were. Sharon Crowley can in fact read and understand Derrida, and she can use the much maligned five-paragraph-theme model of introduction, three body parts, and conclusion to expose what she has learned, just as I can recognize the craft and accuracy of her exposition. Admittedly, she does not offer the eschatological fulfillment of human existence that leads to the silence of absolute truth. But who thought she would? Or even wants her to?

So, yes, by all means give this book to your students and encourage them to think about it. But suggest that they believe what it does, not what it says it does—that is, unless you're willing to begin accepting texts like *Glas* and *La carte postale* instead of texts like Crowley's. Above all, make sure that your students understand deconstruction's political and theological implications before they set about "constructing" a pedagogy based on it.


Reviewed by Timothy W. Crusius, Texas A&M University

A collection of eleven essays selected from a conference on Kenneth Burke held at Temple University in 1984, *Legacy* has already received high praise from reviewers. The praise is fully merited. The essays themselves are all of high quality—always stimulating, especially when the interpretations are most violent, sharply departing from Burke's self-understanding and from orthodox views of him. For example, Burke has often acknowledged his debt to Aristotle, and most rhetoricians see him in the Aristotelian tradition of philosophical rhetoric, but Michael Leff exposes parallels with Cicero—kinships of style, attitudes, and method that may well be more significant than the largely conceptual ground Burke shares with Aristotle. And Herbert W. Simons, in his excellent introduction to the book, refers to J.S. Nelson's identification of Burke with the "new sophistic," which, of course, has its roots in the old one, in the Latin rhetorical tradition of Cicero and Vico, and in such modern figures as Nietzsche (see Nelson's *What Should Political Theory Be Now?*). Simons also refers to Dilip Gaonkar's reading of A Rhetoric of Motives (forthcoming in Simons' *The Rhetorical Turn: Invention and Persuasion in the Conduct of Inquiry*), which likewise takes Burke as belonging more to the once-scorned sophistic tradition than to the Platonic-Aristotelian line.

Also challenged is the dominant humanistic view of Burke's criticism, the Burke one finds, for example, in Wayne Booth. Two essays link Burke with Derrida. Cary Nelson argues that Burke "comes to believe that language is *all* there is, that no material world exists for us." What Burke suggests instead is, first, that we see always through terministic screens; second, that language
is an independent source of human motivation; and third, more deeply, that anything we see or feel is already in language, given to us by language, and even produced as us by language” (169). David Cratis Williams detects in Burke’s dialectic of substance the Derridean emphasis on undecidability: “the methodological perfection of indeterminacy itself” (209) found in both Burke and Derrida aims to disengage us from rhetorical spell-weaving at a time when uncritical adherence to any national or religious creed threatens life itself. But whereas Derrida offers only unceasing, de-structive retreat from the dangers of certitude, Burke reconstructs around a human ontology, around “symbol-using animal,” a definition broad enough to surmount parochialisms. Williams’ understanding of Burke, then, resembles Frank Lentricchia’s in Criticism and Social Change: both hold that Burke deconstructs himself without voiding his project, a highly self-conscious and critical humanism.

When the essayists represented in Legacy are not bent on unsettling established views, they are usually up to something else of equal interest. Trevor Melia explores “some quasi-mathematical motifs” in Burke’s thought and argues that Burke, in resisting Heisenberg’s cult of correlation and the general modern tendency toward unbridled historical and cultural relativism, resembles Einstein. He also critiques Fredric Jameson’s well-known indictment of Burke in a way quite different from Burke’s own defense. Also fresh, and as startling in its own way as Melia’s discourse on Burke the mathematician, is Donald N. McCloskey’s, “The Dismal Science and Mr. Burke.” Anything but dismal itself, the article begins by showing the assumptional ground that dramatism shares with the Austrian school of economics; it then dwells on the topical and tropological nature of persuasion in economic theorizing generally; and it concludes by asserting, first, that Adam Smith offers a critical theory (in the Frankfurt School sense) as much as Marx or Freud does, and second, that “when all is said and done, rhetoric looks like the master of critical theory,” adding (let this be emphasized), “a sweetly American one, shorn of the fallacious economic history and antique neuroses haunting European Marxism” (112). Of all the articles in the book, McCloskey’s exemplifies best (most concretely) what the often-discussed rhetorical turn in social science means. It is this turn, incidentally, which provides a loose thematic unity for Legacy as a whole.

One other article has implications as far-reaching as the ones mentioned already: Vito Signorile’s “Ratios and Causes.” In general, he explores the dependency of all knowledge—tacit and explicit—on symbols, focusing specifically on Burke’s consciously language-centered view of motives in relation to Aristotle’s four causes. His point is that the Pentad offers a tenable “etiological scheme” for the social sciences, which have been moving away from the scientistic reduction to mechanical or efficient cause and toward the richer views of Aristotle and Burke anyway.
The other selections are no less stimulating but are more restricted to Burkean themes and interpretative problems. Joseph Gusfield concentrates on Burke’s antipositivism, Jane Blankenship on magic and mystery, and Christine Oravec on identification in the light of postmodern doubts about the integrity of individual human agency. David Damrosch argues, against John Freccero (see his essay in Hayden White and Margaret Brose’s Representing Kenneth Burke), that Burke’s intent in The Rhetoric of Religion is not to deconstruct Augustine but rather to parody him in a serious, non-satiric way. Burke is “essentially indifferent to the truth claims of Augustine’s theology . . . but he is altogether a disciple of Augustine’s hermeneutics,” since “logology relies upon an essentially allegorical atemporality” (229, 233). Finally, William Rueckert offers a concluding survey of the amazing diversity of roles Burke has assumed in his twelve books.

The previously unpublished essays are certainly the main attraction of Legacy, but reprinted in the appendix is Burke’s 1935 speech at The American Writers’ Conference, “Revolutionary Symbolism in America,” which is followed by Frank Lentricchia’s excellent reading of it, excerpted from Criticism and Social Change. There is also the painstaking work of Richard H. Thames: “The Writings of Kenneth Burke, 1968-1986.” This piece corrects and updates the Frank bibliography, “A Selected Bibliography of Critical Responses to Kenneth Burke, 1968-1986” (published in Rueckert’s Critical Responses to Kenneth Burke), and it complements and extends the annotated bibliography in the second edition of Rueckert’s Kenneth Burke and the Drama of Human Relations. Finally, also included in the volume is one of Burke’s poems, four pages of photographs of Burke and his family, and useful author and subject indices. The total project adds up to the best book of any kind published on Burke so far.

But what, it is worth asking, can one conclude from a reading of Legacy as a whole? First and most obviously, Burke’s impact on social science, once restricted to the isolated student—for example, Hugh Duncan in sociology or Dell Hymes in linguistics—is now more pervasive and likely to become greater still as the social sciences rely less on natural science for models and methods and more on hermeneutics and rhetoric. Second, Burke is at last being recognized as the free-wheeling cultural critic, the all-purpose intellectual that he actually is, an exemplar of what a philosopher ought to be according to Richard Rorty’s vision of a post-Philosophical society. And third, it is clear that Burke criticism has attained a maturer level, a new intensity and vitality. Gone is the older tendency toward either wholesale praise or blame, toward mere summary of his work, or toward casual, piecemeal application of this or that idea or method. The epideictic and expository phases are over; we are now witnessing more or less open appropriations of him for definite projects on the cutting edge of rhetorical, literary, and social thought.
What cannot be concluded from Legacy or, for that matter, from any of the recent work belonging to the new phase—for example, the White-Brose collection, Lentricchia’s Criticism and Social Change, Samuel Southwell’s Kenneth Burke and Martin Heidegger, and shorter pieces by people like Giles Gunn (see The Cultural of Criticism and the Criticism of Culture)—is which appropriation of Burke is likely to prove most persuasive. Will it be Lentricchia’s Burke, who is a Western Marxist (that is, an intellectual engaged in changing an oppressive economic and cultural regime) and a critical structuralist? Or will it be Cary Nelson’s Derridean Burke, a restless dialectician who deconstructs himself, whose skepticism extends even to suspicion of the hermeneutics of suspicion? Or will it be Southwell’s philosopher of a modest recovery of being, a Burke much closer to Gadamer than Derrida, whose views run counter to the whole rationale of deconstruction? Or is it that the liberal humanist Burke is still very much alive, Burke the pluralist; also Burke the pragmatist, Burke the scholastic, Burke the realist, and so on?

There are many interpretations of Burke, but only a few basic issues and ultimately only one fundamental question: What exactly is his understanding of the role of symbols? In answering this question we must not confuse what is or exists for Burke, his ontological beliefs, with human access to what is, his epistemological beliefs. Ontologically there can be no question that in Burke’s view much exists besides language, the whole realm of nonsymbolic motion, nature minus the symbol-using animal. Epistemologically there can also be no question that for Burke unmediated access to anything is impossible; there is no source of knowledge not intricated with symbols. With nothing independent of language to appeal to for legitimation, it follows that all we do or can do is reflect upon our own symbolic mediations; modifying them in light of others that reveal the inadequacies of our own and revising them as action guided by our mediations fails to secure the desired and expected outcome. In other words, knowledge for Burke is not a process of objective speculation but, rather, an active or tragic process of assertion against resistance, always approximate, always subject to revocation or revision.

Put another way, the guiding principle of Burke’s philosophy is what Hans Blumenberg calls “the axiom of all rhetoric . . . the principle of insufficient reason” (see “An Anthropological Approach to Rhetoric” in After Philosophy: End or Transformation?, 447). Truth with a capital “T”—that is, sufficient reason, Spinoza’s adequate idea—is beyond reach. There will always be some degree of doubt, some measure of contingency; hence, human reason is irremediably rhetorical, a persuasive exercise precisely because of reason’s insufficiency.

The above comments, of course, cannot resolve the interpretative struggle over Kenneth Burke. At best it only implies the implausibility of some interpretations. For instance, I doubt that the Derridean Burke will enlist
many adherents. For my part, I am persuaded by the hermeneutic Burke; the appropriation richest in implication is that which would pull Burke within the intellectual orbit of people like Heidegger, Gadamer, Habermas, Ricoeur, Charles Taylor, Alasdair MacIntyre, and Blumenberg. If this line of interpretation prevails, most of the writers represented in *Legacy* will find it congenial, for the hermeneutic Burke and the Burke of the rhetorical turn are the same. At bottom, both come together in the principle of insufficient reason, acceptance of human being as *Mangelwesen*, a creature of deficiencies, whose endless task it is to speak for the speechless and to reflect upon both what has been made articulate and what makes any speaking possible. Beyond this, there is a certain listening for the as-yet-not-said. That should be enough, quite sufficient in its own way.


Reviewed by Reed Way Dasenbrock, New Mexico State University

Chris Anson's collection of essays, *Writing and Response: Theory, Practice, and Research*, is both a good and an encouraging book. Throughout the past fifteen years, as composition research has consolidated its status as an autonomous discipline, a fruitful tension has existed between attempts to draw and attempts to cross disciplinary boundaries in the field. The contributors to this collection present a sensibly balanced perspective on this issue; they have a solid professional identity as writing researchers, but they don't ignore the possibility that the study of response to student writing might profitably draw on other disciplines. For example, reader response criticism is an important resource in these essays. David Bleich himself contributes the lead essay, and the work of Rosenblatt, Fish, and Iser is drawn on in a number of other essays. In addition, since response to writing isn't utterly different from other kinds of response, a number of essays draw on relevant insights from psychology. Dene Thomas and Gordon Thomas' "The Use of Rogerian Reflection in Small Group Writing Conferences," in particular, usefully establishes analogies between the therapeutic techniques of Carl Rogers and the teaching of writing. So the essays Anson has gathered achieve a good combination of disciplinary centeredness and interdisciplinary borrowing to focus on an important problem.

The central notion of *Writing and Response* is that when professors grade papers and comment on writing in conferences and in class, and when students work with other students in class or in a writing center, they are all engaged in the same activity: responding to writing. However, certain kinds of response contribute to writing improvement, whereas others don't. Thus,