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INOCULANT TO INFLUENCE: CULTIVATING CRITICAL CITIZENSHIP BY
FOREGROUNDING ONTOLOGY THROUGH KENNETH BURKE AND WALTER
FISHER'S RHETORICAL FRAMEWORKS

By

MARK DANIEL GRIFFIN

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in English
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Anett Jessop, Ph.D., Committee Chair

College of Arts and Sciences

The University of Texas at Tyler
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The University of Texas at Tyler
Tyler, Texas

This is to certify that the Master's Thesis of

MARK DANIEL GRIFFIN

has been approved for the thesis requirement on
November 17, 2023

Approvals:

DocuSigned by:

Anett Jessop

C5400C4A146E4F0...

Thesis Chair: Anett Jessop, Ph.D.

DocuSigned by:

Brent Yergensen

552B4DF7B6644C0...

Member: Brent Yergensen, Ph.D.

DocuSigned by:

David Strong

B5EA81DAG6B145E...

Member: David Strong, Ph.D.

DocuSigned by:

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Chair, Department of Literature
and Languages

DocuSigned by:

Nou Gray

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Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

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Title: Inoculant to Influence: Cultivating Critical Citizenship by Foregrounding Ontology
Through Kenneth Burke and Walter Fisher's Rhetorical Frameworks

Author: Mark Daniel Griffin

11/17/2023

Thesis Chair: Dr. Annet Jessop

Thesis Committee Members: Dr. Brent Yergensen
Dr. David Strong

Abstract

Scholars interested in exploring the potency of the writing modality of critical pedagogy for molding students into proactive citizens will find the integration of Kenneth Burke's Dramatism and Walter Fisher's Narrative Paradigm instrumental, offering tools essential for cultivating a rhetorical awareness adept at navigating narratives in the 21st century. Synthesizing Burke's rhetorical dialectic between the nature of reality and our understanding of it with Fisher's concept that the human condition is a narrative condition yields insights into the critical writing process. This integration fosters a rhetorical awareness, serving as an inoculant to influence, countering the prevailing persuasive elements within today's public discourse that empower students to engage with narrative more critically. Furthermore, this thesis situates the roles of writing instructors within a balanced methodology to support cultivating informed student decision-making while avoiding ideological imposition. This thesis reassesses writing instruction as a crucible for critical reflection and engagement in varied professional, public, and private discourse. I posit an alternative view of critical pedagogy as not just a channel for social change through writing but a nuanced engagement at the intersection of personal and social identities with narrative. This thesis promotes rhetorical preparedness over rhetorical assertiveness, presenting a framework for critical citizenship emphasizing rhetorical awareness aligned with Burke's terministic trivium that language is a reflection, selection, and deflection of reality. Thereby showing that cultivating critical citizenship through these rhetorical frameworks aligns with Kant's call for enlightenment, underscoring the interplay of rhetoric, narrative, and critical reflection at the intersection of ontology and narrative.

“O God, that men should put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains!”

- William Shakespeare, *Othello* (2.3.308-310)

“The duty and office of Rhetoric is to *apply Reason to Imagination* for better moving the will.”

- Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning* (1605)

“The one place gods exist is in our minds, where they are real beyond refute.” That is, the gods exist in the imagination. The important conclusion from this is not that the gods are therefore real or not important, but rather that the imagination is exquisitely more important than commonly acknowledged.”

- Eddie Campbell; qtd. Alan Moore, *The From Hell Companion*

“So at that point, it was just before my 40th birthday. I thought, well I could have a midlife crisis and just bore everyone to death by going on about, what’s it all about, what does it mean? Or I could sort of just go spectacularly mad, which would at least be more entertaining for those around me.”

- Alan Moore, *The From Hell Companion*

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Mark Griffin

Dr. Annet Jessop

November 17th, 2023

Inoculant to Influence: Cultivating Critical Citizenship by Foregrounding Ontology Through
Kenneth Burke and Walter Fisher's Rhetorical Frameworks

Introduction

The purpose of this project finds its genesis in exploring rhetorical theories in order to cultivate a form of critical citizenship. As a result of this discovery, I have chosen the theories of Kenneth Burke and Walter Fisher as serviceable to this cultivation, not as the only means, but as the most comprehensive means for arriving at the embodiment of critical citizenship. I do not discount other rhetorical theories but rather have chosen Burke's Dramatism for its rich insights and rhetorical tools for engaging with the rhetoricity of self and society, and Fisher's Narrative Paradigm extends and modifies the importance of the dramatic narrative to better suit the demands in the 21st century.

In approaching this cultivation, two distinct, yet intertwined, strands of focus emerged: That of an emphasis on rhetorical theory and the application of that theory within a writing pedagogy in the classroom. While each focus comes with its own constraints, this project predominantly centers on the rhetorical theory of Burke, followed by Fisher's extensions, while accounting for the applications in the classroom through critical pedagogy. Emerging from entering a discussion on a rhetorically informed writing pedagogy that emphasizes social issues is the role of the teacher and the objective learning outcomes for students. And while the latter undermines the former, this project briefly addresses issues of applying rhetorical theories in

critical pedagogy by offering an emphasis on Burke and Fisher as an amelioration or alternative writing pedagogy to critical pedagogy.

Therefore, in traversing these topics, in Chapter 2, I begin by surveying the intellectual history of Burke's rhetorical framework to establish a foundation for understanding in order to show its relevance for cultivating critical citizenship. In Chapter 3, I review traditional critical pedagogy and position how foregrounding the ontology of Burke's dramatism works to alleviate the traditional problematic social-epistemic inquiry dominant within critical pedagogy. Next, I highlight how Fisher's Narrative Paradigm extends the ontology of Burke's dramatism by offering a robust framework that recognizes the irrational nature of narrative and its role in shaping our worldviews. In doing so, I argue that Fisher's Narrative Paradigm provides a foundation for applying Burke's dramatism, such as his pentad, in ways that allow for the deconstruction of narratives to expose its motivating elements and allow for a more informed consideration of what is being asked from that narrative. Essentially, synthesizing Burke and Fisher provides the skills to exercise critical citizenship and more conscientiously engage with persuasive force's lobbying for identification. Thus, the final aim of this project aims to provide the means for a form of critical citizenship as an inoculant to influence through cultivating a rhetorical awareness fit for the 21st century and how that might look in the classroom. Last, in Chapter 4, I make a deeper inquiry into what it means to be a critical citizen by joining the conversation with Immanuel Kant and his clarion call for enlightenment, contextualized with Michel Foucault and Alasdair MacIntyre in order to show that Burke and Fisher's frameworks can satisfy this historical call to action.

Understanding Burke

An Overview of Dramatism

Between the 1920s and 1990s, Burke developed a theory of language as symbolic action called dramatism (Warnock 9). Throughout those seventy years, four distinct works stand out as fundamental for understanding Burke's rhetorical framework—*Permanence and Change* (1935), *A Grammar of Motives* (1945), *A Rhetoric of Motives* (1950), and *Language as Symbolic Action* (1966). These last three comprise Burke's "Motivarium" or his trilogy on motive; as the name implies, motive as "a strategic symbolic summing-up of action" is a central theme for his rhetorical framework (McGeough and King 158). Synoptically, in *Permanence and Change*, Burke first expounds on the significance of motive on interpretation and its following consequences. In *Grammar*, Burke identifies pentadic key terms that are necessarily antecedent to "the rhetorical" and "the psychological" in order to codify motive with terms that specifically do not avoid ambiguity but "terms that clearly reveal the strategic spots at which ambiguities necessarily arise... [because] it is in these areas of ambiguities that transformations take place" (3984, 3986-7). This possibility for transformation is the purpose wherein Burke drops anchor. As Tilly Warnock highlights, "Burke's overall motive is to help people come to terms, not war—*ad bellum purificandum* (9). That is, war is transformation in retrograde and the virtue of coming to terms is the product of transforming perspective in order to cooperate. In *Rhetoric*, Burke investigates the nature of transformation, or the principles of development, arriving at a central idea of identification. Here Burke explicates how the phenomenon of creating human identity is synonymous with persuasion and shows "how a rhetorical motive is often present where it is not usually recognized, or thought to belong" (*Rhetoric* 4024). In other words, Burke discusses how persuasion, functioning as identification, works through the use of motive. Last, in *Language of*

Symbolic Action, Burke furthers his concept of motive from *Permanence and Change* in order to develop the consequence of language as symbolic acts creating terministic screens.

Throughout these works, Burke uses several major and minor key terms that orbit around central ideas within his dramatistic framework. However, scholarship shows that the most informative central concepts in Burke's rhetorical framework for praxis are, but are not limited to, *motive*, *orientation*, *the pentad*, *identification*, *division*, *perspectives by incongruity*, and *terministic screens*, covered herein. Each of these ideas informs one another and builds towards a fuller understanding of dramatism. As Burke himself says, "when working with a set of terms that mutually or circularly imply one another, we must necessarily pick one of them to begin with, though we might as well have begun with any of the others" (qtd in Blakenship et al. 4). Herein arises the challenge of approaching and grasping Burke's framework.

Concepts in Burke's Theory of Rhetoric

Motive, Orientation, and the Pentad

In Burke's rhetorical framework, he views humans as "symbol-using, symbol-misusing, and symbol-abusing animals; inventors of the negative, [and] separated from our natural condition by instruments we make" (Warnock 9). Through this capacity of using symbols, Burke further clarifies the significance of language as symbolic action by differentiating between 'scientific,' language as definition or symbolic logic, and 'dramatistic,' language as an act or symbolic action, although neither are mutually exclusive (*Language as Symbolic Action* 4044-6).

Therefore, Burke finds that the implication of language being symbolic action is that "in 'its essence' language is not neutral; it is 'loaded with judgments'" (Blakenship et al. 11). That is, language is active and motivated, becoming the prime architecture for which reality is rendered.

This becomes a distinctive feature of New Rhetoric which invites the quality of relativism because “words tend to deal imperfectly with continuous reality and are only acts upon a scene” (Blakenship et al. 11). This leads Burke to recognize that “symbols, then, are verbal parallels to patterns of experience and, as such, are synecdochic in nature... [and] the symbol will henceforth determine our attitude toward the thing” (Blakenship et al. 13). This notion that language determines an attitude toward an object is the basis for Burke’s importance on motive, especially when considered for its relativistic qualities and the impact this has on one’s orientation, or world view.

Therefore, it can be considered that the foundation of Burke’s framework is built upon his concept of motive and that “motives are distinctly linguistic products” (*Permanence and Change* 57). Burke views motive as not something in a fixed location, but rather “a term of interpretation [that] will naturally take place within the framework of our *Weltanschauung* as a whole” (*Permanence and Change* 46). In other words, motive can both adapt to and influence the orientation it is found within. Burke’s concept of orientation rests on the idea that all living things are critics, in which orientation becomes our “interpretive attitude” and motive “a term of interpretation” (Blakenship et al. 4, 7). Therefore, motive and orientation are inextricably linked, and when motive manifests within an orientation, meaning is interpreted accordingly.

Additionally, the relativistic quality of language serves to highlight the significance of what Burke means by motive being a linguistic product and this concept resonates through Burke’s work. This is seen when Burke explains:

We discern situational [or motivational] patterns by means of the particular vocabulary of the culture group into which we are born. Our minds, as linguistic products, are composed of concepts (verbally molded) which select certain relationships as

meaningful. Other groups may select other relationships as meaningful. These relationships are not *realities*, they are *interpretations* of reality—hence different frameworks of interpretation will lead to different conclusions as to what reality is (*Permanence and Change* 57-8).

Because orientation is “a self-perpetuating structure, creating the measure by which all shall be measured,” an echo of Protagoras’s man is the measure of all things, reality becomes self-styled by human’s motivational patterns which influence our interpretation of the world (Burke qtd in Blankenship et al. 5).

By developing motive further, Burke’s rhetorical framework progresses to the concept of dramatism and the pentad. Burke arrives at this method by opening the *Grammar* with this question, “what is involved, when we say what people are doing and why they are doing it?” (3979). What Burke is asking here is the other side of Aristotle’s definition of rhetoric as “the faculty of discovering in any particular case all the available means of persuasion” and seeks to know of persuading individuals what is their motive and what has motivated them. In order to answer this question, Burke maps motive upon the dramatic situation for constructing his pentad and its ratios in the *Grammar*, which bears the name “dramatism.” Burke defines dramatism saying that “since it invites one to consider the matter of motives in a perspective that, being developed by the analysis of drama, treats language as through primarily as modes of action...[which] enables us, by the systematic manipulation of terms, to ‘generate,’ or ‘anticipate’ the various classes of motivational theory” (*Grammar* 3993).

Being one of Burke’s most famous ideas, he describes the function of the pentad, saying, “although, over the centuries, men have shown great enterprise and inventiveness in pondering matters of human motivation, one can simplify the subject by this pentad of key terms, which are

understandable at a glance” (*Grammar* 3981). Burke provides a visual metaphor to conceptualize the simplicity he sees the pentad providing. He describes two ships moving on a tranquil sea who’s “wakes crossed and recrossed in almost an infinity of lines... [yet] the picture gave an impression of great simplicity, because one could quickly perceive the generating principles of its design” (*Grammar* 3981). What Burke is describing is the complexity of cause and effect which result from actions. For Burke, the pentad becomes a tool to locate motive and decipher orientation by squelching the impacts caused by action. Moreover, depending on which pentadic term and ratio motive is mapped onto, influences the meaning derived from the action within the dramatic situation (*Grammar* 3990). One such effective application of the pentad is to “make visible how persuaders use language to change our beliefs and influence our actions” (McGeough and King 156). Thus, through the pentad, Burke provides a rhetorical tool to constructively engage and critically examine sociocultural forces.

Scholarship shows that Burke drew on diverse sources to develop his framework in order to emphasize communication as a form of drama, in which people use language as symbolic action to shape their perception of reality. However, for the pentad, three key sources influenced Burke—Aristotle, Roman poet Horace, and Ivor Armstrong Richards. Understanding these influences serves to better see the significance of Burke’s pentad in application. Drawing from Aristotle’s *Poetics*, Burke appropriates the ideas of dramatic form and the power of stories in human history and has affirmed that human storytelling is fundamental to forming and maintaining community (McGeough and King 157). By recognizing the importance that stories affect the meaning we make in life, Burke famously coins literature as “equipment for living.” However, Burke specifically appropriates Aristotle’s central terms on “narrative structure,” “plot,” “character,” “spectacle,” “dialogue,” and “concept” and renames them for his pentadic

terms “act,” “agent,” “scene,” “agency,” and “purpose” (McGeough and King 158). Continuing on the thread on the power of stories, Burke finds the importance of the generative categories for structuring stories within Horace. Burke borrowed and updated these categories to make these questions useful for understanding any human action and explaining how motives arise (McGeough and King 158). Studying the work of IA Richards, Burke finds the importance of narrative form, wherein form “is a way of uniting motive and symbol, situation and act” which “invites participation and [calibrates] our orientation toward the world” (Blakenship et al. 13, McGeough and King 158). Burke shapes this idea into dramatic form and conceives this form to “exist logically prior to our experience” that is “inherent in the very germplasm of man” (McGeough and King 158, Blakenship et al. 14). In other words, dramatic form is integral to the very essence of being *animal symbolicum*. In recognizing the importance that the pentad is a tool to investigate dramatic form, it serves to help acknowledge, interpret, and discover meaning in our environment (McGeough and King 158).

Additionally, while Burke was undoubtedly influenced by Plato, his rhetorical framework finds distinct disagreements with Plato on the nature of language and the role of persuasion. However, despite these disagreements, Judith Ann Abrams highlights a fundamental similarity in concept and purpose between Burke’s pentad and Plato’s categories of rhetoric. Both seek a holistic rhetorical framework that captures rhetoric untarnished by the art of flattery (Abrams 24). Abrams illustrates this by overlapping Plato’s and Burke’s key terms: the speaker (agent), audience and environment (scene), the mode and subject of discourse (agency), discourse (act), and the underlying motive (purpose) (Abrams 24). Moreover, Burke and Plato’s prime importance is considering the fusion of categories to determine the nature of the whole in tracing back to motive (Abrams 27). However, Burke and Plato disagree and negate one another on the

point of motive. While Plato devalues rhetorical acts that are not divinely inspired, Burke views all acts as human and thus sees motive as the seed of all human events (Abrams 28). In fact, Burke argues that Plato founded his *Republic* on a “vision of absolute Good, as a reaction to the individualistic and relativistic teachings of the Sophists” (Hasset 283). In other words, Plato sought to set motive within the gravitational orbit of an absolute concept, Good. In contrast, Burke, rhyming with the Sophists, emphasized the importance of recognizing the individualistic and relativistic quality within the human drama and not bypassing the human agency for change.

Identification and Division

As previously mentioned, in designing his key terms in *Grammar*, Burke states that “what we want is *not terms that avoid ambiguity, but terms that clearly reveal the strategic spots at which ambiguities necessarily arise...* and it is in these areas of ambiguity that transformation takes place” (3986; italics original). This ambiguity is critical for Burke because it enables changes in orientation to occur. Furthering this train of thought, Burke develops the importance of identification in *Rhetoric*, exploring the function of identification as synonymous with persuasion and how and why it is a malleable linguistic construct. Additionally, Burke recognizes identification’s counterpart division. Here Burke highlights because a person cannot absolutely communicate their very essence due to the subjective nature of symbolic action, people are inherently apart from one another, thus succumbing to the identification-division duality of perceived reality (*Rhetoric* 4032). In other words, “identification is affirmed with earnest precisely because there is division” (*Rhetoric* 4032). Because of this strife, Burke identifies a facet of his purpose as aiming toward tolerance and contemplation.

Scholarship shows Burke develops his concept of identification by integrating two primary influences, Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud. Crucial to this integration, Burke viewed

Marx and Freud as “impresarios [or] great dramatists... united by a theory of drama” and whose theories complemented one another, where “Freudianism would ‘explain’ Marxists psychologically and the Marxists could ‘explain’ Freudians sociologically” (Abbott 219). In short, Burke saw that combining Marx’s and Freud’s framework would afford him a more extensive and detailed view of human drama. And it is within this drama Burke recognizes that people “establish identity by relation to groups... [and] if you would avoid the antithesis of supernaturalism and naturalism, you must develop the coordinates of socialism—which gets us to cooperation, participation, man in society, man in drama” (Abbott 219). Like Burke’s rejection of reality being derivative of Platonic forms, focusing on symbolic action within drama as the locus of control for human experience allows Burke to highlight how psychology and drama are interwoven for the purpose of “change and conflict in human affairs” (Abbott 220). It is here that Burke begins to identify forces affecting the malleability of identity and zero in on the role rhetoric plays in its shaping. Moreover, it is expressly within Marx that Burke finds identification and division’s building blocks as “symbols of authority” and “alienation.” Burke subsequently finds a validation within Marxist influences on the rhetorical link between identification, orientation, and motive, clearly showing that social and political change can occur through communication (Abbott 230). This bolsters Burke’s driving purpose of the possibility for transformation and progress toward cooperation. Whereby Burke finds that “Marxism like Freudianism effects change by providing new perspectives and new terminologies for its ‘patients,’ be they individuals or society” (Abbott 218).

Likewise, through Freud, Burke saw the value in analyzing language to expose human motivations and lifted the key terms “identification” and “motive” from *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Davis 124). However, Diane Davis shows that while Burke is indebted to Freud, he

evolved identification to suit the development of his rhetorical framework. One example of this departure is on the formation of the ego and the Oedipal narrative. Unlike Freud, Burke views the social, rather than the sexual, as the desire that constructs ego and identification, which further reinforces Burke's importance of the dramatistic frame (Davis 124-125). Another example of departure is Burke considers identification as a symbolic act that "whether conscious or unconscious... remains available for sober critique and reasons adjustment," rather than Freudian repression (Davis 127). These two points are significant because they highlight the importance of individual autonomy, which plays a vital role in the later stages of Burke's framework. Furthermore, when considering identification within Abbot's "symbols of authority" and "alienation," it can be recognized that individuals retain access to a degree of autonomy from these influences. These forms of identification are resistible and, consequently, open for critique (Davis 126). Possessing a degree of personal agency to resist and critique, yet also be influenced by the rhetorical force inherent within identification, becomes a crucial concept for Burke, leading him to dramatize identification and view it as being synonymous with persuasion. In making this pairing, Burke is further informed by Freud in recognizing the power of suggestion and the ability to "influence without [a] logical foundation," wherein "an a priori affectability or persuadably operates irrepressibly and below the radar of critical faculties" (Davis 137, 144). And while this is another occurrence of contradiction within Burke's rhetorical framework, this exposes a human vulnerability to identification's counterpart, division.

In *Rhetoric*, Burke's development of division is informed by his "scapegoat mechanism" that he initially forms in *Permanence and Change*. Burke recognizes that one way in which division functions is through the device of the "rhetorical other." Here, Burke is again influenced by Freud's model of identification and division in *Civilization and Its Discontents* (Borrowman

and Kmetz 279). Similarly, by underscoring the power of suggestibility, the divisiveness inherent within a rhetorical other becomes an integral component within Burke's rhetorical framework—something Burke later develops a strategy of rhetorical counteraction to combat against. That is, “if rhetors understand the tendencies of their audience, then they can shape their rhetoric in order to move the audience to a shared purpose” (Borrowman and Kmetz 280). And Burke, being called to action by the warning signs he saw in the rhetoric of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, sought to empower his rhetorical framework for it to negate the suggestibility that might lead to joining the madness of crowds. What Burke exposes about the human condition through his concept of division is that “[humans] are uncomfortable with division and will seek identification as a remedy, even when the proposed identifications ultimately lead to further divisions” (Borrowman and Kmetz 284). In other words, there is an anxious human need to belong to a group which may undermine our ability to “peer beyond” or step outside of our current identifications to think critically about and access appropriately in order to perceive the physical and/or rhetorical threats present within a new identification/division distribution (Borrowman and Kmetz 285). An anxious struggle that Burke finds resonance with in both Marxist and Freudian paradigms.

Perspectives by Incongruity and Terministic Screens

Burke will eventually develop the concept of terministic screens, by way of its predecessor, perspectives by incongruity from *Permanence and Change*. Burke originates his idea of perspectives by incongruity through his influence from Nietzsche. This influence infused Burke with an understanding of the nature of language and the effects language produces, providing Burke with the vantage point to ultimately recognize how language operates as a *reflection, selection, and deflection* of reality (Hawhee 129). Specifically, Burke utilized

Nietzsche's concepts that rebuked metaphysics being anchored in divine truth but instead anchored in aesthetics (Hawhee 131-2). Situating within the realm of aesthetics, which is squarely placed in the human domain, allowed Burke to reason that a person's perspective becomes the measure of reality. Consequently, in Burke unpacking Nietzsche's interpretive scheme in order "to ground philosophical concepts in rhetoric and apply them to cultural and social forces," he arrives at his term perspectives by incongruity (Hawhee 133). This concept aligns with Nietzsche's view of *perspectivity*, from *Will to Power*, that the world is only knowable to an extent (Hawhee 134). By recognizing that the world is only knowable to an extent and that each perspective interprets that knowability differently, Burke sets the trajectory for developing his analytical tool, the pentad. In adopting Nietzsche's perspectivalism, Burke makes the first connections between his budding theory of language, highlighting the symbiotic nature of motive and perspective (Hawhee 134-135).

Similarly, while Burke embarked on developing his early framework from Nietzsche, he finds a corresponding confirmation from Alfred North Whitehead's "crisis in mathematics," which examines the logic of subjectivity. Drawing upon Whitehead's *Process and Reality*, Burke finds a connection between self-referential paradoxes where "symbols are taken for reality, when, in fact, they represent entirely different logical types" (DiCaglio 103). What Nietzsche had called perspectivity, Burke finds that Whitehead similarly labels the phenomenon as the "'fallacy of misplaced concreteness' because the error lies in assuming the symbols are themselves concrete... [and treating] them as having reality is to fail to recognize the primary abstraction enacted by them" (DiCaglio 103). This serves as foundational evidence for Burke to later realize the subjectivity inherent in language, which reflects, selects, and deflects our perception of reality.

Furthermore, “Whitehead’s reading of the paradox makes [Burke] aware of the limits of any such symbolic structure—whether logic or semiotic—and forces [Burke] to look at subjectivity—the one who divides into sets” if reality is to be understood (DiCaglio 106). At this time of the early 1920s & 30s, the empirical lens of science saw promise in finding objective authority. However, Burke, as well as Whitehead, saw the inescapable undermining force of subjectivity. Wherein “Burke aims to develop a means of examining what science fails to take into account: perspective, values, [and] the grounding of rationality itself” (DiCaglio 107). This recognition further supports Burke’s concept of perspectives by incongruity, which grows to include the transformative power of language rhetorically operating within identification as persuasion. And it is by these incongruities that the more we generate, “the more aware we are of our orientation and the less we grant concreteness to those abstractions” (DiCaglio 110). That is, carrying Burke’s early concepts forward into his matured rhetorical framework, we can utilize all of Burke’s dramatistic tools to expand and challenge our points of view to encompass more diversity. Wherein “new patterns or ways of understanding can thus emerge through this decidedly subjective, incongruous method” and Burke’s end goals may be achieved (DiCaglio 113).

This concept finds maturity in Burke’s *Language as Symbolic Action* as terministic screens. Burke defines this as “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” (*Language as Symbolic Action* 4046; italics original). Through this *reflective, selective, and deflective* process, we can see the concepts of motive, orientation, and perspectives at play. As previously mentioned, Burke’s matured concept affords deeper insights into the problematic nature of misplaced certainty. To this point, Burke says, “though man is

typically the symbol-using animal, he clings to a kind of naïve verbal realism that refuses to let him realize the full extent of the role played by symbolicity in his notions of reality” (*Language as Symbolic Action* 4053). Essentially, a terministic screen becomes a veil. McGeough and King’s definition of terministic screens highlights the important role played by language. “By terministic screens, Burke means the capacity of language (terminology) to encourage us to understand the world in some ways while filtering (screening) other interpretations out... Thus, no matter how objective we might try to be, the specific language we use to describe an object or event will draw our attention toward some aspects of the event (selecting), and thus away from other aspects (deflecting)” (McGeough and King 156). Burke is equally indebted to William James as he is to Nietzsche for developing the concept of perspectives by incongruity into terministic screens. For it is within James that Burke is turned on to selective, reflective, and deflective nature of an orientation (Stob 140).

Making Use of Burke’s Theory of Rhetoric for Critical Citizenship

Scholars generally consider identification as Burke’s crowning idea and the pentad as his most accessible rhetorical tool. It is within the knowledge of the concept of identification working in concert with Burke’s other central ideas and dramatic tools, namely the pentad, that provides a path toward achieving Burke’s end goals of resolving conflict through rhetorical counteraction, meliorism, and dialectical-rhetorical transcendence. Each of these goals approach problems of identification from different angles—psychologically, sociologically, and transcendently.

Rhetorical counteraction aims to resolve conflict at a psychological level caused by undue influence or the conscious or unconscious use of the rhetorical other. Meliorism seeks to resolve conflict at a sociological level through the cooperative and constructive use of language. And dialectical-rhetorical transcendence addresses conflict at a transcendental level that agnostically

seeks to resolve ideological impasse by expanding perspectives which enables transcending inherent conflicts possible. Burke does not explicitly chart these goals in a single work; however, an astute reading and knowledge of Burke's motivations allow these goals to be gleaned throughout Burke's written corpus.

Burke's posthumously published *War of Words*, originally intended to be a second volume to *Rhetoric*, is where he fully develops the concept of rhetorical counteraction. Burke was motivated to pursue the problem of identification's influence by the rhetorical other, or scapegoat, that he saw happening within the context of America's expanding nationalist agenda in 1948 (Jensen 385). In doing so, Burke employs the entire arsenal of his dramatic framework to

Teach audiences how to identify rhetorical devices that justify nationalistic warfare in the name of peace. [And] by developing this interpretive ability, audiences can (1) find a different, more contemplative place within their historical moment and thereby (2) build strategies for counteracting the threat of war that exists in seemingly innocuous acts of community organization (Jensen 386).

Through studying Machiavelli, Burke was able to reverse Machiavellianism from being rhetorically offensive to rhetorically defensive (Jensen 388). Whereby the often-unconscious suggestibility influencing identification can be more readily exposed. Therefore, "becoming conscious of this dimension of identification allows audiences to evaluate the dangerous capabilities of specific rhetorical devices without scapegoating those who use them" (Jensen 391). Here, Burke's rhetorical counteraction empowers the average person to act or react with the agency by providing accessible rhetorical methods to defend against nationalistic aggression (Jensen 394). Dangers that are still extant in the present day and will likely remain a core component of human drama.

Where Burke's rhetorical counteraction is acutely aware of the influence of identification and power viewed through a psychological lens, his meliorism focuses more closely on language itself within the sociological sphere. This shift in emphasis highlights Burke's argument for "a reconstruction *in* language to ameliorate specific social problems... [language that] helps us better understand the problem-solving and community -building possibilities of language itself" (Stob 229; italics original). In order for this to work, it must be recalled that Burke's view of language is that language is a reflection of reality, in that, language is intrinsically bound to the perspective which it originates from. For Burke's meliorism he underscores the social dimension of language, in which social language permeates the individual and connects the individual to society, transforming the individual into a specific type of social being (Stob 236). By emphasizing the social, rather than psychological, dimension of language allows for these subtleties of identification to go uneclipsed. "The underlying belief is that language *can induce cooperation*; language *can* serve social purposes and function to strengthen 'the public'" (Stob 240; italics original). Therefore, through the melioristic process, the public's task is to reconstruct the discursive fabric that unites person to person in the community sphere (Stob 241).

Burke's final goal is more abstruse. In Burke working toward transcending ideological conflict through a dialectical and rhetorical process, his view of the ambiguous nature of language contradicts his Platonic view of transcendence. However, this contradiction can somewhat be bypassed by seeing Burke's goal as agnostic transcendence. A transcendence that need not anchor in a metaphysics of divine truths but rather aesthetics, as he recognized in Nietzsche. Derived from Plato but carefully distinguished for Burke's own interest in linguistic transcendence than Plato's heavenly archetypes (Zappen 285). In the later part of *Rhetoric*, Burke synthesizes concepts from *Grammar* and the earlier chapters in *Rhetoric* to arrive at the

possibility of bridging conflicting identifications transcendently. In comparison, rhetorical counteraction sought to nullify rhetorical action, and meliorism sought to encourage cooperative rhetorical action. Whereas Burke's transcendence aims at "adopting a point of view by which opposites cease to be opposites" by utilizing "dramatism [to] explore human motive from multiple perspectives" (Zappen 283, 284). That is, by employing the entirety of Burke's framework that examines human motive and dramatic action in order to show the influence of rhetoric on our perceived realities and identities, we might be enabled to adopt a new point of view that transcends ideological conflict. Wherein by seeking "dialectical-rhetorical transcendence, to assert rhetoric's responsibility not only to persuade but also to encourage and facilitate the development of larger communities of interest that transcend individual and group ideologies and interests" (Zappen 297). Thus, Burke's transcendence, like his creed of education, becomes a habit of mind and a lifelong process (Zappen 296).

Burke, Social Change, and Critical Pedagogy

The relevance of Kenneth Burke's rhetorical framework in critical pedagogy is well known. However, a deeper inquiry into exactly how Burke's framework is a valuable component of critical pedagogy lacks scholarly attention. Near the end of his career, Burke shifted his rhetorical emphasis from the epistemological to the ontological in what James Chesebro terms the "ontological-epistemic dialectic" (Chesebro 176). Around that same time, Walter Fisher, writing from the Communication department side of rhetoric, extended Burke's ontological concepts into his Narrative Paradigm. Accounting for this shift, in this chapter, I reassess the value and relevance of how Burke's rhetorical theories function as an ontology within the context of Fisher's narrative paradigm, analyzing how this combination enriches insights sought in the critical writing process. In effect, this reassessed synthesis allows students to critically reflect and think on factors impacting their lives in their writing as a fuller expression of Burke's rhetorical counteraction. Thus, operating as a heuristic, this dialectic cultivates a rhetorical awareness as an inoculant to influence, which would otherwise seek to undermine a Kantian use of reason and empower students to engage in critical citizenship effectively.

In turn, I put forth an alternative perspective on critical pedagogy, commonly seen as a tool for writing in the pursuit of social justice. I position critical pedagogy as a means to equip individuals with the rhetorical tools to critically engage at the intersection of identity and narrative discourse. This perspective does not dismiss social justice but rather subsumes it. By shifting the emphasis away from countering morally maligning narratives, which is undoubtedly a valuable approach in critical pedagogy, I argue that foregrounding the ontology of Burke and Fisher's paradigm empowers students to expose motivation inherent within rhetoric—both their own and others—which assists in cultivating a rhetorical awareness fit for the 21st century. For

example, Fisher's paradigm demonstrates how Burke's pentadic analysis can be employed as an insightful ontological tool to dissect the persuasive power of narratives. Thus, by prioritizing an awareness through rhetorical preparedness over assertiveness, this refined approach offers a broader spectrum for analyzing both individual and societal beliefs, facilitating a more informed deconstruction of narratives that influence our worldview.

Additionally, in response to common criticism of critical pedagogy, a secondary objective of foregrounding ontological rhetoric aims to provide teachers with a neutral methodology that does not elicit any preferred moral judgment, whether figurative or literal. Rather, utilizing the guiding frameworks of Burke and Fisher, students are empowered to make their judgments more informed. In this context, the essence of writing instruction in this alternative perspective to critical pedagogy centers on fostering critical thinking, reflection, and the ability to critically navigate and engage various narrative landscapes. This is achieved by synthesizing insights on how Burke's rhetorical framework, when housed within Fisher's narrative paradigm, can enhance the understanding of the persuasive potency embedded in public narratives. Such insights highlight that narratives play a pivotal role in shaping our ontological orientations and understandings, thereby underscoring the importance of exercising rhetorical acumen in practicing critical citizenship. Recognizing that narrative influence, whether we realize it or not, employs rhetorical strategies that sway individuals, often subverting critical thought and promoting the adoption of a particular ontological stance.

Thus, this endeavor seeks to cultivate and harness critical thinking and reflection for students to tackle moral challenges inherent in public narratives about what it means to be a critical citizen. Such challenges demand engagement that cannot be avoided by taking refuge in an outside authority, where the onus of rhetorical responsibility must be shouldered directly. As

James Berlin acutely observes, “a rhetoric cannot escape the ideological question, and overlooking this neglects the duties of educators and citizens” (493).

Traditional Critical Pedagogy

The ontological aspect of rhetoric is often overlooked. Traditionally, critical pedagogy aligns with what James Berlin classifies as social-epistemic rhetoric that views “rhetoric as a political act involving dialectical interaction engaging the material, the social, and the individual writer, with language as agency of mediation” (488). As the terminology suggests, the prevailing lens in composition within this framework is epistemological. Consequently, as an episteme, knowledge is a product of the dialectical processes in the convergence of the speaker, discourse community, and the material conditions of existence, wherein the rhetorical inquiry studies how knowledge comes into existence (488). While social-epistemic rhetoric offers insights into how identities or orientations are formed, it overlooks the underlying taken-for-granted assumptions about existence—an arena where an ontological rhetorical inquiry can offer depth. Hence, for Giroux’s vision of critical citizenship to be fully realized, there is a pressing need to address the ontological aspects embedded within narrative and discourse. This pursuit necessitates integrating both ontological and epistemological approaches into a unified dialectical process, an argument later-Burke makes and Fisher extends to realize in his narrative paradigm.

Moreover, integrating an ontological perspective into critical pedagogy illuminates the intricacies of engaging with ideology. Berlin highlights how social-epistemic rhetoric casts knowledge as a battle ground for ideological conflict, where “there are no arguments from transcendent truth since all arguments arise in ideology” (489). This insight holds two key ontological impacts. First, because the substance of argument, the warrants of knowledge, has no providence, this underscores the ontological nature present within these warrants. Second, by

foregrounding the ontological, and recognizing reality as a rhetorical construct, magnifies the transformative potential of rhetoric that Berlin identifies as being a tool for engaging in “means of self-criticism and self-revision,” allowing for the capacity to change (490). Embracing this renewed rhetorical perspective, an ontological-epistemic dialectic emerges as a palpable framework for critical pedagogy aiming to “enable students to ‘*extraordinarily reexperience the ordinary*’” as a means to exorcise forms of “false consciousness” or ideological influence (Berlin 490). In other words, a critical pedagogy enriched by an ontological lens can better assist catalysts for change, by revealing the recursive relationship of the epistemic and the ontic informing and reshaping one another.

Within the classroom, the primary aspiration of critical pedagogy is to transform the way students perceive societal norms, shifting them from “reactive objects” to proactive “society-making subjects” (Berlin 492). This aspired progression highlights the recursive power in the ontological-epistemic dialectic, where considering students as “reactive objects” underscores the taken-for-granted quality of reality which an ontological approach addresses in order to provide the epistemological the transformative power to shape students into “society-making subjects.” This nuanced interplay between ontology and epistemology is vividly portrayed in Burke’s dialectic which Fisher realizes in his narrative paradigm. Thus, integrating these rhetorical concepts from Burke and Fisher offers teachers a tangible toolkit for “[providing] the skills and knowledge to expand [students] capabilities both to question deep-seated assumptions of society and to take responsibility for intervening in the world,” assumptions that are inherently ontological (Giroux 172).

Criticisms and the Need to Foreground Ontology

The practice of critical pedagogy and the instructor's role within its framework have not escaped scrutiny. I argue that infusing a sense of ontological awareness into its practice could address some of the criticism levied against it by revealing the problematic ideological elephant in the room. For example, in her article "Diversity, Ideology, and Teaching Writing," Maxine Hairston points out the pitfalls when teachers fail in their duty to guide without imposing their own ideological views. Such that teachers put "ideology before critical thinking" and their social goals "before the educational needs of the student" (Hairston 180). The underlying issue of this cause may stem from teachers imposing their social-epistemic perspective rather than empowering students to foster their own rhetorical awareness of the ontological situation. That is, the educational need to teach students to convey critical thought through writing can still be achieved by addressing social issues if both the student and teacher take an ontological approach into the epistemological. In plain language, students can still learn to express critical thinking in their writing about social issues if they and their teacher focus on understanding the nature of these issues and how we come to know about them instead of launching from a predetermined moral stance imposed by the teacher's authority.

While Patricia Bizzell, in her article, "Composition Studies Saves the World!," does not explicitly make an argument for ontological rhetoric, she highlights that critic Stanley Fish, who claims that teachers should not assume the responsibility to "make students better people or citizens, or guide them in profound life choices" fail to recognize an intrinsic quality of the writing classroom that writing instruction "is never innocent [and] every pedagogy is imbricated with ideology" (Bizzell 180; Berlin 432). Therefore, Fish's extreme to consider teachers as a

“brain in a jar” prompts Bizzell to consider if teachers can legitimately raise issues to promote values through writing assignments (Bizzell 183, 185).

In response to these challenges, Jessica Enoch, in her article “Becoming Symbol-Wise: Kenneth Burke’s Pedagogy of Critical Reflection,” offers Burke’s dramatic pedagogy as a “productive link” between the fields of composition and rhetoric and critical pedagogy that offers an “approach to critical reflection that does not borrow from critical pedagogy but that is rooted in Burke’s rhetorical theory and practice” (273, 274). In other words, Burke’s dramatic approach, which encapsulates the ontological-epistemic dialectic, works to circumvent problems previously addressed by Fish, Hairston, and Bizzell that Enoch states can “strategically change the rhetoric and composition classroom” (274).

Therefore, rescuing an emphasis on critical reflection in the composition classroom enables cultivating critical rhetorical awareness, whereby, “students might become more critical of language use and think twice before discounting, engaging, and adopting a certain cause” (Enoch 281). In essence, reflection begets awareness that empowers preparedness to inoculate the student against influence. Enoch highlights a key subtle difference between traditional critical pedagogies and Burke’s dramatic pedagogy: students are not learning to use language more assertively, rather, students “study the means by which men have been able to increase their assertiveness” (281). It is important to note that these two approaches are not cancelling, but rather enriching. Through critical reflection and gaining a keener awareness, students can more effectively assert themselves when required. In this way, Burke’s rhetorical framework resolves Fish and Hairston’s uncertainties about teachers imparting an ideology by empowering students to come into their own critical faculties and decide for themselves. By immersing students on various sides of the debate they become cognizant of how each side is made and

remade through the power and complexity of language (Enoch 281-4). By emphasizing a reflective stance this underscores the importance of a rhetorical awareness keen to Burke's terministic trivium that language is a reflection, selection, and deflection of reality. Thus, I advocate that employing Burke and Fisher's rhetorical paradigms foreground the ontological that provides tools to hone students' critical thinking and reflection on narratives, guiding them in shaping their values.

Recognizing the Ontological Importance of Rhetoric and Recovering Telos

A catalytic moment within twentieth-century rhetoric was when Burke recognized rhetoric as not simply a form of discourse but an attribute of all symbolic expression and action (Fisher 550). Like the linguistic turn, this insight recognizes that all communication is inherently rhetorical and that reality is a rhetorical construct. The consequence of this elucidates that the experience of rhetoric is "not purely epistemological, [but] fundamentally an ontological experience" because "rhetorical experiences work by identification rather than demonstration" (Fisher 556). This insight foregrounds the rhetorical experience as an ontological identification, which is what makes Fisher's narrative paradigm "fully in accord with [Burke's] view" (Fisher 558). Hence, what makes Fisher's narrative paradigm unique is that, as an ontological framework, it provides a different vantage point for analyzing narratives within critical pedagogy as opposed to a social-epistemic approach. Moreover, this vantage point makes Burke's dramatic tools more readily applicable.

What makes Fisher's narrative paradigm unique is that, as an ontological framework, it provides a different vantage point for analyzing public discourse within critical pedagogy as opposed to a social-epistemic approach. Moreover, this vantage point makes Burke's dramatic tools more readily applicable. The narrative paradigm primarily focuses on the public moral

argument, viewing narratives as moral constructs learned through socialization rather than education (Fisher 4, 8, 10). For this reason, there is a need to reevaluate the utility of Fisher's narrative paradigm in critical pedagogy, as critical pedagogy is ultimately concerned with how the moral practices of society impact the writer. Furthermore, in the landscape of public moral argument, "experts and lay persons meet on common ground," and "experts are storytellers" (Fisher 13). Therefore, it is advantageous to integrate the narrative paradigm with critical pedagogy because in the space of public moral argument, as all variances of experiences are rendered equal, and only the narrative's probability, its perceived truthfulness, and fidelity, its personal resonance, matter when it comes to adopting a point of view.

Fisher's Narrative Paradigm, an Overview

I will now provide an overview of Fisher's narrative paradigm, then identify two key modifications of how Burke's dramatism operates in Fisher's narrative paradigm, and evaluate how Burke's dramatism operates as an ontological framework. Fisher's narrative paradigm diverges from the traditional Aristotelian notion that binds reasoning to rationality that foregrounds ontological rhetorical inquiry over an epistemological. Fisher classifies these metaphysical differences as the epistemological "real world paradigm" and the ontological "narrative paradigm." While both modes of inquiry coexist, Fisher highlights that the certainty of Aristotelian rationality has been upset by modernist and postmodernist schools of thought (4). That is, traditional epistemological schools of thought "restrict the rational world paradigm to specialized studies and treat everyday argument to an irrational exercise," whereas the narrative paradigm ontologically anchors in the concept of a "logic of good reason" which "maintains that reasoning not be bound to argumentative prose or be expressed in clear-cut inferential or implicative structures" (Fisher 1545; Fisher 1). Identifying "good reasons" is not strictly

confined to argumentative logic, allowing narrative, a theory of symbolic actions “that have sequence and meaning for those who live, create, and interpret them,” to become “rhetorical fictions” that are “constructions of fact and faith having persuasive force” (Fisher 2, 6). Thus, Fisher argues that the narrative paradigm could enhance understanding of communication by offering a comprehensive solution for public moral discourse without discarding the valuable work already done but rather reevaluating and enriching it (Fisher 6).

Therefore, the two key factors that separate these paradigms are their conception of rationality and the paradigmatic mode of human decision-making and communication. Where the rational world paradigm views rationality as being “determined by subject matter knowledge, argumentative ability, and skilled employing of rules of advocacy in given fields,” the narrative paradigm views rationality as being “determined by the nature of persons as narrative beings” (Fisher 4, 8). This impacts the paradigmatic mode of human decision-making and communication as “argumentative clear-cut inferential (implicative structures)” into utilizing Fisher’s concept of “good reason,” “which vary from and among communication situations, genres, and media” (Fisher 4, 7). This is significant because, unlike a rational world paradigm focusing on field expertise, Fisher’s narrative paradigm engages with the public moral argument, which itself becomes a subjective collective of all disparate rational world paradigms. Because “experts and lay persons meet on common ground” within the narrative paradigm, the rationality for adhering to an orientation of reality is determined by *narrative probability*, the coherency and believability of a story, and *narrative fidelity*, how true a story is to personal experience. Thus, this orientation is informed by ontology rather than epistemology.

Therefore, where the rational world paradigm sees the world as “a set of logical puzzles which can be resolved through appropriate analysis and application of reason conceived as an

argumentative construct,” the narrative paradigm views the world as “a set of stories which must be chosen among to live the good life in a process of continual recreation” (Fisher 4, 8). That is, an epistemological approach seeks to reduce the complexities of reality into a single empirical view, whereas the ontological recognizes the diverse and often conflicting viewpoints that people infuse into their understanding of reality, acknowledging that this process is continuous and fundamental to human experience. Thus, viewing public discourse as a narrative through the narrative paradigm allows for the different strands of self-made meaning to become identifiable, analyzable, and engageable.

Key Modifications

The narrative paradigm, highlighting the influential role of stories in molding reality, enhances Burke’s dramatism by offering a framework to examine the ontological persuasion that invites individuals to construct these realities. Fisher, however, introduces two modifications to Burke’s dramatism that warrant reevaluation for recovering the usefulness and applicability within the narrative paradigm, specifically concerning actors performed roles and the assessment of human behavior.

The first distinction reframes Burke’s perspective that actors are “constrained or determined by scripts provided by existing institutions” into “authors and co-authors who creatively read and evaluate these tests of life and literature” (Fisher 561). This shift from Burke’s deterministic viewpoint to a co-creative participation underscores that individuals play active roles in creating narratives, acting as either creators or collaborations (Fisher 561). In other words, even if an actor or audience member in a discourse community is influenced by its particular rhetorical practices, the narrative paradigm acknowledges the potential to engage

meaningfully with those practices and enact change. In effect, Fisher softens the claim Burke's dramatism makes about the rigidity of rhetoric in discourse.

The second distinction derives from the concept of such possible change. Fisher notes that Burke "seems to hold that good communication not only surmounts division, but also engenders humane, responsible action" (568). However, Fisher highlights that "not all successful identification results in humane, reasonable action" as no theory can ensure that, but "the narrative paradigm is designed to further it by incorporating the concepts of narrative rationality" (Fisher 570). That is, Fisher himself reevaluates Burke's rhetorical framework and repairs it from the ontological vantage point provided by the encompassing view of his narrative paradigm.

Synthesizing Burke and Fisher's Rhetorical Ontology

After 1968, Burke broadened his view of symbol-use, aiming not only to clarify symbolic practices but also to discern the fundamental distinctions that influence how and why beings communicate (Chesebro 180). Evolving his perspective, Burke acknowledges the dual role of rhetoric as both epistemological and ontological. This positions Burke's framework as an ontological-epistemic dialectic that offers a "more comprehensive view of human communication" (Chesebro 178). As a result, after 1968, Burke made two distinct claims about dramatism. The first claim is that "dramatism is ontological, and not epistemological, because it begins with language as action, not as representation" (Crabbe 324). Second, he contends that "this starting point can claim privilege status because, compared to scientism, or behaviorism, it offers a more complete approach to the study of human motivation" (Crabbe 324). Burke's epistemology becomes associated with his logology and the ontological with dramatism. Where the "logological theory examines rhetoric in practice... [studying] how and why specific people use certain symbols in particular circumstances to create and control specific social settings," the

“dramatistic theory of symbol-using deals with the universals of the human condition and universals of communication... [to] provide a general conception of all human beings as symbol-users” (Chesebro 180-1).

This dichotomy mirrors Fisher’s delineation between the rational world and narrative paradigm, respectively, Burke’s logology and dramatism. In this way, Fisher’s narrative paradigm can be viewed as a natural ontological evolution of Burke’s re-conception, which further enables identifying persuasion operating within narrative. In further distinguishing this dichotomous difference, Chesebro notes that Burke recognizes rhetoric as “both an active and reactive medium” (176). That is, when active, rhetoric functions as an epistemology, and when passive, rhetoric functions as an ontology. In other words, the ontological addresses the “what,” while the epistemological addresses the “how” (Chesebro 185).

Therefore, Burke recognizes that the “ontological and epistemological perspectives mutually define symbol-using” (Chesebro 185). Hence, Burke’s classification of his rhetoric as an ontological-epistemic dialectic “allows us to more carefully explore the literal functions of symbol-using as an ontological dimension of criticism” (Chesebro 185). In other words, Burke’s framework allows for a way to understand how symbols used in communication contribute to our understanding of reality, providing insight into how narrative constructs our perception of the world, an extension Fisher makes both from Burke and MacIntyre as viewing man as a storytelling animal (Fisher 1475).

Here, Crable highlights that since Burke perceives action and existence as intricately connected, dramatism, which begins with action, is inherently ontological (327). Whereas scientism, similar to a rational world paradigm, starts from the point that knowledge is fundamentally epistemological (Crable 327). That is, Burke’s dramatism does not view language

as a reflection of the world; instead, it identifies it as actively participating in shaping the world. Again, aligning with Fisher's narrative paradigm highlighting the connection between Burke's *homo symbolicus* and Fisher's *homo narrans*. To this point, Crable highlights that "language, then, is not simply matching verbal label to nonverbal entity," rather "this is to say that a thing is not so much *represented in language as constituted by language*" (328-9). Concluding that "this distinction is key to understanding Burke's rejection of epistemology and embrace of ontology" (Crable 329).

Therefore, Burke's evolution of thought exposes that if reality is actively constructed through epistemic processes, then that product becomes a passive ontological system or shareable ontological orientation. Essentially, there are two ways of constructing our perceptions of reality. Thus, as Chesebro astutely, "a comprehensive view of human communication must necessarily invoke both ontological and epistemological modes of inquiry," which Burke's total rhetorical framework, logology and dramatism, work to achieve (178).

Tying this understanding back to the importance of Fisher's narration, foregrounding an ontological mode of inquiry fundamentally reveals language's role in constructing reality, crafting "the scene that provides the foundation for the identity of things" (Crable 329). As a result, rhetoric may now be viewed "not as a matter of giving effectiveness to truth but to creating truth" (Crable 337). This further parallels with Fisher's narrative paradigm and his leveraging of Alasdair MacIntyre's emotivism in *After Virtue*. Because of this, Burke asserts that dramatism provides a literal approach to studying reality and holds a privileged status in the study of motivation, primarily because dramatism is grounded in ontology, emphasizing language as action rather than representation (Crable 334, 337).

Revisiting Burke's Ontology in Critical Pedagogy: The So What

As previously discussed, Burke's ontological-epistemic dialectic highlights the active and passive qualities of rhetoric, allowing each to be assessed as operating independently or mutually. Actively, rhetoric helps us come to an understanding of how it is we believe and understand the world, whereas, passively, rhetoric provides the fabric by which reality is constructed. In other words, an ontological mode of inquiry investigates the dimensions of our shared social realities that influence our meaning-making processes and subsequent perceptions of reality, or our ontological orientations. In contrast, an epistemological mode of inquiry investigates how we use that knowledge to inform our beliefs. Thus, while being recursive, the epistemological must draw on the ontological, thereby establishing the importance of invoking both modes of inquiry for examining the persuasiveness of symbolic action.

Before we can investigate how we know something, we must first have a framework or understanding of what that something is. Our methods and ways of knowing are inherently grounded in our assumptions and beliefs about the nature of reality. Consequently, the ontological-epistemic dialectic must be viewed as a recursive process if we are to lucidly engage with the linguistic substance of symbolic actions. Our ontological understandings can be shaped and redefined by our epistemological investigations and vice versa. As we discover new ways of knowing and interpreting, our understanding of reality can shift. Utilizing Burke's framework underscores the malleability of identification and its propensity for influence, due or undue. Therefore, the argument for critical pedagogy is that before students can effectively engage in Berlin's social-epistemic process of discussing their experiences of social factors impacting their lives, the students/they would perform an ontological narrative analysis on those specific social realities to better inform their epistemic analysis.

In application, Burke's pentad¹ and the exploration of their ratios serve to identify how narratives shape our understanding of reality, often in ways they bypass conscious, critical analysis, or our own epistemic modes of inquiry, thereby highlighting the elusiveness of our own process of knowing. I am arguing for a critical pedagogy that expands our rhetorical awareness in order to better survey the ontological "what is" in order to more effectively apply an epistemology of "how." Furthermore, an expanded rhetorical awareness includes equipping individuals with tools and perspectives to discern intricacies within narratives. By honing this awareness grounded in Fisher's narrative paradigm, one can more astutely evaluate the ontological "scene" from which knowledge is constructed and communicated. In essence, an expanded rhetorical awareness acts as a lens that sharpens one's perception on the ontological persuasiveness of narrative. This is the reason to reevaluate Burke's framework in light of Fisher's modifications and insights of the narrative paradigm in order to effectively house it within the writing modality of critical pedagogy.

By understanding how narratives are crafted, framed, and delivered, one can more effectively discern the foundational beliefs about reality embedded within them. This discernment then informs and redefines one's epistemological approach, ensuring that methods and processes of gaining knowledge are grounded in a robust understanding of the realities one engages with.

¹ See Pages 9-12

Applications of Burke's Dramatism in the Critical Pedagogy Classroom

In this section, I join the chorus of scholars that align with Burke's telos that envisions using his rhetorical framework to "help people come to terms, not war," wherein Burke's dramatism as a pedagogy that empowers individuals to engage in the world more actively and lucidly to become "'citizen-critics' to improve human relations generally" (Warnock 9; Rountree and Rountree 352). While not the first, Clarke and John Rountree, in their article "Burke's Pentad as a Guide for Symbol-Using Citizens," "propose[s] that Burke's [pentad] be used to develop a 'user's guide' for symbol users" in order to "become symbolically-aware citizens who can fully understand and engage with the rhetorical world" (352). Foregrounding the view that reality is rhetorically constructed and framed by language, the authors concur that "a rhetorical education offers a way to come to terms with the linguistically constructed reality" (350).

Furthermore, Rountree and Rountree highlight that Burke's pentad uniquely offers "an account of the symbolically mediated world" (354). One reason the pentad provides this account is due to Burke's concept of terministic screens and how the selecting, reflecting, and deflecting processes of language constrain the way people view the world, wherein the pentad as an analytical tool offers an awareness to think beyond ontologically received language (354, 356, 360). Scholarship such as theirs underscores the value a dramatic pedagogy can offer students seeking to grasp the rhetorical role of discourse they encounter, which in itself can be "emancipatory to the extent it reveals how their otherwise taken-for-granted world is stitched together and manipulated through symbols" (352). The pentad serves as a prime example of how Burke's dramatism provides a means to critique the symbolic actions that consciously or unconsciously influence our lives.

Floyd D. Anderson and Lawrence J. Prelli, in their article “Pentadic Cartography: Mapping the Universe of Discourse,” provide a detailed example of just how what the pentad uncovers can be emancipatory. As with the emphasis on a rhetorically constructed reality, Anderson and Prelli push this consequence into the narrative domain of Fisher via/through Herbert Marcuse’s “closed universe of discourse.” Marcuse identifies the dominating gravitas ascendent narratives have within the channel of public discourse. Anderson and Prelli define this scene by saying that “advanced industrial society is so pervaded with a technological rationality that it fosters a closed universe of thought and discourse that stifles and silences all other points of view” and that it is the “critic’s role [to be]...an agent of demystification” (73). Like Rountrees’ thinking beyond received language, Anderson and Prelli “contend that Burke’s dramatisitic pentad furnishes a method for charting the ways that terminologies function to open and close the universe of discourse” (74). In other words, terministic screens of a language-informed reality can be demystified through a pentadic reopening, which expands the linguistic enclosure directed by a discourse. In this way, Anderson and Prelli state that “the pentad furnishes heuristics in the invention” that provides “twenty kinds of pentadic relationships that generate different vocabularies of motive and corresponding orientations toward social realities” (86). These different vocabularies, which reveal “incongruous perspectives” to the dominant narrative, can create “counterstatements, alternative reality orientations, which, when juxtaposed with those that are dominant, possess the potential for reopening the universe of discourse” (86). This is how social change can be rhetorically asserted by expanding a rhetorical awareness to all the different vocabularies revolving around a perspective. As an exercise of pentadic cartography “mapping the observable linguistic structures of discourse,” the pentad “possesses the special methodological features needed to address these critical tasks” (88).

In conclusion, the scholarly discourse surrounding Burke's dramatism and Fisher's Narrative Paradigm affirms their potential as a powerful pedagogical tool—either incorporated with critical pedagogy or standing alone. The perspectives of scholars like Enoch, Rountree and Rountree, and Anderson and Prelli highlight the significance of ontological rhetorical inquiry that empowers individuals to interrogate and transform the narratives that shape their lives. This transformative engagement is not only aligned with Giroux's vision of critical citizenship but is also pivotal in fostering a community where individuals are both equipped to dissect and reconstruct the prevailing narratives and also inspired to contribute meaningfully to the broader tapestry of human narrative. Foregrounding ontology has not just illuminated the academic merit of these rhetorical frameworks but has also charted a course towards a more critically conscious and dialectically harmonious society.

A Deeper Inquiry: Making Use of Burke & Fisher for Critical Citizenship

Philosophical Impetus

Henry Giroux offers a poignant definition of critical citizenship; he defines it as “a form of empowerment [which] means acquiring the skills that enable one to critically examine history and resuscitate those dangerous memories in which knowledge expands the possibility for self-knowledge and critical and social agency” (170). As history informs our present, such a challenge of meeting this goal is often addressed through the writing modality of critical pedagogy that engages students in analyzing power dynamics manifesting within cultural practices that make an explicit commitment to educating for citizenship (George 77-88). That is, critical pedagogy utilizes rhetorical theory and writing instruction to impart students with the capacity to examine social power relationships in order to cultivate a sense of meaningful civic participation, shaping students into informed, critical citizens. In this paper, I argue that Giroux’s emphasis on critically navigating history embodies both ontological and epistemological dimensions of rhetoric. However, critical pedagogy, and writing instruction in general, often neglect the significance of ontological rhetorical inquiry and instead emphasize a social-epistemic approach. Thus, I find a pressing need to foreground rhetorical ontology in order to provide the crucial insights required for acquiring the skills for realizing Giroux’s vision.

I argue that this ontological foregrounding is best showcased through Kenneth Burke’s Dramatism and Walter Fisher’s Narrative Paradigm, which offer a tangible approach to addressing the challenges in embodying critical citizenship, whereby an individual must cultivate a rhetorical awareness fit for the 21st century. Moreover, foregrounding ontology highlights the significance that reality is a rhetorical construct. Therefore, in addition to realizing Giroux’s

vision for critical citizenship through Burke and Fisher's framework, the process of foregrounding ontology also becomes a response to Immanuel Kant's clarion call to enlightenment in *daring to know*, because the two are inextricably linked. That is, the rhetorical tools of Burke and Fisher elucidate how Kant's emancipation of immaturity aligns with Giroux's resuscitation of dangerous memories through critical reflection in knowing the knower and critical analysis in knowing the known. Ultimately, Kant's *Sapere Aduē* is seen as fundamentally embedded within the telos of Giroux's critical citizen, and a rhetorical awareness keen to the shaping power of rhetoric on reality serves as an inoculant to influence for empowering individuals to achieve and exercise Kant's legitimate use of reason and more fully embody Giroux's vision of citizenship.

Kant, in his landmark essay "What is Enlightenment?" (1784), defines enlightenment as delivering an individual from self-imposed immaturity stemming from the reliance on other's guidance due to an inability to utilize one's own understanding and he emphasizes courage to overcome this reliance, urging individuals to *dare to know* the world on their own terms to break those self-imposed barriers (1). Michel Foucault, in his own "What is Enlightenment?" (1984), astutely provides clarity on Kant's use of "immaturity" meaning "accepting someone else's authority to lead us in areas where the use of reason is called for" whereby the process and state of enlightenment becomes a "modification of the preexisting relation linking will, authority, and the use of reason" (35). Therefore, in this process of becoming enlightened, effort is required. This effort, I argue, is best directed at expanding a rhetorical awareness in order for an individual to renegotiate their preexisting relations.

Foucault aptly criticizes that Kant's "way out" of self-imposed immaturity is rather ambiguous, requiring both cooperative and individual participation to "accomplish" effectively

(35). In remedy of this ambiguity, I argue that Burke and Fisher's foregrounding of ontology effectively addresses this challenge. That is, as Kant's enlightenment is both a personal and social crucible, ethical at the personal level and political at the social, where this duality of "men [participating] collectively and as an act of courage to be accomplished personally" is mutually inclusive and one serviceable by Burke and Fisher's rhetorical frameworks (Foucault 35). In other words, on the social level, a keen and applied rhetorical awareness can take the shape of Giroux's critical citizenship, which, in Kant's words, "influences the principles of government" to operate "in a manner appropriate to [man's] dignity" (Kant 11). At the personal level it empowers putting legitimate "reason to use, without subjecting itself to any authority," or one—to use my title terminology-- inoculated to influence. (Foucault 38).

Foucault notes that "illegitimate uses of reason are what gives rise to dogmatism and heteronomy, along with illusion; on the other hand, it is when legitimate use of reason has been clearly defined in its principle that its autonomy can be assured" (38). Building on this, I underscore the legitimacy of achieving autonomy by establishing the need for individuals to cultivate rhetorical awareness and preparedness fit for the 21st century that will make Kant's legitimate use of reason accessible. As Foucault points out, it is worth noting that every step of the way, an individual's rhetorical agency is undermined by dogmatic and heteronymic forces through influence—which is a Burkeian view of persuasion as identification. There is a need for establishing a keen rhetorical awareness that enables one to inoculate influence and retain the agency to exercise legitimate, autonomous reason. Burke and Fisher's frameworks become a heuristic for a legitimate use of reason and the emancipation from immaturity. Here, it is important to recognize that enlightenment in this context is a constant practice that must continually adapt to the undermining forces of present-day rhetorical phenomenon. This

underscores the importance of establishing a rhetorical framework that affords the necessary tools and means to remain rhetorically fit, especially in the digital era where technology has transformed communication. Being rhetorically fit now means not only understanding and engaging effectively in digital discourse but also adapting to the nuances of online communication, where messages can quickly spread to diverse audiences, and meanings can shift in the absence of traditional cues. This framework helps individuals navigate the ever-evolving rhetorically-constructed landscape informing reality. Moreover, because the human condition has always been a narrative condition, Burke and Fisher's tools remain adaptable past the era within which they were conceived.

“The Rhetorical Turn:” Recognizing the Ontological Importance of Rhetoric

The recognition that reality is a rhetorical construct is decidedly a consequence of the linguistic turn in rhetorical theory. The linguistic turn is defined as a broad movement characterized by “a singular focus on the role of language in the construction of thought and shaping reality” (Bizzell 5131). The larger consequences of this realization lead to, according to Bizzell, “Martin Heidegger’s phenomenology, Michel Foucault’s post-structuralism, and Jacques Derrida’s deconstruction” (3693). In continental philosophy, as opposed to analytic philosophy, the view is that the structures of language itself “can only reveal what language itself has made apparent, and not any ultimate final truth grounded in a transcendental rationality” (Bizzell 5131).

Similarly, a catalytic moment for Burke was when he recognized rhetoric as not simply a form of discourse but an attribute of all symbolic expression and action (Fisher 550). Like the linguistic turn, this paradigm shift recognizes that all communication is inherently rhetorical, and that reality is rhetorically constructed. The consequence of understanding reality as rhetorically shaped elucidates that the experience of rhetoric is “not purely epistemological, [but]

fundamentally an ontological experience,” because “rhetorical experiences work by identification rather than demonstration” (Fisher 556).

Burke’s pioneering insights into the ontological significance of rhetoric derive from Nietzsche’s philosophy that regards language, thought, experience, and knowledge as rhetorical constructs (Bizzell 3671). Consequently, the contemporary period in the rhetorical tradition found a renewed interest in viewing persuasion as a force deployed through language to construct reality. Foucault considered that this was the “moment when words ‘rediscovered their ancient, enigmatic destiny,’ lost since the demise of the Sophists” that recognizes that “language does not simply represent a preexisting reality or even a person’s thoughts” (Bizzell 3670). For Burke, this rediscovery of Sophistic relativism surfaced contradictions between the certainty of Plato and Aristotle’s rhetorical legacies that lingered as he forged his rhetorical framework. This dissonance was ultimately resolved after 1968 when Burke made an ontological turn embracing an ontological-epistemic dialectic, which positioned his dramatism, a theory of symbol-using dealing with “universals of the human condition and universals of communication,” as an ontology and his logology, a theory focused on “how and why specific people use certain symbols... to create and control specific social settings,” as an epistemology, thus offering “a comprehensive view of communication” (Chesebro 181, 178). However, a problematic consequence that becomes apparent from Burke working through these contradictions is his “rhetoric of ascent” as he “is forever upping the ante until we finally reach stakes for which few of us are comfortable playing” (Quin 231). Burke’s high stakes are found in his separately developed concept of dialectical-rhetorical transcendence. Burke labors to reconcile this contradiction by synthesizing Hegelian, Marxist, and Platonic forms of transcendence to achieve “pure persuasion” and “ultimate identification” that James Zappen identifies as inevitably ending

within “the province of mysticism and poetic imagination” (Zappen 281). However, one pragmatic approach for reconciling this contradiction is to view Burke’s ascent as an agnostic pursuit for cooperation rooted in the commonality of human nature. That is, without becoming ensnared in mythological cosmology of arguments about the nature of ultimate truths and reality, Burke’s rhetoric of ascent, his essential endgame, can be viewed as his ontological-epistemic dialectic process during which dramatism becomes a way of knowing the world and a way of knowing oneself, as the two are interdependently linked. Moreover, this topic can be approached with a critical openness, acknowledging that aspects beyond our current understanding can be explored through dialectical inquiry, potentially having a substantial impact on the malleable nature of self-identification. This plasticity stems from the fact that self-identity relies on contingent linguistic factors, and by continuing to expand our perspectives ultimately transcends limiting conflicts along the way, *ad infinitum*, into the poetic and mystically conceived “ultimate identification” aided by “pure persuasion,” even if this later concept is only considered an analogical signpost. While Burke’s logic is prone to hierarchical thinking, which presents its own challenges, it is possible to consider Burke’s process horizontally by emphasizing transformation instead of transcendence, an outward expansion rather than upward.

Therefore, in the context and purpose of cultivating critical citizenship, the examination of reality through rhetorical analysis and criticism “becomes a dialectical analysis that examines the structural relationships constituted by the interplay of ontological and epistemological dimensions of transformation” (Bertelsen 231). This described interplay is recursive, with both dimensions constantly influencing each other, enabling the transformation of individual identities amidst the evolving symbolic nature of language. Bertelsen further elaborates that a key significance of Burke’s conception of reality “encourages us not to sort out the temporal

relationships between the [ontological and epistemological] but to acknowledge that ‘there is a sense in which the being and the being-known are one’” (232; qtd. Burke). This suggests that a natural dichotomy characterizes human existence, yet, paradoxically, our innate drive for division through classifications propels us toward unity. Echoing this sentiment, Burke underlines that typically, “man justifies himself in the mode of socialization that goes with society” (qtd in Bertelsen 234). That is, at some level, a compromise emerges between language, identity, and reality, converging to form the self—a perspective steeped in both social constructionist and emotivism viewpoints. Thus, from a transformative standpoint, existence and understanding are intertwined and mutually reliant. As Bertelsen noticed of Burke, this intertwined relationship culminates “as the action that results from transformational sensory perception through symbolism” (235).

While the hierarchical logic of ascent problematically leads into an associative framework with Romanticism’s ontological problems (Quin), Bertelsen’s emphasis on Burke’s transformation over transcendence is beneficial. He states, “the process of transformation is transcendence not because it gets beyond the essential paradox of substance but because it filters experience, thereby encouraging action” (Bertelsen 239). Therefore, by recognizing Burke’s framework as a recursive process dramatism’s teleological drive becomes more identifiable when expressed visually. As a recursive aid, I express Burke’s concepts working together as rhetorical calculus in order to better aid visualizing and understanding how Burke’s concepts interconnect and inform one another:

$$\text{Terministic screens} = ((\text{Identification} + \text{division}) + (\text{motive}) / \text{transformation})^2$$

² See 2.2.1-3 for definitions.

Again, transcendence is viewed as transformation to emphasize the horizontal ontological expansion in order to avoid the cosmological “getting beyond” trappings rooted in Burke’s idealistic “ultimate identification.” Moreover, perspectives by incongruity is purposely omitted because the term is later encompassed by terministic screens. And transcendence, now transformation, is the factor which expands or constricts one’s identity and perspective of reality, viz a viz, the terministic screen.

Understanding Burke’s Dramatism in Fisher’s Narrative Paradigm

Fisher’s Narrative Paradigm extends and builds upon Burke’s theories which uniquely offer an ontological framework that provides access in recognizing the different vantage points for analyzing narratives. This contrasts with a social-epistemic approach and facilitates transformation by showing how reality, our worldviews, and identities can be shaped by transformative linguistic action. Fisher’s Narrative Paradigm is a divergence from the traditional Aristotelian notion that binds reasoning to rationality that foregrounds ontological rhetorical inquiry over epistemological. Fisher classifies these metaphysical differences as the epistemological “real world paradigm” and the ontological “narrative paradigm.” While both modes of inquiry coexist, Fisher highlights that the certainty of Aristotelian rationality has been upset by modernist and postmodernist schools of thought (4). This can be seen in Burke’s framework even though he had not realized the challenge made to Aristotelian rationality until later in his career. Traditional epistemological schools of thought “restrict the rational world paradigm to specialized studies and treat everyday argument to an irrational exercise,” whereas the narrative paradigm ontologically anchors in the concept of a “logic of good reason” which “maintains that reasoning not be bound to argumentative prose or be expressed in clear-cut inferential or implicative structures” (Fisher 1545; Fisher 1). Within this framework, the “logic

of good reason” is not strictly confined to traditional Aristotelean argumentative logic and allows the creation of narratives as “rhetorical fictions” that are “constructions of fact and faith having persuasive force” (Fisher 7). Thus, Fisher argues that the narrative paradigm could enhance understanding of communication by offering a comprehensive solution for public moral discourse without discarding the valuable work already done by rational world paradigms, but rather reevaluating and enriching it (Fisher 6).

The two key factors that separate these paradigms are their conception of rationality and the paradigmatic mode of human decision-making and communication. Where the rational world paradigm views rationality as being “determined by subject matter knowledge, argumentative ability, and skilled employing of rules of advocacy in given fields,” the narrative paradigm views rationality as being “determined by the nature of persons as narrative beings” (Fisher 4, 8). This division impacts the paradigmatic mode of human decision-making and communication as “argumentative clear-cut inferential (implicative structures)” into utilizing Fisher’s concept of “good reason,” “which vary from and among communication situations, genres, and media” (Fisher 4, 7). This is significant because, unlike a rational world paradigm focusing on specific field expertise, Fisher’s narrative paradigm engages with the public moral argument, which itself becomes a subjective collective of all disparate rational world paradigms. Because “experts and lay persons meet on common ground” within the narrative paradigm the rationality for adhering to an orientation of reality is determined by *narrative probability*, the coherency and believability of a story, and *narrative fidelity*, how true a story is to personal experience. Thus, this orientation is informed by ontology rather than epistemology.

Where the rational world paradigm sees the world as “a set of logical puzzles which can be resolved through appropriate analysis and application of reason conceived as an

argumentative construct,” the narrative paradigm views the world as “a set of stories which must be chosen among to live the good life in a process of continual recreation” (Fisher 4, 8). An epistemological approach seeks to reduce the complexities of reality into a single empirical view. In contrast, the ontological recognizes the often-contradictory perspectivity of our understanding of reality, acknowledging its ongoing interpretation and meaning-making process. Viewing public discourse as a narrative through the narrative paradigm allows for the different strands of self-made meaning to become identifiable, analyzable, and engageable. Although Burke’s rhetorical tools are sufficient alone, aligning with Fisher’s Narrative Paradigm greatly enhances a framework to analyze claims in narratives ranging from Protagoras’s “man in the measure” to Steven Colbert’s “truthiness,” becoming an effective heuristic for evaluating narrative in today’s complex post-truth environment.

Alasdair MacIntyre, in *After Virtue*, provides the philosophical historicity and rationality for the importance of how moral subjectivity, or emotivism, works within the contexts applied in cultivating critical citizenship. Burke’s claim that all language is motivated finds support in MacIntyre’s point that “it is only because human beings have an end towards which they are directed by reason of their specific nature, the practices, traditions, and the like are able to function the way they do” (iii). That is, our ends are our motives, and those ends inform our telos, or justifications for our actions. More specifically, MacIntyre emphasizes that because of the historical situatedness of all moral enquiry underscores the subjectivity inherent in the diverse practices across different times (v). Fisher utilizes this recognition to underscore and support the need for an ontological evaluation of morality through his Narrative Paradigm, a need reinforced by MacIntyre’s emotivism that states “that all evaluative judgments and more specifically all moral judgements are *nothing but* expressions of preference, expressions of

attitude or feeling, insofar as they are moral or evaluative in character” (11; italics original).

Thus, MacIntyre’s preference and attitudes correspond to Fisher’s narrative fidelity and narrative probability as the “‘reason giving force’ in narrative” (MacIntyre 8).

MacIntyre’s emotivism, as a philosophical underpinning to Fisher’s Narrative Paradigm, is a “theory which professes to give an account of *all* value judgments” (MacIntyre 11). The significance of MacIntyre’s insights makes available for ontological critique that “in moral argument the apparent assertions of principles functions as a mask for expression of personal preference” which “rests upon the claim that every attempt, whether past or present, to provide rational justification for an objective morality has failed” (MacIntyre 19). MacIntyre’s emotivism underscores the importance of Fisher recognizing the problematic nature of the rational world paradigm’s epistemological approach being unable to constructively engage with public discourse and why we need to treat rhetoric ontologically. Referring back to Kant’s conundrum, MacIntyre says “if moral utterance is put to the use at the service of arbitrary will, it is someone’s arbitrary will; and the question of *whose* will it is is obviously of both moral and political importance” (110). Thus, highlighting the critical importance of cultivating a rhetorical awareness able to inoculate influence foregrounding ontology through Burke and Fisher’s rhetorical frameworks can position oneself to exercise Kant’s legitimate reason.

Furthermore, MacIntyre reveals that the telos of Burke and Fisher’s framework aims to provide a toolset for bringing about awareness to empower cooperation. MacIntyre says/states:

[Karl] Marx was fundamentally right in seeing conflict and not consensus at the heart of the modern social structure. It is not just that we live too much by a variety and multiplicity of fragmented concepts; it is that these are used at one and the same time to

express rival and incompatible social ideals and policies *and* to furnish us with a pluralistic rhetoric whose function is to conceal the depths of our conflict (252).

That is, Burke's purpose is to "help people come to terms, not war" wherein war is "the ultimate disease, or perversion of cooperation" (Warnock, Enoch). War is the end of conversation—and conversation is integral to cooperation in overcoming conflict.

Recognizing the incongruity between an ontology of action and epistemology of knowing allows for Burke's ontological-epistemic dialectic to "critique the world around us" and drive "our attempts to unifying a nonunifiable world"—an approach in which moral purpose is leveraged and acts as the catalyst for navigating the paradoxical nature of language (Hassett 385).

Conclusion

In synthesizing the rich tapestry of rhetoric and critical pedagogy explored throughout this thesis, the concluding insights are as follows. Chapter 2 delved into the intellectual history of Burke's rhetorical theory, laying the groundwork for its application in the development of critical citizenship—a concept of paramount importance in the contemporary world. Chapter 3 explored a discussion that critiqued traditional critical pedagogy, advocating for the infusion of Burke's ontological insights to redress the limitations of prevailing social-epistemic models. Here, Fisher's Narrative Paradigm serves as an extension of Burke's dramatism that magnified the transformative powers of Burke's ontological-epistemic dialectic, revealing the pivotal role of narrative in sculping our worldviews and offering evaluative tools that enhance critical awareness and informed civic participation.

Chapter 4 deepened the exploration into what constitutes critical citizenship, engaging with the philosophical conversations of Kant, Foucault, and MacIntyre, and asserting that the confluence of Burke and Fisher's perspectives aptly meet the call for an enlightened civic engagement. In examining Burke's ultimate objective—transcending ideological strife through dialectical and rhetorical processes—I advocate for a form of transcendental-transformation grounded not in metaphysical absolutes but in the aesthetic possibilities of language and its potential for cooperative action.

Burke's telos, aimed at fostering cooperation rather than conflict, strongly resonates in a world where ideological conflict predisposes discourse to a stalemate and inhibits collaborative efforts. Recognizing the dissonance between the ontology of action and the epistemology of knowing stimulates a critical examination of the world around us, propelling us towards a unity in commonality in a fundamentally diverse world. The ontological-epistemic dialectic, then, is

not just a framework for understanding but a vehicle for moral engagement and a guide for navigating the paradoxical nature of language.

In conclusion, through this scholarly journey, the confluence of Burke's dramatism with Fisher's Narrative Paradigm has been affirmed as a formidable tool in pedagogy—either incorporated with critical pedagogy or standing alone. The perspectives of scholars like Enoch, Rountree & Rountree, and Anderson & Prelli highlight the significance of ontological rhetorical inquiry, empowering individuals to interrogate and transform the narratives that shape their lives. This transformative engagement is not only aligned with Giroux's vision of critical citizenship but is also pivotal in fostering a community where individuals are not only equipped to dissect and reconstruct the prevailing narratives but also inspired to contribute meaningfully to the broader tapestry of human narrative. Thus, traversing these chapters has not just illuminated the academic merit of these rhetorical frameworks but have also charted a course towards a more critically conscious and dialectically harmonious society.

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