

COMMENCEMENT June 18, 1966

EJB

Item 3

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND THE FACULTY OF BENNINGTON COLLEGE
HAVE ASSEMBLED HERE THIS MORNING TO DECIDE UPON AND TO GIVE FORMAL
VOICE TO THE AWARDING OF DEGREES TO THE MEMBERS OF THE 31ST GRADUATING
CLASS; THEY HAVE ALSO ASSEMBLED TO CONFER ONE OF THE COLLEGE'S RARE
HONORARY DEGREES.

THIS ASSEMBLY PROVIDES A FITTING OCCASION TO REAFFIRM
THE IDEALS OF THIS COLLEGE.

BENNINGTON REGARDS EDUCATION AS A PROCESS OF EMOTIONAL
AND ETHICAL ^{no less than} INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT. IT SEEKS TO LIBERATE
AND NURTURE THE INDIVIDUALITY, THE CREATIVE INTELLIGENCE AND THE
ETHICAL AND AESTHETIC SENSIBILITY OF ITS STUDENTS, TO THE END THAT
THEIR RICHLY VARIED NATURAL ENDOWMENTS WILL BE DIRECTED TOWARDS
SELF FULFILLMENT AND CONSTRUCTIVE SOCIAL PURPOSES.

WE BELIEVE THAT THESE EDUCATIONAL GOALS ARE BEST SERVED
BY DEMANDING OF OUR STUDENTS THE FULLEST AND MOST ACTIVE PARTICIPATION
POSSIBLE IN THE PLANNING OF THEIR OWN EDUCATION AND ^{IN} THE REGULATION
OF THEIR OWN LIVES ON CAMPUS. STUDENT FREEDOM IS NOT THE ABSENCE
OF RESTRAINT BUT THE SUBSTITUTION OF HABITS OF SELF RESTRAINT FOR
THE RESTRAINT OF OTHERS. THE EXERCISE OF STUDENT FREEDOM IS THE
VERY CONDITION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF FREE CITIZENS, DEDICATED TO
CIVILIZED VALUES AND CAPABLE OF CREATIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE MEMBER-
SHIP IN MODERN SOCIETY.

"THE DEGREE WE ARE ABOUT TO AWARD CERTIFIES THAT THESE STUDENTS HAVE SUCCESSFULLY MET THE STANDARDS OF QUALITY IN ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND OF RESPONSIBILITY IN CITIZENSHIP SET BY THE COLLEGE. THE EXTENT TO WHICH THEY HAVE FULFILLED OUR OTHER AIMS CANNOT BE FORMALLY CERTIFIED, BUT THE DEGREE DOES INDEED EXPRESS OUR CONFIDENCE THAT THEY HAVE RESPONDED TO THE IMPRESS OF OUR IDEALS AND THAT THEY WILL DO GREAT CREDIT TO THEMSELVES AND THEIR COMMUNITIES.

AT BENNINGTON THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE MEANS AT LEAST
ONE OTHER THING. EDUCATION HERE IS A RECIPROCAL AFFAIR. WE WHO
ARE CHARGED WITH INSTRUCTION AND EDUCATIONAL POLICY HAVE RECEIVED
AS WELL AS GIVEN, HAVE LEARNED FROM THESE STUDENTS AS
WELL AS TAUGHT AND COUNSELED THEM. THE CONFERRING OF THE DEGREE
IS THUS AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE CONTRIBUTION TO US AND TO OUR
COLLEGIATE PRACTICES WHICH THESE STUDENTS HAVE MADE.

WE SHALL CONTINUE TO FOLLOW THEM WITH INTEREST AND
AFFECTION AS THEY GO TO TAKE THEIR ROLES IN OTHER COMMUNITIES.

TO THOSE COMMUNITIES WE CONFIDENTLY RECOMMEND THEM.

Item 4

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WILL THE DEAN OF THE FACULTY PRESENT THE CANDIDATE
FOR THE HONORARY DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF LETTERS.

Item 5

"MR. CHAIRMAN, YOU HAVE HEARD KENNETH BURKE PRESENTED
BY THE FACULTY AS A CANDIDATE FOR THE HONORARY DEGREE OF DOCTOR
OF LETTERS. IS THE BAORD OF TRUSTEES IN FAVOR OF GRANTING THIS
DEGREE?"

Mr. Ruebhausen: "MR. PRESIDENT, WE ARE."

President: READ CITATION

PRESENT HOOD

Citation

Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters

Bennington College, June 18, 1966

Kenneth Burke, you are the master rhetorician in an age in which rhetoric has been rediscovered as a key to knowledge. As scholar, literary critic, novelist, poet, philosopher and translator, and as a recurrent member of this faculty for over twenty years, you have exercised a profound influence on the intellectual life of our times and on the intellectual tone of this College. All who have shared your fascinated concern with man's struggles in the nets of language for clarity, precision and perspective have flourished by your example. By revealing what language is, you have helped reveal what reality is and you have thereby opened up new realms of insight for those who have followed your path, whether here at Bennington or in the world at large.

In all you have done, you have given of yourself totally. It has never been a matter of degree till this moment, and it is exactly fitting that it be a Bennington degree for you, skilled doctor and lover of letters.

Kenneth Burke, you have taught us, delighted us and aroused us; you have left a unique and indelible impress on our institutional being; now, therefore, with deep pleasure and with profound pride we bear witness to your achievements, by conferring on you what we most prize, the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters, and by admitting you to all the rights and privileges which pertain to that degree here and elsewhere.

Item 6

"WILL THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FACULTY PRESENT
THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE AWARD OF DEGREES?"

Item 9

"MEMBERS OF THE FACULTY, YOU HAVE HEARD THE NAMES
OF THOSE STUDENTS WHO HAVE FULFILLED ALL REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION
AND ARE RECOMMENDED FOR THE AWARD OF THE BACHELOR OF ARTS DEGREES,
AND THE NAME^S OF THE GRADUATE STUDENT^S WHO ^{ARE} IS RECOMMENDED FOR THE
~~MASTER~~ MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE. DO YOU NOW NOMINATE THESE
CANDIDATES TO THE TRUSTEES FOR THIS PURPOSE? IF SO, PLEASE SIGNIFY
YOUR APPROVAL BY RISING."

Item 10

"MR CHAIRMAN: I PRESENT FOR THE CONSIDERATION
OF THE TRUSTEES THE STUDENTS WHOM YOU HAVE HEARD FORMALLY NOMINATED
BY THE FACULTY FOR THE DEGREES OF THE BACHELOR OF ARTS, AND MASTER
OF ARTS."

Item 13

'WITH THIS FORMAL RECOGNITION OF ACADEMIC ACCOM-
PLISHMENT, YOU JOIN THE COMPANY OF YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN FROM THIS
COLLEGE AND THE MEN AND WOMEN IN ALL OUR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
WHO HAVE BEEN ADMITTED TO THE SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES AND OBLIGATIONS
WHICH THE BACHELOR OF ARTS AND THE MASTER OF ARTS DEGREES IMPLY.
IN THE NAME OF ALL HERE ASSEMBLED--YOUR TRUSTEES, YOUR INSTRUCTORS,
YOUR FELLOW STUDENTS, YOUR PARENTS, YOUR FRIENDS, YOUR FELLOW
TOWNSMEN--I CONGRATULATE YOU."