

The Presentation

File with
KENNETH BURKE

MR. PRESIDENT, It is my privilege, on behalf of the ~~Trustees and~~ Faculty of Bennington College to present as a candidate for the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters, Kenneth Burke.

Kenneth Burke was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1897, attended Ohio State University and Columbia University, was a music critic of The Dial and one of its editors in the late 20s and music critic of The Nation in the thirties. In the 20s he was also producing distinguished translations of works by German writers, such as Death In Venice by Thomas Mann. In 1928 he received the Dial award for distinguished service to American Letters. In 1931 the first of his series of critical works appeared, Counter-Statement, which was then and has continued to be a prod and eye-opener to its readers. Others of his vastly influential works include Permanence and Change; Anatomy of Purpose, 1935; Attitudes Toward History, 1937; The Phil of Lit Form, 1941; A Grammar of Motives, 1945; A Rhetoric of Motives, 1950; and though it is not yet published, students and colleagues of Kenneth Burke have had the advantage of hearing him talk, indeed of working with him in the preparation of the third of this trilogy; The Symbolic of Motives. He has published novels, for example The White Oxen, 1924 and Toward a Better Life, 1946 and poems, Book of Moments, 1955. He has lectured/ ^{not} only at The New School, ^{and} The University of Chicago, but at Drew University, Pennsylvania State University and the University of California at Santa Barbara. From August 1943 to June 1962 Kenneth Burke was a recurrent member of the faculty of the Literature Division at Bennington, and a lecturer here several times thereafter. He is a member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He received a Guggenheim ⁽¹⁹³⁵⁾ grant, among others.* Kenneth Burke, as a member of the Literature Division and as participator in meetings of the Student Personnel Committee and later of various panels of the Educational Counseling Committee, has been a wise and stimulating contributor to the growing ideals and practices of the College. His contribution to students

and teachers here as elsewhere leaves a radical effect.

Though Kenneth Burke retired officially from the faculty of Bennington College in 1962, he was immediately invited back for a series of lectures the following fall and several times since.

Mr. Burke's work and teaching, their daring and their persistent questing for new horizons and new clarity are interwoven with the most central concerns of Bennington College. His service here has been but a part of his total service to the fields of letters and education in this country. I now ask you to give formal recognition to this outstanding service by conferring on Kenneth Burke the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters from Bennington College.

* He received a Guggenheim Memorial fellowship, 1935; American Academy of Art and Letters and National Institute of Arts and Letters grant, 1946.