

SYNECOCHE AGAINST METONYMY: BURKE, FREIRE, AND WRITING INSTRUCTION

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Explaining "the banking concept of education," Paulo Freire writes that such an education system assumes that students are "adaptable, manageable beings."¹ He continues:

The more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of the world. The more completely they accept the passive role imposed on them, the more they tend to adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited in them" (*Oppressed* 60).

If those of us who profess composition agree with James Berlin that "the way we teach writing behavior, whether we will it or not, causes reverberations in all features of a student's private and social behavior" (92), we must be constantly self-critical of the extent to which we serve the society's dominant ideologies. Almost twenty years ago, Keith Fort pointed out the resemblance between the freshman essay and the military unit, both depending on a central and specific authority to marshal the available resources. More recently, both Pamela Annas and Mike Rose have voiced similar concerns: Annas arguing that we must encourage student essays that resist "hierarchy, competitiveness, detachment, and objectivity" (361); Rose pointing out that the politically advantageous "writing as tool" metaphor might keep our discipline much in demand but that it also weakens our efforts to enact the critical consciousness to which we are committed.

My point in this article is to suggest that one reason our discipline has not overhauled or replaced the metaphor of writing as a tool, that we have not found the exit of First State Bank, is because we have yet to apply the ideas of Kenneth Burke comprehensively. I will argue that the implications of *A Grammar of Motives* reach well beyond the use of the Pentad as a structured heuristic, that they suggest instead a radical change in what it means to teach students to analyze and produce texts, a change leading up to and beyond Freireian pedagogy, a change that asks writing instructors to understand and imply Burke's theory of tropes. Like Annas, I would like more of us to state in our course syllabi, without apology, "The writing product at the end of the process *may or may not* be outside the range of what we are accustomed to recognize as strong expository writing" (370; my emphasis).

PART ONE: PENTAD OR TROPES?

Most published material on structured heuristics in composition would accept Richard Young's statement that the Pentad is "the heart of the method [Burke's dramatism]" ("Invention" 13, "Paradigms" 37);² but I would argue that "skeleton" would be a metaphor more apt than "heart" in that the Pentad, rather than pumping life into dramatic thinking, merely frames analytical questions. Burke's response to compositionists like Young and others who use the Pentad as a structures heuristic raises two issues. First, Burke denies that he designed the Pentad as a text-producing heuristic ("Questions" 332). Second, he reminds us

that in *A Grammar* "my stress is less than upon the terms themselves than upon . . . the 'ratios' among the terms." The first charge is not difficult to answer. Even if we accept Burke's claim that compositionists misconstrue the aim and emphasis of *A Grammar*, we should also accept that good things can follow from misreadings and that an author's intent need not be our primary concern. The second charge, however, is more damaging. Readers of *A Grammar* have seen that dramatism is a dynamic system supported not so much by the five terms themselves but by the relationships among the terms. The danger of the kind of oversimplification indulged in by some compositionists is less what Young complains about—"separated from its context, the Pentad loses some of its power" ("Invention" 16)—than what Freire warns against—the temptation "simply to adapt the world as it is to the fragmented view of reality" that can only reinforce that dominant ideology of the oppressor (*Oppressed* 60).³

Rather than attempting to "fix" the Pentad or to apply the ratios to freshman composition, I am inclined to agree with Irvin Hashimoto's observation that the "structured heuristic procedures may be of only limited value in the composition class" (75). At least a couple of points in his argument are compelling. First, he observes that even though instructors and textbook writers usually qualify their claims about heuristics, "their qualifications tend to become lost in the enthusiasm for structured heuristic procedures" (73). Second, Hashimoto wonders "whether students who follow structured heuristic procedures simply because their teachers rewarded them for doing so will begin to think heuristically, will begin to transfer their learning to contexts other than the composition class" (76). Hashimoto's doubts ought to cause us to reflect on the relationship between the Pentad and critical consciousness: If we value the Pentad because it is "efficient," then its application to freshman composition would fall within the "writing as tool" metaphor, which falls within the "banking concept of education" and *not* within the realm of critical consciousness.

But let us not leave Burke in the bank on our way to the street. What I propose is twofold: first, a different reading of *A Grammar*, a reading grounded in its theory of tropes and in Burke's proposition that identification, rather than persuasion, is the goal of rhetoric; and second, a reconsideration of Freire's pedagogical theory in the light of this reading. In order to lay the foundation for such reading, the next several pages of this article must be devoted to explanations of some of Burke's most difficult concepts.

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Allow me to argue that the opening sentence of "The Rhetoric of Substance" presents the major implications of *A Grammar* for writing instruction. With comic understatement Burke intones: "The ambiguity of substance affords, as one might expect, a major resource of rhetoric" (*A Grammar* 51). I will explicate this statement by looking at its three central terms: ambiguity, substance, and rhetoric.

Ambiguity. Those who would point to the Pentad as "a simple device" that proves to be an "efficient" heuristic have perhaps dismissed too quickly a four-sentence paragraph explaining that the five terms of the Pentad are highly ambiguous and enigmatic. Burke explains that a "perfectionist" seeks terms that are consistent and entirely unambiguous, but that Burke's own purpose is different and "probably retains traces of a comic origin" (xviii). Remembering that Burke defines humanity as "rotten with perfection" (*Language* 16), we should not be at all surprised to see him separate dramatism from "the terministic ideals of symbolic logic and logical positivism." Dramatism is antithetical to neatly packaged systems, which Burke considers to be tragic and dehumanizing. Explaining, in the next sentence, what he means by calling dramatism "comic," he posits all human motives as "essentially enigmatic," contending that "this underlying enigma will manifest itself in inevitable ambiguities and inconsistencies among the terms for motives." Here Burke assures us that dramatism does not promise, nor does it seek, "simple" insights or "efficient" methods of inquiry. The paragraph ends: "Accordingly, what we want is *not terms that avoid ambiguity, but terms that necessarily reveal the strategic spots at which ambiguities necessarily arise*" (my emphasis). Burke's insistence that ambiguity must underlie every aspect of dramatism should make clear the value of viewing the Pentad in the light of *A Grammar's* discussion of tropes, a discussion that recognizes the comic uncertainty – and certain tragedy – surrounding any attempt to know "the truth."

Substance. Further evidence for the prominent role of tropes in dramatism appears as we move from "ambiguity" to "substance." In a section of *A Grammar* subtitled "Paradox of Substance," Burke mentions that "substance" is normally considered "reality, . . . nature, essence" (23), but he quickly moves to point out the paradox that underlies the term. The word "substance," he explains, refers "to an attribute of a thing's *context* . . . [which], being outside or beyond the thing, would be something that the thing is *not*" (Burke's emphasis). All four of Burke's "master tropes" are at work in this brief passage: *metaphor*, "a device for seeing something *in terms of* something else" (503; Burke's emphasis); *metonymy*, in which the "basic 'strategy' [is] . . . to convey some . . . intangible state [the thing itself] in terms of the . . . tangible [the context]," always a "reduction" (506); *synecdoche*, "proclaiming the identity of 'microcosm' [the thing itself] and 'macrocosm' [the context]," always a "representation" or identification with something or someone else (508); and *irony*, in that the process of "contextual definition," defining a thing "in terms of something else" (24), is a process that is dialectic and thus ironic: "For irony we could substitute dialectic" (503).

Moreover, when Burke divides substance into four categories, the four categories parallel the four tropes. Geometric substance, "participation in a context" (29), is metonymic in that it is reductive. Familial substance is synecdochal, or identificational, in that "the concept of family is usually 'spiritualized' so that it includes merely social groups, comprising persons of the same nationality or beliefs" (29). Directional substance, emphasizing perspective and revealing "the paradox of substance in that the given subject both is and is not the same as the character with

which and by which it is identified" (32), is metaphoric. Of the fourth category, Burke writes, ". . . with dialectical substance the irony is explicit . . . [due to] the antinomies attendant upon the fact that we necessarily define a thing in terms of something else"; and he goes on to call dialectic substance "the over-all category of dramatism" (33). The underlying principle of dialectic substance is *agon* (contest or struggle), for "the dialectical considers things in terms not of *some* other, but of *the* other" (33; Burke's emphasis).

Rhetoric. The agonism (or antagonism) underlying or containing dramatism leads us directly to the third term, "rhetoric." In his discussion of dialectical substance, Burke's pacifist vision of rhetoric begins to reveal itself. Noting that "some enemies of Fascism" became much like the Fascists themselves in the struggle against them, Burke observes the human tendency to "become the image of the thing we hate" (34). His exposition on irony concludes in the same vein: "True irony, humble irony, is based upon a fundamental kinship with the enemy, as one *needs* him, is *indebted* to him, is not merely outside him as an observer but contains him *within*, being consubstantial with him" (514; Burke's emphasis).

Grasping what Burke means by "consubstantial" is crucial to understanding Burke's vision of rhetoric. "Originally a term in theology," the *OED* tells us, "consubstantial" means "of one and the same substance or essence." Christian theology may use the term to name the relationship between God and Christ, but Burke uses it to reveal the irony that always attends relationships between opposites. In yet another sentence in which all four tropes show themselves, Burke explains: ". . . we must take *A* back to the ground of its existence, the logical substance that is its *causal ancestor* and on to a point where it is *consubstantial* with *non-A*, then we may return, this time emerging with *non-A* instead" (xix; my emphasis).

Burke's vision of consubstantiality in rhetoric is illustrated best by the allegory of the unending conversation (*Philosophy* 110-111), in which one arrives at a conversation already underway and leaves before it is finished; indeed, this allegory stands as Burke's metaphor for the human experience. None of us, the allegory implies, can transform the world without participating in arguments that neither we nor anyone else fully understands. Positive transformations can be effected only through argument that recognizes the ironic consubstantiality, the synecdochal familial substance, of the opponents, argument based on "identification," a term defined after the publication of *A Grammar*:

You persuade a man [or woman] only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, image, attitude, idea, *identifying* your ways with his. . . . And you give the "signs" of consubstantiality by deference to an audience's "opinions." (*A Rhetoric* 55; Burke's emphasis).

To sum up Burke's vision, rhetoric operates through both the synecdochal establishing of *identification*, which is the conscious recognition of the *consubstantiality* that always already exists, and the ironic uncovering of *ambiguity*, for "it is in the areas of ambiguity that transformations take place; in fact, without such areas transformations would be impossible" (xix).

We can now return the three terms to their container: "The ambiguity of substance affords . . . a major resource of rhetoric." "The ambiguity of substance" is the parent concept of both "consubstantiality" and "transformation"; it is the "scene" of rhetoric, in which the "unending conversation" rises and falls. Ironically, everyday rhetoric tends to deny ambiguity; arguments reach agonistically for what is definite, certain; met-

onymic, geometric substance encrusts synecdochal, familial substance.⁴ Burke invites rhetoricians to recognize this irony as tragic; he wants to refocus rhetoric onto the process of finding identification with others, not achieving victory over others. The two foci, of course, are never entirely separable. Still, writing instruction can emphasize the former over the latter by remembering that Aristotle's definition of rhetoric declares: ". . . [rhetoric's] function is *not to persuade*, but to discover the *available means* of persuasion in a given case" (1355b; my emphasis). For Burke, the "available means" are "the 'signs' of consubstantiality." So Burkeian rhetoric is not the process of establishing truth, gaining power, and constructing hierarchy; quite to the contrary, it is the process of transforming truth, power, and hierarchy through "terms that clearly reveal the strategic spots at which ambiguities necessarily arise."

The reading of *A Grammar* that I propose is offered as an alternative to the reading that extracts the Pentad from its contexts, proffers it as a structured heuristic, and declines to comment upon consubstantiality and the ambiguity of substance. My reading encourages writing instruction to take seriously Burke's often overlooked thesis that "the ambiguity of substance affords . . . a major resource of rhetoric." Part Two of my article moves into pedagogy as I attempt to explain why the reading of *A Grammar* that I have presented should propel writing instruction toward a Freireian method and away from the "writing as tool" metaphor.

PART TWO: COMMUNICATION, HUMILITY, AND HOPE

My attempt to juxtapose Freire and Burke runs a number of risks, primarily the risk of seeming insensitive to the extraordinary differences between the Third World and the First. Several other authors avoid that risk by addressing only the poor with their pedagogy.⁵ I will argue that what Freire calls the "culture of silence" (*Cultural Action* 3) pervades the First World as well as the Third and that the struggle against a "banking concept" of education ought to be the business of all types of writing instruction, not just basic writing instruction, in all types of schools, not just open admissions colleges.

No one would argue that political repression, economic alienation, and physical suffering are as severe in the United States as they are in most Third World countries; however, a "culture of silence" and a "banking concept" of education pervade the US. Bertram Gross, Distinguished Professor of Public Policy and Planning at Hunter College, argues as much when he writes of the "personal pacification" in North American schooling: "The entire educational system itself may be seen as a mammoth set of disciplined activities that . . . help produce docile, accepting personalities" (277). Ira Shor echoes Gross's observation when he discusses "the anti-humanities of the community college" as a response from an economic system that cannot tolerate critical thinking in the labor force. Most writing instructors see compelling evidence of the suppression of critical thinking in the materialistic self-interest of many or most of our students, and we try to deal with it. But Gross points out that we work within a "modern information complex" that requires "suppression on a mammoth scale" enacted through a "filtering-out process" that has little need "for the old-fashioned censor" (261). Within this modern, efficient, hi-tech culture of silence, we struggle to engage our students' critical consciousness. Yet many or most of these students feel ostracized from the "unending conversation" in which we, their teachers, live our lives. Our students, like Freire's, "having internalized the image of the oppressor and

adopted his guidelines, are fearful of freedom" (*Oppressed* 31). Like his, our students have learned "the sonority of words, but not their transforming power" (57). Having been shut out of authentic dialogue, they have not learned to "perceive through their relations with reality that reality is really a *process* undergoing constant transformation" (61; Freire's emphasis). Though only a minority of our students have been victims of violent political repression, many have – in every critical sense – been silenced.

Liberatory teaching is nevertheless possible. If we agree with Freire that "in the name of 'preservation of culture and knowledge' we have a system which achieves neither true knowledge nor true culture" (*Oppressed* 68), we ought to attempt what Shor calls "A pedagogy which empowers students to intervene in the making of history . . . [,] to be their own agents for social change" (48). Freire calls this process "Conscientization . . . [,] a joint project in that it takes place in a [person] among other [people], [people] united by their *action* and by their *reflection* upon that action and upon the world" (*Cultural Action* 46; my emphasis). Dialogue – breaking out of the "culture of silence," joining the unending conversation – is the key element of Freireian pedagogy. Calling dialogue "an existential necessity," Freire proposes that ". . . dialogue imposes itself as the way by which [people] achieve significance as [people]" (*Oppressed* 77).

Freireian dialogue, of course, is not idle chatter. The object of dialogical education is the discovery of "generative themes," a concept we might better understand by referring again to Burke. The search for "generative themes" leads us directly to "the ambiguity of substance," which makes "transformations" possible. In Burkeian terms, we and our students are contained within an oppressive hierarchy, "geometric substance," a metonymy or reduction. Metonymy imprisons. There can be no "pure escape" from it, "For in freeing oneself *perpetually*, one would remain perpetually a prisoner" (*A Grammar* 36; Burke's emphasis).

Within our container, dramatism, Burke finds both "the dialectic of tragedy" and "the dialectic of the scapegoat." The former holds that in any act of perceiving, the learner suffers (38-41). The latter illustrates the principle of "purification" through the sacrifice of victims (406-408). Teleological "doctrines of progress" historically have an ironically tragic reverse effect, in that they tend "to usher *in* precisely the gloom they thought they were ushering *out*" (331; Burke's emphasis). "Progress" demands victims.

But the tragic determinism that is "the logic of geometric substance" is balanced by "the logic of tribal [or familial] substance." "This double genesis," Burke explains, "allows for free will *and* determinism simultaneously . . . , it permits men [and women] to be 'substantially' free . . ." (74-75; Burke's emphasis). The liberatory teacher helps students perceive "the scapegoat" in their culture's representative anecdotes. And she helps them discover the "familial substance," which links the students to the scapegoats, within the "geometric substance." Together – using synecdoche against metonymy – she and her students attempt to write themselves out of "the container."

One type of "generative theme" in my basic writing and freshman composition classrooms is the deconstruction of *local* newspaper columns. In one example, several local columnists had condemned a crowd that had gathered outside a convenience store during a hostage situation. After a siege of several hours, the gunman emerged and shot himself; not surprisingly, the crowd cheered his suicide. The columnists, as one might expect, excoriated the crowd as barbarian. My students agreed.

But my response was to ask the students to discuss the incident's "scene" (and implicitly the scene-act and scene-agent ratios). Students responded that the neighborhood was working class; that many auto workers had been laid off from the large General Motors plant; that the tourist industries (a large amusement park, a major league baseball stadium, and more) were closed for the season; that many junk cars sat in the front yards of the small, wood-frame houses. The list went on.

In time students began to notice, and to tell me, what the columnists' discourse had concealed: that the crowd was a collection of frustrated individuals who had, to some degree, lost the ability to determine the quality of their lives. The incident at the store, some of my students wrote, was a diversion from the personal frustrations felt by members of the crowd; the incident was a moment of emotional release, not unlike watching professional sports. By no means did the students congratulate the crowd on its conduct, but no longer did they share the columnists' elitist moral judgment. The students came to understand better the concepts of alienation and scapegoating. That's identification. That's consubstantiality.

That's what Freire means by a "generative theme," finding out what the culture's privileged discourse leaves unwritten and then writing it. When my students write on a "generative theme," they tend to be quite contradictory; but they are, after all, conditioned to produce the scapegoat, not to identify with it. One week or one course cannot undo a lifetime of such conditioning, but frequent writing on "generative themes" — using synecdoche against metonymy — helps them to break their individual containers, to find themselves consubstantial with others, and to see the larger containers around all of us.

Indeed, we can see the process of using synecdoche against metonymy in Freire's description of the "dialectical movement of thought" in "decoding" an oppressive hierarchy. Echoing Burke's explanation of "contextual definition," Freire explains "decoding" as moving from the abstract (the thing itself) to the concrete (the context), "moving from the part to the whole [geometric substance, metonymy] and then returning to the parts [familial substance, synecdoche]" (*Oppressed* 96). Ironically, Freire's "decoding" process resembles Burke's metaphor of the "alembic," in which the "participation [of two opposites] in a common ground makes for transformability" (xix).

Certainly, there are Marxist followers of Freire who would challenge my argument, who would find ideological faults in my example of a "generative theme," but I do not find in Freire a purely orthodox or scientific Marxism. My reading of Freire agrees with Ann Berthoff's observation that "Freire's critical language is an odd mixture of Christian and Marxist idiom . . ." (60; n. 11). Though nothing seems "odd" to me about Christian Marxism, or liberation theology, I do want to develop Berthoff's footnote. Freire calls for a radical reconceptualization of the role of the teacher, going far beyond Young's characterization that "he [the writing instructor] is no longer to be a purveyor of information about the craft of writing but a designer of occasions that stimulate the creative process" ("Arts" 55).

Freire confesses that practicing liberatory teaching is much like a religious transformation: "Conversion to the people requires a profound rebirth[,] . . . a new form of existence" (*Oppressed* 47). Arguing that "those truly committed to liberation must reject the banking concept in its entirety" (66), Freire becomes more specific: "The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach" (67). The students are "the oppressed who, by freeing themselves, can free

their oppressors" (42); that is, the teacher herself finds liberation in the process of teaching, seeing herself "engaged in the . . . vocation of becoming fully human" (52).

Freire's Christian idiom becomes most apparent as he exhorts the teacher to depend on "profound love," "an intense faith in [people]," "hope," and "humility" (78-80). It is on the subject of "humility" that Freire rises to his most sermonic:

The naming of the world, through which [people] constantly re-create the world, cannot be an act of arrogance. . . . How can I dialogue if I always project ignorance onto others and never perceive my own? How can I dialogue if I regard myself as a case apart from other[s] — mere "its" in whom I cannot recognize the other "I's"? (78)

This rendering of the Beatitudes, which continues through another four eloquent questions, might be as utterly impossible to realize as is Christ's Sermon on the Mount.⁶ But Freire is more optimistic than I about a teacher's ability to let go of the will to "extension," which he characterizes as the desire to colonize, to go into other communities to try to "normalize" them, to make them resemble the reality of the teacher (*Education* 95). I doubt that any of us can ever completely free ourselves from the will to "extension," but we can at least recognize that it does contain us and that we can, in moments, escape its tyranny and become "substantially" free.

Berthoff's observation about Christian and Marxist idiom in Freire would apply as well to Burke. The influence of Marxism in this thought is obvious; as Frank Lentricchia comments: "One of the chapters of a full-scale history of Marxist thought will have to be on Kenneth Burke . . ." (37). But Burke's Marxism is hardly orthodox; Don Abbott calls it "'comic' communism" (229). Central to Burke's comic vision is his view of people not as *vicious*, but as *mistaken*:

"When you add that people are *necessarily* mistaken, that all people are exposed to situations in which they must act as fools, that *every* insight creates its own blindness, you complete the comic circle, returning again to the lesson of humility . . ." (*Attitudes* 41; Burke's emphasis).

Human beings, Burke comments, "build their cultures by huddling together, nervously loquacious, at the edge of an abyss" (*Permanence* 272), and it is in this "Human Barnyard" that rhetoric is "designed to help us take delight" (*Grammar* 442).

Within Burke's vision of human culture, *A Grammar* maintains pacifism, spelled out in five arguments. First, Burke argues that tyranny can never be perfected because "the very nature of the materials out of which a civilization is constructed will not permit such *perfection* of lies, stupidity, and greed to prevail" (100; Burke's emphasis). Second, Burke argues that peace is not to be realized in some future utopia, for peace always already exists:

. . . the potential, the ideal future, [is] . . . the very substance of the present (the Kingdom of Heaven is within you) — so that, from the most exacting visionary point of view, [a call for peace is] not a mere exhortation about what *might be*, but a statement about what *now is*. (332; Burke's emphasis)

"In Christ's poetry," he continues, "peace was a substance, the substance — and only insofar as one was consubstantial with it was he [or she] truly alive" (333; Burke's emphasis).

Third, he expresses a preference for the "religious" over the "secular":

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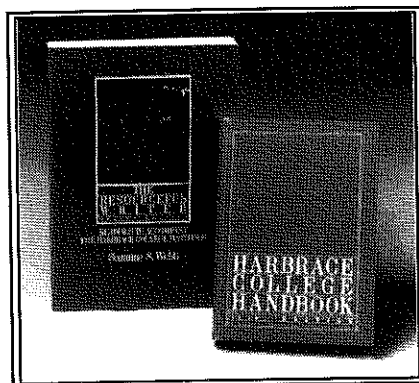
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. . . the religious tactic says: Find what now *is* within you, and you will have found what will be. The secular tactic says: Find what will bring you promises, and you will have found what is worth doing now. Seeing the future in terms of the present . . . has at least one advantage: that the present *forever is*, whereas the future *forever is not*. (Burke's emphasis)

Burke's use of the word "religious" is ironic, of course, for few religious people have ever practiced "the religious tactic." Fourth, like Freire, Burke argues for the rejection of extension and for a new concept of vocation, as he suggests that "a philosophy of Being . . . could be restored to the category of vocation only if 'mediation' rather than 'utility' were taken as the primary characteristic of vocation" (335). He admits that few "vocational acts" in our culture are given to mediation, for our authentic communication with others is generally classified as a "vactional act" (335).

Finally, he argues that peace is "the Universal Substance":

We said that Christ was not making a purely directional statement: "Let us have peace," but was proclaiming that peace was identical with Being, and that Being now *is*, and that only insofar as people were peaceful did they actually partake of Being, and that the promissory must be *now, implicit*, "within you". . . (336; Burke's emphasis)

As "the Universal Substance," peace is ontological, not stipulative, and peace is not something "to be fought for" (337). Thus, Burke's goal is not the establishment of peace, but "the purification of war" (337). Indeed, "*Ad bellum purificandum*" is *A Grammar's* dedication.

Burke's conception of peace might seem "odd" to a reader who conceives of pacifism as a liberal political philosophy, but Burke's views conform closely to the tradition of radical pacifism in the US, especially to the views of the prominent pacifists of his generation, like Dorothy Day and A. J. Muste. Muste, legend has it, composed the slogan which became the motto of North America's largest pacifist organization; we should note its "Burkeian" irony: "There is no way to peace. Peace is the way." The pacifist influences on Burke, unlike the Marxist and Freudian influences, have hardly been mentioned in Burke scholarship – even though Burke and Day were "good friends" and Burke knew of Muste and had met him once or twice (personal conversation with Kenneth Burke; Seattle, March 17, 1989). On this subject, more needs to be written.

Importantly, Burke takes us beyond Freire. Freire decodes. Burke mystifies. Freire epitomizes linearity. Burke manifests tropes. Freire looks to the future. Burke sees that "the present *forever is*." These contrasts are writing instructors' dilemmas. Though we might find, from time to time, an unlocked exit from First State Bank, there are guards in the street who enforce our return. Burke, unlike Freire, recognizes that there is no pure escape; Freire, unlike Burke, is utopian. Freire may not share Burke's sense of irony and comedy, but he does share with Burke a faith that defies the syllogistic logic of philosophy:

Hope is rooted in [people's] incompleteness, from which they move out in a constant search—a search which can be carried out only in communication with other[s]. Hopelessness is a form of silence, of denying the world and fleeing from it. . . . Hope, however, does not consist in crossing one's arms and waiting. As long as I fight, I am moved by hope; and if I fight with hope, then I can wait. (*Oppressed* 80)

Hope "rooted in . . . incompleteness" and humility that refuses to "project ignorance onto others" seem to be qualities required of one who would teach Burke's rhetoric of identification.

Teaching the Pentad as a structured heuristic seems to require neither of those qualities. It values "utility" over "mediation." It tells students that their thinking lacks the "efficiency" that our society requires of them and that—if they are ever going to "get ahead"—they should see that writing is a "tool," a "tool" that one uses to gain power over others. I can think of no pedagogy more antithetical to the spirit of *A Grammar* than "writing as tool" pedagogy. And I can imagine no pedagogy more complementary to the spirit of *A Grammar* than Freire's. Indeed, in the dialectic of praxis, Burke is reflection, Freire action.

CONCLUSION: THE ACT OF WRITING

I have argued that if writing instruction is to incorporate the ideas of Kenneth Burke in an authentic way, we should turn away from teaching the Pentad as a structured heuristic and we should reject the "writing as tool" metaphor. Burkeian theory would recommend "writing as mediation" as an alternative metaphor. Freireian pedagogy, with its emphasis on dialogue, shows signs of being the appropriate method for teaching "writing as mediation." Both Burke and Freire emphasize the discovery of common ground among people as the purpose of rhetoric and education in general; both emphasize liberation and peace, humility and hope.

Some will always contend that to reject the "writing as tool" metaphor and "banking concept" of education is not pragmatic. But they misunderstand pragmatism. In his commentary on Burke, Lentricchia offers the following:

Pragmatism is a rejection of hierarchical structure itself, of the stabilizing (kingly) forces of structure, which would always stand safely outside the structure—outside the game, but ruling the game. Pragmatism is a commitment to the openness of time and a chance for change; pragmatism, then, is the expression of the radical democrat and the experimental method, or scientific spirit of democracy. (3)

Those who would retain the "writing as tool" metaphor seem to embrace "hierarchical structure itself" in that they would train their students to conform to authority rather than to question it or resist it. Such teaching, far from being pragmatic, is authoritarian. I would not suggest that these teachers intend to be authoritarian (though occasionally that is the case), just that they are too comfortable within and too uncritical of an authoritarian educational system.

The overemphasis on the Pentad also misses, ignores, and conceals Burke's concept of writing as "magic." Defining "magic" as "action" that "produces something out of nothing" (*A Grammar* 66), Burke offers writing as an example:

. . . the act of writing brings up problems and discoveries intrinsic to the act, leading to developments that derive not from the scene, agent or agency, or extrinsic purposes, but purely from the foregoing aspects of the act itself. That is, there is nothing present in the agent or his situation that could have led to the final stages of this act . . . (67)

The writer, in other words, is *not in control* of every aspect of text production. Rather, *the act* is in control; agent, scene, purpose, and agency become secondary. "Writing as tool" emphasizes the agent. As an ideology, it upholds efficiency, hierarchy, control; it eschews and conceals "magic." The experience of "writing as

magic" is the experience of consubstantiality, which, I would argue, is primarily a textual and intertextual experience. Lentricchia, summarizing Burke, notes that ". . . the substance, the very ontology of ideology . . . in a broad but fundamental sense is revealed to us *textually* and therefore must be grasped (read) and attacked (reread, rewritten) in that dimension" (24; Lentricchia's emphasis). "That dimension," the intertextual dimension, must be the "scene" of Burke's "magic." It is through writing and reading that most people fully engage with the "unending conversation." Learning "writing as tool," our students are likely to remain alienated from the "unending conversation," misunderstanding it and fearing it as a win-or-lose situation. Learning "writing as mediation," they are more likely to overcome their alienation in the magical act of writing and reading.

NOTES

¹This article is an expanded version of a presentation to the Kenneth Burke Society at the Conference on College Composition and Communication in Seattle on March 17, 1989. The author thanks Victor Vitanza and Michael Feehan (both of the University of Texas at Arlington), Timothy Crusius (of Texas A&M University), Kenneth Burke, and Christina Murphy and two anonymous *FEN* reviewers for their comments and suggestions.

²Though Young's contributions to Burke scholarship are both many and valuable, his "heart" metaphor has, I believe, helped to make it too easy for others to oversimplify and trivialize both the Pentad and dramatism. William Irmsher, for instance, presents the Pentad to his students as "a simple device . . . , a set of five terms each leading to logically related questions" (30). Joseph Comprone, attempting to explain "how Burke's theories might become the heuristic upon which writing would be taught as a process" (337), delves a bit deeper into Burke's thinking than does Irmsher, but he ends up with an application that strikes me as deterministic. For instance, he claims, "Outlines should *never* be written before a first draft; otherwise the writer is encouraged to ignore scene, agency, and agent . . ." (337; my emphasis). It's hard to see how readers of *A Grammar* could agree that such a dictum captures the spirit of that open and ironic text. Comprone goes on to enumerate the terms of the Pentad as *steps* in the process of composing. He admits in a footnote that he has "oversimplified" much research on writing processes because his purpose is "to condense from Burke's work a heuristic that could be applied to composing in at least a general way" (339).

³Applying the Pentad directly to freshman composition, without separating the Pentad from its context, may be difficult; but at least a couple of authors—both writing after Burke's note appeared—have made important suggestions that merit consideration. Charles Kneupper, agreeing that the Pentad "loses much of its power when reduced to [the five terms]" (132), applies ratios as heuristics, so his method is much closer to the spirit of *A Grammar* than is Irmsher's or Comprone's. Still, one wonders if Kneupper's application might not be too complicated for freshman writers and might not be diluted in teaching or in use. Indeed, Kneupper does not recommend an application to freshman composition; his application extends only to expert writers. Two articles by Phillip Keith also attempt to avoid oversimplifying dramatism. His concern is that the Pentad be understood "against the general background of Burke's concern with dialectic" ("Burkeian Invention" 139) and that the Pentad be considered as "only one of many such sets [of terms] in *A Grammar*" ("Burke" 348). When Timothy Crusius scolds composition

theorists for not having heard Burke's complaints, "His distinction [between rhetorical invention and dialectical function] seems to have made no impression" (23)—I cannot entirely agree. Certainly both Kneupper and Keith have listened and have adapted.

⁴Michael Feehan's analysis of Burke's tropology provides an enlightening juxtaposition of synecdoche and metonymy. Noting that "synecdoche involves values, while metonymy considers only quantification" (249), Feehan argues that the two tropes are not "logically independent" and that Burke's promotion of synecdoche over metonymy "reemphasizes his commitment to ethics as the irreducible foundation of language."

⁵In this country, enthusiasm for Freire has been voiced most often by basic writing instructors in open admissions colleges. Ira Shor, in *Critical Teaching and Everyday Life*, and Kyle Fiore and Nan Elsasser, in "Strangers No More": A Liberatory Literacy Curriculum," summarize Freireian theory and report on their experimental applications of Freireian pedagogy. Though these accounts and others are enlightening, even inspiring, none tries to draw a connection between Freire and North American rhetorical theory.

⁶Indeed, Ken Leubbering criticizes Fiore and Elsasser's experiment for its lack of humility; he calls their work "inauthentic, not the action of the students at all, but the prescription of the teacher" (77). If Fiore and Elsasser stand guilty, their only crime is the sin of being "rotten with perfection," a condition that binds us all to one another.

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**"PERSONAL NARRATIVE,"
"ACADEMIC WRITING," AND
FEMINIST THEORY: REFLECTIONS
OF A FRESHMAN
COMPOSITION TEACHER**

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Linnette, a student of mine, approached me with a troubling question last spring. We had just finished a three-course freshman composition sequence, during which Linnette had gone through a dramatic change. She had arrived at college with a fixed idea of the kinds of things one was forbidden to do as a writer—for example, use the word "I"—and her papers had been careful and ponderous, excruciatingly awkward even as they clearly wished so deeply to be successful. Her personality in class had matched her papers; she had frowned almost continually, raising her hand only to ask detailed questions about what I "wanted" or to repeat in her own words something I had said. Because I worked under Peter Elbow as a graduate student, and have been deeply influenced by his teaching methods, I was not the sort of college English teacher Linnette expected. She strug-

gled with me in the beginning, almost begging me to be more critical of her in a conventional way, to tell her what to do. She discussed her papers in groups with her classmates because I required her to, but her resistance was clear; her aim was to interact with The Teacher, and she came to my office hours frequently, doing the best she could to force me to give her "corrections" about her writing. Gradually, though, I got through, and it dawned on Linnette that all I really wanted was for her to take responsibility for her own ideas. By her second quarter she had picked up beautifully on this and wrote fascinating, subjective papers that examined a wide range of philosophical issues. She became an active member of her peer discussion group and worked very hard on her essays, reworking her ideas until they became more and more intricate.

In spite of her metamorphosis, Linnette's facial expression at the end of her third quarter composition class reminded me of the way she had looked when I first met her, and the question she asked revealed a very real concern: "What am I going to do when I have teachers who don't want me to think of my own ideas? I'm afraid I'm going to go back to my old way of writing. Not every teacher is like you, you know—most of them have a set way they want us to write." I tried to assure Linnette that good writing is good writing and that surely any teacher would be pleased to see her personal interaction with the ideas of a course, but at the same time I was worried for her. In spite of the fact that many people in the field of composition accept what Maxine Hairston has described, quoting Kuhn, as a "paradigm shift" in our ideas about what it means to teach writing, we still tend to worry a great deal about the teachers in other disciplines who are committed to the old paradigm. Because we want to initiate our students into college-level discourse, we feel we must coach students to write for teachers who demand writing that is expository and objective—i.e. abstract, not connected in any obvious way to the writer's experience, and taking a strict "thesis and support" form—since we are worried that those teachers will penalize students who try to do anything differently. Linnette's fears, in other words, are valid—the vast majority of people who decide what is right for students continue to promote a strict and limited conception of what makes legitimate academic language.

This insistence on expository writing can be justified by James Moffet's 1968 "spectrum of discourse" (47), which is a description of writing activities that parallel cognitive development. Moffet claims that students move "up" the "ladder of abstraction" from descriptive writing, which records what is happening, to theorizing, which records what may/will happen. As one proceeds up this scale, Moffet argues, one moves from personal or private writing (journals, letters) to more abstract or public analysis (published essays). Even though Moffet himself says, as he describes his spectrum, that "no greater value is ascribed to one level than to another" (25), adding later "[t]his whole theory of discourse is essentially an hallucination. Heaven forbid that it should be translated directly into syllabi and packages of serial textbooks" (54). Most writing teachers I know now, twenty years later, agree that students who write in abstractions are far more likely to succeed as college writers than those who do not. Such teachers view personal writing as a necessarily more juvenile kind of writing, something that students must outgrow as they become initiated into the conventions of rigorous analysis.

The denigration of "personal writing," along with the relentless distinction between personal and expository writing, is becoming more and more disturbing to me as I continue to teach in a large, respectable university. I feel increasingly oppressed by