

# ESSAYS TOWARD A SYMBOLIC OF MOTIVES, 1950-1955

KENNETH BURKE

SELECTED, ARRANGED, AND EDITED BY WILLIAM H. RUECKERT

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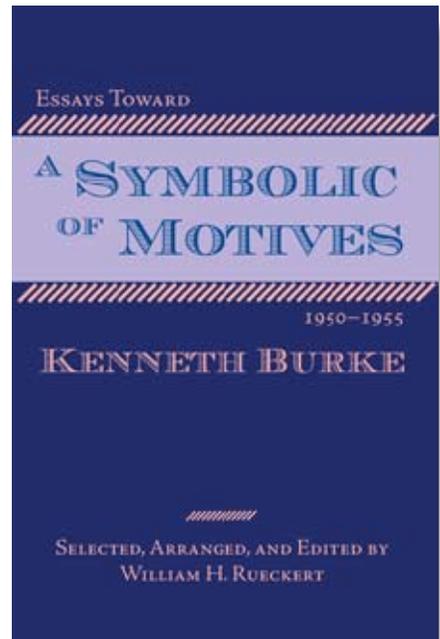
1-932559-34-5 (paperback; \$32.00; £18); 1-932559-35-3 (cloth; \$65.00; £35); 1-932559-36-1 (Adobe eBook; \$18.00; £10) 340 pages, with introduction, bibliography, notes, and index

## DESCRIPTION

Forty-eight years after they first discussed the Symbolic, William H. Rueckert has fulfilled his end of the bargain to assemble Burke's long-awaited book, *ESSAYS TOWARD A SYMBOLIC OF MOTIVES, 1950-1955*. This collection contains the work Burke planned to include in the third book in his trilogy, which began with *A GRAMMAR OF MOTIVES* (1945) and *A RHETORIC OF MOTIVES* (1950). In this book—some of which appears here in print for the first time—Burke offers his most precise and elaborated account of his dramatic poetics, providing readers with representative analyses of such writers as Aeschylus, Goethe, Hawthorne, Roethke, Shakespeare, and Whitman. Following Rueckert's Introduction, Burke lays out his approach in essays that theorize and illustrate the method, which he considered essential for understanding language as symbolic action and human relations generally. Burke concludes with a focused account of humans as symbol-using and misusing animals and his *tour de force* reading of Goethe's *Faust*.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

KENNETH BURKE (1897-1993) is the author of many books, including the landmark predecessors in the Motivorum trilogy: *A GRAMMAR OF MOTIVES* (1945) and *A RHETORIC OF MOTIVES* (1950). He has been hailed as one of the most original thinkers of the twentieth century and possibly the greatest rhetorician since Cicero. Paul Jay refers to him as "the most theoretically challenging, unorthodox, and sophisticated of twentieth-century speculators on literature and culture." Geoffrey Hartman praises him as "the wild man of American criticism." According to Scott McLemee, Burke may have "accidentally create[d] cultural studies."



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