

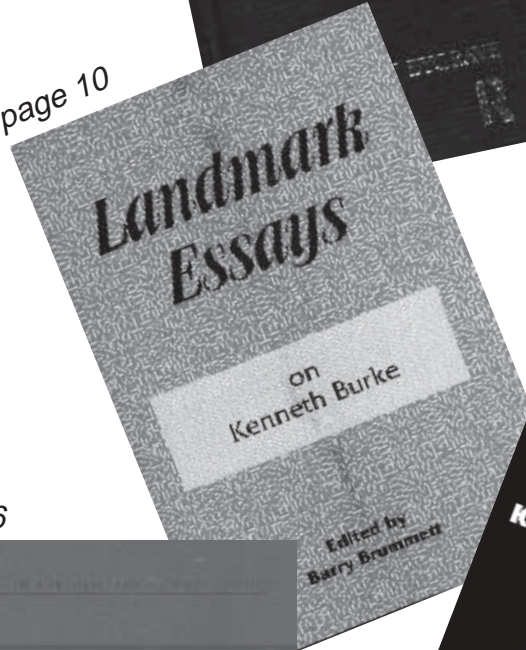


page 16

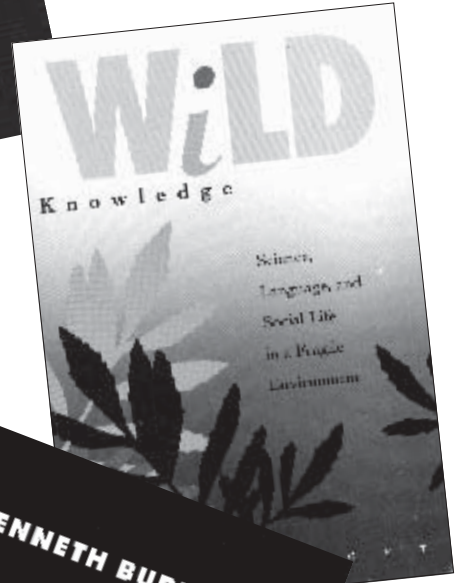


Additional Bibliography  
page 15

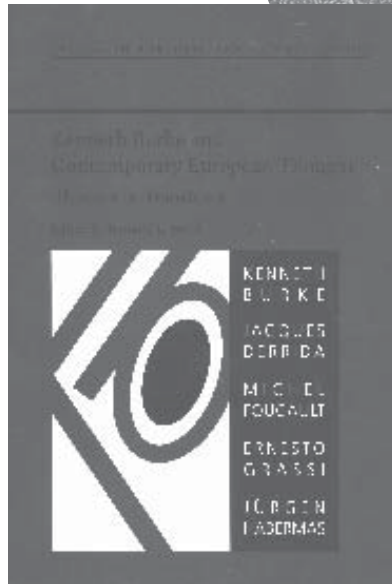
page 10



page 16



page 6



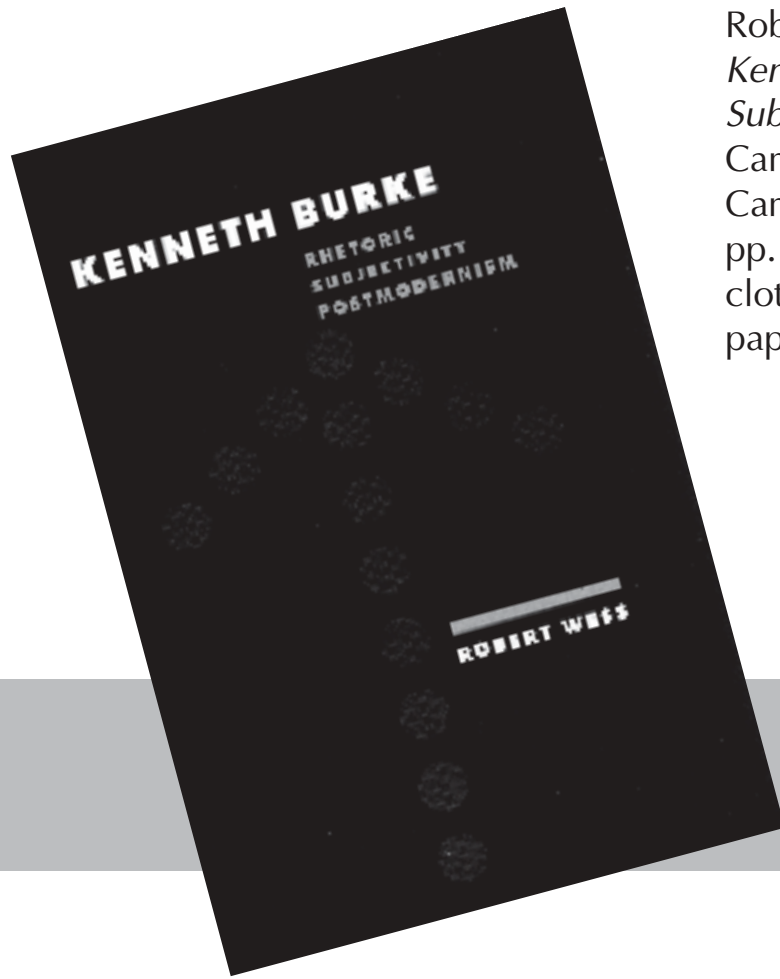
page 2

page 20



# Books & Bibliography

The bronze bust of Kenneth Burke sculpted by Virginia Molnar Burks is housed in the Pattee Library at the Pennsylvania State University. Photos are of the clay bust from which the bronze was cast. Taken in 1985 and copyrighted by Virginia Burks, they are used with her permission.



Robert Wess  
*Kenneth Burke: Rhetoric,  
Subjectivity, Postmodernism*  
Cambridge:  
Cambridge University Press, 1996  
pp. xx + 262  
cloth \$30.00  
paper \$15.95

Michael Feehan  
University of Arkansas  
School of Law

---

**R**obert Wess' *Kenneth Burke* performs two useful acts, providing (1) a new chronological study of Burke's career and (2) a study of Burke's theory of selfhood. The first of these will be valuable, perhaps indispensable, for everyone interested in Burke; the second, the real meat of the book, will probably appeal to a much smaller audience. Wess builds on while going far beyond Armin Paul Frank's *Twayne* volume in describing the development of Burke's career. The sheer size of the book allows Wess greater breadth than Frank could achieve and the explosion of Burke scholarship allows Wess valuable new depths of analysis. More importantly, Wess' thesis claim that Burke's development was driven by his struggles to define a "rhetoric of the subject" creates an unprecedented revision of the "curve" of

Burke's career, identifying the "Dialectic of Constitutions" section of *A Grammar of Motives* as KB's consummative moment.

This important and provocative thesis arises through Wess' systematic comparisons between KB and French criticism of the Althusser-Foucault brand. Burkeans will be most familiar with that brand of criticism through the work of Fredric Jameson. Indeed Jameson's nearly ubiquitous presence throughout the book suggests that Jameson's "comments" on KB were the initiating moment for Wess' whole project. For Wess, Althusser, et al. develop a theory of selfhood which avoids both the transcendental a priori of Kant and the rigidities of Orthodox Marxist historicism, a la Lukacs. Burke appears as conducting much the same kind of investigation two to three decades before the French.

Wess' argument is at once stimulating and difficult; we may hope that the book generates a good deal of co-haggling. Unfortunately, the emergence of such a co-haggling may be slowed by the not inconsiderable difficulty of reading the book.

Readers already comfortable with the language of French criticism-in-translation will have little difficulty with book. However, readers not familiar with that language may find the terrain bumpy, especially with Wess' first chapter, his focal theoretical analysis. Much of that difficulty can be avoided by simply beginning with chapter

between the two can have an effect not unlike reading through a kaleidoscope. For instance, we enter a paragraph on p. 127 with:

Proportionalizing makes invention possible at the root level of hierarchy by making hierarchy an issue rather than a fait accompli. In proportionalizing, there are hierarchies but none can ever stand as the hierarchy. The real, in rhetorical realism, imposes itself in necessitating hierarchy, but not in necessitating any particular one.

The paragraph continues for eight more lines before concluding with: "The act adds something

# Rhetoric,

# Subjectivity,

# Postmodernism

two on *Counter-Statement* (CS). Then, chapters three through eight each discuss one of Burke's books, moving in chronological order from *Permanence and Change* (PC) to *The Rhetoric of Religion* (RR). Chapter three includes an valuable study of the recently published "Auscultation, Creation, Revision." Chapter eight continues beyond RR to survey the final four decades of KB's work. Wess thus provides the most extensive and most fully elaborated survey of KB's career yet available.

Readers who choose to skip chapter one will not thereby avoid all contact with pseudo-French discourse. Because Wess' analysis of Burke's career emerges through his comparison of KB to Althusser, the translator's language alternates continuously with the received rhetoric of academic America. Sometimes transitions

to history—for example, the invention of the subject of individualism and the re-hierarchizing it entailed." (My marginal note has, "Oh.") The following two-sentence paragraph tells us that we have just passed through the heart of Wess' thesis: "The subject, in short, is formed and transformed in the reality of rhetoric. The act is a rhetoric of the subject." Wess argues that it is here, in *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, in his discussion of the proportional strategy in symbolic action that Burke arrives at the outer circumference of his most important work, "The Dialectic of Constitutions."

Reading this book can feel weirdly dream-like as we move in out of Wess' two quite different languages. Happily, the reader who presses on will find the re-appearances of academic prose to be sufficiently many and sufficiently

expansive to make it possible to effectively engage with Wess' analysis of KB's development. (Reading chapters two through eight will also teach by immersion how to read the pseudo-French, just in case one is inclined to attempt chapter one). Ultimately, it is Wess' thesis, not his cross-linguistic discourse which sets this book among the most important studies of KB's achievements. It is through his comparison of KB with the French thinkers that Wess discovers his intriguing new chart of KB's career.



The arena in which Wess conducts his combat is summarized in the title to his first chapter, "Ideology as Rhetoric." Wess wants to show that modern rhetoric, especially in KB's formulation, can revitalize discussions of ideology. In particular, Wess is speaking to Fredric Jameson and his community in hopes of showing that they have misunderstood KB and have thereby missed their best opportunity to enlarge the theories of subjecthood developed by Althusser and Foucault. For those who wish to take Marxism seriously in the post-Cold War era, Wess' argument will be crucial. Wess' arena of argumentation will be most familiar to students of KB as combat between rhetorical realism and idealism with both Burke and Wess plumping for realism. "Chapter 1's argument, in

a nutshell, is that contemporary theory needs Burke's rhetorical realism of the act to preserve the theoretical gains of recent decades by warding off the rhetorical idealism that sometimes threatens to undermine them" (x). Idealism threatens most immediately through the orthodox Marxism of Lukacs; the corrective appears in Althusser and his school. In a nutshell, Lukacs allows for a subjecthood existing prior to and to some extent outside history, where Althusser insists on a subjecthood wholly emergent through history. "For Lukacs, history is an effect of a narratively centered transcendental subject; for Althusser, the subject is a decentered effect of ideology, a transhistorical structure in history. Lukacs gives us a subject of history; Althusser, a history of subjects" (17). The linking term between Althusser and KB is "transhistorical," an individual to be sure, but not a soul-like entity existing beyond what Wess calls history.

What will most interest Burkologists is this

---

## *More Rhetoric,*

---

argument of Wess' that KB's career can best be understood as a progress toward and a drifting away from the transhistorical, from a "history of subjects." Throughout his career, KB struggled to reconcile permanence and change, the a priori self and the self emergent through action. In *CS* and *PC*, the a priori won out in a rhetoric of the body as permanent source of motives and symbols. With *ATH*, KB began to move away from the settled world of the a priori toward a new rhetorical realist view of selfhood. On this view *ATH* cannot be treated as merely a practical appendix to the theory presented in *PC*. "*ATH* is not an application of an ideal to reality but a theoretical reorientation in which the tension between *PC*'s constructionist and essentialist sides is resolved in favor of the constructionist" (84). The term "constructionist" is Wess preferred translation of KB's "proportionalizing," a translation which at once aligns Wess with Althusser et al. and allows Wess to identify *GM*

as KB's paramount achievement. "GM's dialectic of constitutions is the text that underwrites . . . a rhetoric of the subject. From a bird's-eye viewpoint, our narrative of Burke's career charts his steps to this constitutional model and his later steps away from it, although a few years before his death in 1993 he may have contemplated returning to this model or a revised version of it" (5). For Wess, KB's insistence on the active nature of the Constitution and of the Supreme Court's constitutional interpretations creates a decentered world, one in which the rules of the game are constantly changing. "The constitutive act of changing the rules of the game in the play of the game theorizes the invention and reinvention of orthodoxies and their subjects. . . . Subjects are invented in constitutive acts. The act adds something irreducible to its antecedents" (145-46). KB's theory of constitutions provides just the kind of dialectic, the comic interplay of expectations and frustrations, that makes

Court is repeatedly transforming the rule. The Constitution is thus a game in which transforming the rules of the game is a central part of the game" (26). The concept of constitutions links the idea of history to the idea individuality, a linkage which revises our post-Enlightenment belief in autonomous individuals. "To accentuate his location of the new in the act rather than the agent, Burke takes care to stress the act's independence of the agent, exhibiting in doing so his recognition of a tendency in his audience to assume that any reference to action presupposes an autonomous agent as its authentic origin" (146). Yet, Burke does not wholly abandon the idea of autonomy; he places autonomy in history through a rhetoric of motives. "Rhetorical autonomy is beginning and end, both origination and re-origination, a molten liquidity that can harden but that can always be agonistically melted down and transformed. Autonomy is a potentiality that history creates and that is

## Subjectivity, Postmodernism

possible a rhetoricizing of ideology. Wess gives to KB's theory of constitutions the weight that KB himself insisted on.

Burke's theory of constitutions arises out of the conversational model developed in *The Philosophy of Literary Form*. "The horizon of Burke's dialectic, in other words, is the horizon of the conversation. There is no origin or *telos*, only a middle" (154). Our tribe's conversation precedes our arrival and survives our passing. "Cultures, of course, construct acts for us prior to our arrival in history *in media res*, and they labor mightily to suit us to perform them, but no act is fixed forever. Constituted in history, acts can always be agonistically melted down and reconstituted" (146). The U. S. Constitution serves as representative anecdote, because the Supreme Court is always making it new, changing the rules during the play of the game. "The Constitution says what the Court reads it as saying. The Constitution is the rule, but the

actualized in the rhetorical invention of new subject positions, often at great risk to the inventors" (27). The constitutional analysis of *GM* and *A Rhetoric of Motives* completes the conversational model of *PLF*, allowing us to see how the sheer middleness of our tribal conversation can be transformed into a complete drama with a beginning, middle, and end through symbolic action.

Importantly, this argument allows Wess to see KB's non-publication of *A Symbolic of Motives* as arising directly from the writing of *GM* and *RM*. As he composed *GM* and *RM*, KB discovered that *SM* was unnecessary, its goal of analyzing the transhistorical self already completed in the preceding two volumes. KB then, drifted away from his central work into the logological investigations emergent in and flowing from *RR*. Wess here aligns in interesting ways with Greig Henderson's *Kenneth Burke: Language and Literature as Symbolic Action*. ■

That there are intriguing parallels between the thinking of the contemporary Europeans (here Habermas, Grassi, Foucault, and Derrida) and that rhetorical thought is in a period of transition is not to be denied. We can be accordingly grateful that Bernard Brock has assembled essays by a group of locally distinguished scholars dedicated to addressing these two circumstances. Although Brock's collection does not pretend to be a textbook, it invites comparison with the well known text by Foss, Foss, and Trapp. This latter work includes but goes well beyond each of the featured thinkers in the Brock collection. It does

influential contemporary Europeans. It is true that Burke's thought evolved and that his early thinking involved intense consideration of the relations between language and reality. It is also true that Burke's later thinking concentrated on the nature of language as such. I submit, however, that Burke never abandoned his doctrine of recalcitrance, never took the Sophists very seriously (his admiration for Nietzsche notwithstanding) and hence never embraced the rhetorical world view to the extent that Brock claims. K.B. complained frequently in his later years about the tendency to over-rhetorize his work.

# *Contemporary European Thought*

so however without benefit of the specialized authors mobilized by Brock and consequently pays for its admirable scope by a certain lack of depth. The Brock collection would therefore be a valuable addition to the reading list for any graduate course in modern rhetorical theory.

Brock's Burke (and William Rueckert reminds us there are many Burkes) is presented in the first chapter and sets the stage for much that follows. Kenneth Burke is therein presented as a primarily rhetorical thinker who has evolved through three distinct phases. Burke, argues Brock, began as a critical realist and successively evolved into a period of conceptualism and finished by embracing symbolic coherence. This schema is no doubt a useful pedagogic device and also serves to point toward a certain unity of thought between the sage of Andover and the

What Brock claims for Burke is more true of the Europeans who under the influence of Ferdinand DeSaussure severed the connections between language and reality, and under the influence of Nietzsche and his offspring adopted a rhetorical world view. What connects Burke to the Europeans is the questions he asked not the answers he gave. Burke in this volume suffers the same fate that befell Albert Einstein who was perhaps the last great classical (Newtonian) physicist and not the author of the new physics. Burke like Einstein saw the flaws in the prevailing systems of thought, dealt with them profoundly in an attempt to save them, but like the physicist is all too often assimilated to the revolutionaries who followed. Whether presenting Burke as a proto-postmodern does him a favor or not, of course, depends upon what one takes to be the fate of

*Kenneth Burke and  
Contemporary European Thought:  
Rhetoric in Transition*  
Edited by Bernard L. Brock  
Tuscaloosa:  
University of Alabama Press, 1995  
pp. xii + 279  
cloth \$43.95

Trevor Melia  
Professor Emeritus  
University of Pittsburgh



that movement. For my own part I take post-modernism to be a profound, productive, and plausible (particularly for rhetoricians) mistake.

Unfortunately Mark McPhail in his "Coherence as Representative Anecdote in the Rhetorics of Kenneth Burke and Ernesto Grassi" follows Brock's lead. I have myself written of "mathematical motifs" in Burke's work, so I am not insensitive to the coherentist tendencies in the corpus. Still granted Burke's exploitation of linguistic ambiguities, of perspectives by incongruity, and his doctrine of recalcitrance, it is hard to argue that he finished with a fixed and final notion of the pre-eminence of coherence. That doctrine may do much to explain Grassi, and McPhail does offer perspicacious insights into the Italian rhetorician, but it is not an adequate representative anecdote for Burke at any stage of the game.

Thomas Farrell's essay on Burke and Habermas is masterful—this in spite of the fact that the ponderous Germanic theorizing of the one (something only an argument theorist could love) fits very poorly with the Yankee playfulness of the other. But as Farrell's essay makes clear behind the differences in style and procedure both scholars sought to secure the "continuing conversation," the civilized public argument from its detractors. Farrell is a good example of the increasing tendency of critics to overshadow and overwhelm the objects of their criticism. In choosing to append to his essay a critique of Ronald Reagan's speech on the occasion of the *Challenger* disaster as an example of Burke-Habermas approaches to the analysis of a public event, Farrell succeeds only in reminding us of the disastrously low level to which rhetoric in

public affairs has fallen in America. Farrell, one of the best and brightest of contemporary argument theorists, here deploys his considerable analytic skills, his verbal dexterity, his insight into Burke and Habermas in critique of a speech written by Peggy Noonan (an obviously bright, cynical, and sold out version of many of his own graduate students) to help Reagan paper over the tragic results of a misconceived and vaguely insulting PR mission prematurely scheduled by NASA, at least in part, to provide ammunition for the forthcoming State of the Union address by the President. No matter how well this appended critique illustrates the Burke-Habermas motifs that are the main subject of this essay (and it does), it does so by proffering to Reagan-Noonan the sort of deference Burke, at least, would reserve for Shakespeare, Keats, and Whitman (white males all, of course). Meanwhile, Farrell fails to deliver the invective the *Challenger* affair deserves and from KB would surely have got.

parted company with Foucault and other post-modernists. It is on the basis of this disposition that Blair characterizes Burke as a humanist *contra* Foucault's post-humanism. In an otherwise subtle and nuanced essay Blair alleges that whereas Burke's writings were quickly welcomed by rhetoric scholars, those of Foucault face stiff resistance. My impressions are quite otherwise. Burke's work, it seems to me, suffered years of hostility, followed by a couple of decades (two or three instances to the contrary notwithstanding) in which his terminology was appropriated to disguise nearly moribund neo-Aristotelian scholarship. It is only in the last couple of decades that Burke has received care-ful and competent treatment within the discipline. Foucault, on the other hand, seems to me to be making inroads with remarkable rapidity, not least because he commands the respect of exegetes of the calibre of Carole Blair.

## Contemporary European

Carole Blair evades the task of relating the biographies of her chosen subjects (Burke and Foucault) to their *oeuvres*, a task that the other essayists in this volume do discharge, on the grounds that to do so would be to violate Foucaultian imperatives. The point is well taken and yet, from a non-Foucaultian stand point, such a project would probably shed more light on Foucault's writing than is the case for any other of the thinkers featured therein. Such an undertaking would be a very delicate task but well within the capabilities of Blair. Rather than violate Foucaultian sensibilities Blair chooses instead to discuss the different dispositions of the notion "author" by Burke and Foucault. That choice is critical. Perhaps no other concept could so clearly show the cleavages between the two. Burke recognized the problems with the idea of autonomous agent more even than Blair allows. He nevertheless retained the idea, critical to his notion of Dramatism, and thereby

James Chesebro takes on the daunting task of making sense of two thinkers as complex as Burke and Derrida within the confines of a single chapter. Inevitably there is much to quarrel with, but again the essay is far superior to those typical of Foss, Foss, and Trapp. My greatest misgiving is about the move whereby Chesebro compares Burke's derivative notion (from Karl Mannheim, I believe) of "debunking" and makes it directly analogous to Derrida's "deconstruction." Debunking is a minor term in the Burke corpus, hardly adequate to account for Derrida's titular term. In any case, to do Derrida justice, "debunking" carries with it little of the subtlety and none of the painstaking attention to detail that "deconstruction" actually involves. Moreover, debunking smacks of the journalistic context in which it was frequently found. Whatever one's discontents with deconstruction (and mine are considerable), it must be granted that it is the result of serious philosophical analysis and



should be treated as such. Chesebro's application of Burke-Derrida analysis to Charles Darwin, by way of illustration, is a useful device and produces a provocative "take" on the great naturalist. Again, as with other essays in the volume, there is the postmodern attempt, of which Derrida would have approved, to reject realism. In Chesebro's hands Darwin's *Origins* is read as a social construction (which it manifestly is) but that is not all it is. Burke here would part company with Derrida and Chesebro for whatever his misgivings with realism *toute court*, KB never was incarcerated in the so-called "prison house of language." Indeed Burke's own analysis of Darwin makes the point that ultimately confounds any attempt to assimilate the sage of Andover to postmodernism. Using the pentad as a proportionalizing device in the *Grammar*, Burke indicates how each of the major philosophers can be shown to be featuring some elements of the pentad at the expense of others.



---

## Thought, Continued

---

Darwin, a scenic thinker *par excellence*, attempts systematically to repress the claims of agent and purpose with the result that those two factors necessarily get dealt with in demonstrably covert ways. From the Burkeian point of view, insofar as Derrida deconstructs agent, he should be susceptible to the same sort of demonstration. This, in an otherwise fine essay, Chesebro fails to provide.

In the final essay in this collection Celeste Michelle Condit daringly reprises the book and adds commentary on the works of such thinkers as Heidegger and Baudrillard (and gets away with it), quite an accomplishment considering that her reprise covers ground already dealt with by names as locally resonant as Farrell, Blair, and Chesebro! The essay is mistressful—marred only by the rampant and fashionable sexism that betrays her into putting an extended treatment of the work of Mary Daly in the context of dealing with the likes of Burke, Derrida, Foucault,

Habermas, and Heidegger, and incidentally indulging the lust for victimage that Burke so steadfastly resisted. Nevertheless, Condit repairs some deficits left over from the previous essays, brilliantly summarizes the "linguistic reflexivity" of the major figures with whom she deals, and generally comes closest to getting Burke right. Condit also fills a gap in Burke scholarship by reminding us just how important the general semanticists were to Burke's philosophical development. She does speak of Burke's "anti-foundationalist epistemology" at the beginning of the essay, but by the end it is clear that she recognizes that Burke's position is much more complex than that. In fine, Condit's disposition of the major figures in contemporary rhetoric is dextrous and sure-footed enough to make the volume worth buying for her essay alone. Condit here establishes herself as a leading Burke scholar, a luminary in the discipline and perhaps beyond. ■

The very nature of this volume makes it a difficult book to review in any meaningful manner. A collection of thirteen previously published essays, *Landmark Essays on Kenneth Burke* offers nothing new in Burkean studies other than editor Barry Brummett's brief introduction to the volume and an oddly ideosyncratic bibliography. Of course, the volume does not attempt to offer anything new; its value lies in its reproduction in accessible form of significant essays designed to introduce the reader to "what it means to be Burkean, to study Burke, and to use Burke in developing our understanding of the human condition" (xi).

Who is this potential reader? Brummett casts the net widely: "These essays are meant to be read by students, professors, the general public—by anyone who is one [sic] the move intellectually"

this volume but also similar volumes concerning specific topics or periods in rhetorical theory and history, e.g., the rhetoric of science or classical Greek rhetoric (the volume on Burke is the only one in the series focused on an individual theorist)—suggests much more than simply important or provocative essays: it invokes a necessarily dialectical, indeed diachronic, perspective. "A landmark," Brummett writes, "is a prominent feature of the landscape that a traveller makes note of so as not to get lost when going into a wilderness." Even more specifically, landmarks "are for the intrepid explorer who makes the path. If we want to understand where we are and how we are moving, we must keep checking over our shoulders to compare where we are with where the landmark is" (xvi). This notion of movement relative to fixed reference points, regardless of

# Landmark Essays

## On Kenneth Burke

(xix). That is a laudable aspiration, but given Burke's own failure to catch on in any significant way with the "general public," one must suspect that the primary readership for this book is a fairly small body of (probably graduate) students, their professors, and, maybe, a scattered few additional interested academicians and scholars who do not "specialize" in Burke. For the purposes of this review, at any rate, I am operating on the presupposition that the ultimate value of this volume lies in how well it might function as a text, or supplementary text, for a (probably graduate) class focusing to a large degree on Burke's works.

As its title announces, the volume is a collection of "landmark" essays on Burke. In his introduction, Brummett notes that the term "landmark"—derived from title of the Hermagoras Press' "Landmark Essays" series, including not only

whether it embeds an assumption of progress or evolution toward some unstated *telos* or not, necessarily implies a diachronic orientation: "A landmark is most often useful," Brummett continues, "when it is not where one is at present, when it is where one was" (xvi). What this volume attempts, in other words, is to offer a series of more-or-less fixed reference points by which one may chart not only where Burkean scholarship was "in the beginning" but also where it is now (and how it got here) as well as the trajectory of where it may be heading "in the next century" (xvi).

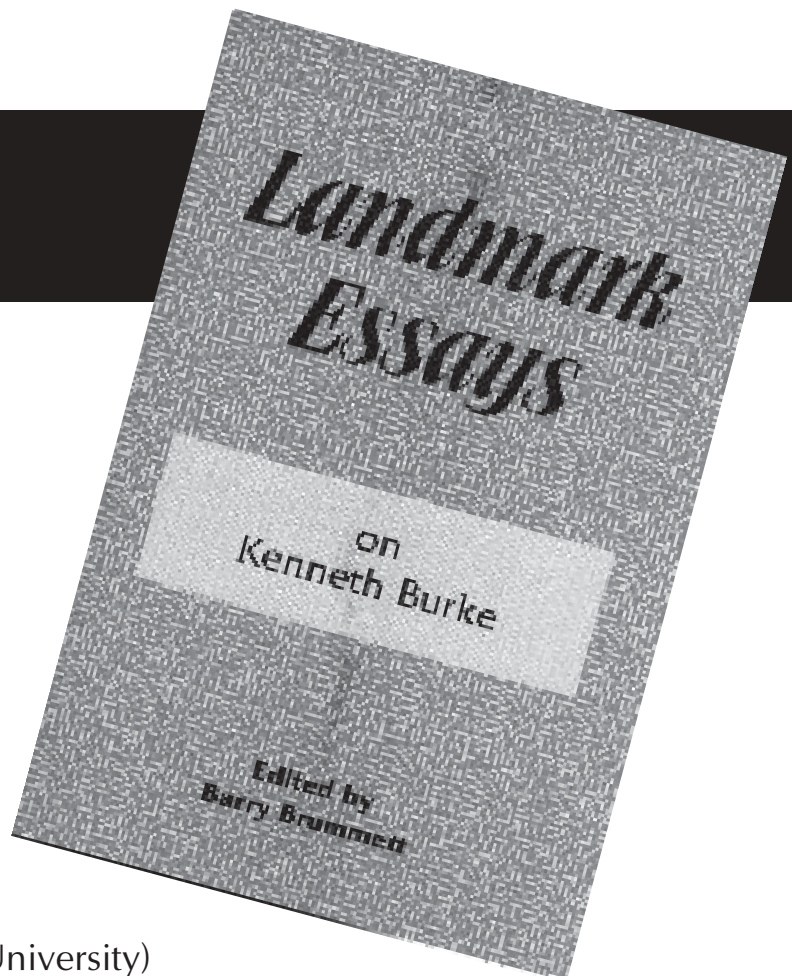
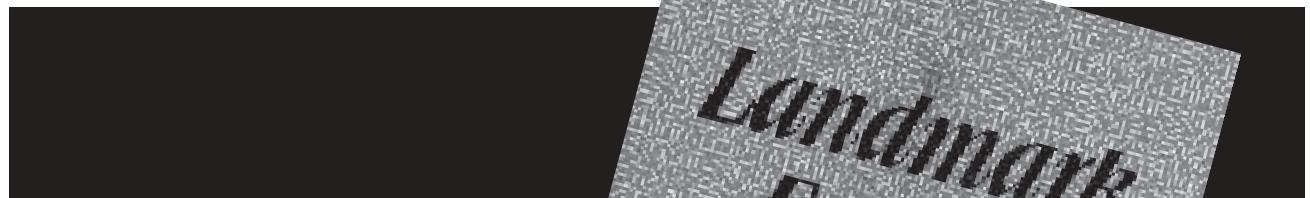
Although this project of charting the course of Burkean scholarship has utility, particularly for classroom purposes, it is not only not feasible without immediate limitations or parameters but it is also fraught with the peril of codifying the course of Burkean studies—past, present, and

future—and concomitantly rigidifying the course of critical interpretations of Burke's works. Before addressing the limitations and possible "dangers" of the volume, let me first indicate what I see as valuable in the volume.

Whether or not one necessarily agrees that all of the essays included in this volume are indeed "landmarks" or even among the most significant essays on Burke, I believe that most Burke scholars would agree that this is a collection of credible essays, all of which are well worth reading and pondering. The essays are divided into three groupings: those which are overviews and surveys, those which focus on critical and philosophical issues, and those which concern politics and intervention.

The five "survey" essays work to explicate and situate Burke's contributions to diverse

"fields" of symbolic activity, such as rhetoric, literature, and sociology, as well as to convey a sense of a "Burkean perspective" on the world. Marie Hochmuth Nichols' "Kenneth Burke and the 'New Rhetoric'" (originally published in 1952) situates Burke's work through *A Rhetoric of Motives* (1950) in relation to fairly traditional Aristotelian approaches to rhetoric; Stanley Edgar Hyman's "Kenneth Burke and the Criticism of Symbolic Action" (chapter ten of *The Armed Vision*, 1948) does much the same in relation to "modern literary criticism" for Burke through *A Grammar of Motives* (1945), and Michael A. Overington's "Kenneth Burke and the Method of Dramatism" (1977) is a self-acknowledged "sociologically interested exposition of Burke's work," "offering a translation of his systematic writings that makes sense to sociologists" (92).



*Landmark Essays*  
*On Kenneth Burke*  
Edited by Barry Brummert  
Davis, California:  
Hermagoras Press, 1993  
pp. xix + 290  
paper \$19.95

David Cratis Williams  
Truman State University  
(Northeast Missouri State University)

The other two overview essays are less disciplinarily focused. "Pivotal Terms in the Early Works of Kenneth Burke," by Jane Blankenship, Edward Murphy, and Marie Rosenwasser (1974), explicates key terms in Burke's works through *A Philosophy of Literary Form* (1941), developing a theoretical lexicon wherein Burke's "terminological development can be traced" (71). In his delightful and delightfully insightful essay "Everything, Preferably All At Once: Coming to Terms with Kenneth Burke" (1971), Burke's longtime friend, admirer, and critic, Howard Nemerov, offers "a species of rhapsodic impressionism and imitation" through which to orient the reader to Burke's own orientation toward language and the constitution of meaning (66).

Only two essays, both by communication scholars, are included in the second section, focusing on "critical and philosophical issues." Richard Gregg's essay, "Kenneth Burke's Prolegomena to the Study of the Rhetoric of

universal holocaust which he envisions as the ultimate end of the scientific orientation and toward the better life of purified war which he envisions as the ultimate goal of the poetic orientation" (177). In a general sense, the other essays in this final section reflect the perspective that Burke's orientation does have utility in the social and political realms, that there is a praxis lurking in the Burkean corpus.

The selection from Hugh Dalziel Duncan entitled "Symbols in Society" (sections three through ten from the "Introduction" to *Symbols in Society*, 1968) concerns "the structure and function of the act considered as dramatic in form and social in content" (179). In pursuing this, Duncan weaves dramatism, symbolic interactionism, and pragmatism into a sociological reading of humanity's compulsion for victimage. Dramatism, he concludes, offers perhaps the best prospect of social catharsis, of, in Burke's phrase, the purification of war.

## Landmark Essays on Burke,

Form" (1978) offers an explication of Burke's early articulation of a psychology of form and its implications for rhetoric; James Chesebro's "Epistemology and Ontology as Dialectical Modes in the Writings of Kenneth Burke" (1988) offers an evolutionary reading of Burkean thought which culminates in viewing the ontological and the epistemological as complementary and constitutive functions of rhetoric.

The final section of the book, focusing on "politics and intervention," consists of six fairly diverse essays. William H. Rueckert's "Towards a Better Life Through Symbolic Action" (chapter two of *Kenneth Burke and the Drama of Human Relations*, 1963 and 1982) examines Burke's move from "his poetic career" in the 1920s to "the field of social criticism and theory" during the period from 1931 through 1941 (155). Rueckert concludes that "Burke hopes to effect a cure for the technological psychosis, directing the self away from the

Leland M. Griffin's essay, "A Dramatistic Theory of the Rhetoric of Movements" (1969), is well known to rhetorical critics: it articulates a methodological process for the understanding of social/political movements based upon dramatistic presumptions concerning symbolic action and social enactments. In "Reading History with Kenneth Burke" (1982), Frank Lentricchia argues that although dramatism "is Burke's official program," his "more fundamental" activity embodies "a process of formulating, exploring, and making forays—in so many words, the various acts of reading and writing history" (222). Drawing primarily on Burke's earlier works (ending with *A Grammar*, 1945), Lentricchia reads Burke as a Marx-friendly reader of history adept at unpacking ideological baggage burdening various philosophical histories as well as histories of philosophy. Burke, he concludes, "set standards for the ideological role of intellectuals that contemporary critical theory would do well to measure itself by" (241).

The penultimate essay in *Landmark Essays* is, appropriately enough, a perspective on perspectives. In “Kenneth Burke’s Comedy: The Multiplication of Perspectives” (1979), Wayne Booth interprets Burke as “one of the great pluralizing minds of our time” (249), placing him in relation to another prominent pluralist, R. S. Crane. Booth finds in Burke’s comic perspective a “pluralism [that] can embrace all meanings, potentially, and still repudiate relativism of the kind that threatens critical understanding” (267). Determinate meaning and final *telos* are unattainable: a comic perspective is an ongoing hermeneutical dance which works “to cure mankind by keeping things off balance, by dissolving fixities, by turning the potential tragedy of fanatical annihilation into the comedy of muddled mutual accomodation” (257). Many critics, of course, will recall Burke’s response to Booth’s earlier articulation of this interpretation (See Booth, “Kenneth Burke’s Way of Knowing,”

These thirteen essays offer a diversity of interpretations and adaptations of Burke’s work. Yet by its very nature as a selection of critical essays on Burke, the volume makes choices of those essays worthy of inclusion and those not. By and large, Brummett announces the parameters for consideration of essays for inclusion forthrightly: all of the essays are “exclusively theoretical” (“critical, analytical essays” “constitute a pool of works for a potential volume of their own”); all are, at least in the editor’s evaluation of them, “extraordinary and noteworthy”; taken together, they reflect “a wide range of academic disciplines that are now involved in Burkean studies,” including “Communication, English,

---

*continued*

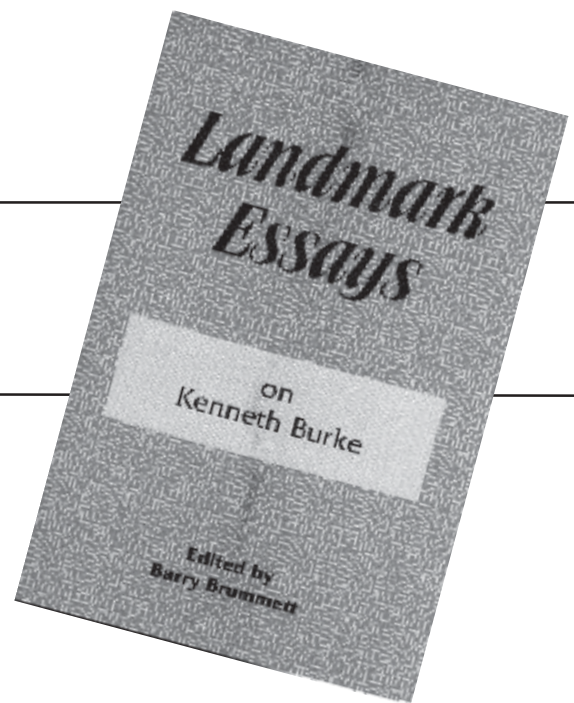
---

*Critical Inquiry*, 1 [September 1974], 1-22, and also Burke, “Dancing with Tears in My Eyes,” pages 23-31 of the same issue).

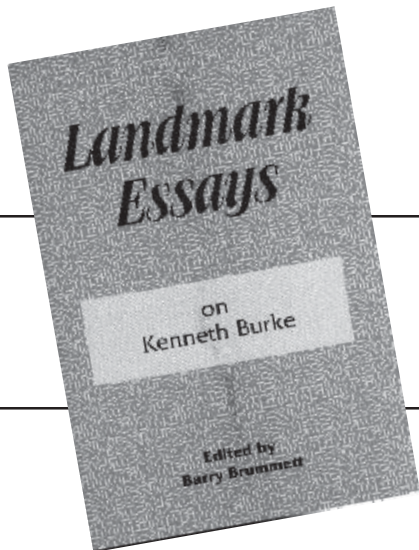
Without nostalgic tears in her eyes, Celeste Michelle Condit (1992) suggests in the volume’s closing essay that Burke’s critical orientation (his “agency”) was necessarily at least in part a function of the social, political, and cultural “scene” at the time of its production; changes in the “scene” since the 1920s through 1960s or even 1970s (the time frame of most of Burke’s corpus) should require adjustments in the agency of critical orientation to the new scene. Thus, in “Post-Burke: Transcending the Substance of Dramatism,” Condit attempts “modifying extensions of Burke’s dramatism” in relation to three dynamic contexts: “gender, culture, and class” (273). By adapting and expanding Burke’s definition of human, Condit advocates a “post-Burkean” orientation adapted for the exigencies of a multiculturally exploding world.

Sociology, and the eclectic mix of Cultural Studies” (xvi, xvii), and—according to the stated objectives of Hermagoras Press’ overall *Landmark Essays* series—they should be essays of which it is difficult to obtain individual copies.

Given that any such volume of selected essays must have limits (one cannot, after all, include everything), these are not unreasonable limits. One may question the value of a collection of “exclusively theoretical” essays (aside from perhaps a very few graduate-level seminars,



I personally wonder whether this “exclusively theoretical” slant fits well with most classroom needs); or, one may desire more historical or even biographical contextualization of Burke’s ideas. Or one may accept neither Brummett’s description of the Condit and Lentricchia essays as “on the cutting edge of Burkean scholarship” (xvi) nor his seemingly offhand characterization of Lentricchia as a “prominent postmodern scholar” who presumably represents that orientation in his writing; in doing so, one is left pondering the glaring absence of any essay which examines Burke in relation to contemporary philosophies of post-modernity or even, by and large, post-structuralism.



Overall, I have mixed reactions to the volume. On the one hand, there are not many “anthologies” of theoretical and/or critical responses to Burke’s work; indeed the only other one attempting to present essays on and responses to Burke with not only some chronological depth but also some diachronic richness which comes to mind is Rueckert’s *Critical Responses to Kenneth Burke, 1924-1966*, published in 1969 (University of Minnesota Press). The other volumes of essays on Burke with which I am familiar all feature essays of more-or-less synchronous—and also more-or-less contemporary—origin; in addition, albeit in varying degrees, these volumes also tend to “speak” a bit more closely in their respective disciplinary “voices.” The *Landmark Essays* volume is thus potentially most valuable

as a secondary text for a course in Burkean studies which wishes to preserve an historically imbued perspective on the interpretations and influence of Burke in a wide, although still truncated, domain of disciplinary interests.

On the other hand, while *Landmark Essays on Kenneth Burke*, may function well as a supplement to Rueckert’s *Critical Responses*, it cannot supplant that important anthology. Indeed, given that these seem to be the only two volumes at the present time attempting to offer some sort of diachronic anthology of the interpretations and influence of Burke, it is important to consider the relationship between the two. Of the thirteen essays reprinted in the *Landmark Essays* volume, eight were originally published after Rueckert’s 1969 anthology (three of the other five are also reprinted in *Critical Responses*). One of the two “new reprints” in *Landmark Essays* is, ironically, Rueckert’s own 1963 essay, “Toward a Better Life Through Symbolic Action”;

---

## *Landmark Essays,*

---

the other is Duncan’s. Oddly, the *Landmark Essays* volume does not indicate to the reader in its citations for the other three of the five pre-1969 essays that they are also reprinted in *Critical Responses*). My point here is that, in terms of pre-1969 “landmark essays” on Kenneth Burke, the *Landmark Essays* volume offers little that is not already available in *Critical Responses*, especially since that volume also includes two other of Rueckert’s essays as well as three of Duncan’s. Given the limited availability of *Critical Responses*, *Landmark Essays on Kenneth Burke* does make these five essays more accessible—and increased accessibility and usability for classroom purposes is one of the stated goals of the entire *Landmark Essays* series—but it should also be noted that, with or without access to Rueckert’s reprint of three of them, none are particularly obscure or difficult to obtain in their original publication. Indeed, ironically, the most obscure of the five essays is probably Griffin’s,

one of the few essays originally published—and here-to-for only available—in *Critical Essays*.

In terms of “early” interpretations of Burke, then, the *Landmark Essays* volume adds little to what is already anthologized, and in terms of genuine “cutting edge” work on Burke the volume has clear gaps and limits.

Brummett’s framing of the essays in his “Introduction” accentuates some of these limitations. In addition to offering Lentricchia as a representative of post-modernism (and Booth as advocating the comic perspective as equipment for living in “the postmodern condition,” xix), Brummett waffles on the “totalizability” of Burke’s diverse works. Although on the one hand he explicitly acknowledges that “Burke cannot be systematized tidily,” indeed his “work is probably not totally systematizable” (xv), on the other he writes at times of the “Burkean system” (xi), of “Burke’s system” (xii), indeed, of “Burke’s system of thought,” for which “dramatism” may be taken

---

*continued*

---

as a “summarizing term” (xiii). It seems to this reader questionable whether Burke’s works may be fairly “summarized” as (reduced to?) “dramatism”—what, for instance, of “logology,” which receives no attention in the introduction and little enough in the volume itself? In addition, it seems particularly suspect given Brummett’s brief description of “dramatism” itself.

Brummett emphasizes that drama is not only a “good metaphor for what Burke wants to say about language,” but also a “metaphor [which] is especially useful in describing human relations.” Although drama has become a “commonplace metaphor”—after all, “Burke is far from the first to observe that ‘all the world’s a stage,’ nor to turn that metaphor into systematic thought”—it is nonetheless “a central metaphor for Burke” (xiii, xiv). This interpretation of dramatism as metaphorical—in addition to flying in the face of Burke’s own repeated insistence that dramatism is meant literally—makes dramatism an analogi-

cal mode of inquiry, not a “substantial” one designed to discern what human motives “really are.” In addition, Burke presents logology as explicitly analogical (hence the various “analogies” in “On words and The Word”); why confuse the issue further? Brummett’s introduction offers the reader “instructions” for reading the “map” of landmarks contained in the volume, but not all Burkeans will agree with the instructions.

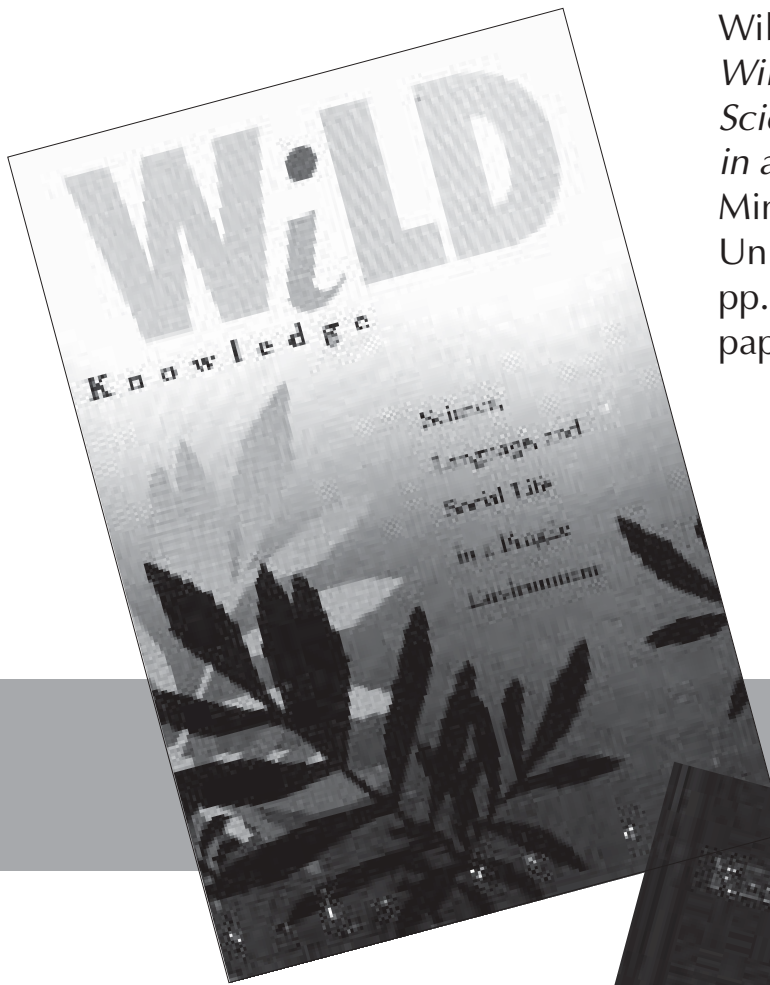
Just as an anthology must have limits defined by its exclusions, so too does it construct a “canon”—or perhaps in this case, a “theoretical narrative”—defined by its inclusions. *Landmark Essays on Kenneth Burke* charts a path for its reader through the wilderness of Burke works and Burkean scholarship. It is not a bad path, but it is a path, and by taking this path—and this path only—the reader may miss a lot of interesting and inspiring parts of the Burkean wilderness. In other words, one risks missing the forest for the path. ■



#### **Additions to *Secondary Bibliography*: Articles**

- Appel, E. C. “The Tragic-Symbol Preaching of the Rev. Wallace E. Fisher.” *Journal of Communication and Religion*, 10 (1987), 34-43.
- Appel, E. C. “Implication and Importance of the Negative in Burke’s Dramatistic Philosophy of Language.” *Communication Quarterly*, 41 (Winter 1993), 51-65.
- Appel, E. C. “Kenneth Burke: Coy Theologian.” *Journal of Communication and Religion*, 16 (1993), 99-110.
- Feehan, Michael. “Chinese Finger-Traps or ‘A Perturbation in the Reality Field’: Paradox as Conversion in Philip K. Dick’s Fiction.” In *Philip K. Dick: Contemporary Critical Interpretations*, ed. Samuel J. Umland, pp. 199-206. Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1995.
- Feehan, Michael. “Kenneth Burke’s Contribution to a Theory of Language.” *Semiotica*, 76.3/4 (1989), 245-66.

*Bibliographic Additions, continued on page 24*



Will Wright  
*Wild Knowledge:  
Science, Language, and Social Life  
in a Fragile Environment*  
Minneapolis:  
University of Minnesota, 1992  
pp. xiv + 236.  
paper \$15.95

James R. Pickett  
Monmouth College



Stephen Bygrave  
*Kenneth Burke:  
Rhetoric and Ideology,*  
London: Routledge, 1993  
pp. xxii + 123  
cloth \$55.00  
paper \$19.95

Thomas Carmichael  
University of Western Ontario



Will Wright's *Wild Knowledge* arrives at a precipitous moment, with increasing interest in the rhetorical analysis of science and ecology. Such criticism, and this particular effort, owes much to the work of Kenneth Burke. Wright begins with a dialectical spin, that scientific knowledge organizes and legitimates a social-natural interaction and that such knowledge must recognize its own social-natural dimension. By raising this point, Wright aspires to bring scientific knowledge into an ecological coherence that, he claims, science lacks. Such coherence, Wright argues, will be found in an ecologically sustainable notion of rationality. This concept of rationality is to be found in narratives, because such stories refer to human agents and therefore point to the "sustainability" of such life. In other words,

when the "story" stops, we stop.

Wright's deployment of Burkean "capital" occurs late in his narrative. To get to this point, Wright retells the now familiar tale of the philosophy of science: how Kuhn, Rorty, et al. undermined the received view. Next, Wright recovers the relationship between physics and politics in the seventeenth century, as well as a summary of the history of mathematics. He concludes that the ideas of physics were formed by politics as much as by observation, and that mathematics made physics' ideas about nature both plausible and rational.

Next, Wright moves the plot from the scene of science to that of social science. First, he wishes us to make an epistemic move, from "knowing individuals" to language-using minds.

*Ecology, continued on page 18*

---

# Ecology & Ideology

Stephen Bygrave's *Kenneth Burke: Rhetoric and Ideology* is a volume in the Routledge series, "Critics of the Twentieth Century." Under the general editorship of Christopher Norris, this series seeks, in Norris' own words, "not only to expound what is of lasting significance but also to set these critics in the context of present-day argument and debate" (viii). Stephen Bygrave's discussion of the Burkean corpus endeavors to fulfil this twofold aspiration by situating Burke "as a historical critic who exemplifies a road not taken for ideological critique" (16). Bygrave's Burke is both eccentric and proleptic; outside the mainstream of Left literary critique and seemingly impossible to imitate, Burke's work, in Bygrave's reading, is at the same time the most far-reaching and rigorous of modern efforts to construct a contextualized criticism, and stands

now as an anticipation of many of the problems apparently "discovered" and only recently addressed in contemporary critical theory and cultural studies.

Bygrave's discussion is also designed to introduce or perhaps to reintroduce Burke's work in the U.K., where, as Bygrave claims, "Burke has hardly been read at all" (8). Bygrave's careful positioning of himself as an outsider with respect to the specifically American intellectual tradition is often useful, as when he debunks Angus Fletcher's crude characterization of the essentially American nature of Burke's project, but Bygrave's overall account is finally very much the mainstream of recent theoretical rereadings of Burke. Bygrave borrows from Terry Eagleton in order to define

*Ideology, continued on page 19*

*Ecology, continued from page 17*

Such minds are social, insofar as it is language that constitutes the possibility of social life “and therefore individuals.” Second, he wants social theory to stop referring, in the last instance, to a nature it has never known, but instead to language.

It is in terms of this reference to language that Burke finally appears. For Wright, language is *the* defining characteristic of human beings and makes possible human action in the world. From Burke, Wright hopes to build a linguistic theory of social life.

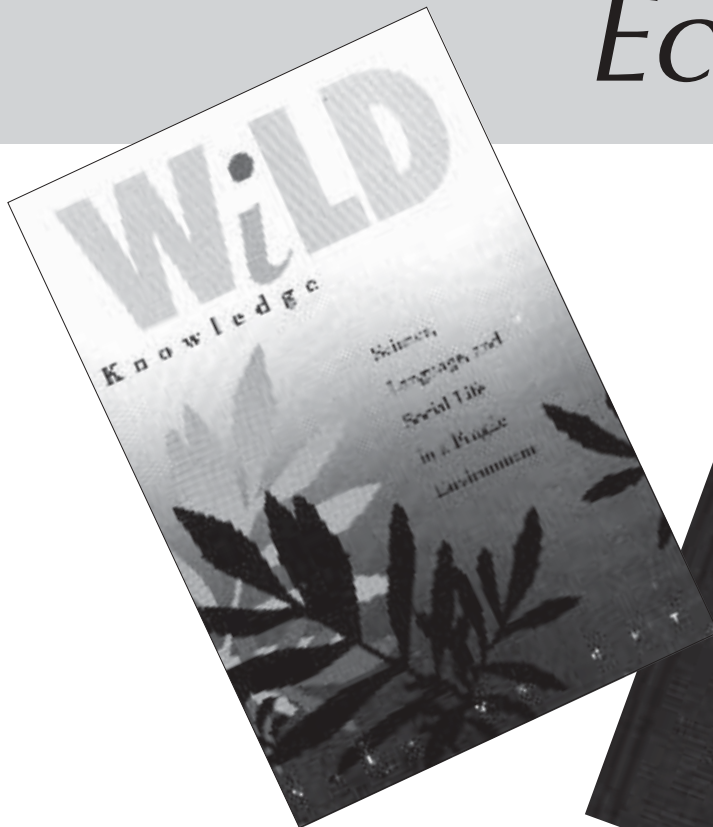
Such a dream is not unique to Wright, who is an adept reader of Burke. He understands the interplay between symbols that divide us (mystery) and the symbols that unite us (identification), and that this has ontological status for Burke. Wright clearly understands that the ordering of differences through identification leads inevitably to hierarchy. Through this reading, Wright concludes that Burke developed

a formal theory of language in which the goal of language is to sustain itself.

An equally adept reader of this review may have noticed that Wright dropped his “social-natural” dialectic along the way. Like many readers of Burke, Wright seems to have forgotten that Burke places equal emphasis upon both “symbol-using” and “animal,” a reason that Burke revised his definition to “bodies that learn language.” In short, while we might stop when the “story” stops, the non-verbal motion of nature might keep rolling along. Sustainability is what some “deep” ecologists term an anthropocentric standard.

As an anthropoid, I have no objections to such a standard. As a rhetorician, I believe sustainability to be a worthy *topoi*. As a symbol-using animal, I wish more readers of Burke would pay attention to that dialectic, and to Burke’s plea that we attend to motives from both ends. ■

## Ecology &



*Ideology, continued from page 17*

the task of rhetorical analysis as the uncovering of ideology; it is this task that he regards as the fundamental project of Burke's critical theory and practice, a project that embraces interpretation in the widest sense, and which "depends upon (and illuminates) a concept of ideology even where the term is absent" (17). As his references to Eagleton might lead one to expect, Bygrave's Burke resembles in large part the Burke who comes to us from Jameson and Lentricchia. Bygrave carefully suggests the ways in which his own reading differs from those presented by Jameson and Lentricchia, but his discussion never really pursues those differences. In his assertion that Burke depends upon an unproblematic notion of the subject, for example, Bygrave's own reservations sound very much like Jameson's insistence that Burke lacks an adequate place for the unconscious, and, in a similar vein, Bygrave's refusal to read Burke as a heroic Gramscian figure, as he claims Lentricchia

constitutions. Each of these topics takes up a single chapter, and in each discussion, Bygrave comes to assert, as he announces in the introduction: "that the 'grounds' of any interpretative act themselves rest on an act. This implies neither circularity nor an infinite regress. Burke anticipates this deconstructive move, and the move beyond it too" (17). Bygrave's favorite representative anecdote from Burke is the often quoted description of the parlor conversation from *The Philosophy of Literary Form*; with respect to Bygrave's own analysis, the corresponding representative moment might be found in his discussion of Burke's musings on ideology in the "Definition of Man" essay in *Language as Symbolic Action*. In Bygrave's reading, this is Burke's practising ideological critique at its best, positing ideology as "something like the 'ground' of all argument" (51). For Bygrave, every Burkean musing on questions of origins, horizons, and god-terms is also a bringing to light of a prior

---

## *Ideology, continued*

---

does, is belied at the end of his text when he argues that Burke is most exemplary not as a reader of literary texts, but "as a reader of proverbs, of constitutions, of the narrative of 'history' itself" (110). One might suggest that the ability to extract the narrative of history from the *camera obscura* of lived experience is at the very least close to a heroic Gramscian intellectual enterprise.

But these quibbles should not overshadow the cogency and range of Bygrave's account. Bygrave's discussion is organized into four separate investigations into parallel problematics in Burke's work. Put briefly, these problematics arise out of the tension between contextualization and essentialization, language and action, words and the world. Bygrave's book addresses these problematics in their various manifestations: in the transition from *A Grammar* to *A Rhetoric*; in the connection of historicism to logology; in the alignment of perspective by incongruity with the comic frame; and in the dialectic of essences and

conflict or division, so that contextualization and the limits of contextualization are the true subject of Burke's vast rhetorical project.

Although this book presents us with a version of Burke that has been with us for some time, at least in North America, Bygrave's discussion does provide a valuable summary of that position and of its implications. This book is not intended to be comprehensive, and, although it gestures toward a contextualization of Burke's own connection with respect to Left critique in the American tradition, it is not a close historical account of Burke's position. Neither is this book strictly an introduction, demanding from the reader, as it does, a fairly comprehensive and agile familiarity with the major Burke texts. But Bygrave's volume does fulfil the aims of the series to which it belongs in its insistence upon the ongoing importance of ideological critique as the persuasive engine of cultural criticism in the very widest sense. ■

Jack Seltzer  
Pennsylvania  
State University



Kenneth Burke died having left behind him plenty of reading for Burke scholars—that’s an understatement. But I nevertheless want to call attention to an interesting early item by Burke (from 1928) because it isn’t included in any of the Burke bibliographies.

It is pretty well known that early in 1925 Burke and some of his friends—Malcolm Cowley, William Carlos Williams, Allen Tate, Slater Brown, Hart Crane, Charles Sheeler, Harold Loeb, Isador Schneider, Peggy Cowley, Sue Jenkins, and Matthew Josephson, among others—put together a literary spoof, *Aesthete:1925*, a 32-page monograph full of mock criticism, fiction, poetry, and advertising that was intended as a stinging riposte to Ernest Boyd’s “Aesthete: Model 1924.” Boyd’s essay, published in H. L. Mencken’s new *American Mercury*, was a fairly tame composite portrait of a young aesthete that satirized second-generation Greenwich Village

---

## An Amusing Addition to the

---



modernists like Burke, John Dos Passos, E. E. Cummings, Gorham Munson, and others—and that a thin-skinned Malcolm Cowley took as a personal attack. Under the leadership of Cowley, *Aesthete:1925* was accordingly devised as a Dadaesque “significant gesture” in order to ridicule Boyd and his “older generation” of American critics and poets: Mencken, Paul Elmer More, Irving Babbitt, Waldo Frank, Paul Rosenfeld, Van Wyck Brooks, Amy Lowell, Edgar Lee Masters, Carl Sandburg, and so forth. Among other things, the volume included Sheeler’s pen-and-ink cover; an overview by the fictitious editor, one “Walter S. Hankel of St. Louis”; “Little Moments with Great Critics”; a piece of mock experimental fiction by Brown; “News Clips” ridiculing Rosenfeld, Mencken, and Boyd; poetry purportedly by “Walter S. Hankel”; Burke’s “Dada, Dead or Alive” (a fairly serious meditation on American Dadaism that was

directed at Frank); and a mock ad by Burke that urged readers to “Menckenize!” by joining the “Mencken Promotion Society.”

What has not been noticed is that Burke was also involved in a similar mockery of the older generation a few years later. In January of 1928 (Shi 115-16), Brown, Cowley, Burke, Josephson, and Robert Coates contributed a twenty-page spoof of New York society to the thirteenth number of *transition* (summer 1928, pages 83-102), an avant-garde modernist magazine that Eugene Jolas published from expatriot Paris and other European venues from 1927 to 1938, that billed itself, with justice, as “An International Quarterly for Creative Experiment,” and that carried (to the tune of several hundred pages per month or per quarter) expressionist, dadaist, surrealist, and other innovative work by Crane, Williams, Tate, Gertrude Stein, Kay Boyle, Archibald Macleish, Yvor Winters, Harry Crosby, and

the land of their mother/ With their hats in one hand and their palms in another.” “Knights of Press-Agency,” by Josephson, mocked the development of New York ad agencies (and spoke of “television”). An experimental story by Coates struck at the vapidness of the New York commercial scene. Josephson attacked the consumerism behind Henry Ford’s success. Cowley’s poem “Tar Babies,” complete with explanatory footnotes, apparently parodied Eliot. And an “Open Letter to Mr. Ezra Pound and the Other Exiles” poked fun at the entire expatriot movement.

Interspersed with these contents were a series of mock ads by Burke that are reminiscent of the one he had written for *Aesthete: 1925*. One, on page 90 (“Cheat the Censor, Take Doctor Rubbm’s Confidential Massage”), offers a mock testimonial by one Guy Hornsby, a “novelist formerly of the Waldo Frank school” who rid himself of Waldo-esque

## Kenneth Burke Bibliography

other Americans, as well as Irish, English, Russian, and Spanish moderns. It was in *transition* that James Joyce published his “Work in Progress” (now known as *Finnegans Wake*)—appropriately so, since Jolas was especially interested in experiments in language and efforts to build a new philosophy from the materials of the New Psychology of Freud and Jung.

“New York: 1928” consists of a set of various materials, mostly inside jokes, that were designed to ridicule in a gentle, even sophomoric way, modernist excesses of one kind or another as well as “the insipidity of American culture in an age of mass production and consumerism” (Bak 402). A Cowley dadaesque prose poem/manifesto satirized the crushing of civil liberties by the economic prosperities of the 1920s. Seven brief poems presumably by “Walter S. Hankel” made fun of Ezra Pound, Williams’s friend Robert McAlmon, the fireside poets, and certain expatriots who “oft return to

“violence, ruttings, and phallic symbols” by subjecting himself to a program of massages by Doctor Rubbm. A second, on page 94 (“She Bought the Wrong Book!”), ridicules the Book of the Month Club by touting a doubtful Book of the Year Association that can always “select for you the correct volume, the book that your neighbor will be talking about,” so that you can avoid the embarrassment of discussing “the wrong book” in front of the boss. A third (“Important Communication to the Editor”), signed by “H. L. Mannikin,” is another parody of Mencken’s self-promotional efforts. All three ads are named as products of the “Prince Llan [Ad] Agency”—a nomenclature that identifies them with Burke, the author of the short story “Prince Llan” whose publication marked the demise of the avant garde periodical *Broom* early in 1924. Since Burke is named as a contributor on page 83, since the performance

is directed against standardization, commercialism, materialism (frequent targets of Burke's wit and wisdom), and since he had contributed similar mock ads to *Aesthete*; 1925 it seems undeniable that Burke was the author of these three contributions to "New York: 1928."

The 1925 and 1928 capers were not the only spoofs Burke was involved in during the 1920s, of course. Besides the *Aesthete*, 1925 episode, Burke had taken part in a poetry scam in 1918 during which he, Cowley, Berenice Abbott, and Foster Damon invented an imaginary rustic poet, Earl Roppel ("the plowboy poet of Tioga County") and succeeded in getting older-generation moderns Amy Lowell, Witter Bynner, and Conrad Aiken to take him seriously (Bak 115-20). In 1921 and 1922 he started writing a play with Cowley (apparently it has not survived) that was designed to ridicule Floyd Dell's fervor for Freudianism, perhaps in the tradition of Susan Glaspell's spoof *Suppressed Desires* (1915).

- Cowley, Malcolm. *Exile's Return*. New York: Norton, 1934.
- Frank, Armin, and Mechthild Frank. "The Writings of Kenneth Burke." In William Rueckert, ed., *Critical Responses to Kenneth Burke*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1969. 495-512.
- Hoffman, Frederick J., Charles Allen, and Carolyn Ulrich. *The Little Magazine: A History and a Bibliography*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946.
- Josephson, Matthew. *Life among the Surrealists*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962.
- Loeb, Harold. *The Way It Was*. New York: Criterion Books, 1959.
- Shi, David E. *Matthew Josephson, Bourgeois Bohemian*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981.
- Tashjian, Dickran. *Skyscraper Primitives: Dada and the American Avant-Garde*

## An Amusing Addition to the Burke Bibliography

And he resurrected "Walter S. Hankle" again with his friends in a 1930 contribution called *Whither, Whither, or After Sex, What? A Symposium to End Symposiums* (New York: Macaulay), a book that I have been unable to examine personally; according to Armin Paul Frank and Mechthild Frank's bibliography, it included Burke's satire of capitalism "Waste—The Future of Prosperity" which also appeared in *The New Republic* and in *Reader's Digest*.

Those who knew Burke personally remark unflinchingly on Burke's wit and affability and irreverence, and all these spoofs, including the rather light-hearted one known as "New York: 1928," point to the presence of a man who took his work and the work of his colleagues very seriously—but never too seriously.

### Secondary Works Cited

Bak, Hans. *Malcolm Cowley: The Formative Years*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990.

*1910-1925*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1975.

### Notes

1. The episode is recounted briefly in Bak (323-28; 294-95), Josephson (268-69), Tashjian (139-42), Loeb (241-42), and Cowley (198-99). For a full rendering of the details, see my forthcoming *Conversing with the Moderns: Kenneth Burke, 1915-1931*.
2. On *transition*, see Hoffman et al, 172-80.
3. Since the Book of the Month Club was founded in 1926, Burke's satire was quite topical.
4. "Walter S. Hankle" also made an appearance as one subject of a Cowley "anthology" of portrait poems on his friends—among them Burke, Coates, Josephson, and Crane—that appeared in volume 12 of the *Little Review* (Spring/Summer, 1926, 33-36).

One of the many Burke articles I read during my doctoral program at Purdue was his “Linguistic Approach to Problems of Education.” At the end of the article appears a two-page curriculum vitae explaining its place in KB’s thinking. Among the “Boik Woiks” listed was a curious “Miscellaneous item,” a reference to an article on “the motives in the ‘higher standard of living,’” entitled “Nous autres matérialistes” (literally, “We Other Materialists”) and published in the French journal *Esprit* in November 1946. Since I was looking for a “Neglected Essay” to share at the 1990 Burke Conference in New Harmony and I found no citation for the French title in any Burkean indexes, I had a mystery on my hands. I couldn’t imagine an article that Burke had failed to publish in English.

My initial research located not only a copy of the French article but a bit of history surrounding its publication. The article can be found on pages 628-42 in volume 14 (new series) of *Esprit*.

*Jeffrey L. Courtright*  
*Miami University, Ohio*



---

## *The Hunt* *for Kenneth Burke’s “French” Article*

---

According to letters he wrote 11 Sept 1946 to Maxim Lieber and 11 Oct 1946 to J. Sibley Watson, Burke had completed an essay entitled “The American Way,” but had not found a domestic venue for its publication. (The letters can be found among Burke’s papers in the Pattee Library at Penn State.) In the meantime, the manuscript was sent to France, was translated by Alex Wittemberg, and went to press in French.

A few years after the New Harmony conference I was perusing (for a different project) the bibliography in Rueckert’s *Critical Responses to Kenneth Burke* and discovered the English version of the article. It is not listed under “Part 4. Essays” where I had looked originally for the French title but appears under “Part 7. Commentary, Discussions, and Miscellaneous.” Burke published “The American Way” in the first volume of *Touchstone*, December 1947, pp. 3-9, a year after its French counterpart.

Mystery solved.





## DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY

Founded in 1878 by the priests and brothers of the Holy Ghost, Duquesne University carries a more than century-old tradition of providing a unique liberal and professional education with an emphasis on moral values, a dedication to quality teaching and a commitment to service. Today Duquesne University serves more than 9500 undergraduate and graduate students, offering more than 150 programs on the bachelor's, master's and doctoral levels in its nine schools: the McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts and the schools of Business Administration, Education, Health Sciences, Law, Music, Natural and Environmental Sciences, Nursing, and Pharmacy.

The Department of Communication at Duquesne offers bachelor's degrees in either Communication Studies, Journalism, or Media Studies and master's degrees in either Rhetoric & the Philosophy of Communication, Corporate Communication, or Online Journalism.

The Kenneth Burke Society is a nonprofit organization incorporated in the State of New York since 1988. Annual dues of \$20 for faculty and \$10 for students entitle members to a year's subscription of the *Kenneth Burke Society Newsletter* (see insert). The *Newsletter* is published semi-annually under the Society's auspices and produced in Duquesne University's Department of Communication, Pittsburgh, PA 15282 (phone 412-396-6446; fax 412-396-4792). Readers are encouraged to "join the fray" by submitting letters, abstracts, or manuscripts that promote the study, understanding, dissemination, research, critical analysis, and preservation of works by and about Kenneth Burke. Authors should prepare manuscripts following MLA or APA guidelines and submit both a paper copy and a 3.5 inch disk file using any established Macintosh, MS-DOS, or Windows wordprocessor. Shorter pieces can be attached to an e-mail (thames@duq2.cc.duq.edu).

**Editor—Richard H. Thames**

**Assistant—John McInerney**



## KBS News and Announcements

Julie Whitaker is working on an edition of KB's unpublished poems. She would appreciate receiving any information about his poetry or any articles or reviews which relate to it. Contact Julie Whitaker, 361 West 36th Street, New York, New York 10018.

§

The film on KB that Harry Chapin had been producing before his death has been completed under the supervision of Chapin's wife. Transferred to a 15 minute videotape, it is now available from the Burke Society for \$50. All profits go to the Society. Contact Star Muir.

The recent obituary and memorial issues of the *KBS Newsletter* are available for \$4; a xeroxed packet of back issues is available for \$12. Contact Star Muir.

§

The Society is in the process of compiling an updated history which will identify early stages in the formation of the Society, summarize the themes and seminar reports from each of the triennial conferences, and give background information on the nature and function of the Society. Paid members will be entitled to a forthcoming *Directory* as well as the *Newsletter*.

### ***Bibliographic Additions***

*continued from page 15*

Feehan, Michael. "Multiple Editorial Horizons

of *Leaves of Grass.*" *Resources for American Literary Study*, 20.2 (1994), 213-230.