Continuity and Change in the Thought of Kenneth Burke

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Abstract

This thesis analyzes Kenneth Burke's *rhetoric of identification*. I will examine the extent to which Burke's earliest critical writings, which focus on the suasive nature of literary forms, affected the writing of his later critical works, which deal with how language functions as a type of symbolic action. In his later texts, Burke breaks with his earlier concern with literary discourse by attempting to expound a critical theory that accounts for historical change, human motivation and the role of language in collective communities. He argues that language motivates people to identify with a certain sets of beliefs by transcending an opposing set of beliefs. Section One is an account of Burke's earlier conception of deology in relation to his view of literary discourse. In Section Two the emphasis shifts toward a study of how Burke integrates his notion of ideology with his theory of a rhetoric of identification.

Résumé

Ce mémoire ánalyse la rhetorique de l'identification chez Kenneth Burke. Nous examinons dans quelle mesure les premiers travaux critiques de Burke, axés sur la nature persuasive des formes littéraires, ont permis le plein accomplissement de ses travaux critiques ultéreurs, ces derniers traitant du fontionnement du language comme type d' action symbolique. Dans ses textes ulterieurs, Burke se détache de ses précédants soucis, concernant le discours littéraire, en tentant l' analyse d' une théorie critique qui rende compte du changement historique de la motivation humaine et du rôle du langage dans les communautés. Il affirme que le langage porte à s' identifier à un éventail de crovances par de passement d' un éventail de croyances opposé. Dans le premier volet, nous rendons compte de sa conception ideologique de départ qui est à mettre en relation avec la conception du discours littéraire de Burke; puis dans le second volet, nous mettons l accent sur la façon dont Burke conjuge sa notion d' idéologie à celle de rhétorique de l' identification.

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Introduction

The main purpose of this study is to investigate and document Kenneth Burke's contribution to what he calls a *rhetoric of identification*. Burke's aim was to recognize and describe complex struggles of power and ideology taking place through language within a multiplicity of social arenas and historical moments. Although Burke began formulating theories of a rhetoric of identification in writings he produced during the 1930s, his 1951 formulation effectively differentiates the "old" rhetoric from the "new." He proposes that "the key term for the 'old' rhetoric was persuasion and its stress on deliberate design, whereas the key term for the 'new' rhetoric should be 'identification' which can include a partially unconscious factor of appeal" (Old and New, 204). Burke argues that "with such identification there is a partially dream-like, idealistic motive, somewhat compensatory to real differences or divisions, which the rhetoric of identification would transcend" (203).

In an earlier formulation Burke further describes the nature of this transcendence, claiming that our identifications only become meaningful to others when they are explained through our ideology: "an ideology is an aggregate of beliefs sufficiently at odds with one another to justify opposite kind of conduct" (CS, 163). For Burke,

to identify with a particular group or perspective is contingent upon human motivations that may only be signified "in terms of verbal action, and which ultimately serve the purpose of unifying us to see things in terms of *some* thing rather than its *other* counterpart" (Grammar, 49). Burke concludes that since identification is "a kind of transcendence" it can serve to eliminate disharmony, thereby enabling people to subscribe to particular sets of beliefs.

It can be argued that Burke, in formulating his theory of a rhetoric of identification, was heavily influenced by the intellectual contributions of pragmatism, the most influential philosophy in America during the first quarter of the twentieth century. H.S. Thayer describes "pragmatism [as] a method of philosophying often identified as a theory of meaning first stated by Charles Peirce in the 1870s, revived primarily as a theory of truth in 1898 by William James; and further developed, expanded and disseminated by John Dewey and F.C.S. Schiller" (4). Peirce, who founded the philosophy of pragmatism, based his doctrine on the principle that we are to "consider what effects, which might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our contemplation to have. Then, our conception of theses effects is the whole of our conception of the object" (cited by Malone). For Peirce, pragmatism is thus an inquiry into the ways in which knowledge affects social action; it "emphasizes the practical character of reason and

of reality" (Thayer, 221). In other words, what pragmatism "argues as 'the practical nature of thought and reality' is that, since existence is transitional, knowledge is one of the ways of effecting transitions of events, and the only reliable way of guiding them" (221).

The extent to which the philosophical tenets of American pragmatism affected Burke's thinking is revealed in his own notion of pragmatism. With a pragmatic philosophy, argues Burke, "we seize upon the reference to *means*, since we hold that Pragmatist philosophies are generated by the featuring of the term Agency. We discern this genius most readily in the very title, *instrumentalization*, which John Dewey chooses to characterize his variant of the pragmatist doctrine" (Gram ar, 275). Burke thus reasons that "there must be as many 'pragmatisms' as there are philosophies. That is, each philosophy announces some view of human ends, and will require a corresponding doctrine of means" (275).

As we shall see later, the term "agency" is one of the many key terms Burke uses to develop his theory of a rhetoric of identification. His deeply pragmatic outlook on language and how it works to affect human actions led Burke to formulate a multiplicity of concepts through which he advanced his thinking over a period of sixty years. Consequently, toward the end of Burke's career, his language became "distressingly compact" (Feehan, 321). Readers who have difficulty understanding Burke need to comprehend his

method of assimilating his old works into his new ones. Michael Feehan argues that "such comprehension comes most clearly when we see the old and the new in juxtaposition, in stereo, where one can watch the boundary between them as it filters, purifies, the earlier version into the language of the later" (321).

One way to arrive at this more thorough perspective is to examine Burke's writings in relation to what can be considered as major junctures in his career: moments when social theorists and critics have, due to distinctly different historical contexts, misinterpreted Burke's theories. In what follows, an interpretation of what Burke meant will be constructed by examining what he says in his essays and books, with special emphasis placed on statements he has made in postscripts to second and third editions of his early works. This approach will help contextualize the process in which Burke formulated his conceptions of a rhetoric of identification.

In the earlier half of Burke's career there were at least three major critical junctures that are worth examination. The dispute Burke had with social critic Granville Hicks, published in a 1935 issue of The New Republic, over Hick's review of Burke's first critical work, Counter-Statement, is one such event. In his review, entitled "A Defence of Eloquence," Hicks accuses Burke of being solely concerned with the eloquence of literature,

claiming that "the emphasis of Counter-Statement is so unmistakenly on technique, and its value is so exclusively in its discussion of technique, that the reader is bound to realize that it is technique alone that interests the author" (Counterblasts, 101). In his refutation of Hicks, Burke cites a statement he made in the chapter "Program" of his Counter-Statement, where he notes that "a system of aesthetics subsumes a system of politics, and though the artist -- qua artist -- may ignore it, the present program of critical orientation cannot ignore it" (Counterblasts, 101). In other words, Burke argues against the separation of literary form from ideology, claiming that even though some artists may wish to detach themselves from certain sociopolitical orientations, they nonetheless work within existing social, political and economic programs. Burke believes that if artists are to affect social change they must produce "a certain kind of social effect" (Counterblasts, 101), which involves developing an art or rhetoric that appropriates, and thus identifies with, an existing framework of social attitudes.

A concern with, or fear of, technique is what led up to another major critical juncture in Burke's early career. This occasion is the 1935 American Writers' Congress' negative reaction to Burke's speech, "Revolutionary Symbolism in America," in which he proposed that the socialist writer should function as a "propagandist" by

adopting a strategy "based upon the positive symbol of 'the people', rather than the negative symbol of 'the worker', which makes more naturally for the kind of identification whereby one's political alignment is fused with broader cultural elements" (Revolutionary, 91). Burke's suggestion offended many members of the Congress; the context in which he spoke was one in which writers came together to participate in a revolutionary "struggle against war, the preservation of civil liberties, and the destruction of fascist tendencies everywhere" (Hart, 11). Those who reacted against Burke's strategy believed that in order to affect social change they were obliged to divest themselves of all petty bourgeois thought so they could fend off the danger of their movement becoming a petty bourgeois movement. But what Burke was trying to tell his colleagues was that, for their movement to be effective, they had to start working *within* the established discourse of society in order speak to, and thereby allow, the uncommitted and the hostile to identify with them.

Two years after this confrontation at the 1935 Congress, Burke had a dispute with yet another leftist American scholar. What can be viewed as the third major critical juncture of Burke's early career is the fiery exchange of opinion he had with social critic Sidney Hook over the meaning of his Attitudes Toward History (1937). Hook charged that Burke's book "adds nothing" to the main

argument in his previous book, Permanence and Change (1935), in which Burke presents his method of "perspective by incongruity." Perspective by incongruity is the way in which Burke shows us how an ideology is dialectically evoked through the fusing of incongruous terms. Using his previous insights into the nature of language, Burke, in his Attitudes Toward History, demonstrates that throughout what he calls the "curve" of history, there have been "frames" or "perspectives" through which people have made sense of their world. He claims that revolutionary change occurs when an existing frame or perspective is superseded by a competing, and hence incongruous, social orientation. Burke calls this process "the bureaucratization of the imaginative," which is itself a perspective by incongruity, since the word "bureaucracy" provides an incongruous perspective when juxtaposed with the word "imagination."

Hook alleged that Burke uses his key metaphor, "the bureaucratization of the imaginative," to express his contempt for "the socialist critics of Russia, [who he] accuses of being Utopians and too prone to use the language of moral indignation. . . . 'Utopian' in his writings is merely a disparaging epithet which he hurls at honest critics of Russia who refuse to 'move in' and 'cash in' (the phrases are all Burke's) on the bureaucratic perspective. His own function consists in being an apologist, not after the fact, but *before* the fact of the latest piece of

Stalinist brutality" (The Technique, 61). But what Burke meant by the "bureaucratization of the imaginative" is that we transform words into institutions. He argues that identification would be impossible if our orientations did not endure, and that they endure only because they become bureaucratized.

In his rebuttal of Hook, Burke argues that "some imaginative possibility (usually at the start Utopian) is bureaucratized when it is embodied in the realities of a social texture, in all its complexity of language and habits, in the property relationships, the methods of government, production, and distribution, and the development of rituals that reinforce the same emphasis" (Is Mr. Hook, 41). What Burke means by "moving in" or "cashing in" on a given bureaucratized perspective is that "there will be a class of people who have a real 'stake' in the retention of an ailing bureaucratization" (41). Burke thus reasons that in an "imperfect world" such as ours, "no imaginative possibility can ever attain complete bureaucratization . . . the opposition must abandon some of its symbolic ingredients and make itself ready to take over [i.e. *identify* with] other symbolic ingredients" (41).

The concluding section of this study will examine another major critical moment that occurred in the latter part of Burke's career. This event is the 1977 meeting of the English Institute, consisting of a panel on "The

Achievement of Kenneth Burke." What needs to be analyzed is the conditions which facilitated a rereading of Burke's rhetoric in order to discern why Burke's theories were of value to a entirely different group of social critics than the ones he had encountered earlier in his life. Two texts presented at the 1977 meeting which were later published among a set of selected papers in Representing Kenneth Burke are to be considered: Fredric Jameson's "The Symbolic Inference; or, Kenneth Burke and Ideological Analysis" and Frank Lentricchia's "Reading History with Kenneth Burke," which seeded his writing of Criticism and Social Change.

Both Jameson and Lentricchia present Marxist misreadings of Burke, but in markedly different ways. The two texts function to a certain extent as a dialectical pair. In his "Critical Response" to Burke's scathing review of the text he presented to the Institute, Jameson argues that "when Burke documents his own use of the Marxian category of ideology, unfortunately he turns out most often to have meant our old friend 'false consciousness,' so unavoidable a part of the baggage of thirties Marxism . . . . For Burke, the concept of ideology is essentially an instrumental one whose usefulness lies in its effectiveness in dramatizing [his] key concept of symbolic action. My own priorities are the reverse of these, since I have found the concept of symbolic action a most effective way of demonstrating the ideological function of culture"

(Critical, 418, 421). As we shall see, Jameson's misreading of Burke is one in which the coercive power of language is given priority over society's productive forces. Not only does he mistakenly categorize Burke's theories as being Marxist in their orientation, but he also fails to recognize that Burke, throughout his writings, concentrates on the material scene, the level of production, as well as on the symbolic expressions and literary artifacts emanating from such scenes. Jameson appears to believe that Burke fails to account for the social, political, and economic consequences of language; how, that is, a social culture is lived out in everyday life.

Whereas Jameson overlooks the many ways in which Burke draws connections between language, ideology, and productive forces within nature, Lentricchia, in his unstated refutation of Jameson, attempts to salvage Burke from the political quietism of American deconstruction by means of an illustration of Burke's concern with historical and political uses of language. Not only did Lentricchia mistakenly "place Burke among the group Perry Anderson called the Western Marxists" (Criticism, 23), but he also used Burke's rhetoric of identification to propose that a progressive ideology will become dominant: "the role of such rhetoric is not the persuasion of doubters that 'there is' totality but the creation and insemination of a vision -- may we say a heuristic fiction -- whose promised child is

consenting consciousness for radical social change" (23). Burke, to the contrary, argues throughout his writings that our social order is constantly being defined and redefined through people's alliances to competing ideological perspectives.

Although Jameson and Lentricchia correctly note the existence of Marxist influences in Burke's writings, Burke is not a Marxist. Richard Coe tells us that the last time he spoke with him, "Burke described himself as a 'Kennedy Democrat,' but that there is doubt that he was strongly influenced by Marxism, that he still considers Marxism extremely useful as a set of concepts and methodology for critiquing capitalism; its weakness, he says, is that it is not very useful for critiquing socialism" (Letter, 1).

Perhaps Lentricchia's and Jameson's misreadings of Burke stem from the writings he produced in the 1930s, which were heavily influenced by an ideology reflecting Marxism. But in parts of his later works Burke insists on reading Marx's rhetoric, rather than simply embracing or fearing his texts. By the mid-1940s his social criticism became less reliant on Marxist ideology, as Burke became convinced that all ideologies are orientations made comprehensible through language. Burke tells us that "somewhere along the line I had read Marx's <u>The German Ideology</u>" (Methodological, 403). With reference to "The Identifying Nature of Property" he reasoned that "in the realm of Rhetoric, such identification

is frequently by property in the most materialistic sense of the term, economic property. . . . Here is *par excellence* a topic to be considered in a rhetoric having 'identification' as its key term. And we see why one should expect to get much insight from Marxism, as a study of capitalist rhetoric" (403). Decrying loyalty to any one ideology, Burke shows us how ideologies and philosophies are perspectives that can have dynamic effects upon our behavior. For Burke, Marxist ideology is an economic orientation that is one of many competing orientations toward the complex nature of human relations.

In what follows I shall investigate some of the occasions, contexts, and ways in which Burke was misread, tracing the process in which he developed his theory of a rhetoric of identification. One of my major claims will be that Burke's later explorations of language are not indicative of a flight from politics; rather, they are a significant rethinking of politics, with further implications for a rhetoric of identification. In order to describe this process, Part One will focus upon the initial conceptions of a rhetoric of identification Burke presents in his early essays and major works such as Counter-Statement (1931), Permanence and Change (1935), and Attitudes Toward History (1937). Section Two will consist of a selective reading of A Grammar of Motives (1945), A Rhetoric of Motives (1950), and Language as Symbolic Action

(1966). A study of this nature and scope will not only enable readers to contextualize Burke among some of the adversaries and critics which he encountered throughout an exceptionally long career, but will also facilitate a much needed reading of his earlier works in relation to his later ones.

Section One: Early Thoughts; or "Beginnings."

> With regard to the subject of "Beginnings," we can see so clearly how the word shifts between ideas of temporal priority and ideas of logical priority. Once you start thinking this way about beginnings, you discover that they are to be found every way you turn. This whole question of beginnings, as so conceived, merges into the question of "principles," or "basic assumptions," and so finally into the matter of conclusions. This is the point at which purely temporal and purely logical categories somehow merge.
>
> -Kenneth Burke, "De Beginnibus," 1962.

Perhaps the best way to begin describing Kenneth Burke's massive interdisciplinary project is to define it, in Burke's own sense of the term, as a series of interconnected "beginnings." Burke's account of the relationship between language and ideology, described earlier on as a rhetoric of identification, is to be best understood by acknowledging that although each of his texts marks a new beginning (in that each deals with different sets of concerns) the temporal periods distancing his writings serve to bring the logical sequence of his thinking

together. We can, for the purposes of introduction, "draw Burke's career as a series of repetitions/revisions" (Feehan, 324).

In each of his books Burke redevelops a previous insight or proposal, advancing a sophisticated method, or theory, from a line of thinking presented in one of his earlier books. But throughout his numerous works Burke consistently foregrounds two important things: "structure and power; structure because of his conviction that the aims of any text are embedded in formal principles, and power because in the end it is both literature's effect on the writer and the reader and its relation to cultural and political power that interests Burke" (Jay, Dictionary, 69).

Burke's earliest critical text, Counter-Statement, is clearly the work of literary criticism in which he develops a study of communicative behavior per se. First published in 1931, Counter-Statement is a collection of essays written over a ten year period, dealing for the most part with the nature of aesthetics. While his earlier essays in this collection elaborate a theory of literary form, the later ones, in particular "Program," "Lexicon Rhetoricae," and "Applications of Terminology," deal with the relationship between art and ideology and offer an oppositional program for writers and literary critics. In Counter-Statement, already one can see Burke moving away from conceptualizing

art as a form of self-expression, toward a view of art as a socially symbolic act. In the chapter "Psychology and Form," Burke presents some of his earliest insights concerning a rhetoric of identification. Even at this early stage in Burke's career one can already see Burke sketching out a dialectical theory in which one thing stands in relation to another. He proposes that psychology and form are mutually dependent entities, arguing that "one is to be defined in terms of the other" (CS, 30). He maintains that,

> If, in a work of art, the poet says something, let us say, about a meeting, writes in such a way that we desire to observe that meeting, and then, if he places that meeting before us -- that is form. While obviously that is also the psychology of the audience, since it involves desires and their appeasements (CS, 31).

Burke's reasoning here is that our experiences are conveyed, on the one hand, through literary forms. But on the other hand, he is arguing that forms of art are not exclusively aesthetic or unique to a work of art; other experiences can be distinguished through them. In another section of the aforementioned essay Burke presents a critical analysis of the relationship between psychology and form in

Shakespeare's Hamlet, where he notes that

> The psychology here is not the psychology of the hero, but the psychology of the audience. Or, seen from another angle, from the creation of an appetite in the mind of the auditor and the adequate satisfying of that appetite (CS, 31).

Burke, in other words, is here proposing that form is essentially created by the artist's ability to identify with an audience's expectations. What Burke is proposing is a theory of rhetoric that accounts for the formal structures of a work. Burke's initial conceptions of what he later on calls a rhetoric of identification thus appears to stem from his account of the relationship between psychology and form, in which he claims that literary forms have a prior existence. Burke notes that "though forms need not be prior to experience, they are certainly prior to the work exemplifying them" (CS, 141). And since "a formal equipment is already present," the forms of art can be said to have "a prior existence in the person hearing or reading the work of art" (CS, 152). There are, of course, limits to Burke's insight, since it is possible for artists to invent new forms which serve to convey our experiences. Burke nevertheless argues that, "form in literature is an arousing and fulfilment of desire. A work has form in so far as one

part of it leads a reader to anticipate another part, to be gratified by the sequence" (CS, 124).

Burke goes on to claim that literary and artistic forms are transhistorical and universal in nature. Moreover, in the chapter called "The Poetic Process," Burke moves from a static conception of form to a dynamic one. Through what he calls "the highly emotive mechanism of crescendo," Burke illustrates how there exist universal formal patterns which serve to distinguish our experiences. He cites as examples, "the accelerated motion of a falling body, the cycle of a storm, the procedure of the sexual act, the ripening of crops" (CS, 45). And he goes to great lengths to point out that formal processes occurring within nature can serve to constitute human perception. Burke argues that

> Throughout the permutations of history, art has always appealed, by the changing individuations of changing subject-matter, to certain potentialities of appreciation which would seem to be inherent in the very germ-plasm of man, and which, since they are constant, we might call the forms of the mind (CS, 46).

As one reads through the collection of essays which Burke presents in Counter-Statement, one can see his method of formal analysis evolving. Burke expands upon his

hypothesis that universal patterns of experience are inherent in the very "germ-plasm of man," arguing that the artist's task is to convey these patterns. He reasons that because form is the "adequate satisfying of an appetite," the artist must construct a "symbol" which serves the function of "arousing the human potentiality for being moved by the crescendo" (CS, 45). Since "the symbol is the verbal parallel to a pattern of experience" (CS, 152), Burke believes that the artist producing the symbolic artifact must begin "with his moods to be *individuated* into subject-matter, and his feelings for technical form to be individuated by the arrangement of the subject-matter" (CS, 52).

What Burke means by this is that the self-expression of the artist is not to be distinguished by the uttering of emotion, but by the "evocation" of emotion, not by what the artist *wants* to evoke but by what *can* be evoked. This line of reasoning Burke uses to postulate his principle of "individuation." Here he asserts that although art takes the form of prior structures, the specific individuations of a form of experience will change significantly with changes occurring within the social contexts and ethical systems out of which they arise. In other words, Burke is arguing that the individual forms which serve to convey our experiences are not stagnant, but are dynamic and flexible; they can be moulded and remoulded to accommodate changes occurring

within the social contexts out of which they arise.

For Burke the symbol is thus the site of convergence, what he calls a "modus of events," which functions to parallel the experiences of our own lives. Moreover, the symbol is also a technical form in that it has been worked upon by the artist to contain within it the universal patterns of crescendo. Before moving on to an account of some of the limitations and reactions against Burke's earliest documented conceptions of form, it is necessary to point out that even during these early moments in Burke's career he is already describing symbolic artifacts in organic, biological, and psycho-sexual terms. The significance of this, as we shall see later on, is very important because throughout the remainder of his career Burke formulates his account of a rhetoric of identification in terms of a discussion of language's power to motivate human actions. Fo.. instance, in his next book, Permanence and Change, Burke coins the phrase "Metabiology"; towards the end of his career he defines human beings as "bodies that learn language."

Returning to our discussion of Counter-Statement, Burke's theory of form would appear to suggest that literary works are essentially ahistorical, that they perpetuate universal, transcendent forms of experience that are beautiful and moving because they stand outside of history. This is the main objection social critic Grandville Hicks

voiced against Burke in his review of Counter-Statement. Hicks charged that Counter-Statement lacked an appreciation of critical perspectives drawn from leftist ideology. Even though Burke had not yet read Marx's writings before he wrote Counter-Statement, his concerns with the social effects of art permeate the later essays of his earliest critical text. Nevertheless, Hicks believed that Burke fell short of addressing the social responsibility of artists. He thought that Burke failed to prescribe solutions for the decadence of American capitalism. Consequently, he claimed that Burke's book was too much "a defence of eloquence," too much a statement of an aesthete. And he accused Burke of equating eloquent art with the "kind of art which deals with the controversial issues of the day":

> Burke goes on, rather half-heartedly, to explain that there are two general bases of critical exhortation, one a concept of an ideal situation and the other a concept of the contemporary situation. And he proceeds by discussing, and in a way defending, the latter basis. But his heart is not in it; his heart is where, if one may speak in parables, his treasure is; he remains principally concerned with eloquence (A Defence, 75).

Hicks here refers to Burke's alleged failure to account for the ways in which economic and political factors subsume an aesthetic. He saw Burke as being far too preoccupied with the notion that the means of appeal are not located within the structures of a social system, but rather in the management of the psychology of the audience. Although Hicks' criticisms are to a certain extent accurate, such tendencies in Burke's thinking eventually led him to become increasingly more conscious of the ways in which the realism of language serves to shape human perceptions and motives. "Experience," argues Burke, "is less the *aim* of art than the *subject* of art; art is not *experience*, but *something added* to experience" (CS, 77). It appears, however, that Hicks failed to recognize the full implications of Burke's insights. He charged that, for Burke, "the only proper concern of the critic is technique," contending that,

> If power and complexity are virtues, does it not follow that the writer who has a clear understanding of the needs which his symbol is to meet for his readers and an imaginative power that meets those needs on the highest level is a greater writer than the one who succeeds in arousing and fulfilling, however completely, a desire that is related to no fundamental need? (A Defence, 75).

a society; he also had in mind what he calls the "practical attitude" which, he said, "in contemporary America the distinguishing emergent factor is obviously mechanization, industrialization, as it effects our political institutions, as it alters our way of living" (CS, 107). Burke juxtaposes the practical attitude with his "aesthetic attitude," which he describes as "the humanistic or cultural counterpart of the external changes brought about by industrialization, or mechanization" (CS, 108). And it is through this juxtaposition that Burke's initial conceptions of a rhetoric of identification evolve. He argues that,

> The artist, who is seeking to adjust a vocabulary (stressing such ways of feeling as equip one to cope with a situation) is necessarily sensitive to both the surviving and the emergent factors in a situation. The contemporary being an aggregate of survivals and possibilities, the artist wholly awake to the contemporary will embody a mixture of retentions and innovations (CS, 108).

In other words, in order to affect social change, the artist's symbol will need to identify with the residual, contemporary, and emergent sets of beliefs which motivate social action. And it is in this way, Burke reasons, that the aesthetic attitude becomes "a means of reclamation"(CS,

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Burke anticipated this critique and incorporated his response to it in his theory of form. He argues that both types of writers serve a vital function in that they are skilled at creating language which can move an audience. This stance becomes quite apparent in Burke's response to Hicks' criticism, where he points out that Hicks' "objection only applies to my rhetoric, where I am discussing not what effects *should* be produced, but *how* effects are produced" (Counterblasts, 101). And while reminding Hicks that "a moral imperative is not proper to a rhetoric," Burke directs him to his "Program," where he notes that "art is eternal in so far that it deals with the constants of humanity. . . . But art is also historical -- a particular mode of adjustment to a particular cluster of conditions" (CS, 107).

As we shall see, Burke's awareness of the historical, contextually specific patterns of experience inherent in works of art eventually led him toward conceiving what he later calls a rhetoric of identification. In his "Program," Burke begins by reaffirming the universality of art, "as it deals with the constants of humanity" (CS, 107), while also noting that art is historical and dynamic; consequently, "the present program speculates as to which emotions should be stressed and which slighted in the aesthetic adjustment to the particular conditions of today" (CS, 107). What Burke means by "conditions" is the dominant value systems of

a society; he also had in mind what he calls the "practical attitude" which, he said, "in contemporary America the distinguishing emergent factor is obviously mechanization, industrialization, as it effects our political institutions, as it alters our way of living" (CS, 107). Burke juxtaposes the practical attitude with his "aesthetic attitude," which he describes as "the humanistic or cultural counterpart of the external changes brought about by industrialization, or mechanization" (CS, 108). And it is through this juxtaposition that Burke's initial conceptions of a rhetoric of identification evolve. He argues that,

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111). He argues that even though the aesthetic attitude appropriates many aspects of the practical attitude, it nevertheless serves the function of "keeping the practical from becoming too hopelessly itself" (CS, 112). The aesthetic attitude, "being primarily a process of disintegration, of making propaganda difficult, of fostering intellectual distrust" (CS, 118), functions in opposition to the practical attitude in that it evokes identifications which would

> seek to discourage the most stimulating values of the practical, would seek -- by wit, by fancy, by anathema, by versatility -- to throw into confusion the code which underlies commercial enterprise, industrial competition, the "heroism" of economic warfare; would seek to endanger the basic props of industry (CS, 115).

Burke's account of oppositions between what he calls practical and aesthetic attitudes eventually leads him to a re-evaluation of the individuation of forms, from which he draws a connection between form and ideology. He argues that "a form is a way of experiencing; and such a form is made available in art when, by the use of specific subject-matter, it enables us to experience in this way" (CS, 143). Even though the images of art will change significantly with

changes occurring within the social and ethical systems from which they arise, Burke believes that "the principles of art, as individuated in these changing images, will be found to recur in all art, where they are individuated in one subject-matter or another" (CS, 143). But because, for Burke, a literary form is "a way of experiencing," it can be used to propose, affirm or undermine certain systems of beliefs. Through what Burke describes in his later works as identification, "the artist's manipulations of the reader's desires involve his use of what the reader considers desirable" (CS, 146). For Burke, identification is synonymous with ideology: by an ideology is meant the nodus of beliefs and judgements which the artist can exploit for his effects" (CS, 161). Burke claims, however, that ideologies are not harmonious structures of meaning; artists produce their symbolic artifacts through a process of selecting beliefs which serve to support a certain perspective, while simultaneously rejecting those beliefs which stand to refute that perspective. He reasons that "an ideology is an aggregate of beliefs sufficiently at odds with one another to justify opposite kinds of conduct" (CS, 163).

Burke goes on to emphasize a causal framework for understanding how our beliefs become ideologically entrenched. He argues that an artist's work is highly ideological in the sense that

> the artist's patterns of experience may be manifest in his particular stressing of the ideology. Accepting certain assumptions or beliefs as valid, he will exploit them to discredit other assumptions or beliefs which he considers invalid. He may, for instance, use the assumption of natural beauty to rout the industrialist's assumptions of progress -- or vice versa. It is by such aligning of assumptions that poetry contributes to the formation of attitudes, and thus to the determining of conduct (CS, 163).

Thus far we have seen Burke's thinking progressively moving away from what he calls the universal patterns of identification inherent in the psychology of the individual mind, toward an account of the more historical, socially constructed, patterns of experience. What has so far remained consistent in Burke's thinking, however, is the notion that language dialectically shapes our perceptions; how, that is, people subscribe to a certain perspective by transcending of an opposing perspective. Even though the symbolic artifacts which artists use to make sense of their social environments can function as tools in which individuals and groups can transcend what Burke calls "practical attitudes," they must, if their art is to be

effective, at certain levels identify with already existing patterns of experience. And it is precisely for this reason that Burke, in his counter-argument to Hicks' criticisms, states that "the second kind of writer is often more effective than the first, though pointing out that such effectiveness may be less fit to survive further permutations of history" (Counterblasts, 101).

Burke's initial interest in aesthetics was not, as Hicks alleged, an elaborate account of his own attachment to literary beauty. His writings, to the contrary, are engaged and wilful attempts to act upon prevailing social and political attitudes. As a result of the crisis of the Depression and due to his reading of Marx, this becomes ever so more apparent in the texts Burke produced during the 1930s. Perhaps in reaction to Hick's charge that he did not effectively challenge capitalism, Burke began to formulate an account of art as being tied directly to dominant modes of production. Although the critical orientation which Burke adopts at this point in his career is often described as Marxist, what interested Burke about Marx's writings was not his social vision, but the dramatic and rhetorical features of his work. Consequently, Burke's 1930s texts are only Marxist in the sense that he translates some of Marx's insights into his own terms. In a letter he wrote to Malcolm Cowley he states that his 1930s writings are "concerned with Marxian criticism, but independently -- in

neither total agreement nor in total disagreement" (cited by Jay, Dictionary, 73).

Two years after the publication of Counter-Statement, Burke produced a pair of essays called "The Nature of Art Under Capitalism" and "My Approach to Communism," in which there is documented yet another shift in his thinking. This shift, which has Marxist overtones, is that of a significant departure from literary criticism toward a study of culture and communication per se. This broader line of thinking is also noticeably prevalent throughout Burke's two major texts of the 1930s, Permanence and Change and Attitudes Toward History. Burke begins, in "The Nature of Art Under Capitalism," with an account of the subject of art as a form of propaganda. He attempts to propose "a line of reasoning as to why the contemporary emphasis must be placed largely upon propaganda, rather than upon 'pure' art," and shows us how "the breach between work and ethics, indigenous to capitalist enterprise, requires a 'corrective' kind of literature" (Nature, 673). The need for such literature, he reasons, stems from the fact that "work-patterns and ethical patterns are integrally related," but under capitalism "this basic integration between work-patterns and ethical-patterns is constantly in jeopardy, and even frequently impossible" (676).

Burke believes that this basic incongruity results from "capitalism's emphasis upon the competitive aspects of work

against the cooperative aspects of work" (676). He notes that "capitalism runs counter to the very conditions by which the combative equipment of man is made ethical -- or social" (676). To illustrate this point, Burke asserts that, in pre-industrialist societies, ritual dance serves to foster, on the one hand, a degree of competitive behavior, while on the other hand it functions to induce cooperation:

> The ethical values of work are in its application of the competitive equipment to cooperative ends. . . . It has been suggested that the primitive group dance is so highly satisfying 'ethically' because it is a faithful replica of this same cooperative fusion. It permits a gratifying amount of muscular and mental self-assertion to the individual as regards his own particular contribution to the entire performance, while at the same time it flatly involves him in a *group* activity, a process of giving and receiving (676).

Not only is Burke here acknowledging that competitive behavior is not exclusive to capitalist social formations, but he is also proposing, as he did earlier on in Counter-Statement, that there exist universal forms of human experience grounded in biology. His account of ritual dance

appears to suggest that competitive and cooperative behavior is "rooted in the very nature of man," and that it is through symbolic means that people transcend the cultural divisions which function to inhibit cooperation. Culture, in other words, brings social groups together.

Unlike in his Counter-Statement, in "The Nature of Art Under Capitalism," Burke advances a theory of rhetoric that addresses how art serves to foster the justification, and ultimately the maintenance of, whole social orders. Arguing that art is no longer a stratum of excellence outside of an audience's desires, Burke describes "pure" art as possessing significant ideological traits, since it is an "art that tends to promote a state of acceptance" (677). Burke maintains that the group dance, described earlier on, is a form of pure art in that

> It carries the social patterns into their corresponding "imaginative patterns," hence tends to substantiate or corroborate these patterns. The aesthetic act here maintains precisely the kind of thinking and feeling and behaving that reinforces the communal productive and distributive act (677).

But because "pure" art tends to "promote acceptance," Burke argues that it is "safest only when the underlying moral

system is sound" (677). Consequently, he asserts that, under capitalism, where the moral system is highly unstable, "pure" art "tends to become a social menace in so far as it assists us in tolerating the intolerable" (677). The most catastrophic intolerable manifestation that Burke cites is the way in which, under capitalism, "pure" art can function to evoke the kinds of identifications necessary to induce cooperative patterns of behavior that serve as a grave stimulus to wars:

> War *does* promote a highly cooperative spirit. War *is* cultural. The sharing of a common danger, the emphasis upon sacrifice, risk, companionship, the strong sense of being in a unifying enterprise -- all these qualities are highly *moral*, and in so far as the conditions of capitalistic peace tend to inhibit such expressions, it is possible that the thought of war comes as a "purgation," a "cleansing by fire". . . . It is natural that, when the cooperative patterns are vitiated in peace, the moment war is declared it is found to be an "adequate" emotional solution to the difficulty, since it promptly brings cooperative genius to the fore (677).

Burke goes on to argue that in order to avoid the "toleration of the intolerable" -- when the competitive aspects of man offer no avenue for "the cooperative use of the competitive," or when the integration between "work patterns" and "ethical patterns" is effectively thwarted -- it is necessary to produce a type of discourse that will serve to foster an alternative, more moral, set of identifications. Burke's Marxist position is that "art must serve as a weapon in the class struggle" (677). He proposes that,

> Under conditions of competitive capitalism there must necessarily be a larger *corrective or propaganda* element in art. Art cannot safely confine itself to merely *using* the values which arise out of a given social texture and integrating their conflicts as the soundest, "purist" art will do. It must have a definite hortatory function, an element of suasion or inducement of the educational variety; it must be partially *forensic*. Such a quality we consider to be the essential work of propaganda (677).

A propaganda art, Burke argues, can help refoster the ritual function of primitive art within the culture and literature of modern societies. In "My Approach to

Communism," Burke describes the nature of this new social order. He asserts that this more moral, alternative orientation can only be communism:

> Communism alone provides the kinds of motives adequate for turning the combative potentialities of man into cooperative channels. . . . The communistic orientation is the only one which successfully produces the combative-cooperative fusion under conditions of peace, hence the only one upon which a permanent social structure can be founded. It does not eliminate the combative genius, since that is ineradicable, being rooted in the very nature of man. But it does permit of its maximum harnessing to the ends of social cohesion (Approach, 19).

What Burke thus means by Communism is what he calls "a kind of industrial medievalism." For Burke, Communism "is a doctrine aimed at the regularizing of human cooperation on the basis of the productive and distributive problems brought about by science and commerce since the close of feudalism" (20). Through what he calls an "esthetic approach," Burke considers the relationship between communist stability and art. This approach is one in which the artist must draw upon pre-existing sets of

identifications in order to evoke social change. Burke argues that under communism art will not become "pure"; rather, it will function to "fuse" our imaginative powers. An esthetic approach to social change thus involves not the elimination of existing social values but their appropriation. Because our beliefs, or identifications, serve as the basis for our social culture, Burke maintains that they enable "the adaptation of our spiritual values to external necessities" (20). And because our values are communicated by means of language, Burke believes that

> A medium of communication is not merely a body of words; the words themselves derive their emotional and intellectual content from the social or environmental textures in which they are used and to which they apply. Under a stable environment, a corresponding stability of moral and esthetic values can arise and perpetuate the group -- and it is this "superstructure" of values which the artist draws upon in constructing an effective work of art. In periods of marked instability, such a superstructure tends to disintegrate into individuistic differentiations (20).

Here we have an aspect of Burke's neo-Marxism. Base and

superstructure are inverted in Burke's formulation, as he asserts that changes in consciousness necessarily precede material and economic ones. Thus it appears that Burke's esthetic approach to social change is Marxist in the sense that he uses some of the categories drawn from Marx's writings, but proposes a fundamentally different "corrective literature" -- one which, as we shall see, is more fully elaborated in Permanence and Change and Attitudes toward History.

The earlier formulations of this "corrective literature" are, nonetheless, well documented in "The Nature of Art Under Capitalism." In the concluding section of this essay Burke says that he "by no means intended to imply that 'pure' or 'acquiescent' art should be abandoned" (677). In a statement reminiscent of his account of the relationship between psychology and form that he presents in Counter-Statement, Burke asserts that,

> Even though we might prefer to alter radically the present structure of production and distribution through the profit motive, the fact remains that we cannot so alter it forthwith. Hence, along with our efforts to alter it, must go the demand for an imaginative equipment that helps make it tolerable while it lasts. Much of the "pure" or "acquiescent" art of today serves

this *psychological* (italics added) end (677).

Burke is thus pointing out that under capitalism, where the moral system is unsound, there still exists a multiplicity of identifications, conveyed through artistic forms of appeal, which psychologically enable us to tolerate an otherwise intolerable situation. And it is for this reason, he argues, that "the great popular comedians or handsome movie stars are rightly the idols of the people" (677). Burke maintains that it is the more positive kinds of existing identifications that a propaganda art, for it to be effective, must appropriate. Although this art will not be "pure" in the strictest sense of the term, Burke believes that it will nevertheless be far more effective than

> The harsh literature now being turned out in the name of the "proletariat" [which] seems inadequate. . . . It is questionable as propaganda, since it shows us so little of the qualities in mankind worth saving. And it is questionable as "pure" art, since by substituting a cult of disaster for a cult of amenities it "promotes our acquiescence" to sheer dismalness. Too often, alas, it serves as a mere device whereby the neurosis of the decaying bourgeois structure are simply transferred to the symbols

of the workingmen (677).

Burke is thus arguing that there is no such thing as a "purist" discourse, or art, that can be considered as being entirely separate from its contexts of dissemination. What he means by "harsh literature," is a literature that excludes the existing identifications which make an alternative social order viable.

Such was Burke's line of thinking leading up to what was described earlier on as the second major critical juncture of his early career: the speech he gave to the 1935 American Writers' Congress. Appearing before a 4000 member pro-communist audience Burke began his speech by reminding his listeners that, "when considering how people have cooperated, in either conservative or revolutionary moments of the past, we find that their attachments as a group are polarized" (Revolutionary, 87). And while citing such polarizing devices as the hammer and sickle, the swastika, and the crucifix, he pointed to "the subtle complex of emotions and attitudes for which such insignia are little more than the merest labels" (87). Burke told the Congress that "from a strictly materialist point of view" such labels are "pure nonsense." Whereas the symbols which represent, for instance, our "food, tools, shelter, and productive techniques," function as "the 'realist' part of our vocabulary," in that they "they correspond to objects that

can be seen and felt, and to operations that can be clearly and obviously performed," Burke claimed that the communal relationships by which a group is bound "do not possess such primary reality" (87). These relationships, he asserted, have a vital importance in the promoting of historical processes but are nevertheless "*myths*, just as the Gods of Homer were myths" (87). And he argued that even though our myths may sometimes be ethically corrupt they are, nonetheless, "the basic psychological tool for working together"; they can serve to promote the continuation or transcendence of a given "reality" because they "deal with a second order of reality" (87). Burke, in other words, is arguing that a social myth serves the function of symbolically orientating our perceptions beyond our immediate material environments.

In his 1935 speech, Burke went on to argue that in order to affect social change the socialist writer must function as a "propagandist" by appropriating the myths of American capitalist discourse. He noted how capitalism had managed to channel the desire of the working class to escape its own oppression, that it had marketed this escape as a function of capitalism itself: "some people, living overly sedentary lives, may like to read of harsh physical activity (as they once enjoyed Wild West fiction) -- but Hollywood knows only too well that the people engaged in such kinds of efforts are vitalized mainly by some hope that they may some

day escape it" (89). Burke therefore urged that the socialist cause must do the same, arguing that "we must resist thinking of social doctrine as being separate from its medium of dissemination" (89). But what the Congress could not accept was his suggestion that "purely from the standpoint of propaganda" the Communists' "negative symbol of the worker" should be replaced with a "positive symbol of the people." A positive symbol of the people, he stated, "contains the *ideal*, the ultimate classless feature which the revolution would bring out -- and for this reason seems richer as a symbol of allegiance" (70). Burke's reasoning was simply that the Congress' proletarian symbol of the worker failed to embody such an ideal. He claimed that their symbol

> appears to us as an incentive because it suggests traits which we should like to share. Yet there are few people who really want to work, let us say, as a human cog in an automobile factory, or as gatherers of vegetables on a big truck farm. Such rigorous ways of life enlist our *sympathies*, but not our *ambitions*. Our ideal is as far as possible to eliminate such kind of work, or to reduce its strenuousness to a minimum (89).

Burke argued, moreover, that in America, with its enormous

middle class base, a symbol of the worker will effectively alienate those whom the Congress wishes to convince. He claimed that "a poet does not sufficiently glorify his cause by pictures of suffering and revolt" (90). To be effective, he said, the revolutionary writer must "show a keen interest in every manifestation of our cultural development, and at the same time give a clear indication as to where his sympathies lie" (91). In this way, he told the Congress, "we can convince a man by reason of the values which we and he hold in common" (91). In other words, Burke is arguing that it is necessary to draw upon existing identifications which transcend class boundaries. As a propagandist, Burke maintained, the revolutionary writer's task is "not to convince the convinced, but to plead with the unconvinced, which requires him to use *their* vocabulary, *their* values, *their* symbols, in so far as this is possible" (92). Burke thus argued that if the American Left is to win the support of the American citizenry it will inevitably need to "enlist the allegiance of the middle class," whose beliefs often run counter to a socialist political perspective (93). And this is why Burke, in the concluding remarks of his speech, reasserted his call for the creation of, what he called earlier on, a *corrective literature* -- a symbol of "the people" which, he said,

> Makes more naturally for a *propaganda by*

> *inclusion* than does the strictly proletarian symbol (which makes more naturally for a *propaganda by exclusion*, a tendency to eliminate from one's work all that does not deal specifically with the realities of the worker's oppression -- and which, by my thesis, cannot for this reason engage even the full allegiance of the worker's themselves) (93).

According to Burke's own testimony, the comments he made before the 1935 Congress "produced hallucinations of 'excrement dripping from my tongue,' of his name being shouted as a 'kind of charge' against him, a 'dirty word' -- 'Burke!'" (cited by Lentricchia, 21). During the discussions proceeding Burke's speech, Michael Gold noted how a symbol of the people was used during the general strike of 1926 in Great Britain, where "the *workers* were portrayed as *attacking* the people." He argued that "the attempt to substitute 'people' for 'worker' is very dangerous from [the Congress'] point of view. Historically, it has been the ruse of the exploiting class to confuse the issue" (Hart, 167). Friedrich Wolf also attacked Burke's suggestion, recalling how "Hitler knew enough to use this ideological device as a supplement to his blackjacks and machine guns." He cited ways in which the "utilization of the myth *'das Volk,'* the people, is an essential part of the

reformist approach, which has directly resulted in the fascists taking power" (168).

The biggest charge against Burke, however, came from Joseph Freeman, one of the moving forces of the Congress, who, Burke recalls, stood up and said, "We have a traitor among us!" (cited by Lentricchia, Criticism, 22). Freeman, in agreeing with the attacks upon Burke's suggestion, declared that it was necessary to show why the "proletariat is the sole revolutionary class." Arguing that "the symbol of the people came with the bourgeois revolution," Freeman pointed out that when the emergent Bourgeoisie demanded the abolition of class privileges, they had the following of the people. And he noted how "the word then became a reactionary slogan -- not because of any philosophy of myths, but because it concealed the reality, the actual living antagonisms between the classes" (Hart, 168). The danger he saw in the substitution of a symbol of the people for a symbol of the worker was that "the type of myth represented by the word *people* can go so far that reality can be concealed even in the name of the proletarian revolution" (168). Freeman thus argued that,

> If the *proletariat* can become a dangerous political myth in the hands of the reaction, how much more dangerous is the vague symbol of the *people*. We must not encourage such myths. We

> are not interested in the myth. We are interested in revealing the reality. We set up the "symbol" of the worker because of the role the worker plays in reality. . . . The worker has nothing to lose but his chains. He alone is forced by his position to be revolutionary, and he alone can liberate the people. If we do not get lost in "myths," if we stick to reality, it is only the working class that the other exploited classes of society -- including the intellectuals -- can find leadership" (169, 170).

It appears that Burke's audience wanted to use "their" word to articulate their place in society because "the worker" is a term from Communist discourse and signifies an ideological alliance. But what Burke meant in his speech is that the discourse and symbol systems utilized by a dominant class are by no means the exclusive "property" of that class, that the symbols of an existing ideology can be appropriated to further the claims of another, competing, ideology. The critics who rejected Burke's strategy were, nevertheless, correct in their observation that the left has no monopoly on appropriation, that the right has successfully utilized this same strategy. However, these same critics failed to understand the more fundamental point that Burke was making: the success of an artist's rhetorical

efforts depends on the psychology of the audience. Burke, in other words, is calling for a non-dogmatic and pragmatic approach to social change, claiming that a communist ideological orientation must include some contrary identifications within its unifying symbols for it to be effective. Burke argues against Freeman's assertion that artists can respond to social injustices occurring within their material reality without accounting for the social myths which serve to make that reality meaningful. In his response to Freeman's criticisms Burke notes how

> A poet's myths are *real* in the sense that they perform a necessary function. They so pattern the mind as to give it a grip upon reality. For the myth embodies a sense of relationships. But relationships cannot be pointed to, in the simple objective way in which you could point to a stone or a house. It is such a sense of *relationships* (I have sometimes called them 'secondary reality') that I had in mind when using the word myth (170).

Burke, in other words, is here calling for a dialectical American Marxist criticism, arguing that the myths which serve to support the beliefs of a dominant class are *related* to the discourses of subordinate classes. As in

his account of "pure" art in "The Nature of Art Under Capitalism," Burke is reasserting his belief that artists construct their symbolic artifacts by drawing on an existing "superstructure" of values. A dominant social class's myths, which maintain a privileged position within this superstructure, are dominant only because they serve to negate the beliefs of an opposing, or competing, social class. Such myths are not "pure"; rather, they exist in dialectical opposition to other symbolic myths. And this is precisely why Burke maintains that the socialist writer must function as a propagandist who must identify with the uncommitted and the hostile through the acquisition of their symbols.

What Burke thus means by the word "myth" is that reality is guided symbolically, whereas his adversaries believed that symbol systems reflect reality. These critics thought that the symbols they choose to articulate their vision of a communist ideological alliance will serve to foster an American working class consciousness, failing to recognize how the existing dominant, capitalist, discourses dialectically shape the very symbols which support and convey their preferred vision.

Despite the negative reactions to his 1935 speech, Burke continued to advocate the idea that to affect social change the socialist writer must identify with competing ideological orientations. In an essay published in 1936,

entitled "What is Americanism," Burke again reasserts his claim that a social discourse cannot be "pure." Arguing that "the Marxist critique, in its main outlines, lacks 'Americanism' only to the extent that anti-capitalist criticism in general is impeded by organized opposition," Burke points out that if Marxism is to become dominant in America it will inevitably have to "become American in its relevance" (10). And he notes that, like Marxism, "Capitalism *is* a philosophy which can only be combated by *another* philosophy" (11). A philosophy proves its value, he says, "not by what new material it can *categorically reject*, but by what new material it can *assimilate*" (11).

Whereas in Counter-Statement Burke emphasizes the ways in which literary forms serve to shape human experience, in the works which follow the emphasis shifts toward a more general analysis of human, rather than strictly literary, motivation. This trend is prevalent in Burke's account of the nature of art under capitalism, as well as in his call for a unifying symbol of "the people"; it is also evident in his two major 1930s works, Permanence and Change, and Attitudes Toward History. Of all the works Burke has produced, these two texts are the least concerned with literary criticism, but are nonetheless the ones in which Burke begins to formulate the principles of identification upon which his later literary criticism and theory are based.

As mentioned earlier on, in Permanence and Change and Attitudes Toward History, Burke expands upon his concept of a "corrective literature," which he first describes in "The Nature of Art Under Capitalism." In "Revolutionary Symbolism in America," such literature takes the form of a symbol of "the people" which serves to correct a one-sided vision of a socialist America. It is not until his writing of Permanence and Change, however, that Burke formulates an actual strategy through which this literature is to be constructed. As he argued earlier on in "My Approach to Communism," Burke reasserts in Permanence and Change that our society is in urgent need of a "corrective framework," claiming that we must search for a way to construct a more stable totality because "a babel of new orientations has arisen in increasing profusion during the last century" (PC, 118). He notes that the contemporary situation has become such that "hardly a year goes by without some brand new model of the universe being offered us" (PC, 118). And because of these highly unstable circumstances Burke believes that we face almost certain annihilation:

> For always the Eternal Enigma is there, right on the edges of our metropolitan bickerings, stretching outward to interstellar infinity and inward to the depths of the mind. And in this staggering disproportion between man and no-man,

there is no place for purely human boasts of grandeur, or for forgetting that men build their cultures by huddling together, nervously loquacious, at the edge of the abyss (PC, 272).

Here we must note the location of Burke's formulation: the proximity of the abyss is a *fact* that we need to forget for our orientations to work. He goes on to argue that in order for us to move toward more stable ground, away from "the edge of the abyss," we must transform the present "babel" of orientations. He thus argues that for there to be change our orientations must change. In the opening section of Permanence and Change, entitled "On Interpretation," Burke describes how a person's orientation is, in effect, a vocabulary that provides a schema of the world. What Burke, in Counter-Statement, calls an "ideology" is in Permanence and Change referred to as an "orientation." According to Burke, an orientation is "a bundle of judgements as to how things were, how they are, and how they may be" (PC, 14). He argues that our ideologies/orientations are perspectives which are lived as though they are entirely true, noting how "our minds, as linguistic products, are composed of concepts which select certain relationships as meaningful" (PC, 14). But because

We discern situational patterns by means of the

> particular vocabulary of the cultural group into which we are born. . . . these relationships are not *realities*, they are *interpretations* of reality -- hence different frameworks of interpretation will lead to different conclusions as to what reality is (PC, 35).

This formulation leads to Burke's first insights into what he calls "motives," a term that forms the focus of the two major texts he wrote during the 1940s: A Grammar of Motives and A Rhetoric of Motives. In Permanence and Change Burke begins to describe how *"motives are shorthand terms for situations"* (PC, 29). He claims that motives are inseparable from the attitudes that are embedded in the names for situations, arguing that our orientations serve to prescribe normative behavior and the sharing of social perspectives. Burke, moreover, examines how our interpretive vocabularies both authorize and delimit one's view of reality, noting how "a way of seeing is also a way of not seeing -- a focus upon object *A* involves a neglect of object *B*" (PC, 29). He thus maintains that "a terminology of motives is not evasive or self-deceptive, but is moulded to fit our general orientation as to purposes, instrumentalities, the 'good life' etc" (PC, 29).

Burke, in other words, is here advancing his theory of a rhetoric of identification by examining how language

serves to motivate individuals and groups to subscribe to a particular orientation. As the title of his book implies, Burke is concerned with the tension between states of permanence and states of change. He examines how a specific interpretation of "reality" can be mistaken for a permanent, natural, state of things. For change to occur Burke calls for a "corrective philosophy," which, he claims, "must be grounded in a philosophy, or psychology of poetry" (PC, 66). What Burke, in Counter-Statement, calls an "esthetic orientation" is in Permanence and Change referred to as a "poetic orientation" which, he argues, evokes the kinds of identifications needed to oppose what he described earlier as the mechanistic, "practical orientation," of everyday life.

Burke's poetic orientation differs from his earlier formulation in two significant ways. The first, to which we will return, is that poetics are "biologically grounded" (PC, 66). The other is that Burke uses his poetics to elaborate a "dramatic" method of critical analysis. He argues that,

> In great eras of drama, the audiences *know* why characters act as they do. The characters themselves may be in a quandary, but the audience has merely to see them act and hear them talk, and the motives are taken for granted. But we

> even become muddled as to the motives in these earlier dramas -- hence our development of an art-form with motivation as its specific subject-matter. This fact in itself should indicate our growing instability; for in highly stable eras, the recurrent patterns of life are highly stabilized, hence the combinations of complex stimuli become standardized, hence the matter of motives is settled (PC, 32).

To set things right, to get beyond the present "muddle" of orientations which, Burke believes, are the cause of our growing social, political and economic instability, he proposes a method that will yield what he calls a "perspective by incongruity." Perspective by incongruity is the title Burke assigns to the second section of Permanence and Change, in which he argues that a new orientation can be evoked by "taking a word usually applied to one setting and transferring its use to another setting. It is a 'perspective by incongruity,' since it is established by violating the 'properties' of the word in its previous linkages" (90). Perspective by incongruity is thus the method by which Burke demonstrates how a ideology is dialectically evoked through the fusing of incongruous terminology; when, that is, an existing orientation is superseded by a competing, and hence incongruous, social

perspective.

Burke goes on to argue that a new historical orientation can be evoked in the same way a metaphor works to evoke new meanings. In his chapter entitled "Perspective as Metaphor," Burke says that when "using a metaphor we substitute for the fact to be described some quite different fact which is only connected with it by a more or less remote analogy" (PC, 95). He claims that a metaphor "appeals by exemplifying relationships between objects which our customary rational vocabulary has ignored" (PC, 90). Using Nietzsche's and Spengler's insights into the operations of metaphor Burke postulates his principle of "planned incongruity," which, he claims, "should be deliberately cultivated for the purpose of experimentally wrenching apart all those molecular combinations of adjective and noun, substantive and verb, which still remain with us. It should subject language to the same 'cracking' process that chemists now use in refining their oil" (PC, 119). Planned incongruity, in other words, involves the deliberate fusion of incongruous terminology; it has both a disruptive as well as an enlightening effect, and it can therefore work as a "corrective framework" through which one affects a new social stability.

With his choice of what he calls a dramatic/poetic metaphor Burke illustrates how his "corrective philosophy," based on poetic standards, is grounded in biology. Here

Burke's thinking is heavily influenced by the pragmatism of George Herbert Mead, who argued that "the discovery of the self is an indirect and arduous outcome of a process of education in gestures that become increasingly intricate. That process is the transformation of a 'biologic individual' into a 'minded self'" (cited by Thayer, 195). Thus, for Mead, "meaning occurs in relationships among organisms and objects, not in them nor in minds. Meaning occurs among phases of the social act" (205). In other words, human cognition results through the ways in which "the organism 'selects and picks out what constitutes its environment'" (207). In his application of Mead's insights, Burke focuses on how Mead distinguishes "action" from "motion." He reasons that "action as here conceived does not involve rationality, or even 'consciousness of action,' but is equated with the internal motivations of an organism which, confronting reality from its own special point of view or biological interests, encounters 'resistance' in the external world. And this external resistance to its internal principle of action defines the organism's action" (Grammar, 237).

Mead's theories thus enabled Burke to formulate his concept of a "Metabiology," through which he demonstrates that "man's historic institutions should be considered as the externalization of biologic, or non-historic factors" (PC, 228). And while claiming that our "materials of

invention" serve as "the objective projection of subjective patterns grounded in our organic equipment" Burke notes how

> Historic textures can be said to "cause" our frameworks of interpretation in the sense that they present varying kinds of materials for us to synthesize -- but the synthesis is necessarily made with reference to non-historic demands, the genius of the human body as projected into its ideological counterparts (PC, 229).

Burke, in other words, is pointing out that our orientations are both biologically and socially constituted, emphasizing that human beings symbolically externalize their interactions with nature. In Attitudes Toward History Burke defines such externalizations as "Counter-Nature." Counter-Nature is thus the biological term Burke uses to claim that our ideologies are in part derived from nature. In his essay, "On Human Behavior Considered Dramatistically," which serves as an appendix to his second edition of Permanence and Change, Burke says, "by 'dramatistic' terms are meant those that begin in theories of *action* rather than in theories of *knowledge*" (PC, 274). He goes on to assert that

> Man being specifically a symbol-using animal, we take it that a terminology for the discussion of

> his social behavior must stress symbolism as motive, if maximum scope and relevancy is required of the terminology. However, man being genetically a biological organism, the ideal terminology must present his symbolic behavior as grounded in biological conditions. (This is not the same as saying that symbolism is *reducible* to biology. *On the contrary.*) (PC, 275).

Burke is here further substantiating an earlier claim he made in the concluding section of his first edition of Permanence and Change, entitled "The Basis of Simplification," in which he argues that the poetic metaphor should be privileged over all other types of metaphors on the grounds that,

> The poetic metaphor offers an invaluable perspective from which to judge the world of contingencies. . . . And since poetry is essentially ethical, the poetic metaphor clearly identifies the ethical with the aesthetic, in Hellenic fashion defining the "beautiful" life as the "good" life. The Metaphor also has the advantage of emphasizing the participant aspects of action rather than its competitive aspect, hence offering a prompt basis of objection when

> the contingencies of our economic structure force us to over stress competitive attitudes. And in a world which has lost its faith in transcendental revelation, the poetic metaphor enables us to start from a point of reference wherein the "revelation" is of a secular nature: the biologic assertion itself. Projecting the metaphor by analogical extension, we find that the entire universe again takes life, as a mighty drama still in progress (PC, 266).

Burke is thus calling for a philosophy of poetry which, he believes, can be used to affect a new social stability. As he asserted previously in "My Approach to Communism" and "The Nature of Art Under Capitalism," he is again arguing that what he calls a "corrective literature" must not only serve to affect material change, but must also function to bring about a more stable, ethical, orientation in which our competitive behavior is channelled toward inducing cooperation. Burke's rationale for choosing poetry as the primary motivating discourse through which one can affect a new social stability is that he believes that poetry is "in the truest sense *active*, but its acts move toward the *participant*, rather than the *militant*, end of the combat-action-cooperation spectrum" (PC, 269). Burke's "poetic orientation," unlike his earlier formulation, the "esthetic

orientation," thus accounts for the ways in which the body's drives are channelled into social symbol systems, directing us toward a perspective in which our competitive behavior is conceptualized in cooperative terms.

Burke's thinking, as it is reflected in Permanence and Change, seems to be an attempt at becoming more attuned to the various ways in which rhetorical forms emerge, and to the nature of their interaction. Although we now see Burke moving toward a dramatistic analysis in order to elucidate what can be best described as a rhetoric of change via identification, he is nonetheless still committed to the "Program" which he elaborated in Counter-Statement, where he claimed that an aesthetic subsumes a system of politics. His description of the operations of what he calls a poetic metaphor has highly political connotations, not only in the sense that the metaphor works to correct a "babel" of competing ideological orientations, but also that the solution is to affect a social order based on communism. In a passage which Burke omits from his second edition of Permanence and Change on the grounds that it "could not possibly be read in the tentative spirit in which it was originally written," (PC, xlix) he asserts that

> Communism is a cooperative rationalization, or perspective, which fulfils the requirements suggested by the poetic metaphor. It is

> fundamentally humanistic, as is poetry. Its ethics is referable to the socio-biologic genius of man (the economic conquest of the machine being conceived within such a frame) (PC, First Edition, 344-45).

Burke is thus proposing that, given the alternatives, communism is the best kind of "external resistance" to our organic environments, that it can work to guide our actions and thereby help affect a more moral social orientation. We thus here have the primary motive of Burke's theoretical undertakings in Permanence and Change: it is undeniably his idea of communism that helped Burke decide what effects his rhetoric should achieve. His attempt to construct an account of the political destiny of humanity, as structured like a smoothly functioning metaphor, is, consequently, an over-determined response to the crises of the 1930s; indeed, a desperate attempt, as Burke himself admits twenty years later, to affect an alternative social reality. In the Preface to the second edition of his book, Burke tells us that his original text constitutes a kind of "crisis-thinking," that it was written during "a time when there was a general feeling that our traditional ways were headed for a tremendous change, maybe even a permanent collapse" (PC, xlvii). Burke justifies his decision to omit the original references he made to communism on the grounds that "the

omissions could be called a kind of 'restoration,' since they further bring the text back to its original nature." And he further warrants the deletions by arguing that

> Cooperation in human society is never an absolute, but varies with conditions of time and place. . . . We do not mean that judgements about the political nature of a society's cooperative habits are in themselves unnecessary. On the contrary. We mean only that they are not necessary to the thesis of the present work, which needs but speculate on the fact that a system of ideal cooperation (whatever that might be!) would be a momentous material aid to the communicative medium, whereas communication is impaired to the extent that cooperation is impaired (PC, xlix).

That there are "no absolutes," that cultures are in a continual state of flux is what Burke is here asserting. That Burke admits that he indeed erred by proposing that communism is the *only* possible orientation which, under an industrialized system of production, can allow for cooperative uses of the competitive thus shows us the extent to which his thinking has changed, that he was responding to a particular set of social, economic, and political

circumstances. What has, however, remained consistent in Burke's thinking is his agenda, his conviction that artistic forms can serve to evoke the kinds of identifications needed to construct more a stable, moral, social order.

Whereas in Permanence and Change Burke "considers communication in terms of ideal cooperation, in Attitudes Towards History he characterizes the tactics and patterns of conflict which are typical of human associations" (Duncan, xxx). By enlarging his view of "orientation," Burke is able to capture the essence of *attitudes* toward history, whereby individuals erect great "frames of rejection and acceptance." He claims that "out of such frames we derive our vocabularies for the charting of human motives. And implicit in our theory of motives is a program of action, since we form ourselves and judge others (collaborating with them or against them) in accordance with our attitudes" (ATH, 92). The emphasis of Attitudes Toward History is, in other words, more on "attitudes" than on "history." Burke tells us that "though the tendency is to pronounce the title of this book with the accent on *history*, so far as meaning goes the accent should be on *attitudes*. And by 'history' is meant primarily man's political communities. The book, then, deals with characteristic responses of people in their forming and reforming of congregations" (ATH, 1).

In Attitudes Toward History, Burke widens the application of his poetic metaphor in order to demonstrate

how what he calls "poetic categories" affect historical change. In what amounts to a dramatic account of the relationship between change and ideology he notes how "each of the great poetic forms stresses its own peculiar way of building the mental equipment (meanings, attitudes, character) by which one handles the significant factors of his time" (ATH, 34). While claiming that our poetic categories are the key metaphors into which all experience is translated, Burke shows us how these categories correspond to a set of conventional literary terms consisting of: the epic, tragedy, comedy, the elegy, the satiric burlesque, the grotesque, the didactic, and, most importantly, the comic.

In what is his first sustained attempt at applying his dramatic method of critical analysis, Burke charts the course of Western history in an account of how our frames have come to be accepted and rejected. He argues that such frames work as macro-perspectives that serve to guide society for a period of time and then change in content or fade away. The frames of each subsequent generation are, however, an extension of those of each previous one, which is why Burke characterizes the course of history as a five-act "curve," beginning with an account of "Christian Evangelism" and moving rapidly through readings of "Medieval Synthesis," "Protestant Transition," "Naive Capitalism," and "Emergent Collectivism." Each act is, in Burke's

terminology, a "collective poem," more commonly known as a social culture, which presents the materials out of which, and poses the problems in relation to which, individual frames ("poetic categories") are constructed.

As mentioned previously, Burke applies his method of perspective by incongruity to construct his idea of what he calls "the bureaucratization of the imaginative," which is essentially the process through which a group's symbolic structures become institutionalized. But because these structures are the "frames of acceptance" which serve as tools for social and political control, those who are less favoured by the prevailing symbolism may seek to challenge or destroy it by constructing "frames of rejection." Insofar as the frames of acceptance and rejection serve as organized systems of meaning that regulate individuals and communities they will, nevertheless, produce what Burke calls "unintended by-products," which include such things as class antagonism, racism, poverty, slums, and pollution. Burke claims that

> We must note how a given frame tends to develop by-products. In aiming at one thing, we incidentally bring out something else. Such cultural by-products are of many sorts -- and they lead to the full range of "alienation," as regards the people's participation in both

material and spiritual properties. (ATH, 139).

Once this point is reached, when, that is, the intolerable is no longer tolerable, a shift toward some corrective is likely. But until the corrective results, those in power will continue to use the dominant symbols in order to control society and distribute its rewards. the dominant group "may not want the by-products, as they may not want the slums. But they do want the rationale of purpose that produces the profits that make for the slums" (Burke, ATH, 140).

As in his Permanence and Change, Burke goes on to elaborate a method by which to affect social change. He argues that "act five of one's historic drama [emergent collectivism] should be left partly unfinished, that readers may be induced to participate in the writing of it" (ATH, 159). Moreover, Burke proposes that a covert strategy of change is in order. He claims that collectivism "may enter 'by the back door', as signalled in that highly ironic term of modern economists, the 'socialization of losses'" (ATH, 160). The socialization of losses is the incongruous perspective which Burke appropriates for the purpose of demonstrating how, under capitalism, losses become increasingly socialized in times of economic depression; when, that is, monies from the national credit are allocated toward such things as make-work projects, welfare payments,

and grants to private corporations. Burke notes how "this handy 'salvation device' becomes 'democratized,' as one group after another arises to claim its benefits" (ATH, 161). Burke thus reasons that collectivism will eventually arrive "by the back door, [as] cyclical depressions bring capitalism progressively closer to socialism" (ATH, 161).

The other way in which Burke sees his covert strategy of change evolving is through what he calls "comic correctives." He proposes that a "comic frame" should be used as a consoling device, claiming that

> The comic frame, in making a man the student of himself, makes it possible for him to "transcend" occasions when he has been tricked or cheated, since he can readily put such discouragements in his "assets" column, under the head of "experience.". . . The comic frame should enable people *to be observers of themselves, while acting*. Its ultimate would not be *passiveness*, but *maximum consciousness*. One would "transcend" himself by noting his own foibles (ATH, 171).

Burke is here asserting that consciousness precedes, and is thus the means by which to attain, political praxis. In the section entitled "Dictionary of Pivotal Terms" of his Attitudes Toward History, there is an entry which Burke

titles, "Repossess the World." This is where Burke asserts that the comic frame can help us establish what he calls a "rationale" of history, whereby the "dispossessed struggle to repossess the world" (ATH, 315). He points out that ideology is the material consequence of our social structures, arguing that the on-going bureaucratization of symbols has effectively alienated people from their own social histories. He thus claims that

> A rationale of history is the first step whereby the dispossessed repossess the world. By organizing their interests and their characters about a purpose as located by the rationale, they enjoy a large measure of repossession (a spiritual property that "no one can take from them") even though they are still suffering under the weight of the bureaucratic body oppressing their society. Maximum alienation prevails when the oppressed suffer oppression without a rationale that locates the cause of the disturbance and the policies making for its removal. By a rationale of history, on the other hand, they own a "myth" to take up the slack between what is desired and what is got (ATH, 315).

It was this line of reasoning which led up to what was described earlier on as the third major critical juncture of Burke's early career: Sidney Hook's scathing review of Attitudes Toward History. Hook rightly stated that Burke's "identification of the comic frame with the attitude of humanism is arbitrary," that it is a form of "ideological homogeneity [which] necessarily demands that the whole of art, science, and politics be interpreted in the exclusive categories of a single perspective" (Technique, 59). Hook charged that "in the realm of *fact*, relativism for Burke has no limits. He either adopts a relativism in which all facts are etherealized or he invokes his favourite metaphor of bureaucratization to blanket the discussion" (58, 61). But Burke, as Robert Heath notes, "has all along shown a preference for relativism; his relativism results from his belief that there is no single ideology, or perspective, which can serve as a infallible guide for human behavior" (Kenneth Burke's, 277).

Burke's relativism is a matter of his exploration of the extent to which our values and knowledge come to be shaped by the language that we use. He does not embrace a single socio-political perspective, but develops a method, which he calls "dramatism," for understanding how language motivates human actions. Consequently, Hook viewed Burke as being uncommitted to socialism; the "facts" which he refers to are Stalin's purges, how Stalin used the Soviet

bureaucracy to achieve what he describes as "the most monstrous frame-ups in all history -- the Moscow trials" (Is Mr. Burke, 47) Hook thus accused Burke of "denying their relevance, that, as his airy references to the Moscow trials show, interprets facts and evidence as he pleases. He relativizes what cannot be relativized" (46).

It is thus not surprising that Hook not only rejected Burke's use of the term "the bureaucratization of the imaginative" but also refused to give Burke credit for his socialist intentions "until he knows what kind of socialism he believes in" (Is Mr. Burke, 47). This Burke provided in his counter-argument to Hicks' attacks in which he voiced his sympathy "with the momentous task confronting the U.S.S.R," and his "admiration for the magnitude of its attainment," while pointing out that "by far his major interest is with the analysis of cultural processes as revealed by any and all kinds of historical and personal situations" (Is Mr. Hook, 42).

Throughout the remainder of his career Burke continued to focus upon the effects cultural processes have on affecting our understanding of "reality." In the Afterword to his third edition of Attitudes Toward History, entitled "In Retrospective Prospect," Burke reflects that "when the book was first published, the term 'bureaucracy' was a red-hot rhetorical weapon, as used by the Trotskites in their attacks against the Stalinists, through application of the

term 'bureaucracy' exclusively to the Stalinist dictatorship" (ATH, 400). And with direct reference to Hook, Burke recalls how

> One stalwart word-warrior had at me on the grounds that my widened use of the term 'bureaucratization' was designed purely to weaken Trotsky's charge against the 'Stalinist bureaucracy,' whereas I took it for granted that not only was *every government* a mode of bureaucratization, but every business, church, conference, ball game, picnic, and ordered set of words on a page (ATH, 401).

In concluding this brief account of Burke's early career, we say that Burke began to elaborate a theory of identification whereby people adopt symbols which are used by others in order to affect social change. Burke has essentially been arguing that a total social transformation is only possible because meaning is flexible, that it is moulded and remoulded through the ways in which people challenge the dominant social ideology and try to form allegiances with others. Burke has been saying over and over that language is a form of symbolic, or social, action. In regard to the symbolic action of social conflict, he has consistently proposed ways in which art can be used to help

us overcome our social divisions and enable us to live harmoniously with others. In his later writings Burke continues to follow up on his early insights; social mergers and division become the foundation of his rhetoric of identification. There is, however, a real shift of emphasis in Burke's later works, from an account of how our discourses are instrumental in fostering political praxis, to rhetorical (verbal, symbolic) factors. Burke does not abandon his own beginnings; his decision to concentrate more on the symbolic, and less on the effects language have, is not only indicative of the extent to which the political climate in America changed during the early post-1930s period, but is also a statement against the ideological tenets of New Criticism.

Section Two: Later Developments.

In his major works of the 1940s, A Grammar of Motives and A Rhetoric of Motives, Burke's earlier ideas about a dramatic or poetic metaphor for the formal analysis of discourse becomes fully and systematically realized as "dramatism." At this point in Burke's career there is, however, a real break in his thinking. In his 1954 retrospective "Prologue" to the second edition of Permanence and Change, Burke corrects an earlier significant statement he made in regard to the socio-biologic genius of humans. Here Burke reverses his claim that the body's drives are channelled into social symbol systems by stating that "even on an empirical basis, a 'Metabiology' needs the corrective of a concern *with social motives as such*. Thus, human kinds of domination and subjugation must decidedly never be reduced to the strictly 'natural' or 'biological'" (PC, li).

The decisive text which marks the break between the biological and the symbolic is A Grammar of Motives, published a full decade before Burke's retrospective corrective statement. Burke tells us that A Grammar of Motives is the project in which "the explicit study of language as the 'critical moment' at which human motives take form, since a linguistic factor at every point in human experience complicates and to some extent transcends the purely biological aspects of motivation" (Grammar, 318). In

what amounts to a proto-structuralist account of discourse, Burke elaborates a method by which human motives are explained through the inherent function of language itself. Burke tells us that "we mean by a Grammar of motives a concern with *terms alone*, without reference to the ways in which their potentialities have been or can be utilized in actual statements about motives" (Grammar, xvi). Burke combines five terms (Act, Scene, Agent, Agency, and Purpose) into what he calls a dramatistic "Pentad" of terms which, he claims, are necessary for any complete analysis of motive. Burke asserts that his five terms are "transcendental rather than formal," since they serve as a critical vocabulary for isolating motivation in discourse. Burke uses his Pentad as a heuristic, or "generating device" in which "any complete statement about motives will offer *some kind of* answer to these five questions: what was done (act), when or where it was done (scene), who did it (agent), how he did it (agency), and why (purpose)" (Grammar, xv).

Throughout his Grammar, Burke stresses that his dramatic method of critical analysis deals not with verifying the reality of our experiences, but with criticizing our experiences of reality. Through an account of what he calls "the ways of placement," Burke demonstrates how our discourses and philosophies are not objectifiable or measurable entities, claiming that they can only be explained in terms of motives, and, ultimately, as modes of

social action. He argues that any given orientation, and its underlying social motives, is constructed through interrelationships, what he calls "ratios," between his five key terms. Burke cites ten such ratios, consisting of "scene-act, scene-agent, scene-agency, scene-purpose, act-purpose, act-agent, act-agency, agent-purpose, agent-agency, and agent-purpose" (Grammar, 15). Through an analysis of the multiple ways in which his key terms are placed or arranged within particular discourses, Burke moves far afield from the realm of poetics toward a study of the many other kinds of categories in which human thought are exemplified. He argues that any given perspective is categorized ambiguously, that to understand how our "reality" is constituted "what we want is *not terms that avoid ambiguity*, but *terms that clearly reveal the strategic spots at which ambiguities necessarily arise*" (Grammar, xviii). His Pentad, in other words, works "to study and clarify the *resources* of ambiguity," in that it "deals with many kinds of transformation" (xix).

Burke goes on to show how "certain formal interrelationships prevail" among his five key terms through an account "of their role as attributes of a common ground or substance" (Grammar, xix). He claims, moreover, that it is "their participation in a common ground which makes for transformability" (xix). In order to substantiate this claim Burke cites how

> Our term "Agent" is a general heading that might, in a given case, require further subdivision, as an agent might have his act modified (hence partly motivated) by friends (co-agents) or enemies (counter-agents). Again, under "Agent" one could place any personal properties that are assigned a motivational value, such as "ideas," "the will," "tear," "malice," "intuition," "the creative imagination." A portrait painter may treat the body as a property of the agent (an expression of personality), whereas materialistic medicine would treat it as "scenic," a purely "objective material"; and from another point of view it could be classed as an agency, a means by which one gets reports of the world at large (Grammar, xix-xx).

The background here is Burke's idea that discourses and symbol system function arbitrarily to bring people together within a common ground, and that any single social orientation is made comprehensible through its relationship to competing orientations. This interdependency between perspectives Burke calls the "paradox of substance," which is the odd term he uses to demonstrate how philosophies and ideologies are not unified systems of meaning, but are, rather, common grounds of interpretation which allow for

transformability. He claims that human discourse serves the function of *substantiating* our "reality." The word *substance*, he says, belongs to the "stance family" of words, and is derived from the concept of "place" or "placement" (Grammar, 21). Substance is thus the word "used to designate what a thing *is*, [since it] derives from a word designating something that a thing *is not*" (23). That is, although the word substance is "used to designate something *within* the thing, *intrinsic* to it, the word etymologically refers to something *outside* the thing, *extrinsic* to it" (23). Substance, in other words, is the term that "would refer to an attribute of the thing's *context*, since that which supports or underlies a thing would be part of a thing's context. And a thing's context, being outside or beyond the thing, would be something that the thing is *not*" (23).

According to Burke, meaning is contextually grounded; it can only be articulated through a system of meaning which functions to support a meaning: the extrinsic "substance" that serves as a foundation of meaning for a particular thing. Our ability to articulate anything, Burke insists, is contingent upon human motivation that may only be expressed "in terms of *verbal action*, and which ultimately serve the purpose of unifying us to see things in terms of *some* thing rather than its *other* counterpart" (Grammar, 49). Burke calls this process "the search for a representative

anecdote," which, he claims, occurs when "men seek for vocabularies that will be faithful *reflections* of reality. To this end, they must develop vocabularies that are *selections* of reality. And any selection of reality must, in certain circumstances, function as a *deflection* of reality" (59). Burke reasons that the anecdotes people use to convey their ideas must thus "have the necessary *scope* to provide a meaning, yet must also possess simplicity in that they are broadly a *reduction* of the subject matter" (60). Moreover, he warns that "the representations will become a *deflection* if the terminology is not suited to the subject matter it is designated to calculate" (59).

Here, of course, is Burke's theory of id ntification re-emerging within a structuralist account of discourse. What Burke is essentially saying is that discourse is structured around a social group's experiences, that individual and groups use language in order to evoke the kinds of identifications needed to bring people together within a common ground. The paradox of substance is thus the theoretical stopping point in the Grammar of Motives, the place where Burke significantly engages a formalist tenet and then pushes that tenet beyond the ideological impasse of formalism. Burke essentially moves from a Grammar toward a Rhetoric of critical inquiry, focusing upon the ideological domain of the critical act itself.

As mentioned previously, in his 1940s writings Burke

challenges the ideological tenets of the American New Criticism, which flourished from the late 1930s to the 1950s. New Criticism undertook and addressed literary works through a type of "objective criticism," whereby the text is seen as an *object* of meaning, completely separate from its social context. Burke's later writings were a reaction against formalism in general, and New Criticism in particular. Anticipating by thirty years a post-structuralist account of language, Burke, in his Grammar of Motives, had already developed insights into how the fields of signification (Grammar, Symbolic, and Rhetoric) "overlap considerably," and how, indeed, "the Rhetoric and the Symbolic hover about the edges of our central theme, the Grammar" (Grammar, xviii). And it is through this observation that Burke is able to launch his attack on the New Critics. In the section of his Grammar, entitled "The Problem of the Intrinsic: As Reflected in the Neo-Aristotelian School," Burke states that

> There is a *rhetorical* explanation for the doctrines proclaiming the eternity of art. We can say that, esthetic standards being transitory, men try to compensate for this changefulness by denying its existence. . . . Or noting how much of art has been a secularized variant of religious processes, particularly

> since the rise of the romantic reaction against capitalism and technology, we may offer a *symbolical* interpretation. A doctrine proclaiming the eternity of art would, from the symbolic point of view, be the natural secular analogue of a belief in the eternity of God. But we may discuss motive on three levels. Besides Rhetoric and Symbolic there is Grammar. We are on the grammatical level when we begin with the "problem of the intrinsic," as reflected in the attempt to characterize the substance of a work. We are faced with *grammatical* problems when we would consider a given work of art "in itself," in what I believe the scholastics might have called its *aseitas*, or "by-itself" (Grammar, 465).

Through an application of his dramatic method of critical analysis, Burke problematizes the basic tenets of New Criticism by insisting that dramatism's central orientation is rhetorical rather than epistemological. Burke considers how the reality of rhetorical tactics serves to shape our perceptions, rather than subscribing to the belief that statements about experience contain some immanent reality or truth. He notes that, for the New Critics, "the poem, as an object of study, is to be considered in terms of its nature

as 'finished', [that] it is to be considered in terms of 'perfection', as per the stressing of part-whole relationships" (Grammar, 482). In contrast, a dramatic perspective "points equally towards a concern with 'internal structure' and towards a concern with 'act-scene relationships'" (Burke, Grammar, 482). Dramatism, in other words, accounts for the ways in which "words are aspects of a much wider communicative context . . . [since it] considers both this nature as words in themselves and the nature they get from the non-verbal scenes that support their acts" (482). Burke thus reasons that

> The explicit treatment of the poem as an act would remind us that it is not enough to consider it solely in terms of its "perfection," or "finishedness," since this conventionalized restriction of our inquiry could not possibly tell us all the important things about its substance (Grammar, 483).

Burke's primary message in the Grammar of Motives is thus to consider the material effects of language; how, that is, language functions to motivate human action, or, as in the case of New Criticism, works to affect a state of non-action. What Burke essentially demonstrates in his Grammar is that criticism is itself an ideological enterprise; he

considers how the acts of reading writing are ideological by examining how they have served the interests of a powerful group of literary intellectuals. With this in mind, Burke makes his final break from a grammatical method of critical inquiry, which assumes a direct and unproblematic relationship between objects and signs, and moves toward a rhetorical account of discourse, which addresses how language and ideology are intrinsically related. In concluding his assault on the New Critics, Burke thus presents his primary reason why rhetoric should become the new method of critical inquiry. He tells us how he

> began by speaking of three fields: Grammar, Rhetoric, and Symbolic. It is perhaps only in the third of these categories that modern criticism has something vitally new to offer the student of literature. And it would be a pity indeed if a dogmatic or formalistic preference for an earlier method interfered with the progress of such inquiry, which promises greatly to increase our knowledge of poetic substance in particular and of human motivation in general. (Grammar, 483).

With this sort of concern permeating his Grammar of Motives it is thus not surprising that Burke's following

major work would be called A Rhetoric of Motives. The Rhetoric of Motives is the text in which Burke systematically extends the term "rhetoric" to include the factor of identification. Burke tells us that his purpose is two-fold: to "reclaim" rhetoric "by rediscovering rhetorical elements that had become obscured when rhetoric fell into disuse . . . and to seek to develop our ... ject beyond the traditional bounds of rhetoric" (Rhetoric, xiii).

It is therefore Burke's second purpose which here concerns us. As mentioned previously, Burke's conception of what he calls a rhetoric of identification accounts for the ways in which persuasion can be unconscious and thus differs from the "old" rhetoric which stresses a deliberate kind of appeal. In the section entitled "The Traditional Principles of Rhetoric," Burke notes that Cicero described rhetoric as "speech designed to persuade" and how Aristotle, three hundred years before him, "had similarly named 'persuasion' as the essence and end of rhetoric, which he defined as 'the faculty of discovering the persuasive means in a given case'" (Rhetoric, 49). For Burke, "the study of rhetoric, in its classical and contemporary forms, provided him with the critical heuristic needed to describe a contextual theory of discourse" (Hoechsmann, 66). Unlike formalist literary criticism, rhetoric studies an utterance and its context simultaneously. Rhetoric, in other words, "analyzes how symbols and forms are persuasive, how they motivate

people to subscribe to certain attitudes and to respond with certain actions or behaviors, often on the basis of group identification" (67). Burke believes that "you persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, idea, *identifying* your ways with his" (Rhetoric, 55). While subscribing to a certain extent to the classical definitions of rhetoric, Burke developed a conception of rhetoric that encompasses the factor of identification. The key term which Burke uses to describe this type of rhetoric is the word "consubstantiality." He states that,

> In being identified with B, A is "substantially one" with a person other than himself. Yet at the same time he remains unique, an individual locus of motives. Thus he is both joined and separate, at once a distinct substance and consubstantial with another. . . . A doctrine of *consubstantiality*, either explicate or implicit, may be necessary to any way of life. For substance, in the old philosophies, was an *act*; and a way of life is an *acting-together*; and in acting together, men have common sensations, concepts, images, ideas, attitudes that make them *consubstantial* (Rhetoric, 21).

Applied to rhetoric, the concept of consubstantiality "reveals the dialectic of persuasion which occurs when people have shared commonplaces" (Hoechsmann, 70). Burke observes how discourses have both literal as well as contextual meanings, and how they can also persuade in the realm of identification. His most famous definition of rhetoric is thus not surprisingly "rooted in an essential function of language itself, . . . the use of language as a symbolic means of *inducing cooperation* in beings that by nature respond to symbols" (Rhetoric, 43). The dialectic, as mentioned earlier, thus works to enable people to subscribe to a certain perspective by transcending an opposing perspective, which is why Burke states that rhetoric is a "partisan" weapon through which groups and individuals are "at odds" with each other (Rhetoric, 22). Burke notes that

> Identification is affirmed with earnestness precisely because there is *division*. Identification is compensatory to division. If men were not apart from one another, there would be no need for the rhetorician to proclaim their unity. . . . In pure identification there would be no strife. Likewise, there would be no strife in absolute separateness, since opponents can join battle only through a mediatory ground that

> makes their communication possible, thus providing the first condition necessary for their interchange of blows. But put identification and division ambiguously together, so that you cannot know for certain just where one ends and the other begins, and you have the characteristic invitation to rhetoric (Rhetoric, 22, 25).

It is within this "mediatory ground" where the concept of ideology figures in Burke's expanded definition of rhetoric. As mentioned previously, in his Counter-Statement Burke defines ideology as "an aggregate of beliefs sufficiently at odds with one another to justify opposite kinds of conduct" (CS, 163). But in his Rhetoric Burke subscribes to a definition of ideology which is essentially a kind of rhetoric. He argues that,

> And though "ideology" originally meant but the study of ideas in themselves (as with Socrates' systematic concern with the problems involved in defining the idea of justice), it usually refers now to a system of political or social ideas, framed and produced for an ulterior purpose. In this new usage, "ideology" is obviously but a kind of rhetoric (since the ideas are so related that they have in them, either explicitly or

> implicitly, inducements to some social or political choices rather than others) (Rhetoric, 88).

Burke, in hindsight, thus argues that an ideology is essentially produced when individuals and groups become consubstantial, when they divide themselves from, and thereby transcend, the identifications which support an opposing social orientation. An ideology, because it is an "inducement to action," is thus rhetorical in the sense that it provides a view of the world. This is precisely why Burke believes that Marxism is an ideology. Burke criticizes Marxists who claim that "rhetoric [applies] solely to the persuasiveness of capitalist, fascist, and other non-Marxist terminologies (or "ideologies") (Rhetoric, 101). A rhetorical motive, says Burke, "is often present where it is not usually recognized or thought to belong" (xiii), which is undeniably the case with Marxism. As briefly mentioned in our Introduction, Burke believes that the primary rhetorical motive operating within a Marxist social orientation is its stress upon the social role of concepts of private property. With reference to the "The Identifying Nature of Property" Burke reasons that,

> Metaphysically, a thing is identified by its *properties*. In the realm of Rhetoric, such

identification is frequently by property in the most materialistic sense of the term, economic property. . . . Here is par excellence a topic to be considered in a rhetoric having 'identification' as its key term. And we see why one should expect to get much insight from Marxism, as a study of Capitalist rhetoric (Rhetoric, 22-23).

Burke goes on to claim that Marx relied too heavily on Hegel's notion of an Universal Idea. His reading of Marx exhibits the undecidability between Marx's materialism and Hegel's idealism, which is why Gregory Jay states that the direction of Burke's project is toward "a sheerly verbal terminology that refuses to traffic in an oppositional dichotomy of such confusing proportions. When Burke spots the return of reification in Marx's own critique of Hegel, he detects a 'blind spot' in the analysis, one his own insights are meant to supplement" (172). This "blind spot" is essentially where Marx classifies "absolute" ideas in concrete, rather than rhetorical, terms. Proceeding in accordance with the Hegelian dialectic, Burke notes how

The Absolute Idea thus becomes the creator of nature and history, which are but concrete expressions of it. Hence all *material* relations

> in history are interpreted as the products of this Universal Spirit, manifesting itself in the material world. The study of this empirical world, of course, would include such matters as conflicts over property. But instead of considering ideas as weapons shaped by their use in such conflicts, the kind of "ideologist" Marx is attacking would treat the conflicts as themselves but "moments" in the expression of the Universal idea underlying all historical development (Rhetoric, 107).

What Burke did find useful in Marx's writings is that Marx clearly exemplified how there is an element of mystification at work within an ideology. Burke claims that Marx subscribed to a notion of ideology "that makes for 'illusion' and 'mystification' by treating ideas as *primary* where they should have been treated as *derivative*" (Rhetoric, 104). The mystification at work here is thus the identifying of material relations as "products" of a "Universal Spirit." Marx's conception of mystification is, for Burke, a contribution to rhetoric in the sense that "it admonishes us to look for 'mystification' at any point where the social divisiveness caused by property and the division of labour is obscured by unitary terms" (108). Burke thus notes how Marx's critique of capitalism "is designed to

disclose (unmask) sinister *factional* interests concealed in the bourgeois terms for benign *universal* interests" (102).

Burke goes on to claim that unitary terms can enable people to transcend purely secular domains and should therefore be called "God terms." He argues that because God terms enable people to transcend division, they are powerful rhetorical devices: they induce people to commit themselves to the motives to which the terms apply. Burke notes how "any over-all term for motivation, such as honour, loyalty, liberty, equality, fraternity, is a *summing up* of many motivational strands" (Rhetoric, 110). However, he warns that because such terms function as rhetorical motives they may appear as "absolute and unconditional" but are actually "titles for conditions" (sic) (111). In Burke's view, a God term thus serves an ideological purpose. Burke's reading of Marx led him to claim that,

> All told, "ideology" is equatable with illusion, mystification, discussion of human relations in terms like absolute consciousness, honour, loyalty, justice, freedom, substance, essence of man -- in short, that "inversion" whereby material history is derived from "spirit" (in contrast with the method of dialectical materialism whereby the changing nature of consciousness would be derived from changes in

material conditions (Rhetoric, 110).

What thus here differs from Burke's earlier definition of ideology is that he provides us with a account of *how* people divide themselves from others, thereby transcending the identifications preventing them from becoming embodied with an opposing, spiritually constituted, understanding of "reality." What has, however, remained consistent in Burke's thinking is his deeply pragmatic, realist, and strategic conception of the operations of language. As we saw earlier, in the speech Burke made before the 1935 Writers' Congress he argued against a "purist" Marxist discourse by stressing that the revolutionary writer must be strategic, that in order to be effective it is necessary to appropriate some of the symbols of capitalism in order to identify and thereby be consubstantial with those living in a 1930s American context.

In his Rhetoric, Burke restates this very position by noting that Marxists have refused to acknowledge the existence of a "Red Rhetoric." Burke states that Marxists have failed to understand how their discourse, like capitalist discourse, is ideological. He tells us that "all this seems obvious enough; but rhetoric having become identified with non-Marxist rhetoric, the Marxist persuasion is usually advanced in the name of no-rhetoric" (Rhetoric, 102). Thus, as mentioned previously, we can see that Burke

is not a Marxist. Burke uses Marx's insights to show how Marxism is itself an ideology, that it is an economic orientation that is one of many competing orientations toward the complex nature of human relations.

With our look into Burke's later account of the relationship between rhetoric and ideology it is now possible to examine the two most important critical texts (Fredric Jameson's "The Symbolic Inference; or, Kenneth Burke and Ideological Analysis" and Frank Lentricchia's "Reading History with Kenneth Burke") which were presented at the 1977 meeting of the English Institute, consisting of a panel on "The Achievement of Kenneth Burke." This event, as mentioned previously, constitutes the major critical juncture of Burke's later career. This is primarily because the meeting essentially reveals the conditions which facilitated a rereading of Burke's theory of rhetoric; explaining why, that is, Burke's thinking was still pertinent within an entirely new social, political, and intellectual context. Gregory Jay provides us with the answer to this very question by noting that

> The date coincides with the impact of French structuralist and post-structuralist criticism upon the American academic scene. . . . When American critics embrace post-structuralism and then recognize Burke's pertinence to it, they may

be unknowingly reclaiming their own alienated majesty and reestablishing a critical tradition that ought never to have been allowed to fall into obscurity (170).

In the Preface to Representing ' n Burke, the book containing the texts which were presented at the 1977 meeting, Hayden White also acknowledges that Burke "had anticipated, in his own inimitable way, much of what passed for structuralism and post-structuralism well before either of these movements had taken shape" (vii). What thus interested both Jameson and Lentricchia about Burke was, first, "his investigation of literature and society as systems of language, discourse, rhetoric, and symbol" and, second, "his framing of such an inquiry within an avowedly, if radically revised Marxist perspective" (G. Jay, 171). However, both Jameson and Lentricchia present Marxist misreadings of Burke, but in radically different ways. Their two texts, as mentioned earlier, function as a dialectical pair.

Whereas Lentricchia attempts to salvage Burke from the political quietism of American deconstruction, Jameson calls for a reappraisal of Burke's theory of rhetoric, offering the first ideological analysis of his work. Jameson's misreading of Burke is reflected in his citing of "Burke's strange reluctance to pronounce the word ideology" (The

Symbolic, 87), and also by his noting of Burke's "desperate and ambitious attempt, in the Grammar and Rhetoric of Motives, to endow the American capitalism of the thirties and early forties with its appropriate cultural and political ideology" (85). Jameson believes that Burke concentrates too much on the symbolic, that he fails to account for the materialist effects of language. Consequently, he argues that Burke's texts amount to what he calls "a strategy of containment" which functions "to arrest the movement of ideological analysis before it can begin to draw in the social, historical, and political parameters which are the ultimate horizon of every cultural artifact" (82).

Jameson goes on to argue that although Burke effectively shows us how cultural artifacts are ideological, he fails to prescribe a political praxis by which social subjects can free themselves from their subjugation. This error led Jameson to claim that "Burke's system has no place for an unconscious" (88). According to Jameson, Burke's key critical term, dramatism, is "not so much the archetype of praxis as it is the very source of the ideology of representation and, with it, of the optical illusion of the subject" (88). He thus erroneously concludes that all Burke has to offer us is "the art and practice of virtuoso reading" (89) and therefore "regrets" to say "that Burke finally did not want to teach us history, even though he

wanted to teach us how to grapple with it; but I will argue for the *bon usage* of his work, that it be used to learn history, even against his own inclinations" (90).

In his "Methodological Repression and/or Strategies of Containment" Burke effectively refutes Jameson's criticisms. He begins by noting that Jameson failed to read the sections in his Counter-Statement and his Rhetoric of Motives where he pronounces, and explicitly describes, the operations of the term "ideology." After briefly restating his earlier positions on ideology, Burke concludes that

> Jameson has proved reluctant to quote even a single sentence in which I do pronounce the word. In referring to "methodological repression" I here have in mind what could be called a "strategy of containment," particularly inasmuch as he puts such emphasis upon my relation to the term. . . . Under the circumstances, his presentation of the case *functions* as a "methodological repression." For since he is differentiating his position from mine in these matters, obviously the proper expository procedure would require that he explicitly *"report"* my statement of my position (preferably at least *somewhat* in my terms) and then demolish it as he sees fit. (Methodological, 401, 403).

What Burke adds in order to bridge the gulf between his and Jameson's position or ideology is his notion of identification. Burke argues that Jameson ignored his theory of rhetoric. Jameson failed to recognize how Burke systematically demonstrates how a whole range of signifying practices exists prior to the subject; how, that is, rhetoric becomes a system of identifications which essentially serve to constitute the subject. Whereas Jameson essentially argues that symbolic acts are not substitutes for real actions, Burke explicates the various forms of textual mystification. In doing so Burke demonstrates that ideologies are "inducements to action," that language and human motivation are not separate entities but are intrinsically related. In his refutation of Jameson, Burke thus argues that he "would not call the 'centrality' of the 'self' (as a separate organism possessing immediate sensations not thus shared in their immediacy by other organisms) a mere 'optical illusion,' though I would grant that the individual as a 'person,' dissolves into quite a complexity of *identifications* in the sociopolitical realm" (Methodological, 413). According to Burke, ideologies "are not merely 'derived' from material conditions; they are positively 'creative' of material conditions" (414).

Burke's theory of language thus attests not to a "political unconscious," but to the politics of language. Whereas Jameson mistakenly concludes that ideology is a

function of the conscious subject, Burke effectively distinguishes how an ideology is a function of signifying practices. Burke's conception of ideology as a form of rhetoric reveals how an ideology becomes a system of identifications which serve to constitute the subject. Jameson's claim that Burke's notion of ideology is that of a "false consciousness" (Ideology, 418) is thus false. For Burke, ideologies are real in the sense that "they help us develop our identities and allow us to live and work together cooperatively (or competitively)" (Heath, Realism, 213).

In his "Reading History with Kenneth Burke," Frank Lentricchia offers an interpretation of Burke's work which opposes Jameson's. Whereas Jameson argues that Burke "did not want to teach us history," Lentricchia refers to Burke's "repeated turning to ideas of history and to his practice as a reader of history" (Reading, 120). In doing so, Lentricchia appears as a pragmatic humanist, tracing the congruity between Burke's work and contemporary literary and critical theory. He thus labels Burke as a "critical structuralist," claiming that the term "indicates not only his anticipation of structuralism but also its most recent critique" (Reading, 136). Burke, however, has always refused categorization; his texts simply cannot be reduced to either of Lentricchia's classifications. Although Burke is in many ways both a structuralist and a post-

structuralist, he is also much more. This is primarily because Burke extends the structuralist and post-structuralist accounts of discourse beyond the deconstruction of literary artifacts, thereby showing how language is itself political; how, that is, symbol systems function to evoke the kind of identifications needed to motivate human actions.

Lentricchia's label only partially reveals the extent to which he misinterpreted Burke; the full magnitude of his misreading shows up when he claims that Burke's notion of a "Bable" of interpretations, outlined earlier in our section on Permanence and Change, represents "a vision of history as a chaos of history of interpretive attitudes, all inaccessibly locked away within their prison-houses. This is no theory of history; it is rather the despair of history" (Reading, 122) Although Lentricchia's reading of Burke is to a certain extent accurate, he goes on to argue that Burke, by "postulating an organic genius for freedom that exists *prior* to any organic texture" (122), offers us an escape from "the despair of history." According to Lentricchia, Burke "finds a point of view outside history from which to mediate (tame) the conflicting interpretations within it" (122-33). Lentricchia thus reasons that Burke's organic principle of freedom "not only resolves the hermeneutic Babel of history by providing a universal motive for interpretation, but also prohibits, at the same time,

any locally engendered reading of the historical process from establishing priority as the key to all of history's meaning" (123). Lentricchia finally uses Burke's insight in order to refute the post-structuralist account of discourse, claiming that no "single interpretive subject is free to work its will in the hermeneutic process because the subject cannot control the forces at work *in* reading and *on* the reader" (125).

Lentricchia's claims clearly reveal that he ignored Burke's later writings. Well before he wrote his "Reading History with Kenneth Burke," Burke had made numerous disclaimers to his earlier assertion that human being possess a prior socio-biological genius. For instance, in his 1952 Preface to his second edition of Counter-Statement, Burke tells us that "any reduction of *social* motives to terms of sheer 'nature' would now seem to me a major error. Naturalism has served as deceptively in the modern world as supernaturalism ever did in the past, to misinterpret motive that are intrinsic to the social order" (CS, xv). Ironically, later on in his essay Lentricchia contradicts himself by acknowledging Burke's disclaimer. He notes that "the deep bias of [Burke's] dramatic system is unavoidably humanistic because the very notion of Dramatism rests on the distinction 'action' (a uniquely human movement) and 'motion' (a process that presumably characterizes all nonhuman movement)" (136). As we shall soon see, Mead's

distinction between "motion" and "action" forms the basis of Burke's later argument in Language as Symbolic Action, where he asserts that our symbols/terms function as "terministic screens" which "direct" and "deflect" our attention, and are therefore ideological factors because they motivate our actions.

As a result of Lentricchia's over ambitious attempt at salvaging Burke from the political quietism of American deconstruction, in his next Burkean text, Criticism and Social Change, Lentricchia compares Burke's dramatic method of critical analysis with Paul de Man's work. Here Burke is characterized as the "prot-gonist" and de Man the "antagonist" who "promotes a debilitated criticism whose main effect is political paralysis" (Criticism, 19-20). Here Lentricchia uses Burke's work in order to propose ways in which intellectuals can perform radical work. He claims that "our society is mainly unresolvable and that education should be one of the places where we can get involved in the process of transforming it" (2). For Lentricchia, Burke's work thus provides us with a "theory" that can serve as "a point of departure" from which we can affect social change. He says that,

> Because I conceive of theory as a type of rhetoric whose persuasive force will not be augmented in our time by metaphysical appeals to

> the laws of history, the kind of Marxist theory I am urging is itself a kind of rhetoric whose value may be measured by its pervasive means and by its ultimate goal: the formation of genuine community" (12-13).

Here Lentricchia's reading of Burke is indeed accurate. Burke, as we saw earlier, provides a very convincing account of why Marxism must be understood as a type of rhetoric. However, Lentricchia's misreading of Burke again shows up in the way in which he applies his theory of rhetoric. Robert Wess notes that,

> In conceptualizing language as action in the Grammar, Burke distinguishes sharply between the "agent" -- the Grammar's term for the subject -- and the symbolic "act." Lentricchia, in his analysis of Burke's use of these terms, slides back and forth between them, making them appear to be synonymous. These slides are symptomatic of how Lentricchia rewrites the later Burke to suit the purposes of his pragmatic humanism. But in thus rewriting Burke, Lentricchia passes by an opportunity to undertake a different project, based on a different agon between de Man and Burke, that might have enabled Criticism and

Social Change to be a genuinely revolutionary event in Marxian discourse (129).

What Wess is referring to is the way in which Lentricchia ignores how the subject's "act" of critiquing society is itself ideological; how, that is, he failed to consider contemporary Marxism's mode of insertion into the dominant ideology. Susan Boerckel notes how this tendency of Lentricchia's is revealed through the way in which he interprets Burke's "Revolutionary Symbolism in America." Boerckel argues that Lentricchia rightly points out how Burke emphasizes the need for a "rhetoric of appropriation" in his 1935 American Writer's Congress speech, but then mistakenly goes on to claim "that change can come through the existing [social] structure" (19). Boerkel arrives at this conclusion by citing Lentricchia's claim that Burke's main message to the Congress is that

> A revolutionary culture must situate itself on the terrain of its capitalist antagonist, must not attempt a dramatic leap beyond capitalism in one explosive, rupturing moment of release, [but] must work its way through capitalism's language of domination by working cunningly within it, using, appropriating, even speaking through its mechanisms of repression (Criticism, 24).

What Boerckel rightly objects to in Lentricchia's analysis of Burke's speech is the way in which he characterizes the critic as a "cunning" rhetorician. According to Boerckel, Lentricchia produces an "Aristotlean, liberal theory of rhetoric," since he fails to examine "the very class biases which underwrite the forms of address to [the] insiders" of the academy (19). Consequently, Lentricchia only reads the utopian aspects of Burke's speech, thereby ruling ideological analysis out of bounds. Lentricchia's theory of rhetoric only works among those who, in his words, share "kindred values," those who "know the language of the academy well enough in order to speak it" (Boerckel, 20). Boerckel claims that Lentricchia's view of rhetoric thus "remains the tool of the dominant ideology, in however disguised a fashion" (20). In his Criticism and Social Change, Lentricchia therefore failed to follow up the suggestion he made in his closing statement to "Reading History with Kenneth Burke," where he said that "Burke set standards for the *ideological* role of intellectuals that contemporary critical theory would do well to measure itself by" (147, italics added).

Even though Lentricchia failed to meet them, Burke did set standards for the ideological role of intellectuals. These standards are that critics must concede to the fact that criticism is itself an ideological enterprise. In the "Summarizing Essays" of his final major work, Language as

Symbolic Action, Burke examines the limitations of critiquing our discourses. He begins by defining humans as "the symbol-using animal," while at the same time noting that we must "bring ourselves to realize just how much that formula implies, just how overwhelmingly much of what we mean by 'reality' has been built up for us through nothing but our symbol systems" (LASA, 5).

To address this question Burke adds a second clause to his definition of humans. He argues that "man is the inventor of the negative." The negative is the concept that Burke uses to describe the symbolic processes through which people find their way about in the world. Burke derives his concept of the negative from "The Idea of Nothing" in Bergson's Creative Evolution, which, he says, "jolted me into realizing that there are no negatives in nature, where everything is what it is and as it is" (LASA, 9). Burke reasons that the negative adds something to nature. Whereas all images are positive, in the sense that they correspond to material things, the negative functions to convey our ideas. Burke argues that even "though idea and image have become merged in the development of language, the negative provides the instrument for splitting them apart. *For the negative is an idea;* there can be no image of it. *But in imagery there is no negative*" (LASA, 430). The negative, in other words, is the instrument which separates us from nature, and, to the extent that our

experiences are mediated by language, it also functions to connect us with nature.

Burke goes on to claim that we are "moralized by the negative"; he considers how the negative can have "hortatory" function, what he calls the "Thou Shalt Not." Here Burke is again urging us to consider how language is an instrument of transcendence; how, that is, language affects our behavior. Burke states that,

> If our character is built of our responses (positive or negative) to the thou-shalt-not's of morality, and if we necessarily approach life from the standpoint of our personalities, will not all experience reflect the genius of this negativity? Laws are essentially negative; "mine" equals "not thine"; insofar as property is not protected by the thou-shalt-not's of either moral or civil law, it is not protected at all (LASA, 11).

Burke is thus arguing that we become moralized through the hortatory prescriptions in words, that our laws and customs come to be established by the hortatory "No." Since the negative has no referent in reality, it lends itself to a higher level of understanding. Thus, because the negative enables us to transcend the present it serves an ideological

purpose. Burke notes how "there is a kind of aesthetic negativity whereby any moralistic thou-shalt-not provides material for our entertainment, as we pay to follow imaginary accounts of 'deviants' who, in all sorts of ingenious ways, are represented as violating these very Don'ts" (LASA, 13). This is why Robert Heath argues that "we may comply with norms of society to avoid the disharmony of not being consonant with others. Or we may oppose those norms in favour of a competing 'thou-shalt-not'" (Realism, 101).

The negative is thus the concept which Burke uses in place of his earlier term "orientation." But unlike his initial formulation, the notion of the negative deals with how language works to constitute hierarchies of social subjugation. To argue this point, Burke begins by stating that man "is separated from his natural conditions by instruments of his own making"; he notes how language is "tool" through which we construct culture, what he calls a "second nature," which enables us to live "beyond" nature (LASA, 13). In a very persuasive elucidation of Burke's key idea here, Richard Coe proposes that "culture in this sense *negates* nature, though *negates* must be understood dialectically, for nature is not destroyed by our transcendence, as we remain in nature as we go beyond it" (Defining, 44).

Burke goes on to claim that by negating nature and

establishing culture we become "goaded by the spirit of hierarchy (or moved by a sense of order) and rotten with perfection" (LASA, 14). He argues that "there is a principle of perfection implicit in the nature of symbol systems; and in keeping with his nature as symbol-using animal, man is moved by this principle" (17). The principle which Burke is here referring to is "the Aristotelian concept of the 'entelechy,' the notion that each being aims at the perfection natural to its kind (or, etymologically, is marked by a 'possession of a telos within')" (17). Thus, for Burke "the entelechial principle figures in other notable ways as regards the genius of symbolism," in the sense that "a given terminology contains various implications, there is a corresponding 'perfectionist' tendency for men to attempt carrying out those implications" (sic) (18). Robert Heath cites these examples: "capitalism is built upon the conception of a perfect balance between supply and demand. If a political system is devoted to freedom, its adherents yearn for complete freedom. If a person is a teacher, she is confronted with the challenge of being a perfect teacher" (Realism, 103). Thus, to the extent that "the entelechial principle manifests itself in forms such as transcendence, hierarchy, and order which are fraught with the desire for perfection" (Heath, 104), it serves to evoke an ideological level of understanding.

Where the influence of ideology figures in Burke's

concept of the negative comes out in his account of "terministic screens." As mentioned previously, Burke believes that our symbols/term function as "terministic screens" which "direct and "deflect" our attention, and are therefore ideological factors because they motivate our actions. Burke argues that "even if any given terminology is a *reflection* of reality, by its very nature as a terminology it must be a *selection* of reality; and to this extent it must function also as a *deflection* of reality" (LASA, 45). He thus points out how that the act of naming involves choice. When we prescribe names to things, processes or situations, our purpose is to direct people's attention in particular ways. Our titles thus function as "terministic screens" that motivate particular ways of acting and seeing. It is through this observation that Burke makes one of his final contributions to his theory of a rhetoric of identification: he asserts that terministic screens serve to establish a sense of "continuity" and "discontinuity." Burke cites the example of how,

> During a national election, the situation places great stress upon a *division* between the citizens. But often such divisiveness (or discontinuity) can be healed when the warring factions join in a common cause against an alien enemy (the division elsewhere serving to

reestablish the principle of continuity at home). It should be apparent how either situation sets up the conditions for its particular kind of scapegoat, as a device that unifies all those who share the same enemy (LASA, 51).

What Burke is here pointing out is how language is relative to particular situations, that it works to order our perceptions and motivate our actions. This is why Burke argues that we are "bodies that learn language," that through our ability to make abstractions we establish culture and move beyond nature. Burke thus reasons that "an ideology is like a spirit taking up its abode in the body: it makes that body hop around in certain ways; and that same body would have hopped around in different ways had a different ideology happened to inhabit it" (LASA, 6).

For Burke, human beings are unique in the sense that they possess the ability to construct symbols systems; using Mead's theories of human communication he distinguishes the difference between the "action of all typically symbol-using animals (that is, humans)" from geological and biological "motion." With regard to the theory of evolution Burke recalls how

> The critical conditions for the emergence of culture arose at that stage in the prehistoric

past when our ancestors underwent a momentous mutation. In their bodies (as physiological organisms in the realm of motion) there developed the ability to learn the kind of tribal idiom that is here meant by "symbolic action." And thereby emerged what we might call a "mechanism" for the steps from nonsymbolic motion to symbolic action. ("(Nonsymbolic)" 811).

For Burke, "motion" is thus the formal process occurring in nature, what he referred to earlier, in his Counter-Statement, as the "the principle of individuation": "the accelerated motion of the falling body, the cycle of a storm, the procedure of the sexual act, the ripening of crops" (CS, 45). In contrast, symbolic action is the "mechanism" by which human beings, unlike all other animals, are able transcend the formal processes occurring in nature, thereby entering a realm of experience beyond nature. Richard Coe states that "for Burke, theses abilities all follow from our ability to abstract, which follows from our use of language. Taken together, these abilities make our behavior symbolic action, motives mediated by symbols, not mere motion" (Defining, 41). Consequently, humans have much of their "reality" determined by their symbolic environment, which is why Burke finally argues that "language [should] be viewed, not directly in terms of a word-thing relationship,

but roundabout, by thinking of speech as the 'entitling' of complex nonverbal situations" (LASA, 361).

Conceived in this way, language is ideological: it serves to constitute a "world run on the commonsense realistic assumption that there is a fairly accurate correspondence between the realm of sensory objects and the vocabulary that names them" (375). But, as Burke rightly states, material things are in actuality "outward manifestations of the forms which are imposed upon the intuiting of nature by language, and by the sociopolitical orders that are interwoven with language (sociopolitical orders that are in turn indicated by the linguistic thou-shalt-not's inhering in a given set of property relationships)" (378). And as we have seen throughout the corpus of Burke's writings, sociopolitical orders are dialectically constituted: they stand in opposition to competing orientations. Burke's most recent definition of human beings is thus not surprisingly based on this important insight. He says that "from within or from out of the vast expanses of the wordless universe we wordly human bodies have carved many overlapping universes of discourse which add up to a pluriverse of discourses, local dialects of dialectic" (cited by Coe, Defining, 50). Burke, in other words, believes that our conception of "reality" is dynamic, that it is continually being constituted and reconstituted through the ways in which people draw upon opposing sets of identifications that form the basis of our culture.

Conclusion

Throughout his numerous writings, Burke consistently foregrounded the ways in which the social aims of art are structured both within and around a particular work, and the extent to which political power is manipulated through a text's effect on readers and writers. Burke concentrated on how the dominant value systems of a society, which he called "practical attitudes," could be challenged through the construction of texts that embody "aesthetic attitudes," which, for him, are the kinds of identifications needed to channel our competitive behavior toward cooperative ends.

Drawing on the pragmatism of George Herbert Mead, Burke formulated his conceptions of symbolic artifacts in organic, biological, and psycho-sexual terms. His deeply pragmatic view of art initially led him to claim that poetry is the best kind of discourse suited for affecting a more moral social reality. Burke's poetics was based on his belief that "poetic metaphors" identify the ethical with the aesthetic, that they can used to construct a "corrective literature" which will motivate us toward a more moral, stable, social orientation. However, as we have seen from the many disclaimers Burke has made in regard to the socio-biological genius of humans, his attempt to construct an account of the political destiny of humanity, structured around a poetic discourse, was an over-determined response

to the crises of the 1930s. His thinking, at that time, was indeed a desperate attempt at affecting an alternative social orientation.

Burke's earlier writings nevertheless figured greatly in his conceptualization of the dramatic method of critical analysis which formed the focus of his later works. Here we must recall how Burke, in his initial formulations of Dramatism, defines "dramatistic" terms as those that begin in theories of "action" rather than theories of "knowledge." He stressed the idea that a dramatistic method deals not with verifying the reality of our experiences, but with critiquing our experiences of reality.

Through his dramatistic approach, Burke also exemplified how our social discourses are ideological. As we saw in his critique of New Criticism, he effectively demonstrated that criticism itself is an ideological enterprise. By arguing that acts of reading and writing motivate our attitudes in certain ways, Burke pointed out that even our critical discourses, which are allegedly designed to challenge the symbols of those who control our society, can be used to serve the interests of an influential group of intellectuals. He thus proposed that rhetoric should become the new method of critical inquiry because it deals with how language and ideology are intrinsically related.

Using insights drawn Marx's writings, Burke advanced

his theory of a rhetoric of identification. Here Burke explored the extent to which Marx's notion of "mystification" figures in constituting a person's or social group's consciousness. By inverting Marx's formulation that consciousness is derived from material conditions, Burke asserted that changes in consciousness necessarily precede material and economic ones. Burke based his neo-Marxist account of discourse on the premise that our material history is derived from "Spirit," arguing that when people become embodied with identifications that motivate them toward a certain social orientation, they divide themselves from, and thereby transcend, a set of competing orientations. In this sense, even secular doctrines can be said to have spiritual powers, since they enable people to live and act in specific ways. As we saw in Burke's "Summarizing Essays," language serves to "entitle" our experiences: it works to order our activities and ultimately motivate our actions. Although there is a marked shift in emphasis throughout Burke's writings, what has remained consistent in his thinking is his deeply pragmatic outlook on how language functions to affect our sociopolitical reality.

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