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Dialectic, Perspective, and Drama

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DIALECTIC, PERSPECTIVE, AND DRAMA

by

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ABSTRACT

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This project is by and large a project of elucidation: it may add something to studies of Kenneth Burke, but I doubt it adds much to Kenneth Burke's studies. This thesis begins and ends with analyses of Burke's famous motto *Ad Bellum Purificandum* (or Toward the Purification of War). The Introduction focuses on "war" while the Conclusion focuses on "purification." In short, purified war is a dialectical activity which actively and perpetually pits divergent perspectives against each other. Such an activity keeps the conflictual nature of divergent perspectives in verbal and symbolic arenas rather than physical ones. Burke owes this formulation to Friedrich Nietzsche's concept of "war" as an attitude toward life. Even as a project of elucidation, this formulation of *Ad Bellum Purificandum* still suggests related areas of study too extensive for one essay. The chapters of this thesis each comprise a foray into these areas.

First, it is clear that Burke intends *Ad Bellum Purificandum* to be a means toward approaching more universal vocabularies, or what Burke calls a "consciousness of linguistic action generally" (Burke, *Grammar* 317). This poses a significant difficulty especially in regards to Burke's critical basis in Nietzsche. The problem is this: if all language, symbols, and thought are irreducibly and subjectively metaphoric (as both Nietzsche and Burke clearly agree on) then a universal frame of epistemological reference is impossible. Resolving this paradox is key in the purification of war. This involves resituating Burke's "representative anecdote" which he connects to the purification of war.

Next, a study of dialectic itself is necessary since Burke's use of war is essentially dialectical. Because dialectic is the proving of equal contraries, and because dialectic implies learning new perspectives, such a project would view dialectic vis-à-vis democracy vis-à-vis education.

Finally this project explains whereby a study of war's purification turns toward Kantian concerns having begun from Nietzschean questions. These projects (and others) serve toward an understanding (and therefore more effective purification) of Burke's use of "war."

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER 1: *AD BELLUM INTELLEGENDUM*: AN INTRODUCTION

As is known to even the most casual of Kenneth Burke's readers, Burke chose as

the motto to *A Grammar of Motives* the tenebrous yet oddly hopeful phrase, *Ad Bellum*

Purificandum (or "Toward the Purification of War"). A recent essay posted on the parlor-

centric *KB Journal* indicates that Burke scholars have yet to fully agree as to (1) what

Burke fully meant by the phrase and (2) how or from where he developed it (Zappen). It

will probably be a while before scholars are able to fully determine whether Burke

appropriated the phrase from another Latin text (unlikely) or he coined the phrase himself

(more probably[1]). However, a sufficient amount of resources are already available in

Burke's published books and essays to develop a reasonable explanation as to what

Burke meant by the phrase and where he got his inspiration for it. Specifically, passages

from Burke's *A Grammar of Motives* (published in 1945) and his later essay

"Communication and the Human Condition" (published in 1973) offer clear perspectives

on the development of *Ad Bellum Purificandum*. In short, both these pieces illustrate that

Burke's effort to articulate the benefit of war/strife as an attitude[2] stems from Friedrich

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[1] As Zappen and company conclude after having researched some of Burke's personal materials in Burke's former home office, "We have reviewed the notes and underlining in the texts of Cicero and Quintilian in KB's library but have not been able to locate the source of either of these phrases. We note, however, that KB frequently uses Latin (and Greek, French, German, etc.) phrases in *A Grammar of Motives* and *A Rhetoric of Motives*. We also note that he wrote numerous Latin and Greek phrases on the wall to the left of the window frame [in his office]. He also wrote copious notes—in Greek—in the margins of his Modern Library edition of *The Phaedrus*. KB loved words—in many different languages. Thus we suspect that the two phrases might be—indeed very likely are—his own" (Zappen). Also, in an online message board response to Jack Selzer in the summer of 2006, James Comas laments his lack of success in tracking down a source for the phrase: "I can't say with certainty whether Burke's 'ad bellum purificandum' is borrowed or his own 'neophrasism'; but, over the years, I haven't been able to find it in the textbases of the Perseus Project or the online Latin Library. In fact, I haven't been able to find even the words 'bellum' and 'purificandum' in proximity. One possibility that intrigues me is that the phrase is Burke's Latin version of the main sentiment of Empedokles' *Katharmoi*, or *Purifications*, his exhortation against war. Such a connection suggests an interesting connection with Burke's later work on catharsis, intended for the 'Symbolic'" (Comas).

[2] Though "attitude" (as the sixth element of Burke's pentad-cum-hexad) also enjoys its fair share of ambiguity in Burke studies, I use "attitude" here in the way I see Burke using it – attitude is to the hexad as adverb is to the rest of action-centered language (recognizing that "adverb" is itself an ambiguous term). A

Nietzsche's metaphoric use of "war" as a vigorously healthy approach to life. From this, it becomes clear that Burke formulates *Ad Bellum Purificandum* as an attitudinal metaphor for dialectic itself.

The ambiguity in *Ad Bellum Purificandum* centers around Burke's use of the word "war." On one hand, Burke was a life-long opponent to combative warfare from his early criticisms of America's involvement in World War I to his critiques later in life of the atomic bomb and America's involvement in Vietnam. "Outright war," Burke asserts, "is to be viewed not as 'essentially' a human motive, but rather secondarily as a *diseased form of cooperation*" ("Communication" 144, italics in original). Admittedly, the massively technological quality of modern warfare requires a mind-boggling amount of cooperation among scientists, economists, politicians, media promoters, and civic organizers (not to mention the correlative efforts of the militarists themselves). This "related ambiguity of tools and weapons comes to focus organizationally in what the late President Eisenhower called the 'military-industrial complex.'" ("Communication" 145). This involves not only those directly involved in the war effort. It also involves the vast majority of the country who have "contributed willy-nilly, directly or indirectly, to the execution of that project, in obedience to the decisions of our leaders" ("Communication" 145).

On the other hand, Burke also uses "war" in an attitudinal sense. This use has its

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much more sophisticated approach to Burke's conception of "attitude" is Mahan-Hays, Sarah E. and Roger C. Aden. "Kenneth Burke's 'Attitude' at the Crossroads of Rhetorical and Cultural Studies: A Proposal and Case Study Illustration." *Western Journal of Communication* 67(2003): 32-55. Mahan-Hays and Aden's critical summation is this: "We believe that critics may investigate how rhetoric positions by using Burkean concepts that explore the idea of 'attitude.' Critics should identify the representative anecdote at work […], determine how it functions as equipment for living […], what frame it represents […], and how the intersection of these three elements suggests a particular attitude or orientation toward others and their rhetoric. This description would be followed by an evaluation of the attitude; that is, whether the rhetoric encourages a dialectical or romantic approach toward the inevitable irony of division/identification" (Mahan-Hayes & Aden).

origins in Burke's recognition of aggression as a basic human motivation. This sense is dialectical in nature; indeed, as I intend to illustrate, war in this sense is the very heart of dialectic. Opposition through dialectic harnesses strife, which is natural to humans' condition, and employs it to cooperative ends. Burke observes that all "organisms live by killing" ("Communication" 136). In other words there is "no construction without destruction" ("Communication" 137). This involves everything from consuming other living matter for survival to destroying tracts of forests for the purpose of commodious living. Dialectic also works this way albeit beneficially. As a certain thesis encounters divergent antitheses, the thesis is partially destroyed by (and reconstructed in at least partial image of) each sound antithesis it encounters.

Burke genealogically connects his use of "strife" in this sense with Nietzsche's use of "war" by recollecting his much earlier project *Permanence and Change* (*P&C*). While Burke was writing *P&C*, he saw issues of the state "discussed with an almost ferocious pugnacity" ("Communication" 139). In such a volatile (yet unavoidably democratic) environment, Burke "began to look upon the language of morals as simply the theoretic analogue of the hand, clenched into a fist" ("Communication" 139). Further on, Burke connects this fist metaphor and much more to Nietzsche,

> Thoughts of that sort were in the back of my mind—but the trend they took was most definitely influenced by Nietzsche […] Nietzsche's own combativeness was in itself enough to make him realize the value of combat so far as he was concerned, […] his very style seemed to me like a constant striking of blows. […] And since he himself in his book, *The Will to Power*, laid such great stress upon what he himself calls 'perspectives,'

on noting the element of 'transvaluation' in his dart-like nomenclature I

entitled the middle section of my book 'Perspective by Incongruity'.

("Communication" 141)

Burke's articulation of "perspective" and perspective's dramatistic function are not the

only elements directly influenced by Nietzsche.

Burke specifically references Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* and *The*

Genealogy of Morals as being particularly influential on his (Burke's) understanding of

the dialectical nature of strife and war ("Communication" 141). However, Nietzsche's

clearest explanations of his own rhetorical use of "war" are found in his late works *The*

Twilight of the Idols and *Ecce Homo*.

For instance, in *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche fondly describes Heraclitus as the one ancient

Greek philosopher,

in whose proximity I feel altogether warmer and better than anywhere

else. The affirmation of passing away *and destroying*, […] saying Yes to

opposition and war, *becoming*, along with a radical repudiation of the very

concept of *being*—all this is clearly more closely related to me than

anything else thought to date. (*Ecce* 273, italics in original)

In this passage, Nietzsche apparently references the well-known Heraclitus fragment,

πάντα κατ᾽ ἔριν γίνεσθαι, the translations of which range from Nietzsche's own

suggestion above (i.e. things "become" through "war" – which Nietzsche also links to

"opposition") to Burke's translation in which "war" is reconceived as "strife". "How

should one translate Heraclitus' famous pronouncement, πάντα κατ᾽ ἔριν γίνεσθαι?"

Burke asks, "I'd want to understand Heraclitus as saying that all things become through

strife. I'd want to guard against the tendency to confuse such concepts as 'strife' or 'conflict' with 'war,' a distinction which my early reading of Nietzsche did not always make"[3] ("Communication" 144, italics in original). Herein Burke clearly connects his conception of war (or strife) with Nietzsche's, for it is in this specific context in which Burke asserts, "the very powers developed by us and grounded ultimately in the primal naturalistic necessities of strife or strain are the same resources by which we perfected our modes of cooperation" ("Communication" 144). Strife harnessed in this way makes it possible for "any *conflict of powers* [to] be presented as a 'balance of powers'" ("Communication" 144).

Burke's early confusion over Nietzsche's use of the word "war" is understandable. In the works which Burke references as especially influential on him (i.e. *The Birth of Tragedy* and *The Genealogy of Morals*), Nietzsche refers to war in its more literal sense, as when he references different Prussian wars or the use of open warfare to establish states and governments. Also, in an early Nietzsche essay (for which Burke apparently had a close affinity[4]), Nietzsche uses the idea of war in a blatant reference to Hobbes's *Leviathan*, "Because man, out of necessity and boredom, wants to live socially in the herd, he needs a peace agreement, and he tries to eliminate at least the crudest

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[3] "Nor can I stoutly contend," Burke continues, "that Heraclitus makes [such a distinction]. For he calls War [*polemos*] 'the father and king of all things.' Yet his view of the world as an endless procession of contraries is qualified by his doctrine that all conflict culminates in universal harmony. Ultimately we confront here the dialectical resource whereby any *conflict of powers* can be presented as a 'balance of powers.' Actually, the very powers developed by us and grounded ultimately in the primal naturalistic necessities of strife and strain are the same resources by which we perfected our modes of *cooperation*" ("Communication" 144, italics in original).

[4] See Hawhee, Debra. "Burke and Nietzsche." Quarterly Journal of Speech 85(1999): 129-145. Hawhee makes several very compelling connections between Nietzsche's essay "On Truth and Lying in an Extra-Moral Sense" and Burke's development of "perspective by incongruity".

forms of the *bellum omnium contra omnes*[5]" ("On Truth" 247). Furthermore, even in his

most lucid addresses of the value of metaphoric "war" in *The Twilight of Idols* and *Ecce*

Homo, Nietzsche uses *der Krieg* (war, warfare) instead of *der Kampf* (fight, struggle,

match, bout, battle, fray) or *der Unfriede* (strife, discord) in passages which deal with the

life-affirming advantages of fostering a perspective of "war"[6].

From his forward to *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche argues that, "War has always

been the grand sagacity of every spirit which has grown too inward and too profound; its

curative power lies even in the wounds one receives" (*Twilight* 31). He explains this

conception of war more clearly in the "Morality as Anti-Nature" section of *Twilight of*

the Idols,

> The spiritualization of sensuality is called *love*: it is a great triumph […].
>
> A further triumph is our spiritualization of *enmity*. It consists in
>
> profoundly grasping the value of having enemies […] enmity has now
>
> become more spiritual -- much more prudent, much more thoughtful,
>
> much more *forbearing* […] We adopt the same attitude towards the
>
> 'enemy within': there too we have spiritualized enmity; there too we have
>
> grasped its *value*. […] One has renounced the *grand* life when one
>
> renounces war. (*Twilight* 53-54, italics in original)

Nietzsche's use of the word "war" instead of "struggle" or "battle" (as Hitler later uses in

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[5] This phrase appears throughout Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*, but probably the most famous context is this: "Whatsoever therefore is consequent to a time of war, where every man is enemy to every man, the same consequent to the time wherein men live without other security than what their own strength and their own invention shall furnish them withal. In such condition there is […] continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short" (Hobbes). In the above passage, Nietzsche uses the concept of war in its most physical, disorganized, life-threatening sense, i.e. in a Hobbsean sense.

[6] See specifically Nietzsche, *Götzen* 27 and 246-247. The most famous of these is perhaps: "Out of life's school of war: What does not destroy me, makes me stronger" (Nietzsche, *Twilight* 33). But Nietzsche advocates war all throughout *The Twilight of the Idols* and *Ecce Homo*.

Mein Kampf) connotes prolonged effort rather than a single effort, a campaign rather than a single fight, a way of life rather than an anomaly within a life. This is best indicated by Nietzsche's use (in German) of the word *Kriegs-Praxis* to describe his "practice of war" (*Götzen* 246-47). Praxis has the same connotations in German as it does in English and implies more of a daily-living experience than a routine or training. Further, war in this sense is obviously not literal open warfare. This metaphoric war does not seek to destroy; rather, it seeks to find advantage in the opposition existing. Nietzsche explains in *Ecce Homo*:

> My practice of war [is thus] summed up […]: I only attack causes that are
> victorious; I may even wait until they become victorious. Second: I only
> attack causes against which I would not find allies, so that I stand alone—
> so that I compromise myself alone […]Third: I never attack persons; I
> merely avail myself of the person as of a strong magnifying glass that
> allows one to make visible a general but creeping and elusive calamity.
> […]Fourth: I only attack things when every personal quarrel is excluded,
> when any background of bad experiences is lacking. On the contrary,
> attack is in my case a proof of good will, sometimes even of gratitude.
> (*Ecce* 232-33, italics in original)

This philosophic and more polite sense of war depends on the person waging it to seek out worthy equals. A fight (even a philosophic fight) with an opponent of lesser means is no fight at all. It is only in a subjectively threatening situation that people waging this sort of war really achieve and develop all they can. "Where one feels contempt," Nietzsche claims, "one *cannot* wage war; where one commands, where one sees something *beneath*

oneself, one has no business waging war" (*Ecce* 232, italics in original).

Thus, Nietzsche's metaphoric war embraces the necessity of equals engaging each other with conflicting paradigms and perspectives in non-destructive manners. In Nietzsche's critique of Christianity in *Twilight of the Idols*, he revels in his opposition to the Christian church even though he's sure the church would love to see him (and those like him) disappear: "The Church has at all times desired the destruction of its enemies; we, we immoralists and anti-Christians, see that it is to our advantage that the Church exist" (*Twilight* 53). The Church provides Nietzsche a formidable enemy against whom he can test and try his philosophic mettle. For Nietzsche, preserving the life of an enemy is just as vital as preserving his own. As such, he and other like-minded immoralists, he asserts, have "opened wide our hearts to every kind of understanding, comprehension, and *approval*. We do not readily deny, we seek our honour in *affirming*" (*Twilight* 56, italics in original). So while Nietzsche may condemn as unhealthy certain perspectives which seek to remove opposition, he still finds oppositional value in those unhealthy perspectives. Even the unhealthy perspectives should be encountered, for they provide people opportunities to be healthy in opposition.

Though Nietzsche might disagree, this philosophic-centered, opponent-equalizing, life-affirming, and opposition-seeking war is at heart dialectical, at least in the Burkean sense. "Allow full scope of the dialectical process," Burke suggests, "and you establish a scene in which the protagonist of a thesis has maximum opportunity to modify his thesis, and so mature it, in the light of the antagonist's rejoinders" (*Philosophy* 444).

All of this points to this conclusion: in his *A Grammar of Motives* (i.e. prior to the 1973 essay "Communication and the Human Condition"), Burke employs Nietzsche's

metaphoric use of "war" to represent the conflictual resources humans use to both survive *and* communicate. In this dual sense, *Ad Bellum Purificandum* represents the hope that humans will be able to purify their modes of war away from the purely physical and toward the purely verbal. "All told," Burke writes in the final paragraphs of *A Grammar of Motives*,

> in this project directed "towards the purification of war," the Grammar should assist to this end through encouraging tolerance by speculation. For it deals with a level of motivation which even wholly rival doctrines of motives must share in common; hence it may be addressed to a speculative portion of the mind which men of many different situations may have in common. (*Grammar* 442)

This assessment of *Ad Bellum Purificandum* is no more than a partial answer to Debra Hawhee's astute question, "What critical and conceptual tools did Kenneth Burke use when producing his own?" (130). While I hope this adds something to Burkean studies, I doubt this adds anything to Burke's studies. But even as a project of elucidation, this formulation of *Ad Bellum Purificandum* still suggests related areas of study too extensive for one essay. The chapters of this thesis comprise a foray into these areas of study.

First, it is clear from *A Grammar of Motives* that Burke intends *Ad Bellum Purificandum* to be a means toward approaching more universal vocabularies[7]. To

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[7] Burke explains, "With a few more terms in his vocabulary of motives, for instance, the rabid advocate of racial intolerance could become a mild one; and the mild one would not feel the need to be thus intolerant at all. And so human thought may be directed towards 'the purification of war,' not perhaps in the hope that war can be eliminated from any organism that, like man, has the motives of combat in his very essence, but in the sense that war can be refined to the point where it would be much more peaceful than the conditions we would now call peace [presumably, the then rising tensions between East and West which would congeal as the Cold War]." (*Grammar* 305)

accomplish this, people must realize that language is "essentially human [therefore] human relations [should be viewed] in terms of the linguistic instrument. Not mere 'consciousness of abstracting,' but *consciousness of linguistic action generally*, is needed if men are to temper the absurd ambitions that have their source in faulty terminologies" (Burke, *Grammar* 317, italics in original). This "consciousness of linguistic action generally" poses a significant difficulty especially in regards to Burke's critical basis in Nietzsche. The problem is this: if all language, symbols, and thought—i.e. all linguistic action—are irreducibly and subjectively metaphoric (as both Nietzsche and Burke clearly agree on) then a universal frame of epistemological reference is impossible. A discussion of linguistic action thus disintegrates into a discussion of subjectively experienced linguistic action but could never be about linguistic action in general. According to Burke, this general or universal discursive ability is needed to work toward the purification of war. Resolving this paradox is key in the purification of war. Such a project will involve resituating Burke's "representative anecdote" which he connects to the purification of war[8]. This is the purpose and content of Chapter Two: "The Exigency for a Representative Anecdote and Motivational Calculus."

Next, Chapter Three: "Rethinking Critical Thinking: Dialectic, Democracy, and Dramatism" entails a study of dialectic itself since Burke's use of war is essentially dialectical. This would also juxtapose Nietzschean and Burkean ideas of sickness. For

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[8] As Burke elaborates, "The world as we know it, the world in history, cannot be described in its particularities by an idiom of peace. Though we may, ideally, convert the dialectic into a chart of the dialectic (replacing a development by a calculus), we are actually in a world at war—a world at combat—and even a calculus must be developed with the dialectics of participation by 'the enemy'—hence the representative anecdote must contain militaristic ingredients. It may not be an anecdote of peace—but it may be an anecdote giving us the purification of war" (*Grammar* 337). This and other passages in *A Grammar of Motives* suggest that "anecdote" in this sense is not the strictly narrative use with which most people are familiar. Rather, Burke seems to be formulating a critical tool with summative qualities that operates *like* an anecdote.

Burke, purifying war is comprised in part of "looking upon the cult of empire as a sickness" (*Grammar* 317). Rejecting the cult of empire implies rejecting both what he calls fanaticism and dissipation[9]. The dialectical middle ground for Burke is a "Neo-Stoicism" (another echo of Nietzsche's influence) which recognizes that both an attitude and a method of greater scope are needed to purify war. Burke's writings on "The Four Master Tropes" and "Linguistic Approach to the Problems of Education" provide sufficient material to elaborate this attitude and method. In short, the attitude is "war-ful" and the method is dialectical. Because dialectic is the proving of equal contraries, and because dialectic implies learning new perspectives, such a project would view dialectic vis-à-vis democracy vis-à-vis education. Burke never thinks of "communication without thinking of its ultimate perfection, named in such words as 'community' and 'communion'"[10] ("Communication" 144). Similarly, the end of a project in dialectic would be at least akin to Richard Weaver's summation of the function of rhetoric: "Rhetoric at its truest seeks to perfect men by showing them better versions of themselves. […] Rhetoric appears, finally, as a means by which the impulse of the soul to

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[9] "By fanaticism [Burke means] the effort to impose one doctrine of motives abruptly upon a world composed of many different motivational situations" (*Grammar* 318). Nietzsche calls this kind of reason which seeks to remove all challenges to its authority "*diseased* reason" (*Twilight* 56, italics in original). Further, "By dissipation [Burke means] the isolationist tendency to surrender, as one finds the issues of world adjustment so complex that he merely turns to the satisfactions nearest at hand, living morally and intellectually from hand to mouth, buying as much as one can buy with as much as one can earn, or selling as much as one can sell, or in general taking whatever opportunities of gratification or advancement happen to present themselves and letting all else take care of itself. This temptation is always with us, partly because sound common sense admonishes that we should not burden ourselves with problems beyond our powers" (*Grammar* 318). For Nietzsche, the combative spirit is the antidote to such slothful existence. "One is *fruitful* only at the cost of being rich in contradictions; one remains *young* only on condition the soul does not relax, does not long for peace. Nothing has grown more alien to us than that desideratum of former times, 'peace of soul,' […] nothing arouses less envy in us than the moral cow and the fat contentment of the good conscience. One has renounced *grand* life when one renounces war." (*Twilight* 54, italics in original)

[10] Burke continues, "though such terms do also imply a *competitive* element, as does indeed the very concept of 'persuasion,' which in most cases is to be classes as the very antithesis of war" ("Communication" 144). This is perhaps as good as any aphoristic summary: the purification of war is communion through competition.

be ever moving is redeemed" (25).

The final chapter, Chapter Four: "A Note on Purification," looks at the ambiguity of *Ad Bellum Purificandum* less in terms of "war" and more in terms of "purification." In short, Chapter Four explains whereby a study of war's purification turns toward Kantian concerns having begun from Nietzschean questions. These projects (and others) serve toward an understanding (and therefore more effective purification) of Burke's use of "war."

CHAPTER 2: THE EXIGENCY FOR A REPRESENTATIVE ANECDOTE AND

MOTIVATIONAL CALCULUS

I. Introduction: Toward a Resolution to Epistemology's Crisis

In discussing an old writing and composition debate, Samuel Delany observes,

Every generation some critic states the frighteningly obvious in the

style/content conflict. Most readers are bewildered by it. Most commercial

writers (not to say, editors) first become uncomfortable, then blustery;

finally, they put the whole business out of their heads and go back to what

they were doing all along. And it remains for someone in another

generation to repeat: Put in opposition to 'style,' there is no such thing as

'content.'" (21)

A similar description would certainly fit a curious phenomenon in rhetoric and

philosophy. Every now and again, a rhetorically minded philosopher or a philosophically

minded rhetor will state a variation of a seemingly unassailable yet equally obvious

epistemological problem. The resulting disciplinary storm will undoubtedly produce

several books and hundreds of articles in response or development. That is until

philosophy, rhetoric, and critical theory as components of academia-as-industry all settle

back into a lull of ism's and post-'s and existentially wonder among themselves just

really how different their disciplines are from psychology. Then someone new will state

anew, "People's ways of thinking *are* their ways of being" (or put more grammatically,

"The *how*'s of thought determine the *what*'s," or put more linguistically, "A nerve

impulse is not itself a thought, but thought about the nerve impulse is language," or put

more philosophically, "There is no private language").

The crisis moment for any epistemology of the last century is Friedrich

Nietzsche's 1873 essay "On Truth and Lying in an Extra-Moral Sense"[11] ("On Truth").

The problem is this: if all language and thought is irreducibly and subjectively symbolic

(as Nietzsche argues), then a universal perspective of epistemological reference is

impossible. Epistemological inquiry thus disintegrates into a discussion of subjectively

experienced thought and language but could never be about human thought in general. I

imagine it is for reasons similar to this that some critics suggest that after Nietzsche,

philosophy can only be considered in tandem with psychology[12]. Meaning, if Nietzsche's

critiques of epistemology, metaphysics, and rationality itself are valid, then all that is

possible are studies of *individual's* thoughts and motives and not thoughts and motives *in*

general. Serious post-Nietzsche thinkers[13] have grappled and continue to grapple with

this basic problem of epistemology.

One such post-Nietzsche thinker is Kenneth Burke. His linguistic philosophy of

dramatism (though heavily referenced in Rhetoric and Communication) has been largely

ignored in terms of its relationship to the problem that Nietzsche poses for

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[11] Indeed Nietzsche's essay could be subtitled "the Prolegomena to Any Future Epistemology" the irony of which I'm sure he would appreciate.

[12] Consider Stephen Barker's claims that "Since Nietzsche, we have had to realize that the thought of change requires us to collate philosophy with psychology, and to make adjustments in the abstractions, absolutes, and conventions on which philosophic thought works to accommodate human (i.e., self-interested) telos and its psychological constraints" (xv). Also, after Nietzsche, the idea of being (ontologically conceived) "is always a function of both philosophy and psychology" (Barker xvi). Also see Barker, Stephen. *Autoaesthetics: Strategies of the Self After Nietzsche.* Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1992. Barker is not alone in this view. Matthew Wickman (a one-time student of Barker's) concedes that from certain perspectives, after Nietzsche there is no real philosophy—only psychology (Wickman).

[13] i.e. thinkers who can trace their philosophic genealogy at least partly through Nietzsche. Some of the more auspicious and recognizable members of this crowd include Martin Heidegger, Jean Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Jacques Derrida, Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, Michel Foucault, Paul de Man, and others.

epistemology[14]. Particularly in the 1930s and 40s, Burke worked on developing a universal perspective beginning in part with Nietzsche's use of perspective. This project culminated in the mid-1940s with *A Grammar of Motives*, which delineated a by-and-large polished version of dramatism with the ratios of Burke's pentad already in place (the most significant addition in later years would be the addition of a sixth element, attitude, with its accompanying ratios to the other five elements).

Since then, dramatism has settled into a comfortable relationship with other philosophies in the field of rhetoric and communications (and to a lesser extent American philosophy). As such, dramatistic terms like pentad (which is actually a hexad), identification, and representative anecdote (among others) now enjoy an almost casual currency in rhetoric conferences and publications. The trouble is, of course, that like most appropriated terms from influential thinkers, these terms are not always used in the ways the original thinkers intended. Sometimes, these terms (thus misappropriated and used "systematically") even generate unintended problems that the original usage of the terms easily address.

Burke's development of the representative anecdote in his 1941 essay "The Four Master Tropes" (published in *The Kenyon Review* just months before Pearl Harbor) is a curious case in point. More often than not, Burke's idea of the representative anecdote has been appropriated by other scholars as a narrative means of discerning fairly narrow attitudinal archetypes—or what Bryan Crable calls examples of "anecdotal analysis"

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[14] The most notable exception is Hawhee, Debra. "Burke and Nietzsche." Quarterly Journal of Speech 85(1999): 129-145. However, while Hawhee points out several Nietzschean elements in Burke, and by extension addresses epistemological issues, her study better serves as a foundation for future Nietzsche/Burke studies more than a response to the problem of epistemology. Other notable Nietzsche/Burke studies include Diselet, Gregory. "Nietzsche Contra Burke: The Melodrama in Dramatism." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 75(1989): 65-83. And Thomas, Douglas. "Burke, Nietzsche, Lacan: Three Perspectives on the Rhetoric of Order." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 79(1993): 336-355.

(318, he lists some notable studies). This is unfortunate in that such uses bring dramatism back to the epistemological problem it solves. Namely, the representative anecdote as a grounding for and extension of dramatism makes possible universal epistemology in the midst of irreducibly symbolic and distinct subjectivities. (i.e. Humans find themselves individually circumscribed in the symbols that make their thoughts possible.) Reducing the representative anecdote as a "tool" of critical inquiry that (e.g.) elaborates on how specific narratives guide certain societal assumptions (among other uses), only serves to perpetuate the problem of epistemology among humans (as subjective symbol-users).

The easiest solution to systematized misappropriation of philosophic terminology is to understand *how* such terminology was developed. In regards to Burke's terminology, Debra Hawhee astutely situates as her guiding concern this question: "What critical and conceptual tools did Kenneth Burke use when producing his own?" (130). For instance, Hawhee focuses a significant amount of attention on Burke's 1935 book *Permanence and Change* in which he formulates the tool of critical inquiry "perspective by incongruity" as a direct development out of Nietzschean concerns (more on this below). Situating Burke and Nietzsche together in terms of *how* Burke developed his critical tools leads to this question: *why* did Burke develop the tools he did? This essay is a step toward the answer to that question.

Understanding the philosophical exigency created by Nietzsche will help paint the philosophic scene in which Burke develops the representative anecdote and dramatism. Specifically, understanding the nature of this exigency requires an understanding of Nietzsche's accounting of human thought in general (as set forth in "On Truth"). Burke's accounting of thought (in his 1941 essay "The Four Master Tropes") closely parallel's

Nietzsche's, so rehashing Nietzsche's account also sets the stage (so to speak) for Burke's dramatism.

Nietzsche is not alone in his critique of the dire condition of epistemology vis-à-vis language's reliance on symbols (although he most assuredly set the tone of conversation). Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, and Paul de Man also recognize this moment of exigency. While de Man explicitly echoes Nietzsche in his recognition of epistemology's exigent moment, Benjamin and Adorno do not explicitly reference Nietzsche in their approaches. However, both Benjamin and Adorno were explicitly influenced by Nietzsche in other regards[15], so viewing their critiques of the limits of epistemology vis-à-vis language in light of Nietzsche at least should not offend reasonable expectation.

Ultimately this project draws back to Burke if only because his dramatism offers a hope for universal epistemology. Situating Burke thus will help contextualize and resituate the representative anecdote as a "leading" component of what Burke called a "motivational calculus." Such understanding will also show what specific ways the representative anecdote could eventually point to rhetoric beyond dramatism.

II. Dialectic and Thought: A Prologue to the Problem of Epistemology

Jessica Enoch observes that Burke's view of thinking is rhetorical in nature. She suggests that Burke's rhetorical assessment of thinking "transforms the relationship between action and reflection itself" and "fortifies the bridge between pedagogy and

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[15] For Adorno and Nietzsche see Bauer, Karin. *Adorno's Nietzschean Narratives: Critiques of Ideology, Readings of Wagner*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1999. For Benjamin and Nietzsche see Reschke, Renate. "Barbaren, Kult und Katastrophen. Nietzsche bei Benjamin. Unzusammenhängendes im Zusammenhang gelesen." *Aber Ein Sturm Weht Vom Paradies Her: Texte zu Walter Benjamin.* Ed. Michael Opitz and Erdmut Wizisla. Leipzig: Reclam, 1992. 303-339. Also see Wohlfarth, Irving. "Resentment Begins at Home: Nietzsche, Benjamin, and the University" (1981). *On Walter Benjamin: Critical Essays and Recollections*. Ed. Gary Smith. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991. 224-259.

rhetoric and composition that has already been built by [other] scholars" (274). More specifically, however, Burke's rhetorical accounting of "thinking" builds on Friedrich Nietzsche's rhetorical accounting of thinking. As noted earlier, Debra Hawhee has already solidly connected specific Nietzschean ideas to Burke's development of his own dramatistic methods of thinking. The study of Burke and Nietzsche that follows is an extension of her initial study.

Here is Nietzsche's most basic accounting of how humans think.

> The portrayal of nerve stimuli in sounds. […] What arbitrary deliminations, what one-sided preferences for one trait or another of a thing! […] The "thing-in-itself" […] is also absolutely incomprehensible to the creator of language […]. He designates only the relations of things to men, and to express these relations he uses the boldest metaphors. First, he translates a nerve stimulus into an image! That is the first metaphor. ("On Truth" 248).

In "The Four Master Tropes" (reprinted in *A Grammar of Motives*), Kenneth Burke specifies that this "first" kind of metaphor is more accurately a synecdoche. "Sensory representation," he explains, "is, of course, synecdochic in that the senses abstract certain qualities from some bundle of electro-chemical activities we call, say, a tree, and these qualities (such as size, shape, color, texture, weight, etc.) can be said 'truly to represent' a tree" (*Grammar* 508). Burke uses "synecdoche"

> in the usual range of dictionary sense, with such meanings as: part for the whole, whole for the part, container for the contained, sign for the thing signified, material for the thing made, […] cause for effect, effect for

cause, genus for species, species for genus, etc. All such conversions

imply an integral relationship, a relationship of convertibility, between the

two terms." (*Grammar* 507-8).

Because synecdoche functions in this manner, Burke freely interchanges "synecdoche"

with "representation" – i.e. a perspective is representative if the perspective functions in a

synecdochic manner. Nietzsche is correct that the transformation of neuronal stimuli into

images or sounds is an irreducibly symbolic overlay. However, the image or the sound as

a symbol of neuronal activity is representative in its symbol-quality in that the stimulus is

not equatable to the object inducing the stimulus; rather, a nerve stimulus that is

transformed into an image or a sound is at best a representation of a certain quality or

qualities of an object[16].

Nietzsche continues: after the first metaphor, "Then, the image must be reshaped

into a sound! The second metaphor" ("On Truth" 248). For example, when humans

experience the stimulus of their hearts beating, the first metaphor would be observing that

stimulus as "sensation." The second metaphor happens when humans observe that

sensation as "heart" (i.e. overlay the symbol H-E-A-R-T over the sensation). "Each time

there is a complete overleaping of spheres—from one sphere to the center of a totally

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[16] "Nature creates similarities," notes Walter Benjamin, "One need only think of mimicry" (Benjamin 333). Mimicry in non-humans reinforces the hypothesis that even neuronal impulses are metaphoric in nature. Consider the cuttlefish (a marine mollusk similar in feature to a squid or an octopus). As a protective function, the cuttlefish can radically and rapidly change its body color to blend in with its surroundings. This camouflaging ability is more pronounced in the cuttlefish than in any other animal. Natural selection may have favored cuttlefish in terms of survival, so conscientious biologists can't really say whether the cuttlefish itself processes its function on a symbolic level. But what of the predators against which this camouflaging function offers protection? For the camouflage to work as a protectant, a predator must see the cuttlefish *as if* the cuttlefish were part of the non-food surrounding scenery. This does not necessarily mean that the predator sees the cuttlefish qua a cuttlefish or even sees non-food qua non-food. But it does suggest that some animals see a thing *as if* it were not-the-thing, which is a metaphoric process. So perhaps the symbolic difference between humans and other animals is this: while other animals experience the world via metaphoric processes, humans have the unique capacity to experience these metaphoric processes as metaphors, which is dialectic.

different, new one," Nietzsche observes. He continues, "When we speak of trees, colors, snow, and flowers, we believe we know something about the things themselves, although what we have are just metaphors of things, which do not correspond at all to the original entities." ("On Truth" 248-249) So while humans may say that it is a "truth" that their hearts beat, Nietzsche suggests that such a truth is an illusion about which it has been forgotten that it *is* an illusion[17].

Burke explains and extends this to a further metaphorical level, namely metonymy. "Language," he explains,

> develops by metaphorical extension, in borrowing words from the realm of the corporeal, visible, tangible and applying them by analogy to the realm of the incorporeal, invisible, intangible; then in the course of time, the original corporeal reference is forgotten, and only the incorporeal, metaphorical extension survives. (*Grammar* 506)

For instance, after a period of separation from a parent, a child may experience a discomfort in the chest in proximity to the organ we call the heart. The child's parent tells the child later that the child felt "sadness." The child grows up to be a poet and writes metonymically about sadness being a "pain in the heart". Burke uses metonym in a usual sense, i.e. "the *reduction* of some higher or more complex realm of being to the terms of a lower or less complex realm of being" (*Grammar* 506, italics in original). But notice the poet's metonym here is actually closer in relation to the original stimulus and is therefore less metaphoric than the original metaphor (which was calling the pain in the chest "sadness").

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[17] Nietzsche actually writes, "Truths are illusions about which it has been forgotten that they *are* illusions" ("On Truth" 250).

Though Burke suggests that the metaphoric perspectives humans experience could be reductions or representations (or what Burke also calls "metonymy" or "synecdoche" respectiviely), the most complete form of perspective, however, is dialectic (for which Burke frequently interchanges "irony"). Burke defines dialectic as "the interaction of [perspectives] upon one another, to produce a *development* which uses all the [perspectives]" (*Grammar* 512). As such, dialectic is a "perspective of perspectives" (*Grammar* 512). In other words, dialectic is complete perspective because it is a development of all perspectives.

Some extensions of the above—"Symbol" itself implies at least two perspectives, for a single symbol that does not symbolize something else would not be a symbol. There is no symbol (singular) without symbols (plural). Meaning, a symbol is itself by virtue of its dialectical relationship to other symbols. In a similar manner, a single word in a linguistic vacuum cannot be understood without its interactions with other words; meaning, language itself is dialectical. Similarly, a single "thought" cannot be understood without its interactions with other thoughts; ergo, all thought is also dialectical. This means that perceiving thinking in terms of dialectic is not just one way of many of perceiving thinking (which would be a kind of dialectical conversation). Instead, this means that thinking itself is *literally* dialectic in nature. Nietzsche asks, "Is language the adequate expression of all realities?" His unstated answer and Burke's beginning assumption is that language is the *only* reality we can express[18].

What Burke's observations add beyond Nietzsche is this: "thinking" does not begin with metaphor; "thinking" begins and ends with *dialectic* or the interaction of

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[18] Burke further puts it this way. "Man *literally* is a symbol-using animal. He *really does* approach the world symbol-wise (and symbol-foolish)" ("Linguistic" 259-260, italics in original).

metaphors. Metaphor in this sense is a part of the dialectic of language as a whole, but as such, a metaphor can never be understood by itself – only in relation to other metaphors.

Burke further clarifies Nietzsche's observations by calling metaphor "perspective." "Metaphor," Burke observes, "is a device for seeing something *in terms of* something else. It brings out the thisness of a that, or the thatness of a this" (*Grammar* 503, italics in original). Burke freely interchanges "perspective" for metaphor, recognizing that any and all perspective is metaphoric in nature. Or as Bryan Crable observes, Burke argues that metaphor is a master rhetorical trope because "all *seeing* is seeing *as*, […] all observation is the taking of a perspective on a subject" (323, italics in original). Crable further points out that people always observe their stimuli *as* particular objects; and they see those objects *as* objects of certain qualities. By extension, people also always observe *as* viewers from certain perspectives (as subjects of gender or profession or race or class or ethnicity or culture or whatnot). Admittedly, individual people's observations (as based on their individual perspectives) are always complex combinations of different elements of their lives. Such variations are only limited in variety to the number of beings who use, have used, or will ever possibly use language[19].

Furthermore, Nietzsche's and Burke's analyses of the symbolic nature of language imply that "observation *as* metaphor" is not as accurate as "observation *is* metaphor." This "is" (in "observation *is* metaphor") is metaphor in action. Meaning, the *first* and *final* metaphoric leaping of spheres happens when metaphor asserts its own literalness. Again, metaphor is a *part* of dialectic but is in itself meaningless without its dialectical context of other interrelated metaphors. Thus Nietzsche's critique of "truth"

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[19] … which leads to an intriguing idea of the "infinite" in regards to human perspectives. Would "actual" infinity really just be the limit of perspectives of thinkers who have, do, and ever will exist? A question for another study another time…

would be more accurately phrased in dialectical terms. Thinking (i.e. *the* activity of

consciousness) is a dialectical activity that has by and large forgotten it is dialectical[20].

To think in a *conscientiously* dialectical manner forces interactive consideration of all

subjects dialectically considered.

This dialectical quality of language provides the possibility of universal

epistemology (more below), but it also presents the problem of epistemology.

III. Minds, Brains, and Language: The Problem of Epistemology Proper

The problem of epistemology stems from the biological fact that there exists no

necessary or sufficient conditions between objects and the corresponding impulses in

people's brains. Also, while neuronal activity seems to be necessary for ideation, it does

not seem to be sufficient (if only because neurons fire all the time in non-correlative ways

to thinking). Meaning, that activity in the *brain* does not guarantee linguistic reference in

the *mind*. This is not to say that Nietzsche or Burke is a dualist. On the contrary, if the

physical structure of the brain is changed, the mind also changes. What the symbolic

nature of thought and language illustrates is that humans are not physical creatures with a

mind anymore than they are mental creatures with a physical body. Nor does Nietzsche

or Burke posit a kind of monist materialism or physicalism—if only because human

thought cannot be reduced any further than the use of symbols as symbols—i.e. there is

nothing in the function of neurons that explains how (e.g.) an image is formed[21]. For lack

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[20] See note 17.

[21] The most that is observable is that certain neurons fire when a subject sees or imagines certain images. See R. Quian Quiroga, L. Reddy, G. Kreiman, C. Koch and I. Fried. "Invariant visual representation by single neurons in the human brain." *Nature* 435(2005): 1102-1107. All this suggests that the mind (i.e. thinking qua irreducible symbols) is an *emergent* quality of the brain in the same way that liquidity is an emergent quality of water. Compare this to John Searle's conception of "biologic naturalism" in "Biological Naturalism." <http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~jsearle/articles.html> 19 December 2006. Also see Searle, John. *The Rediscovery of the Mind*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1995, specifically Chapter 5, "Reductionism and the Irreducibility of Consciousness."

of a better terminology, it should be sufficient to acknowledge that humans *have* brains and that humans *have* minds; however, humans are not brain-creatures with minds nor are they mental-creatures with brains. Instead, humans "are" (in the literal metaphoric sense) *mindbrains*. Humans are, in Burke's terms, the "symbol-using animal"[22] – i.e. the animal whose existence is circumscribed by the never-ending conflict of both libertarian and literal use of symbols (language, abstract thought, etc.) as well as determined non-symbolic instincts (hunger, reproduction, etc.).

This relationship between minds and brains is problematic for epistemology because (topically) there is nothing universal about the ways that humans think—only *that* they think.

In what is probably the most recognizable passage from "On Truth", Nietzsche's critique of "truth" linguistically conceived takes on his characteristically aphoristic form. "What is truth?" he asks. Truth is a "mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, anthropomorphisms, in short, a sum of human relations which were poetically and rhetorically heightened, transferred, and adorned, and after long use seem solid, canonical, and binding to a nation" ("On Truth" 250). By claiming this, Nietzsche posits that perspective encompasses more than mere perceiving. This is more than asserting (with Bryan Crable) that "all seeing is seeing *as*." An extension of this is that all truth is truth *as*; all action is *acting as* (more on this below). In the ontological sense (but not the

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[22] This definition appears in several works by and about Burke. It is part of his "definition of man." I suppose that a more technological-centered anecdote could also be used and humans could be defined as thinking machines. All animals, including humans, would thus be viewed in terms of being literal biological machines. Of course, the difficulty with both the symbol-using-animal and thinking-biological-machine definitions is the same with any definitions that seek to straddle any dichotomy. The solution lays in these definitions not being any kind of "middle" ground between the two poles of the mind-body debate; rather, such definitions are themselves perspectives by incongruity which dialectically combine elements of both extremes and thus develop a new perspective that is and is not both of the former extremes.

ontic sense), all being is being *as*. This is at the core of Nietzsche's observations in "On Truth": humans' ways of knowing *are* their ways of being.

This is why in the opening "fable" of "On Truth", Nietzsche castigates the creatures who invented the concept of knowledge (which is itself also an elaborate metaphor that has forgotten it is a metaphor). "In some remote corner of the universe that is poured out in countless flickering solar systems," Nietzsche humorously narrates, "there once was a star on which clever animals invented knowledge. That was the most arrogant and the most untruthful moment in 'world history'—yet indeed only a moment. After nature had taken a few breaths, the star froze over and the clever animals had to die" ("On Truth" 246). Note the scene in which Nietzsche thus defines "truth". His extra-moral observation of human-created truth is possible exactly because of the perspective given by science (another elaborate metaphor), namely that the whole universe is subject to the second law of thermodynamics and everything, absolutely everything, will cool and die.

Paul de Man possibly best explains the linguistic urgency of Nietzsche's "On Truth". After quoting Nietzsche's famous summation of truth (as an army of metaphors that have forgotten they are metaphors), de Man suggests,

> What is being forgotten in this false literalism is precisely the rhetorical, symbolic quality of all language. The degradation of metaphor into literal meaning is not condemned because it is the forgetting of a truth but much rather because it forgets the un-truth, the lie that the metaphor was in the first place. It is a naïve belief in the proper meaning of the metaphor

without awareness of the problematic nature of its factual, referential

foundation. (*Allegories* 111)

Specifically, this has dangerous implications for conceptions of the self. As de Man

explains, Nietzsche's essay, "On Truth", specifically shows

that the idea of individuation, of the human subject as a privileged

viewpoint, is a mere metaphor by means of which man protects himself

from his insignificance by forcing his own interpretation of the world

upon the entire universe, substituting a human-centered set of meanings

that is reassuring to his vanity for a set of meanings that reduces him to

being a mere transitory accident in the cosmic order. (de Man, *Allegories*

111)

For de Man, the "metaphorical substitution" of every human concept is "aberrant" in that

it sublimates "the real" without any observable medium. The only alternative to bleak

soul-crushing nothingness, de Man proposes, is to embrace the centrality of language

instead of the self in a more accurate conception of cognition. But this is a shallow

recovery he suggests, for while asserting the self as a linguistic reality, it also asserts the

self's "insignificance, its emptiness as a mere figure of speech. It can persist as self if it is

displaced into the text that denies it. The self which was at first the center of the language

as its empirical referent now becomes the language of the center as fiction, as metaphor

of the self" (*Allegories* 112).

Walter Benjamin also observes this grim tension in an early essay "On Language

as Such and on the Language of Man." "The view that the mental essence of a thing

consists precisely of language," Benjamin claims, "is the great abyss into which all

linguistic theory threatens to fall (or is it rather, the temptation to place at the outset a

hypothesis that constitutes an abyss for all philosophizing?) and to survive suspended

precisely over this abyss is its task" (315) This is because language so conceived can only

communicate linguistic entities—language can only describe itself. But Benjamin's grim

assessment does not resign itself to a bleak non-reality as does de Man's. On the contrary,

Benjamin suggests that "because nothing is communicated *through* language, what is

communicated *in* language cannot be externally limited or measured, and therefore all

language contains its own incommensurable, uniquely constituted infinity. Its linguistic

being, not its verbal meanings, defines its frontier" (317). Meaning, of course, that

concepts cannot be contained in the structure of language, but concepts can be "carried"

in linguistic packaging. Human thought extends only to the limit of its linguistic

vocabulary.

Extending from this, mental capacity (which is linguistic capacity) is thus limited

by the linguistic tools available to it. Nietzsche points this out when he argues

> If someone hides an object behind a bush, then seeks and finds it there,
>
> that seeking and finding is not very laudable: but that is the way it is with
>
> the seeking and finding of 'truth' within the rational sphere. If I define the
>
> mammal and then after examining a camel declare, 'See, a mammal,' a
>
> truth is brought to light, but it is of limited value. I mean it is
>
> anthropomorphic through and through and contains not a single point that
>
> would be 'true in itself,' real, and universally valid, apart from man. ("On
>
> Truth" 251)

Kenneth Burke agrees with this… to a certain extent. As Bryan Crable explains, Burke

contends that "in some basic sense, an inquiry can only discover that which its starting

point has already presupposed. […] However, Burke would deny that this implies that

inquiry is 'fruitless'—or that all inquiries are equally valid—and it is to this end that he

develops the representative anecdote" (321). The representative anecdote is a tool that in

one sense "anticipates" its conclusion—i.e. a motivational calculus, but it is also a tool

whereby perspectives can be adjudicated in terms whether or not they are motivational

calculi (more on motivational calculus below).

IV. Toward a Dramatistic Solution to the Problem of Epistemology

Kenneth Burke touts the representative anecdote as a linguistic device that makes

possible transcendence via dialectical thinking.

In light of Nietzsche's admittedly difficult critique of epistemology, Burke's

claim of transcendence meets with occasional and understandable skepticism. Burke

realizes this, and sometimes pokes fun at his own efforts as when he suggests, "Here is

the problem at the bottom of our search, as at the bottom of a well. Our motto might be:

By and through language, beyond language. *Per linguam, praeter linguam*" ("Linguistic"

263). In light of Nietzsche's assessment of the linguistic structure of thought,

transcendence appears to be prima facie impossible. Every effort to transcend the

parameters of language will have to be used with tools only accessible through language.

Any reversal of subjectivism (i.e. objectivism) would be attempted using subjective tools.

Paul de Man states this part of the problem of epistemology this way: all

rhetorical, mental, i.e. linguistic

structures, whether we call them metaphor, metonymy, chiasmus, metalepsis, hypallagus, or whatever, are based on substitutive reversals, and it seems unlikely that one more such reversal over and above the ones that have already taken place would suffice to restore things to their proper order. One more 'turn' or trope added to a series of earlier reversal will not stop the turn toward error. (*Allegories* 113)

In other words, de Man suggests that a subjective reach for objectivity would only create at best more complex subjectivities. The main "error" of epistemology would still hold true, namely knowledge is nothing more than mere "metaphorical substitution."

Theodor Adorno recognizes a similar problem, but he at least allows that temporary epistemological solutions may be available (however tenuous): "The existing cannot be overstepped except by means of a universal derived from the existing order itself" (242). Although Adorno references more of a power-relationship here, he sees the same limitations that Nietzsche and de Man claim. Any subjective modes of thought cannot be transcended except through those very subjective modes of thought. Adorno is not being ironic here. He seems to really believe that universal modes of thinking can spring from subjective materials. The problem, though, is one of violence. "The universal triumphs over the existing through the latter's own concept, and therefore, in its triumph, the power of mere existence constantly threatens to reassert itself by the same violence that broke it" (Adorno 242). Whenever a universal perspective springs from a subjective perspectives, it will be not just with the tools of but also at the expense of the subjective perspectives. Subjective perspectives will continue to fight with universal perspectives in the same destructively dialectical manner.

Perhaps the quickest way to approach the possibility of a universal-out-of-subjective perspective is through the re-presentative quality of thought itself (as Nietzsche and Burke both account for it). Thought is re-presentative in that everything conceived in thought is itself actually a re-conception of a prior impulse or symbol. An impulse presented to the brain is re-presented as an image or concept to the mind (this is "thought") which in turn is re-presented as a word or phrase that continues to re-present itself in relation to other words and phrases. There is nothing that happens in the *mind* that has not already happened in some other form in the *mind* or in the *brain* (though of course plenty happens in the brain that never occurs in the mind). Every event in the mind is thus a replicated event.

That this quality is closest to contemporary conceptions of simulacrum should not create a stir. Simulacrum shows above all else that meaning qua meaning is always re-presentative. That is, it would be a bit disingenuous to go about finding the ultimate context for meaning and then be surprised or dismayed to discover that such a context is itself not meaningful. An unavoidable property of emergence is this: anything that emerges to be thereafter itself will necessarily emerge from a context that is not-itself. Just because meaning emerges from a context that is devoid of meaning does not mean that meaning is thereby meaningless. Indeed, if the context for meaning *had* meaning, at that point would the meaning of meaning be suspect. For better or worse, meaning is a quality that humans ascribe to the world (and not vice versa), but this realization does not devalue meaning as much as it accurately situates it. As such, the "metaphoric substitution" (as Paul de Man puts it) of thought and language is not aberrant as much as it is normative.

Since all thought is already (and unavoidably) metaphorically replicated, the pursuit of universal epistemology should concern itself with replicative rather than applicative perspectives. Meaning, if a particular perspective is applicative, it lays itself over a certain subject and thereby views the subject of inquiry in terms of application, in other words in terms of itself. However, a perspective that is replicative is a perspective that lays itself over a certain subject and re-presents the subject of inquiry in terms of replication, in other words in terms of the subject of inquiry. If a particular perspective has a necessary component that induces replication, such a perspective will be better situated to account for other perspectives. Meaning, if a particular perspective, as a dialectic of metaphor and symbol, has the capacity to re-present any other symbol then its function will be universal even though it still originates from subjectivity.

A perspective with universal re-presentative capability would have a vocabulary adaptable to all meaning or would otherwise be what Kenneth Burke calls a "motivational calculus" (*Grammar* 60). Such a perspective would look at all other perspectives (i.e. at all knowledge) from the inside-to-its-extremes (and could never be from the inside-out much less from the outside-in, for no thought breaks through the barrier that is itself). Epistemology thus reconceived would re-posit the question "What is knowledge" away from knowledge's relationship to the external world (i.e. knowledge's ultimate container) and nearer to knowledge's relationship with the rest of knowledge (i.e. what is contained in the container).

V. A Note on Perspective by Incongruity

A basic linguistic tool for beginning such a project (i.e. pursuing a motivational calculus) is Kenneth Burke's perspective by incongruity. Burke develops perspective by

incongruity from what he calls the "Nietzschean method" (*Permanence* 88). In *Permanence and Change*, Burke explains that he developed this method of reading based on Nietzsche's own "dart-like" style. As Debra Hawhee has noticed (135-36), Burke's usage of perspective by incongruity is closest to Nietzsche's romanticizing of the metaphoric play engaged by the "liberated intellect." Comparing the metaphoric constructs of language to an "enormous structure," the liberated intellect "smashes it apart, scattering it, and then ironically puts it together again, joining the most remote and separating what is closest, he reveals […] that he is now guided not by concepts but by intuitions" ("On Truth" 255). Likewise, perspective by incongruity, as Burke explains it, entails, "taking a word usually applied to one setting and transferring its use to another setting. It is a 'perspective by incongruity,' since he established it by violating the 'proprieties' of the word in its previous linkages" (*Permanence* 89-90). Elsewhere Burke describes it as a "method for gauging situations by verbal 'atom-cracking.' That is, a word belongs by custom to a certain category—and by rational planning you wrench it loose and metaphorically apply it to a different category" (*Attitudes* 308). This activity is obviously dialectical but it is also catachrestical. Meaning, it posits one set of terms in conjunction with a divergent set of terms and does so in ways that are unconventional to both—i.e. it does so via linguistic impropriety. By way of example, Burke suggests that perspective by incongruity can be used in observing

> not things existing at the same time in history but things existing at corresponding stages in different cultures. […] Such a device makes it possible to speak, let us say, of Arabian Puritanism, thus extending the use of a term by taking it from the context in which it was habitually used and

applying to another. We can thus discuss the Pergamene quality in

Wagner, the Mozartian elements in Phidias, the calculus mathematics

emergent in Gothic. (*Permanence* 89)

Elsewhere[23], I show how perspective by incongruity answers a wide range of pedagogical

issues related to teaching "critical" thinking. For now, it should suffice to point out that

perspective by incongruity is the most basic of epistemological tools in that it provides an

activity within which thinkers may conscientiously re-think epistemological constraints.

VI. Resituating the Representative Anecdote (in General)

Burke's concept of representative anecdote is itself a perspective by incongruity

in that "anecdote" connotes a *singular* narrative and "representative" connotes *universal*

applicability. Burke never uses anecdote in this sense to refer to a specific narrative[24]. He

does use representative anecdote, however, to describe people's general approaches to

human motives as when he relates by way of example that "the behaviorist uses his

experiments with the conditioned reflex as the anecdote about which to form his

vocabulary for the discussion of human motives" (*Grammar* 59). Anecdote in this sense

refers to any set of constraints within which a certain quality or qualities is explainable –

i.e. the perspective which presents the "story" of what is the case. For the behaviorists,

their experiments as a whole provide (inadequate) explanations for a certain quality (i.e.

human motives), and these experiments thus provide meaning in an *anecdotal* manner.

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[23] See Chapter 3 of this thesis.
[24] …at least not that I'm aware. The most specific I have seen him get is still in general examples. For instance, Burke confesses how he incorporates as the scene for his "constant concern with poetical and rhetorical devices […] Malinowski's prime representative anecdote for the study of symbolic action: a group of illiterate savages using language as a tool in the cooperative act of catching fish" ("Questions…" 333). Though topically about a specific group of savages, this passage does not reference any specific group (just amorphously "a" group) and could therefore be about language-using savages in general.

Just a brief note on the difference between representative anecdote and motivational calculus. A motivational calculus that really has the ability to address any and all motives (i.e. all meaning) would be a perspective that could re-present any and all symbols. A representative anecdote would be the term or character that serves to represent the calculus as a whole. "Although *all* the characters" in a motivational calculus, Burke suggests, "are necessary qualifiers of the definition, there is usually some one character that enjoys the role of *primus inter pares*. For whereas any of the characters may be viewed in terms of any other, this one character may be taken as the summarizing vessel, or synecdochic representative, of the development of the whole." (*Grammar* 516) Anecdote in this sense is not the same as the systematic terminology that extends from it – e.g. the catalogue of scientific terms that extends from behaviorists' experiments are not the experiments themselves. Rather, Burke explains, "the anecdote is in a sense a *summation*, containing implicitly what the system that is developed from it contains explicitly" (*Grammar* 60). This would mean, then, that the representative anecdote is a *representation* (synecdoche) that succinctly yet sufficiently summarizes the motivational calculus's *dialectic* (irony).

In terms of Burke's dramatistic philosophy[25], Bryan Crable accurately points out that representative anecdote "indicates both the birth of dramatism and the logical ground upon which it is founded" (320). Dramatism so conceived is not *the* motivational calculus; rather, dramatism is *a* motivational calculus. Burke wisely leaves room for other possible perspectives with a universal capacity to account for all meaning. This is evident

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[25] …as opposed to epistemology or ontology. In his essay "Dramatism and Logology," Burke claims that dramatism is ontological and that logology is epistemological (Burke "Dramatism" 89-90). If that were true the relationship between the two would not be very divergent since people's ways of using symbols (their epistemology) are inseparable from the ways those symbols determine their states of being (their ontology). Credit to Bryan Crable for pointing out this essay of Burke's (Crable 339).

in his assertion that "A given calculus must be supple and complex enough to be representative of the subject-matter it is designed to calculate. [i.e.] It must have scope. Yet it must also possess simplicity, in that it is broadly a reduction of the subject-matter. By selecting drama as our representative, or informative anecdote, we meet these requirements" (*Grammar* 60). By all this, Burke clearly asserts that *drama* is the representative anecdote for a *dramatistic* motivational calculus. Again, representative anecdote is a *general* term for a linguistic tool that accomplishes two purposes. First, it sufficiently represents a dialectical perspective that accounts for all meaning, and second, it necessarily reduces that universal perspective to a manageable simplicity.

As a representative anecdote, drama is representative in that any perspective that can possibly be presented can be re-presented within a drama—i.e. as a metaphor for the human condition, drama has sufficient scope for an approach to all human motives (i.e. meaning). Also, drama is representative in that it has necessary simplicity (while not being a simplification[26]). Simplicity is necessary to a search for meaning because the subject matter (i.e. meaning) is too large to pursue all at once. Burke summarizes the simplicity and complexity of drama in this way, the motivational calculus that stems from a representative anecdote will have a vocabulary that "can possess a systematically interrelated structure [i.e. necessary simplicity], while at the same time allowing for the discussion of human affairs and the placement of cultural expressions [i.e. sufficient scope]" (*Grammar* 60). In several essays and books, Burke explains that he settles on drama as his representative anecdote because of his interest in "act"—i.e. action or acting

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[26] Another nod to Bryan Crable who surfaced this observation from Burke's *Grammar* (Crable 324).

as opposed to what he calls non-symbolic motion[27]. Remember that just as all seeing is seeing *as*, all action is *acting as*, so that using drama as a representative anecdote views all humans as *literally* acting in every action they do. "In a dramatist perspective," Burke claims, "where the connotations of 'to act' strategically overlap upon the connotations of 'to be,' action is not merely a *means of doing* but a *way of being*" (*Grammar* 310). Or, as other Burkean scholars have summarized, all the world is literally a stage.

The motivational calculus or vocabulary that stems from drama, Burke calls dramatism. Dramatism's vocabulary terms are the six terms that Burke has dubbed the hexad—act (what is done), agent (who does it), scene (when and where the act occurs), agency (by what instrumentality the act happens), purpose (for what reasons the act occurs), and attitude (in what manner the agent executes the act). It is important to note that merely observing a particular action in a particular place committed by a particular person, etc., is not in itself a dramatistic observation. Dramatism, like any motivational calculus, is *dialectic*. Meaning, dramatistic observation relies on the interrelatedness that its terms have with each other. In a word, dramatistic observation occurs when (e.g.) the act is viewed *in terms of* its context or *in terms of* the person who commits it or *in terms of* the attitude with which it was committed, etc (this is what Burke means by "ratios"). To merely view an event or person in a context described by the vocabulary of drama is to merely engage in a dramatic observation. In his "Linguistic Approach to the Problems of Education", Burke further distinguishes between drama as his representative anecdote

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[27] By non-symbolic motion Burke means any movement determined by non-conscious causes. This probably stems from Thomas Hobbes' distinction between "vital motions" and "voluntary motions" in his *Leviathan*. Vital motions so conceived are those motions like digestion, blood flow, and the like as well as "instinctual" behaviors that have necessarily biological explanations. Voluntary motions are every other behavior (i.e. the behaviors that do not have biological explanations). Burke shows a certain affinity to Hobbes in his treatment of Hobbes and motion in *Grammar* 132-137.

and dramatism as his motivational calculus. In context, Burke suggest that dramatistic analysis takes considerable patience, for it is the methodological effort to place in a dialectical relationship everything it addresses. Dramatism as a "linguistic" approach to the human situation "in terms of symbolic action," he suggests, "fulfils its purposes only in so far as it makes methodological the attitude of patience. The 'dramatic' may thunder. It should. The 'dramatistic' […] will 'appreciate' man's ways of thundering" ("Linguistic" 271).

<p style="text-align:center">VII. Conclusion: The Problem of Epistemology's Solution</p>

The most complete introductory treatment of Burke's representative anecdote is Bryan Crable's impressive study, "Burke's Perspective on Perspectives: Grounding Dramatism in the Representative Anecdote" (see Works Cited). Indeed, any future study of Burke's representative anecdote should begin with Crable's project. However, my main point of departure (indeed, I think, my only departure) from Crable's study would be a disagreement of assessment. Crable suggests that the representative anecdote is both representative *and* dialectical (325). In other words, his study lacks a clear distinction between a representative anecdote and its motivational calculus. Again, the difference between the representative anecdote and its motivational calculus is the difference between synecdoche and irony. A representative anecdote is a succinct yet sufficient summation of the dialectic qualities necessary to a motivational calculus. For Burke, *drama* is the representative anecdote; *dramatism* is the motivational calculus.

The distinction between a representative anecdote and its motivational calculus is important for a few different reasons. Mostly, this distinction provides the avenue of retreat (for lack of better terms) in case dramatism proves insufficient to the task of

accounting for all perspectives. If dramatism really is not a universal motivational calculus, then finding a new representative anecdote with an attendant motivational calculus is still a possibility. This is possible if only because Dramatism is a motivational calculus that derives its representative anecdote (i.e. drama) from humans' "acts." Extending from this, it should be possible to conceive of a motivational calculus that would derive its representative anecdote from some other human quality (For instance, Marshall McLuhan's controversial approach to communication in *The Medium is the Massage* is an approach to human meaning in which "instrumentality" is its representative anecdote).

Theodor Adorno advisedly cautions, "Dialectical thought is an attempt to break through the coercion of logic by its own means. But since it must use these means, it is at every moment in danger of itself acquiring a coercive character: the ruse of reason would like to hold sway over the dialectic too" (242). Meaning, that even though dramatism is a cogent and very likely universal approach to knowledge (because of its dialecticism), those who use it should beware lest they fail to engender a dialectic relationship not just among the dramatistic terms (i.e. the ratios among the hexad) but with other modes of thinking as well. This happens when dramatism is used in applicative rather than replicative manners. This is the pitfall for all "systems" of thinking.

Paul de Man likewise warns, "not only are tropes, as their name implies, always on the move—more like quicksilver than like flowers or butterflies which one can at least hope to pin down and insert in a neat taxonomy—but they can disappear altogether, or at least appear to disappear" ("Epistemology" 18). Paul de Man is correct in his explanation

of how tropes appear to change but not in his concern that the tropes may change "altogether."

As long as humans think, the tropes themselves will never change until humans as animals think in a fundamentally different manner (i.e. different than the symbolic relationship/identity between/in the brain and the mind). Meaning, the *how*'s of the tropes (their function in the mind) will not change but the *what*'s of the tropes (their subject matter) will almost certainly continue to change. Drawing again from the tropes that Burke reference in "Four Master Tropes," the subject matter of tropes like metaphor change because humans' perspectives change; similarly, metonymy changes because humans reduce symbols in different ways over time; likewise, synecdoche changes just as humans' extra-mental tools of representation change; and irony changes as new subjects enter into dialectical dialogue.

Because of this illusive and constant change in the tropes, those who are interested in the principles of dramatism should advise themselves as to how dramatism is but *one* possible mode of universal thinking that could grow too illusive for its subject matter and cease doing what scholars hope it can.

Thus, this is the great hope for the representative anecdote, that it is a linguistic tool (for discovering universal modes of thinking) that could eventually even re-place itself.

CHAPTER 3: RETHINKING CRITICAL THINKING:

DIALECTIC, DEMOCRACY, AND DRAMATISM,

OR PEDAGOGY, *PAIDEIA*, AND PERSPECTIVE BY INCONGRUITY

"Our research and criticism are old; our jobs are new. Our profession as scholars

demonstrates richly the lessons learned from four centuries of experience; our profession

as teachers is still wrestling strenuously and confusedly with initial problems that mass

education has greatly aggravated" (Parker 342).

Chapter 1 of this thesis establishes a map of sorts of Kenneth Burke's conception

of pure war. Pure war necessitates more universal vocabularies if only because pure war

is perpetual verbal dialectic. This was the aim of Chapter 2, namely, the pursuit of a

universal vocabulary among language's unavoidable subjectivities. All of this still drives

towards Burke's hope that, "war can be refined to the point where it would be much more

peaceful than the conditions we would now call peace" (*Grammar* 305). Thus the aim of

this chapter is to explore how a perpetually conflictual verbal dialectic can thrive in (and

help to thrive) democratic conditions.

I. Dramatism and the Problem of Teaching Critical Thinking

In discussing teaching critical thinking, I want to avoid the systematizing or

fetishizing of critical thinking. I fear that discussions of critical thinking may devolve into

institutionalized buzz-words which only serve to further hinder the development of

critical thinking. Nothing is more alien to critical thinking than the reactionary mind. This

is the main problem of *discussing* critical thinking.

The problem of *teaching* critical thinking is this: critical thinking as a concept

resists exact definition because critical thinking implies the capacity for purposeful

thinking through any situation or subject. Since critical thinking needs to be able to

address all systems, critical thinking resists a systematized pedagogical approach. An

extension of this is that any complete notion of critical thinking must be able to guide

purposeful thinking reflexively back on itself as its final "subject" of critical inquiry. In

other words, a good test of the effectiveness of a critical thinking methodology is how

well it guides critical thinking *about* critical thinking[28]. In practical measures, the

problem of teaching critical thinking emerges in how well different "approaches" to

critical thinking apply to subjects outside the parameters of their particular approaches.

Furthermore, those seeking to teach critical thinking must face the question, "Whence

critical thinking?" To borrow from Kenneth Burke's words, "the scene in which [critical

thinking emerges] has to be [non-critical] in the sense that conditions *outside* [critical

thinking] provide the context of situation in which [critical thinking emerges]"

("Questions" 334)[29]. Meaning, critical thinking must emerge from non-critical environs

in order *to be developed or even be developable at all*. This last observation gives the

greatest challenge and the greatest hope toward teaching critical thinking. It presents the

greatest challenge because a complete and robust form of teaching critical thinking will

resist any systematized approach. It presents the greatest hope because it will be in

largely non-critical (and thus more approachable) terms that such teaching will occur.

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[28] For instance, this difficulty is an important component of Nietzsche's critique of moral thinking. He sees most forms of traditional moral thinking inadequate for addressing the morality of morality. See his *Gay Science*, *Twilight of the Idols*, and *Ecce Homo* for his clearest critiques in this regard.

[29] In this passage, Burke is actually explaining a necessary condition for the emergence of the U.S. Constitution in particular. Here's the complete passage, "The scene in which the Constitution was enacted," he explains, "had to be 'un-Constitutional' in the sense that conditions *outside* the Constitution provided the 'context of situation' in which the document was enacted" ("Questions" 334). Beyond explaining a condition of emergence for the Constitution, this passage reminds readers that *every* concept emerges from conditions that are not-the-concept.

Kenneth Burke's dramatism (as a method of thinking about thinking) resolves these and other difficulties of teaching critical thinking. It is by and large dramatism's dialectical quality that makes this possible. Human thought is already a *conscious* dialectical activity. Making dialectic a *conscientious* activity makes it possible to analyze all methods of thought. It is also dramatism's dialectical quality that places dramatism in the intersecting (if not concentric) realms of education and democracy[30]. This is because dialectic is the proving of multiple yet equally-considered contraries and because dialectic implies learning new perspectives.

In discussing Burke and dramatism, I want to avoid two common misappropriations. The first is the mistake of conceiving dramatism as a set of "tools" rather than a "method". Thinking of this relationship in terms of agency, the pentad is to the carpenter's hammer as dramatism is to how the carpenter hammers with the hammer. An extension of this is the second mistake I wish to avoid which is the temptation to appropriate dramatism as any sort of static "system" whereby thinkers can situate certain elements of their projects into the corresponding elements of the pentad[31].

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[30] I save the discussion of different definitions of "democracy" for another treatise another time and satisfy the purposes of this essay by defining democracy broadly as the sociality of diverse equals. I will only say here that this definition owes a great debt to Alexis de Tocqueville who sees democracy as equal social conditions, to Paul Woodruff who distinguishes governmental democracy from other "doubles" (like majority rule), and Kenneth Burke who defines democracy as the institutionalization of dialectic.

[31] By way of example, consider the recent trend in a number of published essays to use the pentad as a linguistic "map." Although this is similar in spirit to the ways that Burke uses the pentad, dramatism (of which the pentad is an element) fosters systematic thinking *beyond* systems of thinking. I fear that it may be possible to be too faithful to Burke's use of the pentad and thus counteract the very kind of thinking he seems to encourage. So while certain studies of "pentadic cartography" may be useful in discerning "trained incapacities," I wonder if such studies would be adequate to the task of discerning the incapacities present in pentadic analysis itself. For impressively sophisticated treatises in "pentadic cartography" see Anderson, Floyd D. and Lawrence J. Prelli. "Pentadic Cartography: Mapping the Universe of Discourse." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 87.1 (February 2001): 73-95. Also see Beck, Cheryl Tatano, "Pentadic Cartography: Mapping Birth Trauma Narratives." *Qualitative Health Research* 16.4 (2006): 453-466. Also see DePalma, Michael-Jon, Jeffrey M. Ringer, and James D. Webber. "(Re)Charting the (Dis)Courses of Faith and Politics: Kenneth Burke's Pentad, Sharon Crowley's Toward a Civil Discourse, and Barack Obama's 'Pentecost 2006' Keynote Address." (forthcoming, *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, Fall 2008)

The difficulty in viewing the teaching of critical thinking from the perspective of dramatism is that dramatism itself enjoys (at best) muddy usage among Rhetoric, Composition, and Communication scholars (i.e. in the disciplines in which dramatism receives the most attention). Similarly to Jessica Enoch, for example, many Burke scholars interpret Burke's dramatism as being "synonymous with the interpretive system that he famously called the pentad" (281)[32]. Such reduction is unfortunate in that it does not fully represent Burke's own view of the interpretive value of dramatism or the interpretive function of the pentad itself. For instance, in an essay published in *CCC* intended to clarify misunderstandings about the pentad, Burke asserts that dramatism is "not just the pentad, but the ratios and circumference"[33] ("Questions" 334). However, Burke's clarificatory answer is equally unfortunate in that it is also unclear. He uses terms (i.e. "ratio" and "circumference") that are just as ambiguous as the term "pentad." Only when instructors understand the grammar of Burke's *Grammar* (i.e. how Burke uses terms like "dramatism," "ratios," "equations," "war," "dialectic," and others) can they

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[32] In Enoch's defense, on April 3, 2008 at CCCC in New Orleans, I asked her what she meant by this. She indicated in that conversation that she sees dramatism as an attitude not as a toolbox. Her earlier quote in its context reads, "Burke names his educational solution [to the problems of education] 'dramatistic.' But the dramatistic in ["Linguistic Approach to Problems of Education"] is not exactly synonymous with the interpretive system that he famously called the pentad" which has an early explanation in Burke's *Grammar of Motives* (281). My contention is that Burke *never* conflated dramatism with *merely* the pentad. From at least as early as Burke's *Grammar of Motives*, dramatistic analysis has *always* been attitudinal.

[33] This is anecdotally supported as well. Susan Miller attended a session of CCCC in the late 70s in which a scholar attempted to appropriate Burke's pentad for the formalist purpose of teaching writing. Burke was also in attendance and was apparently miffed at the misusage of the pentad. Dramatism, he contended, is front to back a system of *reading* and not *writing*. Burke also contended at this meeting that dramatism was more accurately understandable through the ratios and not just the pentad. He further contended that he was not a formalist and that any formalist application of the dramatism or the pentad missed the point (Miller). Though exactly when this occurred is unclear from Miller's account, this anecdote could very well reference Joseph Comprone's paper, "Kenneth Burke and the Teaching of Writing," which appeared in the same issue of *CCC* as Burke's short essay "Questions and Answers about the Pentad." Comprone suggests that Burke viewed writing as "not the product of thought but its actualization or dramatization;" he further suggests that Burke's dramatism is a "group of premises" and that the five pentadic terms are a single "perspective" that serves as "the basis for most of his general perspectives on discourse" (Comprone 336-337). Burke could conceivably rejoin that ALL symbol-using (typified in "reading" – even writing is a form of "reading") is the actualization of thought, that dramatism is a method of *being* not a set of premises of *knowing*, and that the pentadic terms are empty without the ratios.

hope to clarify how dramatism provides compelling explanations of both "thinking" in general and "critical thinking" in particular.

II. First Year Composition and Democratic Conditions

The difficulty of teaching critical thinking is aggravated by the necessarily proto-disciplinary setting of a first year composition course, in which striking a balance between generalities and specific subject matter will never cease being a pedagogical issue. Particularly, in light of the lofty ideals for critical thinking, how can first year composition instructors teach their students abstract modes of thinking when such students often struggle with meeting basic institutional standards such as simple grammar and syntax? This is just a specialized formulation of the larger pedagogical question: how do instructors of any discipline teach critical thinking amid other intellectual rigors attendant to particular disciplines? Such questions reveal a simple post hoc error, namely, just because most students develop critical thinking *after* mastering basic techniques within any given discipline does not necessarily mean that learning critical thinking *presupposes* learning such basic techniques. If critical thinking does not necessarily presuppose prerequisite skills and knowledge sets, then teaching critical thinking would not be based on any kinds of *what*-is-learned but on *how*-it-is-learned. As such, successfully teaching critical thinking in first year composition classrooms would help illustrate the flexibility and range of critical thinking as a methodology of *how's* instead of a methodology of *what's* (since many students in first year composition struggle with composition's particular *what's* anyway).

Also, first year composition in American institutions of higher education is a uniquely democratic nexus of divergent instructor paradigms as well as divergent student

paradigms. Of course composition instructor paradigms will diverge from composition student paradigms and vice versa. But composition instructor paradigms frequently diverge from those of other composition instructors, and a similar divergence holds true for composition students.

The divergence of first year composition instructors (qua instructors) from each other is largely due to the constraints of a homogeneous institutional need (i.e. every student must attend first year composition) the responsibility of which is imposed on individual faculty with heterogeneous sets of professional knowledge. The divergence of first year composition students (qua students) from each other is largely due to the "general" quality of first year composition that was instituted in American universities to imitate the educational concerns of secondary education in American public schools.

In his now-classic essay, "Where Do English Departments Come From?" William Parker describes how both instructors and students can come from divergent paradigms. After mapping the development of English Departments from both classical and rhetorical educational models into the current literature-dominant model, Parker observes that "English departments became the catchall for the work of teachers of extremely diverse interests and training, united theoretically but not actually by their common use of the mother tongue" (348). These teachers typically spend years of graduate study focusing on specialties of literature or language. They then get hired by English departments that put them to work in freshman composition courses or at best survey courses peripherally related to their areas of research. After proving themselves, these teachers will eventually be able to teach a grad seminar or two in their areas of specialty. Thus, composition teachers frequently begin teaching composition (when they teach it)

from divergent non-composition disciplinary backgrounds. Of course, many English departments have a "comp/rhet" sub-faculty that now mercifully relieves the non-composition faculty of the burden of actually teaching students *how* to communicate thus freeing up the non-composition faculty to teach students *what* to communicate. However, the non-sequiter of non-composition faculty teaching composition courses still holds true at smaller colleges and universities at which comp/rhet faculty are not available to do such grunt work. But the basic observation also holds true for graduate student instructors (who teach the majority of first year composition courses at the larger universities), most of whom look forward to the day when they don't have to teach composition anymore because their divergent specialized interests lie elsewhere (Parker 350).

First year composition students' divergence manifests in not only disciplinary differences, but also in cultural, economic, and racial distinctions. This divergence also holds true for instructors, but while there is typically one instructor per classroom, students from all backgrounds are lumped together in the first year composition course. As Parker further explains, such a course emerged onto the university scene as a combination of growing economic needs in America as well as an extension of public secondary education. This became particularly pronounced in the last decades of the 19th century. Particularly the 1890s "was a period in which the whole *structure* of higher education in America underwent profound changes, yielding to the pressures of […] acceptance of the idea that practical or useful courses had a place in higher education" (Parker 348, italics in original). Skills like composition had observable utility in the ever-growing business structure of American economy. Further, in 1892 "the National Education Association formally recommended that literature and composition be unified

in the high school course. […] Thereafter, college entrance exams […] linked high school work in 'English' with beginning college work in composition" (Parker 350). This shift in the structure of higher education helps perpetuate the democratic demographic found in America's public schools[34].

Of course this democratization of higher education is an issue in any general education course. However, unlike first-year biology or chemistry or math or history courses, first year composition faces the especial difficulty of preparing students to write and think in *any* discipline instead of a single discipline. Meaning, the democratic qualities of knowledge learned in first year composition need to continue to democratically apply to all other disciplines.

This democratization of education contains both the problem of teaching critical thinking and the solution for the problem of teaching critical thinking.

III. Teaching "Thinking" in Democratic Conditions: the Problem and the Solution

The problem of teaching critical thinking in democratic conditions faces a two-fold difficulty of what Kenneth Burke calls the "cult of empire"[35] (*Grammar* 317). In its ugliest extremes, the cult of empire manifests in what Burke calls "fanaticism" and "dissipation". These methods of thinking are anti-critical in that they reduce all other methods of thinking to only one method of thinking.

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[34] Of course American public schools have had a spotty record of actually democratizing their student demographics. Some schools regress; other progress, but it's safe to say that American schools are at least in a continual process of generally shifting in that direction—however many generations that shift may take. The point is that insofar as public schools and higher education are pedagogically linked, the democratic element (however strong or weak) of the former will carry over to the latter.

[35] For a solid foray into Burke's conception of the "cult of empire," see Kastely, James L. "Kenneth Burke's Comic Rejoinder to the Cult of Empire" *College English* 58(1996): 307-326. Kastely's treatment of Burke's use of comedy as a rhetorical mode of "tripping" is itself a dialectical view of dialectic processes and only further illustrates the flexibility and utility of Burke's dramatism.

"By fanaticism [Burke means] the effort to impose one doctrine of motives abruptly upon a world composed of many different motivational situations" (*Grammar* 318). In another essay, Burke recognizes that such fanaticism frequently manifests in unsophisticated teaching methods. Some teaching methods seek to indoctrinate students with "a narrowly partisan point of view in [controversial] subjects" ("Linguistic" 283). A slightly less unsophisticated method of education seeks out other perspectives for students to learn but only for the purposes of strengthening students' originally-held perspective.

Alexis de Tocqueville (in his observations of American democracy) offers a compelling explanation as to how of these oppressive methods of education could stem from democratic conditions. He observes,

> Whenever social conditions are equal, the opinion of all bears down with a great weight upon the mind of each individual, enfolding, controlling, and oppressing him. […] As all men grow more alike, each individual feels increasingly weak in relation to the rest. Since he can find nothing to elevate himself above their level or to distinguish himself from them, he loses confidence in himself the moment they attack him; […In a] a democratic society […], it will always, therefore, be very difficult for a man to believe what the mass of the people reject or to profess what they condemn. All this grants a marvelous stability to beliefs. (747-48)

Often when teachers in a democracy are themselves able to avoid or overcome this fanatic impulse, they will often still find fanaticism in varying degrees in many of their students.

The other difficult extreme in teaching critical thinking to students in a democracy is dissipation, which often manifests as competition.

> By dissipation [Burke means] the isolationist tendency to surrender, as one finds the issues of world adjustment so complex that he merely turns to the satisfactions nearest at hand, living morally and intellectually from hand to mouth, buying as much as one can buy with as much as one can earn, or selling as much as one can sell, or in general taking whatever opportunities of gratification or advancement happen to present themselves and letting all else take care of itself. (*Grammar* 318)

Burke further explains that "This temptation is always with us, partly because sound common sense admonishes that we should not burden ourselves with problems beyond our powers" (*Grammar* 318). Also, this impulse drives students to compete with each other in frequently unhealthy ways. Burke explains why:

> Far too often, education is wholly under the sign of the promissory. The serious student enters school hoping to increase his powers, to equip himself in the competition for 'success,' to make the 'contacts' that get him a better-paying job. Vocational courses almost inevitably confirm such an attitude, since their main purpose is to perfect technical ability. […] The 'humanistic' aspect of the curriculum is usually approached in the same spirit, even by those who think of themselves as opponents of the vocational emphasis. The courses are expected in some way or other to help students 'get ahead' as individuals. ("Linguistic" 271)[36]

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[36] Two personal examples of this competition I've experienced as a humanist occurred quite recently. I just recently finished the application process for PhD programs (I'm going to Purdue beginning Fall 2008). I

The temptation here is to subvert education as a phenomenon which helps humans progress in uniquely human ways in favor of education as an economic phenomenon which ultimately serves physical pleasures. This competition-for-self-gratification-sake impulse is a constant temptation in democracies in which, as de Tocqueville explains, individualism often devolves into egoism. Individualism "is a calm and considered feeling which persuades each citizen to cut himself off from his fellows and to withdraw into the circle of his family and friends" (587). The virtue of "self-sufficiency" often found in democracies fuels this impulse. Individualism may eventually merge with egoism, which de Tocqueville defines as "an ardent and excessive love of oneself which leads man to relate everything back to himself and to prefer himself above everything" (587). As individualism socially isolates people, such people may unintentionally find themselves focusing so much on their own needs that they begin to see the world around them solely in terms of their own wants. Again, while teachers in a democracy may overcome or avoid this dissipative and competitive sort of temptation, many students in a democracy enter and graduate through higher education still dealing with it (however consciously or ignorantly).

Having painted (with a Burkean brush) such a dire picture of the problems facing education in a democracy, I hasten to point out that the solutions to these problems are available through the very conditions unique to a democracy. This is a variant of John Dewey's famous assertion that "the cure for the ailments of democracy is more democracy" (146). Of course merely multiplying the democratic conditions in which

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also recently attended the CCCC in New Orleans (2008). The former experience initially pitted me in competition with other hopeful grad students and then eventually it pitted Purdue's offer to me in competition with others. Most professional academics understand how much of the decision process for graduate school comes down to a financial concern. The latter experience found me scoping out the CCCC sessions as I sought out scholars in my chosen field for the purpose of "making connections."

people may succumb to either dissipation or fanaticism is not itself the answer to democracy's ailments. A democracy is democratic by virtue of the diverse equals that compose it. Ergo, the short answer to the problems facing education in a democracy is this: a democratic people needs to be *conscientiously* democratic; meaning, diverse individuals need to participate in any social activity as equals (if not fully equally). The rest of this essay is the long answer.

IV. Democracy and Dialectic

Jessica Enoch suggests that Burke's pedagogical ideas "were revolutionary due in large part to his attention to and interest in progressive education and, more specifically, the work of John Dewey" (277). Through passages from Burke's personal correspondence and the Dewey-inspired pedagogical practices at Bennington College (where Burke worked while writing "Linguistic"), Enoch shows how Burke was intimately familiar with Dewey's educational philosophy (277-278). The connection between Burke and Dewey is larger that this, though. Both philosophers were driven by a deep desire to see democracy succeed.

Dewey observes that de Tocqueville "pointed out in effect that popular government is educative as other modes of political regulation are not. It forces a recognition that there are common interests, even though the recognition of *what* they are is confused; and the need it enforces of discussion and publicity brings about some clarification of what they are" (207, italics in original). Dewey expands on this by suggesting, "The essential need, in other words, is the improvement of the methods and conditions of debate, discussion and persuasion. That is *the* problem of the public. […] this improvement depends essentially upon freeing and perfecting the processes of

inquiry" (208, italics in original). The solution, again, is conscientious dialectical

interaction among democratic counterparts.

A few months shy of his 26th birthday, Kenneth Burke responded via letter to his

friend Malcolm Cowley who had (apparently) earlier praised "the hilarious crudeness" of

America. "I am continually trying to ask myself and you," Burke writes, "whether this

does not involve a latent acceptance of democracy, and whether we really do have to

accept democracy" (Jay 139). Eighteen years later, he wrote in his *Philosophy of Literary*

Form,

> I take democracy to be a device for institutionalizing the dialectical
>
> process, by setting up a political structure that gives full opportunity for
>
> the use of competition to a cooperative end. Allow full scope of the
>
> dialectical process, and you establish a scene in which the protagonist of a
>
> thesis has maximum opportunity to modify his thesis, and so mature it, in
>
> the light of the antagonist's rejoinders. The dialectical process *absolutely*
>
> *must* be unimpeded, if society is to perfect its understanding of reality by
>
> the necessary method of give-and-take (yield-and-advance). (*Philosophy*
>
> 444, italics in original)

As the passages above illustrate, between the years 1923 and 1941, Burke made a decided

turn in which he progressed from questioning the very efficacy of democracy to

categorically asserting that democracy (as institutionalized dialectic) should not be

hindered at all. This transition is certainly related to his awareness of fascism's growth in

Europe during this time. However, this transition more precisely extends from the rhetorical concerns about symbol-use he developed during this time[37].

In his first book of nonfiction, *Counter-Statement* (1931), Burke seems to have already made this transition. In this book, he defines democracy alternately as a "system of checks and counter-checks," "a system of government based on the fear that central authority becomes bad authority," as such democracy is "organized distrust, 'protest made easy', a babble of discordant voices, a colossal getting in one's own way— democracy, now endangered by the apostles of hope [i.e. fascists] who would attack it for its 'inefficiency', whereas inefficiency is the one thing it has it is favor" (*Counter* 114). Burke touts inefficiency as a virtue of democracy because democracy's sluggishness both results from and fosters the very discordant discussion that tends to keep government from going bad. As such, the ideal democrat as Burke conceives it is "the man who thinks of powers as something to be 'fought,' has no hope in perfection—as the 'opposition', his nearest approach to a doctrine is the doctrine of interference. There is no absolute truth, he says, but there is the cancellation of errors" (*Counter* 115). The political problem here is actually linguistic and rhetorical. Cries for more efficient government lead to silencing opposing views (if only because efficiency is by definition the successful pursuit of one course of action at the exclusion of others). The more voices (both in number and diversity) that participate in government, the less efficient the government is. The less efficient government is, the less likely that such government will pursue (however efficiently) disastrous courses of action. Throughout his career, Burke consistently advocated approaches to language that encouraged slower, more methodological, and

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[37] Burke in 1923 was near the end of his foray into fiction writing. The last of his short fiction was published in *The White Oxen and Other Stories* in 1924. Though more stories made their way into the 1968 reprint *The Complete White Oxen*, none of those stories were written after 1924.

more dialectical studies of meaning and motive. Such approaches, Burke suggests, succeed in preventing humans' obsession with hierarchy and perfection (which both drive efficiency) from leading to disastrous outcomes[38].

The rhetorical justification and explanation for this can be found in various works from throughout Burke's career. In his 1973 essay, "The Rhetorical Situation" for example, Burke builds on his work in *Rhetoric of Motives* in which he situates rhetoric as identification. In "The Rhetorical Situation", Burke considers identification under "three main heads": identification by sympathy (what you're for), identification by antithesis (what you're against), and lastly, identification by inaccuracy (or alternately by unawareness or by false assumption). Burke suggests this last mode of identification gets "to the very roots of the rhetorical situation" ("Rhetorical" 269). This is because identification by inaccuracy jumbles the dialectical process. When individuals identify with a specific person or program under false assumptions, what are actually divergent voices become one voice at the expense of the subsumed voices. As Burke explains, "The poignancy of the rhetorical situation attains its fullness in spontaneously arising identifications whereby, even without deliberate intent upon the part of anyone, we fail to draw the lines at the right places" ("Rhetorical" 271). The moral quandary in all this lies in the disjunction between subjective identity and the identity of technological machines and/or sociopolitical movements. On the technological level, humans may relate to a machine (like a car) with the subjective "I" as in, "I sped around the corner." Burke also locates the root of ambiguity in the word "we" – e.g. "we" invaded Iraq, or "we" dropped the Bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, or "Yes, 'we' can! Yes, 'we' can! Yes, 'we' can!"

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[38] For more on this see Kastely, James L. "Kenneth Burke's Comic Rejoinder to the Cult of Empire" *College English* 58(1996): 307-326.

…and on and on. Of course, this kind of identification may be beneficial if the citizens in a democratic society seek to alter the course of governmental behavior through some sense of genuine collective guilt or responsibility. However, first among the considerations Burke stresses in dramatism is this: a "concern with the principle of 'identification' that prevails […] when ruler and subjects, however disparate their ways of living, feel themselves united in some common cause" ("Linguistic" 269). Meaning, this kind of identification becomes dangerous when individuals in a populace accept the actions of a government (however abusive or beneficial) merely *because* they self-identify with the government (whether or not the government's attitudes may or may not accord with their own).

Opposition through dialectic harnesses strife, which is natural to humans' condition, and employs it to cooperative ends. In his 1974 essay, "Communication and the Human Condition", Burke observes that all "organisms live by killing" ("Communication" 136). In other words there is "no construction without destruction" ("Communication" 137). This involves everything from consuming other living matter for survival to destroying tracts of forests for the purpose of commodious living. Dialectic in a democracy also works this way albeit beneficially. As a certain thesis encounters divergent antitheses, the thesis is partially destroyed by (and reconstructed in at least partial image of) each sound antithesis it encounters. In this way, according to Burke, "The very powers developed by us and grounded ultimately in the primal naturalistic necessities of strife or strain are the same resources by which we perfected our modes of cooperation" ("Communication" 144).[39]

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[39] Compare this to Burke's explanation of the motto of *A Grammar of Motives* which is *Ad Bellum Purificandum* (Towards the Purification of War). See particularly pages 317-320 in Burke, Kenneth. *A*

The relationship among this dialectic method of education, its language-dependent dialectic nature, and democracy should be plain. Burke clearly explains, "A linguistic approach to human relations would probably be happiest with democracy, of all political systems, since democracy comes nearest to being the institutionalized equivalent of dialectical processes (with such hopes of maturing an opinion as we discussed in connection with the ideal dialogue of education at rung four)" ("Linguistic" 285). Of course whenever democracy is practiced in any form, the democratic populace is often beset with rhetorical trappings (whether in political, commercial, or religious forms). In such circumstances, dialectical education serves (in Burke's words) to teach a populace how to

> discount such devices; and nothing less than a very thorough training in the discounting of rhetorical persuasiveness can make a citizenry truly free, so far as linguistic tests are concerned. But we can say that *ideal* democracy does allow all voices to participate in the dialogue of the state, and such *ideal* democracy is the nearest possible institutional equivalent to the linguistic ideal. ("Linguistic" 285, italics in original)

Burke's final justification and defense for democracy is thus linguistic in nature. Yes, democracy tends to limit the amount of harm committed by monolithic or hegemonic governments. But Burke's justification for democracy specifically shows that democracy and dialectic are necessary for either to be practiced thoroughly.

Grammar of Motives. New York: Prentice Hall, [1945] 1952. "War" in this sense is closer to Burke's usage of "strife" from "Communication and the Human Condition." In "Communication" (which was written after *Grammar*), Burke makes a clearer distinction between war and strife by suggesting that War is "a diseased form of cooperation" ("Communication" 144).

In addition, even in a democratic environment, in which instructors are sensitive to dialectic needs and concerns, instructors face the difficulty of exactly *how* to go about encouraging critical thinking in their students. The mistake at this point would be to rely on specific pedagogical activities that induce critical thinking. This takes a "tools" approach to the problem and does not account for the "method" in which the tools are used.

<div align="center">V. Dialectic and Paideia</div>

The connection among dialectic, democracy, and education is not new with Kenneth Burke's treatment of dramatism. Paul Woodruff, in his book-length study *First Democracy*, posits a picture of *paideia* (the education the ancient Athenians embraced) that reinforces this interconnected relationship. Indeed, the Athenians' ideal of *paideia* (though perhaps not its actual practice) provides another perspective of the dialectical nature of critical thinking.

While I read *First Democracy*, it occurred to me that rhetoric, democracy, and education contextually relate to each other in a way I can only describe as infundibular. The further in you go, the bigger it gets. Meaning, as a justifiable scene for the other two, each concept enjoys a position that both circumscribes and is subsumed by the circumference of either of the other two concepts. For instance, democratic cooperation could justifiably be the representative anecdote for rhetoric as a whole. Kenneth Burke confesses how he incorporates as the scene for his "constant concern with poetical and rhetorical devices […] Malinowski's prime representative anecdote for the study of symbolic action: a group of illiterate savages using language as a tool in the cooperative act of catching fish" ("Questions" 333). Cooperative human action necessitates rhetoric:

democratic cooperation is the non-rhetorical scene from which rhetoric emerges. I admit,

this is a somewhat crippled conception of democracy – perhaps more akin to the kind of

democracy wolves enjoy – but Burke's metaphoric observation is still apropos to the

democratic development of symbol usage. As symbol-usage and cooperative action

develop and mature (i.e. become more "sophistic-ated"), they lead to instituted and

conscientious efforts of education (in this sense the practice of training other symbol

users how to better use symbols to better catch fish). Democracy and rhetoric comprise

the non-educational scene from which education emerges. But here, at this center point in

the scene of rhetoric (within the scene of democracy), the perspective changes as it

becomes apparent that education is itself the non-democratic scene from which

democracy as an institution emerges (as in Aspasia's analysis of *paideia* – see below).

Such "educated" and institutionalized democracy consequently serves as the scene from

which rhetoric (as symbol-usage grown conscientious of its own use of symbols)

emerges. As such, all three concepts rely on each other (as both scene and agency). As

one goes so go the others. All are necessary for each other; any one is sufficient for the

other two.[40]

    "*Paideia*," Woodruff informs, "is the kind of education that makes for better

citizens" and that such things are "better" if they have more excellence or virtue (193).

One ancient proponent of *paidiea* (ironically ineligible for education because she's a

woman) connects education, rhetoric, and democracy in this way: "If citizens do not have

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[40] But, someone might understandably challenge, what if democracy were denied a people? Could not people still be rhetorical and educational beings without democracy? Of course and of course not. While institutionalized democracy may be removed from governmental systems, every human interaction is at its core cooperational and will never cease to be democratic in this sense. But notice that the less *conscientiously* democratic a people becomes, their rhetorical and educational efforts will likewise become less conscientious. Or as rhetoric devolves so does educational and democratic participation. Likewise, as education lapses, so does attention to rhetorical and democratic concerns, which is one of the points of this essay.

the good judgment that *paideia* is supposed to develop, what good can they do in

discussion? And how will they be competent to judge a debate? But without useful debate

and discussion the people cannot rule well" (Aspasia, qtd. in Woodruff 191). Notice the

causal relationship in which good education develops good rhetoric which develops good

democracy. For the Greeks, education provides the proper context for both rhetorical and

democratic action. As such, Woodruff further explains, "Education must be for all

citizens. Democracy depends on the good qualities of all those who participate. And we

have seen good reasons why democracy runs best when participation is high: government

cannot be for the people it if divides the people" (208). To achieve this civic goal,

Woodruff reasons, *paideia* must teach a balance of certain virtues, namely justice and

reverence on one hand and cultural homogeneity on the other. The latter he justifies

because homogeneity provides societal stability (absolutely necessary for democracy to

function); the former he justifies as the consistent antidote to the inherent dangers in the

latter. Woodruff argues earlier in his book that the study of rhetoric develops the ability

to reason without knowledge – a process which, as he sums up in his *paideia* chapter,

"should lead to better judgment" (203). Judgment is the final major virtue needed in

paideia that distinguishes between the needs of justice/reverence and homogeneity.

  In answering the concern, "In *paideia*, who are the teachers?" Woodruff reasons

that the ideal educational department includes both non-intellectual teachers (those who

merely have what he calls "citizen wisdom") and those with expert training who

challenge conventional wisdom. The former he justifies with the consistent claim that

paidiea must be *general* education (after all it is equal education for all). And who best to

educate generally than those who are generally versed in the norms of society? But lest

such education lead to dogmatic harm (after all, the democratic Athenians still had non-democratic cultural practices, e.g. slavery, the treatment of women, etc.), experts who challenge the status quo must be allowed to pedagogically contribute. "This is the paradox of general education," Woodruff surmises, "that it must provide both continuity [thus satisfying its "general" demands] and challenge [thus satisfying its "betterment" demands] for the culture it is trying to sustain" (209). This paradox firmly connects *paideia* with the overtly dialectical concerns of teaching critical thinking.

For brevity's sake, consider the rhetorical components of *paideia* and teaching critical thinking in light of Kenneth Burke's treatment of what he calls "The Four Master Tropes" – metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony[41]. Burke analyzes these tropes in regards to "their role in the discovery and description of 'the truth'" (*Grammar* 503). This particular instrumentality of the tropes applies just as well to pedagogical concerns in *paideia* and teaching critical thinking. What role, if any, do these tropes play in the discovery and description of the virtues *paideia* should teach? Further how do these tropes relate to the development of critical thinking?

"Metaphor," Burke suggests, "tells us something about one character as considered from the point of view of another character. And to consider A from the point of view of B is, of course, to use B as a *perspective* upon B" (*Grammar* 503-504, italics in original). The symbolic overlays which occur in the other three tropes are extensions of the function of metaphor/perspective. In terms of *paideia* and critical thinking,

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[41] These tropes also parallel Burke's critique of the "educational ladder" in "Linguistic Approach to the Problems of Education" (283-284). Each trope corresponds with each successive rung of the educational ladder (metaphor on the lowest rung and dialectic on the highest rung). Even though dialectic is represented in this educational hierarchy, dramatistic education and critical thinking would be even more dialectical, for they would view the hierarchical educational "steps" themselves in dialectical (and not just hierarchical) terms.

implementing perspective is useful in that it is through perspective that students understand anything. However, *paideia* and critical thinking (as a mode of education in democracy) cannot embrace merely a mono-perspective (or metaphor) of societal concerns, for that is perspectival relativism. Relativism in this sense, Burke explains, "is got by […] fragmentation […] for relativism sees everything in but one set of terms" (*Grammar* 512, italics in original). While a partisan perspective fulfills the "general" requirement of *paideia* (in that the concerns of the general community are upheld), partisan perspective cannot satisfy the justice/reverence requirement (which accounts for reconciliation of disputes, among equals and across power boundaries, in a democratic plurality). Similarly, critical thinking that is only one perspective of thinking is unable to explain itself from a perspective outside itself.

Metonymy (or "reduction" for Burke) is "to convey some incorporeal or intangible state in terms of the corporeal or tangible. E.g., to speak of 'the heart' rather than 'the emotions'" (Burke, *Grammar* 506). Metonymy as reduction is a useful technique in *paideia* and critical thinking, for it provides the possibility of teaching complicated societal concerns in simpler terms. The chief concern, though, is to make sure that such reductions reduce to simplicity and not mere simplification[42]. *Paideia* and critical thinking cannot tout merely a reduction (metonymy) of societal concerns, if only because *paideia* and critical thinking must be able to concern itself with future concerns. Meaning, education can only be reduced to future concerns insofar as future concerns imitate past concerns; otherwise future concerns that lack imitations in the past demand education be adequately *expanded* to meet these concerns. Certainly the Greeks struggled

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[42] See Crable, Bryan. "Burke's Perspective on Perspectives: Grounding Dramatism in the Representative Anecdote." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 86(2000): 318-333. See particularly page 324 for this same relationship in regard to Burke's Representative Anecdote.

with this (e.g. their execution of Socrates), but a certain worry over this is also reflected in de Tocqueville's study of American democracy. Without an expansive ability to anticipate future societal needs, de Tocqueville worries that democratic citizens "will prefer to follow tamely the course of their own destiny rather than make a sudden and energetic effort to set things right when the need arises" (750)[43].

This leads to Burke's next trope synecdoche (or representation). While all reduction is representation, as Burke recognizes, not all representation is reduction. A representation may certainly *reduce* its original subject (in the way a topographical map is a representative reduction of the "contours of the United States" [Burke, *Grammar* 507]). This is the path from the concrete to the abstract (and is merely metonymy). But a representation may also follow the path from the abstract to the concrete. In other words, a representation may also *expand* from its original abstract subject to any number of concrete representations (in the way the actual paint involved in the construction of Jackson Pollack's paintings is a representative expansion of paint-ness – inasmuch as Pollock's splatter projects are paintings *about* painting). But, *paideia* and critical thinking cannot hold merely to a representative perspective of societal concerns, for *paideia* as Woodruff correctly portrays it, represents and is represented by paradoxical provisions, namely, continuity of and challenge to societal concerns.

It is only through the *dialectical* or ironic relationship of ideas (i.e. in Burke's terms "the interaction of [these] terms upon one another, to produce a *development* which

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[43] de Tocqueville also saw the importance of education in relation to "interest rightly understood" which is at least akin to Woodruff's definition of "citizen wisdom" which also requires effective education. From De Tocqueville: "I do not believe that the doctrine of self-interest as it is preached in America is obvious in all its aspects but it contains a great number of truths so clear that all you have to do to convince men is to educate them. Hence, give them education at any price, for the century of blind sacrifice and instinctive virtues is already distant from us and I see the time drawing near when freedom, public peace, and social order itself will not be able to do without education" (613).

uses all the terms" [*Grammar* 512]) that *paideia* really achieves its divergent purposes.

As Burke further describes irony or dialectic:

> Insofar as terms are thus encouraged to participate in an orderly
>
> parliamentary development, the dialectic of this participation produces (in
>
> the observer who considers the whole from the standpoint of the
>
> participation of all the terms rather than from the standpoint of any one
>
> participant) a 'resultant certainty' of a different quality, necessarily ironic,
>
> since it requires that all the sub-certainties be considered as neither true
>
> nor false, but *contributory*. (*Grammar* 513, italics in original)

Burke's use of "parliamentary" here is not happenstance. Dialectic/Irony is the most

democratic of the master tropes, for it is not just a perspective; rather it is a "perspective

of perspectives" (Burke, *Grammar* 512). It is a dialectical perspective which makes

possible the perceiving and *appreciating* of divergent perspectives, reductions, and

representations *at the same time*. As such, dialectic is the most useful trope for the

concerns of *paideia* and critical thinking, for it allows, nay demands, the interaction of

paideia's paradoxical concerns – the perpetual interaction between

homogeneity/continuity and justice/reverence/challenge. Such interaction produces a

development that uses all the concepts and achieves a certain harmony of pedagogical

purpose through perpetual paradox.

Concerns of improving upon education, rhetoric, and democracy are not only

interrelated but very often identical. It is through the dialectic of divergent ideas and

concepts that all three of these concepts improve, for education, rhetoric, and democracy

themselves are dialectical in their relationship to each other.

VI. Dialectic and the Ratios

As I have shown elsewhere[44], thinking (i.e. *the* activity of consciousness) is a dialectical activity that has by and large forgotten it is dialectic. To think in a *conscientiously* dialectical manner forces interactive consideration of all subjects dialectically considered. Burke's dramatism is his method of forcing conscientious dialectical observation. Just as all seeing is seeing *as* [45], all action is *acting as*. Everyone is *acting* in every movement (whether neurological or physical) that is not mere non-conscious motion. People act in certain ways dependent on their ways of perceiving. It is because every act is *acting* that Burke calls his method of thinking about thinking "dramatism." Meaning, dramatism is a method of thinking about humans in the dialectically dramatic environment which humans (because of the way their symbolically-determined minds operate) find themselves in. So while humans' actions are partially controlled by the symbols that makes their thoughts possible (remember, e.g., fanaticism and dissipation), humans can mediate such control by approaching their own thoughts dialectically (i.e. by practicing thinking via divergent perspectives). Burke develops dramatism as a method of accomplishing this.

Burke most often references the "ratios" and of the pentad as the most useful means whereby this kind of dialectical analysis can happen. "The ratios," he explains in his *Grammar* "are principles of determination" that determine "synecdochic relation" (*Grammar* 7, 15).

In other words, "synecdochic relation" is *representative* relation. The ratios are

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[44] See chapter 2 of this thesis titled "The Exigency for a Representative Anecdote and Motivational Calculus."

[45] See Crable, Bryan. "Burke's Perspective on Perspectives: Grounding Dramatism in the Representative Anecdote." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 86(2000): 318-333. Specifically see page 323.

representative in function in that they are ways of seeing one term in *terms* of another term.

Burke elaborates on this function when he explains that his dramatistic project in *Grammar of Motives*

> "stresses the ways whereby the terms become functions of one another:
> Thus, by the 'scene-act ratio' is meant a statement where the substance of
> an act is said to have been potentially or analogously present in the scene,
> and to be derived from the scene; similarly, an 'agent-act' ratio derives the
> quality of the act from the corresponding nature of the agent; the 'purpose-
> agency ratio' concerns the relation of consistency or consubstantiality
> between end and means; etc." ("Linguistic" 268).

The ratios force questions such as, "What of the agent is represented in the action, and vice versa, what of the action is represented in the agent?" Notice that this question is another way of asking, "In what ways is the agent affected from the *perspective* of the action, or in what ways is the action affected from the *perspective* of the agent?"

In a later essay, after explaining this concept of ratios, Burke explains that "the approach to human relations through the study of language in terms of drama makes such concerns [of perspective] primary and seeks to […] treat of human quandaries in such a spirit" ("Linguistic" 269). He further clarifies that "the study of symbolic action […] should begin with the charting of 'equations.' That is: when you consult a text, from which you hope to derive insights as regards our human quandaries in general, you begin by asking yourself 'what equals what in this text?' And then, next, 'what follows what in

this text?'" ("Linguistic" 270). As Gregory Clark suggests, these most basic of critical

questions are central to Burke's dramatistic approach to human action (Clark).

Notice that this kind of thinking involves considering divergent perspectives in

conjunction with each other. This activity may be simple, as in the analysis of how

different elements of an action committed by a single person interrelate to each other.

This becomes more complex when considering the actions of diverse people or peoples.

Burke suggests that education, thus dialectically conceived, would note, "how [human's]

distinctive trait, [their] way with symbols, is the source of both [their] typical

accomplishments and [their] typical disabilities [and would therefore] be first and

foremost 'of a divided mind,' and would seek to make itself at home in such

divisiveness" ("Linguistic" 271).

VII. Critical Thinking as Perspective by Incongruity

The "method" of critical thinking is thus readily observable in democratically

dialectical discussions. As a certain thesis encounters divergent antitheses, the thesis is

partially destroyed by (and reconstructed in at least partial image of) each sound

antithesis it encounters. Education beneficially relies on the destruction of former ways of

thinking as new ways of thinking take their places. In his book *Permanence and Change*,

Burke calls the conscientious mode of such thinking "perspective by incongruity" which

he defines elsewhere as "a method for gauging situations by verbal 'atom-cracking.' That

is, a word belongs by custom to a certain category—and by rational planning you wrench

it loose and metaphorically apply it to a different category" (*Attitudes* 308). Perspective

by incongruity is dialectical catachresis in that it relies on purposefully perceiving

divergent perspectives at the same time thus creating a third perspective that is and is not

both divergent perspectives. Such dialectical "atom-cracking" often produces

observations that are not otherwise available.

More than anything else Burke teaches, perspective by incongruity offers a clear

pedagogical starting point for instructors interested in teaching critical thinking to their

students.

Perspective by incongruity is also another way of seeing the "perpetual" element

of all future scholarship. Scholars share and publish papers on the assumption that their

papers contain recognizable elements shared from new perspectives. Even thinkers who

radicalize scholarly conversations (Nietzsche, Foucault, de Beuvoir, Derrida, Elbow, to

name a few) do so by perceiving old problems from radically different perspectives.

Perpetually fostering perspective by incongruity keeps dialectic a conscientious

(rather than merely conscious) human activity. Perpetual perspective by incongruity

appreciates all the possible relationships among perspectives but also requires a certain

amount of patience, for it never settles or resolves itself. Every perspective it produces

may incongruously clash with yet another perspective. Burke elaborates that dramatism

> fulfils its purposes only in so far as it makes methodological the attitude of
>
> patience. The 'dramatic' may thunder. It should. The 'dramatistic,' in a
>
> commingling of techniques and hypochondriasis, will 'appreciate' man's
>
> ways of thundering." ("Linguistic" 271)

Hypochondriasis is hypochondria in its pathological sense. Burke mentions

hypochondriasis twice in his *Grammar of Motives*. Both instances are in response to the

difficulties that fanaticism and dissipation (as the ugly extremes of the cult of empire)

present to democratic society. "To what extent," Burke asks,

can we avoid the piecemeal response of dissipation (that is content simply

to take whatever opportunities are nearest at hand) and the response of

fanaticism (that would impose one terminology of motives upon the whole

world, regardless of the great dialectical interchange still to be

completed)? (*Grammar* 442)

The answer, he suggests, "will be like an attitude of hypochondriasis: the attitude of a

patient who makes peace with his symptoms by becoming interested in them" (*Grammar*

443). This attitude would also be "an attitude of appreciation" that "would seek delight in

meditating upon some of the many ingenuities of speech" (*Grammar* 443)[46].

Adopting perspective by incongruity as an attitude of hypochondriasis in "looking

upon the cult of empire as a sickness" (Burke, *Grammar* 317) makes sound dialectical

sense[47]. If we constantly assume that we might be linguistically or motivationally sick

(i.e. dialectically lacking) with symptoms of either fanaticism or dissipation, employing

perspective by incongruity serves as a continual cure-all. Even if perspective by

incongruity is employed against democracy (say, combining democratic terminology with

very anti-democratic terminology), the result could only be more democracy. This is

because perspective by incongruity continually creates new dialectical entities in which

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[46] See also Kastely, James L. "Kenneth Burke's Comic Rejoinder to the Cult of Empire" *College English* 58(1996): 307-326. Kastely suggests Burke presents this attitude in comedic terms, calling it a "smiling hypochondriasis." Kastely's article astutely, and I think accurately, situates Burke's dramatistic answer to the cult of empire in classically comedic terms. However, perspective by incongruity is the perspective that makes even comedy possible.

[47] Burke also suggests elsewhere that we ought to pursue "the study of ambition as a *disease*" ("Linguistic" 272, italics in original). As mentioned earlier, ambition in this sense is indicative of "dissipation" or the grabbing what one can with whatever one can get a hold of. Also, Burke refers to open warfare (i.e. the systematized effort of people killing each other and breaking each other's things) as "a diseased form of cooperation" ("Communication" 144). This would correspond with fanaticism in its most lethal extreme. Again, fanaticism in this sense is any effort to impose one subjective perspective on all other perspectives. Open warfare is cooperative in that it pulls together efforts from almost all occupations of a society (to form and coordinate the use of something as complex as, say, a firearm). Open warfare is diseased in that it seeks to impose a subjective perspective on another (as delivered through the barrel of the firearm).

the opposing/combining perspectives function as equals. This function of perspective by incongruity only serves to achieve the aims of critical thinking.

By way of review, all thinking is taking a perspective; *critical* thinking is conscientiously taking a perspective incongruously via a divergent perspective. Burke's emphasis on the *ratios* among the pentadic terms rather than the pentadic terms themselves makes more sense via perspective by incongruity. "My stress," he says, "is less upon the terms themselves than upon what I would call the 'ratios' among the terms" ("Questions" 332). For instance, the "scene-act ratio" which is the interpretation of "men's actions […] in terms of the circumstances in which they are acting" is a milder form of perspective by incongruity. Understanding an act in terms of its scene is to wrench descriptions from a vocabulary of *context* (i.e. scene) and apply those to a vocabulary of *action* (i.e. act). It is the conscientious clash of symbols (i.e. metaphors) that makes possible this kind of thinking. From the stance of incongruity, Burke ultimate latches onto "Dramatism" is arbitrary, for surely there are other terms than "act" with the capacity to provide an "overall scene" or "ultimate circumference" for all human motive and behavior[48]. The key here, though, is a realization of *how* Burke came up with the terms he did. That method, that *attitude*, is perspective by incongruity.

VIII. Dialectic and First Year Composition Pedagogy

Bringing this theoretical project back to the practical concerns of first year composition instructors and students makes sense for a few reasons. First, as I suggested earlier, first year composition is a *general* education course that typically requires that

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[48] I realize I'm picking a fight by making such a casual claim. Let me briefly explain. I understand the central role that "act" plays in the development of Dramatism, but consider an ultimate circumference in which "agency" plays the central part. I suspect something akin to Marshall McLuhan's "medium is the message" might result from a universal vocabulary in which the *medium* of communicated symbols were the focal concern.

students learn ways of writing and thinking that must apply to any and all future disciplines. Second, it is by and large pedagogists who concern themselves with first year composition (brilliant people like Glynda Hull, Mike Rose, Nancy Remler, and Gerald Graff) that encounter perspective by incongruity in their analyses of students and in their students' ways of reasoning (even though they do not speak of critical thinking in terms of perspective by incongruity).

In her study of Burke's essay "Linguistic Approach to the Problems of Education," Jessica Enoch hopes to analyze how Burke's "pedagogy of critical reflection […] could change classrooms today" (274). This hope is intriguing but not only because of dramatism's potential for contemporary classrooms. Enoch's hope is especially intriguing because many conscientious first year composition educators and pedagogists have *already* "discovered" dramatistic principles of critical thinking without recognizing those prinicples as dramatistic. Specifically, more and more first year composition pedagogists are recognizing critical perspectives in their students that differ from scholarly critical analysis in content but not method. Meaning, many un-"educated" (i.e. pre-first year composition) students already employ critical thinking but not in contexts that are readily identifiable to educators. This phenomenon is readily explainable through Burke's use of the ratios and perspective by incongruity.

The project thus facing teachers of first year composition is this: first year composition students need assistance toward becoming conscientious of their own use of symbols that construct thought and language. Such pedagogies will most likely include non-critical introductions to metaphor, simple discussions of how metaphor manifests in

everyday language[49], further discussions of how language and thought themselves are sets of symbols and metaphors, and practical study of aesthetic or technical works in terms of clashing sets of metaphors and symbols[50].

If all this sounds too abstract for first year composition students, consider Glynda Hull's and Mike Rose's observations of a first year composition student "Robert" who interprets a poem in an "unconventional" manner.

> Robert […] isn't socialized to such conventions [i.e. the conventions of reading a poem's symbolism in the academically expected way] so he relies on a model of interpretation [that is] an almost legalistic model, a careful, qualifying reasoning that defers quick judgment, that demands multiple sources of verification. The kind of reasoning we see here, then, is not inadequate. In fact, it's pretty sophisticated. (252-253)

Robert's academic faux pas is that he interprets a line from the poem "And Your Soul Shall Dance" by Garrett Kaoru Hongo differently than what Glynda Hull and Mike Rose

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[49] These could include discussions on and examples of simile (it would be like taking candy from a baby); metonymy (replacing one term with another, like "the white house" to refer to the executive branch of government); synechdoche (referring to one part of a thing as if it were the whole, like observing everyone should have a roof overhead to mean everyone should have a building or shelter); and personification (overlaying human qualities on non-human subjects, as in "the sky wept" for "it rained"). There are of course many, many others, but these should suffice to illustrate the point that conceptual metaphor pervades many aspects of language. Unless teaching a course specifically on rhetoric, I would avoid the unfamiliar names of rhetorical figures and just stick to examples of each to illustrate the flexibility of metaphor. This assumes that students speak native languages that foster conceptions of "symbols." I know two languages intimately and (several languages from the world over causally) enough to suspect that conceptual symbols (like simile, metonym, synechdoche, personification, etc.) pervade every language. If I am wrong on this point, then such students with native languages lacking the quality of conceptual symbols should receive individual instruction on just what a symbol is. Ultimately, students should understand that any symbolic relationship (or any relationship of symbols) is essentially metaphoric.

[50] The nature of such works is ultimately arbitrary, for Richard Shusterman's 1991 article "The Fine Art of Rap" beautifully illustrates that the subject matter of aesthetic inquiry is not nearly as important as the attitude that drives the inquiry. His article also illustrates that unconventional readings or readings of aesthetic works often excluded from the "canon" frequently end in delightful discoveries of aesthetic worth. Also note, the title of his article exemplifies perspective by incongruity in that it takes terms from one vocabulary (i.e. "fine art) and clashes them against terms of another vocabulary (i.e. the pop art of rap and hip-pop) in deliciously improper ways.

would typically expect. Robert reads the line which describes a woman hanging clothes to dry by wooden shacks to mean that the woman simply chooses to hang her wet laundry there not that the woman is necessarily poor. Robert's own mother (who is not poor but lower-middle class) prefers to hang-dry her laundry instead of machine-drying. Robert is thus unintentionally clashing a description of laundry-drying from a middle-class central-LA vocabulary against a description of laundry-drying from an academically poetic vocabulary. The result is an interpretation that is not contradicted by the text of the poem; it is only contradicted by conventional expectations of interpretation based on historical and socio-economic knowledge. If Robert had been more aware of hang-drying clothes being an indication of poverty level, he would have had more vocabularies to draw from for his interpretation of the poem. The point here is that Robert was already doing the kind of thinking necessary for successful critical thinking. Hull's and Rose's mildly surprised assessment of Robert's sophisticated reasoning supports this point. What Robert needs is someone to point out to him that he was already doing the *kind* of thinking necessary to think critically about the poem; he just lacks adequate conscientiousness of his own processes of thinking. If Robert were to be encouraged to be conscientious of his processes of thinking (i.e. conscientious of what sets of symbols he is drawing on) then he would be more equipped to recognize the extents of his own reasoning and what avenues of thought might deserve attention. Perspective by incongruity not only manifests in Robert's thinking, it also manifests in Hull's and Rose's study of Robert; it is Robert's incongruous reading of the poem that leads Hull and Rose to realizations about the teaching of critical thinking.

Consider also the pedagogical critical thinking techniques proposed by Nancy

Remler. As a classroom tool to help students participate in class discussion, she suggests

that teachers give students these instructions: "Pretend that you are teaching the class.

You want to give your students a quiz on today's assigned material. Write three questions

you would include […]. The questions should generate thinking above the knowledge

level, and they should indicate that you have read and understand these selections" (242).

What is this other than having students appropriate the vocabulary (perspective) of a

teacher and apply it (incongruously) to their rolls (perspectives) as students? Further on

in her article, Remler describes having the students do class presentations – again an

activity that clashes together student and teacher vocabularies. Over and over again,

every successful technique or pedagogical aid to teaching students how to think critically

involves this kind of layered thinking, i.e. perspective by incongruity.

The clearest exemplification of all this probably comes from the "Hidden

Intellectualism" chapter from Gerald Graff's *Clueless in Academe*. Beginning with

Michael Warner's engaging story of his development from anti-intellectual religionist to

critical literary theorist, Graff suggests "that educators need to pay more attention to the

extent to which adolescent lives are often already 'steeped in argument'" or, in other

words, already acquainted with processes of critical thinking (even though those

adolescents may not know the specific academic vocabularies their teachers know) (212).

Graff does acknowledge that it is perhaps too simple to assume that every student merely

has a "hidden intellectual […] waiting to be discovered;" rather, students "who cross over

into the intellectual club are inventing a new identity as much as unearthing one that

existed before" (212-213). Graff peppers his chapter with examples of his own

development as an intellectual as well as those of others. Consider English professor

Mark Edmundson who transformed from self-described "jock to intellectual."

Edmundson admits that until he encountered a certain high school philosophy course, he

hadn't read completely through a single book that wasn't about American football. Graff

points out, "Edmundson contrasts his reading of football books with the passion for

Nietzsche and Thoreau that his teacher ignited. But it does not occur to Edmundson that

had football books not given him an early sense of what it feels like to engage deeply

with a text, he might not have been able later to get much out of Nietzsche and Thoreau"

(219). Drawing this back to his own experience transitioning from sports interests to

academic interests, Graff observes, "Only much later did it dawn on me that the sports

world was more compelling than school to me because it was *more intellectual than*

school, not less" (220). Sports, he continues, "was full of challenging arguments, debates,

problems for analysis, and intricate statistics that you could care about" (220). Likewise,

"the real intellectual world, the one that existed in the big world beyond school, is

organized very much like the competitive world of team sports, with rival texts, rival

interpretations and evaluations of texts, rival theories of why they should be read and

taught, and elaborate team competitions in which 'fans' of writers, intellectual systems,

methodologies, and –isms contend against each other" (220). What Graff describes here

is essentially this: people who make a transition from passion about religion or sports on

one hand to passion about intellectual concerns on the other do not typically abandon one

kind of activity for another (e.g. the non-critical for the critical) as much as they adapt

processes they are already acquainted with to new arenas of inquiry. Again, they overlay

the new intellectual vocabulary over the same kind of critical activity they'd been doing

all along. Graff does caution, however, that what "should worry us, then, is not courses in which students study *The X-Files* instead of Plato, but courses in which students study *The X-Files* or Plato with no obligation to argue rigorously and analytically about *either* subject" (225). Truly successful pedagogical efforts therefore focus on activities that harness students' interests in areas where they may be inclined to inquire critically and overlay those interests with the new "intellectual" vocabulary necessary to their academic success. Graff's two lengthy practical examples in the "Hidden Intellectualism" chapter (as well as his entire *They Say/I Say* book) illustrate this effort.

IX. Conclusion: The Beginnings of Critical Thinking

Well, I could go on. But the path I've described here should be fairly plain. In order for perspective by incongruity to work toward a method of critical thinking, students need to understand that thoughts and language are *both* essentially dialectic. In other words, composed symbols are not a manifestation of thinking; thinking is a manifestation of composed symbols.

If all thought is essentially dialectical then the only way humans can understand anything (including all human behavior) is through dialectic. If students doubt this, ask them to explain some mundane action (like drinking a glass of water) without using any symbols that relate to each other (i.e. verbal, visual, or other types of representation); ask them then to *think* about that action without using any symbols that relate to each other. The next step toward an adequate mode of critical thinking is some mode of analysis that takes into account the dialectic nature of language. Since we have to use symbols (i.e. language itself) to address anything, any analysis will be an application of one set of symbols/metaphors to another set of symbols/metaphors, which illustrates dialectic. Even

when people apply "their own" perspectives on (e.g.) a poem or a political treatise, they use the sets of symbols they have become accustomed to using (whether their language, or political ideas, or religion, etc.) when they address the poem or political treatise (i.e. different sets of symbols/metaphors). This is essentially perspective by incongruity, but critical thinking does not end with perspective by incongruity; it *begins* here.

So where do we go from here?

First, an adequate goal should help in guiding the integrating of perspective by incongruity with pedagogical purposes at large. The following working definition of critical thinking was developed by a 46-member panel convened by the American Philosophical Association. I present this with no other purpose than to keep in mind the parameters of the kind of critical thinking I'm hoping to address in this essay. In line with this, I'm not implying I unquestioningly trust their definition of critical thinking (such trust would be inimical to critical thinking, would it not?), I merely present their expert view as a dauntingly thorough one that a robust method of critical thinking in the method of perspective by incongruity should be able to account for (and criticize and move beyond as well). This is the definition of critical thinking they offer:

> We understand critical thinking to be purposeful, self-regulatory judgment which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference, as well as explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological, or contextual considerations upon which that judgment is based. critical thinking is essential as a tool of inquiry. As such, critical thinking is a liberating force in education and a powerful resource in one's personal and civic life. While not synonymous with good thinking, critical

thinking is a pervasive and self-rectifying human phenomenon. The ideal critical thinker is habitually inquisitive, well-informed, trustful of reason, open-minded, flexible, fair-minded in evaluation, honest in facing personal biases, prudent in making judgments, willing to reconsider, clear about issues, orderly in complex matters, diligent in seeking relevant information, reasonable in the selection of criteria, focused in inquiry, and persistent in seeking results which are as precise as the subject and the circumstances of inquiry permit. Thus, educating good critical thinkers means working toward this ideal. It combines developing critical thinking skills with nurturing those dispositions which consistently yield useful insights and which are the basis of a rational and democratic society. (qtd. in Facione 2)

Next, instructors would do well to remember that Burke's linguistic approach to thinking "confronts a *practical* use of language for rhetorical effect by a *theoretical* study of such usage" (Burke, "Linguistic" 285, italics in original). Meaning, perspective by incongruity does not offer ready-made sets of practical exercises. Indeed, efforts to appropriate Burke's pentad (one of Burke's extensions of perspective by incongruity) as a rhetorical tool for students to use in their writing have by and large fallen flat[51]. This is because the pentad is an ontological device *constructed with* rhetorical tools. Introducing students to the pentad as a rhetorical tool adds unnecessary layers of vocabulary (especially since Burke's terms do not set the tone for any academic discussion that does not directly involve Burke's terms – or at least such discussions have by and large

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[51] By way of example, see Comprone, Joseph. "Kenneth Burke and the Teaching of Writing." *College Composition and Communication*. 29(1978): 336-340. Comprone shared the paper form of this article at the same CCCC Burke gave his "Questions and Answers about the Pentad."

forgotten they are Burkean). Meaning, students will benefit more from pre- or extra-pentad ideas than from the pentad itself (i.e. more from *how* Burke developed what he did than *what* Burke developed). When constructing practical applications, instructors should remember that overlapping and clashing different perspectives is at least a necessary (if not the fully sufficient) component of effective teaching of critical thinking [52].

Third, this approach to thinking about thinking could apply, of course, to other disciplines besides first year composition. But the multi-cultural and socio-economically diverse classrooms typical to first year composition should provide rife material for divergent ways of thinking. The process of shifting descriptions from one vocabulary and applying them to another vocabulary is precisely the kind of activity that fosters critical thinking because perspective by incongruity *relies on* divergent ways of thinking. First year composition instructors need to not only cope with the diversity typical to first year composition classrooms but also need to learn to harness it. If first year composition teachers want to teach their students critical thinking skills, those teachers must be conscious and conscientious enough of what critical thinking means to be able to help students know what critical thinking means. Perspective by incongruity as an accessible way of thinking about (divergent modes of) thinking provides the principles for this.

I close with two words of caution.

If anything, the experiences of knowledgeable pedagogists like Hull, Rose, Remler, and Graff (as mentioned above) should remind mindful instructors that they are

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[52] For starters, consider party games like "Apples to Apples" or "Why did the Chicken…?" which rely on clashing together divergent ideas and topics and require players to force a judgment or description that uses ideas that surround the divergent ideas. Also, at the 2008 CCCC in New Orleans, I participated in a workshop led by Marvin Diogenes, Doree Allen, and Jenn Fishman titled "Writing Is a Serious Game: Improvisation as Exploration and Performance." The workshop focused on the implementation of games and techniques usual to improv comedy but unusual to a composition class room. The various game types applied to composition forced the generation of divergent perspectives in idea-generation and analysis.

not immune to the democratic foibles of fanaticism. Academia like any other occupation

has its own psychoses – its own trained incapacities. It is often too easy to assume a kind

of unintentional chauvinism – that instructors' ways of thinking are necessarily more

"critical" than their students'. The less-threatening form of this occurs when instructors

"value" divergent perspectives – as if the divergent perspectives all have some innate

"value" by virtue of being themselves (or worse by virtue of being divergent). Value is

itself an *observed* thing, meaning, the *observing* perspective (the instructors' in this case)

will always overlay its own terms of value over *observed* perspectives. Besides, if value

were intrinsic (which I do not believe it is) then a perspective's intrinsic value (how it is

good in itself) will always trump its motivational value (how it is good to perspectives

beyond it –i.e., what the perspective is good *for*). This, of course, hinders the dialectical

process. Keeping perspective by incongruity in mind at all times would serve to keep

instructors from the unhealthy effort of imposing one perspective (the "academic") over

all others. Perspective by incongruity would instead keep instructors involved in the

occupation they most likely intend to be in – helping their students become their

intellectual (though diverse) equals.

Also, the dense theoretical language that permeates most of Burke's writings (and

an unfortunate amount of this essay) should serve to remind all conscientious instructors

that they are not immune to the democratic dangers of dissipation. The introduction of

ever new *post-*'s and *-ism*'s to instructors' occupational language too often imitates a

kind of hand-to-mouth intellectual existence – a reliance on what is new *because* it is new

and not because of its dialectical (and therefore democratic) function. This results

inevitably from viewing academia (however consciously or unconsciously) as an

"industry" – similar in manner to the way many young business professionals tout their new techno-gadgets and their association to their increasingly manic careers. In light of this, perspective by incongruity should probably aim to be a method without a name if only to better aid the contextualizing and democratizing of every "new" idea.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION: A NOTE ON PURIFICATION

In the introductory chapter of this thesis, I observed that Burke's use of "war" in his famous motto *Ad Bellum Purificandum* (or Toward the Purification of War) was ambiguous. This thesis has been by and large an exploration of the dialectical nature of dramatism and thus a foray into the conflictual (or war-ful) nature of dialectic. But "war" is not the only ambiguous term in Burke's motto; his use of "purification" is also admittedly ambiguous.

Such ambiguity most likely stems from what Burke calls the "paradox of purity" or the "paradox of the absolute" (*Grammar* 35). In short, the paradox of purity occurs whenever "actual" occurrences of a concept are juxtaposed with the "pure" concept itself. By way of example, Burke suggests that thinkers

> confront this paradox when deriving the nature of the human person from God as 'super-person,' as 'pure,' or 'absolute' person, since God as a super-person would be impersonal—and the impersonal would be synonymous with the *negation* of personality. Hence, Pure Personality would be the same as No Personality: and the derivation of the personal principle from God as pure person would amount to its derivation from an impersonal principle. (*Grammar* 35).

This paradox occurs by a certain perspective by incongruity in which *actuality* is viewed in terms of *generality*. Because a paradox is a paradox by virtue of its identifying but contradictory relationships, it should help to view the paradox of purity in more analytically formal terms. Specifically, for any given concept (x), pure-(x) cannot in actuality be (x) because every actual instance of (x) is unavoidably singular while pure-

(*x*) would be (*x*) in its general sense. Meaning, actual (*x*) will always be distinct from other instances of actual (*x*) while pure-(*x*) will always be the same and thus only treatable in non-actual ways.

Consider this paradox vis-à-vis the concept "war."

Burke treats actual war as any occurrence in which groups of people organize themselves in concerted movements to kill each other in a mass-effort to assert divergent perspectives (see "Communication" 144-45). That is to say, actual war is always fought for some end or purpose, and those ends or purposes are unavoidably symbolic (whether for "ownership" of land/resources, or for eventual "agreement" in the form of a treaty, or for the supremacy of a certain racial/ethnic/governmental "identity," etc.). Actual war then is reducible in this sense to *physical* conflict for *symbolic* purposes. This situates actual war in its *dramatic* sense; i.e. actual war is an *act* in a specific *scene* committed by specific *agents* via specific *agencies* for specific *purposes*, etc.

To paraphrase Friedrich Nietzsche, actual war is symbolic war that has by and large forgotten it is symbolic. "What is truth?" Nietzsche asks in what is possibly the most famous excerpt from his essay "On Truth and Lying in an Extra-Moral Sense". Such a rhetorical question, of course, could only be answered with rhetorical observations. Nietzsche answers that truth is a

> mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, anthropomorphisms, in
>
> short, a sum of human relations which were poetically and
>
> rhetorically heightened, transferred, and adorned, and after long
>
> use seem solid, canonical, and binding to a nation. Truths are

illusions about which it has been forgotten that they *are* illusions,

worn-out metaphors, without sensory impact. ("On Truth" 250)

This stems from Nietzsche's observations that every thought in the *mind* is an irreducibly symbolic transformation of nerve impulses in the *brain*. Humans experience an image as an image *not* as a bundle of neurons firing even though the image is a representation of the neurons firing. Further, humans label thoughts, images, and concepts with audio or visual symbols (i.e. words and language) which is another symbolic transformation. Burke views human thought and language in essentially the same manner as evidenced in his essay "Four Master Tropes." The main differences between Nietzsche's and Burke's conceptions of human thought are in their descriptions of the *kinds* of symbols for each symbolic transformation in the mind/brain. Nietzsche calls the transformation from nerve impulse to image "the first metaphor;" he calls the transformation from image to audio-word "the second metaphor" ("On Truth" 248). Conversely, Burke calls the first transformation a "synecdoche" and the second transformation a "metonym" (*Grammar* 508 and 506, respectively).

In contrast with actual war, pure war is already symbolic in that pure war is only treatable in non-actual terms. In this way, pure war never "forgets" (in Nietzsche's sense) that it is symbolic war; pure war is therefore a negation of actual war. This is not to say that all instances of symbolic war are necessarily pure war; indeed, to be an "instance" (whether symbolic or not) implies a *specific* and not a *general* character (much like a computer game simulating a WWII battlefield is a symbolic war but is obviously not pure war or war-in-general). Rather, pure war or absolute war linguistically completes the concept of "war" back to its symbolic roots. Pure war is symbolic conflict that asserts

itself literally. In one sense, pure war reverses the relationship found in actual war and seeks to transform "war" so that the *symbolic* nature of war (i.e. asserting divergent perspectives) becomes its *actual* use. Inasmuch as actual war is "diseased" cooperation (see Burke "Communication" 144), pure war would be the cure. But also inasmuch as actual war and pure war are dialectic in their relationship, with Burke, "we should 'ironically' note the function of the disease in 'perfecting' the cure, or the function of the cure in 'perpetuating' the disease" (*Grammar* 512). In particular, the attitudinal element of actual war—the assertion of divergent perspectives—will always be a guide for pure war. This situates pure war in its *dramatistic* sense as a dialectically verbal activity; indeed, as perhaps *the* activity of any fully developed dialectical relationship.

The two middle chapters of this thesis deal with some of the dialectical elements of pure war thus dramatistically conceived. Chapter Two seeks to resituate "drama" as Burke's representative anecdote for "dramatism" as a motivational calculus. Drama is a linguistic tool that functions anecdotally in that it simplifies (without making simplistic) the interrelated and often oppositional dialectical terms that compose an adequate motivational calculus. Chapter Three pursues dialectic to Burke's formulation of "perspective by incongruity" which is a kind of dialectical catachresis. Perspective by incongruity is a verbally conflictual activity in that it results from the conscientious combining of divergent vocabularies (i.e. terms that belong by custom in one setting and using them against custom in another). If pure war is an eventual and perpetual dialectical state of affairs, perspective by incongruity is the method by which such a dialectical state of affairs eventuates and perpetuates.

Extending from these, a future project would view the purification of war in

wholly moral or ethical terms and would thus focus on *purification* primarily and *war* secondarily. More specifically, such a future project would explore ways of *completing* dialectical relationships more than exploring dialectic itself. A project focusing on the completion of dialectic makes sense in light of Burke's claim that "war" is a "means" towards its own purification. Consider this explanation from *A Grammar of Motives*:

> All means are necessarily "impure." For besides the properties in
> them that fit them for the particular use to which they are put, they
> have other properties (properties that would fit them for other
> possible uses, including hostile ones). […] That is, there is no one
> end exclusively implicit in them. And thus, from the standpoint of
> any given end, they are "impure." And we act by a progressive
> purification of them. (*Grammar* 309-10)

Burke's assertion is a direct response to Aldous Huxley's claim that pure ends can only result from pure means. But Burke astutely counters that "if we could get peace by peaceful means we'd have peace already; and if we couldn't get it by means somewhat short of peace, then there would be no use in our attempting to get it at all" (*Grammar* 309). If peace can only result from actions that are decidedly not peaceful, what use pursuing peace if the effort to attain it and keep it only perpetuates the lack of it?

The error in this problem lies in the dogged view that ends and means enjoy a hierarchical relationship—that ends *necessarily* follow means, when of course means are means by virtue of the ends to which they aim. That is, means depend on their ends. Whatever the sought-for ends, means must adapt themselves to those ends. In this sense, ends produce their means and not vice versa. Means fulfill their purposes insofar as they

complete their progression back to their ends. Means are, in a word, *impure* formulations of their ends.

If pure war (i.e. the negation of actual war) is the sought-for end, then adequate means must be implemented in order to go about purifying war. As noted, this effort places as foremost war's *symbolic* purpose—the assertion of divergent perspectives. The assertion of divergent perspectives is a necessarily dialectical activity. Burke suggests that dialectical thinking "arises when one tries, by the interaction of terms upon one another, to produce a *development* which uses all the terms" (*Grammar* 512, italics in original). From this "perspective of perspectives" Burke suggests that "none of the participating 'sub-perspectives' can be treated as either precisely right or precisely wrong. They are all voices, or personalities, or positions, integrally affecting one another" (*Grammar* 512). As divergent "terms are thus encouraged to participate in an orderly parliamentary development, the dialectic of this participation produces […] a 'resultant certainty' […] that all the sub-certainties be considered as neither true nor false, but *contributory*" (*Grammar* 513, italics in original). Quoting Kenneth Benne's critique of *A Grammar of Motives*, Burke summarizes the dialectical purpose of his entire motive project: "Reaffirming 'the parliamentary process,' it is motivated by a 'humanitarian concern to see how far conflict (war) may be translated practically into linguistic struggle and how such verbal struggle may be made to eventuate in a common enactment short of physical combat'" ("Linguistic" 268). This situates dialectic as the means to pure war as an end. In practice, such dialectic will always be (at the very least) verbally messy if only because divergence implies a lack of accounting for that which is divergent. The challenge facing conscientious rhetors is to keep such messes verbally contained—

avoiding the spilling over of verbal divergence (face-to-face *pure* war) into physical

divergence (fist-to-face *actual* war).

The ethical dimension of such a future study would take a decidedly Kantian turn

(as opposed to the Nietzschean elements already covered herein). Burke suggests

elsewhere[53] that Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason* is closest to Burke's own

dramatism. Kant's ethical project in *The Critique of Practical Reason* concerns itself

almost entirely with means and ends of actions. Kant formulates the categorical

imperative as a command-for-actions which is an end in itself, for it could apply to all

individuals without contradiction. However, Burke recognizes that all action is *symbolic*

action. That is to say, all doing is doing *as*[54]: every action is a means to some other end.

In light of this, Burke's *Ad Bellum Purificandum* takes on the role of universal imperative

(the Burkean Imperative, if you will). It does so by dialectically involving all humans it

encounters and by accurately recognizing that no action can be an end in itself (only at

best a perpetual attempt to be). So, for Burke, while all action is essentially moral, those

actions which are *completely* moral (i.e. attain moral completeness) are those which

purify war.

To the study of that end, I would fain submit this thesis as a potential prologue.

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[53] See Burke's essay "A Dramatistic View of the Origins of Language" in *Language as Symbolic Action*, pages 419-79.
[54] I cannot take credit for this clever formulation. Bryan Crable inspired this with his explanation of perspective as Burke uses it, "All seeing is seeing *as*" (Crable 318).

APPENDIX: FURTHER PARALLELS BETWEEN NIETZSCHE AND BURKE

Friedrich Nietzsche	Kenneth Burke
"When we speak of trees, colors, snow, and flowers, we believe we know something about the things themselves, although what we have are just metaphors [or verbal constructs] of things, which do not correspond at all to the original entities." ("Truth" 249)	"it is not possible for us, without contradiction, to recreate in words a world which is itself not verbal at all." (*Grammar* 130)
"Every word becomes a concept as soon as it is supposed to serve not merely as a reminder of the unique, absolutely individualized original experience, to which it owes its origin, but at the same time to fit countless, more or less similar cases, which, strictly speaking, are never identical, and hence absolutely dissimilar. Every concept originates by the equation of the dissimilar. […] what we know are numerous, individualized, hence dissimilar, actions [or things] which we equate by omitting the dissimilar and then referring to them as [the same]" ("Truth" 249)	"Since no two things or acts or situations are exactly alike, you cannot apply the same term to both of them without thereby introducing a certain margin of ambiguity, an ambiguity as great as the difference between the two subjects that are given the identical title." (*Grammar* xiii)
"Only by forgetting that primitive metaphor-world, only by the hardening and rigidification of the mass of images that originally gushed forth as hot magma out of the primeval faculty of human fantasy, only by the invincible belief that *this* sun, *this* window, *this* table is a truth-in-itself." ("Truth" 252)	"Distinctions, we might say, arise out of a great central moltenness, where all is merged. They have been thrown from a liquid center to the surface, where they have congealed. Let one of these crusted distinctions return to its source, and in this alchemic center it may be remade, again becoming molten liquid, and may enter into new combinations, whereat it may be again thrown forth as a new crust, a different distinction." (*Grammar* xiii)
"Between two absolutely different spheres such as subject and object, there can be no expression, but most an *aesthetic* stance, I mean an allusive transference, a stammering translation into a completely foreign medium. For this, however, in any case a freely fictionalizing and freely inventive middle sphere and middle faculty is necessary." ("Truth" 252)	"We take it for granted that, insofar as men cannot themselves create the universe, there must remain something essentially enigmatic about the problems of motives, and that this underlying enigma will manifest itself in inevitable ambiguities and inconsistencies among the terms for motives. Accordingly, what we want is *not terms that avoid ambiguity,* but *terms that clearly reveal the strategic spots at which ambiguities necessarily arise*." (*Grammar* xii-xiii, italics in original)
"Someone could invent such a fable and still not have illustrated adequately how pitiful, how shadowy and fleeting, how purposeless and arbitrary the human intellect appears within nature. There were eternities when it did not exist; and someday when it is no longer there, not much will have changed. For that intellect has no further mission leading beyond human life. It is utterly human, and only its owner and producer takes it with such pathos as if the whole world hinged upon it." ("Truth" 246).	"Presumably the realm of non-symbolic motion was all that prevailed on this earth before our kind of symbol-using organism evolved, and will go sloshing about after we have gone. In the meantime, note that, for better or worse, by evolving our kind of organism, the wordless Universe of nonsymbolic motion is able to comment on itself. But we do not grow over-arrogant at the thought. For our very ability thus to exercise is by the same token disposed to tell us that, in all likelihood, throughout the Universal Infinity, there are other countless spots where meetings like this are in session. How can I admonish these sessions? Perhaps by saying, 'Not just the Pentad. But the ratios and circumference.'" (Burke "Questions" 334).

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