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THE ORIGINS OF THE KENNETH BURKE SOCIETY

Abstract: The Kenneth Burke Society was founded during Burke’s lifetime by scholars in communication, literature, sociology, and other fields to promote the study and application of Burke’s copious works and fertile ideas. Burke had become the leading writer on rhetorical theory in the twentieth century, as well as a notable literary critic, fiction writer, poet, and translator. His century of scholarly publication—including posthumous works twenty-five years after his death in 1993—have provided plenty for members of the Society to analyze, debate, and elaborate upon. The Society has sponsored triennial conferences in the United States since 1990, featuring notable keynote speakers, seminars in various topics led by Burke scholars, and social events, including music performances by Burke’s talented family. The Society also has supported an online journal, a number of edited books drawn from its conferences, a listserv, and a newsletter (now discontinued). It is affiliated with a half-dozen other scholarly organizations. Most members of the Society are in the United States and Canada, where the study of rhetoric has grown in importance particularly during the latter part of the twentieth century (with Burke’s help) and up until the present. Recently, interest in rhetoric and in Burke has returned to Europe, which developed rhetorical theory and made it a central art in public education for more than 2000 years. The first “Burke” conference in Europe was held in 2013. The Kenneth Burke Society has made outreach to Europe a central goal in its future development.

Keywords: Kenneth Burke, Kenneth Burke Society, rhetoric.

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ИСТОРИЯ ОБЩЕСТВА КЕННЕТА БЕРКА

Аннотация: Общество Кеннета Берка было создано еще при жизни самого Берка специалистами по теории коммуникации, литературе, социологии и другим наукам для изучения и применения на практике многочисленных трудов и плодотворных идей Берка. Берк был ведущим теоретиком риторики XX века, равно как и выдающимся литературоведом, писателем, поэтом и переводчиком. Его научные работы, охватывающие целое столетие – считая изданные в 1993 году, через двадцать пять лет после его смерти, – дали участникам Общества богатый материал для анализа, обсуждения и размышлений. С 1990 года в Соединенных Штатах при поддержке Общества Кеннета Берка каждые три года проходят конференции, на которых выступают видные ученые, семинары на разные темы под руководством специалистов по Берку и различные мероприятия, в том числе музыкальные представления, поставленные талантливыми участниками этого содружества. Кроме того, Общество издает электронный журнал, опубликовало ряд книг по материалам конференций, рассылает подписчикам сообщения о новостях, а раньше организовывало и рассылку информационных бюллетеней. Оно тесно сотрудничает с несколькими другими научными учреждениями. Большинство членов Общества живут в США и Канаде, где изучению риторики со второй половины XX века (благодаря Берку) и вплоть до сегодняшнего дня уделяется особое внимание. Недавно интерес к риторике и к Берку возродился и в Европе, где более двух тысяч лет разрабатывалась теория риторики, которая считалась ключевой дисциплиной. Первая конференция, посвященная Берку, прошла в Европе в 2013 году. Общество Кеннета Берка определило налаживание контактов с Европой как одну из приоритетных задач своего дальнейшего развития.

Ключевые слова: Кеннет Берк, Общество Кеннета Берка, риторика.

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Kenneth Burke's publications span more than a century, from his first poem published in 1916¹ to the posthumous publication of his most recent book, *The War of Words*, in 2018.² He has published as a poet, a short fiction writer, a novelist, and a translator; but that work has been greatly overshadowed by his work as a critic and theorist.³ He spent the 1920s and 1930s as a music, theatre, and book critic for a number of magazines including *The Dial*, *The Nation*, and *The New Republic*. His literary and aesthetic writings began to draw the attention of academics in literature departments, primarily through reviews of his early books, *CounterStatement* (1931), *Permanence and Change* (1935), *Attitudes Toward History* (1937), and *The Philosophy of Literary Form* (1941).⁴ From the 1950s forward, he would become a notable figure in literary studies, attracting essays by writers in over one hundred different literature journals.⁵

The interest of literary scholars would soon be eclipsed by that of scholars of rhetoric. Although Burke wrote about rhetoric in his first scholarly book, *CounterStatement*, in 1935, it was his 1950 publication of *A Rhetoric of Motives* that garnered a book review in *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, the flagship journal of the Speech Association of America (now the National Communication Association [NCA]).⁶ That association was formed in 1914 by teachers of public speaking whose scholarly interests diverged from their colleagues in literature departments who were less interested in the pragmatic communication that is the focus of what is broadly referred to as "rhetorical studies." Burke first published in *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* in 1952,⁷ leading to a four-decade engagement with this community that would become the leading champion of his ideas. Within the past few decades "English" departments, which had long housed freshmen writing programs, turned to rhetoric to inform

¹ Burke, Kenneth. "Adam's Song and Mine." *Others 2* (March 1916): 184.

² Burke, Kenneth. *The War of Words*, eds. Anthony Burke, Kyle Jensen, Jack Selzer. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2018.

³ A comprehensive bibliography of Burke's publications is available on the *KB Journal* website, "Works by Kenneth Burke," at <http://kbjournal.org>.

⁴ See Rountree, Clarke. "Burke by the Numbers: Observations on Nine Decades of Scholarship on Burke." *KB Journal* 3:2 (Spring 2007). Online at <http://www.kbjournal.org/node/177>.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Ehninger, Douglas. "Review of *A Rhetoric of Motives*." *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 36 (1950): 557–558.

⁷ Burke, Kenneth. "A Dramatistic View of the Origins of Language." *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 38 (October 1952): 251–264.

their pedagogy and scholarship in an area broadly called “rhetoric and composition” studies. They also turned to Burke for insights, increasing their departments’ interest in this eclectic scholar.

Although there were scattered publications on Burke from the speech community starting from the 1950s, a new generation of scholars began exploring his works in the 1960s and 1970s; by the 1980s, works about him skyrocketed and continued to climb into the 2000s. It is unsurprising, then, that in 1984 some speech faculty at Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania decided it was time to host a conference on Burke. Their fifth annual conference on Discourse Analysis, held on 6-8 March of that year, was billed as “The Burke Conference” and co-sponsored by the Speech Communication Association (later NCA). Kenneth Burke and scholars from a dozen disciplines participated.⁸

My participation in this conference informs the story of the Kenneth Burke Society’s origins that follows. I attended “The Burke Conference” as a first year graduate student in Rhetorical Studies from the University of Iowa, one of the oldest programs in rhetoric in the United States. Three years earlier I had been a Political Science major who was introduced to Burke in an undergraduate Persuasion class. I talked one of my professors into a directed studies and produced a fifty-page paper on Burke’s theories of rhetoric. A year passed and I found myself on a Student Government Association committee that brought folk singer and political activist Tom Chapin to campus. Tom is the brother of the more-famous recording artist, the late Harry Chapin, and both are Kenneth Burke’s grandsons. I had dinner with Tom and told him about my paper. Tom insisted that “KB”—the name friends and family have for Kenneth Burke—would love to read my paper. I quickly made a copy of it and handed it to him. Six months later while in my first semester at the University of Iowa, I got a note from Don Jennerman, a Classics professor at Indiana State University, who reported that Burke had read my paper, liked it, and wanted to invite me to the Burke Conference! (The fact that such an eminent scholar would take time to read the writings of an undergraduate says a great deal about the generosity of KB.) Burke’s note would be the first of what would become a decade of correspondence between me and KB, especially after I helped to run three

⁸ Some background on this conference is provided in the preface to a book produced from the conference: *The Legacy of Kenneth Burke*, eds. Herbert W. Simons, Trevor Melia. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989.

weeks of videotaped interviews with him when he was a Visiting Professor at the University of Iowa in the Spring of 1986.⁹

The Kenneth Burke Society was formed on 7 March 1984 at a late meeting at The Burke Conference. Don Burks from the Department of Communication at Purdue University (Indiana) chaired a steering committee that included three literature faculty: William Rueckert, the “Dean” of Burke studies from the State University of New York at Geneseo; Rosalind J. Gabin from the State University of New York in Binghamton, and Mary Stoffel, along with Jennerman, from Indiana State University. Five faculty from “Communication” departments included Burks, James Chesebro from Queens College of the City of New York, Jane Blankenship from the University of Massachusetts, Mary Evelyn Collins from Winthrop College (South Carolina), and Sharon Dailey from Indiana State University. I was the only graduate student represented on the committee.

James Chesebro offered a model for the new Society: The Jean Piaget Society, established fourteen years earlier, that not only recognized the eponymous founder’s contributions, but sought to study the issues explored by him. Following this suggestion, the meeting established the purpose of the Kenneth Burke Society “to promote the study, understanding, dissemination of, research on, critical analysis of, and preservation of the works of and about Kenneth Burke.”¹⁰ Chesebro also took the lead in securing the nonprofit’s registration in New York State. Don Burks was the first to follow the committee’s recommendation that we create affiliations with other organizations, inaugurating the Kenneth Burke Interest Group in the Speech Communication Association. Other regional and national association affiliations followed, including the Southern Speech Communication Association, the Western Speech Communication Association, the Eastern Speech Communication Association, the Central States Communication Association, the Modern Language Association, and the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC).¹¹

⁹ These are collected in a published videotape series: *Conversations with Kenneth Burke*. Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Department of Communication Studies, 1986. I served a director of research for all the questions asked in the interviews, an editor of the videotape, and even a stage manager. I also wrote a guide to the interviews included with the four-videotape set, Rountree, Clarke. *An Introduction to Conversations with Kenneth Burke*. Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Department of Communication Studies, 1986.

¹⁰ Burks, Don. *Newsletter of the Kenneth Burke Society* 1:1 (October 1984): 9.

¹¹ The third issue of the *Kenneth Burke Society Newsletter* included notes about some of these affiliations, as well as minutes from some of their meetings (October 1987).

When Don Burks published the first newsletter for the Kenneth Burke Society in October 1984, Kenneth Burke weighed in on the new association, as its “eponymous founder,” with “A Plea to Join the Fray and Make It Worth Our While,” invoking a biblical development:

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,¹² 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-departure-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 out things completely by making the design a Hexateuch, analogizing from the book of *Joshua* we might wonder what kind of promised land our Joshuas will have brought this project, what kind of Jericho will they have “fit de battle ob,”—and when “de I am’ ram sheep horns begin to blow;/trumpets begin to sound’,” what kind of walls will “come tumblin’ down.”¹³

For the next few years, this newsletter became an outlet for news on Burke-related happenings, a channel for our eponymous founder to send missives to members, and a forum for contending over Burke-inspired ideas. Mary Evelyn Collins from the University of Houston, Downtown (Texas) took over newsletter editing duties. Her 1986 newsletter featured a brief, but noteworthy essay by Herb Simons on whether Burke’s system, which encouraged the view that those to whom we are opposed should be

¹² Logology is discussed as the focus of Burke’s late work in Burke, Kenneth. *The Rhetoric of Religion: Studies in Logology*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1961.

¹³ Burks, Don. *Newsletter of the Kenneth Burke Society*: 1.

seen “fools” rather than as evil, allowed for “warrantable outrage” where such a comic response seemed inappropriate.¹⁴

Dale A. Bertelson of Bloomsburg University (Pennsylvania) took over as newsletter editor in 1989 in time to announce the first triennial Kenneth Burke Conference would be in a quaint little 19th Century religious colony in New Harmony, Indiana in 1990. Burke attended that conference and announced in a plenary session a project for the Society which he called “Operation Benchmark.”¹⁵ He uses the metaphor “benchmark” as a method of proceeding in our discussions, so that “we start with what you say, but we only ask that you say ‘Burke says it this way, I say this,’ with some reasons.” I chimed in with a problem, telling Burke, “the problem is difference in opinion about what you’re saying.”¹⁶ Burke responded, “That’s fair enough.” Don Burks noted that the exchange meant that Burke required us to start with a shared *text*—his writings—to ensure Burke scholars do not engage in a dialectic over Burke like “ships passing in the night.”

Burke would be too weak to join the second triennial at a pastoral lodge in Airlie, Virginia in 1993 and would die by the end of that year at the age of 96. Richard Thames from Duquesne University would take over as newsletter editor and dedicate a 24-page issue to memorialize Burke.

The triennials continued, providing a time for a reunion of friends and scholars over all issues Burkean: Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1996; my alma mater at the University of Iowa in Iowa City in 1999; Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana in 2002; Pennsylvania State University in University Park in 2005; Villanova University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 2008; Clemson University in Clemson, South

¹⁴ Simons, Herb. “On the Issue of Warrantable Outrage.” *Kenneth Burke Society Newsletter* 2:1 (July 1986): 1–2.

¹⁵ The details that follow are from Burks, Don M. “KB and Burke: A Remembrance.” *The Kenneth Burke Society Newsletter* 9:1 (December 1993): 5.

¹⁶ I must admit that I had a particular complaint in mind when I said this. A few years earlier, some “leading Burkeans” had disagreed with Burke about whether his theory of dramatism was literal or metaphorical. Burke argued vociferously that to say that “people act while things but move” is a literal statement undercutting dramatism. Two of his interlocutors claimed he was wrong and that dramatism was metaphorical. I believe they misunderstood Burke, hence my particular complaint. The original exchange between Burke and these scholars is in “Dramatism as Ontology or Epistemology: A Symposium.” *Communication Quarterly* 33 (1985): 17–33. My position on this argument was published years later in Rountree, Clarke. “Revisiting the Controversy over Dramatism as Literal.” *KB Journal* 6:2 (Spring 2010). Online at <http://www.kbjournal.org/content/revisiting-controversy-over-dramatism-literal>.

Carolina in 2011; St. Louis University in Missouri in 2014; East Stroudsburg University in East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania in 2017; and the University of Maryland in Baltimore in 2020 (now postponed because of the coronavirus epidemic). In 2013 many American Burke scholars traveled to Belgium for the first Burke conference in Europe: “Rhetoric as Equipment for Living: Kenneth Burke, Culture and Education” at Ghent University.

One of my favorite features of the triennials is the seminars, which meet each day of the conference and include intensive discussions run by leading Burke scholars on issues involving pedagogy, postmodernism, ecology, visual rhetoric, technology, and feminism, among many others. I have led or co-led three such seminars involving pentadic criticism, Burke and law, and the problem of substance.

The triennials also have featured keynote addresses by a variety of notable scholars, including William H. Rueckert, Celeste Condit, Richard Harvey Brown, Denis Donoghue, Joseph R. Gusfield, Jack Selzer, Ann George, James Klumpp, and Debra Hawhee. Members of the Burke family have attended frequently, especially Michael Burke and his wife Julie Whitaker, as well as the Chapins who have provided music and stories for many of the conferences. The 2017 triennial in East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania ended with a visit to Kenneth Burke’s home in Andover, New Jersey, where he settled in 1922 and lived until his death.

Selected papers from the several triennials are available in edited volumes. Jim Chesebro edited the volume from the New Harmony conference, *Extensions of the Burkeian System*.¹⁷ Bernie Brock, who was the first to introduce Burke’s pentadic method in a rhetorical criticism textbook,¹⁸ edited the volume from the Airlie, Virginia conference, *Kenneth Burke and the 21st Century*.¹⁹ Greig Henderson and David Cratis Williams edited the volume from the Duquesne conference, *Unending Conversations: New Writings by and about Kenneth Burke*, which included unpublished work by Burke.²⁰ *Kenneth Burke and His Circles*, from the Pennsylva-

¹⁷ *Extensions of the Burkeian System*, ed. James W. Chesebro. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1993.

¹⁸ Brock, Bernard L.; Robert L. Scott. *Methods of Rhetorical Criticism: A Twentieth-Century Perspective*. 2nd ed. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1980.

¹⁹ *Kenneth Burke and the 21st Century*, ed. Bernard L. Brock. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999.

²⁰ *Unending Conversations: New Writings by and about Kenneth Burke*, eds. Greig R. Henderson, David Cratis Williams. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2001.

nia State conference, was edited by Jack Selzer and Bob Wess, putting Burke in conversation with other writers of the twentieth century.²¹ Bryan Crable edited a book from the Villanova conference, *Transcendence by Perspective: Meditations on and with Kenneth Burke*, which considered the relationship between human symbolicity and social change.²² A new generation of Burke scholars, Chris Mays, Nathaniel A. Rivers, and Kellie Sharp-Hoskins, edited the volume from the St. Louis conference, *Kenneth Burke + the Posthuman*.²³

Between triennials in 2004, David Blakesley, Mark Huglen, and I decided on our own to establish a venue for disseminating Burke essays by launching *KB Journal*—an online journal dedicated to Burke studies. We got the Burke family’s agreement to let us use “KB’s” signature on the masthead. Mark and I were co-editors for the first four years, while David ran the website. Robert L. Ivie from Indiana University, who had used Burke extensively in analyzing the rhetoric of war, wrote our inaugural essay in fall 2004.²⁴ In our editors’ introduction to the journal we invoked Burke’s 1990 call to action:

Through “operation benchmark,” this journal will follow Burke’s lead in encouraging a thorough understanding of our starting points through the explication and clarification of ideas, but we will not shy away from disagreements with those ideas—there are no sacred texts here. Indeed, it would be quite unBurkean and ultimately unproductive for an enterprise of this sort to devolve into hero worship. Nietzsche notwithstanding, we are reminded of a similar challenge faced by the magazines that sprang up to support users of Macintosh computers, which praised heavily the fledgling platform, and its various incarnations, lest criticisms undermine their *raison d’etre*. But eighty years of challenges to Burke’s ideas have not dislodged a core of basic assumptions that have guided his work and have led to their more robust elaboration and extension, giving birth to a well-

²¹ Selzer, Jack; Wess, Robert. *Kenneth Burke and His Circles*. Anderson, SC: Parlor Press, 2008.

²² *Transcendence by Perspective: Meditations on and with Kenneth Burke*, ed. Bryan Crable. Anderson, SC: Parlor Press, 2014.

²³ *Kenneth Burke + the Posthuman*, eds. Chris Mays, Nathaniel A. Rivers, Kellie Sharp-Hoskins. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017.

²⁴ Ivie, Robert L. “The Rhetoric of Bush’s War on Evil.” *KB Journal* 1:1 (Fall 2004). Online at http://www.kbjournal.org/ivie_Bush.

developed, resilient, and productive paradigm. We will see what develops as we move “toward the next phase.”²⁵

This last phrase, “toward the next phase” was the inscription Burke added when he autographed my personal copy of *Permanence and Change*. At the 2005 triennial the Society adopted the journal as its official publication, appointing Mark and me as the first Publication Editors of the Society. The journal includes essays from some of the leading Burke scholars, as well as fledgling graduate students just delving into Burke and newly-minted assistant professors. Notable contributors to the journal include William Rueckert (State University of New York at Geneseo), Robert Wess (University of Oregon), Herbert Simons (Temple University), James Klumpp (University of Maryland), Clarke Rountree (University of Alabama in Huntsville), Mark Huglen (University of Minnesota, Crookston), Ed Appel (independent scholar), Richard Thames (Duquesne University), Greig Henderson (University of Toronto), Elizabeth Weiser (Ohio State University), Barry Brummett (University of Texas, Austin), David Cratis Williams (Florida Atlantic University), Timothy Crusius (Southern Methodist University [Texas]), James Kuypers (Virginia Polytechnical Institute and State University), Camille Lewis (Furman University), James Chesebro (Indiana State University), Chris Carter (University of Cincinnati), Greg Clark (Brigham Young University), Stan Lindsay (Florida State University), Michael Feehan (independent scholar), and Robert Wade Kenney (University of Dayton).

As co-editor I published the first essay by a European scholar in *KB Journal* in 2008, from Hans Lindquist (Lund University [Sweden]), who wrote “Composing a Gourmet Experience: Using Kenneth Burke’s Theory of Rhetorical Form.”²⁶ He has since been joined in the journal by more than a dozen international scholars, including Stefanie Hennig, Eberhard-Karls-Universität Tübingen (Germany), Kris Rutten (Ghent University), Dries Vrijders (Ghent University), Ronald Soetaert (Ghent University), Ivo Strecker (Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz [Germany]), Hanne Roer (University of Copenhagen), Waldemar Petermann (Lund University [Sweden]), Derek Pigrum (University of Bath), Odile Heynders (Tilburg University), Marco Hamam (University of Sassari [Italy]), Marco Hamam

²⁵ Rountree, Clarke; Huglen, Mark. “Editors’ Essay: Toward the Next Phase.” *KB Journal* 1:1 (Fall 2004). Online at http://www.kbjournal.org/roundtree_huglen.

²⁶ *KB Journal* 4:2 (Spring 2008). Online at <http://www.kbjournal.org/lindquist>.

(University of Sassari [Italy]), Pierre Smolarski (University of Applied Sciences Bielefeld [Germany]), Laura Herrman, Eberhard-Karls University of Tübingen (Germany), Anneli Bowie (University of Pretoria [South Africa]), Duncan Reyburn (University of Pretoria [South Africa]), and Yakut Oktay (Bogazici University [Turkey]). The journal has been used as a venue to publish select papers from conferences as well, including the 2013 Ghent Conference.²⁷

David Blakeley, who currently edits *KB Journal*, also began an important outlet for Burke scholarship when he founded Parlor Press in 2002. Among the Burke-related books Parlor Press has published are a collection of Burke's literary reviews,²⁸ his letter exchanges with William Rueckert,²⁹ his Shakespeare criticism,³⁰ and a version of his previously unpublished *Symbolic of Motives*.³¹ Additionally, there is a new work on Burke and myth by British scholar Laurence Coupe³² and two of the conference volumes noted earlier.

I served as President of the Kenneth Burke Society in 2013 when the first European Burke conference was held at Ghent University in Belgium. I attended, along with several other North American Burke scholars, specifically so I could reach out to Europeans who have a growing interest in rhetoric generally, and in Burke particularly. The recently-founded Rhetoric Society of Europe hopefully will succeed in growing interest in rhetorical studies. (Or should I say *regrow* since rhetoric was born in Europe and thrived there for 2300 years.) Given Kenneth Burke's seminal contributions to our understanding of rhetoric, no doubt Europeans will be drawn to works by and about him. And the Kenneth Burke Society stands ready to support those efforts, extending invitations to Russian and other European scholars to come to our triennial conferences, to read and publish in *KB*

²⁷ These were published in *KB Journal* 10:1 (Summer 2014) and 11:1 (Summer 2015).

²⁸ Burke, Kenneth. *Equipment for Living: The Literary Review of Kenneth Burke*, eds. Nathaniel A. Rivers, Ryan Weber. Anderson, SC: Parlor Press, 2010.

²⁹ Burke, Kenneth. *Letters from Kenneth Burke to William H. Rueckert, 1959–1987*, ed. William H. Rueckert. Anderson, SC: Parlor Press, 2003.

³⁰ Burke, Kenneth. *Kenneth Burke on Shakespeare*, ed. Scott L. Newstok. Anderson, SC: Parlor Press, 2007.

³¹ Burke, Kenneth. *Essays Toward a Symbolic of Motives, 1950–1955*, ed. William H. Rueckert. Anderson, SC: Parlor Press, 2007.

³² Coupe, Laurence. *Kenneth Burke: From Myth to Ecology*. Anderson, SC: Parlor Press, 2013.

Journal, to engage with our members when we come to your shores, and to reach out and contact us with projects, requests, and queries.

This work is mutually beneficial. American rhetoric scholars long have encouraged their colleagues to internationalize their rhetorical studies.³³ European scholars bring their own academic and cultural traditions, a variety of old and new rhetorical texts inflected by various languages and histories, and the excitement that comes from embarking on a new area of study. I am, as we Americans say, “putting my money where my mouth is” in this endeavor. I just published a coedited book with Jouni Tilli of the University of Jyväskylä in Finland—an excellent Burke scholar—that included a dozen European scholars investigating national political discourses responding to the Syrian immigration crisis.³⁴ Working on this book was enlightening and satisfying, offering a channel for dialogue across the “pond.” I look forward to the next phase in what Burke calls our “unending conversation.”

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³³ For example, Raymie E. McKerrow urged in the Centennial Issue of the *Quarterly Journal of Speech*: “We have a great deal of work to do in ‘internationalizing’ our scholarship—in recognizing the varied ways in which different cultures theorize about and engage in rhetoric, especially in ways that our contemporary terms do not capture” (“‘Research in Rhetoric’ Revisited.” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 101 (2015): 159).

³⁴ *National Rhetorics in the Syrian Immigration Crisis: Victims, Frauds and Floods*. Rhetoric and Public Affairs Series. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2019.

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