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Copyright Information

Justus Buchler Biography

Name: Justus Buchler

Birth Date: March 27, 1914

**Death
Date:**   March 19, 1991

Nationality: American

Gender: Male

Works

WRITINGS BY THE AUTHOR:BOOKS

- *Charles Peirce's Empiricism* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1939; New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1939).
- *Philosophy: An Introduction,* by Buchler and John Herman Randall Jr. (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1942; revised, 1971).
- *Toward a General Theory of Human Judgment* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951; revised edition, New York: Dover, 1979).
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Further Reading

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Many of his contemporaries considered Justus Buchler the most distinguished living systematic philosopher in the United States. His ideas are elaborated in five books and several articles written over a span of thirty years. In regard to his themes Buchler was influenced by the classical American philosophers Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, Josiah Royce, George Santayana, and John Dewey; in regard to philosophical method he drew his inspiration chiefly from Aristotle, Baruch Spinoza, and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. As a result, his work, while widely respected, falls outside the mainstream of Anglo–American analytic philosophy. His writings, especially *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes* (1966; enlarged, 1990), are notable for their elegantly spare style.

Buchler was born in New York City on 27 March 1914, the first of three children of Samuel and Ida Frost Buchler. Samuel Buchler had been born in Hungary, where he earned a Ph.D. in history and was ordained a rabbi. After immigrating to the United States in 1908, he had become a lawyer and served as deputy New York state attorney general. In 1920 he founded the Jewish Court of Arbitration, and in 1933 he published *"Cohen Comes First" and Other Cases: Stories of Controversies before the New York Jewish Court of Arbitration.* Ida Buchler, who was of Russian descent, died of a heart condition in 1948 at fifty–three; Buchler's brother, Harry, who also studied philosophy, died of the same cause six years later. Buchler's sister, Beatrice Buchler Gotthold, became the founding editor of *Working Woman* magazine, executive editor of *Family Circle*, and the first female vice president of the New York Times Company.

Buchler studied philosophy under Morris R. Cohen, Yervant Krikorian, and Abraham Edel at City College of New York; another major influence on Buchler was Bird Stair, a professor of English who taught critical writing. Because of the Great Depression, Buchler had to support his family in addition to pursuing his studies. He published his first article, "Note on Proust," in 1934 in *The Lavender*, a student publication; it is a

five–page, single–paragraph essay written in imitation of Marcel Proust.

Buchler received a B.S.S. in 1934 and went on to Columbia University, where he earned his M.A. in 1935 with a thesis on John Locke directed by Frederick J. E. Woodbridge. At Columbia, Buchler formed a lasting friendship with the philosophers Milton Munitz and Lenore Munitz. In 1936 he and Benjamin Schwartz edited George Santayana's *Obiter Scripta: Lectures, Essays, and Reviews.* In 1937, while studying for his doctorate, Buchler became a part–time instructor of philosophy at both Brooklyn College and Columbia. He earned his Ph.D. in 1938 with a dissertation directed by Ernest Nagel and, while retaining his instructorship at Columbia, took a similar position at Brooklyn College. Published in 1939 as *Charles Peirce's Empiricism*, Buchler's dissertation became a classic in Peirce studies. In 1940 he edited a selection of Peirce's writings.

During his early years at Columbia, Buchler served as book editor of *The Journal of Philosophy.* Charles Hartshorne was so impressed by Buchler's review of his *Man's Vision of God and the Logic of Theism* (1941) that he sought Buchler out for two hours of discussion. In 1942 Buchler became a full–time instructor at Columbia, and he and his colleague and mentor John Herman Randall Jr. co–authored the textbook *Philosophy: An Introduction.*

From 1942 until 1960 Buchler participated in the Contemporary Civilization program at Columbia College, serving as administrative head from 1950 to 1956. He told Beth J. Singer in a 23 March 1972 letter that "The teaching, reading, editing and (in 1950) administering of CC (the great staff, the discussions, the *esprit*) was *the* most fundamental intellectual experience of my life." Buchler's colleagues in the program included the sociologist C. Wright Mills, the social historian Benjamin Nelson, and the philosophers Randall, Nagel, and Herbert Schneider.

In February 1943 Buchler married Evelyn Urban Shirk, a fellow philosophy instructor at Brooklyn College who was working on her doctorate at Columbia. Buchler relinquished his instructorship at Brooklyn College that year. A few years after their

marriage the couple purchased a farm in the northeast corner of Vermont as a summer retreat. Work on the colonial farmhouse became a lifelong project for Buchler and Shirk, who did much of the carpentry themselves. The farm provided the solitude Buchler needed for his creative philosophical work.

In 1946 Buchler, Shirk, and Randall co–edited the introductory anthology *Readings in Philosophy*, which went through several editions. Buchler was promoted to assistant professor the following year. In 1949 Shirk received her Ph.D. from Columbia and joined the faculty of Hofstra University in Hempstead, on Long Island; the couple moved to nearby Garden City. In 1950 Buchler advanced to the rank of associate professor at Columbia.

Buchler published the first of his books of systematic philosophy, *Toward a General Theory of Human Judgment*, in 1951. He wrote several articles on education, including "The Liberal Arts and General Education" (1952), "On the Problem of Liberal Education" (1954), "What Is a Discussion"" (1954), and "Reconstruction in the Liberal Arts," a history of the development of the Contemporary Civilization program for *A History of Columbia College on Morningside* (1954). During the 1950s Buchler, an opponent of McCarthyism, was active in the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). In 1954 he co–authored the paper *Academic Due Process: A Statement of Desirable Procedures Applicable within Educational Institutions in Cases Involving Academic Freedom.* He published the second of his systematic philosophical works, *Nature and Judgment*, in 1955. In 1956 he was promoted to full professor.

For many years Buchler taught a course at Columbia titled "Major Themes in Recent Philosophy," in which he covered the concepts of experience, intuition, and common sense as dealt with by philosophers such as Aristotle, David Hume, Edmund Husserl, and Alfred North Whitehead. He devoted several terms of the course to philosophical method. He also taught courses on symbolism, language and meaning, Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689), major themes in twentieth–century philosophy, metaphysics, and metaphysical themes in literature.

Buchler and Shirk's only child, Katherine Urban Buchler, was born in 1958. That same year Buchler became vice chairman of the National Academic Freedom Committee of the ACLU, a position he held for the next seven years. In 1958, 1959, and 1960 he was a guest lecturer at the William Alanson White Institute of Psychiatry in New York City. He was named Johnsonian Professor of Philosophy at Columbia in 1959. He co–authored *Academic Freedom and Civil Liberties of Students in Colleges and Universities* (1961; revised, 1963) and "Teacher Disclosure of Information about Students to Prospective Employers" (1961), which was adopted as a policy statement of the ACLU. In 1961 he published his third major systematic work, *The Concept of Method.*

Buchler's three early books develop his metaphysics of human process. By *metaphysics,* Buchler means the construction of categories to frame one's thinking about a particular subject matter; the "metaphysics of human process" is the formulating of categories about the nature of human beings. According to Buchler, one way to formulate categories is to theorize about what must be the case if the world is what it is; but this method is just a starting point. Unlike the eighteenth–century philosopher Immanuel Kant, Buchler does not regard categories as necessary a priori conditions of thought; rather, metaphysical categories are invented––they are constructed as devices for interpreting the world and one's experience of it, and they are to be assessed in terms of their interpretive power. No sharp distinction exists for Buchler between reality as it is in itself (Kant's "noumenal reality") and reality as it appears to the human mind (Kant's "phenomenal reality"); Buchler assumes that categories are about the world itself, as well as about one's experience of it. While all metaphysical systems purport to be universal in at least some sense, none is a "view from nowhere," a "perspectiveless perspective," or the only necessary foundation for all possible thought. A metaphysical system is a conceivable way of thinking about its subject matter; it is necessary only to the extent that its underlying assumptions are indispensable to doing justice to its subject matter.

Buchler considers Plato the exemplar of the inventiveness required of any philosopher who attempts to change the terms in which people think about the world. Buchler, like

Plato, Aristotle, and Hegel, critiques and synthesizes the views of his predecessors and moves beyond them to construct a new conceptual framework. His project in the metaphysics of human process is to develop a conception of experience that, as he says in *Toward a General Theory of Human Judgment*, "should be able to encompass aspects of human life reflected by the sciences and arts, by moral and religious attitudes, and by what takes place psychologically, socially, technologically." A philosophical conception of experience has to be able to encompass and locate human experiences of communicating, discovering, and creating meaning and of interpreting and validating judgments in all their multiple forms.

If this goal is to be achieved, Buchler warns, several common philosophical assumptions about experience have to be avoided. One such assumption is that experience is subordinate to, or an inferior form of, knowledge. Another, which is a corollary of the first, is the assumption that knowledge is restricted to propositional, or what Buchler calls "assertive," judgments. For Buchler, some experiences may be cognitively negligible or have no discernible cognitive relevance or outcome, but they are not any the less experiences on that account. A third assumption Buchler rejects is that experience and judgment must be conscious. When one limits experience to that of which one is explicitly aware, one excludes too much from total experience and, ultimately, from judgment.

One standard way philosophers have conceptualized human being has been to parse it into two distinct kinds of being: mental and physical, or mind and body. Body is explained in terms of the same kinds of causal processes that determine any physical entity or event, while mind is defined as that which is distinctively human; all human functions have to be traceable to, or in some way an outcome of, mind or consciousness. Buchler contends that such a framework cannot do justice to experience, communication, and knowledge. The knowledge possessed by an athlete is just as much knowledge as that of a mathematician; thus, knowledge must involve more than purely "mental processes." Buchler's metaphysics of human process is a sustained argument that the conceptualization of experience and judgment requires the formulation of philosophical categories that can identify what goes on in experience

and judgment, whatever their physiology or psychology turns out to be. In *Toward a General Theory of Human Judgment* he replaces *experience* with a broader concept that he calls *proception.* Buchler accepts the insight of idealists and pragmatists that the nature of meaning requires a breakdown of the traditional distinction between language and world, sign and existence, or symbol and symbolized, but he avoids the idealist conclusion that the world itself must be mental. Not only words or other human products but facts themselves can function as signs; therefore, meaning cannot be purely mental or linguistic. And if meaning is generated in proception, then proception must involve a similar breakdown between language and world. Proception cannot, then, be either merely mental or merely physical.

According to Buchler, judgment appraises and discriminates some feature or features of the world in one of three modes: "assertive," "active," or "exhibitive." "The world" includes whatever exists––trees, art objects, mathematical models, hypotheses, human relationships, social institutions, even fictional entities. Judgment is both an expression of some feature of the individual doing the judging and a discovery about an aspect of the world to which the individual is related at that moment. Judgment presupposes communication as a fundamental human process, whether linguistic or not, and moves toward "justification" or validation. Judging is always done from a perspective; but perspectives are shareable and duplicatable, because a perspective is defined not exclusively by the one judging but by the entire context of judgment. Those who are judging are, therefore, not locked into intrinsically private, first–person perspectives. As a proceiver, one assimilates features of the world in which one is located and seeks to communicate both to oneself and to others aspects of oneself and of the world that is being proceived. For example, the heat of a summer day is assimilated not just physiologically but proceptively––that is, into the organization of one's past experiences, current activities, desires, and so on: a person is working on a manuscript, perspiring, having difficulty concentrating; he or she gets up and puts on a bathing suit to take a dip in the pool. In Buchler's terminology, the person is "located" in several perspectives or "orders"––the meteorological order, the order of his or her writing, the order of the house and how hot it becomes, and so forth. The action of going swimming is a judgment––an active judgment––about the heat, the person's

state of mind vis−à−vis the manuscript, and the ordering of his or her desires at that time. While swimming, the person may try to perfect his or her stroke, not to be able to swim faster but simply to become more graceful. This action is an exhibitive judgment: the person discriminates the graceful form in the activity and tries to execute it simply for the sake of exhibiting it. According to Buchler, these active and exhibitive judgments are no less judgments than if the person had asserted the propositions "It's hot today" or "I'm going to take a swim."

One's judgment about the hotness of the day is made in the action of swimming. One is judging "the temperature−in−relation−to−human−functioning." One does not have a representation of the heat standing in between oneself and the actual heat; rather, the temperature itself is one's procept. Similarly, when one proceives a house, it is the house itself that one proceives, just as it is the house that one buys, sells, or bequeaths to one's heirs. In each case, the "object" is a complex in relation to the self, not a third thing posited between the self and the world. Hence, judgments are "in" and "of" the world.

Judgment can be appraised formally, expressively, socially, or personally. Assertive judgments are formally appraisable in terms of true and false, active judgments are formally appraisable in terms of moral attributes such as right and wrong, and exhibitive judgments are formally appraisable in terms of excellence of kind such as good and bad. These types of appraisal are not mutually exclusive: a judgment can comprise any combination of the three, albeit in different respects. Hence, a mathematical proof is both an assertive (true or false) and an exhibitive (elegant or clumsy) judgment. An athlete's performance may be both active (correct in terms of the standards of the sport) and exhibitive (graceful or beautifully executed). A teacher's utterances may be both assertive (true or false) and active (efficacious or inefficacious in producing learning in the students).

Buchler's view can be compared with Aristotle's. Aristotle recognized kinds of reason−−theoretical, practical, and productive−−that would seem to correspond roughly to Buchler's assertive, active, and exhibitive judgments. In Aristotle's system,

however, the kinds of reason are hierarchically arranged and valued, with theoretical as the highest and best. In Buchler's system, by contrast, the assertive judgments of a philosopher or mathematician are no higher or better than the active or exhibitive judgments of an athlete or dancer. Any mode of judgment may be preferable in a specific context or with respect to a particular purpose, but none is intrinsically superior to another.

Buchler served as chairman of the Columbia philosophy department from 1964 to 1967. His fourth systematic work, *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes*, appeared in 1966. It deals not with the metaphysics of human being but with the wider field of "general ontology," which Buchler defines as the metaphysics of being in general.

If Buchler's earlier systematic works are driven by the goal of reconstructing the concepts of experience and judgment on metaphysical and not merely epistemological grounds, *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes* derives its impetus from what he calls the "principle of ontological parity." This principle asserts the equal reality of whatever is: attributes are as real as substances, relations as real as entities, the impermanent as real as the fixed, the mental as real as the physical, human beings and the human order as real as God and the divine order, fictional entities as real as physical ones, and so on. Buchler's metaphysical orientation is, thus, nonreductionistic, nonhierarchical, and all–inclusive. It sets the stage for the development of the specific categories of Buchler's "ordinal metaphysics," or "metaphysics of natural complexes." Ontological parity completes the critiques of metaphysics advanced by Friedrich Nietzsche, the logical positivists, Martin Heidegger, Dewey and other pragmatists, Richard Rorty, and the postmodernists. Such critiques usually end either in an attempt to formulate an alternative set of concepts, as with Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Dewey, or in a rejection of the possibility of metaphysics altogether, as with the logical positivists, Rorty, and the postmodernists. Buchler falls into the former group. His system of general ontology is guided by an interest in addressing such metaphysical issues as identity, determinateness, relation, possibility, meaning, and the nature of being as such. In other words, he believes that there are substantive metaphysical issues that need to be rethought, not just abandoned as unsolvable. One of his aims is to provide categories

that allow for the adequate conceptualization of such issues.

Buchler's first task in *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes* is to formulate a generic term of identification for whatever exists. The term he chooses is *natural complex,* or *complex* for short. *Natural* is intended to convey the notion of nature as all–inclusive; for Buchler, *nonnatural* and *supernatural,* as designations of intrinsically lower or higher, better or worse, less–or more–real kinds of being, are not metaphysically meaningful. No being, he says, is, in principle, inaccessible to other beings. On this view, God is a natural complex and is ontologically comprehensible in terms of the same categories as any other being. Whatever is special or unique about God as a kind of being or complex would require a more specific set of categories, just as the distinctiveness of human being or process is not captured by the categories of general ontology but requires a distinct set of categories––the metaphysics of human process. (Buchler does not pursue philosophical theology beyond a brief section on God in the first part of *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes.*) On the other hand, specific categories must be consistent with and encompassed by the categories of general ontology if the latter is to be truly general.

Buchler's second task is to formulate a way to recognize the being of anything that is, including relations, possibilities, fictional characters, processes, changes, and novelty. The thrust of his first pair of ontological categories is to conceptualize the being of change, as well as of permanence; the being of possibilities, as well as of actualities; and the being of societies, individuals, dreams, poems, and death, as well as of brains, books, and bodies. If entities are not the only realities, then *existence* is not a broad enough category to capture the being of any being; if not all beings change, then *becoming* is not broad enough. Buchler's categories for the predicative sense of *is* are the pair *prevalence* (derived from *prevail*) and *alescence* (derived from *coalescence,* "a coming together of complexes"). They are designed to encompass all possible ways of being––that is, the being or "thatness" of any natural complex.

Buchler's third task is to provide categories to define the "whatness" of any being or natural complex. Categories are needed that specify the ways in which a natural

complex is constituted by its particular characteristics and that specify its similarities to and differences from other natural complexes. In Buchler's view, metaphysical complexity is irreducible. A natural complex is not a traitless "it" that is ontologically prior to its attributes or relations; instead, it is––or, in Buchler's terminology, it "prevails"––insofar as it is its traits, that is, insofar as it prevails as related, as actual, as possible, and so forth. The key categories here are *order* and *relation.* Buchler defines *order* as a "sphere of relatedness." Every complex––whether entity, process, relation, or possibility––is what it is in virtue of its locatedness in orders, or "ordinal locations." Every complex shares traits or locations with other complexes. Moreover, every complex is itself an order and, hence, is uniquely determinate, that is, different from every other complex. For example, a university is a university in virtue of its location in the order of universities; it is related to other universities in virtue of shared traits such as educational and research goals, departmental organization, and principles of faculty governance. A university qua university is thus located, or prevails, in the order of universities, which is, in turn, located in the orders of educational institutions, social institutions, and the like. A university qua this particular university is itself an order and, as such, locates other complexes, such as its type of student body, its particular principles of faculty governance, and so on. A complex, then, is irreducibly complex, shares traits (relations) with other complexes, and is distinguishable as a distinct complex; and no complex is more or less complex than another, because there is no fixed limit to possible relatedness.

In anticipation of the objection that some relations or traits are important and others trivial, Buchler distinguishes two kinds of relation or location: "strongly relevant" and "weakly relevant" ones. The former constitute the very character of a complex, while the latter affect the scope or reach of the complex. For example, a particular faculty member may be a weakly relevant trait of a university in that he or she does not contribute to the character of the university but is still a constituent of the scope of the university. On the other hand, a faculty member who played a role in the formation of the structure of government at the university might be strongly relevant to the university––that is, a constituent of its character as this particular university. Each trait is identifiable as a trait of this university, but each is determinate in a different

way. Finally, every complex and every trait is related to some other complex or trait, and no complex or trait reaches or affects every other complex or trait. This conclusion is entailed by the distinct location of each complex. If every complex were related to every other, then either complexes would be indistinguishable from each other, or a single overarching complex would exist. The metaphysics of natural complexes is premised on a rejection of the monistic commitment entailed by the latter possibility. It also endorses the principle of the "identity of identicals" of the German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716), according to which multiplicity entails discernibility.

The final set of categories has to do with the issue of the limit, or boundary, of any particular complex. If determinateness entails a boundary, but that boundary is itself indeterminate, then both boundary and indeterminateness need to be conceptualized. Buchler's solution is to define *boundary* in terms of the categories *actuality* and *possibility:* a boundary is determinate insofar as it contains actualities and indeterminate insofar as it contains possibilities. The indeterminateness of a boundary is "determinately indeterminate," because every possibility is determinate––that is, every possibility prevails in a particular ordinal location. Not just anything is a possibility for a complex; but insofar as there is possibility, its boundary is indeterminate, pending actualization. For example, the number of lines that can be drawn from a given point is indefinite; but this indeterminate possibility is determined by the initial point and, more generally, by the entire spatial order. The boundary of a possibility or set of possibilities becomes determinate on actualization; but because actualization itself becomes the condition for new possibilities, boundaries or determinateness of complexes cannot be wholly fixed.

In 1971 Buchler was hired away from Columbia by Patrick Heelan, who was establishing a Ph.D. program in philosophy at the University of New York at Stony Brook. As a systematic philosopher he enabled the program to distinguish itself as a pluralistic one rather than being dominated by the then ascendant analytic tradition, and his presence facilitated the approval of the program by the state board of education. At Stony Brook, Buchler, who held the title Distinguished Professor of

Philosophy, taught only graduate courses. At the M.A. level he offered courses in the history of philosophy (the focus of the master's program at Stony Brook), such as modern moral philosophy, philosophy of religion, and ancient moral philosophy. At the doctoral level he taught courses on Locke, classical and contemporary metaphysics, experience, meaning, and conceptions of philosophy. In 1972 Buchler and Shirk were among the founders of the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy. In 1973 Buchler was awarded the Butler Silver Medal by Columbia University.

Aside from philosophy, one of Buchler's major interests was photography. He owned an Exakta camera, and, with his friend and former student Sidney Gelber, who became provost at Stony Brook, he frequently took pictures around New York City; he also took pictures during his summers in Vermont. He developed and printed all of the photographs himself. Another of his passions was baseball: the rhythm of the game, the complex systems of communication that developed among the players, and the timelessness inherent in the structure of baseball fascinated him. He also had a great appreciation for the beauty in athleticism and the human body in general and had as much admiration for the graceful leap of the outfielder reaching for a ball as for the dancer's pirouette. Such catholicity and respect for the multiplicity of forms of human activity were not only characteristic of Buchler's personal relationships––he could evince as much interest in the publishing ideas of his sister or in the intricacies of carpentry as in the arguments for and against an abstract philosophical thesis––but also were embodied in his theory of human judgment.

Buchler was also a great lover of the arts, in particular Baroque music, Italian Renaissance art (especially the sculptures of Donatello), dance, and poetry. In a 1971 interview with Earl Lane, Buchler remarked that "the whole history of art, especially poetic art, has been apologetic" and that philosophy and, in particular, "an adequate metaphysics of judgment" could establish the autonomy and value of art. He endeavored to carry out this project in his last book, *The Main of Light: On the Concept of Poetry* (1974).

In *The Main of Light* Buchler returns to the theory of judgment, which he believes is necessary for an adequate understanding of the range of actual and possible human experience. Buchler chooses poetry to show how the theory of judgment can better frame a philosophical understanding of a specific type of human experience. The book is divided into four parts: a critique of prevailing theories of poetry in chapters 1 through 4, the classification of poetry as a species of exhibitive judgment in chapter 5, the development of categories to identify the distinguishing features of poetry as a literary art in chapter 6, and an analysis of the conditions of meaning and interpretation in poetry in chapter 7. The book incorporates the categories of Buchler's entire system, both the theory of judgment and the general ontology. Buchler's thesis is that poetry can be created, but cannot be understood philosophically, without an adequate metaphysics of general ontology.

In 1978 Buchler published two major articles that complete his system: "On the Concept of 'the World'" and "Probing the Idea of Nature." Both were republished in an enlarged edition (1990) of *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes.* In these final articles Buchler takes up the question of whether there is an order of orders that can be designated "the world" or "nature." He argues that according to the principles of ordinality and noncontradiction, there is no such order, and he shows that attempts by such philosophers as Whitehead, Thomas Hobbes, R. G. Collingwood, and Ludwig Wittgenstein to argue for the notion of totality fail.

Buchler suffered a serious stroke in March 1979, a few days before he was to deliver his paper "Probing the Idea of Nature" to the Metaphysical Society of America. He recovered sufficiently to return to teaching and dissertation supervision in January 1980. He retired the following year. His health steadily declined, and he died in a nursing home in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, near the home of his daughter, on 19 March 1991. Shirk wrote an account of his final years titled *After the Stroke: Coping with America's Third Leading Cause of Death* (1991). She died on 24 August 1997.

Buchler's work was somewhat out of step with the dominant analytic trends in philosophy; even so, it has been studied since it first appeared. In 1959 a double issue

of *The Journal of Philosophy* devoted to Buchler's work was edited by Gelber and Matthew Lipman. In the early 1960s some former students and colleagues of Buchler's began meeting informally to discuss his ideas; they came to be known as the New York Philosophical Group. The membership of the group included, at various times, Edel, Singer, Gelber, Lipman, Lynne Belaief, Gail Belaief, Robert Olsen, George Kline, Douglas Greenlee, Stephen Ross, Arnold Berleant, Patrick Hill, Victorino Tejera, and Marjorie C. Miller. Buchler himself sometimes attended.

While Buchler's work has not had wide influence, the daring nature of his system guarantees him a place in the history of philosophy. In *Creativity in American Philosophy* (1984) Hartshorne comments on Buchler's central concept of natural complexes: "I think almost the entire history of philosophy is against such an idea. . . . Only considerable courage could have made it seem worth while to challenge this tradition." Others see Buchler's work in relation to the American pragmatist tradition. In *A Stroll with William James* (1983) Jacques Barzun remarks that "among the very few contemporary thinkers who have attempted to fashion an entire philosophy as James did, Justus Buchler may be regarded as taking up empiricism where James left it and restoring to pragmatism the breadth and flexibility that its first followers restricted." However one reads Buchler's works, one cannot help but be impressed by the originality and depth of his insights and the economy and rigor of expression of his literary style.