Logology is our logo

From Kenneth Burke

A Plea to Join the Fray and Make It Worth our While

Along with my ritual role as the eponymous founder of a new verbalizing venture (the several doughty organizers of which are already coming to the fore), there is my personal concern with the MATTER OF MEMBERSHIP.

In the cause of form, I would present the case thus:

The Genesis of the enterprise was the "Burke" Conference in Philadelphia, March 6-8, under the joint auspices of Temple University and the Speech Communication Association. Its Exodus took place when a "Kenneth Burke Society" was inaugurated. Its Leviticus was in the seventy-plus papers anent doctrine that were contributed for discussion at the meetings.

This APPEAL FOR MEMBERSHIP is obviously analogous to the census-taking that engages the book of Numbers. In fact, it was such a correspondence that suggested this way of presenting the whole issue.

Then what a pay-off! Next comes Deuteronomy which, besides adding up to a Pentateuch, has as its key word "thou shalt." On the assumption that LOGOLOGY IS OUR LOGO, I assume that all mandates will be in the line of the herewith enclosed paragraphs; and that members' comments, whether in-agreement-with or as-departures-from such speculations, will be written with reference to them. I hope later to list some further considerations which other persons might care to develop.

To round things out completely by making the design a Hexateuch, analogizing from the book of Joshua we might wonder to what kind of promised land our Joshuas will have brought the project, what kind of Jericho will they have "fit de battle ob," -- and when "de lam' ram sheep horns begin to blow; trumpets begin to soun'," what kind of walls will "come tumblin' down."

K. B.

With the above statement from the "eponymous founder" begins the first newsletter of the Kenneth Burke Society. The feature article is from Charles W. Mann, Chief, Rare Books and Special Collections, Pattee Library, The Pennsylvania State University. There are two more statements from Kenneth Burke, one of them written over seventy-eight years ago, the other a letter to the editor of the Times Literary Supplement (London) which appeared in August, 1983. There are notes on forthcoming publications and convention programs relating to Burke's works, a section to which it is hoped many readers will contribute in future newsletters. There is a bit of Burke's poetry. Finally there are the minutes of the first meeting of the Kenneth Burke Society, a list of Steering Committee Members, and the Numbers, the list of the paid and counted within the Society. For those who want to be in that number Instructions are given at the end of the present list.
BURKE PAPERS AT PENNSYLVANIA STATE

The Kenneth Burke Collection now housed in the Rare Books Room of The Pennsylvania State University Library at University Park, Pennsylvania is primarily a correspondence file of letters written to Mr. Burke through the year 1961. While the collection does contain occasional manuscripts and typescripts of Burke poems, articles, and reviews, the manuscripts of Mr. Burke's own essays, articles, books, and poems remain in his possession. There is some discussion underway toward the depositing of such items at Penn State in the near future.

The collection of letters and documents at Penn State was obtained in 1974. Mr. Burke had taught several times at Penn State, and had had a long friendship, dating from his time in Chicago, with the then-head of Penn State's English Department, the late Henry Sams. Thus, it was a matter of great satisfaction for such a collection to come to Penn State as in addition to its fundamental importance to modern letters it serves even now as a recognition of a long association between Mr. Burke and the University.

It comprises in archival terms, 11.5 feet of material; that is, nearly four quite-full filing cabinet drawers. It ends with the year 1961, as Mr. Burke wished to retain his current files. It consists of both family and professional correspondence, as the earliest letter was written by "Master Kenneth Burke" to "Dear Mom and Lewis" on August 8, 1906, the first of about 1,080 notes or letters in original or on carbon by Burke himself in the collection. KB frequently did not send a letter, or less frequently had some returned to him. He also began in the 1950's to retain carbons of his own letters. Also of direct KB interest are the countless tiny spider-like summaries in margins or on the versos of letters which he used to work up a reply.

The "public" correspondence begins in 1915 with letters from James Wilkinson, James Light, and a surviving letter from Burke to Malcolm Cowley written September 11th, 1916; the earliest letter from Cowley is dated June 11, 1918. These gentlemen still correspond on a regular basis, sixty-eight years later.

Files of correspondence for the 1920's are quite good but there are obvious gaps as KB's correspondence was not really organized until the late Mrs. Burke took on the job in the 1950's.

The collection is thoroughly organized chronologically, and a full card index to correspondents is available. A calendar for the collection is about halfway toward completion. It ends with "Foresdale," and the 37 pages are available on order for around $5.00.

The scope of the collection is just about what KB scholars would expect. The major files of correspondence include letters from Stanley Hyman, Theodore Roethke, Allen Tate, Robert Penn Warren, Hugh Dalziel Duncan, John Crowe Ransom, Robert Coates, Hart Crane, James Light, Jean Toomer, Waldo Frank, R. P. Blackmur, Bruce Bliven, Peter Blume, James Daly, James T. Farrell, Francis Ferguson, Norman Fitts, Charles Henri Ford, Lincoln Kirstein, Sidney Hook, Marianne Moore, Gorham Munson, Howard Nemerov, Harvey Slochower, Gilbert Seldes, J. S. Watson, and above all, William Carlos Williams. Williams wrote to Burke several times a week from 1921 to his death in 1959, often sending along poems for Burke's reactions and comments. Theodore Roethke also counted on Burke whom he addressed sometimes as "Paw" for a poetic sounding-board so that the 88 items in the Roethke file include corrected galleys and typescripts for poems as well as letters and cards. The Robert Penn Warren file while smaller in size includes a typescript draft for the play "Proud Flesh" which eventually became "All the Kings Men." Allen Tate also sent poems including a typescript draft of "Death of Little Boys."
Other important names which appear in fewer but still significant letters include Ezra Pound, Katherine Anne Porter, E. E. Cummings, Stefan Zweig, Jacques Maritain, Robert Fitzgerald, and so on.

The above list may be a little long on names and short on detail but perhaps the names may serve as touchstones. The material is, with permission from KB, open to consultation. He readily grants such permission in response to a letter or postcard written directly to him.

General inquiries about the collection may be addressed to the writer who will be pleased to return short summaries of specific correspondence upon request.

Charles W. Mann, Chief
Rare Books and Special Collections
The Pennsylvania State University

From "Master Kenneth Burke"

On the following page is a copy of the earliest letter written by Burke to which Charles Mann refers in his description of the Kenneth Burke Collection at Pennsylvania State University. Professor Mann's reference to the letter made its inclusion in this first newsletter of the Kenneth Burke Society seem particularly appropriate, and he quickly sent the requested copy. Burke's most recent message, "A Plea to Join the Fray and Make It Worth Our While," arrived with a letter dated August 30, 1984. There is thus a span of seventy-eight years between two of the three statements by K.B. in this first newsletter.

K.B. reports that "Mom and Lewis" to whom he refers in the 1906 letter are his grandmother and his uncle. His reference to "Grandma" is to his "Great-Gramma Brodie," who "Taught me a lot/About Implications." (See p. 8.) The references to "mamma and papa" are to his mother and father. K.B. explains that he usually referred to them as "Ma and Pa" but that he was in this letter "on parade."

The letter foreshadows the extraordinary man we have come to know. Master Kenneth Burke appears to have been loving, generous, yet quite candid at age nine, as K.B. has been and is likely to be at age ninety. Now as then, through symbolic action he may communicate his dissatisfaction with the way things are, yet he is always ready to make the best of the situation. The future master logologist has one or two misspellings and seems to have selected the wrong word in reference to his state of mind during "the rest of my vacation," possibly the only word confusion to be found among the millions he would write. He would in the next seventy-eight years have more than a little to say about homonyms, heteronyms, using metaphors with discounting awareness, and the significance of a phrase that happens to appear in this early letter, "as if." For a number of readers "Master Kenneth Burke" would one day become "Headmaster to the Universe." That title John Mason Brown assigned to George Bernard Shaw, but some in our society feel it is equally appropriate to our "eponymous founder."

Don Burks
Dear Morrie and Lewis,

I got your postal card and mamma got her letter and I saw where you got ducked. I guess you and Lewis are doing everything to have fun. Is Grandma there? If she is, give her a sweet kiss, and give Lewis one too, and keep one for yourself. I hope you all are having a good time, and I wish I was there too. When mamma came over to Auntie's to get me she told me that you and Lewis went to Seminole Point. I started to cry, then I asked her how long you were going to stay. She said, 'Girl are going to stay for two weeks.' Then I started to cry more, and I felt as if I could not be in peace the rest of my vacation. I'm having fun over here, but I could have more fun with you. I'm just thinking about you in the big boats, and I'm feeling good and mamma and papa are feeling fine.

Yours truly,
Mom and Lewis

From Walter Kenneth Burr
Burke's letter to the editor of *The Times Literary Supplement* is in response to an essay-review of the new edition of William Rueckert's book, *Kenneth Burke and the Drama of Human Relations*. The essay-review was written by Robert M. Adams and appeared in TLS July 8, 1983. An expanded version of Burke's "Dramatism and Logology" will appear in *Communication Quarterly*. (See "News and Notes.") Punctuation and spelling as they appear in TLS are followed in this letter.

*The Times Literary Supplement -- August 12, 1983 -- "To the Editor"

**DRAMATISM AND LOGOLOGY**

Sir, -- Please let me state my great gratitude for the generous allotment of space to "Reasons for reading Kenneth Burke" (July 8). And I am most grateful to Robert M. Adams . . . . But his review contains one error of fact. Referring to my theory of language which I "first called 'dramatistic' and then baptised 'logological'", Adams says that "both these terms are Burkean coinages". I did give to "dramatism" the specific meaning it has in *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, "a technique of analysis of language and of thought as basically a mode of action rather than a means of conveying information". But for "logology" the OED records two eighteenth-century theological usages, "the doctrine of the Logos" (referring to Christ as "the Word" in the Book of John). And though "rare", as early as 1820 there is a secular meaning, "the science of words" synonymous with "philology". (I confess at first I did think that I had invented the term.)

This might be the place to explain why two terms for the one theory. Though my aim is to be secular and empirical, "dramatism" and "logology" are analogous respectively to the traditional distinction (in theology and metaphysics) between ontology and epistemology. My "Dramatism" article (in *The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*) features what we humans are (the symbol-using animal). Logology is rooted in the range and quality of knowledge that we acquire when our bodies (physiological organisms in the realm of non-symbolic motion) come to profit by their peculiar aptitude for learning the arbitrary, conventional mediums of communication called "natural" languages (atop which all sorts of specialized nomenclatures are developed, each with its particular kind of insights).

Logology entered as a necessary term in connection with my work "on words and the Word" in *The Rhetoric of Religion*. And I am happy that Mr. Adams was kind to it. There my pages on St. Augustine's conversion from "word merchant" as a teacher of pagan rhetoric to his ecclesiastical role as a Preacher of the Christian Word get me to the centre of the distinction between the "creativity" of God's verbal *flats* in the first chapter of Genesis and the fact that any new verbal distinction, if but by virtue of its novelty, is to that extent "creative". Here the two definitions of "logology" (the theological *Word* of the eighteenth century and the secular words of 1820) are by analogy one.

In his *Biographia Literaria* (the last footnote of Chapter IV) Coleridge observes that "When two distinct meanings are confounded under one or more words . . . men of research . . . having discovered the difference [may] remove the equivocation, either by the substitution of a new word or by the appropriation of one of the two or more words, that had before been used promiscuously." And "When this distinction has been so naturalized and of such general currency that the language itself does as it were think for us . . . we then say, that it is evident to common sense. Common sense, therefore, differs in different ages." (Surely among the most notable of Coleridge's many notable footnotes.)
This principle would apply far beyond such "desynonymising" as Coleridge proposed with his distinction between "imagination" and "fancy". It would apply to any word for anything since any such word would be "creative" as a verbal discrimination added to some "universe of discourse" and not there until language puts it there. The word may designate some "object" or "process" that owes not its actual or imputed existence, but only our awareness, to the name for it. The new nomenclature that guided the inventing of the atomic bomb did not by creative fiat produce the atomic energy that was absent from the universe of common sense as summed up in the opening chapter of Genesis.

Further thoughts on logology as an epistemology suggest a perspective along these lines: Surrounding us wordy animals there is the infinite wordless universe out of which we have been gradually carving our universes of discourse since the time when our primordial ancestors added to their sensations words for sensations. When they could duplicate the taste of an orange by saying "the taste of an orange", that's when STORY was born, since words tell about sensations. Whereas Nature can do no wrong (whatever it does is Nature) when STORY comes into the world there enters the realm of the true, false, honest, mistaken, the downright lie, the imaginative, the visionary, the sublime, the ridiculous, the eschatological (as with Hell, Purgatory, Heaven; the Transmigration of Souls; Forte I unget; the Transmigration of Souls; Forte I I Ings of an inevitable wind-up in a classless society), the satirical, every single detail of every single science or speculation, even every bit of gossip—only our kind of animal can gossip. There was no story before we came, and when we're gone the universe will go on sans story.

KENNETH BURKE
154 Amity Road
Andover, New Jersey 07821

But for these lucky accidents*

Were I not tall and suave and handsome
were I not famed for my glamorous Byronic love-affairs
had not each of my books sold riotously,
had not my fists made strong men cringe

did not my several conversions
enlist further hordes of followers
and did not everything I turned to
make me big money

despite my almost glorious
good health of both body and mind
how in God's name
could I through all these years

have held up
and held out
and held on?

Kenneth Burke

SCA Chapter Meeting

William Rueckert has suggested that the Kenneth Burke Society should have chapters affiliated with the organizations of the various fields in which Burke's works are of particular interest, such as the Kenneth Burke Society of the Modern Language Association, of the Speech Communication Association, etc. In keeping with that suggestion there will be an Organization-Business Meeting of the SCA Chapter of the Society at the 1984 convention in Chicago. The meeting is scheduled on Saturday, November 3, at 7:35 p.m. in Dining Room 16, Club floor of the Palmer House.

Message from Herb Simons:

Our gratitude, once again, to those of you who traveled to Philadelphia for the "Burke" conference on your own funds. And our deepest appreciation to Don Burks for this Newsletter.

KB and I are still at it on the issues of "warrantable outrage" and "dramatism as metaphor." As regards the first, he wrote recently that his "cult of comedy tries as hard as it can to let things ride." And, parenthetically, "I see Nietzsche's aphorisms in his Will to Power as daily indignant unsent letters to the editor." I'm told by Jim Chesbro that the dramatism-as-metaphor issue will be played out soon in Communication Quarterly.

Any ideas for a publisher for The Legacy of Kenneth Burke? Trevor Mella and I are nearing the point where we'll be able to submit. It's going to be a honey of a book. First-rate essays by Rueckert on Burke offering "Doctrine (without) Dogma, Action (with) Passion," Gusfield on KB and social science, Mella on KB's symbolic equations, Leff on Burke as Ciceronian (or Cicero as Burkian), Signorile on "Ratios and Causes," Damrosch on Burke and Augustine, Nelson on Burke and post-structuralism, Blankenship on "The Burke-Coleridge Connection," Orevec on KB and identification, McCloskey on Burke and economics. Maybe 1-2 others.

Department of Speech
Temple University

Forthcoming articles, reviews, and convention programs on Burke:

James Chesbro reports that "Dramatism as Ontology or Epistemology: A Symposium" with articles by Bernard Brock, Kenneth Burke, Parke Burgess, and Herbert Simons will appear in the Winter, 1985 Issue of Communication Quarterly. The Spring, 1985 issue of the same journal will have an article by Kenneth Burke in which he extends the Dramatism-Logology discussion begun in the TLS letter, a copy of which appears in this newsletter. Chesbro reports also that the Eastern Communication Association has already approved the Kenneth Burke Society as an affiliated organization, and that there will be a chapter business meeting at the 1985 ECA Convention. There will be a Burke program at that convention with papers by Jane Blankenship, James Chesbro, and Trevor Mella.

Walter Fisher and Wayne Brockriede have an article in the Spring, 1984 Issue of Central States Speech Journal, entitled, "Kenneth Burke's Realism."
"Beyond Dramatic Analysis: The Vitality of Kenneth Burke to the Study of Literature in Performance," is the title of a program scheduled at the SCA Convention, November 1-4. Sponsored by the Interpretation Division, the program chairperson is Sheron Dalley. Papers will be presented by James Beggs, Don Burks, and Mary Strine. David Thompson will act as respondent.

An essay-review by Phillip K. Tompkins, "On Hegemony -- 'he gave it no name' -- and Critical Structuralism in the Work of Kenneth Burke," will appear in a future issue of OJS. Tompkins uses conversations at the Burke Conference as incisions into the text provided by five books dealing with recent upheavals in literary theory and criticism. In addition to anticipating both structuralism and post-structuralism, Burke is shown to have developed independently of Gramsci a system from which to critique the hegemony of American Capitalism.

A note concerning an article on the Burke-Duncan correspondence has arrived:

Charles Elkin's "'Son of a Burke': The Hugh Dalziel Duncan Collection at Morris Library" will appear in the forthcoming issue of JCarbs, a journal published by the Southern Illinois University Library, featuring articles growing out of research in its special collections. The article deals inter alia with Burke's influence on Duncan and draws heavily on Burke's letters to him.

Alan Cohn
Morris Library
Southern Illinois University

In response to a request for clarification as to which library holds which letters, Charles Mann explains:

The Duncan file at Southern Illinois contains Kenneth's letters to Duncan; Duncan's letters to Kenneth are at Penn State although Duncan probably retained carbon copies. The situation is similar with the Cowley letters; Burke's being with Cowley's Papers at the Newberry Library. We have a microfilm of both sides of the correspondence, and a projected edition is now under way.

Pattee Library
Pennsylvania State University

PLEASE SEND "NEWS AND NOTES" ITEMS FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER OF THE KENNETH BURKE SOCIETY to Don Burks, Department of Communication, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN 47907.

MY GREAT-GRAMMA BRODIE*

My Great-Gramma Brodie
Wouldn't let me say "G"
'Cause it meant a swear-word.

My Great-Gramma Brodie
Knew about
Heck, Holy Smokes, and Darn It.
She helped me clean them up, too.

My Great-Gramma Brodie
Taught me a lot
About implications.

MINUTES OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE KENNETH BURKE SOCIETY

March 7, 1984 -- Bellevue Stratford Hotel -- Philadelphia, PA

Don Burks of Purdue University called the meeting to order at 9:10 p.m.

James W. Chesebro of Queens College provided the report of the Steering Committee which recommended five actions which were approved with a sixth issue to be resolved:

1. The official name of the organization should be the Kenneth Burke Society.
2. The purpose of the Kenneth Burke Society should be to "promote the study, understanding, dissemination of, research on, critical analysis of, and preservation of the works of and about Kenneth Burke."
3. The Society should secure a Secretary/Treasurer with appropriate Institutional support as soon as possible.
4. Notices should be sent to all major academic associations announcing the formation of the Society and announcing the availability of membership in the Society.
5. Institutional affiliations should be sought with other major associations such as SCA, MLA, and regional associations. Plans should be made as soon as possible to hold panels at these associations.
6. While the particulars could not be offered at this time, it is also recommended that an editor with appropriate Institutional support be selected to establish and publish a newsletter at regular intervals for the Society.

 Responses to the Steering Committee Report were sought:

1. Bernard L. Brock of Wayne State University recommended that the Society's newsletter be created and distributed as soon as possible.
2. Don Burks recommended the formation of chapter meetings of the Kenneth Burke Society at all conventions during the coming year.
3. William Rueckert of SUNY at Geneseo underscored the Steering Committee's recommendation the Kenneth Burke Society should take one year to get started, securing institutional affiliations, a secretary and appropriate funding during this first year.
4. Kathleen Jamieson has volunteered to submit a proposal for a seeding grant for the society.
5. Rather than attempt to mail out individual notices to all those likely to be interested in joining the Kenneth Burke Society, notices will be placed in established newsletters such as SCA's SPECTRA.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

ON PUTTING THINGS IN ORDER*

File this, throw out that.
Alert the Secretariat
In re each claim and caveat
To better serve the Cause of Alphabet.
Throw out this, file that.

File this, throw that out,
We know beyond all doubt how Perfect Order reconciles--

And now throw out the files.

Since the organizing of the Kenneth Burke Society may at times require an incongruous perspective, the steering committee will try to remember the following anecdote from Attitudes Toward History as an antidote.

[Lincoln] Steffens, as the story goes, was entering the New York Public Library when a friend of his came stumbling out. The man was obviously in great agitation. "I've found it!" he shouted. And he clamorously called for Steffens to go with him and listen while he told of his discovery.

Steffens obliged. The two bumped along Forty-Second Street and turned down Fifth Avenue while the friend somewhat incoherently explained. Gradually, despite his excitement, his words began to make sense—and Steffens realized that his friend had found a plan for saving the world. And the more the outlines of the plan began to emerge, the better the scheme sounded.

Then Steffens became aware that someone was walking along beside them, listening to the account. And finally, turning, he saw a very distinguished-looking gentleman—then, looking again, he realized that it was the devil.

Steffens: "You seem to be interested in my friend's plan."
The Devil: "Decidedly!"
Steffens: "What do you think of it?"
The Devil: "I think it's an excellent plan."
Steffens: "You mean to say you think it would work."
The Devil: "Oh, yes. It would certainly work."
Steffens: "But in that case, how about you? Wouldn't it put you out of a job?"
The Devil: "Not in the least. I'll organize it."*

THE PAID AND COUNTED MEMBERS OF THE KENNETH BURKE SOCIETY AS OF SEPTEMBER 15, 1984

Kenneth Duva Burke*  
Don Paul Abbott  
Marin Pearson Allen  
Edward C. Appel  
Melanie Bailey  
Fred Bauer  
R. David Beal  
William Bennett  
William L. Benoit  
Thomas Benson  
Elvira B. Berry  
Jane Blankenship  
Mark Borzi  
George Bradley  
Bernard L. Brock  
Barry Brummett  
Brenda H. Burchett  
Don Burks  
Virginia Burks  
Marlon Odell Carr  
Mary Ann Censky  
George Chesebro  
Mary Evelyn Collins  
Laura Crowell  
Sheron J. Dalley  
David Damrosch  
Robert E. Denton  
Madeline Derbyshire  
Joan Distel  
Weldon B. Durham  
Lisa Ede  
Walter R. Fisher  
Mary M. Foertsch  
Karen A. Foss  
Sonja K. Foss  
Robert Lewis Fulford  
Rosalind J. Gabin  
Robert E. Garlitz  
Steve Goldzwig  
Charles J. Griffin  
Leland Griffin  
Sharon Howell  
Kathleen H. Jamieson  
Donald Jennewann  
Richard L. Johannesen  
Janette Kenner  
Robert L. King  
James Klump  
Keisuke Kurata  
James C. Maddock  
Thomas F. Mader  
Ray E. McKerrow  
Richard Mitchell, Jr.  
James S. Mullican  
James J. Neary  
Cary Nelson  
Kathryn M. Olson  
Christine Oravec  
Leonard L. Osborne  
John Patton  
Brooke L. Quigley  
Robin G. Reese  
J. Clarke Rountree  
William H. Rueckert  
Edward Schlapa  
Vito Signorille  
Herbert Simons  
Mark E. Stoffel  
Timothy N. Thompson  
Elaine Tompkins  
Phillip K. Tompkins  
Mike Wartman  
Edward A. Watson  
Al R. Weitzel  
Robert Wess  
Charles A. Wilkinson  
David C. Williams  
Gaynelle Rothermel Winograd  
George Yochum  
Sander W. Zulauf  

*Distinguished Eponymous Founder Membership, exclusively for one who's been to the Mountain.

Membership dues for the first year in the Kenneth Burke Society are $5.00. To become a member and receive future newsletters, please send a $5.00 check payable to the Kenneth Burke Society, along with preferred mailing address to: Don Burks, Department of Communication, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN 47907.

AS FROM A GREEK ANTHOLOGY*

Do the violets, like me, tug at their roots this warm day of late autumn?  
Already I can imagine late April, yet we have not even had our first snow-flurry.  
When I was young, spring came upon me suddenly, with me still thinking of the pleasures of the sleigh.  
But if I expect it always earlier and earlier I shall soon overtake it by a cycle,  
And be expecting spring in the springtime.