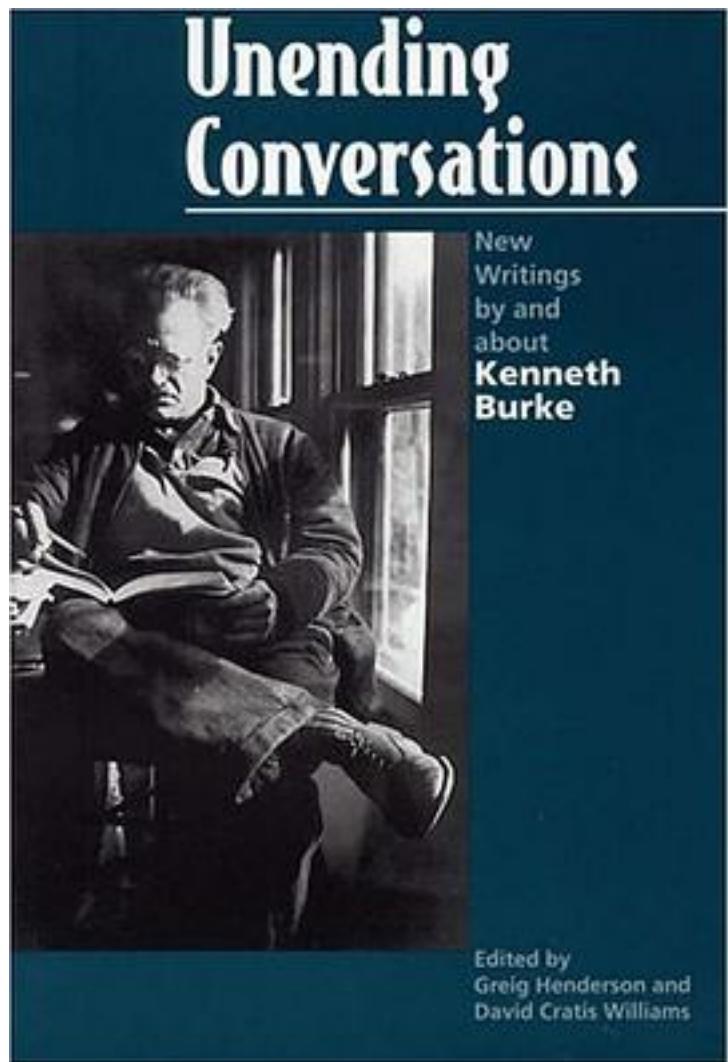


Unending Conversations



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Previously unpublished writings by and about Kenneth Burke plus essays by such Burkean luminaries as Wayne C. Booth, William H. Rueckert, Robert Wess, Thomas Carmichael, and Michael Feehan make the publication of "Unending Conversations" a significant event in the field of Burke studies and in the wider field of literary criticism and theory. Editors Greig Henderson and David Cratis Williams have divided their material into three parts: "Dialectics of Expression, Communication, and Transcendence," "Criticism, Symbolicity, and Tropology," and "Transcendence and the Theological Motive." In the first part, Williams's textual introduction and Rueckert's essay analyze the genesis and composition of Burke's "A Symbolic of Motives" and "Poetics, Dramatistically Considered." Henderson opens part two by showing how these two essays' concerns with literary form hearken back to Burke's first book of criticism, "Counter-Statement." Thomas Carmichael discusses Burke's relationship to thinkers such as Paul de Man, Jacques Derrida, Stanley Fish, Fredric Jameson, Jean-Francois Lyotard, and Richard Rorty. Wess analyzes the relation between Burke's dramatistic pentad of act, agent, scene, agency, and purpose and his four master tropes--metaphor, metonymy, syncedoche, and irony. In the third part, Booth mines his unpublished correspondence with Burke to demonstrate that Burke is a coy theologian. Michael Feehan discusses Burke's revelation in a 1983 interview that rather than rebounding from a naive kind of Marxism in "Permanence and Change," he was rebounding from what he had "learned as a Christian Scientist."

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