files in this series were compiled and titled by Kaplan himself. Of particular interest is a series of files that he grouped into "Lectures;" each file contains typed and handwritten pages filled with Kaplan's knowledge of a particular subject, delivered in lectures to students around the world. Kaplan used much of the material here as a resource to compile his written works and to broaden his knowledge of world religions and cultures. Of special interest is a file titled "Terrorism," which contains articles and research findings that Kaplan had gathered on the subject. Other areas within the series include disciplines of philosophy, world history, and religion (with an emphasis on Judaism throughout). In addition to files originating with Kaplan are two other areas of interest: "News Articles/Publications About Kaplan" and "Interviews with Kaplan," containing news clippings, journals, periodicals, photocopies, and programs detailing the philosopher's career and ideology. Kaplan's "Professional Correspondence" is also contained here, being letters and memorabilia from colleagues,
friends and students.

The Writings series contains Kaplan's extensive collection of handwritten and typed lectures, essays, reviews, articles, and book manuscripts. Works are shown in various stages of progress, from cross-out and white-out editing to the publisher's review copy. Some files contain materials related to the compilation or publication of a work; i.e., handwritten notes, offprints of articles used as reference, and even publishers' rejection notices. Titles of significance in this series include Kaplan's unpublished works On Being Human: Notes for the Examined Life; The Mind of Israel; and The God Story, which was co-written with his wife Iona Kaplan. Of special interest is the title Freedom and Terror: Reason and Unreason in Politics, which contains two chapters about terrorism. One of the chapters, The Psychodynamics of Terrorism, was published in a journal and can be found in the Publications series; the other chapter, The Ethics of Terrorism, can be found as an additional file in this series. Also included are a several published works that gained special attention: (In) Pursuit of Wisdom: The Scope of Philosophy is one example. As in the Subject File series, the Writings series covers a large array of topics from metaphysics to religion, with a strong emphasis on the Hebrew culture. Many files in the Writings series can be cross-referenced with their published counterparts in the Publications series.

Located in the Publications series are all of the published materials that arrived with Kaplan Collection. Formats include journal offprints/reprints, entire journals, hardbound books, and photocopies of journals/magazines. Kaplan’s works are presented in a variety of languages including German, Portuguese, French, and Hebrew. One important title in this series is Kaplan’s first book The New World of Philosophy. Also of interest is a file of book reviews written by Kaplan and two Encyclopedia Americana volumes that contain Kaplan’s contributions for BODY AND MIND and CAUSE. Of special interest is an article in which Kaplan delves into the topic of terrorism: The Psychodynamics of Terrorism. Of particular note to those in the field of library information science is Kaplan's article The Age of the Symbol: a Philosophy of Library Education from v.34, no.4 of Library Quarterly, in which he succinctly redefines the function of the library as it relates to the age of information. Many files in the Publications series can be cross-referenced with their unpublished counterparts in the Writings series.

The Recordings series contains cassette tapes and 1/4" reel-to-reel recordings of many lectures given by Kaplan in the years from 1954 to 1989. Lectures were given at high school assemblies, radio conferences, workshops, conferences and seminars. Also included is a four-part cassette recording of Abraham Kaplan’s oral history (no transcript is available at this time).

Related Collections

The personal library of Abraham Kaplan was also donated to the University Library and can be viewed by doing an Author Search in the library catalog using the phrase: "Abraham Kaplan Memorial Collection."

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Philosophy

Social sciences -- Methodology

Series 1: Subject File SC2001.1

Physical Description: 4.0 boxes
Arranged alphabetically. Most of the files in this series were organized and titled by Kaplan himself; however, they arrived in no discernible order and were arranged alphabetically so that they might be searchable. The processor created files in instances where a clear subject could be gleaned from the documents. Contents of files created by Kaplan were in no way disturbed, separated, or otherwise altered. Box 1: Academic — Groups Box 2: Hist. Esthetics — Lectures-Zionism Box 3: Literary Criticism — Probability Box 4: Professional Correspondence — Zen
Series 2: Writings SC2001.1

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 4.0 boxes
Arranged alphabetically by title. This series is of Kaplan's writings: handwritten and word-processed; published and unpublished; finished and unfinished; submitted to many publishers or to none at all. Most of the typewritten works arrived in mass quantities; three copies of each were accessioned and the rest were reserved for donation or other possible uses. The documents were arranged into alphabetical order for ease in finding a work by title. In some cases Kaplan kept files accompanying his works, whether they were research or rejection notices. These files are placed before their corresponding manuscripts in the collection. As in the Subject File Series, many manuscripts arrived arranged in files by Kaplan, and were not necessarily arranged by specific title. In some instances, files are titled by the subject of the manuscript and not by the title of the work. Rather than disturb the files created by Kaplan, they were arranged alphabetically by the title that he gave them. All other files are arranged by the title of the manuscript. Box 5: Aesop Revisited — Freedom and Terror Box 6: Freedom and Terror — Management MSS & WPI Box 7: Management and the Metaphysics of Culture — Pardon the Expression Box 8: Pardon the Expression — Values in Decision-Making

Series 3: Publications SC2001.1

Physical Description: 2.0 boxes
Arranged alphabetically. Many of Kaplan's publications arrived in bundles of copies of offprints; three copies of each were accessioned and the rest were discarded or reserved for donation or other possible uses. Also filed in the collection are journal issues containing his articles; books by Kaplan and books in which his writings appear; his works in translation; and photocopies of his publications. In a few instances, the publisher and/or date of publication are unknown. For a complete container listing of this series, see below under “Selective Container Listing.” Box 9: (Serials) Aesthetics of the Popular Arts — Whose Just Rights Box 10: (Monographs) Conduta Na Pesquisa — Theorien der Kunst

Series 4: Recordings SC2001.1

Physical Description: 1.0 Box
Box 11 Arranged chronologically. Includes taped recordings of various lectures given over the period of 1954-89 and a four-part oral history interview conducted with Kaplan in December 1989. Most items are 1/4-inch reel-to-reel recordings; the rest are cassette tapes.
