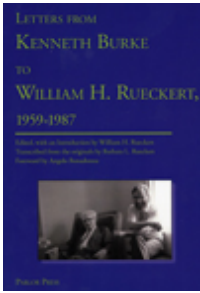




Where does the drama get its materials? From the "unending conversation" that is going on at the point in history when we are born. Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. Before you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them arrived, so that each of them must trudge through the whole of it from beginning to end like the man who staggers out into the open air without his coat; you all the steps that had gone before. You listen for a while, until you catch the speaker's general line of argument, and then you too begin to contribute to the general conversation. You do not really begin to understand until you have tried some of the arguments against you, to your own amazement or gratification. The hour grows late, you must depart, and you do so, with the discussion still vigorously in progress. --Kenneth Burke, *The Philosophy of Literary Form*

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For immediate release . . . December 9, 2002

New Publisher Announces First Books

Parlor Press, a newly formed scholarly publishing company, announces the publication of its first book on December 9, 2002: *Letters from Kenneth Burke to William H. Rueckert, 1959-1987*. Hailed by many as one of the most provocative and influential of twentieth-century philosophers, literary theorists, and social critics, Kenneth Burke (1897-1993) wrote well into his nineties. These letters capture the intellectual life he shared with Rueckert, the "Dean of Burke Scholars," during the dramatic developments in literary theory, rhetoric, and philosophy that Burke himself helped initiate. The book appears in paperback, cloth, and digital (eBook) formats. Parlor Press also announces an agreement to redistribute two classic works on the teaching of writing and writing program administration, Edward M. White's *Teaching and Assessing Writing* and *Developing Successful College Writing Programs*. The founder and publisher of Parlor Press is David Blakesley, who is also an associate professor of English at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana.

The Press, also based in West Lafayette, is a new and independent publisher of trade and scholarly books in high quality digital and print formats. It was founded to address the need for an alternative scholarly, academic press attentive to emergent ideas and forms while maintaining the highest possible standards

of quality, credibility, and integrity. The Press's primary goal is to publish outstanding writing in a variety of subjects. Because Parlor Press is unencumbered by the bureaucratic machinery of older publishing entities and systems, the stress can be more on excellence and innovation than on marketability or reputation.

According to Blakesley, the Press is especially interested in considering outstanding new work by emergent scholars, writers, and artists, as well as work that takes unique advantage of digital formats enabled by TK3 or Acrobat eBook formats. The Press, he says, will also consider republishing and redistributing foundational work that has gone out-of-print. Because the review process is rigorous and the book development process interactive and intensive, Parlor Press works only with authors and series editors who have a substantial commitment to the highest possible standards.

The Crisis for Research and Academic Publishing

Parlor Press has also been formed in part as a response to the growing crisis in the academic publishing sector and the impact it has had on scholarly research and dissemination. That crisis has been described in substantial detail recently in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (see "University Presses Take Different Approaches to Making Cuts"

<http://chronicle.com/weekly/v49/i04/04a01201.htm>; and "A Wake-Up Call for Junior Professors"

<http://chronicle.com/jobs/2002/07/2002070201c.htm>), in *Enculturation* ("The Perilous Future of Academic Publishing"

http://enculturation.gmu.edu/4_1/intro/), and elsewhere. Many have read the statement by Modern Language Association President Stephen Greenblatt on "the problems in scholarly book publishing." Greenblatt encourages young scholars (and their universities) to make adjustments. Blakesley believes that one adjustment is for scholars to take control of the process of academic book publishing more directly. Scholars have always served their professions by reviewing books and editing series for university presses and, of course, as editors of academic journals. Until now, however, they have been reluctant to break into the more mysterious world of book publishing. New developments in digital technologies have changed that.

Traditional university presses have found it difficult to thrive in the recent climate of state budget cuts, a poor economy, and the changing habits of book buyers. Authors have seen their books go out-of-print quickly, with publishers unable or unwilling to front the costs of printing large runs, doing what they can to trim production costs, and cutting author royalties dramatically (in some cases asking authors for "subventions," which are payments to help offset the costs of publishing a book). The problem has been magnified by a system heavily burdened by bureaucratic structures in place before these recent challenges to the publishing industry. Many university presses have been slow to adapt to the new opportunities of digital publishing.

Market

Parlor Press is designed to address some of these issues and thus appeal to the need for an alternative and independent scholarly press. The Press will publish books in multiple formats. New developments in technology make on-demand printing economically viable. And although the wider reading community has been slow to respond favorably to the eBook format, the delivery systems and authoring tools for eBooks have improved dramatically, making it likely that this market will open substantially in the next few years.

The Press has partnered with Lightning Source to make printed books available through brick-and-mortar bookstores, as well as its own Website (www.parlorpress.com) and online distributors like Amazon.com, Powells, and Barnes & Noble. Electronic books will be available in Acrobat eBook and Night Kitchen (tk3) format. Night Kitchen, in particular, is an elegant authoring and publication system that has substantial appeal as a widely used format because of its seamless integration of multimedia material, its ease of reading, and its uncomplicated delivery possibilities (see www.nightkitchen.com).

The second book to be published by Parlor Press will be *Effective Writing: A Handbook with Stories for Lawyers* by John Phelps Warnock, with Harold Warnock, due out in January 2003. John Warnock, a professor at the University of Arizona, is a widely respected scholar and lawyer whose book will appeal broadly as a resource for practicing attorneys. William Rueckert's *Faulkner from Within: Destructive and Generative Being in the Novels of*

William Faulkner is also due out early in 2003, with more to follow.

The People

The founder and publisher of Parlor Press is David Blakesley, who also works at Purdue University as an associate professor of English and director of professional writing. He is the co-editor and publisher of *The Writing Instructor* (a networked journal and digital community at



www.writinginstructor.com), the series editor and founder of *Rhetorical Philosophy and Theory* (a Southern Illinois University Press series), production editor for *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, and formerly, the managing editor *Pacific Review*, a literary journal. He is the author or editor of *The Elements of Dramatism* (2002; Longman), *The Terministic Screen: Rhetorical Perspectives on Film* (2003; Southern Illinois University Press; editor), *Late Poems, 1968-1993* by Kenneth Burke (University of South Carolina Press, 2003; co-editor with Julie Whitaker); *Illuminating Rhetoric: A Guide to Seeing, Reading, and Writing* (2004; Mayfield/McGraw-Hill; author) and other forthcoming books and articles on writing, visual rhetoric, technology, and Kenneth Burke.

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Where: For more about Parlor Press or the books mentioned here, visit

<http://www.parlorpress.com>

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Place: West Lafayette, Indiana

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For more information about Parlor Press, contact Dr. David Blakesley, publisher, at 765.746.0175 or in the Department of English at Purdue University, 765.494.3772. Email: editor@parlorpress.com.