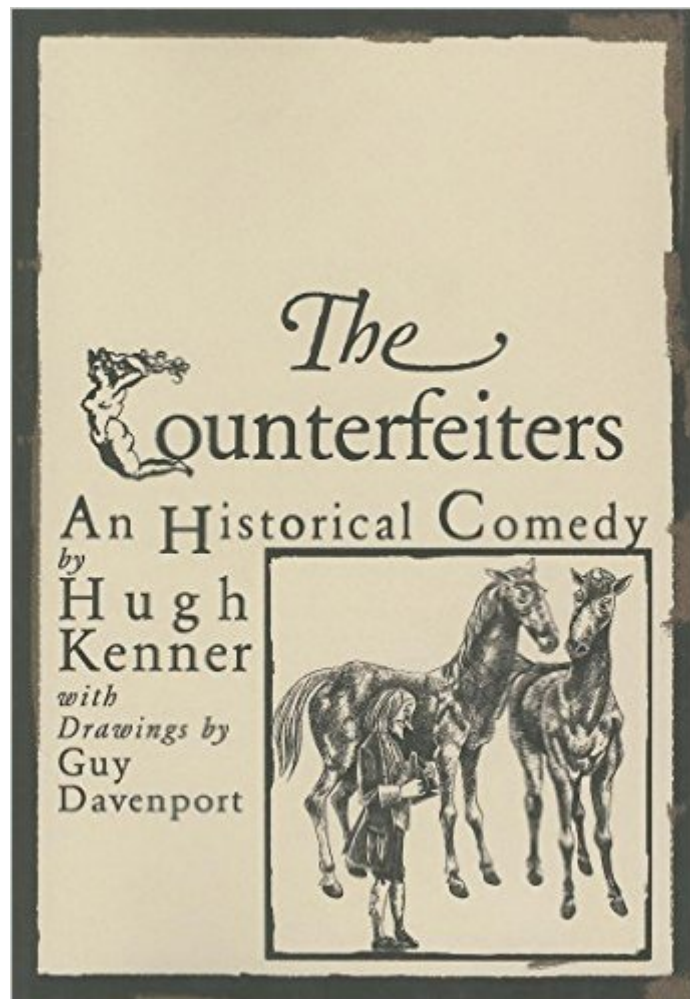


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The Counterfeiters: Counterfeiters: An Historical Comedy (Dalkey Archive Scholarly)



Synopsis

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Customer Reviews

I read *The Counterfeiters* (in effectively one sitting) with some sadness. I realized that only a few more books remain before I will have read everything Hugh Kenner has written. He was one of the geniuses of the century, and *The Counterfeiters* shows him at his best. Imagine *The Critique of Pure Reason* written in the form of a few offhand essays about Buster Keaton. Imagine laughing out loud in the middle of a scholarly essay. What Kenner has done in this book is to demolish, with Keatonesque deadpan, the rationalist foundation of Western culture. He is brilliant on Keaton. He is brilliant on Pope and Swift (the best reading of Swift's intentions in *Gulliver's Travels* that I've ever seen, and I have a PhD in 18C English Lit). He is brilliant on Andy Warhol and Alan Turing. Kenner is often more interesting to read than his subject. I've never been able to finish *Ulysses*; Dublin's Joyce is a feast from beginning to end. Pound is an acquired taste; *The Pound Era* reads like a novel, Umberto Eco without the snobbery. Whether he is writing about William Butler Yeats, Buckminster Fuller, Chuck Jones, or William Carlos Williams, what he has to say will be challenging, well-informed, and entertaining. This is a literary scholar who had a column in *Byte* magazine for years. Kenner died a few years ago after a long and productive life, leaving behind as legacy a dozen of the most accessible and valuable works of literary criticism in contemporary letters. The

Counterfeiters is a great place to meet this amazing mind.

"The Counterfeiters" is a humorous work of genius of the sort one doesn't usually associate with "literary criticism"... ranging over topics as diverse as comically Bad Poetry, Alan Turing's Turing Machine (and Turing Game), Andy Warhol, and Buster Keaton's comic artistry, Kenner probes the nature of identity and "humanitas". His prose style is remarkably clever and lucid; his prose is complemented by Guy Davenport's illustrations (e.g., "Mr. Andy Warhol Fetches a Work of Art Through a Metaphysical Barrier", depicting Warhol taking a can of Campbell's Tomato Soup from the shelf, one soon to be transformed into a Genuine Warhol Soup Can through the magic of his signature). This short book is well worth reading... and re-reading. I picked this off the shelf at the age of seventeen, didn't get half of it, but still found it both marvelously entertaining and thought-provoking. I still do, 35 years later!

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