

LANGUAGE AS MORE THAN SYMBOLIC ACTION: KENNETH BURKE ON TONAL
TRANSFORMATIONS

by

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(Under the Direction of Michelle Ballif)

ABSTRACT

In the last several decades, Kenneth Burke's philosophy of language, a philosophy that famously flouts disciplinary conventions, has found its disciplinary home in rhetoric studies. Rhetoricians have found myriad points of inspiration in Burke's capacious philosophy, and several of Burke's concepts have become touchstones for contemporary rhetorical theory. One concept, however, has received little attention from rhetoricians or anyone else. Burke's theory of tonal transformations—his term for a kind of unconscious punning that disguises unutterable words and ideas in socially acceptable language, thereby allowing the utterer to say the unsayable—has, along with the attendant theory joycing, been largely ignored. And yet Burke himself, in his brief discussion of tonal transformations and joycing, encourages readers to consult other areas of his *oeuvre* to develop a more thorough understanding of these concepts.

This dissertation takes up Burke's suggestion and examines works from across Burke's *oeuvre* to develop a more complete understanding of tonal transformations and joycing, leading me to explorations of Burke's theories of nonsymbolic motion, catharsis, and the sublime, among others. This examination reveals productive connections between tonal transformations, joycing, and current interest in the rhetoric of affect. Rhetoricians studying affect aim to theorize the

persuasiveness of physiological and emotional phenomena, phenomena that escape meaning. More often than not, this means studying phenomena other than language, which is often characterized as a force that limits affective phenomena because of its link to meaning. Burke does not deny language's link to meaning. However, tonal transformations and joycing posit language as an affective force. This dissertation illustrates that in tonal transformations and joycing affect and meaning are inextricably intertwined and that often the persuasiveness of language's meaning depends upon the persuasiveness of language's affect. Ultimately, I argue that for Burke language is always already an affective phenomenon and that rhetoricians should be more willing to see language from such a perspective.

INDEX WORDS: Kenneth Burke, Tonal transformations, Joycing, Rhetoric, Affect, Aesthetics, Symbolic action, Catharsis, Unconscious, Sublime, Equipment for living, Composition, Pedagogy, Invention, Style

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DEDICATION

For Molly

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: CHARTING A NEW COURSE IN BURKE STUDIES

In a recent interpretation of Kenneth Burke's seminal *A Rhetoric of Motives* (hereafter, *RM*) for the *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, Bryan Crable argues that in spite of the *RM*'s central place in rhetorical studies, scholars have for the most part neglected large swaths of the book. In Crable's estimation, these scholars have instead taken William Rueckert (an early and influential champion of Burke's work) at his word and equated Burke's rhetoric with identification (215-6; cf. Rueckert *Kenneth* 152). The problem, Crable claims, is not just that other important ideas (for him, the notion of "pure persuasion") fail to receive the attention they deserve, but that such oversight encourages narrow readings of *RM* and creates artificial separations between Burke's rhetoric and other areas of his thinking (216). Crable's push back against narrow readings of Burke echoes Victor J. Vitanza's lament more than two decades before. In his introduction to the 1985 double-issue of *PRE/Text* devoted to Kenneth Burke, Vitanza decries what he sees as the narrow-mindedness of so many interpretations and extensions of Burke's work. Too many nominally Burkean scholars, Vitanza complains, approach Burke's extensive and encyclopedic work with blinders on, focusing their efforts on only a handful of key concepts: most notably, dramatism. "What I . . . have a major quarrel with," he complains, "is the kind of reductionism that wants, first of all, to focus on *only* one of KB's [sic] terminological methods of analysis . . . and then, secondly, to reduce this one analytical terminological method even further by not actually using the 'ratios' formed by the pentad . . ." (124). All of this amounts, he finally writes, to a "monist" approach to Burke's unabashed "pluralism." Likewise, Ross Wolin, writing at the turn of the millennium, argues against what he calls "piecemeal" readings of Burke (128). For

Wolin, the piecemeal approach to Burke causes his readers to miss important illustrations that some of the lesser studied texts offer. “[W]hen a principle is vague or may be interpreted in a variety of ways,” he writes, “illustrations—as embodiments of that principle—can actually be more telling than the principle itself; that is, the meaning of the idea may reside more in the illustrations than in the principle” (130).

If recent Burke scholarship is any indication, the piecemeal approach to Burke has largely been abandoned, which suggests, perhaps, that Crable’s, Vitanza’s, and Wolin’s complaints have been heeded. In recent years, there have appeared a number of books and articles that aim to upend some of the more dominant modes of thinking about Burke’s philosophy of language. These include Joel Overall’s examination of Burke’s work as a music critic for *The Nation*—and the unsung yet valuable Burkean concepts of piety and the graded series developed therein—and Debra Hawhee’s book on Burke and the body, which attempts to unsettle the dominant thinking about Burke as someone focused solely on symbolic action at the expense of nonsymbolic motion (*Moving*). Burkeans as of late have been responsible not only for keeping alive interest in Burke’s well-known works, but also for drawing attention to Burke’s lesser-known works. Burke’s long-form essay “Auscultation, Creation, Revision,” written during the 1930s, was first published in James W. Cheseboro’s *Extensions of the Burkean System* in 1993. Fragments of the unfinished *Symbolic of Motives* appear in Greig Henderson and David Cratis Williams’s book *Unending Conversations*. And even more recently, there has been a surge of archival work on Burke, as the collection *Burke in the Archives* (Anderson and Enoch) and an edited collection of his literary criticism (Rivers and Weber) illustrate.

And yet, in spite of the anti-piecemeal trend now dominating Burke studies, one of Burke’s ideas still receives almost no critical attention: the discussion of “purely tonal

transformations” near the end of *RM*. According to Burke, such transformations—including “umlaut, ablaut, augmentation, diminution metathesis, substitution of cognate consonants, and . . . portmanteau formations”—can conceal the offensive, often fecal words that, regardless of authorial intent, “might be lurking in a usage of” more “neutral or honorific” words (310). To illustrate the point, he imagines the “fecal word” *soteme* then runs the word through six of the seven kinds of tonal transformations he’s just mentioned (310).¹ The umlaut transformation (i.e. the movement of the “back vowel” *o* toward the subsequent “front vowel” *e*) results in *seeteme*. The ablaut transformation likewise refers to the movement of the vowel (usually to indicate a shift in tense, as in *sing*, *sang*, *sung*) and results in *siteme*. The diminution transformation (a musical term that refers to the reduction of time values in the notes of a melody) results in *stome*. The augmentation transformation (the musical opposite of diminution) results in *sozeteme*. Metathesis turns *soteme* into *Metos*. And the substitution of cognate consonants turns *soteme* into *sodebe*. “Such usages,” according to Burke, “would reduce, sometimes to a single letter or syllable, the process of catharsis, or ritual purging, that is developed at length in tragedy, with its elaborate rites of purification got through the offering of a victim hierarchically infused” (310). That is to say, uttering one of the tonally transformed variations of *soteme*—variations that ostensibly disguise the word’s fecal associations—could have the same cathartic effect as uttering the offensive word itself.

The reference here to catharsis, one of the central tenets of Burke’s theory of dramatism, suggests that tonal transformation is a significant concept for Burke. And this significance is reinforced when, in a footnote, Burke invents a term—*joycing*—to describe “the deliberate and systematic coaching of such transformations for heuristic purposes” before making an ultimately unfulfilled promise² of more to come and in the meantime directing readers to other sections of

his *oeuvre*. “This matter requires further discussion in the *Symbolic*,” he writes. “It has been treated somewhat in *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, notably pages 51-66, 258-271, 369-378” (311). Burke offers readers a helpful indexing, but apart from treatments by Rueckert and by Ann George and Jack Selzer (both of whom mention joycing but not tonal transformations) these concepts are barely mentioned at all in the extensive Burkean critical literature.³

As with the tendency to focus on identification as the core of Burke’s rhetoric, Rueckert’s influence can be felt in the lack of attention given to tonal transformations and joycing. In *Kenneth Burke and the Drama of Human Relations*, Rueckert likens joycing to “linguistic mumbo jumbo” and characterizes it as “highly suspect” (95). Rueckert’s criticism is particularly dismissive. But, according to Wolin, Burke was similarly criticized for his “cues” (an early version of tonal transformations in *Attitudes toward History* [236]), and for “linguistic excess” in early responses to *PLF*, where, as Burke himself tells us in the aforementioned *RM* footnote, he “somewhat” treats the idea (Wolin 136). However, in the face of such criticism, Burke did not abandon tonal transformations. As I’ve already noted, tonal transformations are alive and well in *RM*. They also appear in *Language as Symbolic Action* (hereafter, *LSA*).⁴ But even Wolin, for all his anti-piecemeal-ism seems to accept, if subtly, the general dismissal of tonal transformations and joycing, indirectly referring to such concepts as “primitive and questionable” (136). In their dismissals, however, Wolin and Rueckert both fail to recognize the importance of tonal transformations and joycing in relation to Burke’s larger project and to rhetoric studies more generally.

This dissertation takes up Burke’s suggestion that we compare his treatment of tonal transformations in *RM* to his “somewhat” treatments of the same phenomenon in *The Philosophy of Literary Form* (hereafter, *PLF*), which in turn leads me to other selections from Burke’s

oeuvre. My aim over the course of three substantial chapters is to develop a more thorough explication of the terms *tonal transformations* and *joycing* than has been offered. What emerges from this explication is the idea that Burke sees language as “more than” symbolic action. That is to say, tonal transformations and joycing reveal that for Burke language is fundamentally enmeshed in the world: language for Burke is always already rhetorical, in the sense that it is inevitably and irrevocably social and situational. At the same time, tonal transformations and joycing reveal that language is always already aesthetic, in the sense that it is “of the senses,” both material and affective. In the end, tonal transformations and joycing serve as vivid reminders for rhetoricians that they must not forget the interrelatedness of these two fundamental traits of language.

BETWEEN RHETORIC AND AESTHETICS

Kenneth Burke was not a rhetorician. Or, at least, Burke was not *just* a rhetorician. Famously difficult to classify according to disciplinary conventions, Burke’s decades-long exploration of language “cut[s] across the bias’ of accepted intellectual categories,” according to Wolin (x), and extends beyond what Burke himself, in *RM*, dubs “The Traditional Principles of Rhetoric.” Many have observed Burke’s tendency to flout disciplinary demarcations. To cite one example, Ann George and Jack Selzer argue that the “various overlapping circles” he frequented during the 1930s “gave his work intellectual encouragement, shape, and sustenance” (12-3). Burke to some extent encouraged this notion of himself as a sort of linguistic Renaissance man, writing to Malcolm Cowley in 1932 that he was “not a joiner of societies” (qtd. in George and Selzer 1).

And yet, in spite of Burke’s far-reaching interests and his broad influence, rhetoricians have—since at least the 1980s, when rhetoric as a discipline came into its own in the

contemporary academy and interest in Burke really picked up steam—by and large been responsible for the continued academic interest in all things Kenneth Burke. Of the nearly 2,000 or so Burke-related scholarly articles published since 1980 (and not counting the 270-odd articles published in the Burke-centric *KB Journal* since its inception in 2004), most are found in rhetoric-centric journals like *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, *Rhetoric Review*, and *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*.⁵ Scholarly books seem to tell a different story. There, Burke is more often aligned with Theory. Yet, aside from a few notable exceptions (Rueckert, Hayden White and Margaret Brose, Frank Lentricchia), many of the scholars making such alignments are scholars with overtly rhetorical interests (Wess, Brock, Cheseboro, Biesecker). In short, Burke’s legacy rests in the hands of rhetoricians.

Now, Burke is not a rhetorician, at least in the strict sense. His interest in language as symbolic action extends beyond “the basic definition for rhetoric,” which Burke sums up as “persuasion” (*RM* xiv) and, in a quote from Cicero, as “Speech designed to persuade” (qtd. in *RM* 49). But Burke is not *not* a rhetorician either. At the outset of *RM*, Burke seeks to reclaim rhetoric as a topic for investigation, “showing how a rhetorical motive is often present where it is not usually recognized, or thought to belong. In part,” he goes on to say,

we would but discover rhetorical elements that had become obscured when rhetoric as a term fell into disuse, and other specialized disciplines such as esthetics, anthropology, psychoanalysis, and sociology came to the fore (so that *esthetics sought to outlaw rhetoric*, while the other sciences we have mentioned took over, each in its own terms, the rich rhetorical elements that esthetics would ban). (xii; my emphasis)

The characterization of “aesthetics” here is most revealing. By suggesting that “aesthetics sought to outlaw rhetoric” and “ban” certain “rich rhetorical elements,” Burke implies that “aesthetics” is something like an abbreviated version of rhetoric, which—historically at least—has been a discipline with a rather broad purview. This brief history of rhetoric’s fall from grace and other disciplines’ rise to prominence, and most especially rhetoric’s demise at the hands of “aesthetics,” is corroborated, in part, by John Poulakos’s article on the rhetorical roots of aesthetics.

Examining aesthetics’s “genesis in the modernity of the eighteenth century,” Poulakos analyzes Alexander Baumgarten’s *Reflections on Poetry* (1735) and Immanuel Kant’s *The Critique of Judgment* (1790), two early and influential works of aesthetic theory. He concludes “that both aestheticians were looking beyond the tenets of rationalism” and “that a great deal of the aesthetics of the eighteenth century is indebted to rhetoric” (335). In *RM* and in the concept of tonal transformations found therein, Burke reclaims for rhetoric those elements—including, most notably for my purposes, aesthetics—that struck out on their own, so to speak, in the eighteenth century.

I’ll add here that, throughout this dissertation, I am using the term *aesthetic* in the Kantian sense, meaning “of the senses” (“Aesthetics”). In Kantian aesthetics, *sense* largely refers to the five corporeal faculties (vision, hearing, smell, taste, and touch) through which we perceive the external world (“Sense”).⁶ Kant writes that “an aesthetic . . . judgment . . . does not involve a *concept* of the character and internal or external possibility of the object through this or that cause; rather, it involves merely the relation of the presentational powers to each other, insofar as they are determined by a presentation” (513). Aesthetic judgments are not for Kant cognitive, mindful, or reasoned judgments; they are, rather, judgments based on more of a felt sense. Of course, we not only *sense* with those faculties that are “connected with a bodily organ,”

we also sense with “faculties of perception, not scientifically delimited,” but which are “only conjectured to exist” (“Sense”). John Locke has this kind of “felt sense” in mind when he makes this statement: “Had Mankind been made with but four Senses, the Qualities then, which are the Object of the Fifth Sense, had been as far from our notice, Imagination, and Conception, as now any belonging to a Sixth, Seventh, or Eighth Sense, can possibly be” (qtd. in “Sense”). When I use the term *aesthetic*, then, I’m referring to the five corporeal faculties associated with their respective bodily organs, but I’m also referring to this kind of sense, a sort “mental feeling” or “sensibility” (“Sense”).

Burke’s description in *RM* suggests that tonal transformations and joycing are *aesthetic* in both of the aforementioned senses of the term. His tonal transformations of the imagined “fecal word” *soteme* is, let’s face it, gibberish. However, Burke’s nonsense examples illustrate that if *soteme* were an actual “fecal word,” readers and listeners who encountered any of the foregoing tonal transformations would also encounter *soteme* by way of both the five corporeal faculties and the mental feeling or “sixth sense” to which Locke refers.⁷ The term *aesthetic*, then, might be seen to serve as a kind of bridge between what Burke calls nonsymbolic motion and symbolic action. In this way, I think, the term *aesthetic* might provide a useful way of bringing together many recent avenues of exploration in rhetorical studies, but especially avenues like affect studies and sound studies, as well as object-oriented and materialist rhetorics. Or, to put it another way, these recent avenues of exploration serve to reclaim for rhetoric what it lost when aesthetics as a discipline broke away in the eighteenth century. For just as piecemeal approaches to Burke have been abandoned in favor of broader views of Burke and his work, so too have rhetoricians increasingly embraced broader definitions of rhetoric, including what might be called an *aesthetically-tinged* brand of rhetoric. Recent rhetorical scholarship, for instance,

displays a growing interest in sound and affect. In a recent article, Matthew M. Heard cites those calling for “expanding our attention . . . [to tone and the materiality of language],” which for Heard would suggest ways we might “engage alterity in the most responsible and hospitable ways possible” (45). He and others focus on “sound as it interrupts our human need to make all marks and noises *mean something*” (45).⁸ This interest in sound as a way of interrupting meaning has led to a renewed interest among rhetoric scholars in what has come to be known as “sound studies.” In their review essay on rhetoric and sound studies, Joshua Gunn, Greg Goodale, Mirko M. Hall, and Rosa A. Eberly neatly sum up the relationship between rhetoric, affect, and sound: “*Prima facie*, the key difference between ‘rhetorical studies’ and ‘sound studies’ is that sound persists whether or not it has taken on meaning (i.e. whether or not the sonic has been delivered to, by, or with language). Those laboring under the aegis of sound studies do not presume the semiotic, only the affective” (476). Rhetorical studies, these authors suggest, has devoted too much attention to the semiotic, the meaningful; now, it’s time to take a lesson from sound studies and to look beyond the semiotic and the meaningful and into the affective, which is to say, the aesthetic.

In contradistinction to such attempts to “not presume the semiotic,” Burke’s theorization of tonal transformations points to the difficulty—and perhaps even the impossibility—of interrupting “our human need to make all marks and noises *mean something*.” For Burke, there is no way to interrupt meaning making. Yet, at the same time tonal transformations insist on the importance of the affective, which we might liken to the “sixth sense” (or maybe the seventh or eighth) discussed above. In Burke’s theories of tonal transformations and joycing, the affective doesn’t short circuit meaning. Rather, the affective accumulates meaning. In what follows, I aim to show how, quite in line with affect-focused thinkers like Diane Davis and Thomas Rickert—

thinkers for whom Burke provides key jumping-off points for their own affective theories of rhetoric—tonal transformations reinforce the notion that meaning and symbolic action are the product of affect as much as they are the product of conscious, human intent. But more than that, tonal transformations and joycing both highlight “sound as it interrupts our human need to make all marks and noises *mean*” *one thing*. The accumulation of meaning that takes place here is cathartic, Burke tells us, and in this way, it *moves* us. At the same time, this catharsis serves a social function. Tonal transformations and joycing work because of Burke’s theory of collaborative expectancy, the idea that an audience can appreciate the form of a message in spite of the message’s content. This means rhetoric can exist where meaning is not consciously present. It means that rhetoric exists within and operates on the senses. In sum, tonal transformations and joycing unite rhetoric and aesthetics.

It’s perhaps by now well known that Burke sought to unite rhetoric and aesthetics, something that was quite unfashionable when he published *Counter-Statement* (hereafter, *CS*) his first critical monograph, in 1931 (George and Selzer 264, Clark *Civic* 9-10). According to Wolin, “The problem of aesthetics [for Burke] is understanding how artistic technique and social purpose, two seemingly separate realms, overlap and blend together” (47). Unfortunately for Burke, *CS* was not well received. Critics had trouble reconciling what his readers saw as the competing interests (aesthetics and politics) at the heart of the book (Wolin 47). So, beginning with *Permanence and Change* (hereafter, *PC*) and continuing on through *Attitudes toward History* (hereafter, *ATH*) and on up to *PLF*, Burke began to focus more broadly on communication. “In particular,” Wolin writes, “he focused on the relationship between communication, social problems, and what he called ‘political’ organizations (that is, governmental structures and commercial enterprises)” (63). Wolin continues:

Permanence, Attitudes, Literary Form show that the chief problem of language and meaning arises not out of different languages spoken by, say, different racial groups, but by a universal problem of meaning: the belief that there is a neutral language, devoid of emotion, which is the ideal basis for communication because its clarity prevents misunderstanding and the irrationality of emotion from entering into discussion. Eschewing the “semantic” ideal for all but some specific uses, Burke argues that social and political problems are best treated with what he calls the “poetic” ideal, language that is emotionally “weighted.” In this view, dealing with social and political problems requires a language that allows otherwise different or even contradictory statements to exist side by side. (64)

Burke’s advocacy for the “poetic” ideal suggests that his broader focus on communication—which is to say, on rhetoric—does not come at the expense of his interest in aesthetics. In fact, it’s quite the opposite. As Wolin puts it, Burke “came to believe that aesthetics is fundamentally rhetorical” (63). *PLF*, after all, is where we find Burke’s “somewhat” treatments of tonal transformations and joycing, a direct link between one of Burke’s more overtly aesthetic books and one of his more overtly rhetorical ones (*RM*). In the essay “Semantic and Poetic Meaning,” which appears in *PLF* and to which Wolin refers in the foregoing passage, Burke doubles down on his esthete inclinations and argues against what he calls “the semantic ideal”: “the aim to evolve a vocabulary that gives the name and address of every event in the universe” (141). The semantic ideal aims to “fix” language, which in the process would rid it of attitude and of poetry. “Because poetry has been so arrantly misused, in the sophistries of the press and of political demagogues, there is apparent justification for the attempt to eliminate it,” Burke explains. “But one could with as much logic abolish printing itself, since printing has been misused. To

paraphrase Mallarmé: semantics would make us Promethian inventors, minus the vulture (*‘égaux de Prométhée à qui manque un vautour’*)” (159). Burke sees in poetic language an important social function, a feature of language—as proponents of an idealistic neutral language dating back to John Locke and up to some of Burke’s intellectual combatants like John Dewey and Sydney Hook have argued⁹—that has, he admits, led to frightful abuses of language. This was the case with someone like Hitler, as Burke’s essay “The Rhetoric of Hitler’s ‘Battle’” illustrates quite vividly. In spite of this, Burke’s aim was not to rid language of its poeticism. This would be impossible. In fact, Burke cites Mallarmé to illustrate how the semantic ideal aims to reap the benefits of language without having to suffer the consequences of its potential misuse.

But misuse is inevitable, a point that is all the more apparent when one examines tonal transformations. Thus, Burke hoped to better understand this poeticism, which we must accept rather than contain or ignore. Not only might we defend ourselves against the kind of evil poetry espoused by Hitler, but we might also find ways to use these poetic powers for good, something Burke saw in literature, like the poetry of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.¹⁰ A more accurate view of language, Burke suggests, would account for and embrace its poetic potential. Hence, Burke advocates the poetic ideal, a vision of language as, I argue, inherently aesthetic, which is to say, “of the senses,” in all of the senses discussed above. Burke’s poetic vision of language accounts for both its attitudinal and emotional charges and its physicality.

What’s interesting about thinking about all of this in terms of Burke’s career and the different phases within that career is how the ostensibly literary bent of *PLF* is perhaps misleading, for it represents the end of a period in which Burke tried to think about politics beyond the aesthetic. It is a return to the aesthetic, according to Wolin, but it is a return that’s affected by the foray into communication in the previous two books (65). It’s also, notably, the

first appearance of the term “symbolic action,” a term that is itself potentially misleading because of its emphasis on the symbolic. This is something Burke himself fretted over in his initial introduction of the term in *PLF*.

But though I must use this term, I object strenuously to having the general perspective labeled as “symbolism.” I recognize that people like to label, that labeling *comforts* them by *getting things placed*. But I object to “symbolism” as a label, because it suggests too close a link with a particular school of poetry, the Symbolist Movement, and usually implies the unreality of the world in which we live, as though nothing could be what it is, but must always be something else (as though a house could never be a house, but must be, let us say, the concealed surrogate for a woman, or as though the woman one marries could never be the woman one marries, but must be a surrogate for one’s mother, etc.). (8)

Reading this passage, one can’t help but get the sense that even as early as the 1930s such (simplistic) Freudian interpretations had become clichés. But Burke is doing more than just warning readers of the traps of the kind of so-called psychological criticism he railed against in *CS*. Burke warns readers not to neglect “the world in which we live” as an elemental component of symbolic action. This is why he soon goes on to say that “The symbolic act is the *dancing of an attitude*” on the very next page (9) and then spend another ten pages or so identifying examples of interactions between the mind and the body, including a discussion of Sir Richard Paget’s gesture speech theory, which, as I explore in chapter two, seems to be an important influence on the development of tonal transformations and joycing.

In sum, Burke warns us against misreading *symbolic action* as all symbol, no action, action in this sense referring to the symbol user’s intentional designs upon and negotiation of the

real world. Tonal transformations and joycing intensify this real world element. But more than that, they reveal the elements of nonsymbolic motion (be it the physical stuff of language—its sounds, its feel—explored in chapter two, or the vast realm of the unutterable that exists out of reach of symbolic action, explored in chapter three) are inextricable from language itself.

(There's also the unconscious, which, as I explore in chapter two, serves as a kind of bridge between these two realms.) Hence, in understanding language as “symbolic action,” one must at the same time view language as “more than” symbolic action and appreciate the significance of that “more than” in the way that language moves us. In other words, we might break it down this way: language as symbolic action is rhetorical language, which is to say language that is *designed to persuade*, language marked by conscious intent. Language as *more than symbolic action* is aesthetic language, language marked by a sensory appeal experienced largely apart from conscious intent. Of course, we must also acknowledge that a poet can consciously design such sensory appeal, and we must further acknowledge that joycing specifically calls for the conscious transformation of words. Nevertheless, one might argue that from a reader's perspective, the participatory “enjoyment” one gets from tonal transformations happens apart from conscious intent. For a more conscious rhetorical “buy-in” to take place, the unconscious aesthetic buy-in must happen first. Or, at least, rhetoric is all the more successful when it combines elements of rationality and aesthetics.

Burke's theory of tonal transformations should be of interest to those rhetoricians doing the kind of aesthetic work to which I've referred above because with tonal transformations, Burke locates these aesthetic (i.e. materialist, affective) concerns within language itself. In doing so, he's not so much ignoring the extra-linguistic concerns of those scholars who examine materiality and affect outside of or apart from language, he's illustrating that language is always

already shot-through with such concerns. With tonal transformations, Burke reminds us that language is both a material and a symbolic force. If, as Wolin claims, “The great challenge that Burke offers [in *PLF*] is to see the internality of the text as a manifestation of the external” (132), then the theory of tonal transformations—a concept Wolin ignores, by the way—is perhaps the most distilled example of this challenge. In tonal transformations, “different or even contradictory statements . . . exist side by side” (Wolin 64). And these contradictory statements—“symbols of an external reality”—are linked *aesthetically*—through the senses. That is to say, the internality of word (its symbolic action) proliferates as a result of its externality (its nonsymbolic motion). We can observe an example of this in the “prayer learned in childhood” Burke discusses in *PLF*:

God loving me
 Guard me in sleep
 Guide me to Thee (57)

Guard and *guide* are tonally transformed versions of *God*, and the relationship between these three words is based largely on their phonetic similarities. Thus, *guard* and *guide* are “‘god-words’ in the psychic economy of the person who wrote this prayer” (57). And the narrative arpeggio could possibly extend beyond these three short lines, so that other words with a *g—d* structure that appear elsewhere in this author’s *oeuvre* take on Godly connotations.¹¹

In advocating for more attention to Burke’s rhetorical aesthetic, I follow Gregory Clark, who writes that

if we believe Burke (and, I think, much of our own experience) and conclude that it is not really useful to treat the rhetorical and the aesthetic as all that separate (*Language* 307), we can confront with greater understanding the human tendency

to abandon abstraction and dive into immediacy when matters pertaining to self and community become difficult. Ideas and arguments can bind people together or push them apart—they can change attitudes or prompt action. But Burke reminds us that experience does that as well, and perhaps to even greater effect. That is why as theorists and critics of the rhetorical we would do well to attend to this rhetorical work of the aesthetic. (“A Child Born” 254)

Burke, Clark argues, actually forwards “a useable rhetorical aesthetic” (254). “For Kenneth Burke,” he writes, “rhetoric works first and foremost upon attitudes, attitudes that develop from immediate experiences and that anticipate particular actions—indeed, attitudes are, as he frequently put it, ‘incipient actions’ . . . And so operates the aesthetic, in his conception” (268). In fact, in spite of the decisively rhetorical persuasions of most Burke scholars, it’s worth noting the recent work in rhetoric studies on Burke and aesthetics. Hawhee, Don J. Kraemer, and Gracie Veach have all highlighted the aesthetic, affective emphasis of Burkean rhetoric. Hawhee claims that the body, the domain of what Burke calls nonsymbolic motion, is the basis for symbolic action (*Moving* 157, 165). Kraemer, meanwhile, sees identification operating affectively “midway between motion and action.” And Veach points to Burke’s theorization of the formative space “between chaos . . . and reason” known as the *chōra*, a space intimately linked to the body, as evidenced by Gregory Ulmer’s tonally transformed term *choragraphy*. In each of these studies, affect and the body are highlighted as prominent features of the Burkean system, more so than in previous Burkean scholarship. Tonal transformations and joycing likewise emphasize affect and the body. What they add to the conversation is the sense that affect and the body are as much influenced by sound as they are by meaning and that sound is something that Burke takes at least as seriously as meaning. For Burke, the sound of language appears to have

unique access to human physiology, access that can at times seem to bypass meaning entirely. Though I will show that Burke ultimately thinks meaning-making is an inevitable part of any aesthetic or rhetorical endeavor, it also appears to be the case that meaning can be significantly influenced by tonal associations that operate like a sort of phonetic graded series.¹² In sum, tonal transformations and joycing refer to the creative and critical methods, respectively, wherein the full scope of language—both its symbolic action and its nonsymbolic motion—is considered.

METHOD

The method I adopt in this dissertation is one that Burke variously refers to as “charting,” “scissor work,” and “selecting some interrelationships” (*PLF* 21), or what Rueckert refers to as “cluster analysis” (*Kenneth* 84). The basic idea, as Burke sums it up, is looking for “what goes with what” (*PLF* 22). In other words, the critic, beholden by the Burkean ideal “to use all that is there to use,” seeks out “equations” among terms routinely employed by a single author (*PLF* 23). It is, not coincidentally, a practice very similar to the discovery of tonal transformations through joycing. What charting discovers, Burke writes in *PLF*, are “narrative arpeggios,” or “associational progressions in the work itself” (58-9), which he illustrates with the aforementioned “prayer learned in childhood.” In so doing, he also demonstrates tonal transformation of the ablaut variety:

God loving me

Guard me in sleep

Guide me to Thee,

The verbs *guard* and *guide* are, Burke argues, “predicates of the noun in line one” and “merely restate the noun” (57). Thus, *guard* and *guide* are “‘god-words’ in the psychic economy of the person who wrote this prayer” (57).¹³ In other words, *guard* and *guide* are tonally transformed

versions of *God*, and the relationship between these three words is based largely on their phonetic similarities. Moreover, the narrative arpeggio could possibly extend beyond these three short lines, so that other words with a *g—d* structure that appear elsewhere in this author’s *oeuvre* take on Godly connotations.

Tonal transformations draw their power from the repetition of sounds common to otherwise unrelated words, and more specifically from the repetitions of sounds common to “forbidden” words and “neutral or honorific” words alike. Uttering a neutral or honorific word can carry with it the same emotional charge as the phonetically similar forbidden word. And it’s important that the emotional charge be mediated by way of form, the body, and motion—which we access by way of affect—and apart from the informational content of the word, which we access consciously. (This process is explained in great detail in chapter two.) What this suggests (and what Burke is getting at more generally in his “cut across the bias” of rhetoric, aesthetics, and poetry) is that symbolic action works on a level beyond the consciously symbolic, beyond reason. Put another way, Burke is acknowledging the power of emotionally charged, non-neutral language, and he is pointing to one of the ways in which such language can orient us toward the world and thus selectively filter out the reasonable semantic facts of the case, however reasonable those facts might be. This process happens synchronously in tonal transformations, while joycing aims to re-arpeggiate the chord, so to speak.

In many ways, Burke’s metaphor for charting the narrative arpeggios in a given work of literature is similar to Byron Hawk’s methodology for producing new rhetorics and realizing future possibilities from historical evidence. Following the saxophonist and ethnomusicologist David Borgo, Hawk posits a synthesis of complexity theory and jazz improvisation as a model for the ways in which events unfold within and through certain constraints and possibilities. For

Hawk, the predominant patterns worth noting are: (1) *degrees of freedom*, which delineate the possibilities for an event and provide the conditions of possibility for further developments; (2) *strange attractors*, or the forces that pull events in unexpected directions (like a jazz player inserting a new riff into the music to which the other players respond); (3) *feedback*, both negative and positive; and (4) *bifurcations*, the result of strange attractors and feedback: by making the system or event more complex, they expand the conditions of possibility set out in the initial degrees of freedom. Historiography for Hawk becomes both searching out the improvisations within history and writing improvisationally.

Charting and tonal transformations are themselves like the jazz improvisations Hawk describes. Consider Burke's tonal transformations in the "prayer learned in childhood." The degrees of freedom in the word *God* are delineated by the consonants *g* and *d*. Subsequent lines of the prayer and the attributes listed therein transform the word. And depending on the feedback the prayer receives, one can imagine the transformations *guard* and *guide* themselves being transformed into other words that retain the "godly" connotations of the original transformations.¹⁴ Importantly, my dissertation also follows this sort of improvisatory logic, and necessarily so, because for all of his helpfulness in indexing references to tonal transformations in the footnote from *RM*, Burke never systematically develops the idea. In other words, my degrees of freedom are tonal transformations and joycing. But in investigating these ideas, I find myself (strangely) attracted to other important Burkean ideas like catharsis and motion in chapter two and equipment for living and collaborative expectancy in chapter three. The chapters themselves might be viewed as the feedback generated by viewing these concepts in conjunction with one another.

STRANGE ATTRACTORS

In *The Rhetoric of Religion* (hereafter, *RR*) Burke describes a process in which words, which begin as mere descriptors of sheer material nature, become inspirited; that is to say, these words come to take on spiritual connotations. And they do this because, he writes, mere words are unable to describe the spiritual. For one thing, we don't know what we're supposed to be describing. For another thing, the words describing sheer nature provide good stand-ins for the ineffable spirit. Once thus inspirited, Burke writes, the references to sheer nature themselves contain remnants of the spiritual, whether or not the speaker of those words intends such a suggestion. This is very similar to what happens in tonal transformations. Words that refer to the "unspeakable" are transformed by various shifts among the vowels of those words. Once the words have been transformed into friendlier, or as Burke would put it, more "honorific" terms, they nevertheless retain their previous connotations.

The following passage, from Burke's *RR* essay "On Words and The Word" helps differentiate between the work I'm doing in chapter two and the work I'm doing in chapter three. According to Burke's Sixth Analogy between words about words and words about God, the relationship between words and the things they name are analogous to the relationship between the persons of the Trinity. And yet, he writes, "The power is primarily in the thing, in the tree rather than in the word for tree. But the word is related to this power, this thing, as 'knowledge' about that thing. Hence, derivatively, it has a kind of power, too (the power that is in knowledge, in accurate naming). But primarily power is in the materials, the things, that we can build with, or heat with, or strike with and so on" (29). Chapter two, on tonal transformations and joycing, focuses in on the way in which words themselves hold just such a kind of "primary" power, much like the tree in Burke's analogy here. In developing a thoroughgoing explication of tonal

transformations and joycing, I am interested therein in the power of the sounds and the “feel” of the words. And yet, as my explication of tonal transformations and joycing illustrates, with words there’s never any getting away from the sort of knowledge-power Burke describes. Indeed, as chapter two illustrates tonal transformations and joycing derive their own power from the intermingling of primary and knowledge powers, albeit with more emphasis on the physical components.

Chapter three discusses Burke’s theory of the sublime, which in the Kantian aesthetic tradition refers to the unutterable. We are, in Burke’s words, in the realm of the “supernatural.” We are naming situations for which there are no names. This, I illustrate, is for Burke the situation common to all symbol users, a situation presented most vividly in the final passage of *PC*, where Burke finds “men” [sic] “huddling together, nervously loquacious, at the edge of an abyss” (272). As a way of encompassing this situation, symbol users develop common formal responses (a grammar, if you will) that have the ability to generate assent and identification among symbol users in a phenomenon known as “collaborative expectancy.” Collaborative expectancy is a way of describing how an audience gets to experience and take pleasure in invention. The sublime suggests that we all find enjoyment in (or, better yet, are moved to) our “nervous loquaciousness,” as Burke puts it.

Chapter four takes as its starting assumption the idea that rhetoricians tend to abide by the classical distinction between substance (*res*) and style (*verba*) and that this distinction undergirds much of composition pedagogy happening today. Compositionists are largely wary of stylistic instruction, perhaps due to the legacy of much-maligned current traditional approach to composition that gave birth to the discipline and against which the discipline in its current state rebelled in the mid twentieth century. In this chapter, I use the theories of tonal transformations

and joycing developed in the previous chapters as the basis for my argument that the problem with teaching style isn't the style itself but with our teaching of it. In brief, I argue that it's style that not only makes language moving (an obvious point), but that style, when it's moving—when it resonates with symbol users, not just on a symbolic level, but also on a more than symbolic level—can be a source of invention. Style, when it's effective, when it's rhetorically successful, pleases us aesthetically, viscerally, unconsciously. Style is the stuff that gets us excited about studying what we study. The problem is we make it seem unexciting, in part because of the focus on invention as something distinct from style, in part because when examined from a technical (abstract) standpoint, this stuff *is* unexciting. These shortcomings become especially evident when I examine how Burke's dramatic pentad has been appropriated in composition settings.

I conclude this dissertation with a call for a renewed attention to language as language (what Burke calls "epideictic rhetoric" or "delight in the exercise of eloquence as such" [RM 71]) among rhetoricians. In making this call, I push back against the current trend in rhetoric studies to view language as a limiting force, as something that abstracts and insists on meaning and thus oversimplifies a given rhetorical moment. As we find ourselves in the midst of an affective turn in the humanities, rhetorical scholars are looking beyond language in order to locate the places where rhetoric happens. I don't deny that language abstracts and insists on meaning. Burke himself says as much (LSA 5). The problem for me is the way in which this function of language is characterized as a limitation and something that happens apart from other affective concerns. Indeed, one of the not-so-implicit, yet under-examined arguments running throughout Burke's *oeuvre* is that *language matters*. Tonal transformations and joycing foreground this argument, compelling us to pay attention not just to the semantic value of our language, but also to its formal and structural value as well. As I illustrate in chapter two, the form of language opens up

the semantic possibilities of language; thus meaning becomes an expansive rather than a limiting force. As I illustrate in chapter three, it's in the form and structure of language—the stuff of language that exists apart from meaning—where symbol-using animals find common ground and hence the communal resilience to encompass our common ineffable situation.

In the end, the primary implications of tonal transformations, the sublime, and collaborative expectancy for rhetoric in general are that we account for language's uniqueness in the realm of symbol use and that we embrace, rather than downplay, the formal common ground necessary for linguistic symbolic exchange. This is not to dismiss the important work being done in extra-linguistic and materialist rhetorics. In fact, tonal transformations and joycing compel us to reckon with the extra-linguistic, materialist, affective tendencies of language, to recognize language as emplaced in the world and not just something that gets in between symbol-users and the world in which live. The point is that for Burke language works as an aesthetic force as much as it works as a symbolic force. Perhaps it's time that rhetoricians start to appreciate that.

CHAPTER 2

CUNNING PUNNING: ON TONAL TRANSFORMATIONS, *JOYACING*, AND THE
“MUSICALITY” OF BURKE’S RHETORIC

When Burke introduces tonal transformations in *A Rhetoric of Motives* (hereafter, *RM*), he illustrates the effect by referring to the salutation of an ailing acquaintance: “Thus we knew a man who had kidney trouble, and who jocularly signed his letters ‘yourn,’ without meaning to suggest the pun, ‘urine’—while a serious use of ‘urn’ may, on some occasions, encompass the same ambiguity” (310). In choosing such an example, Burke perhaps alienates even his most loyal readers. Such bathroom humor reeks of immaturity and might very well be the reason why so few scholars have paid any attention to tonal transformations—Burke’s label for the “added poetic function” of words or the “concealment” of the fecal and the criminal within “words of neutral or honorific meaning”—or to the related *joycing*—“the deliberate and systematic coaching of such transformations for heuristic purposes”—which Burke introduces in a footnote along with instructions for where to find more information on the topic (310). Besides, readers of *RM* will have just finished a section on “fecal mountings,” where, Burke writes, “scatology and eschatology overlap” (308). How much more of this impropriety does Burke expect his readers to endure? William H. Rueckert, perhaps the only critic to discuss *joycing* at length, dismisses the critical method outright. He calls it “suspect” and accuses Burke of “deliberately tampering with” language rather than “disinterestedly exploring” it whenever he uses *joycing* as part of analysis of a poem (95). For Rueckert, *joycing* reveals Burke’s idiosyncratic sense the “sinful and hence contaminating and hence guilt-inducing and hence in need of being purged” (96).

Yet, Burke's characterization of this bathroom humor suggests something more. To be sure, as an illustration of tonal transformation, the man who had kidney trouble's inadvertent pun does, as Burke definition of tonal transformations claims, reveal the "concealment" of the fecal or criminal motives "within words of more neutral or honorific meaning" (310). But more than just "concealment," Burke also describes this as an "added poetic function" of language, and he claims that "Such usages would reduce, sometimes to a single letter or syllable, the process of catharsis, or ritual purging, that is developed at length in tragedy" (310). Burke's example of tonal transformations and Rueckert's dismissal of joycing both point to reasons why these concepts deserve more attention than has been granted them. Notably, in both cases, there is a clear connection here to catharsis, another important concept in Burke's dramaturgical framework. And in Burke's example, the tonal transformation illustrates how both the body and the physical properties of language can shape symbolic action. The man does not intend the pun; however, his choice of the pun-ready "yourn" seems inevitable given his medical condition. In a similar way, the "serious use of 'urn'" is doomed to pun-hood by virtue of its phonetic ties to "urine." Here, the physical realm that exists apart from and in spite of human symbol use, a realm represented here both by the man's body and by the sound of language, exerts its influence on the symbolic realm.

This chapter hinges on the idea that tonal transformations and joycing deserve a thoroughgoing explication. As I aim to show, these twin concepts serve as the nexus for a number of Burke's significant ideas about language and its function as symbolic action. By examining how catharsis, the body, and the physical properties of language, among other elements, including form and Burke's nonsymbolic motion/ symbolic action pair, all unite under the auspices of tonal transformations and joycing to illustrate that, for Burke, language operates

as *more than* symbolic action. Even in the brief glimpse offered by the foregoing examples from Burke and Rueckert, one can get the sense that language does more, *is more* than a symbol system. Language is also an aesthetic phenomenon. That is to say, it is of senses; we feel language both physically and semiconsciously. Rueckert's dismissal of joycing is based on the premise that one should examine and engage with language *disinterestedly*. But as it turns out, the whole point of tonal transformations and joycing is that such disinterested engagement with language isn't really possible. Moreover, I aim to show how this *more than* notion of symbolic action collapses the distinction between rhetoric and aesthetics. *Aesthetics*, you will recall from the introduction, refers to that which is "of the senses." And *sense*, as I also explain there, refers to both somatic and semi/unconscious feeling. Aesthetics thus refers to the stuff of language not covered by the notion of "symbolic action." It refers, in other words, to the elements of language covered by Burke's term nonsymbolic motion. What's at stake in the collapse of the distinction between rhetoric and aesthetics, then, is the capability of language to move us. In this chapter, I argue that language is for Burke always more than symbolic action, and its power as symbolic action is rooted in this "more than," this "musicality," as he calls it elsewhere.

In developing this line of thinking, I follow Burke's suggestion in his *RM* footnote on tonal transformations and consult *The Philosophy of Literary Form* (hereafter, *PLF*).¹⁵ In that footnote, Burke directs readers to three sections of *PLF*: a brief essay called "On Musicality in Verse," part of a longer essay called "Freud and the Analysis of Poetry," and two adjacent sections of the title essay called "The Concealed Offense" and "Beauty and the Sublime." I begin by examining Burke's treatment of the "musicality" of language in "On Musicality in Verse," noting the implicit connections between this idea and the relationship between form and the body. From there, I move into a discussion of the specific content of such musical language.

Following that, my treatment of “Freud and the Analysis of Poetry” and “The Concealed Offense”¹⁶ illustrates how tonal transformations carry within them a certain “unspeakable” content, which leads into a discussion of catharsis. Finally, I examine a contemporary example of tonal transformations and joycing in action. Ultimately, I argue that tonal transformations illustrate the importance of symbol misuse for Burke, that the misuse of symbols is what gives language its aesthetic, rhetorical power.

ON MUSICALITY IN LANGUAGE: FORM

Burke provides what is perhaps his most thorough treatment of tonal transformations in the last selection to which he refers readers in his *RM* footnote, a brief essay called “On Musicality in Verse.” Here, tonal transformations—the “musicality” referred to in the title—are dubbed “colliteration” (that is, “concealed alliteration”) and are said to contribute to a poem’s “marked consistency of texture,” a “spontaneous effect [that] can be appreciated...by anyone who reads the line aloud without concern with the pattern” (*PLF* 369-70; 375). “Colliteration” occurs when phonetically related consonant sounds repeat. Specifically, Burke groups together the *n*, *d*, *t*, and *th* (voiced and unvoiced) sounds and the *m*, *b*, *p*, *v*, and *f* sounds. Repetition or alliteration can take place among any of the elements within these two groups, as it does with the repetition of sounds from the latter group in the example “bathed by the mist” (“b___ b___ the m___”) with which Burke begins the essay. All told, Burke offers the following illustrations of musicality in verse:

- “Acrostic structure” occurs when alliterations and concealed alliterations are mixed up, as in the example “tyrannous and strong,” or “t, r, n, s and s, t, r, ng” (371)
- Chiasmus refers to the use of an a-b-b-a structure, as in the example “nonpolitical

bodies and the body politic,” which “[matches] adjective-noun with noun-adjective” (372). While phonemic chiasmus is less common in English than it is in Latin,¹⁷ according to Burke this “reversal . . . is quite common in music (where the artist quite regularly varies the sequence of notes in his theme by repeating it upside down or backwards)” (327).

- “Augmentation” and “diminution” are terms borrowed from music and refer, respectively, to a melody normally played in quarter notes instead played in half notes, or vice-versa. In poetry, the same effect is achieved by changing the vowel length in between the instances of alliteration, as in the example from “sleep” to “slid” to “soul,” which augments the “sl” of sleep and slid, adding vowels between them to get “soul” (372-3).
- “Ablaut” changes vowels within constant consonants, as in “heaven-haven” (375).

The influence of music on Burke’s ideas about language is evident. Indeed, the application of the musical devices “augmentation” and “diminution” to phonemes seems to be original to Burke.¹⁸ But why does Burke choose the designation “musicality” to characterize this phenomenon? He does this, I contend, in order to momentarily bracket content and focus on exclusively on form.

How are tonal transformations and joycing “formal,” exactly? For one thing, repetition is one of the five kinds of form that Burke details in *Counter-Statement* (hereafter, *CS*). And tonal transformations and joycing refer to, in the most basic sense, repetition in disguise. Perhaps more to the point, form is for Burke “the creation of an appetite in the mind of the auditor, and the adequate satisfaction of that appetite” (*CS* 40). In the same essay, he goes on to claim that music is the most formal of the arts, writing that “music, of all the arts, is by its nature least suited to the psychology of information, and has remained closer to the psychology of form” (45), and he

follows this statement with another that draws together music, form, and emotion: “Music, then, fitted less than any other art for imparting information, deals minutely in frustrations and fulfilments [sic] of desire, and for that reason more often gives us those curves of emotion which, because they are natural, can bear repetition without loss” (47). In these statements, Burke juxtaposes information and form, and similarly, information and desire, information and emotion. (Emotion is curiously dubbed “natural.” Does that make information “unnatural”?) In short, the formal is that which works distinctly apart from the informational. Thus, in *RM*, Burke claims “that many purely formal patterns can readily awaken an attitude of collaborative expectancy in us,” and he invites readers to “imagine a passage built about a set of oppositions (*we do this, but they on the other hand do that; we stay here; but they go there; we look up, but they look down,*’ etc.) Once you grasp the trend of the form, it invites participation regardless of the subject matter. Formally, you will find yourself swinging along with the succession of antitheses, even though you may not agree with the proposition that is being presented in this form” (58).

But how does that work? It is, I think, no coincidence that Burke links form to appetite, a bodily phenomenon. Elsewhere in *CS*, Burke writes, “The appeal of form as exemplified in rhythm enjoys a special advantage in that rhythm is more closely allied with ‘bodily’ processes” (140). And in *PLF*, he highlights the somatic qualities of the poetic form:

In the poet, we might say, the poeticizing existed as a *physiological* function. The poem is its corresponding *anatomic* structure. And the reader, in participating in the poem, breathes into this anatomic structure a new physiological vitality that resembles, though with a difference, the act of its maker, the resemblance being in the overlap between writer’s and reader’s situation, the difference being in the fact

that these two situations are far from identical. (90; my emphasis)

Form, for Burke, is a mode of symbolic action with unique access to the body. This relationship between the body and form, between the situated physiologies of poet and reader and a poetic, anatomic structure that both transcends and is shaped by those situations (more on that in chapter three), this relationship in turn calls to mind Burke's (nonsymbolic) motion/(symbolic) action pair.

Symbolic action is undoubtedly the term more familiar to students of Burke; he defines it succinctly as "any verbal act" (*PLF* 8) and more thoroughly as "modes of behavior made possible by the acquiring of a conventional, arbitrary symbol system, a definition that would apply to modes of symbolicity as different as primitive speech, styles of music, painting, sculpture, dance, highly developed mathematical nomenclatures, traffic signals, road maps, or mere dreams" ("Motion/Action" 809). Symbolic action, to borrow and augment J.L. Austin's famous title, means doing things with words and other representative media.

Non-symbolic motion can be difficult to define, no doubt because of the broad range of phenomena to which the term refers. Nonsymbolic motion has received less attention than has symbolic action, and as Debra Hawhee points out, the attention paid to it often results in misunderstanding (*Moving* 157). Namely, critics tend to see nonsymbolic motion as something that exists apart from symbolic action. Dana Anderson, Bryan Crable, Hawhee, Donald A. Pease, J. Clark Rountree III, and Robert Wess all treat the motion/action pair, and all relegate motion and action to distinct realms. Anderson refers to "the shadowy divide that separates action from motion," and she claims that "Burke leans heavily on consciousness as the differentiating factor" (260). Rountree calls the distinction "fundamental." For Pease, it's a "decisive distinction" (73). And Wess refers to "the unbridgeable gap between body and language" (249). Crable treats the

motion/action pair at length. And his treatment of motion/action—invaluable for the guidance it offers in my understanding this abstruse relationship—likewise seems to delineate a division between the two terms, even as he troubles that very delineation. Crable posits that the realms delineated by these two terms influence one another. Thus, he asks, “If we alter our focus, from language to the body, what do we learn about the rhetorical relationship between the social and the ‘natural’?” And he continues, “Applying Burke’s terminology...we can trace the rhetorical relationships between the body and social identity, the symbolic devices concealed within our constitutions of the nonsymbolic” (“Symbolizing” 122). For Crable, the motion/action pair “provides the best vantage point from which to examine our vocabularies for their dialectics and rhetorics of embodiment—and thus more reflectively and adequately to *draw the lines between the symbolic and the nonsymbolic features of our experience*” (134-5; my emphasis). Hawhee treats the motion/action pair at length too. However, her treatment is a bit more nuanced: “nonsymbolic motion . . . hovers at the edges of language, or symbolic action, neither juxtaposed nor mutually exclusive to it,” she writes (157). Hawhee’s reading displays a bit of separation between motion and action, but she aims to play up the interconnectedness of these two realms. In her formulation, language is still symbolic action, while nonsymbolic motion is “neither juxtaposed nor mutually exclusive to it.” For Hawhee, motion and action “run parallel” (163); the attitude of one influences the attitude of the other.

In the schemes proposed by several of the previous readings, the realm of non-symbolic motion is the realm of the natural world, the world that exists in spite of and apart from human symbolizing, while the realm of symbolic action is the realm of language, the terministic screen through which we experience and interpret and, as Paul Stobb puts it, “cope with the world” (139).¹⁹ And to scholars with even passing knowledge of Burke’s capacious theory of language,

the association between language and symbolic action is perhaps an obvious point. Burke's employment of the slash mark in his signifier of this relationship—as in the title of his essay “Nonsymbolic Motion/Symbolic Action”—seems to suggest a clear demarcation between motion and action. At times, he makes statements that would reinforce this distinction. In *Rhetoric of Religion* he writes that “Dramatism assumes a qualitative empirical difference between mental action and mechanical motion” (40). Thus, readers might be forgiven for thinking that Burke is interested solely in symbolic action. After all, as Hawhee points out, *symbolic action* is the term that appears again and again in Burke's titles (157). However, as the more nuanced interpretations of the motion/action pair by Crable and Hawhee both illustrate, the shoehorning of language into the realm of symbolic action oversimplifies Burke's ideas about what language is and what it does. That is to say, language isn't *just* symbolic action. Language is also, in very significant ways, non-symbolic motion. We can get at this idea somewhat obliquely by examining more carefully the title of Burke's book just alluded to and in particular by paying careful attention to the preposition *as*: *Language as Symbolic Action*. The book is notably *not* called *Language is Symbolic Action*. The preposition *as* used by Burke here suggests that language can have a function (or, perhaps, functions) *other than* the symbolic action referred to in the title. In fact, as I will demonstrate, in that very book as well as in *The Philosophy of Literary Form*—a book with subtitle *Studies in Symbolic Action*—Burke demonstrates that language is never *just* symbolic action. It is always, as my dissertation title suggests, *more than* symbolic action. If anything, these two books illustrate the sympathetic relationship between these two functions of language. For Burke, treating language as symbolic action means reckoning with language as *more than* symbolic action.

Hawhee and Crable have recently worked to clarify the terms *motion* and *action*. While they disagree on which of the two halves of the pair Burke sought to emphasize—Hawhee emphasizes motion, and Crable emphasizes action—Hawhee and Crable both acknowledge that for Burke, motion and action are inextricably linked. At its most basic level, “nonsymbolic motion names, among other things, the realm of sensory perceptions” (Hawhee 157). Or, as Burke puts it, motion refers to “the realm of matter” and thus to, among other things, “The human body, in its nature as a sheerly physiological organism” (“Motion/Action” 809). Through the action/motion pair, Crable argues, Burke is trying to account for the nonsymbolic while at the same acknowledging that we have no access to the nonsymbolic without recourse to the symbolic (“Symbolizing” 130). And Hawhee writes that “nonsymbolic motion...hovers at the edges of language, or symbolic action, neither juxtaposed nor mutually exclusive to it” (157).

For Burke, however, the things done with symbols do not remain exclusively within the realm of symbols. In his 1975 review of J.L. Austin’s *How To Do Things with Words*, Burke points out that Austin’s “speech acts”—what Austin himself calls an “illocutionary act” or “the performance of the act *in* saying something” (109)—only “work” if there is a corresponding attitude in the arena of motion (160).²⁰ A hypothetical example from Burke’s review illustrates this point well:

Mine enemy referred to me in utterances (a rhetic act) the attitude, or illocutionary force, of which I found quite irritating. My response to his attitude had a physiological counterpart in the realm of motion by such behavior as increased blood pressure, accelerated pulse beat, secretion of adrenalin, without which body symptoms his attitudinizing couldn’t have had such an illocutionary force so far as my response to his speech act was concerned. (166)

Symbolic action, then, extends beyond the realm of the symbolic and into the realm of the non-symbolic, which for Burke is the realm of motion.

Much the same might be said about Burkean form and about tonal transformations. Form might not be “sensory perception,” per se, but it is something that is better off experienced and felt, rather than contemplated or understood. Thus, form is an aesthetic consideration. In the foregoing example from *PLF* Burke calls the poetic *structure* that links together the situated physiologies of poet and reader “anatomic.”²¹ Situational similarities and differences aside, the implication is that there must necessarily be some kind of somatic common ground within the poem itself. There must be something, Burke suggests, that poet and reader alike can *feel*. This somatic common ground is what Burke calls form. So while the full title of his book is *The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action*, Burke reminds readers at the outset of his book that symbolic action is never *just* symbolic. Situating the form of language under the auspices of the motion/action pair as I have here reinforces its bodily appeal. Motion, then, is linked to aesthetics. And the bodily appeal of language, evident in language’s formal qualities, is for Burke the very thing that gives poetry its “musicality.” Put another way, the examples of “colliteration”—acrostic, chiasmus, augmentation, diminution, and ablaut—examined by Burke in “On Musicality in Verse,” refer to patterns—specifically, repetition—in the formal qualities of the language itself. And these formal qualities, in turn, are what produce, as Burke puts it, the “spontaneous effect” or “marked consistency of texture” in a particular poem. They are, in other words, what we find enticing and appealing about the language. In sum, by placing emphasis on the formal qualities of language, not to mention our somatic, visceral appreciation of those formal qualities, tonal transformations and joycing reveal that language is, for Burke, *more than* the symbolic action. More to the point, Burke’s related theories tonal transformations and

joycing—his theories that draw attention to the musicality of language—reinforce the notion that for him the two sides of the motion/action pair are far from oppositional; rather, they are in fact inextricably linked and mutually reinforcing.

ON MUSICALITY IN LANGUAGE: CONTENT

Notably, Burke ends “On Musicality in Verse” by claiming that he has made “no attempt” to connect the musical devices and the content they carry (378). “The extra burdens I should take on, if I attempt to deal with this controversial realm, would be enormous,” he writes (378). But, he continues, there are connections, even if he is not willing to go there in this essay, and even if, as he sees it, some content is made more appealing by its musicality. “Lines like ‘Black hell laughs horrible—to hear the scoff,’ and ‘Where the old Hag, unconquerable, huge’ seem to profit expressionistically by their reliance upon gutturals,” he writes in closing (378). Burke finds himself in a bit of a paradox here, though one that is arguably unavoidable. He wants to focus on poetry’s musicality apart from its content, or “musicality pure and simple,” but he must necessarily access that musicality by way of the content (378). That is to say, Burke must use the content to get at the form.

In analogous ways, Crable, Hawhee, and Gracie Veach have all shown that for Burke motion is a prerequisite for action but is itself cognitively inaccessible without the action it engenders. Crable in particular emphasizes that form in-and-of-itself would be imperceptible without the content it carries (“Symbolizing” 126). In other words, form needs content, even if that form is ultimately appreciated apart from or even in spite of its content. To a certain extent, form, once identified and codified, much as Burke does so extensively in *CS*, becomes content. Nevertheless, trying, however vainly, however vaguely, to conceive of form as something distinct from the content it carries, as motion rather than symbolic action, emphasizes the

multifaceted and often physiological nature of persuasion. Hawhee appears to have just such a shift in emphasis in mind when she writes that “Identification, so frequently figured by scholars as a sheerly social formation, first presented itself to Burke as an alliance formed between sounds made through similar laryngeal postures, or through physical mimesis” (“Language” 341). Indeed, in *RM*, Burke presents the foregoing example of formal appeal in spite of content—that is, the “*we do this, but they on the other hand do that*” example—as an illustration of identification. He writes, “the expressing of a proposition in one or another of these rhetorical forms would involve ‘identification,’ first by inducing the auditor to participate in the form, as a ‘universal’ locus of appeal, and next by trying to include a partisan statement within this same pale of assent” (59). This sort of formal identification paves the way for informational identification. Motion (referred to here as “a ‘universal’ locus of appeal,”) again, paves the way for action.

The connection between musicality, form, and the motion/action pair is perhaps most noticeable in Hawhee’s examination of Sir Richard Paget’s influence on Burke. Hawhee shows how Paget’s gesture-speech theory provided Burke with an illustration of how sensory impressions transformed into symbols. Burke treats Paget in several of his 1930s works—namely in “Auscultation,” and in *ATH*—but “the most lucid account of Burke’s Paget available,” according to Hawhee, is in *PLF* (343). Here is that “most lucid account”:

According to Paget’s theory, language arose in this wise: If a man is firmly gripping something, the muscles of his tongue and throat adopt a position in conformity with the muscles with which he performs the acts of gripping. He does not merely grip with his hands; he “grips all over.” Thus in conformity with the act of gripping, he would simultaneously grip with his mouth, by closing his lips

firmly. If, now, he uttered a sound with his lips in this position, the only sound he could utter would be *m*. *M* therefore is the sound you get when you “give voice” to the posture of gripping. Hence, *m* would be the proper tonality corresponding to the act of gripping, as in contact words like “maul,” “mix,” “mammas,” and “slam.” The relation between sound and sense here would not be an onomatopoeic one, as with a word like “sizzle,” but it would rather be like that between the visual designs on a sound track and the auditory vibrations that arise when the instrument has “given voice” to these designs (except that, in the case of human speech, the designs would be those of the tongue and throat, plastic rather than graphic). (*PLF* 12-13)

In short, gesture-speech theory claims that spoken language was the result of humans trying to imitate gestures with their mouths and vocal chords (see also, Hawhee “Language” 336). Put another way, Paget’s theory presents the formal elements of language as inextricably linked to the informational elements of language. In Burkean terminology, this means that non-symbolic motion and form (in this case the correspondences between bodily gestures and the vocal apparatus) provide the formative elements for symbolic action. Or as Hawhee puts it, “the body both models and performs the physical movements to produce speech, and, in doing so, almost literally breathes life into words” (“Language” 333). She goes on to write that “For Burke-inflected rhetorical criticism, too, overlooking this important historical connection between Paget and Burke leaves in most critics’ hands rather deflated, decidedly unlively notions of Burke’s most important conceptual legacies” (333).

My aim here is to take up Hawhee’s call to recognize the “liveliness” of Burke’s ideas by pointing to just how particularly “lively” his notions of tonal transformations and joycing are.

That is to say, tonal transformations and joycing play up this liveliness in Burke's thinking. For example, this liveliness can be seen in another selection referenced in the *RM* footnote on tonal transformations called "Freud and the Analysis of Poetry," Burke's treatment of hidden meaning lurking beneath the surface of socially acceptable words leads him to a discussion of the body and its relationship to language, and he asks, "why should it not be likely that an attitude, no matter how complex its ideational expression, could only be completed by a channelization within its corresponding gestures?" (264). But perhaps his most revealing statement on this relationship and on the importance of the sonic qualities of language falls outside of the 258-71 page range he recommends in his *RM* footnote:

the gestures ["formal devices, ways of pointing up and fulfilling expectations..."] might well be tracked down eventually to choices far closer to bodily pantomime than is revealed on the level of social evaluation (as were a poet, seeking the gestures appropriate for the conveying of a social negativeness, to draw finally upon imagery of disgust, and perhaps even, at felicitous moments, to select his speech by playing up the very consonants that come nearest to the enacting of repulsion). (282)

In other words, complete expression necessarily involves both the symbolic (the "imagery of disgust") and physical manipulation of language ("consonants that come nearest to the enacting of repulsion"). Taking advantage of both of these essential elements, the poet, Burke tells us, might gain considerable rhetorical advantage.

Randy Allen Harris emphasizes the importance of these two essential elements, writing that in Burke's theory of language, "the form signification assumes profoundly affects the way human organisms respond to it" (2). And Burke illustrates this idea well in an example from *RM*:

We saw another speaker, a theologian, who periodically interrupted his sermonlike lecture while he gazed into space. The audience waited for a marvel—and slowly, as was made apparent by the changing expression on the speaker’s face, there became manifest the signs of the next idea which he was about to fetch from the distant depths. Sometimes, when thus seeking to descry the next message, he turned his eyes intently upward, and to the right. At other times, he bent, and looked down, intently, to the left. Presumably he alternated these postures for the sake of variety; but we can begin to speculate: If, by looking upward, and to the right, he can bring forth ideas from heaven, then by the same token, when he has looked downward, and to the left, does he also have other things brought steaming hot from hell? (67-8)

Note the relationship between form and content here. The theologian’s ideas are previewed by “the changing expression” of his face, and the audience is thus psychologically readied to accept those ideas. But more than that, the theologian himself aims “to fetch from the distant depths” those very ideas. Burke’s use of the transitive verb *descry* is revealing. According to the *OED*, *descry* means, not only “To cry out, declare, make known, bewray,” but also “To get sight of, discover, examine” (senses I and III, respectively). The verb contains an uncanny collapse of the distinction—dating back at least as far as the last two terms of Gorgias’s famous nihilistic formulation “Nothing exists; or if it does exist, we cannot know it; or if we can know it, we cannot communicate our knowledge to another person” (Bizzell and Herzberg 43)—between knowing something and communicating that knowledge to another person. That is to say, *descry* refers to both acquisition and dissemination, to both invention and delivery.²² Burke’s use of the term here capitalizes on that double meaning. So in Burke’s account, the theologian’s

presumably prepared message (the acquisition, the invention) does not entirely precede the manner in which he presents it (the dissemination, the style). Burke here seems to have in mind, if not the opposite order of events, then a collapse of strict chronology. The theologian, after all, is “seeking.” And it is “*by looking upward*” that he “can bring forth ideas from heaven.” The acquisition and dissemination of his message almost seem to happen together. Almost.

I do not think that Burke is subscribing to an Augustinian notion of Divine inspiration. Rather, I think that the passage points to Burke’s focus on mutually influential (and mutually beneficial) relationship between symbolic action and non-symbolic motion. The theologian’s decision to look up and down for inspiration and to communicate to his audience the sources of that inspiration is not arbitrary. Up and down are highly charged ideas, especially—as I explore later—in the Burkean vocabulary, and in this passage Burke is very upfront about which charge is positive and which is negative. What’s more, the audience’s “collaborative expectancy”²³ with the theologian depends on its familiarity with the associations between up and down, heaven and hell, respectively.

At this point, even a generous reader might begin to worry that I have lost my way, seeing as how tonal transformations and joycing—the ostensible subjects of this chapter—are not at all the sort of visual phenomena as have been many of the examples just discussed. But while tonal transformations and joycing are modes of symbolic action, they are modes of symbolic action that are acutely attuned to the sheerly physiological organism, which is to say to motion. Thus, musicality and tonal transformations and joycing are formal and operate at the “edges of language.” Form is the arousing and satisfying of appetites in the auditor. It is contrasted with information. Tonal transformations are likewise otherwise than information, for the whole point of tonal transformations is that a word means something other than the thing about which it

supposedly informs us. As evidenced in Burke's example from *PLF*, "fix" does not only mean "fix" when the title character of Eugene O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape* exclaims, in reference to the object of his affection, "I'll fix her!" (52-3). Rather, the ablaut effect is one that is in large part felt, what Burke calls a "spontaneous effect [that] can be appreciated...by anyone." This is what accounts for the slipperiness of content when tonal transformations and joycing are at work.

Thus, Burke writes, "we may with a little patience and not too innocent a past, come close upon a socially forbidden form that expresses perfectly the attitude of the character, 'Yank,' who had thrown his shovel at the girl" (52-3). In much the same way that form of, say, Greek tragedy readies an audience for the content of the play, the material, musical qualities of language—its form—precede and in turn shape the content it delivers. Burke's most succinct statement on the relationship between motion and action can perhaps be found in *PC*, where he states that "though orientation rises out of the affective, it in turn calls forth affective states. Otherwise stated: meanings and stimuli merge" (150). In other words, Burke motion gives rise to action, and action then turns around and affects motion.

ECCLESIA SUPER CLOACUM

Recall how at the end of "Musicality" Burke acknowledges that content plays a part in the effect of tonal transformations. This makes sense, given what Crable says about the inevitability of symbolization. Still, it might seem odd that tonal transformations and joycing should have a specific kind of content. Form, after all, can absorb all manner of content. But in the other two selections referenced in the *RM* footnote, Burke posits a very specific kind of content when discussing tonal transformations, what he variously dubs the *cloacum*, criminality, the fecal motive, and the "unutterable." In "Freud and the Analysis of Poetry," Burke discusses how poetry, like dreaming, serves as an "*ecclesia super cloacum*," or church over a sewer (*PLF*

259). That is to say, both poetry and dreaming are symbolic acts, and both can and do disguise socially unacceptable content in more acceptable forms. For Burke, this similarity illustrates the value that Freudian psychoanalysis offers poetic analysis. “In so far as art contains a surrealist ingredient (and all art contains some of this ingredient),” he writes, “psychoanalytic coördinates are required to explain the logic of its structure” (278). Namely, Burke finds valuable the notion that something can mean one thing on the surface and something else, something unmentionable, “below the surface.” There is a similar, if more extensive theme in a section of the eponymous essay of *PLF* titled “The Concealed Offense,” likewise referenced in the *RM* footnote. There, Burke aims to show how what he calls the “criminality hidden beneath the surface of art”—that is, criminality “transformed, transcended, transubstantiated, by incorporation into a wider context of symbolic action”—might be revealed by the discovery of “unconscious punning in language” (51-2). In other words, aural associations can suggest hidden, unutterable meanings.

As it turns out, the very criminality that tonal transformations disguise is the basis of Rueckert’s dismissal of joycing as a critical method. In his seminal *Kenneth Burke and the Drama of Human Relations*, Rueckert offers what is likely the most extended explication of joycing to date, focusing in part on its connection to catharsis. He writes, “the theory itself maintains that all poetic journeys are purgative-redemptive” (95), thereby echoing Burke’s claim that tonal transformations are cathartic and that catharsis can in this case be reduced “sometimes to a single letter or syllable” (*RM* 310). But joycing, Rueckert complains, seems too limited in focus, too reductive, and more than anything else, he argues, its connection to the “unutterable” is too arbitrary. It is for him the least essential of Burke’s analytical methods:

Joycing, which up until 1945 Burke used primarily to “discover” scatological meanings, and after that to “discover” both scatological and “hierarchic”

meanings, is the extreme example of a method created to make a theory work.

The method, which Burke applies with a great deal of linguistic mumbo jumbo about cognate sounds and metathesis, is based on the highly suspect assumption that any remote similarity of sound constitutes a similarity or even identity of meaning which the collective conscious or unconscious mind is aware of because the human psyche “works” that way. (95)

Rueckert’s main charge²⁴ seems to be that the scatological meanings Burke discovers with joycing are too subjective, too arbitrary. “Unfortunately, every time Burke joyces a word,” he continues, “there remain a number of alternate meanings which could also be got by joycing but which Burke arbitrarily rejects because of another suspect assumption: that the covert meaning is always one of the ‘unutterables’” (95-6).

Perhaps if we interpreted Burke’s focus on the unutterable too narrowly, too literally, we might agree with Rueckert that the motives joycing uncovers are ultimately arbitrary. This would be unfortunate, for a dismissal of joycing on those grounds would in turn mean a dismissal of tonal transformations. And a dismissal of tonal transformations means a dismissal of what I have already illustrated is a noteworthy collapse of the distinction between motion and action. However, I would like to illustrate that the motives hidden within tonal transformations and which Burke discovers through joycing might be “unutterable,” but they are anything but arbitrary. In fact, even Rueckert goes on to claim just a few pages later that “fecal is simply another word which Burke uses to indicate the pollution archetype—that which needs to be transcended, expelled, changed, expiated, or solved” (101). The key is to see joycing²⁵ as one form of charting, or one way in which the critic discovers “narrative arpeggios” or “associational progressions in the work itself” (*PLF* 58-9).²⁶ In *PLF*, Burke illustrates the idea with “a prayer,

learned in childhood,” which I cited in the introduction. In so doing, he also demonstrates tonal transformation of the ablaut variety:

God loving me

Guard me in sleep

Guide me to Thee,

By tonally transforming “God” into “Guard” and “Guide,” is the poet thereby making *God* a criminal word? To be sure, God is not usually associated with the criminal and the offensive, but He is, or His name Jehovah is, Burke points out, “‘unutterable,’ for it represents the Almighty Power” (56). “In Greek,” he claims, “it was called the ‘Tetragrammaton,’ which by a cunning, punning accident means ‘four-letter word’” (56). Okay, but we’re not exactly in *criminal* territory yet. To get there, I think, we need to figure out what exactly Burke means by *criminal*. Is it the case that “criminal” is shorthand for “unutterable” or that “unutterable” is shorthand for “criminal”? I am tempted to think that it is the former, only because Burke says explicitly in *PLF* that unutterable can be both good and bad. It all boils down to context. In *PLF*, he writes, “there are two kinds of ‘unutterable,’ the unutterably good as well as the unutterably bad, with an ambiguous area containing something of both” (54).²⁷ He goes on to offer this example: “The Latin *sacer*, we may recall, did not correspond simply to our word ‘sacred.’ The criminal was *sacer*,” he writes, “(an ambiguity that was at least retained in the vocabulary of action if not that of explicit linguistic usage, as we see it in the ‘rite of sanctuary’ whereby a fugitive from the law could not be molested while under the protection of the altar, or perhaps in the design of the Crucifixion, with Christ surrounded by thieves). *Sacer*, “Burke concludes, “might thus be more accurately translated as ‘untouchable,’ since the extremely good, the extremely bad, and the extremely powerful are equally ‘untouchable.’” (55)²⁸ If Burke often focuses on the unutterably

bad, it is likely because, as he puts it, “the ‘bad’ pun (arising from a conflict of impulses where one states an attitude despite himself) is the kind most amenable to study” (56). But he admits that, yes, “good” puns or “‘benignities’ that correspond to . . . ‘malignities’” are discovered (56). What makes the sacrifice of the unutterable cathartic, arguably, is that it piles on the mystery—that which unnerves us and gives us that sense of malaise (this is the term Burke uses again and again in his essay on *Coriolanus*), thereby making it the perfect victim. It’s just that the unspeakably bad is easier to see and thus easier to work with. Still, with the “prayer learned in childhood,” we find ourselves here with something that is ostensibly “unspeakably” good, so let’s try to work with it.

In *PLF*, Burke explains how “God” might be “unutterable”: “if I knew who the writer [of the prayer] was, and other writings by him [sic], I should inspect them from the standpoint of the possibility that ‘guard’ and ‘guide’ as used by him in other contexts were also roundabout ways of saying ‘God’ (and possibly ‘forbidden’ ways—as he might be saying ‘God’ in contexts where his auditors would object if he explicitly motivated his statement by this “ground of proof”)” (57). In other words, we need to know more about how the prayer is situated within specific contexts. What’s more—and Burke doesn’t point this out, but it’s nevertheless worth mentioning—the prayer itself functions as a way of instructing its ostensibly young audience (an audience just getting to know and being able to conceptualize God) in the ways of approaching God. It does so through the basic function of tonal transformations: making something “unutterable” and turning it into something more familiar and less taboo.²⁹ Motion helps make the action happen. We might further note that *God* that instills in us a certain sense of dread. It is, after all, the God-term of god-terms and thus the original negative, the ostensible source of “thou shall not,” especially in the Burkean system. That God is here tonally transformed into more

socially acceptable terms like “guard” and “guide” (presumably through the use of “thou shall nots”).³⁰

All of which is to say that tonal transformations—and, by extension, joycing—are not exclusively linked to the fecal motive or the pollution archetype. They are, however, linked to forbidden words and ideas. But the notion of what’s forbidden and what’s not, as the foregoing prayer learned in childhood illustrates, is for Burke very much relative to specific situations. Rueckert’s dismissal of joycing on the grounds of its arbitrariness, then, simply doesn’t hold. Moving forward, I examine catharsis in more detail. And by noting the broad scope of activities that, for Burke, fall under the term *catharsis* (*catharsis* in this case being the purging of “unutterable” elements and a key part of the effect of tonal transformations), I will illustrate that joycing is actually a more useful method than Rueckert seems willing to admit.

CATHARSIS

In the essay “On Human Behavior, Dramatistically Considered,” Burke highlights the centrality of catharsis within the dramatic analysis of human behavior, advocating for the discovery of the “possible secular equivalents” to Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s formula for “the two great moments in Christianity”: “original sin” and Redemption (*PC* 283). As Burke explains it, “the kind of ‘guilt’ intrinsic to hierarchal order (the only kind of ‘organizational’ order we have ever known) calls correspondingly for ‘redemption’ through victimage” (284). This suggests that any symbolic order, organized hierarchically and “rotten with perfection,” must feature a purgative-redemptive impulse that cleanses and thus “perfects” that symbolic order by driving away the “unutterable.” In his essay on *Coriolanus* from *LSA*, for example, Burke emphasizes the titular character’s role as the embodiment of patrician ill-will toward the plebeians (81-4). In this sense, the play functioned as a “timely topic” for Shakespeare’s

contemporaries, who were then facing their own heightened class tensions as a result of the Enclosure Acts; as drama, *Coriolanus* resolves British class tensions by symbolically purging a victim—Coriolanus—who has been inscribed with the kind of values that are at the source of those tensions (82, 89-90, 94). In short, catharsis is central to any dramatic consideration of human behavior (see also, Jennermann).

Importantly for Burke, the cathartic impulse generated by purely *symbolic* action can result in *actual*, and often violent, action. This makes sense, given Burke's claim about the reciprocal relationship between motion and action. While dramatism operates "within the realm of symbols" ("On Human Behavior" 292), catharsis is, as much as anything else, a bodily phenomenon, a sort of bridge between motion and action. This sort of bridging catharsis can be nonviolent too. Thus, in his essay on *Timon of Athens*, Burke brings together motion, catharsis, and the unutterable with the term "invective," which he calls "a primary 'freedom of speech,' rooted extralinguistically in the helpless rage of an infant that satiates its attitude by utterances wholly unbridled" (*LSA* 120). But, he writes, "it is a kind of 'freedom' that must soon be subjected to control, once articulacy develops," and that "invective most directly involves pugnacity, since it is itself a species of pugnacity" (120).³¹ In other words, language and symbolic action emerge out of the formless, "wholly unbridled" cries of the infant, cries that, until the infant learns otherwise, indicate a sort of linguistic freedom. Such is the freedom of these utterances that the infant's extra-linguistic "helpless rage" is satisfied. From this it seems to follow that an infant's "free" speech is almost wholly cathartic. But when these "unbridled" utterances are reigned in under the auspices of articulation, only those utterances that flout articulacy's control might provide a similar type of cathartic satiation, which is why invective can be linked back to cathartic, infantile speech. That catharsis isn't fecal, but it is still

“unutterable.” Borrowing from Burke’s discussion of the “concealed offense,” we might say that invective cathartically “[transforms], [transcends], [transubstantiates], by incorporation into a wider context of symbolic action” those ineffable, extra-linguistic motives at the heart of helpless rage (*PLF* 51-2).

Catharsis for Burke can come in many forms. In his essay on Burkean catharsis, Donald L. Jennermann describes at least four types, and he argues that in exploring these different types Burke capitalizes on the vagueness of traditional notions of catharsis (33). In *Moving Bodies*, Debra Hawhee likewise explores four different types of Burkean catharsis, and she suggests that there are even more (184, note 23). But whatever the form (or better yet, whatever the *content*), the connection between catharsis the body is important. Hawhee examines this relationship between language, catharsis, and the body, writing that “Catharsis (Greek *katharsis*), for Burke at least, evokes a kind of body-thinking and therefore binds bodies with ideas and language” (136). Pointing to one of his two 1950s essays on catharsis, Hawhee argues that Burke aims “to fashion readers and viewers of poetic works as physical readers and viewers, readers and viewers with bodies” (138). She likewise illustrates how Burkean catharsis blurs the lines between author, character, and reader. All three experience catharsis, and they do so in a “body-to-art-to-body” (that is to say, from artist to character/artwork to reader) sort of “transference” by way of what Burke names the “bountiful materiality” of words (Hawhee 140; Burke “The Language of Poetry, Dramatistically Considered,” part 1, 98). Again, we see references to language itself providing the common ground between distinct bodies. Burke’s advocacy for the “attitudinizing of the poem” so that “the whole body may finally become involved” reinforces this view (*PLF* 9).

This blurring is important, because it suggests that bodily catharsis, and the kind of bodily catharsis that tonal transformations and joycing identify, does not have to come in fecal form but can take any number of guises. The important common ground comes by way of language and the body. Most generally, catharsis is achieved through the interplay between inarticulate, ineffable bodily motion and articulate symbolic action. According to Hawhee,

This pair of tangles, the articulate form of language and inarticulate matter (bodily impulses), forms a maze even more complex than the one fashioned by the cunning craftsman Daedalus to confine the Minotaur, in part because, as Burke notes, the maze of catharsis is double, involving on the one hand a whole heap of material—flesh, bile, tears—and the bounty of words (articulate matter) on the other. (143)

Hawhee's parenthetical characterization of words as "articulate matter," an allusion to Burke's own reference to the "bountiful materiality" of words, is telling because it disrupts those words' tidy location within the realm of symbolic action by likening them to a physical substance. Words in this formulation are the cathartic bridge between the "whole heap of material" and articulation. Catharsis, in other words, denotes the articulation of motion, the transubstantiation of nonsymbolic motion into symbolic action.

In acting as a bridge, words themselves can become the sacrificial victims. That is to say, the tidy symbolism of words is sacrificed as the hidden meanings emerge and express criminal attitudes.³² As I have already mentioned, Burke explicitly links tonal transformations to catharsis in *RM*. In *PC*, he writes of "exorcism by misnomer" (142). And in *Language as Symbolic Action*, he dubs James Joyce and Lewis Carroll "[victimizers]" of words for the way in which these authors treat words sacrificially (39). Tonally transformed words afford the users of such words

the cathartic release of expletives by grafting those expletives onto the sacrificial, socially acceptable ones. Likewise sacrificed along with the old symbolism of the word in question is the perspective engendered by that symbolism. The connection between catharsis and tonal transformation suggests that the face-value perspective that a word offers is no longer satisfactory and that a new perspective, incongruous with the old, is necessary to interpret the situation. I will explore the implications of this connection between tonal transformations, joycing, and perspective by incongruity in chapter four. Suffice it to say for the moment that the “unutterable” is context specific. If Burke leans heavily on the fecal and the sexual (and, to Rueckert’s credit, there is no denying that he does) it is because these are things that have long been and in large part remain “unutterable.” His choice of terms (namely, the so-called “fecal motive”) is more of a context-specific rhetorical device than it is some kind of objective observation. Arguably, though, this terministic choice proves all the more useful given the fecal motive’s origins in the body and motion. Or maybe it’s just that the fecal motive provides a convenient metaphor for catharsis.

Thus, in O’Neill’s *The Hairy Ape*, Yank’s exclamation “I’ll fix her!” reveals the inadequacy of the dictionary definition of *fix* within the context of this scene of the play (recall that Yank is referring to the object of his affection). Joycing the word, Burke hints, reveals a tonal transformation that more adequately represents Yank’s motives. Catharsis is achieved when the word *fix* is aurally and orally burdened with the criminality of its phonetic cousin. The cathartic tonal transformation happens by way of phonetic similarities between words so that the “bad” word is smuggled in under the auspices of a phonetically similar “good” word, thereby sacrificing the good in order to expel the bad.

In sum, tonal transformations and joycing conceal and reveal, respectively, the criminality lurking beneath the surface of certain words. The aesthetic effect of such tonal transformations is derived from the catharsis that they engender; tonal transformations allow us a way of purging criminal elements through the victimization of more socially acceptable terms. However, what Burke at times dubs “criminal” is perhaps more accurately called “unutterable.” Thus, what tonal transformations purge is not necessarily “bad”; rather, this purge affords us the opportunity to speak the unutterable and in so doing provides us a way of excising the existential dread that the unutterable represents.

FRACKING V. FRAC’ING: WHAT’S IN A NAME?

By this point, I hope to have made it clear that tonal transformations and joycing upset the distinctions between the felt sense of words and their social function, that is, between aesthetics and rhetoric. For this reason, they are, I contend, significant, undervalued concepts within the Burkean system. Tonal transformations and joycing highlight the interplay between motion and action and the importance of the body and its visceral response to language for successful rhetoric. Indeed, at the outset of *PLF*, Burke decries what he saw as the shift away from language’s bodily, poetic qualities. For Burke, it’s important that we consider how symbolic action is, if not always connected to the body, then at its best when connected to the body. He writes,

Our gradual change of emphasis from the spoken to the documentary (with many symbols of mathematics and logic having no tonal associations whatsoever, being hardly other than designs) has made increasingly for a purely ocular style—so that children now are sometimes even trained to read wholly by eye. And there are indeed many essayistic styles that profit greatly if one can master the art of

reading them without hearing them at all. For they are as arrhythmic as traffic itself, and can even give one a palpitation of the heart if he still reads with an encumbrance of auditory imagery, and so accommodates his bodily responses to their total tonal associations. But whatever may be the value of such styles, for bookkeeping purposes, they have wandered far afield from the gesturing of heard poetic speech. Paradoxically, their greatest accuracy, from the standpoint of mimesis, is in their very absence of such, for by this absence they conform with our sedentary trend from the bodily to the abstract (our secular variant of the spiritual). It is the style of men and women whose occupations have become dissociated from the bodily level, and whose expression accordingly does not arise from a physical act as the rhythms of a Negro work song arise from the rhythms of Negroes at work. (16-7)³³

Burke clearly privileges the poetic, the aesthetic, over the informational and the documentary. More specifically, he is interested in a relationship between motion and action as it appears within language. This relationship illustrates that for Burke form and content in language are—or can be—mutually reinforcing. But of course this isn't always the case. There are moments, as in the positivist, documentary conception of language—language “dissociated from the bodily level,” as he puts it—that do not illustrate this mutually reinforcing relationship between form and content. Burke is clearly in favor of an approach to language that does play up this relationship. He privileges this type of language over the other as more “poetic.” As chapter three will illustrate, it's this kind of language that offers the most persuasive, appealing equipment for living. Thus, tonal transformations and joycing indicate Burke's desire to see language as an aesthetic medium. Symbolic action is at its most complete means when all of the facets of

language are utilized. In this sense, symbolic action depends upon the workings of language as *more than* symbolic action. Moreover, the symbolic and more than symbolic elements of language shouldn't just be used, they should be misused too. Whereas tonal transformations suggest that such "misuse" of language is inevitable, joycing suggests, paradoxically, that such misuse can be useful. This idea can be illustrated by way of a simple example.

In a recent story on the controversial energy collection method known as hydraulic fracturing, National Public Radio presents what is ostensibly a report that the word *fracking*, the common shorthand for the natural gas extraction method known as hydraulic fracturing, has been added to the latest edition of Merriam Webster's dictionary. However, the real story emerges out of a controversy surrounding the term *fracking*. As NPR puts it in its overview of the story, "Activists play up [the word's] unseemly connotations" (Cusick). That is to say, anti-fracking activists have capitalized on *fracking's* visual and aural similarities to a particular four-letter word (see the discussion of O'Neill's *Hairy Ape* above). Apparently this has fracking advocates worried, so much so that they are trying to introduce a new spelling: *frac'ing*. In the story, NPR correspondent Marie Cusick interviews Larry Fulmer, "frac superintendent for Cabot Oil and Gas in the Northeast Region." According to Cusick, Fulmer "believes the more popular—and now dictionary spelling—of fracking with a K is a deliberate attempt to make it look more like that other word that begins with an F and ends with a CK." Whatever one's feelings about hydraulic fracturing, it is hard to deny that Fulmer and his pro-fracking allies have a point. The audio version of the story includes sound bites from an anti-fracking rally and sounds of the crowd chanting "No fracking way! No fracking way! Let's hear it!" But, from the perspective of tonal transformations and joycing, it is also hard to deny that the proposed change from *fracking* to *frac'ing* is much more than a desperate attempt to rid the word, and by extension the entire

process of hydraulic fracturing itself, of its “unseemly connotations.” Given what I have proposed about tonal transformations and joycing, we should acknowledge that the unutterable reference comes from the word’s sound as much as it comes from its appearance on the page. That is to say, *frack* and *frac*, *fracking* and *frac’ing* sound alike, respectively, and thus all have unseemly connotations in spite of their visual differences.

Moreover, the bodily appeal of form illustrates that motion can be affected by symbolic action, that a certain degree of physical catharsis can be achieved by way of a word’s phonetic connotations. In the case of *fracking*, the word itself offers somatic thrills similar to those we get when we utter the phonetically similar “unutterable” word. But that association is itself rooted in the form and thus in the bodily aspects—the motion—of language. What this suggests is that the natural gas companies’ proposal to alter the spelling of the word *fracking* to downplay the word’s negative associations is not exactly the most rhetorically effective solution. For while the predominately symbolic visual associations between *fracking* and its unutterable counterpart are certainly there and probably do make a difference, there are also the arguably more visceral oral and aural associations. Though, to the gas companies’ credit, it is probably the case that the terribly awkward spelling “frac’ing” might very well throw people off of the scent of the unutterable oral and aural associations of the word. At the same time, the word’s unseemly associations might also account for the popularity of the concept as well. That is, in the same way that Burke claims that the movie-going public would find a criminally derived name of his hypothetical movie starlet “beautiful” (see chapter 3), fracking supporters might likewise be more amenable to the concept because of the word’s tonal association.

Other functions of tonal transformations are likewise evident in the fracking/frac’ing controversy. For an opponent of fracking, there is undoubtedly something viscerally cathartic

about being able to associate the term with an expletive that the *OED* defines as “To cheat; to deceive, betray” and as “Expressing anger, despair, frustration, alarm, etc.” (“Fuck,” senses 2 and 3, respectively). In the latter sense, the word is in-and-of-itself cathartic. In the former sense, as well as in the definition of the word that reads “To damage, ruin, spoil, botch; to destroy, put an end to” (sense 2), we can see attempts of fracking’s critics to change the perspective on this practice, touted by the industry as the best alternative to importing fossil fuels. Rather than emphasizing the benefits—as does, obviously, the industry line—the critic’s use tonal transformations (and maybe joycing, too) to emphasize the downsides.

Tonal transformations and joycing illustrate our tenuous relationship with language, something that “controls” us at least as much as we “control” it (if, that is, we can control it at all, though in this respect Burke seems to think that we do have some control). And therein lies the rub. Burke, in advocating for what he calls a poetic rather than a semantic view of language, wants us to seize control of the language and its symbolic functions while nevertheless acknowledging that this control is tenuous at best and that while we might seemingly gain command over “the tiny sliver” (*LSA* 5) of language, the language is never ours to keep and is always subject to other influences as soon as we make use of it. It’s this flexibility that makes new perspectives possible. That is to say, Burke grants us agency in our use of language while also reminding us that our agency is anything but absolute, that we owe whatever control we have to our fellow symbol-users, yes, but also to the language itself, the language as a material substance (its poetic potential).

CONCLUSION

“In referring to the misuse of symbols,” Burke writes in the first clause of his “Definition of Man”—the clause in which he famously calls man the “symbol-using, symbol-making, and

symbol-misusing animal”—“I have in mind not only . . . demagogic tricks . . .” That is to say, he is not only thinking about the malicious rhetoric of “medicine men” like Hitler.³⁴ Burke also thinks of “misuse” in terms of the motion-action relationship:

I also think of ‘psychogenic illnesses,’ violent dislocations of bodily motion due to the improperly criticized action of symbolicity. A certain kind of food may be perfectly wholesome, so far as its sheer material nature is concerned. And people in some areas may particularly prize it. But our habits may be such that it seems to us loathsome; and under those conditions, the very thought of eating it may be nauseating to us. (*LSA 6*)

Burke’s point here is that the symbolicity of language can have distinctly nonsymbolic effects. Developing the wholesome/loathsome food example a bit further, he relates a story about the anthropologist Franz Boas dining with the Eskimos. Apparently Boas, having politely consumed what he thought to be blubber, had to excuse himself from the gathering because eating the blubber made him ill. As he was collecting himself, he encountered an Eskimo woman who, upon learning that blubber was on the menu that night, hurried eagerly to the meal to get her share. When she and Boas crossed paths again, however, he found that she was disappointed by the meal. What Boas took to be blubber, it turns out, had actually been dumplings. Clearly, for Burke, symbolic misuse can have an powerful effect.

It’s hard not to think Burke is privileging symbolic action here. He is, after all, pointing to the capacity of symbols to affect us both viscerally (the “certain kind of food” can be “loathsome”) and somatically (the food is “nauseating”). Symbols are so powerful, he tells us, that even misused symbols can move us. However, he soon complicates that apparent hierarchy:

So, in defining man as the symbol-using animal, we thereby set the conditions for asking: Which motives derive from man's animality, which from his symbolicity, and which from the combination of the two? Physicality is, of course, subsumed in animality. And though the *principles* of symbolicity are not reducible to sheerly physical terms (quite as the rules of football are not so reducible despite the physicality of the players' hulks and motions as such), the meanings cannot be conceived by empirical organisms except by the aid of a sheerly physical dimension. (*LSA 7*)

This corrective serves as an admonishment to those who might be led to believe that symbols are somehow all powerful, that they actually create the reality we experience. Instead, there are significant ways in which the effectiveness of symbolic action is dependent upon nonsymbolic motion. Rather than thinking of the motion-action relationship as unidirectional, then, it makes more sense to think of the relationship as a kind of feedback loop.

I think that tonal transformations and joycing actually reinforce this view of the motion-action relationship, and in so doing, they suggest a noteworthy addendum to the questions of motive Burke asks in the foregoing passage: To what extent does the sheerly physical dimension determine the symbolic one? Both tonal transformations and joycing are forms of symbolic misuse. That is, both disguise and discover meaning hidden beneath the "church" of the intended symbolic action. But these disguises and discoveries can only be accessed by way form, which to say by way of motion, feeling, aesthetics. Tonal transformations and joycing thus show motion operating, not just at the edges of language, as Debra Hawhee suggests, but right smack dab in the middle of language as well. In other words, Burke's tonal transformations and joycing reveal that language is always already motion and action and that both of the "sides" of language are

instrumental in language's ability to move us. There are moments, in other words, in which motion and action are indistinguishable. The rhetorical and aesthetic dimensions of language become difficult to separate.

Moreover, the fact that Burke sees motion as an essential component of language means that symbolic misuse is inevitable. Whatever our conscious symbolic intent, the language itself, as a physical, aesthetic phenomenon, often betrays those intents and undermines our attempts at straightforward symbolic action. But this misuse, in Burke's theory, can move us as much as can proper or appropriate symbolic action. For herein lies the possibility for catharsis and the articulation of the unutterable. It's in this misuse that language for Burke becomes "poetic." The kind of symbolic misuse one finds in tonal transformations and joycing actually serves to increase meaning, but this increase is, again, rooted in language as phenomenon that is more than symbolic action.

Recent advances in the rhetorical study of affect tend to focus on the happy coming together of disparate elements that results in rhetorical success, sort of like a more complex and multifaceted version of Lloyd Bitzer's famous three-part rhetorical situation. We can see evidence of this in a recent article by Dana L. Cloud and Kathleen Eaton Feyh, who, in their effort to "develop critical frameworks for evaluating the role of affect/emotion in constitutive rhetorics" (315), posit Walter Fisher's concept of "fidelity" as a way of "[describing] some constitutive rhetorics as 'reasonable' (without denying their partial and affective force)" (301). Fidelity refers to the happy coming together of any number of different elements, including reasonable and emotion. That is, "Fidelity describes the emergent fit between a rhetorical hailing and the experiences of those hailed" (301). This happy coming together accounts for the success (or, in their words, the reasonableness) of rhetoric to constitute a given situation. Tonal

transformations and joycing suggest, however, that Cloud and Feyh might have it wrong way around. In highlighting the inevitability of symbolic misuse, these theories suggest the possibility that fidelity is always already on the verge of being undermined by the tonal suggestiveness of language. Though this may momentarily result in new fidelities, the point here is that the possibility for infidelity is always there, lurking within the more than symbolic qualities of language. So perhaps, rather than seeking out moments of fidelity, rhetoricians might instead seek out the potential for infidelity, which is to say the potential for new meanings to emerge and multiply. Recognizing the productive capacity of language's infidelity necessarily entails the appreciation of language as language, which is to say that it entails the appreciation of symbolic misuse and how that misuse too can move us.

In this chapter, I have offered an extended explication of tonal transformations and joycing, primarily by following Burke's suggestion that we examine different sections of *PLF*. In taking Burke at his word, I've found that tonal transformations and joycing ultimately unsettle the distinction between rhetoric and aesthetic and that misuse is both inevitable and productive. In chapter three, I examine the remaining text mentioned in Burke's *RM* footnote, a section of the long essay "The Philosophy of Literary Form" called "Beauty and the Sublime." There, I illustrate that not only does Burke blur the distinction between rhetoric and aesthetic, but also that for him the most effective equipment for living is that which is thoroughly aesthetic.

CHAPTER 3

ENDLESS MALADY: THE BURKEAN SUBLIME AS EQUIPMENT FOR LIVING

In chapter two, I examine three selections from *The Philosophy of Literary Form* (hereafter, *PLF*), selections to which Burke refers in a footnote in *A Rhetoric of Motives* (hereafter, *RM*). In this footnote, Burke recommends these selections—namely, “The Concealed Offense,”³⁵ “Freud and the Analysis of Poetry,” and “Musicality in Verse,” though Burke himself refers to them by page number—as “somewhat” treatments on tonal transformations and promises “further discussion in the *Symbolic*” (311). In chapter two, I illustrate how tonal transformations and the corresponding critical heuristic called joycing reveal that for Burke language contains a visceral, somatic element, and that the aesthetic appeal of language—inextricably linked to our willingness to be moved by language—is as much the result of the exercise of this visceral, somatic element as it is the result of a conscious response to conscious symbolic action.

In the present chapter, I examine another section of *PLF* referred to by Burke in that footnote. This one, titled “Beauty and the Sublime,” follows the section “The Concealed Offense,” and, because Burke himself directs us here for more on tonal transformations, will, like “The Concealed Offense,” be useful in developing a more complete understanding of tonal transformations and Burke’s philosophy of language.

Burke’s theory of the sublime is unique in two key ways. First, in opposition to both traditional and contemporary notions of the sublime found in the work on Edmund Burke, Kant, and Lyotard, Burke’s vision of the sublime is not the antithesis³⁶ of beauty. Rather, it is beauty.

Or at least, beauty for Burke depends on the sublime. The sublime, in the classic definition, refers to the terror one feels in the face of the ineffable. Beauty, meanwhile, refers to visceral, somatic pleasure rooted in our ability to symbolize the external world. Burke puts it bluntly enough: “the *threat* is the basis for beauty” (*PLF* 61). Here, Burke refers to what has been, since the eighteenth century, the preferred sense of the sublime: the terrifying, the threatening. In this chapter, I demonstrate how Burke supplants beauty—the common starting point for analyzing the motivations of a literary work—with the sublime (*PLF* 64). It is, along with what Burke calls “the ridiculous,” one of the two essential forms of “equipment for living” (61). Together, these two forms get to the root of symbolic action. “Should we not begin,” asks Burke, “with this as our way into the subject—treating all other manifestations of symbolic action as *attenuated variants* of pious awe (the sublime) and impious rebellion (the ridiculous)?” (62). This synthesis of the concepts “equipment for living” and “piety and impiety” suggests, I argue, a second unique quality of the Burkean sublime: its essentially social—and thus, rhetorical—nature. Burke’s sublime response in particular hinges on what Burke calls “collaborative expectancy,” the idea that the audience must feel like it has a hand in creating the response. Indeed, the sublime response demands that audience and rhetor/poet alike invent. Their collaboration is how Burke gets from the sublime to the beautiful. Both audience and poet derive pleasure from the “nervous loquaciousness” that unites all symbol-using animals.

Perhaps even more so than the tonal transformations and joycing I explicated in chapter two, Burke’s theory of the sublime is a largely unexamined aspect of his philosophy of language. With one exception—George A. Shipley’s article “Longinus, Two Burkes, Tom Paine, and *Don Quixote*: On the Sublime...and the Ridiculous”—I am the only one that I know of studying Kenneth Burke’s sublime. Such a gap in Burke scholarship seems all the more remarkable given

the sublime's important place in the history of rhetoric. As I illustrate below, Longinus's foundational statement on the sublime is shot-through with rhetoric. Usually translated as *On Sublimity* or *On the Sublime*, Longinus's *Peri Hupsous* most likely appeared sometime during the first or third century A.D.³⁷ Moreover, one of Longinus's primary achievements in this work, argues Ned O'Gorman, is that it frees rhetoric from the question of legitimation by advancing what might called a kind of rhetoric for rhetoric's sake (72). Deviating from previous legitimation efforts by Gorgias, Aristotle, Isocrates, and Cicero, Longinus's treatise on the sublime, O'Gorman argues, "marks a point within the trajectory of the rhetoric of rhetoric where the art of rhetoric is presented as possessing its own end and essence, freeing it from subordination and, like Kant's and Lyotard's notions of the sublime, external judgment" (72). Ultimately, though, O'Gorman claims that doing away with the question of rhetoric's legitimacy isn't a good thing, for in so doing, Longinus idealizes and "[memorializes]," and, thus, "[loses]" rhetoric (85). That is to say, for O'Gorman, Longinus's push to "heighten" rhetoric's status by lifting it out of the domain of *techne* only serves to make rhetoric inaccessible and, worse yet, irrelevant.

John Poulakos's examination of the emergence of aesthetics as a discipline in the 18th century—and of the (largely unacknowledged) debt early aesthetic theorists Alexander Baumgarten and Immanuel Kant owed rhetoric—reveals a somewhat analogous situation in which rhetoric is diminished, except that in this case rhetorical principles are employed in the service of freeing aesthetics, not rhetoric, from legitimation. At the time, Poulakos explains, German philosophy dealt in rationalism. However, this rationalism "concerned itself with innate ideas and the geometrical method" and therefore "had little room for Baumgarten's interest in *ta aistheta* (the materials of sense perception) or Kant's interest in common sense and judgments of

taste” (335). According to Poulakos, when aesthetics entered the picture, it upset philosophy’s dominance by allowing that knowledge could come from individuals and their interactions rather than from reason alone (337). Baumgarten and Kant alike, Poulakos contends, “were looking beyond the tenets of rationalism,” and “their search points us in the direction of the rhetorical tradition. If we follow that path, we will discover that a great deal of the aesthetics of the eighteenth century is indebted to rhetoric” (335). Yet, this important role in the development of aesthetics did not signal a return for rhetoric; as Poulakos tells it, rhetoric’s place as the domain of aesthetics was usurped by poetics (337). And as aesthetics became the area of inquiry that looked “beyond the tenets of rationalism,” it also became the new home for the sublime, which found new life in the 18th century thanks to Edmund Burke and Kant.

Perhaps this fraught relationship between rhetoric and aesthetics is why, since the so-called linguistic turn and the reinvigoration of rhetoric as a scholarly discipline in the 1960s, the sublime has received a somewhat spotty treatment from rhetoricians. Perhaps the sublime—an experience in which one confronts, as Lyotard puts it, “unpresentable” or, as Nathan Stormer writes, that which is “beyond representation” (213), in other words, that which threatens the efficacy of discourse—poses too much of a threat to rhetoric, a discipline that is, traditionally, concerned with persuasive, instrumental discourse rather than discourse pushed to its limits. Of course, it doesn’t have to be this way. Studies of the relationship between rhetoric and the sublime by Thora Iln Bayer (2009), Stephen H. Browne (1988), Michael Duncan (2011), Ned O’Gorman (2004 and 2008), Christine Oravec (1981), Chrisine M. Skolink (2003), Stormer (2004), and Barbara Warnick (1990), though infrequent, attest to the interest that the sublime holds for rhetoricians, even if some of these authors perpetuate the distance between rhetoric and the sublime. Duncan, in his call for a shift away from an exclusively sound-based approach to

studying prose rhythm (an approach, he tells us, which has failed scholars again and again [587])³⁸ and toward what he calls “multisensory” perspective, decries what he sees as “bias toward a sublime,” a tendency to elevate the literary over the mundane (594).

More tellingly, Oravec claims that John Muir’s “ability to convert essentially passive aesthetic responses into pragmatic action represents [a] *unique persuasive accomplishment*” (246; my emphasis). Oravec’s statement here is indicative of the separation between the sublime and rhetoric. Even though, to her credit, she later calls “the sublime response” a “popular aesthetic and rhetorical effect” (248), in the end she dubs the sublime a “merely passive experience” that Muir must “[move] readers beyond” (256). The sublime in Oravec’s reading is but part of a larger rhetorical strategy. One aim of the present chapter is to extend the intermittent conversation happening around rhetoric and the sublime by not only calling attention to Burke’s treatment of the sublime as a rhetorical matter, but also by presenting rhetoric as fundamentally linked to the sublime experience. For Burke, the sublime *moves* us. Thus, a close look at “Beauty and the Sublime” reveals that for Burke aesthetics and rhetoric are “reciprocal” terms.³⁹ In this sense, Burke’s treatment of the sublime in *PLF* offers another way into what Gregory Clark calls Burke’s “rhetorical aesthetic” (“A Child Born” 254).

In chapter two, I employed the Burkean critical method of charting, tracing related terms across the selections mentioned in the footnote, as well as in other selections from Burke’s *oeuvre*. Likewise in this chapter, I will chart the associated terms across Burke’s *oeuvre* while focusing primarily on *PLF*. This chapter is in fact largely a close reading of “Beauty and the Sublime,” examining this section’s development from the way Burke situates himself within a broader aesthetic tradition and on through his discussions of equipment for living and poetry as medicine before he finally revisits the concealed offense. This final move on Burke’s part

prompts me to revisit the concealed offense in light of Burke's theory of the sublime. As I detailed in chapter two, tonal transformations and joycing, paradoxically, represent the un(re)presentable; they signal, through discourse, the limits of (polite) discourse. In so doing, tonal transformations provide rhetoricians with a moment in which "moving" an audience extends beyond the rational argument and into the realm of the sublime and the ridiculous. Notably, tonal transformations and joycing serve as examples of these essential responses, as examples of language reaches beyond itself, even when it's unable to adequately symbolize that "beyond." Burke's treatment of the sublime, I argue, suggests that it's in this reaching beyond to what's offensive, out of bounds, and ultimately unrepresentable that we find pleasure—which is to say, beauty—in language, that language becomes "moving."

(I KANT GET NO) REPRESENTATION: A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SUBLIME

Burke begins "Beauty and the Sublime" with an illustration that beauty can be both pleasing and terrifying. He makes this point by emphasizing context. A "lozenge-like design on a cake" is pleasing, he claims, while the same design on the back of a rattlesnake is "sinister," "ominous," or "dangerously fascinating" (60). But in either case, he says, the design is beautiful. He follows this up with a somewhat humorous point about how the same "lozenge-like design" on a woman's scarf would likewise be beautiful, but the more specific associations, be they with pleasantness or terror, would very much depend on "our attitude towards the woman herself (whether we thought of her as 'likable' or 'fascinating')" (60). Already, in the first paragraph of this section, Burke presents his challenge to what he goes on to call the "obscuring" of beauty "in much aesthetic theory of the nineteenth century," obscured, he claims, "because it tended to start from notions of *decoration* rather than from notions of the *sublime*" (60; emphasis in the original). The target of Burke's challenge is undoubtedly the very "art for art's sake"

aestheticism he railed against in *Counter-statement* (hereafter, *CS*).⁴⁰ And his definition of “symbolic action” as a strategy for dealing with a situation at the outset of *PLF* reinforces this view (1). The example of the lozenge-like design illustrates of the importance of this situation-strategy relationship in shaping our aesthetic judgments. Throughout *PLF*, the situation-strategy dialectic plays an important role. It refers to the relationship between the world at large (the situation) and the poetic act as a strategy for “encompassing” that situation. “These strategies,” Burke writes at the outset of *PLF*, “size up the situations, name their structure and outstanding ingredients, and name them in a way that contains an attitude toward them” (1).

One might reasonably ask, “If what Burke is really trying to do here is emphasize the situation-strategy relationship, then why refer to the sublime at all?” Seeking an answer to this question compels us to look beyond the nineteenth century and back to the birth of aesthetics in the eighteenth century, as well as to the origins of the sublime in the *Peri Hupsous* by pseudo-Longinus. There, we find a variety of emphases. In the *Peri Hupsous*, the sublime denotes a link between rhetoric and aesthetics. In Edmund Burke’s estimation, the sublime terrifies us. And in Kant’s formulation, the sublime refers to an encounter with the “unpresentable.” Burke’s version of the sublime both draws on and deviates from these previous theories. And so, I begin by briefly outlining that tradition.

Commonplace among those writers interested in the historical development of the sublime is that the concept can be traced back to the text *Peri Hupsous* is attributed to a Greek rhetorician named Longinus (Ashfield and de Bolla 14, Costelloe 3, Heath 11, Nicolson 29, Pieters and Madelein 580, Shaw 12). For Longinus, “Sublimity is a kind of eminence or excellence of discourse,” (347) and this “eminence or excellence” can be traced to five sources: (1) the “Power to conceive of great thoughts” (that is to say, “words will be great if thoughts are

weighty”); (2) “strong and inspired emotion”; (3) the use of figures; (4) “Noble diction”; and (5) “dignified and elevated word arrangement” (350). Although scholars would later characterize Longinus’s version of the sublime as “rhetorical” (see below), Longinus himself saw the sublime as something beyond mere persuasion. Persuasion, he argued, can be resisted. But the sublime “produces ecstasy,” which through “the combination of wonder and astonishment always proves superior to the merely persuasive and pleasant” (347). In other words, Longinus’s sublime is one that transcends the usefulness of a purely functional rhetoric. “This is because,” Longinus argues, “persuasion on the whole is something we can control, whereas amazement and wonder exert invincible power and force and get the better of every hearer” (347). O’Gorman’s close reading of Longinus’s text emphasizes how the sublime extends beyond “mere rhetoric.” O’Gorman argues that “Longinus moves rhetoric beyond the traditions of character and persuasion, traditions which directly or indirectly bind rhetoric to external criteria for judgment, and brings rhetoric to autonomy” (75). This autonomy results in a kind of rhetoric for rhetoric’s sake, a rhetoric that can be appreciated in-and-of-itself rather than as an instrument of persuasion. And because it is not limited to persuasion, rhetoric can now be the source of “ecstasy” (O’Gorman “Longinus” 82).

Notably, Burke picks up on this distinction between persuasion and ecstasy. In *RM*, he writes asks whether Longinus’s term *sublime* “come[s] close to what we mean by ‘moving,’ not in the rhetorical sense, of moving an audience to a decision, but as when we say of a poem, ‘How moving!’” (65). Burke’s treatment of Longinus thus reveals an attention to something more than rhetorical. Unlike so many of those scholars of the sublime tradition who distinguish between Longinus’s so-called rhetorical sublime and the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century “natural”

sublime, Burke recognizes Longinus's sublime on its own terms: the sublime of the *Peri Hupsous* is something much more than "mere rhetoric."

In comparing Longinus's characterization of the sublime to the way a poem "moves" us, Burke situates this initial discourse on the sublime within the domain of aesthetics rather than rhetoric. Reinforcing this view is the way Burke introduces his point on Longinus. At this point in *RM*, Burke is describing formal appeal.⁴¹ He writes,

As for the purely formal kinds of appeal which we previously mentioned when trying to show how they involve the principle of identification, their universal nature makes it particularly easy to shift them from rhetoric to poetic. Thus, viewing even tendentious oratory from the standpoint of literary appreciation rather than in terms of its use, Longinus analyzes "sublimity" of effect *in and for itself*. (65; my emphasis)

In other words, Burke recognizes that Longinus is talking about something "more than" rhetoric, and this very "more than rhetoric" is "poetic," or, as I will argue, "aesthetic" language used for its own sake. (Poetics and aesthetics go together for Burke.) Burke goes on to mildly criticize the extent to which rhetoricians during the classical era catalogued all the different forms of speech. ("You can't possibly make a statement without its falling into some sort of pattern," he writes [65].) But more notable is what he says in the next paragraph, which I'm quoting here at length:

The rhetorical devices can become obtrusive, sheer decadent decoration (as during the era of the "second sophistic" in Rome); but we have offered reasons for believing that even the most ostentatious of them arose out of *great functional urgency*. When pagan rhetoric grew weak, such verbal exercising could be sought for itself alone, for its appeal as a display of virtuosity. Thus, ironically, the

splendidly enthusiastic analyses of Longinus (“enthusiasm” is one of his words) marked a step towards this very decay. But Augustine, who had been trained in pagan rhetoric prior to his conversion, reinfused many of the decaying forms with the zeal of the Christian persuasion. (66; my emphasis)

What this passage indicates, I think, is the way Burke blurs the lines between rhetoric and poetic without necessarily favoring one or the other.⁴² In Longinus’s sublime, he finds an attempt to go beyond rhetoric and into the poetic, thereby suggesting that the two concepts exist along a “graded series” of terms that name the different uses of language.⁴³ Here, Burke associates *rhetoric* with use and purpose, and he associates *poetic* with a lack of purpose, with something done for its own sake. And yet in this passage and elsewhere,⁴⁴ it is also clear that Burke intends to show how these two apparently distinct realms influence one another: what is now “decadent decoration” was once functional.⁴⁵ In sum, it seems reasonable to suggest that Burke would locate both rhetorical and aesthetic aims within Longinus’s concept of the sublime.⁴⁶

The sublime as we know it today really came into its own during the eighteenth century after Nicholas Boileau translated and added commentary to the *Peri Hupsous* in 1674. During the 18th century, there was a shift away from the so-called “rhetorical sublime” of Longinus (who, after all, was interested in sublime discourse) and towards the so-called “natural” sublime (Pieters and Madelein 581), which focused more on natural scenes and on the emotions evoked by such scenes than it did on language itself.⁴⁷ Pieters and Madelein describe this shift as a “turning inward of the sublime—the sublime being considered an experience of the subject rather than as a quality inherent in one or other [sic] object” (581). It is this “inward,” “natural,” and ultimately *aesthetic* sublime that appears in classic statements by Edmund Burke and Kant.

Edmund Burke delivered what was perhaps the first classic statement on the “natural” sublime. In his 1757 work *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, Burke associates the sublime, not just with the natural world but with the pain and terror evoked by the natural world. “Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror,” he writes, “is a source of the sublime; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling” (549). Unlike Longinus’s version, which deals with “strong and inspired emotion” more generally, Edmund Burke’s sublime exists solely in the realm of the painful. And pain, for Burke, is more powerful than pleasure, which is associated with the beautiful. George A. Shipley writes that for Edmund Burke, “The artist who intends to cause a response that is sublime . . . had best attend to the properties of the sublime that occurs [sic] naturally and distinguish those from the properties of the naturally beautiful” (57). According to Shipley, Edmund Burke thought that “the artist...must never forget the distinction,” even if “often the differences are blurred” (58). Thus, in his *Enquiry*, Burke establishes an oppositional relationship between the beautiful and the sublime, an oppositional relationship echoed in both Kant’s and Lyotard’s treatments of the sublime.

Kant’s version of the sublime is similar to Edmund Burke’s in that it opposes beauty and the sublime. But for Kant this opposition is based on a different line of reasoning. Burke aligns beauty with pleasure and the sublime with pain. For Kant, however, the sublime can actually be a source of pleasure, whereas beauty must be “disinterested.” However, the sublime pleasure that Kant describes is a particular kind of pleasure, a pleasure that, as Lyotard explains it, “derives from pain” (“Answering” 77). For Kant, beauty (in its most simplistic formulation) refers to the happy correspondence between one’s Imagination and one’s Reason or Ideas, between what we

can sense (both physically and mentally) in the world and what we can think about that world, respectively. In the beautiful, Image and Idea correspond harmoniously. The sublime, on the other hand, refers to a painful disconnect between one's Imagination (home to the Image) and one's Reason (home to the Idea). More specifically, the sublime refers to an experience in which something we sense that is of great size (say, a mountain range) inspires us to "think big" (about "big ideas" like eternity, death, or even the size of the Earth) which in turn causes us to realize that the thing we've sensed is only a small part of the whole we're thinking about. We then subsequently realize that in fact the thing we're thinking about can't be imagined. There is no Image that corresponds with the Idea. The Kantian sublime, then, refers to the unrepresentable, the ineffable:

For just as, when we judge the beautiful, imagination and *understanding* give rise to a subjective purposiveness of the mental powers by their *accordance*, so do imagination and *reason* here give rise to such a purposiveness by their *conflict*, namely, to a feeling that we have a pure and independent reason, or a power for estimating magnitude, whose superiority cannot be made intuitable by anything other than the inadequacy of that power which in exhibiting magnitudes (of sensible objects) is itself unbound. (526)

Painful though it may be, the sublime experience also causes us to appreciate the power of our reason. And in this way, the sublime for Kant is also pleasurable. Thus, Kant writes that "we like to call these objects sublime because they raise the soul's fortitude above its usual middle range and allow us to discover in ourselves an ability to resist which is of a quite different kind, and which gives us the courage [to believe] that we could be a match for nature's seeming omnipotence" (527).

The inward, natural, aesthetic sublime also appears in the postmodern appropriation by Lyotard. Lyotard's version of the sublime owes a great deal to Kant's. In fact, Lyotard's sublime is the Kantian sublime. Or, rather, the Kantian sublime, which he likens to "Nietzschean perspectivalism," provides Lyotard with the attitude most relevant to the postmodern moment: "it is in the aesthetic of the sublime modern art (including literature) finds its impetus and the logic of avant-garde's finds its axioms" ("Answering" 77). This doesn't bode well for the beautiful. In "Answering the Question: What is Postmodernism," Lyotard argues that the postmodern moment is characterized by crisis of representation in art; "the modern aesthetic question," he writes, "is not 'What is beautiful?' but 'What can be said to be art (and literature)?" (75). Art, then, no longer concerns itself with "reactionary" aesthetic concerns like "the established rules of the beautiful," as Lyotard puts it (75). Rather, in an era defined by what Lyotard calls "a shattering of belief" and the "discovery of the 'lack of reality' of reality," art takes as its starting point the fact that its subject matter is unrepresentable (77). This necessitates an engagement with the sublime. For Lyotard, the sublime refers to "Ideas of which no presentation is possible. Therefore, they impart no knowledge about reality (experience); they also prevent the free union of the faculties which gives rise to the sentiment of the beautiful; and they prevent the formation and the stabilization of taste. They can be said to be unrepresentable" (78). Postmodern art in particular (aka in Lyotard's essay as avant-garde or experimental art) accesses the unrepresentable in both form and content, unlike modern art, in which the unrepresentable is there, but only as content. That is to say, postmodern art (exemplified for Lyotard in the work of James Joyce, as it turns out) enacts the unrepresentable, whereas modern art (exemplified in Proust), merely describes it (80). Indeed, Lyotard could almost be describing tonal transformations when he writes that, "Joyce allows the unrepresentable to become perceptible in his writing itself, in the signifier" (80).

In short, Lyotard posits the sublime as a response to the conformist tendencies in art represented by the beautiful.

My goal in this brief overview of the history of the sublime has been to offer a sort of “greatest-hits” of the sublime. Key themes emerge over the course of the sublime’s history: a marriage of rhetoric and poetry in Longinus, the association of the sublime with terror in Edmund Burke, and a disconnect between Image and Idea in Kant. Each one of these themes will pop up again in the subsequent examination of Kenneth Burke’s sublime. For the moment, however, I would like to call attention to a key feature of the sublime in both Edmund Burke’s and Kant’s formulations: the separation of the sublime and the beautiful. According to Kenneth Burke, viewing these ideas as distinct (as opposed to related) is what resulted in the “obscuring” of beauty in the 19th century (*PLF* 60). His theory about why beauty and the sublime were separated in the first place is that “aesthetic theorizing was largely done *by* people in comfortable situations *for* people in comfortable situations” (60-1). This mutual comfort gave rise, in Burke’s estimation, to an overemphasis on decoration and an under-emphasis on the sublime, which in turn led to a narrow understanding of art (literature in particular) and its social purpose. At the outset of the essay “The Philosophy of Literary Form,” Burke introduces his premise that “Critical and imaginative works are answers to questions posed by the situation in which they arose. They are not merely answers,” he qualifies, “they are *strategic* answers, *stylized* answers” (1). Near the end of “Beauty and the Sublime,” Burke revisits the situation-strategy idea, albeit with some new key terms. “Confronting the poetic act in terms of the sublime and the ridiculous, we are disposed to think of the issue *in terms of a situation and a strategy for confronting or encompassing that situation*, a scene and an act, with each possessing its own genius, but the two fields interwoven,” he writes, whereas beginning with beauty means focusing exclusively, and

thus narrowly, on the scene (64). What we forget in the process, he argues, is that “poetry is produced for purposes of comfort, as part of the *conconsolatio philosophiae*. It is undertaken as *equipment for living*, as a ritualistic way of arming us to confront perplexities and risks. It would *protect us*” (64). Burke does not equate beauty with the sublime. Rather, he takes them together as different starting points along a graded series. And it’s the sublime (along with the ridiculous) which is the more appropriate starting point for understanding the literary act, for it’s from this starting point that we get to see that the poem is an act, a response to a specific situation, in short, as equipment for living. Starting from beauty, in other words, is starting too far down the line. (This is also probably a slight jab at the New Critics as well). In order to really “get” a poem, to truly understand its form, that form must be seen in light of the situation to which it responds. In this sense, beauty depends on the sublime.

So why discuss this situation-strategy relationship in terms of the sublime, as Burke does right at midpoint of “The Philosophy of Literary Form”? And why “equipment for living”? What changes when we view the situation-strategy relationship in terms of the sublime? In the following section, I examine Burke’s essay “Literature as Equipment for Living,” his classic statement on the subject, highlighting what I take to be the essay’s emphasis on the rhetorical value of poetry. Then, I examine how Burke’s theorization of the sublime refers to a very special kind of equipment for living.

EQUIPMENT FOR LIVING

By “equipment for living,” Burke means a strategy for dealing with a given situation. He writes in the essay “Literature as Equipment for Living” that “Art forms like ‘tragedy’ or ‘comedy’ or ‘satire’ would be treated as *equipments for living* that size up situations in various ways” (PLF 304). In other words, literature and other art forms offer us ways of responding to

the situations in which we find ourselves. Thus Burke begins this much-cited essay by defining what he's doing "as a *sociological* criticism of literature" (*PLF* 293). He then quickly moves on to a discussion of proverbs in order to get at the function of literature more generally, and he lists the defining characteristics of proverbs with a reference to their medicinal qualities: "You will note, I think, that there is no 'pure' literature here. Everything is 'medicine'" (293). This a bold statement, for it cements language's connection to the world it names, thereby setting Burke apart from his purely "esthete" contemporaries.⁴⁸ "Proverbs are designed for consolation or vengeance, for admonition or exhortation, for foretelling," he continues. "Or they name typical recurrent situations. That is, people find a certain social relationship recurring so frequently that they must 'have a word for it'" (293), and he goes on to discuss the clichéd and somewhat controversial example of Eskimos having many, many words for snow.⁴⁹ Burke's perhaps questionable example aside, his point is significant: "I submit that such naming is done, not for the sheer glory of the thing, but because of its bearing upon human welfare. A different name for snow implies a different kind of hunt. Some names for snow imply that one should not hunt at all" (294). What Burke emphasizes here is the interplay between strategy and situation. Words become medicinal by "bearing upon human welfare," which is to say by going out into world and returning equipped to help humans deal with "recurrent situations."

The "Literature as Equipment for Living" essay is, George and Selzer tell us, "one of [Burke's] best known" (199). It's not surprising, then, that the essay has been given numerous treatments by critics. But before we get to those treatments, let me begin by way of a negative example, turning to a recent *New York Times Book Review* discussion of the usefulness of literature. There, one finds a misguided characterization of "equipment for living" by Adam Kirsch. I say, "misguided," because Kirsch's opinion piece reads Burke's essay way too straight,

situating, as it does, “equipment” on the usefulness side of a usefulness-aesthetic opposition. “To reduce literature to its usefulness is to miss the verbal texture, the excess, the sheer pleasure of word and sound, that make it literature in the first place,” writes Kirsch. “The idea of literature as equipment for living seems puritanically utilitarian—as if you were to listen to a symphony in order to sharpen your hearing, or look at a painting to improve your vision” (31). In so doing, he misses the essay’s send-up of the notion of usefulness. As Stephen Bygrave notes, “The title [of the essay ‘Literature as Equipment for Living’] is of course a parody of self-help (or ‘Personal Growth’) manuals like the one Burke cites as ‘How to buy friends and bamboozle oneself and other people’” (31). But Burke isn’t just decrying usefulness, as Kirsch does. He’s asking us to rethink what we deem useful in the first place. In *PC*, Burke has this to say about poetic usefulness:

In the poetic or humane sense, utility has a much broader range than is suggested by the restrictions which the industrial economist places upon the term. It contains elements of self-interference which the cult of dominance, as preserved and fostered by current institutions, has no place for. It implies a kind of abnegation and resignation which our combative society would probably describe as mere cowardice. It is in the truest sense *active*, but its acts move toward the *participant*, rather than the *militant*, end of the combat-action-coöperation spectrum. (*PC* 269)

Usefulness here is presented as something that transcends mere economics. Freed from “the restrictions” of “the industrial economist,” usefulness takes on activist and even revolutionary connotations. Positing literature as *equipment*, and thus as “useful,” Burke calls for a view of utility as something apart from the purely (“puritanically”) instrumental, or as Burke labels it here, “industrial,” a term we might chart to the term “equipment” that Burke uses in his later

essay. Usefulness for Burke extends beyond solely utilitarian aims like sharpening our hearing or improving our eyesight.⁵⁰ In his reorientation of the concept, usefulness names “recurrent situations,” and in so doing, it becomes “medicine” and “has a bearing upon human welfare,” as he puts in the “Equipment” essay.

Having misunderstood the playfulness of the essay’s title, Kirsch also seems to miss out on Burke’s collapsing of the use value-aesthetic opposition.⁵¹ In fact, what “equipment for living” actually refers to is a kind of recognition of the aesthetic as useful. The essay is called, as John McGowan points out, “Literature *as* Equipment” because it presents what Burke hopes will happen, through his advocacy. “The ‘as’ modulates the being claim made,” writes McGowan. “Instead of insisting that this is what literature is, Burke is saying, ‘Let’s consider what happens when we take literature as intimately involved in everyday practices’” (144). To put it another way, Burke isn’t telling us what literature has to be; he’s telling us what it could be. He’s telling us that literature can be useful.

If it is to be so useful, however, the idea of *literature* must be expanded. Thus, when making the leap from proverbs to literature, Burke doesn’t jump into the literary canon, at least not initially. Initially, he writes about the accuracy of strategies and their efficacy in the real world, turning to the popularity of “inspirational literature” to make his point. Rather than actually making people successful in real life, which “would be very difficult, full of many disillusioning difficulties,” Burke writes, “*The reading of a book on the attaining of success is in itself the symbolic attaining of that success. It is while they read that these readers are succeeding...* The lure of the book resides in the fact that the reader, while reading it, is then living in the aura of success. What he wants is *easy* success; and he gets it in symbolic form by the mere reading itself” (299). This would seem to place Burke firmly on the strategy side of the

strategy-situation divide. He even seems to locate a kind of self-contained aesthetic experience in the hypothetical reader's encounter with inspirational literature and its "aura of success." But in fact, Burke attributes the popularity of inspirational literature to "an era of confusion like our own" (299). The hypothetical reader is only receptive to the easy symbolic success offered by the book because of "a need for consolation" born of a specific situation (298-9). The symbolic success "works" as a reorientation of the reader's relationship to the situation. This reorientation comes not in spite of the fact that "readers make no serious attempt to apply the book's recipes," but because of it (299). Through the act of reading, Burke suggests, readers absorb a new consoling vision of the situation they confront. The inspirational literature doesn't just name the situation. It names the situation in such a way as to offer these readers comfort through vicarious success. At the same time, the readers' confusing situation calls for such "easy" comfort. What Burke is getting at here is the notion that situation and strategy are reciprocal and mutually influential, as motion is to action, respectively.⁵² More specifically, the strategy, responding to and thus shaped by a particular situation, can in turn shape our attitude toward that situation. Situation and strategy act upon one another.

Thus, the "Equipment" essay isn't just about advocacy on behalf of literature (an idea Burke complicates and dismantles), but on behalf of a particular vision of language as symbolic action, a vision in which act and scene, strategy and situation, are inextricably linked. All of which is to say that Burke is pointing out literature's utility, but in so doing, he's calling on us to take a certain position when it comes to language, to view language as doing something in a way that just isn't allowed by the semantic, mechanistic view. Language, in this view, doesn't simply name the world at a remove. Language is inextricably part of that world. This is akin to Henderson's claim that in symbolic action, "the intrinsic and extrinsic are mutually dependent"

(185). And yet, at the same time, the poetic view that Burke advocates in “Semantic and Poetic Meaning” points to the way in which language does not correspond to the things it names. In this view, language can be “reasonable or unreasonable . . . adequate . . . or . . . inadequate,” (143) but “it cannot be disposed of on the true-or-false basis” (144).

It is in this context that Burke writes, in “Beauty and the Sublime,” that “poetry is produced for purposes of comfort, as part of the *consolatio philosophiae*”; that “It is undertaken as equipment for living, as a ritualistic way of arming us to confront perplexities and risks;” and that “It would protect us” (*PLF* 61). Proceeding dialectically, Burke reasons that “implicit in the idea of protection there is the idea of something to be *protected against*” and “to analyze the element of *comfort* in beauty, without false emphasis . . . we include also, as an important aspect of the recipe, the element of *discomfort* (actual or threatened) for which the poetry is ‘medicine,’ therapeutic or prophylactic” (61). He even goes so far as to say that “if we retraced the course of aesthetic speculation, until we came to its earlier mode, we should get a much more accurate description of what is going on in poetry” (61). Burke doesn’t specify any more about this “earlier mode,” but what he means by “a much more accurate” view of poetry is pretty clear. The accurate view of poetry is that which takes into account poetry’s dual elements of comfort and discomfort, which necessarily exist together. The sublime and its impious counterpart the ridiculous provide for Burke this much more accurate view of poetry as “equipment for living.” As we shall see, by choosing the terms *sublime* and *ridiculous* as signifiers linked to an “earlier” and “much more accurate” view of poetry, Burke is also looking towards a view of poetry beyond a specific situations, towards a view of poetry *in toto*.

ENCOMPASSING THE ABYSS, OR, REPRESENTING THE “UNPRESENTABLE”

Thus far I have attempted to show that “equipment for living” and the sublime are, for Burke, two ways of describing the situation-strategy relationship. Both are ways in which symbol users make strategic sense of their situations. The sublime and its counterpart the ridiculous highlight the interplay of comfort and discomfort at the heart of the situation-strategy relationship. Moving forward, I document the various forms of situational “discomfort” utilized by Burke and others who’ve written about “equipment for living.” I aim to illustrate that by characterizing such discomfort in terms of the sublime (and the ridiculous), Burke links discomfort to the unrepresentable, that which cannot be captured by symbolic action.

Inaugurating the critical interest in “equipment for living,” Barry Brummett locates a specific example of “equipment for living” in the form of horror movies (“Electric”). Subsequent critics have followed suit, locating their own examples of “equipment” in Milton’s poetry (Zacharias); criticism (Jay, Ivie); Theory (McLaughlin); political advertising (Smith and Johnston); television (Mahan-Hays and Aden, Ott); video games (Gee);⁵³ satire (Shouse); and, of course, literature (Maguire,⁵⁴ McGowan)⁵⁵. These applications of Burke’s idea illustrate just how variegated the possible “equipment” can be. But what of the situations to which such variegated strategies respond? In spite of such variety of equipment, many of these critics seem to agree that the role of “equipment” is to make the chaos of the reality seem more orderly. In their article on the television shows *Supernanny* and *The Dog Whisperer*, Lisa Glebatis Perks and Amanda Davis Gatchett describe “equipment for living” as a “transformation from disorder to order” (812). Likewise, Mark Lawrence McPhail writes that Burke’s notion of “equipment for living” “provides a vehicle for continuity and clarity in the face of constantly changing historical circumstances.” It is, like rhetoric, “a ‘way’ through which human beings give coherence to

symbolic and material phenomena” (97). Brummett sees agents constructing mosaics so as to help them order their personal and public lives, to make sense of the mess of ‘bits’ they find themselves in every day (*Rhetorical*). Laura Herrman calls “equipment for living” the answers to questions presented by “a hitherto unknown situation.”

For these critics, “equipment for living” is about reducing disorder and creating order. Their readings of the “equipment” idea are revealing for the glimpse of the situation they afford, however vague. In their analyses, these critics tend to emphasize order, and this is perhaps due to the difficulty of describing this situation in the first place. Reading their various references to the imposition of order onto chaos brings to mind the final image in *PC*, that of the “staggering disproportion between man and no-man, . . . 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” (272). This stark image, with its reference to “man and no-man,” appears to capture the most fundamental situation-strategy, motion-action relationship. And, notably, it’s a sublime image, even if Burke doesn’t put it this way. In “Beauty and the Sublime,” however, Burke does note similarly sublime “vastness of magnitude, power, or distance, disproportionate to ourselves” (*PLF* 61). And it’s this situation—which, in “Beauty and the Sublime,” Burke links to “acts of God,” the Dust Bowl, war, earthquakes, and a Martian invasion, all chaotic situations—that prompt sublime and ridiculous responses (61-2).

That Burke would link the human drive to symbol use to discomfort with recourse to the sublime (be it the sublime image in *PC* or the more overt link in “Beauty and the Sublime”) suggests that his notion of the sublime is to some extent in line with that of Edmund Burke, who, as we saw above, helped popularize the notion of the sublime as an experience of terror. That Burke would associate such terror with the abyss suggests that his notion of the sublime is in line

with that of Kant. As we saw above, Kant's sublime is the source of terror when the Imagination fails to devise an appropriate representation of the Idea. Kant's view holds on through the 19th century and into the 20th with Lyotard, who writes about the failure of reason and the introduction of the very Kantian-sounding *differend*, ". . . the unstable state and instant of language wherein something which must be able to be put into phrases cannot yet be . . . the human beings who thought they could use language as an instrument of communication, learn through the feeling of pain which accompanies silence (and of pleasure which accompanies the invention of a new idiom)" (*Differend* 13). In short, the crux of the sublime is the problem of representation. This is the case in Kant's sublime and in Lyotard's, and it is the case in Kenneth Burke's sublime too.

I've already spent some time in chapter two trying to describe the difficulty of depicting the realm beyond symbolic action, which is to say the difficulty of representation in general. There, following Debra Hawhee, I aligned the realm of what I am calling "more than" symbolic action (and what Hawhee calls "the edges of language" [157]) with Burke's term *motion*. I return to that effort here, in part to stress the difficulty (indeed, the impossibility) of ever *really* characterizing motion. Burke makes this pretty clear in his famous pseudo-Gorgian maxim from, *GM*: "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). Beyond symbolic action also lies reality—the realm of motion, and thus of non-meaning and the abyss.⁵⁶ And yet, we are compelled to access the abyss by way of symbolic action. Symbolic action inevitably shapes our perception of nonsymbolic motion. Our representations of reality, then, are always already "screened."

But knowing what we know about the interplay between situation and strategy, it stands to reason that motion—as the situation that prompts a strategic, symbolic response—is to a certain extent present in the symbolizing with which we represent it. In his forward to the second edition of *PLF* (reprinted in the third edition), Burke insists that “Only by knowing wholly about our ways with symbols can we become piously equipped to ask, not only in wonder but in great fear, just what may be the inexorable laws of non-symbolic motion which our symbolizing so often ‘transcends,’ sometimes to our ‘spiritual’ gain and sometimes to our great detriment” (xvi). Here, in yet another sublime image (motion should be approached with “piety,” “wonder,” and “fear”), Burke suggests that we can get at motion by way of symbolic action. Thus, while any conscious attention to reality and to motion necessitates symbolic overlay, in which we get what Kant calls the “Idea” of that reality, we can still access reality and motion, either “by knowing wholly about our ways with symbols” or firsthand, so to speak, in the physical sense through the “Image.” Somewhat counter-intuitively, that physical sense is both symbolic and nonsymbolic; it can be both mimesis and reality-in-itself. For Kant, this physicality is the Image’s limitation. He sees the Image as always limited in comparison to the Idea, for it can only ever represent a small part of what the Idea can encompass. For Kant, the pleasure of the sublime is the pleasure of recognizing, in the face of a limited imagination and a limited ability to *sense*, just how powerful our faculties of reason (home of the Idea) can be:

Hence the feeling of the sublime is a feeling of displeasure that arises from the imagination’s inadequacy, in an aesthetic estimation of magnitude, for an estimation by reason, but is at the same time also a pleasure, aroused by the fact that this very judgment namely, that even the greatest power of sensibility is

inadequate, is [itself] in harmony with rational ideas, insofar as striving toward them is still a law for us. (525)

But whereas Kant sees the problem of representation as a conflict between Image and Idea, Burke's interpretation of the problem of representation brings together Image and Idea. And, notably, in *RM*, Burke posits the term "poetic image" as a way of describing this combination. Whereas "'image' in Kant's sense would be quite close to Aristotle's kind: it would be perceived through the senses, and remembered or anticipated in the imagination," for Burke "The 'poetic' image . . . can *stand for* things that never were or never will be" (84). In other words, the poetic image does more than just sense or represent a limited reality; it transcends that limited sense of reality and represents something that is, strictly speaking, unrepresentable, an Idea.

When that Idea is itself of the unrepresentable, which is to say, of the abyss or some other terrifying situation, the Image that represents it becomes sublime: a representation of the unrepresentable. How is such a thing possible? One potential answer might be found in Burke's view of poetry as an inherently creative form of symbolic action. In her examination of Nietzsche's influence on Burke's thinking, Hawhee focuses on Burke's investment in poetry and the creativity to which it refers. Hawhee claims that "for Burke, poetry encompasses all creative acts" ("Burke and Nietzsche" 138). She contrasts Burke's position with the semanticist, mechanistic view of language: "If the mechanistic view denies the constructedness of nature and posits science as the art of discovering rather than creating reality, then, Nietzsche claims, it is the most deceptive view of all. A more apt interpretive scheme would be one that acknowledges its constructive powers and seeks to create. And who better to inhabit this perspective than the artist?" (140) From this perspective, poetic language is unique in its ability to create. It doesn't

simply name what is; it names what could be. And because poetic language has unique access to the space and place of invention, it is the language best suited to representing the unrepresentable.

In “Beauty and Sublime,” Burke makes it clear that the sublime and the problem of representation gets to the core of poetry. After noting “The story of Orpheus and his voyage to Hades has much to tell us about the ways of poetry,” he calls our attention to “a still more basic myth”: Perseus and Medusa (63). Citing this story, Burke reminds us that Perseus “could not face the serpent-headed monster without being turned to stone, but was immune to this danger if he observed it by reflection in a mirror” (63). Burke’s choice of example here is revealing. Perseus doesn’t confront just any situation. His situation, his reality, is “the serpent-headed monster” that he cannot confront directly. Outside of an indirect reflection of her, Medusa is literally “unrepresentable.” Though the *Idea* of her (in the Kantian sense) exists (for Perseus knows not to look), she cannot be *imagined* (again, in the Kantian sense), at least, except by way of some intermediary representation. Poetry, too, is always an indirect reference to whatever reality exists beyond its bounds:

The poet’s style, his form (a social idiom), is the mirror, enabling him to confront the risk, but by the protection of an indirect reflection. Begin with this, I suggest, and look at the many aspects of poetic expression as but departures from it, watered, or toned down, or farther from the center, but all best analyzed as attenuations of the sublime-ridiculous problem, rather than as idioms wholly disrelated [sic] to it. (63)

Seen in this light, poetry for Burke boils down to two essential responses to the “unrepresentable”: the pious, sublime response, or the impious, ridiculous response. The poet either confronts this “risk” with respect and terror or with humor and sophistication. In their secular attenuations, the

sublime and the ridiculous become “admiration and disobedience,” respectively; rather than encompassing such difficult-to-represent situations as “manifestations of the divine, natural, or astronomical powers,” they traffic in “kings and heroes, . . . commercial or parliamentary figures, insignia of social classes, and the like . . .” (62).⁵⁷ But by choosing the sublime as his starting point, so to speak, Burke implies that the central “risk” confronted by poetry is the “unpresentable.”

Burke’s explicit reason for introducing the terms *sublime* and *ridiculous* is to steer readers away from analyzing poetry from the standpoint of “beauty.” He writes that “by starting with ‘the sublime and the ridiculous,’ rather than with ‘beauty,’ you place yourself forthwith into the realm of the *act*, whereas ‘beauty’ turns out to be too *inert* in its connotations, leading us rather to overstress the *scene* in which the act takes place” (64). From the standpoint of “beauty,” poetry becomes a thing in itself and thus has no resonance in the real world. From this perspective, poetry is not an indirect reflection of anything, and, thus, it does not creatively encompass any particular situation. Burke aims to correct this “heretical [overemphasis],” to make us see poetry as active in the world (64). He writes, “Confronting the poetic act in terms of the sublime and the ridiculous, we are disposed to think of the issue *in terms of a situation and a strategy for confronting or encompassing that situation*, a scene and an act, with each possessing its own genius, but the two fields interwoven” (64). For Burke, a poem must display action, and it does so by reference to the situation that prompted such action. As equipment for living, a poem must likewise strategically confront or encompass the reader’s situation, something Burke makes clear at the very beginning of “PLF.” “The situations are real,” he writes; “the strategies for handling them have public content; and in so far as situations overlap from individual to individual, or from one historical period to another, the strategies possess universal relevance”

(1). Appearing almost right in the middle of “PLF,” Burke’s treatment of the sublime and the ridiculous as the two starting points for, as he puts it, “all other manifestations of symbolic action” suggests, in my estimation, that they are the two most universal strategies in the Burkean scheme (62). And the universality of these two strategies stems from their confrontation of the situation common to all symbol users: the problem of representation.

As we’ve seen, Burke links these two strategies—the sublime and the ridiculous—to piety and impiety, respectively. According to Burke’s strategy-scene dialectic, both the sublime and the ridiculous are inextricably linked to the risk of the unrepresentable. However, only one is “sublime,” and this sublimity is the result of taking this risk seriously. So on the one hand, the impious Dust Bowl farmers (in one of Burke’s examples) devise “courageous jests . . . to cancel off the dread of earthen clouds sifting through the cracks of their windows, into their rooms, into their very lungs and flesh” (61-2). Thus, they refuse the unrepresentable (though their refusal is, Burke implies, also an acknowledgement). Piety, on the other hand, can be observed in “the social phenomenon called ‘earthquake love,’ at the time of San Francisco’s disaster, when the whole city was for a time unified in brotherly exaltation by the common danger” (62). Unlike the Dust Bowl farmers, and unlike those impious city dwellers telling “humorous anecdotes following the tremor in New York a few years ago,” the San Franciscans did not refuse the unrepresentable (62). Instead, it became the *acknowledged* source of their unity. The sublime response acknowledges the representative limitations of symbolic action. As Joel Overall explains it, piety is for Burke a necessary component of moving audiences, for even those rhetors who aim to change an audience’s mind must “effectively ingratiate the pieties of their intended audience” (448). So even though Burke himself doesn’t make such an explicit connection, I think that the sublime’s pious foregrounding of these limitations is the source of the pleasure we take

in symbolic action. That is to say, while Kant claims that the pleasure we experience from the sublime comes from our reassurance in the strength of our reason, for Burke, sublime pleasure comes from pious attempts to represent the unrepresentable, representations that call to mind their own limitations as representations. In this sense, Burke's brand of sublime pleasure is closer to what Longinus refers to as "sublime" and to what Burke in his discussion of Longinus calls "moving" (*RM* 65) than it is to a celebration of our faculties of reason.

In calling attention to the "concealed offenses" hidden within the inoffensive language we use, tonal transformations and joycing acknowledge the limitations of language as a representative medium. In so doing, they display piety towards the unrepresentable. Yet, at the same time, tonal transformations and joycing both point to language's creative potential. Language, they suggest, often does more than we mean for it to do. As we saw in chapter two, it often strives to go beyond the confines of semantics. And due in part to the limits and affordances of its physical presence, it often succeeds in doing so.

ENDLESS MALADY

So far, I've examined the history of the sublime, highlighting its connection to the unrepresentable and, in Burke's work at least, to the concept "equipment for living" and to the inextricability of situation and strategy that this concept suggests. I've also pointed to Burke's association of the sublime with piety, which, in contrast to the ridiculous, foregrounds the unrepresentable. In what follows, I turn to the penultimate section of "Beauty and the Sublime," in which Burke revisits the idea of poetry as "equipment for living," only now he calls that "equipment" something else: medicine. In this context, the poet is "medicine man," and "it is only in so far as his situation overlaps upon our situation, that his strategy of encompassment is felt by us to be relevant" (64).

For readers familiar with Burke, this characterization of the poet as “medicine man” calls to mind Burke’s infamous use of the same term to describe Hitler. In “The Rhetoric of Hitler’s ‘Battle,’” he declares, “let us try . . . to discover what kind of ‘medicine’ this medicine-man has concocted, that we may know, with greater accuracy, exactly what to guard against” (*PLF* 191). However, that Burke would call poetry in general “medicine” and poets “medicine men” in “PLF,” an essay written after his review of *Mein Kampf*, indicates that he does not subscribe to a strictly negative view of “medicine.” To be sure, Burke deems Hitler “exasperating, even nauseating” (191) and then “sinister,” but he insists that the “book is the well of Nazi magic; crude magic, but effective.” Thus, he argues, “A people trained in pragmatism should want to inspect this magic” (192). The rhetoric Burke observes in Hitler’s book isn’t unique; it’s everywhere. This is the reason for its danger and its efficacy. And this is the reason that the sort of rhetoric Burke observes at work in *Mein Kampf* pops up elsewhere in Burke’s thinking. In Burke’s analysis, Hitler relies on such tried-and-true rhetorical moves as scapegoating, identification, and catharsis (see, especially, 202-3), moves that are readily observed in many other rhetorical situations. Thus, Burke comes to the conclusion that “we must make it apparent that Hitler appeals by relying upon a bastardization of fundamentally religious patterns of thought. In this,” he carefully adds, “if properly presented, there is no slight to religion. There is nothing in religion proper that requires a fascist state. There is much in religion, when misused, that does lead to a fascist state” (219). But let us get too hung up on the references to religion here. My point is not so much that poets, like Hitler, are medicine men. My point is that, in Burke’s estimation, medicine men and the medicine they offer can have palpable effects on the situations they encompass and the patients they treat. If anything, Hitler offers us an extreme case of a particularly effective brand of rhetoric.

For rhetoricians, Burke's references to "medicine" no doubt call to mind two famous moments from the history of rhetoric. In the first, Gorgias's "Encomium for Helen," the sophist compares language to a drug, thereby emphasizing the intoxicating power of language. "For just as different drugs dispel different secretions from the body, and some bring an end to disease and others to life," he argues, "so also in the case of speeches, some distress, others delight, some cause fear, others make hearers bold, some drug and bewitch the soul with a kind of evil persuasion" (46). Similarly, but more disparagingly, Socrates, in a key scene from Plato's *Gorgias*, opposes rhetoric and medicine, likening the former instead to cookery, which, rather than actually attending to and benefitting the body (as does medicine), "cares nothing for what is the best, but dangles what is most pleasant for the moment as a bait for folly, and deceives [the body] into thinking that she is of the highest value" (98). Rhetoric, like cookery, "is not an art, but a habitude, since it has no account to give of the real nature of the things it applies, and so cannot tell the cause of any of them" (98). Curiously, Burke claims that the medicine man poet "deals with 'poisons'" (65). But in making such a claim, he doesn't contradict Socrates's celebration of medicine over cookery, nor does he unknowingly align himself with Gorgias's characterization (pious though it may be) of language as an intoxicant. Instead, he claims that any food or medicine can be poison if taken in sufficient quantity ("if you do not think that bread is a poison, try eating a barrel of it," he suggests). The goal of the poet, then, is to enact a kind of homeopathy, "transforming poisons into medicines by attenuation of the dose" (65). Thus, on the one hand, "The poet, in his pious or tragic rôle, would immunize us by stylistically infecting us with the disease." On the other hand, "As we move towards the impious response, on the other hand, we get an 'allopathic' strategy of cure. We get the recourse to 'antidote'" (65). These two medicines, the homeopathic and the allopathic, correspond, respectively, to the sublime

acceptance and ridiculous refusal I examine at the end of the previous section. Poetry protects us either by infecting us with the “disease” or by giving us the tools to resist it. For Burke, infection is an important part of the sublime poetic experience. This suggests that pious, sublime poetry has “built in to it,” so to speak, the situation to which it responds. If poetry seems to transcend the situation from which it sprang, to leave the realm of the sublime and enter realm of the beautiful (in the Kantian sense, disinterested and universal), this is because the poet, as medicine man, is actually able to “infect” us with the uncomfortable situation we all share: the abyss and its generative power, a space known to rhetoricians as the *chōra*. The inextricability of situation and strategy suggests that successful strategies, strategies that comfort us, must—paradoxically—encompass that uncomfortable situation by presenting the unrepresentable.

The reference to medicine that begins this section of “Beauty and the Sublime” is significant in part due to the fact that it resonates with Burke’s similar characterizations of poetry elsewhere in “PLF.” In particular, there is an earlier discussion of the poetry-disease relationship, one that is worth quoting at length.

[T]he poet will naturally tend to write about that which most deeply engrosses him—and nothing more deeply engrosses a man than his *burdens*, including those of a physical nature, such as disease. We win by capitalizing on our debts, by turning our liabilities into assets, by using our burdens as a basis of insight. And so the poet may come to have a “vested interest” in his handicaps; these handicaps may become an integral part of his method; and in so far as his style grows out of a disease, his loyalty to it may reinforce the disease. It is a matter that Thomas Mann has often been concerned with. And it bears again upon the subject of ‘symbolic action,’ with the poet’s burdens symbolic of his style, and his style

symbolic of his burdens. I think we should not be far wrong if, seeking the area where states of mind are best available to empirical observation, we sought for correlations between styles and physical disease (particularly since there is no discomfiture, however mental in origin, that does not have its physiological correlates). So we might look for “dropsical” styles (Chesterton), “asthmatic” (Proust), “phthisic” (Mann), “apoplectic” (Flaubert), “blind” (Milton), etc. (17)

This passage is by no means straightforward. But parsing it reveals much about the situation-strategy relationship. The poet’s style, Burke writes, is born out of the disease, which in turn develops in the poet as sense to “loyalty” to the disease.⁵⁸ What Burke is saying here, I think, is that the poet’s strategy for encompassing his situation inevitably, in turn shapes his feelings about that situation, his attitude toward that situation. In other words, what begins as a strategizing in response to the disease becomes a stylization of the disease itself. The strategy and the situation become inextricably linked, and in this way, the strategy can be said to contain an attenuated dose of the situation, what Burke refers to as an “indirect reflection” in his discussion of Perseus and Medusa. The sublime response, then, as homeopathy, necessarily contains within it traces of the disease it guards against, which is to say that it contains within it traces of the unrepresentable. It is, as Burke puts it, “stylistic infection.” The sublime response stylistically infects us with the abyss that lies beyond our symbolic using.

In Burke’s view, the poet is most attuned to his burdens. It stands to reason, then, that the poet is likewise most attuned to the unrepresentable. Here Burke appears to be indebted to a tradition that can itself be, according to Jed Rasula, traced back to Wagner.⁵⁹ Rasula argues that the framework for understanding literary modernism’s musical aspirations can be found in the Wagnerian concept “endless melody,” the idea that melody runs throughout a particular artwork

rather than being limited to certain sections. In literature, endless melody manifests itself, not just in works that go on and on and on and on, but also in works that, drawing attention to themselves as language, challenge or threaten or confound language's ability to signify in any stable sort of way. That is to say, endless melody refers to language that asserts itself physically, aurally, verbally, the generative stuff onto which meaning is layered. Rather than, fixing language and meaning, endless melody highlights language's creative capabilities. In its original conception, endless melody was a way to respond to the sublime. Rasula writes, "That the incomprehensible might be a subject of art was initially inconceivable; but when art—specifically under the sway of nineteenth-century melomania—reconceived its mission as a plunge into the immeasurable, guided only by infinite yearning, it became possible to accord the sublime an artistic purpose" (47). In literature, this meant that signification became looser, more open-ended. It embodied what Ezra Pound called *melopoeia*, or "a force tending to lull, or to distract the reader from the exact sense of the language. It is poetry on the borders of music and music is perhaps the bridge between consciousness and the unthinking sentient or even insentient universe" (qtd. in Rasula "Endless" 42). Pound and Rasula clarify for us the implications of this musical poetry: the highlighting of language's relationship to the realm beyond signification. It's not just that endless melody takes us beyond signification, but that arriving beyond signification then opens up the doors for endless signification. The place beyond signification is the place where signification is made. In Rasula's estimation, this place is contained within language itself. But Burke reminds us that that language is always inextricably linked to situation to which it responds. The situation, too, is a place of invention.

Rhetorical theorists have recently become interested in this space and place of invention, which Plato calls the *chōra*. According to Thomas Rickert, "the *chōra* transforms our senses of

beginning, creation, and invention by placing those activities concretely within material environments, informational spaces, and affective (or bodily) registers” (45). The *chōra*, argues Rickert, presents a complex vision of invention that accounts for media and situation as well for the symbols communicated through that media in response to that situation. Because it transcends strict symbolic action, the *chōra* is difficult to define and comprehend. In her illustration of the concept, which she claims, “mingles reason and mystery,” Gracie Veach presents the *chōra* in more strictly geographical terms. “Another feature of the *chōra*,” she writes, “situated as it is surrounding the city, is that it occupies the space between the city and the abyss. The abyss, of course, brings the unknowable, thus the ineffable, to the borders of the known . . .” Though Rickert is quick to note that the *chōra* largely ignored by rhetoricians, Veach argues that Burke’s reference to the abyss at the end of *PC* is actually a nod to the *chōra*, if by another name: “The abyss represents that space where foundations fail; the *chōra* represents the expansive space between certainty, reason (the city), and the unspeakable.” In “Burke’s overall scheme,” she writes, “because humans are the symbol-using animal, the place where body and mind both hold sway would be humankind’s natural dwelling place.” In Rickert’s estimation, “The *chōra* illuminates how rhetoric and invention rest on an interplay of revealing and concealing, between, that is, a generative ‘infomaterial’ matrix difficult to apprehend but out of which we work for our rhetorical productions and *within which they achieve their vibrancy*” (43; my emphasis). The *chōra*, then, refers to the place, unrepresentable though it might ultimately be, from which rhetoric gets going and in which rhetoric is made successful.

As we’ve already seen, Burke likewise calls for some degree of common ground between poet and reader; poet and reader alike must find suitable “equipment” in the poetry they share so that they might confront their respective situations. If Rickert and Veach are correct, poet and

reader *both* must venture into the *chōra* in order to determine the equipment's suitability. Burke's sublime image in the final passage of *PC* suggests that the *chōra* itself is a situation shared by all symbol-using animals. Poetry for Burke, then, would be the language that calls to mind this common resource for creativity, the language that draws attention to its own ability to "stand for things that never were or never will be." In order to create, one must make a trip to the *chōra*, that ill-defined place of invention. But in order to move an audience, one must take the audience there. The sublime response, with its acknowledgement of the unrepresentable and the limitations of representations, does just this. By acknowledging the unrepresentable and the limitations of representation available to us in language, the sublime opens up the possibility for creating something new, something other than what is being overtly stated in the poem. Burke's sublime calls attention to this in-between space, not just for invention, but for reception to. Accessing this space, and tonal transformations are one key form of such access, is the key to "moving" an audience with language.

How does one access this space? The answer, for Burke at least, seems to lie in the form, i.e. the motion, the aesthetics of language. That is to say, here appears to be a connection between the sublime's acknowledgement of language's limited representative capabilities and the way that, for Burke, form works. Form, he writes in *RM*, moves audiences by making them believe that they are participating in the creation of the artwork. Form isn't just integral to invention, with which it's normally associated, but to reception too. That is, without form, audiences would not be able to identify with the speaker. Burke writes in *RM*, "Longinus refers to that kind of elation wherein the audience feels as though it were not merely receiving, but were itself creatively participating in the poet's or speaker's assertion. Could we not say," Burke asks, "that, in such cases, the audience is exalted by the assertion because it has the feel of

collaborating in the assertion?” (57-8). As I illustrated in chapter two, Burke feels that form is the key to invoking a sense of creative participation. He argues that “formal patterns can readily awaken an attitude of collaborative expectancy in us,” and he claims, “Once you grasp the trend of the form, it invites participation regardless of the subject matter” (58). In form, the invention-reception dichotomy seems to break down. Either that, or the reception side of things is subsumed by invention. Either way, the point to make here is that form moves audiences through a form of identification called “collaborative expectancy.” Form is where poet and audience meet in the *chōra*. *Collaborative expectancy* is Burke’s term for this meeting.

Something similar is at work in the sublime response. Sublime pleasure stems from an encounter with that terrifying creative space (the *chōra*) out of which we invent language. In the sublime response (a form in its own right), the audience identifies not so much with the poet as with the poet’s difficulty in presenting the unrepresentable. Both are “nervously loquacious,” as Burke puts it in his sublime image at the end of *PC*. Burke’s use of the term “nervously” appears to capitalize on the dual sense of *nerves*. On the one hand, *nerves* can refer to a mental state and to a sense of anxiety (or, if used in the singular, a sense of courage). On the other hand, *nerves* are the very material bodily transmitters of signals between our brains and the rest of our bodies. There is the sense, then, that our loquaciousness is aesthetic through and through. It is, in other words, of the senses. In this way, poet and audience alike “breathe life” into the poem, as Debra Hawhee puts it. Poet and audience alike take part in an attempt to present the unrepresentable. Both witness the futility of such efforts, and they experience the terror of such futility. But at the same time, both find pleasure in the attempt because there is something pleasurable about gaining access to that creative space. This sense of pleasure is what we deem “beautiful.” The sublime, then, is collaborative expectancy pushed to its limit.

Is Burke a theorist of endless melody, albeit by some other name? Perhaps so. But given Burke's presentation of the sublime response as "equipment for living" and as a prophylactic against the unutterable that must infect in order to protect, I would like to propose that Burke is a theorist of "endless malady," a "joycing" of the Wagner's term that reveals what Burke saw as the medicinal motive underlying the impulse toward "endless melody."

CONCLUSION

Ironically, even though Burke wants us to view poetry from the standpoint of the sublime, in the process of shifting our perspective away from beauty, he nevertheless underscores the importance of beauty. Beauty, after all, is where the pleasure of the sublime resides. As we've seen, Burke's sublime pleasure derives from the assertion of our ability to create a poetic image. This is unlike Kant's sublime pleasure, which asserts our faculties of reason while subordinating our imagination. Because Kant's formula for the sublime subordinates the imagination (home to representation and, thus, to beauty), beauty and the sublime can exist side by side, so to speak. They are, for Kant, distinct concepts. Burke, however, finds beauty and the sublime existing alongside in a graded series. The sublime response to some unrepresentable situation becomes "beautiful" once poet and audience are able to discover the mutual creative pleasure that can accompany the invention necessary to present the unrepresentable. This is illustrated in final section of "Beauty and the Sublime" where we find Burke's hypothetical story about becoming a public relations man tasked within naming Hollywood starlets. Burke offers this example as an illustration of tonal transformations in action. Specifically, this example illustrates tonal transformations at work on our unconscious. The starlet is (initially) named with some forbidden word. That word is then changed to something that sounds like the forbidden word, so that "the original repellent word was retained

as a barely audible overtone, flickering about its edges” (66). The starlet adopts the new name with its concealed offense. Admirers dub her name (and her) “exceptionally beautiful” (66). As chapter two illustrates, Burke insists that unrepresentable (or what we called there the “unutterable”) has social connotations as well as representative connotations. In Burke’s philosophy of language, the unrepresentable refers to both things which *cannot* be represented and things which *should not* be represented. Thus, in the example of the Hollywood starlet, the sublime is “sourced,” so to speak, for something unrepresentable that might be concealed.

Readers might be forgiven for finding this example somewhat of a letdown. In calling her and her name “beautiful,” aren’t the starlet’s admirers simply committing a “heretical overemphasis,” viewing the starlet and the starlet alone, in and of herself, apart from the act that her name disguises? Perhaps. And yet, this example underscores the importance of collaborative expectancy. The offensive word that inspired the starlet’s name must be viewed indirectly; the offense must be concealed. However, the offense is still there. The audience must “know and dislike the word from which [the starlet’s name] had been derived” (66). Starting with beauty, then, is a way of acknowledging the unrepresentable without knowing it. And this tacit acknowledgement of the unrepresentable, Burke suggests, is the necessary first step towards pleasure and beauty because it locates the basis of beauty in the sublime. Burke’s treatment of equipment for living in “Beauty and the Sublime” suggests, paradoxically, that it’s the “vastness” which makes the order palatable, such that, as Burke puts it, if poetry is protection and thus needs something to protect against, then the things against which it protects us are always an integral part of the appeal of that protection. As George Shipley writes, in a sublime response, “Burke’s actor acts, not to distance and thereby reduce the threat, but to ‘contain’ its pressure in an [sic] sense opposite the other Burke’s: holding the threat at bay, formulating a

defensive, protective response (this being the poetic activity of whatever kind) more or less respectful, awestruck, courageous” (62). But in Burke’s formulation the both poet and audience alike become actors, and thus, the lines between invention and reception are blurred as the sublime invokes a sense of collaborative expectancy.

Collaborative expectancy is the key feature worth emphasizing here. Of course, we already know that any rhetorical act requires a kind of collaboration between rhetor and audience, but collaborative expectancy stresses the point that the audience gets to feel like (or sense that) it’s collaborating in the invention of the rhetorical act. It’s another way of saying that the audience gets to take pleasure in invention. (Of course, in some ways what I’m talking about transcends the divisions between the rhetorical canons, especially the canons of invention and style; see chapter four). This makes sense, I think, when we view collaborative expectancy from the standpoint of the sublime. The sublime suggests that we all find enjoyment in (or, better yet, are moved to) our “nervous loquaciousness,” as Burke puts it. If this seems a bit manipulative or exploitative on the part of the rhetor, we might do well to remember that oftentimes, when it comes to tonal transformations at least, collaborative expectancy can be awoken without any conscious effort on the part of the rhetor. This is because tonal transformations work out of the formal—that is to say, physical and aesthetic—qualities of language. The kind of collaborative expectancy upon which tonal transformations depend, then, must be found in the qualities of language as *more than* symbolic action.

Moreover, seeing tonal transformations as a kind of collaborative expectancy that taps into the symbol-using animal’s collective “nervous loquaciousness” highlights what for Burke is the importance of aesthetic language as a rhetorical medium. Recall how, early on in this chapter, I point to O’Gorman’s characterization of Longinus’s legitimization of rhetoric. Longinus

legitimizes rhetoric, O’Gorman claims, by introducing the sublime, freeing it from the domain of the *techne*, and in so doing positing a kind of rhetoric for rhetoric’s sake. The paradoxical result, O’Gorman claims, is that rhetoric becomes irrelevant; it loses its role as medium for getting things done in the world and becomes instead something to be admired. Longinus’s sublime rhetoric, in short, is useless. We can observe something quite similar in Burke’s sublime. However, I disagree with O’Gorman that an aesthetically tinged rhetoric for rhetoric’s sake is irrelevant and useless. Though it might seem counterintuitive, Burke’s theory of the sublime illustrates the important “medicinal” function of a rhetoric for rhetoric’s sake. Burke’s sublime illustrates that language—beautiful language—forces us to confront (if, unconsciously) the fact, as he writes in his “Definition of Man,” that both “the tiny sliver of reality each of us has experienced firsthand,” and “the whole overall ‘picture’ is but a construct of our symbol systems. To meditate on this fact until one sees its full implications,” he continues, “is much like peering over the edge of things into an ultimate abyss. And doubtless that’s one reason why, though man is typically the symbol-using animal, he clings to a kind of naïve verbal realism that refuses to realize the full extent of the role played by symbolicity in his notions of reality” (*LSA* 5). Burke of course wants us “to realize the full extent of the role played by symbolicity in [our] notions of reality.” He wants us to acknowledge and admire the inextricability of motion and action. For it’s there we find recourse to the medicine of symbols. That is to say, peering over the edge of abyss—albeit indirectly by way of a sublime response—is for Burke the fundamental means by which the symbol-using animal might find comfort and order in the face of chaos. And we do this best, I argue, when we push language to the limits of symbolicity; when we accept language as more than symbolic action, which is to say as something not entirely under our control, we can better appreciate the beauty, the pleasure that results when language confronts the ineffable.

Rhetoricians would do well to pay attention to Burke's sublime and the implications it holds for his philosophy of language. For, as I've illustrated in this chapter, it's the sublime response that calls attention to the symbol-using animal's shared nervous loquaciousness and to the aesthetic pleasure one finds in being a symbol-using animal in the first place. Thus, it's the sublime response that points to source of beauty in language. And it's the beauty in language that moves us.

CHAPTER 4

JOYCING TO INVENT: REINVENTING BURKE IN THE COMPOSITION CLASSROOM

The educational theorist and critical pedagogue Paulo Freire begins what is perhaps the most well-known chapter of his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (i.e. chapter two, a.k.a. “The Banking Concept of Education”) with a particularly vivid example of all that’s wrong with the so-called banking, or narrative, approach to education. It goes like this:

The outstanding characteristic of this narrative education, then, is the sonority of words, not their transforming power. “Four times four is sixteen; the capital of Para is Belem.” The student records, memorizes, and repeats these phrases without perceiving what four times four really means, or realizing the true significance of “capital” in the affirmation “the capital of Para is Belem,” that is, what Belem means for Para and what Para means for Belem. (71)

Famously for Freire, the narrative or banking approach to education undermines the possibility of social change by divorcing the content of education from the world beyond the confines of the classroom. Notably for my purposes here, he associates pedagogy reliant on “the sonority of words” with the very banking model he attacks. “Knowledge,” he argues, “emerges only through *invention* and *re-invention*, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other” (72; my emphasis). Thus, against the banking concept, Freire offers what he calls “problem-posing education,” pedagogy—his foregoing statement on the emergence of knowledge suggests—reliant on invention.

Freire's distrust of the sonority of words vividly suggests a *de facto* disconnect between the form of language and its content. For Freire, it's as if being enamored by the sound and the feel of words necessarily precludes the emergence, the development, and the discovery of knowledge. Freire is distrustful, then, of the appreciation language as language, what Burke in *A Rhetoric of Motives* (hereafter, *RM*) calls "epideictic rhetoric" or "the love of words for their own sake" (72). As far as I know, Freire was not a student of classical rhetoric, but his distrust of the sonority of words hearkens as far back as Plato and his dialogue *Gorgias*. There, we find Socrates debating with Callicles about the two kinds pleasure: on the one hand, the artistic sort that operates, as Socrates puts it, "with forethought for what is to the soul's best advantage," on the other, the "habitude" that aims for "mere gratification" (122). Socrates calls this latter sort of pleasure "flattery," and he manages to get Callicles to agree that music, poetry, and rhetoric all fall under that heading.⁶⁰ That is to say, for Socrates music, poetry, and rhetoric all aspire to "mere gratification." Freire's distrust of the sonority of words also implies a separation of form and content, and in so doing, it echoes classical rhetoric's distinction between substance (*res*) and language (*verba*), the distinction between the rhetorical canons of invention and style, respectively. What Freire does not consider, then, is that the transformative power of words might very well be intimately linked to their sonority, that is to say, to the material features of language. He doesn't seem to realize is the potentially inventive role those material features might play in any sort of rhetorical act, be it the *communiqué* that he maligns or the communication that he celebrates (72). As I aim to show in this chapter, Burke's theories of tonal transformations and joycing (and joycing in particular) emphasize the important overlaps between *res* and *verba*—between the canons of invention and style—evident when one considers the sonority of words from a Burkean perspective. Drawing our attention to the importance of

affect and aesthetics in Burke’s philosophy of language—which is to say, drawing our attention to all of the stuff happening outside the domain of symbolic action—tonal transformations and joycing complicate the traditional separation of these two rhetorical canons. As Randy Allen Harris reminds us, “The form signification assumes profoundly affects the way human organisms respond to it” (2). That said, attending to tonal transformations and to the sonority of words means accepting that education doesn’t always take place “consciously.” Some education is more visceral and, as I discuss below, is something akin to what the philosopher Walter Benjamin calls “reception in distraction.” In fact, as I illustrate in chapters two and three, Burke’s theories of tonal transformations and joycing suggest that it’s those visceral features that save language from the kind of abstraction and passivity that Freire decries as one of the hallmarks of the so-called “banking” approach.

This chapter focuses on the educational implications of tonal transformations and joycing, which in rhetoric studies largely means focusing on composition, i.e. writing. Largely, but not entirely. Composition’s other—writing’s other—is speech. However, if the recent “Mt. Oread Manifesto on Rhetorical Education 2013” published in *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* is any indication, the longstanding division within rhetoric studies is beginning to give way. The manifesto calls for a reunification of speech and writing at a time when the potential for such reunification “is both more important and more realizable than at any time when Speech filed for divorce from English” (2). The initial separation and the subsequent disciplinary antagonisms, the authors argue, meant that student education took a back seat to “Complex institutional, financial, and practical factors,” including professionalization (1). However, in spite of this separation, “formal divisions between speaking and writing are untenable and indeed, in practice, are beginning to dissolve” (2). The manifesto calls on rhetoricians of all stripes to embrace

rhetoric's inherent transdisciplinarity at a time when, in spite of the professional and discipline-specific aspirations of rhetoricians in both Speech and English, rhetoricians remain "under-appreciated" (4). As I've shown in the two previous chapters, Burke's theories of tonal transformations and joycing flout the formal divisions between speech and writing. Since composition is my own home base in the larger world of rhetorical education, it's from this vantage point that I examine how Burke's theories might serve as the foundations for the kind of transdisciplinary bridging called for in "Mt. Oread Manifesto."

By highlighting the ways in which tonal transformations and joycing flout the formal divisions between speech and writing and between invention and style, I propose a set of terms from which a new transdisciplinary rhetoric might emerge. At the same time, I offer a corrective to the way Burke's ideas have been adopted in composition studies. As I will illustrate, Burke and his theory of dramatism have been used, misused, and abused by compositionists who rely on Burke's dramatic pentad as an invention heuristic. Specifically, I argue that the appropriation of the pentad in composition studies is guilty of the two sins detailed above: 1) assuming a (distinctly non-Burkean) division separation between invention and style, and 2) ignoring the ways in which speech and writing (in Burke's view anyway) exert pressure on one another. My motivations for offering making this argument arise, in part, from recent interest in affect and materiality among rhetoricians (see, especially, my introduction and conclusion), as well as from the recent interest among composition scholars in sound as a composition medium, which I detail below. I also feel that since language has been the focus of this dissertation, it makes sense to turn to the subfield of rhetoric studies that remains most obviously attentive to language: composition. Hence, I argue that it's time for change in the way we think about Burke's applicability to composition pedagogy. Instead of beating the dead horse of the pentad,

rhetoricians might instead look to the ideas examined in chapters two and three, most notably for the ways in which tonal transformations and joycing demand that readers, writers, and speakers embody the language with which they are engaged.

As a theory of invention, joycing also displays correspondences with compositionists currently working under the auspices of affect. Though they might not necessarily subscribe to such a label, these compositionists nevertheless display an interest in the inventive elements of language that operate apart from conscious symbolic intent. This includes Geoffrey Sirc and the composition scholars working with sound as a composition medium. In his book *English Composition as a Happening*, Sirc criticizes what he sees as the staleness of composition since its emergence as a discipline in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In its attempt at professionalism, composition became, well, boring. Here's Sirc:

I think of what the idea of composition is: an opportunity to reflect on textuality, its craft, wonder, problems—obviously that should be at the center of any idea of academics; but thanks to the epistemic turn we are simply the eager lapdogs of the big-ticket disciplines. Our self-imposed formal and material subservience marks a sad betrayal of the spirit of verbal risk and writing-as-life that marked the best of our history. (8)

“Despite all the lip service we give to empowerment in our ideological curricula,” he goes on to write, “we don't really believe in the power of a composition to change the world. We have a concept of audience as construct, not as lived” (10). As an alternative to this tired approach, Sirc suggests we draw inspiration from the avant-garde art movements of the 1960s. “It was an art that frustrated conventions in order to allow other meanings to surface,” he writes. “It involved a re-appreciation of everyday material in order to complicate the distinction between art and life.

This attempt resulted in new compositional forms: Assemblages, Combines, Neo-Dada works, and, most genre-blurringly, the Happenings.” (5) Sirc’s main complaint is that composition has abandoned the aesthetic edge that it once had. Against this anti-aestheticism, he seeks an approach to composition that dwells within the intersection between art and life.⁶¹ For Sirc,

A pedagogy geared to clarification rather than disorientation will never yield to the sublime. To build a pedagogy on such a limited notion of titles dooms your curriculum (as well as the writing done with it) right from the start; it’s not so much the *banking* as the *bankrupt* concept of education. Rather than even parodies of writing, then—let alone the full-blown possibilities of allegories—students are offered flat fictions: Horatio Alger narratives in which the moral is that if they just follow the neatly, ordered, representational program, they’ll make it (to the authentic, the academic, the counter-hegemonic, etc.). (215)

As I’ve tried to illustrate in my previous chapters, Burke is also very much interested in this intersection. Both Sirc and Burke are push for in their respective rhetorics is a way for human symbol (mis)users to devise their own names for encompassing the situations in which they find themselves. Sirc and Burke both more or less call for a “poetic” view of language, one that, as Debra Hawhee explains in her article on Burke and Nietzsche, takes “poetic” and “poesis” to mean “to make,” or “to do.”

There have been recent attempts to understand sound in/as composition, or sound as a medium of composition. “Sound in/as composition” was actually the title of a special issue of *Computers and Composition* edited by Cheryl Ball and Byron Hawk. This special issue and the new-media turn in composition studies seem to have prompted scholars such as Dene Grigar, Bump Halbritter, N. Katherine Hayles, Heidi McKee, and Cynthia Selfe, among others, to

investigate the pedagogical possibilities of an increased attention to sound, especially music, in the composition classroom. This increased attention to sound has in turn led to a critique of the visual bias in composition studies (Ball and Hawk 263, Selfe 618), a critique that resonates with the affective turn in rhetoric studies more generally. For example, Crystal VanKooten argues for a more inclusive definition of rhetoric, one that, in her view, adheres to Aristotle's description of rhetoric as locating "the available means of persuasion" and thus invites the analysis and production of nontraditional texts into the composition classroom. In particular, VanKooten points to music's effectiveness as a means of persuasion and calls on composition teachers to encourage their students to make use of music's approachable and effective rhetoricity. Venturing outside the composition classroom and into the forest of the Congaree National Park outside of Columbia, SC, Byron Hawk describes the "ontological presence of sound, resonance, ringing as the ground of composition" ("Acoustic"). Knowledge, Hawk argues, is the result of "the ontological co-production of the world as a function of . . . sonic resoundings."

Highlighting the connection between music and writing, Diane Davis emphasizes music's noncognitive effects and notes similar effects (tone, rhythm) in written texts. She writes that "every text is at the very least part musical score—even in a printed text, the synesthetic event of persuasion depends to a large degree (larger than is usually acknowledged) on tone, style, beat, rhythm—and static. To write with sound...is to engage in a performance of the inscription that relies very explicitly on noncognitive affective appeals" ("Writing"). Here, Davis provides us with a useful phrase. What she calls "the synesthetic event of persuasion" points to an expanded notion of rhetoric and more specifically to the idea that in speaking and writing, persuasiveness very much depends on the non symbolic, on the "non cognitive affective appeals" of language, and on "tone, style, beat, rhythm—and static," in other words, language as *more than symbolic*

action. Of course, Davis is trying to highlight what compositionists might learn from DJs. But her observations about language and its musicality resonate with Burke's own. That is to say, attending to language as more than symbolic action means attending to "the love of words for their own sake." The aim of this chapter is to advocate for a composition pedagogy that attends to the sonority of words, a pedagogy inspired by Burke's work on tonal transformations and joycing and the ideas I've developed in the foregoing chapters.

I begin with a snapshot of the *res-verba* distinction. From there, I survey the history of Burke's pentad as it's been appropriated by composition instructors, emphasizing in particular its lack of attention to style and other post-humanist concerns, and following that I forward a more fully Burkean theory of invention, one rooted in Burke's call for a poetic rather than a semantic view of language. Next, I discuss the origins of the term *joycing* in *Permanence and Change* (hereafter, *PC*) and the important connections between joycing and perspectival shifts and between rhetoric and aesthetics. Then, I trace the correspondences between joycing as invention, Peter Simonson's reinvented post-humanist take on invention, and Benjamin's theory of "reception in distraction." Ultimately, I argue that tonal transformations and joycing suggest a much-needed aesthetic approach to invention, one that invites attention to language as more than symbolic action. Tonal transformations and joycing reveal in Burke an appreciation of the epideictic, "the love of words for their own sake." This, I argue, should be the foundation of a Burkean composition pedagogy and can provide a foundation for the reunification of speech and writing.

RES AND VERBA

In the history of rhetoric, the distinction between invention and style can be traced at least as far back as Aristotle. Aristotle divides his treatment of rhetoric into three books, thereby

creating a distinction between the *pisteis*—that is to say, “the available means of persuasion in each case” (36), which he treats in books one and two—and *lexis*, his term for, as translator George A. Kennedy puts it in his introduction to the third book, “what is said,” which is to say, style (193).⁶² “[For] it is not enough to have a supply of things to say,” writes Aristotle, “but it is also necessary to say it in the right way” (194). In other words, things and words, *pisteis* and *lexis*, are distinct components of rhetoric. This division, of course, rests on the assumption of a mind-body split. Invention is the work of the mind, while style works in the affective register, which is to say, on the body. Thus, in *De Inventione*, Cicero defines invention as “the discovery of valid or seeming valid arguments to render one’s cause plausible” (19). In the original Latin—“*Inventio est excogitatio rerum verarum aut veri similium quae causum probabilem*”—the word *excogitatio* explicitly connects “discovery” to the work of the mind (see also, Simonson 302). Cicero’s definition of style (or “expression,” as his translator puts it) as “the fitting of the proper language to the invented matter” (19) doesn’t explicitly link style to the body. However, as I have already illustrated in chapter three’s discussion of collaborative expectancy, what we deem as “proper” is often determined in affective registers.

Cicero’s *De Inventione* is, in Walter Watson’s estimation, the “most influential of all accounts of rhetorical invention and probably the most influential textbook of any kind in the history of western education” (qtd. in Simonson 302). According to Peter Simonson, Cicero’s “early definition helped set the tone for a great deal of subsequent thinking about this essentially contested concept, often conceived in contrast to the canon of style, the one focusing on the ‘substance’ (*res*) of an argumentative appeal, the other on the language (*verba*) for expressing it” (302). The Roman distinction between things (*res*) and the words used to describe them (*verba*) parallels Aristotle’s *pisteis-lexis* split. According to Simonson, Cicero’s notion of invention as the

work of *excogitation* has profoundly influenced subsequent theories of invention (302). The implication is that invention is a mindful practice, a practice set apart from the body and thus set apart from affect and aesthetics.⁶³ Perhaps we don't need Simonson to tell us this. Students of rhetoric know well that the *res-verba* distinction persisted (though not without challenges) throughout rhetoric's more than 2000-year history. Contested though invention might be, it is commonplace among rhetoricians to differentiate between the canons of invention and style.

The separation between invention and style and between mind and body provided the fuel for the Renaissance thinker Peter Ramus to, as he puts it, remedy "Aristotle's and Cicero's confusion of dialectic and rhetoric" (681) and effectively limit rhetoric to style and delivery "since invention, arrangement, and memory belong to dialectic" (686). Ramus's reduction of rhetoric to style and delivery would last well into the nineteenth century. When classical rhetoric saw a revival in the twentieth century, invention, arrangement, and memory once again became part of the discipline; however, the distinctions between the canons remained more or less in place, even as such distinctions—particularly the distinction between invention and style—become harder to maintain. This is particularly the case in composition studies, where the process-based approach to writing has largely upheld the classical canon. Invention and style, *res* and *verba*, might (along with arrangement, memory, and delivery) work together to make up the whole of a rhetorical effort, but they are nevertheless two different things. (See, for instance, the most recent edition of the *St. Martin's Guide to Teaching Writing*, which contains different sections on teaching each of the canons.) In the context of composition, both invention and style remain important, if distinct ideas. The persistence of the *res-verba* distinction is especially evident in the way Burke's ideas have been appropriated by compositionists. As I will illustrate, composition theorists have adopted Burke's dramatic pentad as an invention heuristic with no

style largely because of an assumption of a distinction between *res* and *verba*. Ironically, many of those compositionists who've adopted the pentad as an invention heuristic neglect *verba* altogether, neglecting that which is central to so much of Burke's thinking: language. The effect has been to rob Burkean invention of affect. Later, I take a closer look at Burkean invention, which, as it turns out, is rooted in language and, thus, quite stylish. However, if one were to form an opinion of dramatism based on the way the pentad has been represented and utilized by the large majority of compositionists, one would most certainly miss out on this chaotic, poetic, inventive potential. The image of dramatism that's been propagated in composition studies is one of rigidity.

ALL *RES*, NO *VERBA*: THE CASE OF DRAMATISM IN COMPOSITION

Burke's work has maintained a steady presence in composition studies since the early 1970s, when composition studies "rediscovered" rhetoric and declared its tenuous independence from literary studies (Lynn 233). Clark Rountree notes that as of 2007 Burke's name and work have appeared in at least twelve prominent journals associated with composition studies. In terms of actual pedagogy, however, Burke's influence is rather limited in scope. Most scholars interested in pedagogical applications of Burke's ideas follow William F. Irmischer's lead in adopting the dramatic pentad as an invention heuristic, a misapplication Irmischer makes in his 1972 textbook (Crowley 276n8).⁶⁴ Thus, one can find Andrea A. Lunsford and Cheryl Glenn's essay in a recent edition of *The St. Martin's Guide to Teaching Writing* offering the pentad as an invention heuristic, even though, by their own admission, it was not intended to be one (453). And though it is not the sole focus of their discussion of Burke as a "modern master" of rhetoric in *A Teacher's Introduction to Composition in the Rhetorical Tradition*, Ross W. Winterowd and Jack Blum devote significant space to using the pentad as a prewriting heuristic (73-5). The same

goes for Erika Lindemann and Daniel Anderson, who explicitly adopt Irmischer's reworking of the pentad in their *Rhetoric for Writing Teachers*, and for Irene Clark, et al, and Steven Lynn in their own composition teaching guides (120-1, 91 and 55, respectively).

Irmischer is generally credited with the first strictly pedagogical application of Burkean rhetoric to composition studies in his 1972 textbook *The Holt Guide to English* (Crowley 276n8). In moves that would more-or-less define how Burkean rhetoric would subsequently be used to teach writing, Irmischer looks to dramatism and adopts the pentad as an invention strategy (28), and later, he quotes Burke's statement on form—that "Form in literature is an arousing of fulfillment and desires" and that "A work has form in so far as it leads a reader to anticipate another part, to be gratified by the sequence"—in his chapter on structure (Irmischer 47; Burke *Counter-Statement* 124). Of interest to me here, however, is Irmischer's first move, that is, his adoption of the pentad as method for invention, and the widespread influence that this initial appropriation of Burke's most famous idea has had on composition studies.

I have chosen to focus on the pentad's pervasiveness in composition studies primarily because Irmischer's appropriation of the pentad turns out, in fact, to be a misappropriation and because, despite some scholars' recognition of this misappropriation, it nevertheless persists as the "congealed" remains of a once more "molten," suggestive heuristic. Irmischer's own appropriation of the pentad, which is by his own admission a simplification of Burke's method, presents fifteen questions classified according to Burke's original five dramatic elements: act, agent, agency, scene, and purpose. Irmischer's questions are as follows:

- Under the heading of "Action," he prompts student writers to ask, "What happened?"; "What is happening?"; "What will happen?"; and "What is it?"
- Regarding the "Actor-Agent," he suggests asking, "Who did it?"; "Who is doing

it?"; "What did it?"; and "What kind of agent is it?"

- For "Scene," he poses the questions, "Where did it happen?"; "Where is it happening?"; "When did it happen?"; and "What is the background?"
- For "Means," he offers, "How did he do it?" and "What means were used?"
- And for "Purpose," he suggests simply asking, "Why?"

He posits these questions as a means for generating ideas in the early stages of the writing process and for keeping the later stages of writing organized (28). Worth pointing out here is just how informational, how substantive, the pentad becomes in Irmischer's appropriation of it. The invention taking place in this series of questions deals strictly with content. Irmischer's pentad is all *res* and no *verba*.⁶⁵

Six years after the debut of Irmischer's book, Joseph Comprone asked whether Burke's ideas might be applicable to teaching composition, and he found an answer in his conceptualization of the composing process through the lens of the pentad. In this conceptualization, the writer becomes an agent, acting within a particular scene using a particular set of means for a particular purpose. Presenting the writing process in this way, Comprone suggests, helps teachers help students become more aware of the writing process and its essential components (337-9). To some extent, Comprone's appropriation of the pentad corrects the stylelessness of Irmischer's approach. By situating the student writer within the pentad, Comprone calls on the student writer to consider not just the content of her writing, but the form too. Writers are, in Comprone's view, "people acting through and with words and symbols," and writing itself is a "dramatic attempt to complete an action that begins with a linguistic struggle with the world out there and closes with a recreation of that struggle for readers" (337). Comprone reintroduces *verba* into the pentad heuristic, but this correction didn't seem to stick.

That same year, Hugh Agee advocated a twofold use of the pentad, first as a means for analyzing texts and then as a means for prewriting, and Richard L. Larson included *A Grammar of Motives* as an item on his reference lists for both “Rhetorical Invention” and “Processes of Discovering.” In 1979, Charles Kneupper published “Dramatistic Invention: The Pentad as Heuristic Procedure.”

This tradition continued into the 1980s and continues up to the present day. The various works mentioned above attest to this: Lindemann’s *Rhetoric for Writing Teachers* was initially published in 1982 and is still in print. Lunsford and Glenn’s “Rhetorical Theory and the Teaching of Writing” appeared in 1990 and was reprinted in multiple editions of *The St. Martin’s Guide to Teaching Writing* up until 2008. Winterowd and Blum’s *Teacher’s Introduction to Composition in the Rhetorical Tradition* appeared in 1994, while Clark, et al’s and Lynn’s teaching guides appeared in 2003 and 2010, respectively.

When compositionists working with the pentad do focus on *verba*, that focus tends to limit style to cognitive rather than affective domains. Such is the case with Phillip Arrington, who employs the pentad to help teach students how to paraphrase. For Arrington, students can learn to paraphrase according to their own rhetorical needs by emphasizing or deemphasizing the pentadic ratios identified in the original passage. Similarly, Kathryn Rosser Raign proposes using the pentad as a way to help so-called basic writers transpose their thinking and oral communication to the written page; she suggests that the pentad can help these students construct both sentences and paragraphs from a reader-based perspective rather than a writer-based one. Indeed, she claims that it can help them to distinguish between these two prose types. To make this work, she draws parallels between the parts of the pentad and the parts of a sentence. (Agent corresponds to the sentence’s subject, Act to its verb. Scene and Agency are located within

prepositional phrases. And Purpose is identified in because clauses.) Once they familiarize themselves with these correspondences, students are better prepared to express complete thoughts in their sentences, Raign argues.

That composition studies continues to cling to Irmischer's initial misappropriation of dramatism is not surprising and, indeed, not all that uncommon in disciplines from philosophy to sociology to psychology to history. Ross Wolin notes that dramatism is Burke's "most widely known" theory (145). Its prominence can be traced, according to Wolin, to the fact that "it is a relatively simple method that brings to the foreground assumptions about what may not be apparent in a wide range of texts" (151). But this simplicity, Wolin argues, tends to lead to oversimplification:

In a cruel irony, dramatism is also Burke's nemesis, for many readers of Burke interpret dramatism *apart from his earlier work*, thereby finding in dramatism a superficial kind of semantics that misses entirely the social and political purposes that dramatism was intended to serve; worse yet, in so doing, they imbue dramatism with a systematicity so rigid that it actually undermines dramatism's largely heuristic and *suggestive* nature. (Wolin 145; my emphasis)

In composition studies, use of the pentad has been shaped by the writer-centric, process-oriented approach that has dominated the discipline. The process-based approach is, of course, rooted in classical rhetoric's five canons: invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery. However, it tends to emphasize the first canon—invention. In the same year that Irmischer's influential textbook appeared, Donald M. Murray famously argued that writing instructors should focus on the process rather than the product of writing. Writing, Murray argued, should be a means of discovery for the student. As he puts it, "it is not the job of the teacher to legislate the student's

truth.” “We have to be patient and wait, and wait, and wait,” he writes. “The suspense in the beginning of a writing course is agonizing for the teacher, but if we break first, *if we do the prewriting for our students they will not learn the largest part of the writing process*” (5; my emphasis). And elsewhere, Murray suggests that in a process-oriented approach, “The student is encouraged to attempt any form of writing which may help him discover and communicate what he has to say” (6). Murray’s argument reflects how the then-nascent field of composition studies distinguished itself from the dominant field of literary studies as a student-centered discipline that focused on guiding students through their own unique writing processes, and the lasting influence of his argument suggests that the field has yet to stray too far from this originary impulse. Whatever concerns the discipline has since addressed, the student-centered, process-based approach remains one of its key principles (Villanueva 1). Locating Irmischer’s introduction of dramatism in this disciplinary scene, it becomes clear why a writing textbook published in the early 1970s would seek out a means for guiding students through the writing process and why, given the constancy of the process-based approach to teaching writing within the discipline, Irmischer’s scheme has persisted to the present day.

The problem with the dramastistic pentad, as it turns out, is its ubiquity.⁶⁶ That is to say, the dramastistic pentad’s popularity, rooted in the tradition of Irmischer’s early 1970s appropriation of the concept for composition, has, in a sense, melted down the core concept from Burke’s *A Grammar of Motives* (hereafter, *GM*). In the process, the pentad’s “substance” has been distilled, such that the ratios have been filtered out, leaving only the five core elements. Dramatism’s molten-ness has re-solidified as a pentad-only form of dramatism. And this is the problem. It’s the (arguably discipline-specific) association the term carries with it after having spent 30-plus years being known as the pentad and the pentad only. But not just the pentad, the

pentad as invention heuristic. There have been exceptions.⁶⁷ But when it's all said and done, what we're left with is a dramatism shorn, not just of the ratios but of its aesthetic qualities as well.

Such misuse of the pentad has led some scholars to question the effectiveness of using the pentad in writing instruction. As I have tried to illustrate, much of composition's appropriation of dramatism is rooted in the discipline's privileging of a student-centered, process-oriented approach, an approach which reinforces the traditional distinction between invention and style while privileging the former. Notably, as early as 1984, Virginia Allen warned against just such misguided attempts to corral Burkean thinking into already established pedagogical frameworks:

As we learn to examine theories as theories and not just as pedagogical tools, we must begin by recognizing the relationship between the epistemology which underlines each of the theories we examine and the implications of the epistemology for the production of discourse Trying to impose Burkean rhetoric over the conventional forms of discourse is like trying to solve a problem in geography with a design solution, and the implications go well beyond the applicability of Burke's pentad to traditional composition. Discovering the relationship between epistemology and invention is basic to rhetorical analysis.

The problem which Allen pinpoints here, what she is referring to when she urges composition scholars to recognize the relationship between the epistemological underpinnings of Burkean thought and the kinds of discourse already at work in the composition classroom and already grounded in their own epistemologies, is that these different epistemologies are bound to conflict, and Burkean thinking tends to lose out to student-centered discourse in these

epistemological contests.⁶⁸ This then begs the question of whether it is worthwhile to try to appropriate Burke's ideas for use in the composition classroom at all. But Allen's purpose is not to suggest that composition scholars abandon Burke. Rather, she suggests that if Burke is to be employed in such a way that does justice to his ideas, then composition scholars would need to establish Burkean thought as the epistemological starting point. Likewise for Richard M. Coe, who observes that many composition pedagogies' deployment of Burke through his pentad distracts from Burke's more important contributions to our understanding of words and their significance—a topic woefully under-appreciated in the composition classroom according to Coe (368). True appreciation of Burke, Coe argues, would work to subvert the all too common “antirhetorical thought/language dichotomy” (369). In other words, a true appreciation of Burke's ideas in the composition classroom would pay attention to both *res* and *verba*.

In sum, when one focuses solely on the pentad as the Burkean invention heuristic what is liable to happen (what, as I think I've shown, has actually happened) is that Burke's ideas get oversimplified and misinterpreted as a rigid formula rather than as the more playful, more flexible, more aesthetic version of dramatism that he actually presents in *GM*. The pentad as an invention heuristic is too much of the mind. It needs some style. It needs some body. This is where tonal transformations and joycing come in, for both offer evidence of a physical, *more than symbolic* common ground. Whereas the pentad as an invention heuristic remains stale and limited to information, the poetic potential of tonal transformations and joycing treats “words as words” as the sight of invention. With tonal transformations and joycing, *verba* becomes the basis for *res*. Invention and style become inextricably linked..⁶⁹

TOWARD A STYLISH BURKEAN INVENTION

Burke famously begins his *GM* with the dedication *ad bellum purificandum* or “towards the purification of war.” When he explains this dedication near the end of the book, he writes that the project “should assist to this end through encouraging tolerance by speculation. For it deals with a level of motivation which even wholly rival doctrines must share in common; hence it may be addressed to a speculative portion of the mind which men of many different situations have in common” (442). In order to encourage “tolerance by speculation,” Burke introduces his dramatic pentad of act, agent, agency, scene, and motive as representative of “questions to be answered in the treatment of a topic” (228). He also insists that we pay attention not just to the individual elements of the pentad but to the relationships, or ratios, between the elements. It is through examining these ratios that transformations within particular representative anecdotes arise, “and it is in the areas of ambiguities that transformations take place” (*GM* xix). Burke vividly likens the process to the transformation of the earth’s surface by way of volcanic activity:

Distinctions, we might say, arise out of a great central moltenness, where all is merged. They have been thrown from a liquid center to the surface, where they congealed. Let one of these crusted distinctions return to its source, and in this alchemic center it may be remade, again becoming molten liquid, and may enter into new combinations, whereat it may be again thrown forth as a new crust, a different distinction. (xix)

For Burke, then, paying attention to ratios among the elements of the pentad highlights the way in which “Their participation in a common ground makes for transformability” (xix). He illustrates this transformability with several examples, most notably in a hypothetical anecdote of two friends using a file to escape their imprisonment by a villain (xx-xxi). The friends and the

villain are characterized as agents, the file as the agency, the escape as the act, and the prison as the scene. In one reading, Burke explains, the motive to act might be attributed to the escapees' friends. But because of the transformability of the pentadic elements, other readings are possible. Motive might alternatively be attributed to the villain, to the file, or to the scene. Moreover, Burke explains that the friends themselves might be viewed under the sign of agency because of the important roles that their brains, hands, and educational backgrounds play in manipulating the file. Likewise, for the other elements of the anecdote: "if you reduce the terms to any one of them," writes Burke, "you will find them branching out again; for no one of them is enough" (xxi). Whatever reading one tends to favor, Burke suggests, it must nevertheless be acknowledged that all possible readings develop out of a common source and because of this contain within them the potential for change.

Whereas "tolerance by speculation" concerns "the speculative portion of the mind," Burke's "molten lava" metaphor also suggests something more. Here, the common source is visceral, aesthetic, and—importantly—productive. That is, the "great central moltenness" is a poetic idea; it encourages invention. As I point out in chapters two and three, an important common source for Burke is language. And language, as we saw in chapter two, combines elements of both nonsymbolic motion and symbolic action. It's in this way that language is cathartic; catharsis, I explain in chapter two, is the articulation of motion. A Burkean invention, then, should likewise be cathartic. Burke's moltenness metaphor and the image of "new combinations" being "thrust forth" reinforce this idea. In chapter two, I also pointed to Hawhee's examination of Nietzsche's considerable influence on Burke. There, Hawhee addresses the "poetic" metaphor, Burke's alternative to the mechanistic (i.e. positivist or semanticist) view of language that dominated the thinking of his day. It's worth remembering here that according to

Hawhee, “If the mechanistic view denies the constructedness of nature and posits science as the art of discovering rather than creating reality, then, Nietzsche claims, it is the most deceptive view of all. A more apt interpretive scheme would be one that acknowledges its constructive powers and seeks to create. And who better to inhabit this perspective than the artist?” (140).

And she continues:

In this Nietzschean framework, humans are considered, as Burke puts it, “possessed” by social forces and norms, but at the same time are “inventors of new solutions”

Further, these solutions must negotiate two conditions: one a being, a permanent state of possession, and one a becoming, an ever-changing emergence of force An easy humanism is rendered problematic in the Nietzschean-Burkean frame, as the process of becoming renders various points—social forces, individuals, discourse—indiscernible.

The Nietzschean forces in Burke’s thoughts on art suggest an alternative reading to [William] Rueckert’s: Rueckert’s assertion that “Between 1924 and 1941 [with the publication of *Permanence and Change* and *Attitudes Toward History*] Burke moved from writing poetry to theorizing about poetry to converting a theory of poetry into a philosophy of living” . . . might be turned around to say that during this time Burke converted philosophy into a theory of poetry. (140)

Hawhee aims to correct the prevailing view of Burke as a humanist. In making that correction, she, somewhat counter-intuitively, emphasizes the importance of invention. Humans are “inventors of new solutions.” But as she explains above, she is not referring to invention as discovery of already existing realities, which would be something akin to Ramus’s a-rhetorical invention. Rather, she is referring to invention as the means by which we construct our realities.

Finally, invention doesn’t happen “from scratch.” It must account for the social forces

that inform preexisting ways of knowing the world, the forces that possess humans. Invention, then, looks back in order to look forward. The inventor-artist-poet must reach back into the “great central moltenness” in order to create a new version of reality. Hawhee’s corrected, not-quite-humanist portrait of Burke hinges on this Janus-faced vision of the human inventor.

Of course, Hawhee is referring to invention as the site where “social forces, the individual, [and] discourse” become “indiscernible.” The elements themselves, I argue, become indiscernible in language. Isn’t limiting myself to language here giving short shrift to the individual and to social forces? Not quite. For one thing, Hawhee, contra Rueckert, argues that Burke’s interests go from writing about philosophy to writing about poetry, and in so doing, she underscores the importance of language. Elsewhere, Hawhee herself warns against “unlively” readings of Burke, readings that don’t account for nonsymbolic or more than symbolic forces at work in Burke’s writing (“Language” 333). And at the end of *PC*, Burke warns us against “forgetting that men build their cultures by huddling together, nervously loquacious, at the edge of the abyss” (272). It is in this way that humans are “possessed by” language; the impulse to use language is built into the nervous system. Language is a bodily inventive medium. I am thus heeding Hawhee’s and Burke’s warnings by focusing on language as a central site of invention in the Burkean scheme. As both symbolic action and more than symbolic action, language is always already at the intersection of the social forces to which Hawhee refers and inextricably bound up with the individual who uses (and is used by) language.

In sum, language is for Burke an essential—perhaps the essential—inventive medium. It makes sense, then, to turn to joycing, which Burke explicitly introduces as a heuristic in his footnote on tonal transformations. “By ‘joycing,’” writes Burke, “we mean the deliberate and systematic coaching of [tonal] transformations for heuristic purposes” (*RM* 310). In terms

employed by Burke at the outset of *GM*, *joycing* refers to a language-based mode of invention that exemplifies the workings of the great central moltenness. Moreover, the language-based focus on joycing means that this kind of invention isn't limited to content; rather, it suggests that form and content are, to borrow a word from Hawhee, indiscernible. As I highlighted in chapter two, both joycing and tonal transformations illustrate that language is never *just* discourse, that it is never just symbolic action. It is also nonsymbolic motion. Both joycing and tonal transformations seem intended to heighten our sensitivity to the formal qualities of language. Both point to the ways in which the sound and the feel of a word make that word moving. That is to say, a tonal transformation moves us because it reveals (an often unconscious) formal connection between an honorific word and a concealed offense, between what can be said and the unutterable. What this suggests, I think, is an important connection between invention and style. Allow me to further explain.

In my discussion of the Burkean sublime in chapter three, I explain that the sublime for Burke is, along with the ridiculous, one of two primary forms of equipment for living. Equipment for living, meanwhile, is Burke's way of characterizing the inventions of poets to deal with their situations. That is, equipment for living refers to the poet's symbolic encompassment her situation; it is, Burke claims, a way of confronting and managing the risk inherent in a given situation. Equipment for living, then, is inextricably bound up with the situation that prompted it. For a poet to invent, she must use the resources available within her particular situation. At the same time, because of the inevitable symbolic mediation that occurs with any language (see the discussion of motion and action in chapter two), the poet must confront the situation indirectly. It follows that poetry is an indirect reflection of the reality it confronts and to which it refers. This indirectness, as it turns out, is Burke's definition of style. In his discussion of the sublime, he

writes, “The poet’s style, his form (a social idiom), is the mirror, enabling him to confront the risk, but by the protection of an indirect reflection” (*PLF* 63). Later, in a different section of the same essay, he states bluntly, “Stylization is inevitable,” and goes on to offer the following examples: “Sometimes it is done by sentimentalization (saying ‘It’s all right’ when it isn’t). Sometimes, by the reverse, brutalization, saying it with an over-bluntness, in ‘hardboiled’ or its scientific equivalent (sadism if you like to write it, masochism if you like to read it)” (128). And then: “Sometimes the stylization is by neutral description, the method more normal to scientific procedure. And tragedy uses the stylization of ennoblement, making the calamity bearable by making the calamitous situation bearable” (129). While these aren’t exactly the plain, middle, and grand styles advocated by Cicero in *Orator*, Burke shares with Cicero the assumption that the speaker must choose a style appropriate to the situation at hand. Where they seem to differ, however, is that Burke takes it for granted that in choosing a particular style, one also to some extent invents the situation. Because of the inextricability of situation and strategy, one’s choice of style means that one has encompassed the situation in a particular way and thus (re)invented the situation to make it more bearable.

Sometimes, however, the style chooses you. In the same chapter (i.e. chapter three), I illustrated the importance of collaborative expectancy, itself an inventive, formal concept rooted in the form of language. Collaborative expectancy happens apart from or at the edges of the realm of symbolic action. Audiences, moved by the form of a particular message, are so moved because they are made to feel as though they are participating in the invention of that message. Burke says as much in his definition: “the audience is exalted by the assertion of collaborating in the assertion” (*RM* 58). “Once you grasp the trend in the form,” he goes on to write, “it invites participation regardless of the subject matter” (58). The enjoyment one feels in a moment of

collaborative expectancy, in the feeling one gets from invention, is for Burke born of style. In collaborative expectancy, style precedes substance; *verba* precedes *res*. Or better yet, *verba* is *res*.

All of which brings me back to Burke's discussion of dramatism, with which I began this section. Burke writes that his aim is to encourage "tolerance by speculation" by "[dealing] with a level of motivation which even wholly rival doctrines must share in common." Tolerance by speculation "may be addressed to a speculative portion of the mind which men of many different situations have in common." All of this suggests invention as excogitation. However, as we've seen, another thing "which men of many different situations have in common" isn't the mind but "nervous loquaciousness." If Hawhee is right to suggest that motion precedes action in the Burkean scheme (*Moving* 157), then the first step toward speculation is an affective one. We must *feel*, in other words, before we can think. Tonal transformations and joycing both emphasize this order of events. In so doing, they both highlight the affective qualities of language as more than symbolic action. However, it's joycing that Burke forwards as an invention heuristic, so it's joycing that I focus on for the remainder of this chapter. Joycing, in short, is very stylish. And its stylishness is the source of its inventive potential. Moving forward, I flesh out the notion of joycing as invention by linking it to notions of post-human invention, reception in distraction, and sublime composition, as well as to developments in sound in/as composition.

LINGUISTIC GARGOYLES

But why would Burke choose James Joyce as the namesake for the practice of "coaching" tonal transformations (*RM* 310). Thus far, I have primarily focused on what one might call the aesthetic implications of tonal transformations, as seen through the guises of form, the

motion/action pair, the unutterable, and catharsis. And Burke's use of the term *joycing*—an homage to aestheticist *par excellence* Joyce—would further seem to reinforce the aesthetic bent of tonal transformations, as would the fact his most extended treatment of this idea appears, by his own account, in a book titled *The Philosophy of Literary Form*. However, as I will illustrate, the term *joycing* actually, counter-intuitively, helps to reinforce the rhetorical implications of tonal transformations by highlighting the ways in which such transformations have an instrumental function and move audiences. Perhaps astute readers will note that I've already covered some rhetorical ground in my discussion of tonal transformations. Most notably, Burke's only overt reference (as far as I can tell) to either tonal transformations or *joycing* appears in his book called *A Rhetoric of Motives*. What's more, he defines the term *joycing* as “the deliberate and systematic coaching of [...] tonal transformations for *heuristic* purposes” (310, my emphasis). The point of *joycing*, in other words, is to teach us something. The critic who *joyces*, learns by *joycing*.

Burke, in his essay “Dramatism and Logology,” has this to say about the relationship between poetry and rhetoric:

Devices for raising the audience's emotions contribute to the office of “moving” them attitudinally in the desired direction. In my *Rhetoric* (1950), I suggest that, with regard to Longinus' *On the Sublime* where he is quoting both poets and orators as grand literary examples of such diction, we get the point better by our expression “How moving!” when we're not responding to the diction by deciding to do this or that or the other, but simply by “appreciating” the passage as a literary gesture. (91)

Here, Burke focuses on the term “moving,” a nod, no doubt, to Cicero’s classic definition of rhetoric’s three offices. His point here is that examples of what “moves” in Longinus’s treatise on the sublime can be found in both oratory and poetry. But more than that, Burke presents this type of movement as something distinct from the informational quality of the oration or poem: “we’re not responding to the diction by deciding to do this or that or the other, but simply [...] ‘appreciating’ the passage as a literary gesture,” he writes. In short, something intended to be rhetorical can turn out to be poetic. But there is also the implication, in turn, that such poetic qualities have a rhetorical effect.⁷⁰ We are, again, “moved.” If we revisit the passage from *RM*, we can see that in fact a speech’s poetic qualities can be source of identification (57-8)

In the “Dramatism and Logology” essay, Burke reinforces this idea with a description of Joyce’s imitation of a priestly oration *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. It is, he writes,

the *imitation* of a *genuine oration*, designed to so *move* its auditors by fear of Hell, as ‘information’ about what suffering is in eternity, that they’ll be moved to be good. But in the book, this is used as a *poetic device*. It *entertains* us. Yet, every such development serves as an analogue of the Bible’s relation between story and doctrine—it adds up to a BIBLE OF AESTHETICISM [sic], with corresponding story to match the doctrine. (91; emphasis in the original)

In this instance, the information counts, but only to the fictional auditors of the speech itself. What Joyce has done, Burke argues, is make the speech entertainment for the readers of his novel. The speech, in this capacity, becomes poetic. At the same time, however, the speech retains its rhetorical function as well. It is, Burke claims, both story and doctrine.

Perhaps at this point it goes without saying that joycing cultivates new perspectives. After all, the whole point of joycing is to transform one word into another word or set of words, and a

shift in terminology, any good Burkean will tell you, results in a shift in perspective. However, the implications of the particular sort of perspectival shift cultivated by joycing are worth sorting out precisely because of what they reveal about Burke's view of language. Specifically, they reveal the following:

- That language operates both semantically (informationally) and poetically (aesthetically).
- That the poetic/aesthetic function of language often operates unconsciously, or at least, in spite of human efforts.
- That the “natural” tendency of language is to move toward the poetic, the aesthetic, the unconscious.
- And finally, that the conscious cultivation of new perspectives by joycing is merely the overt, conscious effort to recreate something that often happens on its own.

This final point is the critic's job. The critic recreates a process that happens naturally. In so doing, the critic makes clear the terms of our—that is to say, the symbol-using animal's—relationship to the symbols we use. We are not ultimately controlled by the symbols we use, nor do we ultimately have control over those symbols, but rather, we exist in a give-and-take relationship with them. What joycing highlights about this give-and-take is that it operates somewhere apart from overt symbolism. The give-and-take is perhaps at its most effective, Burke suggests, when it is most poetic.

In *Kenneth Burke in the 1930s*, Anne George and Jack Selzer define *joycing* as the cultivation of new perspectives, and they trace the lineage of joycing to *PC*, where Burke spends several pages describing how Joyce successfully cultivated such new perspectives through the

invention of “linguistic gargoyles,” those examples of the grotesque in language that Burke examines in this book (*PC* 109). For Burke, the grotesque “tends to be revolutionary” (*PC* 112) by offering new sets of terms by which we accomplish thinking and acting in the world, and so do gargoyles. “The maker of gargoyles who put man’s-head on bird’s-body was offering combinations which were completely rational as judged by his logic of essences,” Burke writes. “In violating one order of classification, he was stressing another” (*PC* 112). Joyce’s writing—considered just after Burke’s claim that dreams too are gargoyles—is grotesque in the sense that it replaces one symbolic system with another. But just as importantly, the new symbolic system is born out of the remnants of the old. The maker of gargoyles doesn’t invent man or bird but instead takes bits and pieces of both and combines them in a new way. Thus, gargoyles provide a new perspective, but that perspective is rooted in old perspectives rather than entirely dismissive of them. In his article, “Burkean Theory Reborn,” Andrew King reinforces this point: “Exposing the phony linkages and word magic of hierarchically charged messages might bring enlightenment, but it might also bring confusion, cynicism, and alienation from one’s community” (34). Thus, King argues, Burke found it important to productively engage with the old rather than dismiss it. “He believed in trying to manage change in a way that energizes rather than bursts old creeds” (35). In short, the old perspectives provide the new perspective with a reference point.

Notably, Joyce creates his linguistic gargoyles by, as Burke puts it, “blasting apart the verbal atoms of meaning, and out of the ruins making new elements synthetically” (*PC* 113). That is to say, Joyce doesn’t simply create new perspectives out of thin air; instead, he fashions those new perspectives out of the old ones, “synthetically.” This illustrates how joycing can be both formal and impious: with a nod to the subtle coaxing of social change represented by the

notion of a graded series, it manipulates familiar forms—in this case phonemes (presumably) familiar to all speakers of a particular language, the “common ground” to which we’ve already referred—in order to create linguistic gargoyles. In creating his gargoyles, Burke writes, Joyce

has accomplished the dangerous feat of dreaming most laxly while most awake.

In the portmanteau words of his latest manner, he seems to be attempting to include within the span of one man’s work an etymological destiny which may generally take place in the course of many centuries, as the rigidities of education gradually yield to the natural demand that the language of practical utility and the language of “unconscious” utility be brought closer together and their present duality mitigated (114).

Given the biographical bent of their book, it is understandable that George and Selzer say little about the implications of Joyce’s linguistic gargoyles other than the fact that they help cultivate new perspectives. There is no mention, for instance, of Burke’s claim that Joyce’s linguistic gargoyles combine the “practical” and the “unconscious” ends of language. What exactly are we supposed to make of such a statement? What does Burke mean by the phrase “dreaming most laxly”? And why is it dangerous?

Charting the correspondences within this passage tells us much. For one thing, we can find correspondences between “dreaming” and “the language of unconscious utility.” And given that association, not to mention the dialectical structure of the paragraph itself, it seems justifiable to associate “the language of practical utility” with “most awake.” That is to say, Burke is, in these two sentences, restating the same idea in different terms: that the language we use to accomplish practical, everyday, even scientific tasks is presumed to have some kind of correspondence with reality, whereas the language of dreaming and the unconscious is seen as

symbolic, metaphorical, and poetic. Evident here is Burke's apparent distinction between semantic and poetic meaning, respectively.

Burke's essay "Poetic and Semantic Meaning" provides an illustration of his view of language as a tool that works both consciously and unconsciously. This essay, like so many others, finds Burke combatting the prevailing scientism of his day, represented here by what Burke calls "the semantic ideal," or "the aim *to evolve a vocabulary that gives the name and address of every event in the universe*" (PLF 141). Burke insists that there is no ideal, neutral language. Or, rather, he insists that there is such an ideal, but that it is only that, an ideal: "the ideal is itself an attitude," he writes, "hence never wholly attainable, since it could be complete only by abolition of itself" (PLF 150). An ideal, neutral language would offer a one-to-one correspondence between words and world, between action and motion. In this way, such a language would be much like the perfectly accurate map in Borges's infamous short story,⁷¹ which completely (and literally) covers the territory it's supposed to represent and thereby becomes indistinguishable from that territory. A perfect, neutral language would, in Burke's estimation, become indistinguishable from the world it attempts to name.

A more accurate view of language, Burke suggests, would make semantic meaning but part of a larger "poetic meaning." From the standpoint of poetic meaning, "An attitude may be reasonable or unreasonable; it may contain an adequate meaning or an inadequate meaning—but in either case, it would contain a meaning" (143). Viewing language through the lens of poetic meaning means accepting and even embracing the idea that language does not perfectly correspond to the world it tries to name. Thus, "'Poetic' meanings...cannot be disposed of on the true-or-false basis," writes Burke (144). The implications of such a perspective are far-reaching, but for the purpose of this chapter, I want to focus on the idea that musicality (in the form of

“tonal suggestiveness”) works against the semantic ideal. Burke says as much in his analysis of a passage from Lucretius, who, “in trying to make us feel the great relief that would come from the abolition of the gods, . . . exposes himself to the full rigors of religious awe” (152). That is to say, his attempt to be semantic turns out to be poetic: “He has tried, by the magic of his incantations, to get analgesia (perception without emotion); but he builds up, aesthetically, the motivation behind his anesthetic enterprise, thereby making us tremble all over again at the lines in which he reconstructs the sublimity of natural vastness and power” (153).⁷² Words alone, Burke claims, contain “incantatory power, themselves suggest awe” (153). And this awe is realized on a bodily level, “making us tremble.” Thus, in spite of Lucretius’s semantic intent, his words take on poetic qualities. Lucretius is musical and poetic in spite of himself. What Burke is calling for in this essay is, essentially, a refusal of the view of language as something we can control, something we can pin down and force to mean precisely what we want it to mean. Words are always already charged with aesthetic, poetic potential.

Hawhee’s examination of the intellectual relationship between Burke and Nietzsche reinforces this idea. The point of poetry is not to wrestle language to the ground, to control it. The point of poetry is to adopt an attitude whereby one allows language to “do its thing.” The connections and the new perspectives engendered by those connections are as much the product of language in and of itself than of the poet’s conscious manipulation. It’s a view of the poet as a kind of humble god, if you will. The negotiation of being and becoming operates in “the space between” and centers on the “unthinkable.” The poet submits to her nervous loquaciousness. Hawhee thus concludes that “An easy humanism is rendered problematic in the Nietzschean-Burkean frame, as the process of becoming renders various points—social forces, individuals, discourse—indiscernible” (140). Tonal transformations offer a vivid illustration of the ways in

which we access this “space between” in which social forces, individuals, and discourse overlap. Operating as they do in between motion and action, neither wholly of one or the other, tonal transformations offer a glimpse of the unutterable. In this sense, the criminal and the fecal might be viewed as approximations of what Hawhee calls the “unthinkable.” Is it any wonder that Burke draws important connections between poetry and psychoanalysis in his essay on “Freud and the Analysis of Poetry”?⁷³

With this in mind, we might revisit Burke’s readings of tonal transformations in *The Hairy Ape* and the “prayer learned in childhood” from “The Philosophy of Literary,” discussed in chapters one and two. In these two examples, we saw Burke pointing out the criminal, unutterable words lurking beneath the surface of the neutral word “fix” and the more honorific “guard” and “guide,” respectively. In both cases, authorial intent, that is to say, the conscious transformation of the unutterable into the utterable, matters less than the fact that the transformations are there. The author of a concealed offense, Burke reminds us, “encounters both external and internal resistance” to the use of more direct language (*PLF* 52).

These offenses seem to operate unconsciously on the reader and are what account for language that is aesthetically pleasing. Thus, as we saw in chapter three, Burke cheekily concedes that “In these utilitarian days, pure science must earn its ways by serving applied science” (65). At the end of a section of “The Philosophy of Literary Form” called “Beauty and the Sublime,” the second section of the long essay to which Burke refers in his *RM* footnote on tonal transformations, he suggests that his theory of tonal transformations would prove profitable in Hollywood, and in particular in the naming of young starlets, where “a happy choice may mean a difference of hundreds of thousands of dollars in box office receipts” (66). He proposes that “the experts in publicity” begin with a “socially forbidden” word and then “experiment with

slight transformations of this word, until they had produced a structure in which the original repellent word was retained as a barely audible overtone, flickering about its edges” (66). The result, Burke claims, would be that an audience “who did not know the genesis of this word, but who did know and dislike the word from which it had been derived” would find the name “exceptionally beautiful” (66). In other words, Burke argues that a socially forbidden word can play a key role in the appeal of another, more socially acceptable word. But the implications of this extend beyond the box office and into more serious areas of “applied science.” As Burke suggests in *Language as Symbolic Action*, “many motivational conflicts that might distress us in real life can be transformed into kinds of poetic imitation that engross us. Thus in the realm of the aesthetic we may be delighted by accounts of distress and corruption that would make the moralist quite miserable” (81). The shift from offense to neutral or honorific terms is not only aesthetically pleasing, it can also result in a shift in perspective, as in the foregoing example of the starlet being deemed “beautiful” because of her tonally transformed name.

So if, in the foregoing passage on Joyce, dreaming→the unconscious→poetry, and awake→practical utility→science,⁷⁴ and if—as Burke seems to suggest when he refers to “the rigidities of education gradually [yielding] to the natural demand”—the comingling of these two “utilities” is inevitable, then words, he seems to be saying, evolve in accordance with the demands placed on them by the unconscious but also, as Burke discovered in the work of Sir Richard Paget around the same time he was working on this book, the physical demands of language. Dreaming most laxly, then, refers to what from the Nietzschean perspective we might call man’s instinct for trickery and deception and his desire to be lied to. But for Burke this isn’t such a bad thing, for it emphasizes man’s improvisatory nature in the face of worldly, material hardship. It reveals Burke’s belief in language’s bountiful creativity, but it likewise notes the

limits and the affordances that “natural demands” (the body, the unconscious) place on that creativity. Thus, when Burke writes that Joyce combines these two aims of language, I take it to mean that Joyce’s linguistic gargoyles combine the symbolic and the non-symbolic qualities of language and that Joyce’s grotesque perspectives are successful largely because of this “natural” combination.

At the same time, while Joyce’s portmanteau words are “natural,” they are also “dangerous,” or at least, the way Joyce arrives at them—by “dreaming most laxly while most awake”—is dangerous. What Burke is trying to suggest here is by no means clear. However, in light of what has already been noted about the criminality of tonal transformations in chapter two, it seems to be the case that Burke is referring to Joyce’s ability to see the poetic potential in the ostensibly semantic. That is to say, “dreaming most laxly while most awake” refers to Joyce’s refusal to accept semantic meaning at face value. If this is a “dangerous feat” it is because it refuses the piety demanded by the acceptance of semantic meaning. Worth noting is that for Burke, Joyce has “accomplished” the feat and that he’s done so, not by a radical departure from the “the language of practical utility” (a move that would likely be deemed far too impious to be successful) but by combining the practical with the unconscious, by locating language’s poetic potential within its semantic functions.

Tonal transformations work unconsciously. Burke says as much in his discussion of “the concealed offense” in *PLF*, which he claims might be revealed by the discovery of “*unconscious punning in language*” (51-2; my emphasis). This point is worth revisiting, for it means that tonal transformations aren’t necessarily a way in which humans exert control over language. In fact, what it actually seems to mean is that humans have *less* control over the poetic possibilities in language than might be expected. And what joycing reveals—yes, through conscious human

intent—is the paradoxical notion that complete control over language has escaped even our most celebrated poets. All of which is to say that while human agents can consciously coax tonal transformations, the transformations can also happen on their own.

In sum, tonal transformations work within in the space between motion and action, cutting across the unconscious and consciousness, and across the distinction between rhetoric and aesthetics. This is especially evident when we note the “unutterable” content so often disguised by those transformations and revealed by joycing. In Burke’s estimation, then, Joyce invents by way of a return to the great central moltenness. He embraces his nervous loquaciousness. He is, on the one hand, possessed by language but also, on the other hand, able to fashion new meaning, new perspectives through recombination of the very thing that possesses him. Moreover, a key component of Joyce’s inventive strategy is the more than symbolic quality of language. That is to say, Joyce’s invention straddles the line between motion and action. This why Burke names his heuristic for the discovery of tonal transformations “joycing.” Invention for Burke, then, must account for both the moltenness of content and the moltenness of form.

INVENTION IN DISTRACTION, OR STYLISH INVENTION AS AFFECTIVE INVENTION

In the recent article “Reinventing Invention, Again,” Peter Simonson redefines invention for a post-human context. Simonson’s post-humanist invention attempts to resolve two “productive tensions” and “two longstanding prejudices” (300). The productive tensions in question refer to the tension between invention as something “emplaced” or localized and invention as something dispersed and to the tension between an adherence to tradition and rebellion against tradition. For the purposes of this chapter, I focus primarily on the former, which Simonson explains in this way: “On the side of location were the *topoi* and *loci*, discrete

conceptual ‘places’ to find arguments, further harnessed through the compact heuristic of stasis theory. On the side of dispersal was the view that invention’s materials were cast across the totality of human knowledge, which required a rounded liberal education instead of specific training in technique” (300). On both sides of this tension, however, invention remains linked to “excogitation” (302). That is to say, invention, be it emplaced or dispersed, was something linked to the mind of the individual rhetor. The prejudices Simonson combats are what he calls *logophilia*, or the tendency to locate invention in discourse (i.e. in argument, thinking, and reasoning) “at the expense of affects, things, and bodily sensations” (312) and an affinity for “creativity and originality as invention’s normative core” (300).

Simonson’s goal in this essay is to define invention (or, should I say, redefine invention) for a contemporary post-human context, thereby resolving the aforementioned tensions and combating the aforementioned prejudices. But he begins with what seems like a pretty simple definition: “Invention indexes all the ways that discourse and other materials are generated for rhetorical address” (299). Later in the essay, he offers an even simpler definition (“*the generation of rhetorical materials*”), though he also takes the time to justify his use of the term “generate” by noting how much ground the term covers: “to bring into being, give rise to, form, produce from other substances, or reproduce” (313). The apparent simplicity of Simonson’s definition of invention belies both its nuance and its broad scope. “Rhetorical materials are generated through vitalities that traverse human and non-human realms,” he writes. “Heterogeneity characterizes both the agencies and products of invention” (313). Thus, his “revised definition disperses invention widely” across eleven different types of media, including bodies, language, and physical space (313). His goal is twofold. First, he aims to bring together the two sides of the aforementioned productive tensions, finding a sort of conceptual middle ground between

emplaced and dispersed notions of invention. Simonson's reinvented invention is, as he puts it, "widely" dispersed, but it also "seeks to . . . reestablish contact with premodern views not favoring original beginnings, and enhance them with post-humanist insights about displaced agencies" (318). Second, Simonson aims to correct the longstanding prejudices of logophilia and originality, thereby welcoming "affects, things, and bodily sensations" into the realm of invention. Reinventing invention for a contemporary post-human context, Simonson moves invention out of the domain of the individual and the cognitive and into the domain of the material and the social.

Already, I think we can notice the connection to joycing here. On the one hand, joycing as an invention heuristic is emplaced; it is situated within a particular context, the context of the poet-inventor and the context of the language in question. That is to say, joycing refers to a situated practice. It is explicitly labeled a "heuristic" by Burke, and it centers around the coaching of tonal transformations in order to discover (invent) new/concealed strategies for confronting that situation. On the other hand, joycing is dispersed. As an emplaced heuristic, it nevertheless compels the poet-inventor to venture beyond the textual situation at hand. If the poet-inventor is to discover new strategies for confronting a given situation, she must venture beyond the text itself, beyond symbolic action, and into the domain of nonsymbolic motion, especially those qualities of nonsymbolic motion that unite other nervously loquacious symbol users. Joycing, like Simonson's reinvented invention, taps into the very inventional media posited by Simonson as a corrective to the more traditionally logophilic invention. Language-based though it may be, joycing nevertheless moves invention away from excogitation and distributes it across the nonsymbolic, more than symbolic qualities of language. And, finally, joycing doesn't invent new meanings from scratch, repurposing the old to make it new again.

By moving invention away from excogitation and dispersing it across a host of “inventional media,” Simonson’s post-humanist invention and joycing both echo Walter Benjamin’s theory of “reception in distraction,” an idea Benjamin outlines in his seminal essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Mechanical Reproducibility.” There, Benjamin writes that in the modern age, “Quantity has been transformed into quality: *the greatly increased mass of participants has produced a different kind of participation*” (39).⁷⁵ “The masses,” he goes on to say, “are criticized for seeing distraction in the work of art, whereas the art lover supposedly approaches it with concentration.” Benjamin, it turns out, is on side of the masses here. Wary of the art lover’s mindful appreciation for the work of art, he distinguishes between the two forms of perception, that is to say, between distraction and concentration: “A person who concentrates before a work of art is absorbed by it.... By contrast, the distracted masses absorb the work of art into themselves. Their waves lap around it; they encompass it with their tide” (40). In other words, “reception in distraction” refers to an experiential, tactile engagement with the work of art. To illustrate the point, Benjamin turns to architecture, which he deems the most constant of all art forms. “Buildings,” he writes, “are received in a twofold manner: by use and by perception. Or, better: tactilely and optically. Such reception cannot be understood in terms of the concentrated attention of a traveler before a famous building” (40). Noting the interplay between these two forms of perception, Benjamin even goes so far as to privilege the tactile over the contemplative: “*For the tasks which face the human apparatus of perception at historical turning points cannot be performed solely by optical means—that is, by way of contemplation. They are mastered gradually—taking their cue from tactile reception—through habit*” (40). Benjamin, in short, aims to move reception from excogitation, a move that parallels both Simonson’s efforts to reinvent invention along post-humanist lines and joycing’s emphasis of the inextricability of

motion and action in language. Indeed, what Burke highlights for us in his theories of tonal transformations and joycing is a kind of reception in distraction: reception (and perception) through the tactile qualities of language. Recall from chapter two that tonal transformations can be “coached” but that to certain extent, they also happen independent of conscious human intent. Thus, paradoxically, any effort to appreciate and “coach” tonal transformations must to some extent involve a reduction—as much as possible—of conscious intent. To this end, we might revisit Byron Hawk’s aforementioned conference presentation. There he describes the recording of Michael Pissaro and Greg Stuart’s *Continuum Unbound*, a combination field recording-musical composition. Pissaro’s composition aims to capture the feel of the emergent soundtrack of sheer nature. To this end, Hawk writes,

Pissaro developed a heuristic to ground his composition in discontinuities: there has to be a definite beginning and ending—they left home and returned; there is no necessary path to get back to their home territory; and independent actors operate without central organization to create an emergent organization that is contingent and improvised. The role of the composer, then, becomes to ensure that each part is composed independently and is mixed in an aleatory fashion.

Might we not say that Pissaro’s composition strategy walks the line between reception in distraction and invention by excogitation? If so, it might offer a strategy for using joycing in the composition classroom. So utilized, joycing would abide by the terms of Simonson’s post-humanist invention, in spite of (or, perhaps, because of) its attention to language.

CONCLUSION

Let me begin my conclusion to this chapter with an anecdote. For the past two years, I have been assigned to teach a first-year composition course called “Advanced College Reading

and Writing,” or ENG 103 as it’s known at my home institution. The course is created for students who place out of the standard first-year composition course, and so it is generally assumed (by both the English Department and the teachers who teach this course) that students populating this course are especially motivated. Since I have also found this to be true, I have taken upon myself to capitalize on that motivation by focusing the course on getting students to reflect on the role of literacy in their own lives and on the rationale for requiring students to take a composition course during their first year. To this end, I assign David Foster Wallace’s review of Bryan Garner’s *Dictionary of American Usage*, which Wallace wrote for *Harper’s Magazine* in 2001. As anyone familiar with Wallace’s nonfiction writing might guess, this is not your typical book review. Right off the bat, Wallace acknowledges how odd it must be to find oneself reading a review of, of all things, a usage dictionary. “From one perspective,” he writes, “a certain irony attends the publication of any good new book on American usage. It is that the people who are going to be interested in such a book are also the people who are least going to need it” (40). His explicit goal, however, is to convince his *Harper’s* readers that usage dictionaries are in fact exciting books because they represent the sites of fraught ideological battles: “Did you know that probing the seamy underbelly of U.S. lexicography reveals ideological strife and controversy and intrigue and nastiness and fervor on a nearly hanging-chad scale?” And then: “Did you know that U.S. lexicography even *had* a seamy underbelly?” (40) To that end, Wallace not only rigorously details the ins and outs of the ideological underpinnings of the usage debates between prescriptivists and descriptivists, he also adopts a playful style that includes frequent digressions, extensive footnotes, and clever abbreviations. His unstated aim seems to be that usage can indeed be interesting. “Just look at my own usage,” he seems to say. “Isn’t this fun?”

My experience teaching Wallace's "Tense Present" indicates that students generally find Wallace's attempts to make usage interesting, well, uninteresting. The problem, as I see it, is Wallace's approach. I find the essay highly entertaining. But then again, in my case, Wallace is preaching to choir (something that, again, he readily admits [40]). The problem—and Wallace's essay, I'll admit, is an extreme example—is that the essay is too heady. Wallace is trying to get his readers excited about usage, but his attempts to generate this excitement by getting his readers to think, which is to say, by excogitation. For all its playfulness, Wallace fails to capitalize on the "sonority of words." His essay lacks a visceral element.⁷⁶

Again, Wallace's essay is, admittedly, extreme in its "heady" approach to usage. However, his approach, in its headiness, is not all that different from how compositionists have traditionally dealt with matters of *verba*. That is to say, compositionists have tended to ignore the visceral elements of language, perhaps due to the legacy of the much-maligned current traditional approach to composition that gave birth to the discipline and against which the discipline in its current state rebelled in the mid twentieth century. Since the influential Dartmouth Conference in 1966, compositionists have, like Freire, been suspicious of attending to stylistic concerns, largely because such attention reinforces the compositionist's role as gatekeeper to the university at large (Parker). In the view of many compositionists, style often comes at the expense of the "real" content, at the expense of so-called "global" concerns, at the expense of *res* (Parker, Rose).

You can probably already see where I'm going with this, so I'll come right out and say it. It's the style that affects us viscerally, that really gets us moving. For all of our disciplinary development beyond the early, dark days of university writing instruction and the so-called current-traditional approach, we are still, I posit, very much current-traditionalists. And our

students know this. Semester after semester and year after year, the students I encounter in my capacities as a writing instructor and as a writing tutor display deep insecurities about their “grammar,” by which they mean not only their grammar but also their mechanics and their usage. In short, they’re worried about their style. Many claim that they weren’t taught it, that grammar instruction has been abandoned in high school curriculums, yet they correctly intuit—as Wallace makes plain in his review of those usage dictionaries—that *verba* matters and that they are being judged because of it, even when the ostensible criteria for assessment is something else entirely. As we teachers recognize this desire in students; we’ll often try to throw them a bone. “Visit the writing center,” we’ll tell them. Maybe we’ll even include a “grammar” workshop somewhere in the semester, perhaps when we’re fed up with the poor style we encounter in paper after paper. Unfortunately, however, as Richard A. Lanham points out in the updated edition to his classic *Style: An Anti-textbook*, “Pleasure in words does not occupy a dominant place in the contemporary panoply of pleasures” (1).⁷⁷ Style, when it’s effective, when it’s rhetorically successful, pleases us aesthetically, viscerally, unconsciously. Style is the stuff that gets us excited about studying what we study, which is to say, language. This is the impetus for Lanham’s stylebook. He calls most composition handbooks “excruciatingly boring” (*Style* 2) and proposes instead “a different way to teach composition, a way which [emphasizes] pleasure rather than duty” (4).

In this chapter, I use Burke’s theories of tonal transformations and joycing developed in the previous chapters as the basis for my argument that the problem with teaching invention is that it ignores the *verba* side of invention, that it ignores the sonority of words. A more truly Burkean invention, I claim, would attend more carefully to *verba* and all of the implications such attention entails. According to the joycing-based invention heuristic I outline above, it’s largely

the style that makes language moving, and this style, when it's moving, resonates with symbol users, not just on a symbolic level, but also on a *more than* symbolic level. The goal here is to emphasize the importance of pleasure, of teaching students to “love . . . words for their own sake,” as Burke puts it. This love of words for their own sake provides an important foundation for creating new knowledge, for invention. Thus, Freire's distrust of the sonority of words might be said to suggest a distrust of appreciating words for their own sake, a distrust that can likewise be seen in many a composition course. For Freire, the only thing that repetition of “four times four is sixteen” can *really mean* is something mathematical; there is no real meaning, then, apart from the mathematical content of this sentence. But of course, there is something else worthwhile in that statement. It might not be meaning, *per se*, but the expression as an expression, its form—its sound and its visceral qualities—is something worth attending to. Arguably, the very repeatability of the expression is what lays the groundwork for accepting the real meaning that is the mathematical content.

It becomes apparent that what we need to find are examples of language that students find persuasive, moving, and beautiful. In my two previous chapters, I explored Burke's view of the symbol-using animal's relationship to this “great central moltenness, where all merged” as it emerges in his discussion tonal transformations and joycing (chapter two) and the sublime (chapter three). With these chapters, I aim to emphasize what for Burke were the very blurred lines between aesthetics and rhetoric, what he saw as the one of the most significant features of language: its elasticity, its poetry. Oddly enough, joycing is one heuristic of Burke's that has been roundly ignored by pretty much everyone.⁷⁸ I hope that this chapter serves as a call for compositions in particular and rhetoricians in general to reclaim the study of aesthetic language. Joycing reminds us that language is as much about aesthetics as it is about relating information.

Joycing, I think, offers an approachable to style and its generative potential. Getting students to *feel* the generative potential of language in turn cultivates a sort of collaborative expectancy, a phenomenon that, for Burke, gets at the essence of language's ability to move us.

As I've shown here and in chapter two, language's ability to move us is linked to the Burkean concept of catharsis. Of course, finding a pedagogical application for catharsis is not without difficulty. That is to say, catharsis isn't necessarily that amenable to pedagogy. How does a composition instructor help students understand and realize the cathartic potential of language, especially when catharsis can be so difficult to pin down? The answer to that question might very well lie in the fact that language is always already both rhetorical and aesthetic. That is to say, language is a social, situational, and sensory phenomenon. Language serves the rhetorical purpose of moving others. Language is also "of the senses."

What I'm trying to show in this dissertation is that tonal transformations and joycing highlight the difficulty in separating these two aspects of language. A revised Burkean composition pedagogy, then, would play up this difficulty. What this means for composition teachers working in the Burkean vein, then, is that we should aim to help students (1) locate emotional connections to language (i.e. we must help them find a cathartic, affective connection to language) and (2) understand the extent to which such emotional connections are socially informed and can in fact be used to further solidify social connections. In other words, composition instructors should help students see language (1) as an aesthetic phenomenon and (2) as a social phenomenon. One way of doing this, the heuristic joycing suggests, is by temporarily bracketing meaning so that one can focus on the sensuous, aesthetic qualities of language, which will in turn lead to new meaning. The social, rhetorical aspect comes in when others share in that new meaning, whether consciously or unconsciously. If speech and writing

are to be once again united under the broader heading of rhetorical education, maybe aesthetics is the place to start.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION: LANGUAGE AS LANGUAGE AS MORE THAN SYMBOLIC ACTION

In his inaugural “Musical Chronicle” review for *The Dial*, written at the end of 1927, Burke muses about the analogous relationship between the pairs emotion and reason and music and letters, and in so doing he seems to present an early formulation of the motion-action pair. For Burke, appreciation for and by reason is inextricably bound to appreciation for and by emotion, a relationship that for Burke justifies the job of the critic. “We recognize, perhaps too readily, that even the sublime can be cheapened by multitude,” he writes, “and here enters the wedge whereby criticism may force itself out of the class of parasites into the class of the useful; for at those wayward and unpredictable times when a composer’s eloquence is happening outside of us rather than within us, much can still be made arresting to the prying eye and we can be rescued from sloth, by substituting investigation for sympathy” (536-7). The critic here is tasked with ocular investigation. Burke contrasts this with the composer’s aural “eloquence” and “sympathy,” qualities that, when they work, work “within.” But if the composer’s work begins to work outside of us, it is the critic’s job to pick up the slack, so to speak, to move the work “within” by other means. In other words, the inevitable lulls in the emotional content—in this case, through repetition—of a particular musical composition provide the critic with an opportunity to insert his reason and thus become useful, rousing an audience from its sloth by investigating and making interesting those “outside” moments of the composition. Contrary to the kind of aesthetically driven thinking we’ve seen throughout this dissertation, Burke is being very reasonable here. Or so it seems.

Note Burke's use of the term *arresting*, the way he suggests audiences might "be rescued from sloth." These are qualities attributed to the critic, not the composer. The critic, in Burke's estimation, can work on an emotional level too. The implication is that while music is often paired with emotion and form and letters paired with reason and content, such pairings are far too reductive. "There are not only degrees of emotion, but even kinds," Burke goes on to point out in the same essay. "The satisfaction of the Kantianer over his page of syllogisms is no less an emotional state than the static pall of Chopin. So one could keep the pot a-boiling with pedantry, and that to expect of an audience a sustained emotional tension is to ask for nothing short of pathology" (537). Not only is that a great line in the classic Burkean mode, it also reveals Burke's complicated view of the relationship between form and content, emotion and reason (and to a certain extent, the relationship between music and letters). What Burke suggests is that, simply put, they do in fact have a relationship and that the distinction between the two can in fact be quite blurry. On the one hand, Burke deems "useful" the critic's ability to steady those "wayward and unpredictable times."⁷⁹ On the other hand, Burke seems to suggest that the Kantianer's syllogisms and Chopin's "static pall" are both formal qualities and that both have emotional resonance. The syllogism, after all, is the form, not the content, of an argument.

Perhaps the most striking thing about this statement is Burke's insistence that criticism not only aspire to be "useful," but that it "force itself out of the class of parasites." Such a bold claim reminds us that Burke felt few qualms about attacking what he deemed the inferior forms of criticism of his day.⁸⁰ This statement also reminds us that Burke devoted much effort to defining the role of the critic. In "Productive Criticism: Then and Now," Robert Ivie, drawing heavily on Burke's ideas, argues that the productive criticism is a distinctly rhetorical feature: "The thoroughly rhetorical critic, I want to argue, is a productive scholar who enriches the social

imaginary for the purpose of enhancing human relations.” But the Burke connection, he laments, can often be difficult to see:

Yet, we aren’t accustomed to thinking of Burke as an engaged social critic writing within the academy or, at least, read by academic intellectuals. We are more comfortable with Joseph Gusfield’s sociological take on Burke’s theory of symbols and society than William Rueckert’s normative rendering of Burke’s comic corrective. We think of Burke’s theory as a way of accounting for rhetorical practice rather than as a way of addressing social problems and improving human relations.

But Burke does in fact argue for a productive criticism, Ivie claims, for a criticism that is socially engaged because it “enriches the social imaginary.” And the Burkean critic’s tool? Language.

Burke says as much after his discussion of tonal transformations in *RM*. He writes that hierarchical, cathartic mountings, of which tonal transformations are but one example, “can be consciously used for speculative liberation from a given social order—or both consciously and unconsciously, it can be used for fixing men’s loyalty to a given social order” (311). Joycing, as an aesthetic heuristic used for coaching tonal transformations, emphasizes this useful aspect of criticism, what Ivie calls being a “productive critic,” which is to say, a *poetic* critic. (To be productive in the Burkean scheme is to be poetic. See chapters one and four.) At the same time, joycing emphasizes the central role of language in that productivity. More to the point, it emphasizes the productivity of language, a productivity rooted in the sonic, the physical, the affective, non-symbolic elements of language.

My hope is that at this point you’ve come to see that for Burke *engagement* is a multifaceted notion that blurs the distinction between nonsymbolic motion and symbolic action.

Social engagement, for Burke, would mean *aesthetic* engagement. In chapter two, I illustrate how tonal transformations and joycing reveal Burke's interest in a physical engagement with language, an engagement which taps into the "unutterable" and that leads to the sort of symbolic "misuse" which lies at the heart of perspectival shifts (and, thus, social change). Invention, in other words, is aesthetic; it is "of the senses." In chapter three, I examine Burke's theory of the sublime and illustrate how, for Burke, finding pleasure and beauty in language means pushing language to its limits and in so doing tapping into the collective nervous loquaciousness of human beings. In chapter four, I argue that joycing offers an aesthetic, rhetorical heuristic—that is to say, an engaging heuristic—that looks toward the reunification of speech and writing in rhetorical education. If critical social engagement means being productive and thus poetic, then critical social engagement must reach beyond symbolic action and into the realm of nonsymbolic motion. It stands to reason, then, that critical social engagement along Burkean lines should be founded on aesthetics. This is what Burke means when, during his discussion of "tonal transformations" in the *RM*, he writes that "If all these arbitrary syllables are assumed to be meaningful in some one language system, then it is our notion that they could perform this added *poetic* function, along with their strictly lexicological role, as defined in a dictionary" (310; my emphasis). The poetic (i.e. the productive) function of language is the stuff of language that happens apart from meaning.

In my introduction to this dissertation, I drew on observations by Burke (*RM* xii) and on the work of John Poulakos to illustrate the splintering of rhetoric in the eighteenth century. Once a discipline that—as Burke observes—provided the home for psychology, anthropology, sociology, and, most notably for my purposes here, aesthetics (see also, Bizzell and Herzberg 3 and Kennedy's *Prooemion* to Aristotle xi), rhetoric after the Enlightenment became divorced

from those areas of inquiry as each came into its disciplinary own. While rhetoric studies in recent years has set out to reclaim some of those disciplines, this spirit of reclamation has largely neglected aesthetics (if only by that name). One notable exception to this neglect of aesthetics in contemporary rhetoric studies can be found in work on Poulakos. In his article with Steve Whitson on the implications of Nietzsche's aesthetic rhetoric, we are introduced to the idea that "Aesthetic rhetoric focuses on the human body as an excitable entity, an entity aroused by language. Inasmuch as the ears can be bribed, the nose infiltrated, the skin raised, the tongue stimulated, and the eyes stopped at the surface of things, the task of aesthetic rhetoric is to speak words appealing to the bodily senses" (Whitson and Poulakos 141). Whitson and Poulakos are describing a rhetoric devised from Nietzsche, but they might as well be writing about Burke and his theories of tonal transformations and joycing here.⁸¹ They explain that "life for Nietzsche cannot be predicated on Truth because it emerges from aesthetically generated images" (138). For Nietzsche, human life is impelled by "primordial desires, irrepressible passions, and blind drives" (132), including the drive to make sense of the chaos of existence (136). This makes any search for "truth" or "reality" a fool's errand. The point for Nietzsche is not that we try to discover reality but that we strive "[make] it more hospitable" (137).⁸² All meaning-making is therefore artistic; the meaning-making that declares itself knowledge has merely forgotten its artistic roots.

Why *artistic*? Because in Nietzsche's explanation, the drive to make meaning is prompted by "our sensuous encounter with phenomenal being" (137). "Thus, the value of all things . . .," Whitson and Poulakos explain, "can be estimated only by the aesthetic criterion. Among the pre-Platonic Greeks, the Sophists acknowledged the significance of linguistic surfaces in making the world appear as they wished it" (138). Perhaps unsurprisingly then,

Nietzsche celebrated the Greeks for their love of beauty. Whitson and Poulakos quote his *Gay Science*, in which he remarks on the Greeks' tendency to go "to the theater *in order to hear beautiful speeches*" (qtd. in Whitson and Poulakos 138). Nietzsche, it seems, was a fan of epideictic rhetoric, what Burke describes as "the love of words for their own sake" (*RM* 72). In the end, this kind of rhetoric—a rhetoric not bound to forensic or deliberative concerns—is the ur-rhetoric, a rhetoric most fully attentive to aesthetics. When, in his foundational statement on animal rhetoric, George A. Kennedy writes, "there does seem to me that there is a something found in nature that either resembles rhetoric or possibly constitutes the starting point from which it has culturally evolved" (1), and when he defines rhetoric as "the energy inherent in communication: the emotional energy that impels the speaker to speak, the physical energy expended in the utterance, the energy level coded in the message, and the energy experienced by the recipient in decoding the message," he is describing an aesthetic rhetoric, even if he doesn't call it that (2).⁸³ Tonal transformations and joycing likewise suggest such an aesthetic ur-rhetoric.

One notable difference between Nietzschean-Burkean aesthetic rhetoric and Kennedy's animal rhetoric is the role of language. In the former, language is especially significant: "Aesthetic rhetoric puts on its best face in oral performance. Its charm and impact cannot be greater than what the human voice, in all its resonances, its tempi and its rhythms, allows. Even in its written dress, it follows the rules of speaking as dictated by the physiology of the ears, the larynx, and the lungs" (Whitson and Poulakos 141). According to Burke, "The 'presentness' of epideictic rhetoric . . . brought it closest to *appeal by sheer delight*" (*RM* 72). In the latter, however, Kennedy's aim seems to be to move beyond language. His first of eight theses is that "Rhetoric is prior to speech" (4). In sum, both of these rhetorics—the Nietzschean-Burkean aesthetic rhetoric and Kennedy's aesthetic rhetoric—emphasize the importance of aesthetics.

That is to say, they both emphasize the qualities of rhetoric that occur outside the domain of reason. Thus, both might be said to speak to the current affective turn in rhetoric studies. However, if one rhetoric might be said to better represent the current affective turn, it's Kennedy's, because it's his aim to move beyond language.

The affective turn in rhetoric studies has in some ways been a reaction against language as the medium for rhetoric. After the much talked about linguistic turn in the humanities, the pendulum seems to have swung back all the way in the other direction. While I've yet to find anyone naive enough to abandon language outright, the general consensus definitely seems to be that language just isn't enough. Language alone, those affective rhetoricians seem to suggest, isn't enough to capture the full scope of a given rhetorical effort. And when it is considered as part of a rhetorical effort, it's often associated with meaning and reason, with symbolic action. This is something rhetoricians have recognized for a while now, if Debra Hawhee's recent review essay for the *Quarterly Journal of Speech* is any indication. Tracing rhetoric's "sensorium" as it's developed over the 100-year history of the *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, she points to "many essays appearing in the pages of this journal that attempt to situate the discipline as concerned with more than—and often something entirely other than—reason, rationality, or the symbolic work of language" (3). "That effort," she continues, "of course includes the recent rise in work on materiality, bodies, affect, media, objects, machines, nonhuman animals; the list ought to go on" (4). Later, she writes that "sensation needn't become encased in language to be known—the epistemic approach to rhetoric has run its course; rhetoric is not, or not only, a means of knowing and needn't be so attached to meaning. Other attachments matter for rhetoric" (13). For her part, Erin J. Rand defines the affective turn as "often invoking potentiality and becoming, the body's capacity to affect and be affected, and the vital forces and intensities that

exceed linguistic capture" (161; my emphasis). Alluding to what amounts to the presumed rationality of (academic) language, Rand writes, "our secular norms of argumentation preclude spirituality and other forms of ritual practices as potentially legitimate ways of knowing" (173). Thomas Rickert, meanwhile, develops his theory of ambient rhetoric by mining the history of rhetoric for concepts like the *chōra*, concepts that illustrate the limits of language by emphasizing the importance of the place of rhetorical invention and "the offloading of mental and physical activity" (42). When Rickert does treat language, he claims that "Burke almost uniformly places meaning first, and the rhetoricity implicit to symbolic action emerges with it" (161).

To cite one more example: in a recent essay, Dana L. Cloud and Kathleen Eaton Feyh argue that rhetoricians need to "develop critical frameworks for evaluating the role of affect/emotion in constitutive rhetorics" (315). In other words, they suggest that affect and emotion play an important role in those rhetorics that establish group identities, and they further suggest that when emotion/affect and reason align in the right circumstances, constitutive rhetorics can be quite powerful. They write, "Only when emotion is bound to the experience and interests of the collective it hails can reason and revolt rightly 'thunder together'" (315). In sum, Cloud and Feyh argue that reason and emotion work together and that the emotion evoked by a particular rhetorical effort needs to be rooted in the collective experience of the individual it attempts to unite. For Cloud and Feyh, "ideas move together with their embodiment" (307), and so language alone is not enough to satisfy the critical framework for which they call. This is not the same thing as saying that language doesn't matter. On the one hand, Cloud and Feyh make a point of illustrating how the language of the socialist anthem "La Internationale" alone is not what makes the song effectively constitute worker solidarity. For them, the lyrics and the music

are what give the song its rhetorical power. On the other hand, they also point out how changing the lyrics (as Billy Bragg did in the late 1980s) changes the identity of the group that the song attempts to hail. Still, language here and in the other foregoing examples is associated with meaning, that is to say, with symbolic action. In spite of the strides made during the recent affective turn, we've seemingly failed to see the kinds of affective potential of language illustrated in Burke's theories of tonal transformation and joycing. This is not to say that Burke has been completely ignored by those exploring affect. Brian L. Ott and Diane Marie Keeling turn to Burke to develop their notion of "common sensations," but their essay focuses on the aesthetic, affective potential of film rather than language.

There are perhaps at least two primary reasons for this. First, there was the technologizing of the word, famously described in Walter Ong's seminal *Orality and Literacy*. As Ong illustrates, the advent of literacy meant treating language as an abstract entity, something removed from or apart from lived experience. The technologizing of the word, then, means the downplaying of language's orality. This, in turn, led to a downplaying of language's oral characteristics (though they did not by any means disappear, Ong is sure to point out). This in turn has led to an association between language and symbols. Hawhee's aforementioned reference to "the symbolic work of language" is telling in this respect. And, of course, Burke's influence in popularizing this association, especially among rhetoricians, is by no means insignificant, as Rickert's aforementioned characterization of Burke's rhetoric illustrates.

Second, there was the aforementioned separation of aesthetics from rhetoric. After the split between rhetoric and aesthetics, the rhetoricians who helped to revive the discipline in the latter half of the twentieth tended to shy away from the ways in which language excites us as language. Pigeonholed into dealing with matters of plain speaking for a few hundred years after

the split, when rhetoric returned in the twentieth century, it neglected to reincorporate aesthetics, which by this point had flourished into its own area of inquiry. With some exceptions (Whitson and Poulakos), rhetoric has neglected to recover what makes language—as language—moving. To appropriate a line from Burke, we've forgone the love of words for their own sake.

The explications of tonal transformations and joycing I've developed in this dissertation point, I think, to how many of the concerns of those rhetorical theorists who are interested in affect—be it Cloud and Feyh's interest in the way that emotion and experience work together, or Rickert's call to consider the “ambience” of the rhetorical situation—how many of these concerns are actually found in language itself. To her credit, Hawhee laments Burke's association with epistemic rhetoric, which came at the expense of attention to what she calls his “highly sensuous treatment of language” (9). But take, for instance, Rickert's notion of ambient rhetoric. For Rickert ambience denotes the idea that a subject both constitutes and is constituted by the environment in which she finds herself. This is precisely what tonal transformations seem to indicate as well. They show that language refers to something other than its overt referent and that the other stuff of language, the stuff other than symbolic action, plays a significant part in the way language moves us.

So what, then, does my dissertation ultimately add to the larger conversation in rhetoric studies happening around affect? I hope that this dissertation illustrates Burke's love of language is evident throughout his *oeuvre* and that this love of language *as* language is not just some genteel, esthete appreciation. Burke loves language in a way that's aesthetic in the most literal of senses: he loves it viscerally, affectively. Thus, it seems to me that Burke's theories of tonal transformation and joycing remind us of the importance of cultivating a similar appreciation, to celebrate the epideictic, and, finally, to see language as *more than* symbolic action.

NOTES

¹ Burke neglects to offer an example of the portmanteau transformation but still has this

² Actually, while it is still perhaps a commonplace among Burke scholars that Burke's promise of a *Symbolic of Motives* (also referred to in *RM* 294) was ultimately unfulfilled, Rueckert disputes this in his essay in *Unending Conversations* ("Kenneth Burke's 'Symbolic' 100).

³ In a rare exception, Richard H. Thames treats tonal transformations briefly in his explication of Burke's famous epigram "Ad bellum purificandum." Thames's and Cem Zeytinoglu's joycings of the epigram serve as the basis for their respective re-readings of *A Grammar of Motives*. Ironically, Wolin actually glosses over and even dismisses some of Burke's most important illustrations: the concealed offense and musicality of verse. (Note too that while Wolin sees Samuel Taylor Coleridge as someone Burke admires, he neglects an important essay on Coleridge and tonal transformations: "Musicality in Verse.")

⁴ Debra Hawhee's article on Burke and Sir Richard Paget is the first (and perhaps the only, the present study excepted) critical work to recover this aspect of Burke's psychology/philosophy of language, if by another name and with another focus altogether. See Hawhee "Language as Sensuous Action."

⁵ The numbers, according to my very cursory "Multi-search" results on The University of Georgia's library portal—results which began as a search for "Kenneth Burke" and were then narrowed down by the subjects "Burke, Kenneth, 1897-1993"; "Burke, Kenneth"; "Kenneth

Burke”; “Burke, Kenneth, 1897-1993”—are as follows: *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* (152), *Rhetoric Review* (147), *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* (74), *Communication Quarterly* (56), and *Philosophy & Rhetoric* (53).

⁶ The *OED* calls this “outward or external sense.” The notions of an “outward or external sense” and of an “external world” are problematic concepts. I interrogate them below.

⁷ My understanding of aesthetics is in part inspired by Reuven Tsur’s work in cognitive poetics. In the essay “Rhyme and Cognitive Poetics,” Tsur explains the distinction between three levels of linguistic reception when it comes to language: the acoustic level, the phonetic level, and the semantic level. The latter two levels, he explains, are different from the first because they refer to a stage of reception in which the language received contains some kind of cognitive differentiation. That is to say, the “raw” sounds are organized in some meaningful way, not just according to what the different words “mean,” as is the case on the semantic level, but also according to how words sound differently from one another (which is to say on the phonetic level). Burke’s concepts tonal transformations and joycing operate primarily somewhere between the acoustic and phonetic levels, but at other times, they also seem to operate on the semantic level. Such a blend of the different levels of linguistic perception, of the “raw” and the differentiated is a telltale sign of aesthetic language. Tsur explains:

In ordinary speech, the use of the phonetic code is “transparent”; it is exploited for the efficient use of short-term memory, but no conscious or half-conscious attention is paid to it. In literary use, some attention is shifted to it: we do acknowledge its affect [sic] on the whole, but are hard put to identify its source. Since, however, we use language as a rule in order to convey meanings rather

than mere sounds, semantic coding does have a certain primacy over phonetic coding, even in literary language. Whenever possible, we tend to foreground semantic coding; only when something seems to “go wrong” with the semantic coding, we tend to shift our attention to the phonetic coding . . .

Aesthetic, then, is something akin to “raw sound plus.” Tsur sums it up nicely when he writes “In the poetic mode of auditory perception, the pre-categorical sensory information that reaches consciousness somehow becomes significant.” Burke, in his own way, seems to be saying the same thing but is oftentimes hamstrung by his phrase “symbolic action,” a phrase which itself suggests a privileging of the semantic.

⁸ Heard is indebted to Diane Davis, who theorizes non-hermeneutic encounters with radical alterity (*Inessential* 11-2).

⁹ See Wolin for a discussion of Burke’s back-and-forth with Dewey, Hook, and the logical empiricist Ernest Nagel (145-50).

¹⁰ See Wolin for a discussion of the way Burke applauds Coleridge’s poetry (138).

¹¹ Burke offers another fine example of charting narrative arpeggios in “On Musicality in Verse.” As if to illustrate this inextricability of musicality and content, Burke draws conclusions about the meaning of an owl’s “nonsense syllables” in Coleridge’s poem “Christabel” based on musical connections to some of Coleridge’s other poems (378). The passage is worth quoting in full:

But though I shall fight shy of expressionistic correlations for the present,
before closing I would like to append some observations bearing upon the call of

the owl as Coleridge finally decided to form it in “Christabel”: “Tu—whit!—
Tu—whoo!”

In “Frost at Midnight,” the owl’s cry” is mentioned, and though the sound is not explicitly given, may we not discern it there, implicitly, two lines below, as the poet, after mentioning its cry, announces that he has been left to “that solitude, which *suits abstruser musings*” [sic]? The sound also appears in “Fears in Solitude,” where the reference is to the “owlet Atheism, Sailing on obscene wings athwart the noon.” For *w* is but *oo* pronounced quickly—and the line might be transcribed phonetically: “oo-ings athoo-art the noon.” Incidentally, as this passage proceeds, we may get a glimpse into a possible translation of the nonsense syllables in “Christabel.” I refer to the lines in “Fear in Solitude,” where the owl’s cry is given as an explicit question containing the sounds of both “whoo” and “it”:

And hooting at the glorious sun in Heaven,

Cries out, “Where is it?” (378)

Burke’s reference to the owl’s “nonsense syllables” also gestures towards the unspeakable. His aim, however, seems to be to translate these so-called “nonsense syllables” into the more sensible but still phonetically related “Where is it?” from “Fear in Solitude.” In both poems, Burke is saying, the owls cry the same question. In “Fear in Solitude,” the question is “explicit” (378). In “Christabel,” it’s implicit.

While this is a clever job of charting/joycing on Burke’s part, and one that gives the lie to Rueckert’s claim that joycing deals solely with the fecal and the sexual (see chapter one), I feel

like he has it kind of backwards. Maybe the explicit question in “Fear” derives its power because of its tonal association with the “nonsense” syllables in “Christabel.” Indeed, the owl that cries more explicitly in “Fear” (and the owl whose cries are given more explicit symbolic treatment in “Frost at Midnight”) are in fact speaking the unspeakable “nonsense” of the more phonetically (and let’s face it) symbolically accurate owl-speak from “Christabel.”

¹² As Burke describes it, graded series refers to a spectrum of terminology between polar opposite terms, which is to say that the terms are all related by meaning. Burke’s theory of tonal transformations suggests something like a graded series of sound, where the terms in the series are phonetically rather than semantically related.

¹³ Rueckert’s is probably the most straightforward explanation of cluster analysis, which he likens to the development of an index or concordance. “Essentially,” he writes, “it is a way of finding out what something means by finding out what the term is associated with in the poet’s mind” (*Kenneth Burke* 86).

¹⁴ Actually, Burke acknowledges this kind of *bifurcation* when he discusses a hypothetical situation in which overt references to *God* are forbidden. See *PLF* (57) and chapter 1 (22).

¹⁵ “It has been treated somewhat in *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, notably pages 51-66, 258-271, 369-378,” he tells readers (311).

¹⁶ I mention “Beauty and the Sublime” in passing here. I treat it more thoroughly in chapter two.

¹⁷ William Harmon and C. Hugh Holman's *Handbook to Literature* (8th ed.) offers the following examples of phonetic *chiasmus*: "Firestone snow-tire" and "moonstruck mushroom" (90).

¹⁸ According to Warren Kirkendale, the musical devices "augmentation" and "diminution" can actually be traced to rhetoric.

¹⁹ This order of events (experience-interpret-cope) seems intuitively logical. First, we experience the world, then we interpret the world based on that experience, then we cope with the world based on that interpretation. However, Burke himself suggests no such sequence. In fact, his definition of terministic screens suggests more simultaneity: "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 as a *deflection* of reality" (*LSA* 45). Moreover, at outset of this particular essay, Burke makes it very clear that "The ultimate *origins* of language [are for him] as mysterious as the origins of the universe itself" (44). Language, and all the attitudinal and hortatory baggage that comes with it, must be seen "simply as the 'given'" (44).

I address the notion of "coping," if by another name, extensively in chapter three. Suffice it to say for the moment that Burke argues that one of language's key roles is to provide us with a way of *dealing* with reality. This is what he means by his assertion that we view "Literature as Equipment for Living" (for which I provide a reading in chapter three). As I go on to illustrate in both this chapter and the next, the most affecting, moving language is that which most closely corresponds to an individual's reality, which of course is always away screened through the "given" of language.

²⁰ See also Hawhee's treatment of this review (*Motion* 158-65).

²¹ See also Hawhee's claim that for Burke "communication is difficult to separate from language's materiality, which is never far from communing, communicative bodies" (*Motion* 124).

²² For more on invention and its relationship to style, see chapter four.

²³ For more on collaborative expectancy, see chapter three.

²⁴ Rueckert's other charge, that joycing is an example of "a method created to make a theory work," is worth some discussion too. To a certain extent, Burke suggests that creating a method "to make a theory work" is inevitable. In *PC*, he writes, "one tends to state the problem in such a way that his particular aptitude becomes the 'solution' for it" (242-3).

²⁵ For more on joycing, see chapter four.

²⁶ Rueckert's is probably the most straightforward explanation of cluster analysis, which he likens to the development of an index or concordance. "Essentially," he writes, "it is a way of finding out what something means by finding out what the term is associated with in the poet's mind" (86).

²⁷ See also Burke's statement from *RM*, which places notions of good and bad along what he elsewhere calls the "graded series":

Either elegant or filthy language can represent the hierarchic principle, just as both "up" or "down" represent the "principle of height." . . . In this way, extremes can meet. To call a man very moral or to call him very immoral is at least "the same" in the sense that, in both cases, one is saying, "This man is to be considered exceptional from the standpoint of moral considerations"—and that is one of the

purely “grammatical” factors behind “ambivalence” that might otherwise seem merely “irrational.” (258)

This notion of extremes “meeting” within the same hierarchy is important for Burke, because it allows him to examine in literary and cultural works the substitution of one extreme for another and to make sense of those substitutions by accounting for the hierarchic principle of which they are a part. For example, Christ is both the greatest sinner and the redeemer of those sins. This is also the basis of his reading of T.S. Eliot’s *Four Quartets*, in which, Burke argues, Eliot elevates earlier imagery (both from his earlier poems and from the earliest of the *Quartets*) as the poems progress, from the particular to the universal, and moves up the hierarchy (Thus, “In my beginning is my end” and then “In my end is my beginning”). This makes sense, given that these poems, the last of Eliot’s career, are written after WWII and his conversion to Anglicanism.

²⁸ See also his subsequent statement that “Typical Freudian exegesis would “reduce” all these to a kind of “forbiddenness” that is contained in the taboos of stage one. Our method would require us to judge by the context alone” (*PLF* 57).

²⁹ It’s worth noting, too, that Burke also offers an example in which “God” is the pun that conceals the unutterable, so to speak: “My favorite instance is that of Senator Carter Glass, who in his ‘inspired’ defense of the gold standard would give us progression from talk of “gold” to talk of ‘God’ (again our g—d structure with *ablaut*).” (58)

³⁰ Melissa Mohr, in her recent *Holy Shit: A Brief History of Swearing*, likewise refers to the “two spheres of the unsayable—the religious and the sexual/excremental, the Holy and the Shit, if you will” (3). In this way, Mohr echoes Burke’s discussion of the “unutterable” in *PLF*. As Mohr puts it, “A history of swearing is a history of their interaction and interplay” (3). And it

seems worth pointing out, as Mohr does a few pages later, that particular obscenities can actually connote polar opposite definitions (6). In short, Burke is acknowledging the perhaps obvious point that, as Mohr puts it, “everyone has a different bar, a different account of what is considered to be sayable and unsayable” (13).

Notable too is that in the examples of her grandmother and of Baudelaire with which she begins, Mohr mentions that while both lost language—to dementia and a stroke, respectively—both remembered swear words (3). Fascinatingly, this is likely in part due to the *physiological* components of swearing. Besides being able to induce physiological changes like an increased pain threshold and an increased heart rate, swear words, some scientists believe, might also be stored part of the brain—the limbic system—“responsible for emotion, the fight-or-flight response, and the automatic nervous system” (Mohr 5-6). Stuff like this leads me to believe that Burke is really talking about our own unique, limited sensory experience as we engage with the world when he refers to the individuality of the nervous system and the law of property located there. And of course she mentions the cathartic release of swearwords: “Oaths in the past offered the catharsis we now seek in obscene language” (8).

Also worth noting is Burke’s discussion of H.L. Mencken, who in *American Language* describes what Burke labels the Hollywood screenwriters’ practice of devising euphemisms for “four-letter words” by replacing the vowels (usually with an “er”) but maintain the consonants, as in the transformations from “nuts” to “nerts” (*PLF* 52; *Mencken Supplement* 655). The transformation from “fuck” to “frack” discussed below seems to be a similar move. But the transformation doesn’t necessarily move from vulgarity to concealed vulgarity, as Mencken himself illustrates:

The average American, I believe, has a larger profane vocabulary than the average Englishman, and swears rather more, but he attempts an amelioration of many of his oaths by softening them to forms with no apparent meaning. *Darn* (= *dern* = *durn*) for *damn* is apparently of English origin, but it is heard ten thousand times in America to once in England. So is *dog-gone*. Such euphemistic written forms as *damphool*, *helluva* and *damfino* are also far more common in this country. *All-fired* for *hell-fired*, *gee-whiz* for *Jesus*, *tarnal* for *eternal*, *tarnation* for *damnation*, *cuss* for *curse*, *holy gee* for *holy Jesus*, *cussword* for *curse-word*, *goldarned* for *God-damned*, *by gosh* for *by God*, *great Scott* for *great God*, and *what'ell* for *what the hell* are all Americanisms; Thornton has traced *all-fired* to 1835, *tarnation* to 1801 and *tarnal* to 1790; Tucker says that *blankety* is also American. *By golly* has been found in England so early as 1843, but it probably originated in America; down to the Civil War it was the characteristic oath of the negro slaves. (*American* 153-4)

³¹ For an excellent example of such pugnacity, see Burke's joycing of the characters' names in the "Comments" section of the *Coriolanus* essay:

Though the names are taken over literally from Plutarch, it is remarkable how tonally suggestive some of them are, from the standpoint of their roles in this English play. "Volumnia" suggests the voluminous—and often, on students' papers, I have seen the name spelled "Volumina." "Virgilia" suggests "virginal." "Aufidius" suggests "perfidious." And in the light of Freudian theories concerning the fecal nature of invective, the last two syllables of the hero's name are so

‘right,’ people now often seek to dodge the issue by altering the traditional pronunciation (making the *a* broad instead of long). (96)

³² What I am here calling “the tidy symbolicity of words” is what Burke, in the essay “Poetic and Semantic Meaning” from *PLF*, calls “the semantic ideal,” discussed below. More relevant to my purpose here is Burke’s claim that “musicality” or “tonal suggestiveness” work against the semantic ideal; it works against the notion that language can be rid of attitude (153). Burke is referring here to Lucretius’s mixture of ideals, an attempt to be semantic that turns out to be poetic:

He has tried, by the magic of his incantations, to get analgesia (perception without emotion); but he builds up, aesthetically, the motivation behind his anesthetic incantatory enterprise, thereby making us tremble all over again at the lines in which he reconstructs the sublimity of natural vastnesses and power, a vision reinforced by the tonal suggestiveness of his sentences Also on this page, the statement that words alone contain “incantatory power.” (153)

The poetic view of language, in other words, draws attention to its musicality and to the emotional power contained therein. What’s more, Burke’s example suggests that this musical, emotional power can be found even in language that is ostensibly semantic. The symbol-using agent’s intent, then, is only one part of the equation. Language has its own musicality whether or not the agent means for it to be there.

³³ Burke seems to have had a particular distaste for traffic. Elsewhere in *PLF*, he regards traffic as the source of ulcers in cab drivers (11).

³⁴ For more on “medicine men,” see chapter three.

³⁵ Actually, “The Concealed Offense” is section from the long form essay “The Philosophy of Literary Form.”

³⁶ From a Burkean perspective, *antithesis* might not actually be the best choice of word here. In *The Rhetoric of Religion*, Burke’s sixth analogy between “‘words’ (lower case) and The Word (*Logos, Verbum*)” (7) states that “The relation between the name and the thing named is like the relations of the persons in the Trinity” (34). He writes:

Quite as the first person of the Trinity is said to “generate” the second, so the thing can be said to “generate” the word that names it, to call the word into being (in response to the thing’s primary reality, which calls for a name).

Next note that there is a kind of *correspondence* between the thing and the name for the thing. There is a state of *conformity*, or *communion*, between the symbolized and the symbol. Insofar as we are considering merely the relation between a name and the thing it names, some such technical term as “correspondence” or “conformity” will serve our purposes. But insofar as the Trinity is said to be composed of “persons,” we must translate our idea of perfect correspondence into correspondingly “personal” terms. And the word for perfect communion between *persons* is “Love.” (29-30)

Burke finds a similar relationship in the Hegelian dialectic: “Given the genius of the negative, the term “thesis” of itself implies “antithesis”—and both together imply “synthesis,” the element of communication between them” (30). The point for Burke here is that “thesis” and “antithesis” do not necessarily have an antagonistic relationship, as is often thought, nor does the former necessarily have priority over the latter, even in a temporal sense. Rather, like the Father and the

Son of the Trinity, they exist simultaneously, if not in the *narrative* sense, then in the *logical* sense (30-2; the italicized terms are Burke's and denote temporal and syllogistic relationships, respectively). "Though there is a sense in which a Father precedes a Son," Burke writes, "there is also a sense in which the two states are 'simultaneous'—for parents can be parents only insofar as they have offspring, and in this sense the offspring 'makes' the parent. That is, logically, Father and Son are *reciprocal* terms, each of which implies the other" (32). All of this is to say that I mean *antithesis* in the antagonistic, non-Burkean sense.

³⁷ Pieters and Madelein indicate that the dating discrepancy is due to the fact that while *Peri Hupsous* first appeared sometime during the first century A.D., the author Longinus to whom the text is usually ascribed lived during the third century A.D. (580). Because of this ambiguity, many commentators have taken to calling the author of the *Peri Hupsous* "pseudo-Longinus." However, most of the sources referred to here, including Burke, refer to the author simply as "Longinus." For the sake of simplicity and clarity, in what follows I adopt the latter convention—dated though it might be—and refer to Longinus as the author of the *Peri Hupsous*.

³⁸ Notably, Duncan cites Burke as one of a handful of authors who hint at "a larger sensory experience of rhythm" (599).

³⁹ Cf. note 2.

⁴⁰ The essay in question is called "The Status of Art."

⁴¹ I discuss form and formal appeal at length in chapter two.

⁴² This bears some similarity to O'Gorman's reading of Longinus, mentioned above. I treat these similarities, as well as important differences, in the conclusion.

⁴³ Joel Overall explains the “graded series” this way:

The “graded series” represents a spectrum of terms that many would classify as gradients between polar opposites, but Burke’s “graded series” essentially eliminates polarities by focusing on how the orientations encompassed within these graded terms convert into the next. Thus, the concept of wetness can be converted upwards in the graded series to become soaked, then drenched, until it is sopping. Similarly, wetness can be converted downward in the graded series to become moist, then damp, and eventually dry. Because the change in perspective is achieved by degrees, people might be more inclined to consider a position that had seemed unconnected to their orientation. (445)

By eliminating polarities, the graded series can also help explain how, as in the examples explored in chapter one, “God” can become “a concealed offense” or how “church” and “sewer” alike can meet up, so to speak, in a single word. Moreover, tonal transformations and joycing suggest that for Burke the graded series can work aurally as well as symbolically (as in the movement from church to sewer). That is to say, antithetical terms might be “bridged” by way of their tonal similarities. Locating continuities between antithetical terms in order to resolve this antithesis is, Overall explains, a traditionally rhetorical move (445 n.4).

According to Greig Henderson, there are four “realms” of symbolic action: the grammatical realm, which is concerned with “accuracy”; the rhetorical realm, concerned with persuasion; the symbolical realm, concerned with consistency; and the ethical realm. These distinct, yet overlapping realms are what allow Burke “to transcend the formalism of intrinsic approaches, the reductionism of extrinsic approaches, and the indeterminism of poststructuralist

approaches” (185). That is to say, Burke's “fourfold conception of symbolic action” accounts for the complex interplay between language [how about *symbol*?] and the reality that language is supposed to represent, what Henderson calls “the dialectical nature of the transaction between the system of signs and the frame of reference, between verbal implications and empirical observations...the intrinsic and extrinsic are mutually dependent” (185).

⁴⁴ At the end of his essay “Rhetoric and Poetics,” Burke writes,

My “Dramatistic” theory of “symbolic action” does not permit me to use categories that draw the lines at precisely the same places where he [Dr. Howell] would prefer to have them drawn. Also, frankly, I am much more interested in bring the full resources of Poetics and *Rhetorica docens* to bear upon the study of a text than in trying to draw a *strict* line of demarcation between Rhetoric and Poetics, particularly in view of the fact that the full history of the subject has necessarily kept such a distinction forever on the move. (*LSA* 307)

⁴⁵ And what of those reasons to which Burke refers? The ones that would compel us to “[believe] that even the most ostentatious” rhetorical figures “arose out of great functional urgency”? The most compelling reason comes at the beginning of this section of *RM* (called “Traditional Principles of Rhetoric”) in which he writes,

Persuasion involves choice, will; it is directed to a man only insofar as he is *free*. This is good to remember, in these days of dictatorship and near-dictatorship. Only insofar as men are potentially free, must the spellbinder see to persuade them. Insofar as they *must* do something, rhetoric is unnecessary, its work being

done by the nature of things, though often these necessities are not of natural origin, but come from necessities imposed by man-made conditions...” (50)

And then, a few pages later, Burke continues, “it seems to be a fact that, the more urgent the oratory, the greater the profusion and vitality of the formal devices. So they must be *functional*, and not mere ‘embellishments.’ And processes of ‘identification’ would seem to figure here” after which he introduces his notion of “collaborative expectancy” (57-8).

We might also point to another passing remark, made just before the foregoing passage on verbal display for its own sake, about the philosopher Croce:

Croce seems to have taken this terminology of piecemeal effects [that is, the names of rhetorical figures] as the very essence of rhetoric. And though, in accordance with Croce’s attitude, the modern replacing of logic, rhetoric, and poetic by “esthetics” relegated such forms to the class of “mere rhetoric,” he could have quoted from Cicero and Quintilian passages that derived “artifice from eloquence, not eloquence from artifice. (66)

Now what do the passages Burke is here “deriving” actually mean? That is to say, what advantage does “artifice from eloquence” have over “eloquence from artifice”? If *artifice* has a clearly negative connotation, and *eloquence*, on the other hand, has a clearly positive connotation, then what Burke is getting at here is a kind of rehabilitation of rhetoric, one in which the stuff of “mere rhetoric” that’s usually seen as manipulative is born out of, as he puts it in the next paragraph which I’ve already quoted at length above, necessity, the need to persuade, out of the need to do something.

⁴⁶ Again, this is very much in line with O’Gorman’s take on the *Peri Hupsous*. O’Gorman writes that Longinus’s text “moves easily between poetical and rhetorical discussions, and most of the text operates without any significant distinction between the two” (73). O’Gorman is quick to point out, however, that there are times—and the foregoing example in which Longinus distinguishes between persuasion and ecstasy is one such instance—where Longinus gives rhetoric a distinctly pragmatic bent; nevertheless, the best rhetoric is that in which overly persuasive and pragmatic ends are concealed by a display of verbal skill. “Poetry and rhetoric are identical in their extraordinary manifestations,” O’Gorman writes, “and as extraordinary style is Longinus’s main concern, the domain of poetry and rhetoric overlap significantly in the text” (73).

⁴⁷ In *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory*, her classic statement on the matter, Marjorie Hope Nicolson disputes this chronological development of the sublime from “rhetorical” to “natural” and argues that for English writers the so-called “natural” sublime actually predates the arrival of Longinus’s rhetorical sublime by way of Boileau’s translation. She writes that “Longinus did little else for the “Natural Sublime” than to offer some assistance in vocabulary (29-31). Nicolson’s account of the sublime very much corresponds to what Burke says about the way language develops in, among other places, *PLF*, *RM*, and *RR*. I discuss this account in a subsequent section.

⁴⁸ As I discuss in the introduction, in the 1930s Burke found himself being pulled in two directions: the aesthetic direction and the leftist/politically direction. Burke was often labeled an esthete by the leftists and a leftist by the esthetes, but he had sympathies with both sides and looked for ways to bridge the gap between the two. For more, see George and Selzer (61-5).

⁴⁹ For more on the controversy, see Pullum and Cichocki and Kilarski.

⁵⁰ One wonders what analogous sense would be improved by reading literature, though one might suggest, as I do in chapter four, that paying attention to tonal transformations might improve one's hearing.

⁵¹ Indeed, Burke's *oeuvre* presents him as a category-dismantler from the get-go. Most notably, in the *CS* essay "The Status of Art," Burke surveys the then-recent and current trends in the theorization of art (in particular, "Art for Art's Sake," "Psychological Theories of Art," "Economic Theories of Art," and "World Historical Theories of Art") in order to deconstruct them, showing how the way each theory values art paradoxically leads to its devaluation:

Most remarkable of all, however, is the fact that the doctrines of art's ineffectualness have flourished in a period noted for its intense utilization of art . . . The proper complaint here, however, is not that art has been ineffective, but that a certain brand of art had been only too effective . . . Still, we should not be driven by the excesses of our opponents into making too good a case for art. Such was, perhaps, much of the trouble in the first place. (113)

⁵² See chapter two for more on the motion-action relationship.

⁵³ James Paul Gee uses "equipment for living" to elevate video games to the level of art form, which is funny because Burke's essay knocks literature down a few pegs.

⁵⁴ According to Roberta S. Maguire, "Kenneth Burke, the (white) American rhetorician whose 'sociological' to understanding art, which renders it 'equipment for living,' has had a profound impact on [Albert] Murray's formulation of a contemporary blues-based aesthetic theory" (7).

⁵⁵ Maguire and McGowan seem to be at odds when it comes to the role of aesthetics. Maguire is pro-aesthetics while McGowan is “anti.” McGowan writes: “For Burke, at stake is literature's relation to life, and his championing of the active and direct participation of literature in life is poised against an aestheticist distancing of that relation. Both conceptions of literature-Burke's and the aestheticists' - should be understood dialectically. That is, the conceptions are produced in (contextual) relation not only to one another but also to the larger ensemble of social forces and practices within which they are proposed and enacted” (143).

⁵⁶ Some might see in Burke's characterization of the realm beyond symbolic action as the *abyss* evidence of Burke's reputed humanism, a charge often leveled against him (Hawhee “Burke and Nietzsche” 131). While it is beyond the scope of this study to fully explore the implications of Burke's humanist tendencies, I will posit that Burke's apparent humanism is, if anything, a *pragmatic* humanism (see McGowan), one that views man's role as the symbol-(mis)using animal as something of the hand we're dealt. That is to say, human experience, human being, is necessarily filtered through the lens of symbolic action (see Crable “Symbolizing”), and it is a lens that's been permanently affixed to our collective retinae. But for Burke, as complicated and all encompassing as this lens is, it is not without cracks. As I intend to illustrate, the abyss—and all that stuff beyond the realm of symbolic action—still makes its presence known, just as we saw motion bubbling up through the symbolic web in the tonal transformations analyzed in chapter two.

⁵⁷ One of the “attenuations” Burke cites is Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's *Laocoön*. Lessing's early work of aesthetic theory is noteworthy, not just for Burke's mention of it, but for its status as a touchstone in aesthetics, and for the fact that it famously delineates between the job

of painting and the job of poetry. Painting, Lessing writes, is medium that exists in space, that is to say, it is static, while poetry exists in time. These respective media thus have certain limitations that shape them and which, if they try to transgress (that is to say, if they try to overcome these limitations) they fall short. Lessing's delineation, then, is based on the ineffable, the unrepresentable, the sublime (though Lessing himself doesn't call it that). Painting, for instance, because it exists in space, cannot depict action and must (or should, Lessing argues) depict a crucial moment and, in so doing, prompt the viewer of the painting to represent the action in his or her mind. Regarding this particular point, Lessing makes the interesting observation that the painter should seek to portray, not so much the crucial moment of action, but some other moment that prompts the viewer to imagine the crucial moment. In his eponymous example, Lessing claims that the Laocoön sculpture does not depict Laocoön with his mouth *wide open* in a moment of agony. Rather, the sculpture depicts the man, enveloped, along with his two sons in snakes, with a look on his face that suggests sighing. Why is it, Lessing speculates, that the sculptor should depict Laocoön in this manner while a poet like Virgil can depict Laocoön screaming in agony? The reason, Lessing states, is that if the sculptor (or another artist, like a painter, working in a visual, space-oriented medium) should depict the precise moment of agony, then viewers of the artwork would eventually get bored looking at it, and it would lose its artistic power. A poet, on the other hand, can depict that *act* of agony as it occurs, but is himself limited to what he can say in terms of what the scene looks like and must settle on key descriptive features rather than trying to describe everything (something, by the way, which Burke decries in contemporary realist fiction). The point to make about Lessing is

that Burke is slyly excusing Lessing's aesthetics (with its strict divisions between different art forms) as a product of its time and place, a strategic response to the situation that produced it.

⁵⁸ Burke's review of Wagner's letters for *The Dial* provides a clear illustration of how an artist develops "loyalty" to his disease. In this brief review, Burke dismisses the notion that the majesty and achievement of Wagner's professional life should be matched by a comparable achievement in his personal life. Indeed, the letters suggest quite the opposite, prompting Burke to begin his review in this way:

Possibly, when we meet with a kind of ambitious tragedy in the work of art, a species of aspiring dignity comprising marked violence and resignation, we should automatically expect as a parallel in the artist's life little that is accomplished (perfected) and much that is beyond his best management. We should not consider his art invalidated by the apparent discrepancy, as the dying "new psychology" was recently tempting us to do with too much promptitude, but should find it in the nature of things that the same proficiency is not consubstantial to both life and page. (85)

Besides giving Burke the opportunity to relish in the demise of psychological criticism (something he would do again at length in *CS*), this notion of a distinct separation between an artist's personal and private lives sets Burke up to make what I take to be the more significant point that the artist can, with his art, actually create his own situation. "The success of an artist resides greatly in his skill at arranging the circumstances of his work; he exemplifies his qualities by the manufacture of an environment for them," he writes (85). Indeed, the reason Wagner failed to succeed personally is because of how all-consuming his professional life was for him.

“What we are left with, then,” Burke writes of the portrait of Wagner revealed in his letters, “is the spectacle of a man for whom the process of creating (and of gaining acceptance for his creations) was the generator of all the other standards of his life” (86). And then: “we can understand how his productivity as an artist might serve as the prime determiner of a morality, even making that which seems like hypocrisy or opportunism when judged by other codes, quite loyal when judged by his own” (87). In other words, the strategy we use to define our situations can in turn help shape our situations all the more.

⁵⁹ Burke’s second “Musical Chronicle” article for *The Dial* offers a helpful way of understanding how Burke sees what Rasula identifies as the modernist problem of representing the unrepresentable. In this “review,” Burke is interested in the problem of how the moderns (his contemporaries) have returned to the music of Bach, pointing out how readily available Bach’s music is to the concertgoer. He suggests that it is because the moderns find themselves in a situation similar to Bach’s—a nice prelude, by the way, to his claim in “The Philosophy of Literary Form” that artist’s messages are successful in as much as the artist’s situation is similar to the audience’s. He describes their corresponding situations this way: “It was also the fact that the moderns, like Bach, seem to have held as one of their strongest preoccupations the balancing of the licit and the lawless, the search for distinction in the direction of chaos” (84). Burke explains how, after Bach, the Impressionist movement accepted chaos as a form of musical expression because of the way it was likened to different “ideas.” During the Impressionist era, “as gradual exhaustion of the field drove composers once more into the remoter areas of consistency—the lawless was now made acceptable, not by a coexistent technical counteragent, but by the addition of an ethical element—the inclusion of an ‘idea.’ New sounds were

henceforth admitted for their representative value” (85). Here, we can see the very collapse of image and idea that Burke calls the “poetic image.” In this case, the Impressionists sanctioned lawlessness and chaos of new sounds by linking them to ideas. At the time Burke wrote his review, modern composers were trying to scale back the “musical ideas”/“sound-values” notion of music-making prominent in the Impressionist age, describing what he calls “the modern attempt to ‘retrench’ upon the literary allowances without at the same time retrenching upon the extreme wealth of tonal freedom which such allowances had produced” (85). In Burke’s estimation, Bach offers moderns a model for using both form (what Burke goes on to call “the technical”) and chaos (or tonal “allowances”).

In fact, the main thrust of Burke’s thinking in this review is the relationship between form and chaos. Burke claims that form responds to the chaos, making chaos palatable, a strategy that in turn leads to the legitimation of chaos as a strategy/form all its own. Here’s what Burke writes:

In Bach, this inclusion of a “subversive” element was always matched by some higher principle of order. We could cite, for instance, his many ways of fixing and emphasizing the character of his melodic lines until they were able to exist side by side as “individuals,” thus waiving the claims of strict harmonic adaptation to each other. Each motive, that is, was made to stand out so strongly in its own right that the motives could, though played simultaneously, be heard in terms of the melodic independence of each, an otherwise “unlawful” chord progression being excused by the superior assertiveness of the motives themselves. (84)

And later: “certain notes serve in a dual capacity, and as melody or harmony, partake somewhat of the licences [sic] of both. Or again, the many inessential notes, natural to a style of melody

which, like Bach's works up and down the scale by single or half degrees, afford opportunity for a substratum of cacophony which could be noticed as such only were the music to be halted at one of these points and the ear allowed to dwell on it" (85). He is describing the (indirect reference to the) abyss, which is, if not born out of, then accessed through the form, so that in layering formal elements together, one might be able to get a glimpse of the chaos underneath. In the first passage, anyway, Burke talks about individual motives being strong/prominent enough to distract us (in a sense) from the chaos that occurs when several of these motives are set off in motion simultaneously. This begins to get at the notion that the abyss is never really available to us, but that it's perhaps best represented by the amalgamation of competing motives, all presented together at once in a kind of cacophony or overstuffed Burkean parlor.

⁶⁰ Interestingly, Socrates calls poetry "a kind of public speaking" and then "a kind of rhetorical public speaking" (Plato 123).

⁶¹ Ironically, one of the avant-garde compositionists Sirc mentions and praises is Irmischer, the very person who is responsible for the widespread misuse of the pentad in composition.

⁶² Actually, Aristotle writes that "there are three matters that need to be treated in discussion of speech—first, what will be the sources of the *pisteis*, second concerning *lexis*, and third how the parts of the speech ought to be arranged" (194). In effect, he is describing the first three canons of classical rhetoric: invention, style, and arrangement, respectively. However, this three-part division does nothing to undermine my emphasis on his separation of invention and style.

⁶³ There is, perhaps, something to say here about invention as excogitation and the privileging of *logos* over *pathos* throughout much of the history of rhetoric. Note, for instance, George A. Kennedy's discussion of Aristotle's *pisteis*, in which Kennedy claims that *pathos* is for Aristotle a kind of necessary evil (Aristotle 29).

⁶⁴ In his essay on invention, which I discuss below, Peter Simonson even mentions the pentad, "which Burke himself did not explicitly present as a theory of invention, but which teachers of composition and speech would bend to those purposes" (304).

⁶⁵ Nevertheless, Burke himself was quite forgiving of this appropriation. Commenting on Imscher's handbook, Burke notes that "my relation to the terms differs somewhat from their role in the Imscher handbook," but he goes on to say that "Both have their place" ("Questions and Answers about the Pentad" 330).

⁶⁶ To some extent, the pentad's ubiquity in composition studies also belies the significant impact Burke has had on the field. Burke's pervasive and multifaceted influence on composition studies is perhaps most evident in the historical and theoretical areas of the discipline.

Addressing the question of ideology in the composition classroom, James A. Berlin invokes Burke to assuage fears that Marxian analysis must necessarily lead to Marxian revolution (736).

John Clifford, in his own analysis of the ideological implications of teaching composition, employs Burke to get composition teachers to recognize their own requisite identification with university institutions that, in Burkean terms, "[raise] sheep for market" (38). In their *Rhetoric for Writing Teachers*, Erika Lindemann and Daniel Anderson lionize Burke as having "had the greatest impact on rhetoric in the twentieth century (53). Similarly, Ross W. Winterowd's *Composition/Rhetoric: A Synthesis* highlights Burke's conception of reading as "a tradeoff

between information and eloquence” (65). Kurt Spellmeyer, meanwhile, employs Burke’s sense of communication as cooperation to find common ground in David Bartholomae and Peter Elbow’s debate over the place of academic discourse in composition pedagogy (268-75). And Victor J. Vitanza cites Burke in order to critique Socratic pedagogy and advocate for his own “paralogical” approach to writing instruction (“Three Countertheses” 166-7).

⁶⁷ To his credit, Michael J. Hassett tries to push dramatism beyond the confines of the pentad. Recognizing a postmodern condition characterized by a weariness of authorial tyranny, a weariness that seems to run counter to composition’s steadfast adherence to a writer-centric epistemological framework and to the Irmischerian dramatistic tradition in particular, Hassett argues that Burke’s thinking can serve as a model for the ethical postmodern writer. By making this argument, Hassett implicitly calls for a transformation of composition’s representative anecdote from its focus on writer-centric-informed epistemological underpinnings to a more holistic and dramatistic framework. “Our ability to act symbolically will allow us to correct ourselves to a certain extent . . . ,” Hassett admits. “But in order to develop a thorough critique of our current perspectives,” he continues, “we must utilize the view of others, others who are located in their own particular time and place. It is only through response that we are able to do this, and it is only by creating a space for ourselves and for others that we allow response” (190). Therefore the goal of composition teachers should be to begin with a dramatistic framework and to push their students to create such a space in their writing, encouraging them to produce texts which invite reader response. “Our ethical postmodern writer,” Hassett insists, “will be a person attempting to write in such a way that the reader is invited into the text’s space as a full and equal partner in the meaning-making process” (194-5). Dramatism allows for the creation of such a

space and the cultivation of an ethical postmodern writer because it encourages us to seek out ambiguities, and not just in the guiding principles of others but in our own guiding principles as well.

⁶⁸ Burke deals with the question of epistemology quite explicitly in his brief 1985 essay for the *Quarterly Journal of Speech* called “Dramatism and Logology.” Indeed, for Burke, the initial distinction between the titular terms is made thusly: “Though my aim is to be secular and empirical, ‘dramatism’ and ‘logology’ are analogous respectively to the traditional distinction (in theology and metaphysics) between ontology and epistemology” (89). Here then, we should be able to get a clear sense of what Burke’s take on epistemology (as well as ontology) is. And since Burke links epistemology to logology, I’ll focus on his definition of the latter term. “Logology,” he writes, “is rooted in the range and quality of *knowledge* that we acquire when our bodies (physiological organisms in the realm of non-symbolic motion) come to profit by their peculiar aptitude for learning the arbitrary, conventional mediums of communication called ‘natural’ languages (atop which all sorts of specialized nomenclatures are developed, each with its particular kind of insights)” (89-90).

⁶⁹ Recall, for instance, Burke’s example of the preacher from *A Rhetoric of Motives*. As I illustrate there, the preacher in Burke’s example uses gesture, posture, and other bodily movements, not only to reinforce for his audience a preconceived message; the preacher’s bodily movements—that is to say, his *style* of delivery—actually help him invent his sermon. Thus, “by looking upward, . . . he can bring forth ideas from heaven” (*RM* 67-8). Or recall Burke’s claim in *Permanence and Change* that “meanings and stimuli merge” (150).

⁷⁰ In *RM*, Burke actually makes a point of distinguishing between rhetorical and poetic

“moving.” Referring to Longinus, he writes, “Indeed, might not his key term, that is usually translated ‘sublime,’ come close to what we mean by ‘moving,’ not in the rhetorical sense, of moving an audience to a decision, but as when we say of a poem, ‘How Moving!’” (65). In other words, rhetoric moves with “an ulterior purpose,” as he puts it later (69). Poetry lacks such purpose. Yet, this distinction isn’t as clear-cut as Burke makes it seem here. In his subsequent discussion of epideictic rhetoric, which he describes this way:

Often this third kind, as a rhetoric of “display,” was aimed at praise, not as an attempt to win an audience’s praise for the subject discussed, but as an attempt to win praise for the oratory itself. The appropriate time for such oratory could then be called the present in the sense that the appeal was directed to the very presence of the words and speaker themselves, *not for some ulterior purpose*, as with convincing a jury about a past act or moving an assembly to make a decision about the future, but purely because it aimed to give delight in the exercise of eloquence as such. (71; my emphasis)

Yet again, we find Burke discussing the power of words in spite of or apart from their subject matter. And to consider words in such way, without deliberative or judicial aims, is to find oneself in the realm of the poetic.

⁷¹ Famously cited by Baudrillard at the outset of *Simulacra and Simulation* (1).

⁷² For more on the sublime, as well as the medicinal function of language, see chapter two.

⁷³ The idea that the “unutterable” can be cathartically exorcised both intentionally and unintentionally is further illustrated in Roy Ambrester’s explication of Burke’s view of the

unconscious, a view outlined in *Language as Symbolic Action*. Ambrester finds identification at the center of the relationship between ego and itself and between the ego and superego, which acts as an “alien audience” (213) and censor to the ego’s symbolic actions. “Burke’s major postulation concerning the unconscious resides in his view of self as a process of ‘becoming’ through identification within,” he writes. “Hence the recurring Burkeian motif of identification forms the basis through which the processes of the unconscious are viewed” (207). As Ambrester explains it, in *LSA*, Burke considers the unconscious dramatically, in five parts, each of which is represented by five “dogs,” or five connotations of a particular word: (1) the “primal dog” refers to the scene of the initial encounter between ego and the symbolic and between the ego and the superego; (2) the “jingle dog” represents the ego’s subversions of the superego’s parental authority through word play; (3) the “lexical dog” represents the superego’s reassertion of its authority as classifier through dictionary definitions of “dog”; (4) the “entelechiial dog” illustrates the ego’s striving for perfection (to conceive of the perfect dog) and the superego’s striving for normalcy, the result of which is an identification between the two that recognizes the unattainability of perfection; and (5) the “tautological dog” refers to the ego’s desire to kill the censoring superego in order to identify with the “spirit.” What Burke’s subdivision of the unconscious suggests, Ambrester claims, is that identification transcends the conflict between ego and superego.

But for our purposes here, it’s Burke’s characterization of the “jingle dog” that deserves attention. Now, I’ve already made clear that no one has actually offered a thorough explication of tonal transformations. However, Ambrester’s explication of the “jingle dog” will no doubt resonate with the readers of this chapter:

Burke's second "dog," the "jingle dog," corresponds to some degree with Freud's concept of word-play [sic] in jokes. The "dog" is onomatopoeic to the extent that it is composed of the pure sound system of the symbol itself. This "dog" might be conceived as corresponding with the act-agency ratio in the pentad format, for its concern rests with the language as an instrument in the attainment of a goal including those areas of the unconscious which incorporate word-play as a substitute for child-like responses to given situations. In other words, language becomes an instrument whereby man can attain his ultimate objective through the mere manipulation of that instrument. Therefore, Cummings' word-play with the word dog as "God spelled backwards" becomes a play on words which reflects a purgative-redemptive bypassing of the "superego." (211-2)

In this passage, we find a clear connection between tonal transformations and the "jingle dog." Ambrester describes the "jingle dog's" wordplay as a sort of second-order catharsis, a "substitute" for the infant's unbridled rage and a "purgative-redemptive bypassing of the superego." And, notably, the purge offered as an illustration here is not the purge of unutterable fecal matter, but of the unutterable God. But also note Ambrester's characterization of the "jingle dog" as "onomatopoeic," as "composed of the pure sound system of the symbol itself." The "jingle dog" is clearly tonal transformation by another name.

Of course, we can also see here the idea that tonal transformations reside within the act-agency ratio of the pentad. This seems to suggest that tonal transformations are the result of conscious intent. And yet, Ambrester is describing Burke's view of the *unconscious*. This seems

to be why he makes a point of saying that language acts an instrument “including those areas of unconscious.” Ambrester goes on to say:

The “jingle dog” offers an expansion of the concept of “ego” in the sense that it represents the self as a dynamic child-symbol (“all children” might be more accurate) and the superego as a dynamic parent-symbol. Hence, the word-play employed by the ego becomes a kind of rhetoric of courtship through which the child-like symbols lull the parent-symbols into submission without jeopardizing the autonomy of the symbolistic structures. There is an identification process operative in the selection of the child-play symbols which will permit identification with the suppressed symbols and identification will ultimately lead to an extension of the “self” in the symbols chosen. (214)

Catharsis is achieved, this latter passage suggests, by “[lulling] parent symbols into submission.” What Ambrester is describing here is the smuggling in of concealed offenses under the guise of more acceptable terms, i.e. the so-called “parental symbols.” That is to say, the parental symbols become here the unwitting conspirators in the smuggling. Language here is “an instrument,” a means to an end for man. And yet at the same time “the autonomy of the symbolic structures” is not jeopardized; the *potential* for the kinds of wordplay Ambrester describes exists apart from conscious intention. Ambrester’s discussion of the “jingle dog” thus illustrates the way that tonal transformations straddle the divide between the conscious and unconscious functions of language.

⁷⁴ The use of arrows to chart correspondences is something Burke recommends in *PLF* (74-5).

⁷⁵ Here and throughout this discussion of Benjamin's idea, the italics are in the original text.

⁷⁶ It is not without some irony, then, that Wallace describes his own visceral training in the ways of usage. In one footnoted "Interpolation," he recalls how growing up, "Family suppers often involved a game: If one of us children made a usage error, Mom would pretend to have a coughing fit that would go on and on until the relevant child had identified the relevant error and corrected it" (41). In another note, he describes himself as someone who gets "uncomfortable" around usage errors (41).

⁷⁷ Lanham's more recent monograph *Economics of Attention* aims to illustrate the contemporary relevance of style. There, he criticizes the

theory of communication has dominated our thinking to the present day. Words should be as much like things as possible, ideally *are* the things they represent. The word "table" should look like a table. If you try to wrap words up in emotion, in design, you are only masking the naked truth with fallacious glosses. You are trying to persuade somebody of something. The truth, like Adam and Eve before the Fall, is naturally naked. And the heart that delivers it should always be naked as well. These assumptions are so fundamental to how we think about communication that they inhere in the terminology we use to describe it: rhetoric versus reality; style versus substance. They have been strongly reinforced by the hyperventilated romanticism of our own age, where we spend so much time, defenses down and conventions aside, in telling each other how we feel. (138)

⁷⁸ And of course, as I explain in chapters one and two, it's probably Rueckert's fault that

joycing has been ignored. At the very least, his early dismissal of the heuristic seems to have stuck.

⁷⁹ Elsewhere Burke cites the amazing Loeb intro to Aristotle's *Poetics* that writes that going to the theater too often might result in "emotional dysentery" (qtd. in Hawhee 137).

⁸⁰ See, for instance, the essay "The Status of Art" in *CS*.

⁸¹ And of course, as we've seen in chapters one and three, Nietzsche had a profound influence on Burke's thinking, especially his notions of poetry as invention.

⁸² I hope that my readers will note the similarities between this principle and Burke's notion of "equipment for living, discussed in chapter three.

⁸³ He does, however, claim that "There is...quite a lot of epideictic rhetoric among animals," which he describes as "a kind of ritualized socializing that involves reassuring 'contact calls' with the group" (5).

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