

Kenneth Burke, Culture and Education.

Ghent University 22nd to 25th May 2013
Ghent, Belgium

Enquiries: kbconference@ugent.be

Web address: <http://www.cultureeducation.ugent.be/kennethburke>

Extended deadline (!) for proposal submissions: February 1st 2013

Confirmed keynote speakers:

Barry Brummett (University of Texas at Austin - USA)

Steven Mailloux (Loyola Marymount University, Irvine - USA)

Jennifer Richards (Newcastle University - UK)

Theme

The second half of the twentieth century has witnessed a number of different but related turns in the humanities and social sciences: linguistic, cultural, anthropological/ ethnographic, interpretive, semiotic, narrative... All these turns recognise the importance of signs and symbols in our interpretations of reality and more specifically the cultural construction of meaning through both language and narrative. The aim of this conference is to introduce rhetoric as a major term for synthesizing all the above-mentioned turns by exploring how rhetoric can make us self-aware about language and culture. We will specifically focus on 'new rhetoric', a body of work that sets rhetoric free from its confinement within the traditional fields of education, politics and literature, not by abandoning these fields but by refiguring them.

Guiding source of inspiration in all this will be the international legacy of Kenneth Burke, one of the founders of this new rhetoric tradition together with scholars such as Wayne Booth, Richard McKeon, Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca. As a rhetorician and literary critic interested in how we use symbols, Burke described the human being as the symbol-making, symbol-using and symbol-misusing animal. He argued that our interpretations, perceptions, judgements and attitudes are all influenced and 'deflected' by the symbols that we make, use and misuse, and that we are at the same time used by these symbols. This implies that we can approach the world either symbol-wise or symbol-foolish. This conference wants to explore how rhetorical concepts can be used as tools - equipment - to make students, teachers, scholars and citizens symbol-wise: to understand the way linguistic, cultural, narrative symbols work, and to develop critical engagement with, as well as on behalf of, those symbols. It furthermore wants to explore if and how rhetoric can still be relevant in a world that is becoming ever more complex and paradoxical by political, economic and cultural differences on a global scale.

In what will be the first major conference devoted to Kenneth Burke outside the United States, we aspire to introduce the ideas of this seminal thinker to disciplines that might benefit from them. We therefore welcome both paper abstracts as panel proposals that broadly explore the topic of Rhetoric as Equipment for Living from the perspective of education, citizenship, literature, literacy, technology, games, (new) media and from the

perspective of disciplines such as pedagogy, social work, psychology, cultural studies, management and communication. The committee especially welcomes contributions that examine the possible use of rhetoric for education or educators, as well as contributions that explore affinities between Burke and European scholars or scholarship, or that apply new rhetoric to political, economic or social issues.

Kenneth Burke Society

The conference is organized in close cooperation with the Kenneth Burke Society who will delegate a number of prominent US Burke scholars and rhetoricians: David Blakesley (Clemson University); Michael Feehan (Arkansas Legislative Council); Ann George (Texas Christian University); Mark Huglen (University of Minnesota); Clarke Rountree (University of Alabama in Huntsville); Herbert W. Simons (Temple University); Richard Thames (Duquesne University); Elizabeth Weiser (The Ohio State University); Robert Wess (Oregon State University); David Cratis Williams (Florida Atlantic University); James P. Zappen (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute). From the International Rhetoric Culture Project participation is confirmed by Ivo Strecker (Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz).

Details:

Conference dates: May 22-25th 2013

Deadline for submissions - February 1st 2013

Decision about submissions: by February 15th 2013

Registration starts: February 15th 2013