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Abstract: The extensive writings of St. Augustine and Kenneth Burke, though partially "canonized," are popularly domesticated by an academic clericism which attempts to divorce each writer's religious concerns from their literary-critical vocabulary—even if that means disregarding, bracketing, or chopping up the more complex visions offered by whole books or collections. When we re-address intersections between the rhetorical and linguistic, between the secular and theological, we can examine how both thinkers worked inside conventions of their respective times to re-envision—even "convert"—such conventions on their own terms. To read Burke and Augustine in this way means to dislodge a conventional center which seems "obvious" merely because we neglect to examine its history and assumptions.

Men seek for vocabularies that will be faithful reflections of reality. To this end, they must develop vocabularies that are selections of reality. And any selection of reality must, in certain circumstances, function as a deflection of reality.

—Kenneth Burke, on "Scope and Reduction,"
A Grammar of Motives (1945)

FOR ALL MODERNITY'S OVERT SKEPTICISM about theological doctrine, it is worth noting how dogmatic boundaries have become conventional among the humanities—as if designating secular "denominations" inside the university: *This is rhetoric; that is criticism; this is literature; that is theology*. By extension, students tend to study *this* writer as rhetorician, *that* one as literary critic, and so on, suggesting that genre itself can be equally dogmatic. Further, students and instructors in particular disciplines who choose to "cross over" into other denominations of study or genre can be dismissed as dilettantes or academic "heretics." Even vogues of "interdisciplinarity" suggest that it is certainly a big step to bridge subject-matter bounds.¹

Media scholar Marshall McLuhan, the theologian and critic Walter Ong, S.J., and Puritan historian Perry Miller have argued that much of the tendency towards academic compartmentalization, quantification, and "fundamentalism" can be traced to 16th century logician Peter Ramus, who effectively advocated a method of student instruction that separates dialectic from rhetoric (Kuhns; Bizzell & Herzberg cited hereafter as *RT* 557-583). Ramus himself tells us in *Arguments in Rhetoric against Quintilian*: "I consider the subject matters of the arts to be distinct and separate. The whole of dialectic concerns the mind and reason, whereas rhetoric and grammar concern language and speech" (*RT* 570). As a key to his distinction, Ramus sought to separate judgment from invention, as if to "purify" logic from Sophistic influence (*RT* 571-573).

With that in mind, we must acknowledge how inherited and currently accepted conventions for engaging texts are circumscribed by assumptions and traditions which are not merely "neutral" or "descriptive," though they may be habitual—even ritualistic. Well-aware that my own selections of texts and subsequent analysis will inevitably "select" certain angles and "deflect" others, I nevertheless seek to examine how texts written by St. Augustine and Kenneth Burke can be read against the Ramistic scene, even as they have been Ramistically "re-formed" in modern anthologies. I propose that such a reading is necessary in order to expand discourse among disciplines, particularly between the "religious" and the "secular."

The extensive writings of Augustine and Burke, though partially "canonized," are popularly domesticated by an academic clericism which attempts to divorce each writer's religious concerns from their literary-critical vocabulary—even if that means disregarding, bracketing, or chopping up more complex visions offered by whole books or collections. Yet Burke's theory of "logology" (words about words) cannot be separated from the language and allegorical structures of Christianity. Likewise, Augustine's pre-conversion interest in "pagan" philosophy/religion and classical Ciceronian rhetoric ultimately informs not only his critical vocabulary (his own "words about words"), but also his culminating theological interests, arguments, and goals.

Both writers engage and interrogate traditions and vocabularies of their respective times, even as they aim to articulate revised or "new" unifying theories. When Augustine, through painstaking exploration, borrows rhetorical and pagan conventions as a catholicizing strategy towards Catholic theological *unity*, he rejects any temptation towards "simplification" which Ramus will popularize one thousand years later. But on a more subtle level, in his preoccupation with forming and protecting a canon of Biblical texts, "true" interpretational strategies and doctrine, Augustine anticipates, in a preliminary way, the drives of Ramus's "method-ism." Unlike Ramus, however, Augustine identifies his rhetorical motives—laying them open to more direct challenge. Burke employs dramatic strategies which likewise generate alternatives to modes of Ramistic simplification; and, like Augustine, identifies rhetorical motives and certainties of his own. Ironically, in using doubt *as a directing principle*,² Burke transforms his own "paradox of substance," so that logology can be interpreted as a "*trans*-substantiation" of theology for a secular age—a move which deflects typical labels of categorization, challenging university denominationalists and theological fundamentalists alike.

Examining the Ramistic "Scene"

First, we should take a brief look at how Ramus's influence becomes evident in the tendency to accept academic boundaries as unexamined (if not invisible) "givens." Placing Ramus in historical context, McLuhan situates his impact in the context of nascent Renaissance print culture: "The new homogeneity of the printed page seemed to inspire a subliminal faith in the validity of the printed Bible as bypassing the traditional oral authority of the church." He continues, "It was as if print, uniform and repeatable commodity that it was, had the power of creating a *new hypnotic superstition of the book as independent of and uncontaminated by human agency* (176; my emphasis).³

Ong's extensive study, *Ramus: Method and the Decay of Dialogue* traces far-reaching implications of Ramus's work. Ong identifies particular tendencies of Ramism which ring familiar to anyone who has worked in the field of education: favoring textbooks rather than manuscripts; preferring "teachability" and pedagogical efficacy rather than complicated or intricate questions of intellectual depth; advocating quantitative rather than qualitative modes for "assessment" of learning;⁴ and using monologue rather than dialogue in classroom delivery. Importantly, Ong emphasizes Ramus's dislike of "doubt" in the educational process. Citing his famous rejection of Aristotle, Ong comments that, for Ramus, "Aristotle is at his worst when he refuses to be dogmatic or magistral, questioning and doubting rather than teaching" (161). Ong attributes Ramus's tendency against experimental openness to his "horror of ambiguity and abstractionism," no doubt related to "his adulation of mathematics" (205).⁵

Ong notes that, long before Ramus formally declared his rejection of Catholicism, he had a reputation for being a "secret Protestant" (28). In fact, Perry Miller suggests that Ramism lent itself well not only to pedagogical changes of the 16th and 17th centuries but to theological gestures of early Protestantism, particularly among Puritan groups. For one thing, he points out Ramus's "dichotomy of invention" between "artificial" arguments (those demonstrable to any direct observer at any time) and "inartificial" ones (which "must be taken on trust, on testimony") (129). Miller notes that New Englanders used this dichotomous doctrine to declare the text of the Bible itself privileged as an "inartificial argument," deriving its testimony from witnesses (130). In addition, New England preachers used Ramus's rejection of the syllogism ("the student of Ramus was expressly warned to use it as sparingly as possible") to compose sermons from sequences of axioms rather than tracing steps of doctrinal logic from A to B to C (134).⁶

In the name of both simplification and logic, Ramus sought to eliminate the rhetorical or dialectical need to trace origins of doctrine when preaching, or teaching, or both—thus constructing an approach which tended to rely on the *apparently* impersonal authority of text and its "self-evident" propositions. Miller writes: "This was a logic for dogmatists; it assumed that decency and order prevailed both in the mind and among things. Therefore, the crowning achievement of the system was its doctrine of method" (138). "Method," even now, retains its blatantly pedagogical overtones but, as Ong points out, the word also was claimed by "enthusiastic preachers who made an issue of their adherence to 'logic'"—namely, then, "methodists" (304).⁷

Ong provides evidence that the "seedbed" of Ramist influence following Ramus's death was Germany (295-298), so it is little wonder that Friedrich von Schiller alludes to the prominence of Ramist trends in section six of his sixth *Letter on the Aesthetic Education of Man* in 1795. Although he attributes the phenomenon to "civilization" itself and what he calls an "increase of empirical knowledge," he also blatantly refers to "sharper divisions between the sciences," and "the separation of rank and occupation." Most importantly, he states that "The intuitive and the speculative understanding . . . have withdrawn in hostility to take up positions in their respective fields" (Leitch et al. 576). Ong echoes Schiller's note about empiricism when he points explicitly to "the effects of typography on Ramus's hardening style of logic" (Kuhns).⁸

Clearly, Ramism creates an interrelationship among paradigms of textual privilege, pedagogical "methodism," knowledge commodification, and Puritan theology. The absence of Ramus from the *Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* (Leitch et al.; henceforth *NATC*)—his accepted "relegation," ironically, to studies in what is currently termed "rhetoric"—serves as peculiar evidence that Ramus's influence has been successful, even if it remains unacknowledged. Ong himself characterizes this "curiously anonymous" influence by stating that the very configuration of academic books literally perpetuates Ramus's impact as part of a "great deposit of textbook literature dealing with the most familiar of our ideas which is rewritten in every generation, *while remaining so much a part of the universal heritage that no one can believe it has ever changed or even derived from a particular source*" (9; my emphasis).

For our purposes, Ramus's influence culminates in the *NATC*'s amazing underestimation of Burke. A self-educated "man of letters" who wrote prolifically from the margins of academe—he attended Columbia but did not take any degree⁹—Burke tends to be most acknowledged inside the domain of rhetoric and composition. While Burke himself did not address Ramus or his impact on the study of language and text, his early insight that "selections" of terms necessarily "reflect" and "deflect" certain interpretational values seems relevant to a discussion of conventions used to separate literary criticism from rhetoric and theology.¹⁰ Like Augustine, the "proto-semiotics" theorist who was equal parts theologian and trained rhetorician, Burke delves into language not merely as an *artifact* but as a center for meaning and persuasion. For both writers, dialectic and rhetoric may be distinguishable enterprises, but they do not operate in isolation from one another.

Connections: Augustine and Burke

To begin, let us examine the academic ground—a legacy of Ramistic dichotomies and divisions—which domesticates Augustine and Burke, specifically.

One of the most indicative examples of the compartmentalizing trend

to maintain distinctions between "criticism" and "rhetoric," or "criticism" and "theology," can be found in the bifurcation of Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*, or *On Christian Doctrine*, by two prominent anthologies. The editors of the *NATC* omit any selections from

Book Four—by far the most self-consciously religious section. Similarly, editors of Bedford Books/St. Martin's Press *The Rhetorical Tradition (RT)* include *only* Book Four in their pages (although introductory material quotes selections from the first three books). Such dissection of material within a single work tends to simplify Augustine's wrestlings with problematic intersections among words (signs), eloquence, and meaning—on both religious and linguistic levels. In fact, Augustine's theological interests *inform* his definitions of critical terms. While he attempts to distinguish between secular signs and religious purposes for using them, the language of religious allusion and example pervades both levels of his analysis. Augustine's pre-modern assumptions about authority and order inform all his painstaking ruminations on linguistic convention.

Burke functions as a twentieth century parallel, a modern secular counterpart, to Augustine. Prolific to the extreme, his work is difficult to anthologize, so that isolated and fairly uncharacteristic selections such as what the 2001 edition of *NATC* includes serves drastically to reduce the complexity of Burke's writing which, as even the editors themselves admit, tends towards a "Whitmanesque embrace of everything" (*NATC* 1271). The text selected for Burke, one might say, appears on the surface to be more easily "teachable" than his other texts.¹¹ Titled "Kinds of Criticism," the essay appeals to the Ramistic "eye" in that it proceeds with subdivisions and headings for "types" of critical method, even though the content is much less pedantic than its form suggests. Burke's ultimate emphasis on merging and interplay among types of criticism in fact parallels his overall emphasis on convergences of terms—particularly in the relation between logology and theology.

In stressing the overlap between the linguistic and rhetorical/religious for each writer, distinct agendas become apparent. Where Augustine seeks to resolve conflict, doubts, and heresies in thoughtfully evolving rules of orthodoxy about exegesis and "God as Word," Burke throughout his career sought a way to "manage" or "read" dissension of all types by analyzing language. If Augustine was a proponent of a theistic, pre-modern Gospel of texts, Burke represents a modern, even post-modern, gospel of experimentation and doubt—a brand of non-theistic metaphysics in the tradition of Nietzsche (Southwell 5-6). Using what he termed "logology," or "words about words," Burke can be read as a kind of linguistic theologian, whose particular evangelism seeks conversions not of souls but of terminologies and social transactions. Burke's approach highlights the relationship *between* dialectic and rhetoric, as does Augustine's, but at the same time models a posture of questions rather than certainties. *Forms* of inquiry thus function as a kind of goal, becoming a new *content* for constructive dialogue.

Undeniably, Burke's logological interests are rooted heavily in the language and allegorical structures of Christianity. Similarly, Augustine's original, pre-conversion interest in "pagan" philosophy and classical Ciceronian rhetoric ultimately informs not only his critical vocabulary (his own "words about words") but his theological interests and goals as well. The dramatic overlap of rhetorical and linguistic, secular and theological terms and complexities create vivid intersections for both writers—intersections which serve as grounds for two different kinds of transformation. In short, Ramistic designations for either writer will not serve.

Language and Theology in Augustine

To read Augustine against a Ramist grain, I must establish that no dichotomy exists between his theological and linguistic concerns—despite

their separation via textbooks. In addition, I must demonstrate that Augustine's attempts to incorporate pagan-classical rhetoric into his doctrinal (that is, his teaching) concerns represent an intentional blend rather than an accident.

On Christian Doctrine and *The Trinity* will be our primary focus.

In *On Christian Doctrine*, Augustine places his discussion of linguistic signs and conventions within an overtly theological framework. Considered historically, as the gospels were yet to be formally compiled together as a set of privileged texts, Augustine's writing can be seen as the work of "a controversialist, defending the correct doctrine of a young and volatile Christian church against various heresies," and thus "transforming for sacred use his old ambition to be a secular lawyer" (*RT* 381).¹² As a rhetorician, Augustine was well-versed in strategies the new church could employ for reaching nonbelievers and establishing its credibility in a non-Christian world. However, his rhetorical purpose was also bound deeply to a concern for establishing standards of linguistic interpretation.

Augustine is widely known to appropriate or draw from other traditions what he thinks can advance the new faith. In Book Two of *On Christian Doctrine*, for example, Augustine states frankly:

If those who are called philosophers, especially the Platonists, have said things which are indeed true and are well-accommodated to our faith, they should not be feared; rather, what they have said should be taken from them as unjust possessors and converted to our use. (*RT* 384)

Augustine's shameless certainty, here of "truth," reflects the Platonic tradition to which he refers, but he straightforwardly declares the need for philosophic incorporation, almost pillaging the previous tradition to accommodate the new one. It makes sense, then, that Augustine's voice at different points in *On Christian Doctrine* sounds at once like the voice of critic, rhetorician, and religious teacher. On the whole, he transforms Isocrates's kairotic spirit of suiting subject to time and place (i.e., "fitness for occasion"; 44), within a Pauline doctrine of "being all things to all men" in order to achieve persuasive success—and thus to build up a Christian community. One could argue that this move attempted to transform the Protean myth, in a reach to resolve questions of doctrine through linguistic shape-shifting.

Augustine binds linguistic terms with theological allusions and metaphors to provide a coherent ground for his set of Christian conventions. Book One, for example, begins with the connection between religious "doctrine" and "signs": "All doctrine concerns either things or signs, but things are learned by signs" (*NATC* 188). From here, he goes on to distinguish positivist objects (wood, cattle,

stone) from their symbolic counterparts in the Bible, and finally concludes in this section that words themselves, as signs, are also "things" (188). Thus Augustine uses religious—i.e. rhetorical—purposes to create motivational contexts for understanding linguistic signs. This maneuver is reinforced by the fact that "doctrine" can also be translated in the classical sense as "teaching" or "instruction" (RT 386).

Books Two and Three rework the appeals of Book One. Book Two opens with the most detached critical analysis of secular/linguistic terms, while its remaining sections—and all of Book Four—repeatedly examine language in a theological context. In the rare, more "purely" secular moments, Augustine transitions from a definition of doctrine to a definition of signs as "things which cause us to think of something beyond the impression the thing itself makes upon us." Specifically, he develops two categories of signs, the "natural" and the "conventional," by contrasting natural processes (smoke signaling fire) and conventional, interactive gestures (such as facial expressions) (NATC 188). Sections II and III transform Augustine's idea of the latter into religious terms. He writes, "Living creatures show these signs to one another for the purpose of conveying . . . *the motion of their spirits* or something they have sensed or understood" (189; my emphasis).

It is crucial to note the rhetorical priority in the above passages: conventional signs are *communicative* attempts to *connect* understandings between creatures. Significantly, Augustine stresses this principle once more before returning again to a discussion of "signs given by God . . . in Holy Scriptures": "Nor is there any reason for signifying, or for giving signs, except for bringing forth to another mind the action of the mind in the person who makes the sign" (NATC 189). Thus, we observe the socializing context within which Augustine implies the rhetorical motives behind his own use of signs—logically and evangelically, to "bring forth" a "motion of spirit." Affirming a connection between words, motive, and listening, he argues that there is no point in using language or being eloquent merely for the sake of doing so.

Augustine allows for "expression of meaning" even beyond words, through the senses, when he describes Biblical acts, particularly Christ's, as messages in themselves. He uses, in fact, the word "sacrament" (NATC 189) which, in the Catholic tradition, refers to an *outward sign*, instituted by Christ's action, *to provide grace*. Yet, perhaps conscious that people may only know of Christ's acts through the literal narrative of the Bible, Augustine repeatedly emphasizes that "words have come to be predominant for signifying whatever the mind conceives if they wish to communicate it with anyone" (189)—ultimately even analogizing signs indicated by sound or visual cues as being "like so many visible words" (189). Here we see that Augustine's notions of "correct instruction" will play a key role in reading verbal, literal, visual, and aural signs to suit a Christian exegesis.

Appropriately, near the middle of Book Two, Augustine explicitly addresses the problems of division among users of lettered signs, suggesting that the confusion of Babel represents a moment when "not only the minds" but the voices of men became dissonant (NATC 190). Having established such discordancy, he implies at once the need for authority (convention) and communication (translation). In fact, we can read "translation" as a linguistic form of theological *conversion*, even more stridently as *ascendancy*, since it attempts to bring one set of terms and idioms into the language of another. It is clear that Augustine is bothered by an emerging tension between principles of inclusion versus distinction in Book Two Section X, where he writes: "There are two reasons why things written are not understood: they are either obscured by unknown or by ambiguous signs. For signs are either literal or figurative" (190). Latent here is his assumption that written signs can and should be *understood*, which raises the question of how new conventions can resolve ambiguity.

Despite his attempt to illustrate the literal versus the figurative with yet another scriptural example (the ox), and despite his call in Section XI of Book Two for the "sovereign remedy which is a knowledge of languages" (NATC 190), Augustine does not clarify until Book Four the particular authorities to be used for distinguishing "true" reading or translation from "false": "It is the duty, then, of the student and teacher of the Holy Scriptures, who is the defender of the true faith, and the opponent of error, both to teach what is right, and to correct what is wrong" (RT 388). Thus, Augustine's exploration of words/signs and meaning may emerge from his classical training and does, in fact, borrow Platonic language of the "right," "good," and "true"—but his aim is to advance a new convention of faith and a Christian construct of charity. His exposition in Book Three, of what "lettered men should know"—the grammar of tropes such as allegory, enigma, and metaphor, even irony—becomes fundamentally necessary as "a solution of the ambiguities of Scriptures" (NATC 192), as opposed to mere self-education or secular savviness.

In Book Four, Augustine goes on explicitly to locate the imperative behind linguistic knowledge. Teachers and priests must possess eloquence *and* wisdom in order to impact students and congregants:

For what is the good of correctness of speech if the understanding of the hearer does not follow it, since there is absolutely no reason for speaking if they for whose instruction we speak are not instructed by our speaking? And so Cicero has said . . . that an orator ought to speak in such a way as to instruct, to please, and to persuade. (RT 395-96)

In his emphasis here on accuracy for a purpose—persuasion to instruction, and thus towards an acceptance of Christian tradition and church authority—Augustine applies again his classical training to the Christian "moment," transforming the preparations demanded in traditional "pagan" oratory into an ecclesiastical sensitivity. The very concept of spiritual conversion parallels Augustine's call to synthesize the purposes of "correct" speech: To provide instruction, to provide "pleasure" (or emotional connection), and to persuade—all at the same time. Struggling to resolve the difficult ambiguities of scripture is meant to induce humility and obedience, and thus no "easy" instruction or list of conclusions will serve the same transformative purpose.¹³

Ultimately, in *The Trinity*, Augustine's trinomial approach to speech is complemented by the Trinity as a doctrinal concern. He conflates scriptural authority and "purely" linguistic matters, as when he writes:

There are numberless instances in scripture where similar statements are made about the word of God, which is scattered

in the sounds of many languages through the hearts and mouths of men. But it is called the word of God, therefore, because a divine and not a human doctrine is handed down. (NATC 195)

In this translation, the passive construction of Augustine's phrases—"it is called" and "it is handed down," rather than "we call" or "Christians hand down"—

underscores again that a new universal authority is being offered as an objective principle. Here also we are reminded of Plato's concept of Forms (transcendental signifieds) as anchors not only "in principle" but also as an ultimate Reality, made even more urgent given the social and linguistic "scatterings" among human beings.

In *The Trinity*, we find an ultimate reciprocity between theological convention and linguistic terms. This occurs when Augustine discusses the opening passages of John's Gospel, attaching the Christian construction of God-and-Christ-as-Word with the "word of God" which is literally scriptural (NATC 195). In addition, his focus on the triune nature of God (as Father, Son and Holy Spirit simultaneously) can be read as *enacting* a conversion or melding of the three classical rhetorical concerns—Logos (God), Pathos (Son), and Ethos (Spirit)—resonating with Augustine's earlier conflation of instructiveness, appeal, and persuasion.¹⁴

Augustine's *exploitation* of pagan or secular terms, concepts, and associations to further a Christian rhetorical appeal certainly operates as a move towards orthodoxy as opposed to gnosticism, Manicheanism, or other worldviews deemed heresy at the time. Augustine's ultimate alignment with a catholic (that is, universalizing) Christianity and its canonization of the four Gospels—excluding, say, the "secret" Gospel of Thomas or the Apocryphon of John (Pagels xv-xvi)—is mirrored now in academia's blatant use of the word "canon" to privilege literary texts within individual disciplines. On some level, the early selection and privileging of texts for the Christian canon prefigures gestures made by textbook makers for all levels of education. What makes Augustine's direction different from Ramus's is that it preserves an open rhetoric of authority and tradition more readily identifiable for direct challenge.

Burke's Logological Transcendence

Throughout his career, as is well-known, Burke revisited religious themes, terminologies, and texts, perhaps most extensively in *The Rhetoric of Religion: Studies in Logology*, published in 1961. Through logology, Burke further complicates Augustine's conflation of religious purposes and secular terms by using "the close study of theology and its forms . . . to provide us with good insight into the nature of language itself as a motive" (RR vi). In effect, a paradox of logology mirrors back Burke's "paradox of substance."¹⁵ While the approach *depends upon* theology, Burke says, logology itself remains secular. Nevertheless, he puts the connection to theology in fairly urgent terms: "This text RR is intended to show why any secular theory of language that ignores the hints provided by theology is bound to be inadequate, whether or not theology is 'true'" (RR 14n).

There is much compelling and interesting disagreement about the extent to which Burke "dissembled" his own rhetorical, even religious, "motives" in his discussions of logology.¹⁶ However, I will argue that Burke, in particularly un-Ramistic fashion, manages two things at once: a secularization of theology and a theologizing of language. Burke's ultimate achievement could be called a paradox of "trans-substance"—even trans-substantiation—for terminologies, using analytical gestures which move, to put it metaphorically, from Word to flesh to bread, and back again to words. In "Counter-Gridlock," Burke makes a powerful declaration of such transformations: "Love is a personalized word for communication . . . There's communion in love, shared communion" (Rueckert and Bonadonna 371).¹⁷ Burke's writings make clear that his recurring posture of doubt and inquiry is not cynical or nihilistic, but re-socializing and seeking connection. In light of his urgent humanism, it makes sense that Burke would reject or seem to toy with questions meant simply to "place" or position him as a "kind" or "brand" of theologian or philosopher.¹⁸ At the same time, however, Burke refuses to ignore the impact of religiosity upon what literary-critical circles deem to be "purely" secular, psychological, or historical concerns.

Burke's treatment of Augustine as rhetorician and theologian serves as a locus for examining the apparently paradoxical motives of logology. He engaged Augustine's *Confessions* at length in *The Rhetoric of Religion*, but he also extensively addressed *De Doctrina Christiana* in *A Rhetoric of Motives* (1950). What Burke notices, even admires, about Augustine provides insight as to the critical principles latent in Burke's own theoretical framework. In a chapter titled "Traditional Principles of Rhetoric" in the earlier text, he writes:

The rhetoric with which Augustine is exclusively concerned, a rhetoric for persuading audiences to a Christian way of life, does not aim at systematic observations about the art of 'proving opposites.' His treatment is at once both narrowed and widened: narrowed in the sense that it is concerned only with the use of words for one purpose, the teaching of Christianity; widened in the sense that the persuasion it would establish was a doctrine of *universal* motivation. (RM 74-75; his emphasis)

Burke goes on to point out Augustine's "close analysis of Biblical texts, which he selects and studies for their craftsmanship," and while he compares Augustine's "literary appreciations" to Longinus's, Burke emphasizes that Augustine is nevertheless always writing as "propagandist of the Faith," as "a master of apologetics . . . whose sensitiveness to communication problems was sharpened by the memory of harsh conflict within, of inner voices at one time opposing each other like rivals in debate" (75). Burke seems to respect Augustine's use of dialectic in the service of rhetoric—particularly in his conversion and conflation of terms to expand a Christian appeal.¹⁹

Burke's terms of appreciation for the theologian as persuader and teacher connect fundamentally to his own interests in close-reading, communication, social interaction, and "conflicts of voices."²⁰ There are no easy ways to separate the theological from linguistic implications of these interests, despite what we might identify as Burke's persistent "disclaimers." In fact, towards the end of his

career, logology becomes a deeply *urgent* concern. In his introduction to the collection of Burke's writings from 1967-1984, Rueckert notes that Burke in fact moves away from modes of "text-centered" analysis and becomes "relentless" in his explanations and applications of logology—particularly as challenges against hyper-technologism and environmental destruction (Rueckert and Bonadonna 1-6).²¹

The association between God and language is complex for Burke. As if anticipating dismissal in a world suspicious of "traditional" religions, he tends to couch logology's theological fixations in distant language or passive syntax, even as he stresses the "genius" of theology. In his 1979 essay, "Theology and Logology," Burke writes:

Logology involves only *empirical* considerations about our nature as the symbol-using animal. But for that reason logology is fascinated by the genius of theology; and all the more because, through so much of our past, theologians have been among the profoundest of our inventors in the way of symbolic action. Also, everywhere logology turns, it finds more evidences of the close connection between speech and theologic doctrine. (153)

Later in the same essay, he emphasizes how the narrative of Genesis "tells the story of a divine word's informative power" (166). Language becomes "symbolic action" as we read descriptions of God's creative acts (when God *said* "let there be light," light came to exist), as well as in the office accepted by Adam, the proto-human, for identifying, through names, what God had made.²²

Logologically, Burke locates one of the most profound indicators of human agency in what he calls the linguistic "invention of the negative." Yet even here he analogizes his linguistic concepts to Christian conventions:

. . . To our knowledge, the Law, be it St. Paul's or Jeremy Bentham's, is the flowering of that humanly, humanely, humanistically, and brutally inhumanely ingenious addition to wordless nature, the negative, without which a figure like Satan would be logologically impossible, as it also would be impossible to put a sign next a live wire saying, "Danger, don't touch." ("Theology" 171)

Notice Burke's shameless continuum of judgments regarding the "ingenious" negative—running the gamut from simply "human" to "brutally inhumane." He demonstrates an awareness of the divergent intentions and (ab)uses of human distinctions, suggesting that in any polarity, "yes" and "no" problematically imply one another. Such a dependence between affirmation and denial, acceptance and rejection, returns us again to the paradox of substance:

Implicit in polar terms, there is a timeless principle . . . which not only warns against the wiles of Satan *but creates the need for Satan*. In regards to the logology of the case, Adam's fall was in the cards from the start in the sense that his task, as the "first" man, was to represent the *principle* of disobedience that was implicit in the possibility of saying "no" to the first "thou shalt not." ("Theology" 172; his emphasis)

In Burke's terms, then, even as Adam disobeys God's commandment, he thus says "yes" to something else—curiosity? Independence? An attraction to sin? Burke's point that this convergence emerges precisely from polarity itself revises and complicates what Augustine attempted to affirm simply as Christ's "yes, yes, no, no" admonitions for the speaking faithful (NATC 195). It also challenges diagrammatic understandings of "truth" or simplistic axioms offered as "self-evident" in the mode of Ramus.²³ Burke's strategies of critical identification and transformation actually resemble Augustine's *in reverse*, with the profound distinction being that Burke's logological approach moves towards an orthodoxy of uncertainties rather than certainty.

Nevertheless, Burke's direction is grounded in undeniably humanistic—even catholic (universalizing)—priorities. This is revealed in his recurrent definition of man as "the symbol-using animal," as well as his distinction between human beings *in action* and mere bodies *in motion*.²⁴ He writes:

Logology . . . is in an intermediate position between theology and behaviorism It is as dualistic in its way as theology is, since logological distinction . . . is as "polar" as theology's distinction between mind and body or spirit and matter. Logology holds that "persons" act, where "things" but *move* or are *moved*. ("Theology" 156; his emphasis)

This fundamental belief in human agency as it connects to language underscores an idealizing tendency which also protects Burke from the charges of relativism advanced by some early critics, such as Allan Tate. As Samuel Southwell puts it, "Burke leaves us on a knife-edge border of a unifying metaphysics" (166). Ironically, in its dance between classical "grounding" and a spirit of ultimate openness, Burke's logology reads on some level as a return to the gnostic tradition which Augustine certainly would have considered heresy during his time. It would also be too "uncertain" or "ambiguous" for Ramus and his disciples.

Beginning in such early works as *Counter-Statement* (1931), Burke inhabits a strange middle territory between idealism and relativism.²⁵ He clearly situates the "symbol-using animal" within traditional conventions of a "pre-existing" natural world. Favoring Aristotle's idea that successful art satisfies appetites found in the minds of its audience members, Burke refers to "inherent potentialities" in man as the common ground:

Over and over again in the history of art, different material has been arranged to embody the principle of the crescendo; and this must be so because we "think" in a crescendo, because it parallels certain psychic and physical processes which are at the roots of our experience. (CS 45)

We thus have the potential of frustration when art, or language, fails to make its connection or impression upon our "human roots." Burke echoes here Augustine's concern that speech make a unified impact on the "whole" person. In addition, he affirms that even the

"natural" exists within a kairotic "scene" of changing conventions, thus renewing Augustine's practical concerns for those who would be trained, not as artists, but as religious teachers: "When the emphasis of society has changed, new symbols are demanded to formulate new complexities, and the symbols of the past become less appealing of themselves" (CS 59).²⁶ By implication, efforts to engage language must reflect a flexible, even fluid, discipline.

The complimentary terms Burke uses in his close-reading of 19th and 20th century writers reveals that an admiration for tension and ambiguity might demonstrate social purposes. In the "Adepts" chapter of *Counter-Statement*, Burke traces the interrelation between personal papers, literary texts, and biographies of Flaubert, Walter Pater, and Remy de Gourmont. Burke points out the uncomfortable contradiction between Flaubert's "aesthetics" and his actual "product" (6-9), stating that he "finds himself midway between two contradictory attitudes: one, a love of 'mouthings, lyricism, the flying of big birds, the *sonorities* of prose; the other, a desire to make the reader feel his books 'almost materially'" (7). Likewise, Burke distinguishes Pater as "interested in laying numerous angles of approach" to his subject matter (12), wherein a "contemplation of permanent things served primarily to strengthen his depiction of the evanescent" (15). Finally, Burke points out de Gourmont's driving imperative as being "venturesome" (17), stating that the author located even in the subject of futility "a delight where his predecessors found despair" (19). Commenting at length on de Gourmont's "characteristic ambivalence," Burke writes, "A conflict of attitudes gives his work considerable liquidity. . . . Thoroughly godless, for example, he always manifested a passionate interest in Catholicism" (20).

Similarly, Burke pairs Gide and Mann as writers whose works attempt to "make us at home in indecision, to humanize the state of doubt" (CS 105). Such "doubt" serves as a creative ground wherein "what is lost in . . . moral certitude is gained in questioning and conscientiousness" (96). Unlike Augustine, who transposes the certainties of classical thinkers into new Christian doctrines, Burke here close-reads literary texts for affirmations of instability as a generating principle. In doing so, he also contradicts the "horror" against ambiguity expressed in Ramist Puritanism—as manifest in academic as well as religious attitudes towards literature.

By idealizing paradoxes as they relate to the work of literary artists, Burke sets up a translation of aestheticism for linguistic, and eventually theological, terms. Ultimately, his trust in "approximate communication" (CS 79) essentializes the basis for a logological approach to texts:

While it is dialectically true that two people of totally different experiences must totally fail to communicate, it is also true that there are no two such people, the "margin of overlap" always being considerable (due, if nothing else, to the fact that men's biologic functions are uniform). (CS 78)

Here he expresses the value of social connection, which, as noted before, Burke actually refers to as a means of "communion." He thereby rejects the false assumption that because we are "different" we cannot communicate *at all*. Such priorities seem to motivate Burkean interest in expression—in how "language 'thinks' for us," as he states many years later: "The study of *words as words in contexts* asks us to ask how they *equate with* one another, how they *imply one another*, and how they become *transformed*" ("Theology" 177).²⁷

In a Burkean framework such study is not idle, isolated, or easily reducible, but a fundamentally complicated enterprise with social ends in mind. Perhaps the core of the difficulty is that, while Burke observes ways in which language overlaps and regenerates, almost as a "living" entity, he connects this phenomenon to essential human choices and human agency. As Howard Nemerov puts it, Burke "sees the human hope precisely in the rich polyvalence of terms, the Shakespearean equivocations, which purely scientific philosophies propose to exclude" (69). Emphasizing this "hope" at the end of *A Grammar of Motives*, Burke urges readers not to fear that dialectical inquiry equals a chaotic relativism:

It is certainly relativistic . . . to state that any term . . . can be seen from the point of view of any other term. But insofar as terms are thus encouraged to participate in an orderly parliamentary development, the dialectic of this participation produces . . . a "resultant certainty" of a different quality, necessarily ironic, since it requires that all the sub-certainties be considered as neither true nor false, but *contributory*. (512-513; his emphasis)

The human goal of this "contributory" dialectic is to create a basis of exchange which transforms the self-righteous posture, even between ultimate enemies. Arguing in favor of what he calls "true" and "humble irony," Burke calls for "a sense of fundamental kinship with the enemy, as one *needs* him sic, is *indebted* to him, is not merely outside him as an observer but contains him *within*, being consubstantial with him" (514). By describing this social and linguistic relationship as "consubstantial," Burke appropriates an early Protestant term explaining the eucharistic sacrament as simultaneously "bread" and "Christ." Unlike Ramus and his disciples, who rejected both trans- and consubstantiation as "mystical" (Graves 198), Burke thus anticipates and seeks to avoid the agonistic consequences of isolating judgments.²⁸

As a whole, *Counter-Statement* can be read as an introduction to themes of openness in Burke's later writings. Because Burke himself favored Aristotle's concept of "entelechy," it is fitting to return to the "beginning" or seminal text of Burke for insight as to his "end." The religious terms within which Burke later explains Aristotle's concept are hardly surprising:

The formula of the Christian theologians was stated thus: *Novum Testamentaum in Vetere latet, Vetus in Novo patet*. How to translate it exactly? "The N.T. as latent in the O.T. The O.T. becomes patent in the N.T." Or "The implications of the O.T. became explicitly manifest in the N.T." ("Theology" 163).

The reference to "latency" can be applied to Burke's work as well. He reframed new editions of *Counter-Statement* himself—adding a preface to the second edition in 1952 and a final postscript titled "Curriculum Criticum" in 1967. Reengaging his own early text, Burke points out that the "book begins on the word 'perhaps' and ends on the word 'norm'" (CS xi). He then articulates a statement which

can be applied to his later critical career: "The overall trend is *through* Perhaps towards the norm (even though I unconsciously revealed my *tentativeness* with regard to norm by ending on it—not outright, but in quotation marks" (xi; his capitalization and emphasis). Here we find an admission which tells us that even when he appears to be "classifying" or didactic, Burke anticipates and essentially welcomes divergent views. Paradoxically, the sub-stance of Burke's own "dogmatism" is openness.

This complicated maneuver is fairly easy to miss or ignore inside the Ramistic scene. In the selection NATC chooses, blandly titled "Kinds of Criticism" (1946), we see that, even as he posits critical definitions, Burke offers them only *after* articulating a rhetoric of contingency. As an opening, he writes:

In here surveying the kinds of criticism, we don't hope to tell anybody anything he didn't already know. We merely hope for whatever clarification may come of a general survey. And we are more concerned to look over the field than to argue for any one method. (1272)

A reader hitherto unacquainted with Burke's other writings—a new student, a teacher looking for the "teachable" lesson—could easily skim this frame of characteristic tentativeness and rush past it into the apparently "easy certainty" of Burke's "extrinsic" vs. "intrinsic" critical distinctions and terms. The Ramistic suggestion made by the NATC sadly underestimates Burke.

In contrast to fellow modernists such as T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, who sought to ground conventions of art and criticism in "new" or "re-newed" absolutes—Eliot with a self-affirmed return to Royalism in politics and Anglo-Catholicism in religion, Pound with an Imagist dogmatism which prefigured his later fascist sympathies—Burke's analysis implies a critical, aesthetic and pragmatic resistance against what he calls a "hysterical retreat into belief" (CS 106), which we could equate with Ramist Puritanism. He writes:

Need people be in haste to rebel against the state of doubt? . . . Society might well be benefited by the corrective of a disintegrating art, which converts each simplicity into a complexity, . . . which concerns itself with the problematic, the experimental, and thus by implication works corrosively upon those expansionistic certainties preparing the way for social cataclysms. (CS 105)

Such passages reveal that Burke's critical interest in doubt is melded to his

logological idealism, his desire to prevent "social cataclysm." *A Grammar of Motives* (1945), published in the wake of the Second World War, continues this thread prominently in its dedication: *Ad bellum purificandum*. In *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, Burke actually suggests that a posture of "charitas" as opposed to "intelligence" will best serve as the basis of his dialectical theory (123n), thus emphasizing that agonistic defeat of one's opponent in dialectical debate will not suffice. This is reinforced in Burke's argument for the "psychology of *translation*" (his emphasis) as a cultural antidote. In *Permanence and Change*, he writes: "Our concept of recalcitrance could lessen sectarian divisions by prompting a man sic to remember that his assertions are necessarily socialized by revision, an attitude which might make for greater patience" (265).

The flexibility of Burke's logological approach towards texts is neither nihilistic nor despairing, but fundamentally purposeful and pragmatically social. Further, his attitude is not ex-communicative (note the religious term) but firmly *appositional*.²⁹ Austin Warren, as early as 1935, pointed out Burke's attitude of "skeptical comprehensiveness" (56), and noted that in *Counter-Statement* readers find the following:

A mind capable of defending its skepticism, not on any absolute basis, but as an ingredient in the temperamental mixture of any complete community. Society, it maintains, can endure and even profit from a considerable admixture of doubt and doubters. . . . For one doubting Thomas there are eleven who believe. Thomas too has his vocation, his mission. (53)

Burke, through logology, actually fuses the certainty of Augustine with the

doubts of Thomas, fashioning a mission or vocation which makes linguistic conversion itself a new "sacrament," an outward sign, of human connection.

Conclusions

Despite the fragmentary nature of anthologized presentations of both Augustine and Burke, Augustine's role as linguistic and semantic "assimilator"

for the Catholic faith seems more easy to reconcile than Burke's "place," which remains less defined. Even in the early years of his career, Burke was challenged by socialist critics such as Granville Hicks, who accused Burke of not being definite enough in his critiques of capitalism (Heath 10-12). As Burke's writing became more coherently philosophical, social conservatives such as Richard Weaver and Wayne Booth sought to establish connections to their own rhetorical concerns (Weaver 78-79, 103-04, 139-58, 221; Booth, *Modern Dogma* 29-31, 167-69, 183, 196-97).³⁰ The apparently unwieldy nature of Burke's work creates special problems for critics of the Ramist, Puritan strain who demand simple clarifications: Is Burke's work overtly Marxist? Latently "Christian? To what brand of "Christianity," "philosophy" or "religiosity" does it belong?³¹

The aim to define Burke's theological significance has been addressed repeatedly. William Rueckert has commented that Burke systematized a

"naturalistic, linguistically oriented, secular variant of Christianity" (Frank 401).

Wayne Booth has described his attempts, via correspondence, to engage Burke personally about his obsession with religious subject matter. In an essay titled, "The Many Voices of Kenneth Burke, Theologian and Prophet, As Revealed in his Letters to Me," Booth first traces what he calls "the Protean nature" of Burke's tone in his epistles—from vitriolic to self-critical, sarcastic, witty, insecure, inquiring, and skeptical—concluding:

We can see beneath all the fragments there was a man desperately attempting to put it all together in a grand view of everything: not the mere language theorist that my mentors tended to dismiss, but the frustrating and frustrated critic who could not get everybody, including Derrida, to see the difference between the taste of an orange and the words "the taste of an orange." (190)

Booth underscores Burke's underlying hope for, even expectation of, understanding, and suggests that Burke sought connection rather than sitting back in resignation or smugness at inevitable disagreements over meaning and reading.

This Augustinian stretch towards unity, however, cannot be separated from Burke's stress on experimentalism. Note that the title for *A Grammar of Motives* fuses the prescriptive term, "grammar," with the *tentative* article "a" rather than "the," and the *plural* noun. Burke's idea of "nature" and "the social" serve as a grounding for his "flexible" dialectic and operate with an unavoidably *rhetorical* humanism—perhaps newly "evangelical" in nature. Again we can see the intersection—a reciprocal "trans-substantiation"—between Burke as Augustinian "propagandist" and "doubting" or "indecisive" Thomas. This discomfortable paradox nudges open, even defies, our almost in-bred academic temptation to revisit the easy Ramistic distinctions and commodifications which catalogue Burke's work in "fixed" terms, rather than examining them with the dialectic he preferred.³²

As already discussed, Burke takes pains to distinguish his logological interest in religion from theological questions of "God." For example, he clarifies his desire to hold religious questions of authority in abeyance: "Logology leaves it for the scruples of theology to work out why that damned nuisance has to be put up with, by an all-powerful Ordainer of all Order" ("Theology" 171). Yet, considering Burke's own theory that distinctions logologically *imply* one another, that "yes/no" are not easy to extricate from each other, it is hardly surprising that critics are drawn to study references to God in Burke's letters and, in Burkean fashion, to read them against Burke's overt disclaimers (Booth 192-193; Appel 105). Booth eloquently makes the case that while Burke did not "embrace some sort of church" or profess "unambivalent belief in an intervening providential lord," he seems nonetheless driven by religious questions, by "a belief in a mysterious but real cosmic power . . . a belief in the power of the so-called nature that made us as we are in all our complexity" (195).

Thankfully, Booth approaches here, but does not affix, a label to Burke's *oeuvre*. While categorization is tempting, we must consider that Burke's avoidance of an easy "yes/no" answer to questions of his religiosity may in fact be interpreted as a demand that our question itself be revised. In maintaining fluidities of meaning, apparently refusing to "plant his feet," Burke in fact *does* place himself outside a plane of linguistic victimage—and thus he provokes more dialectic examination, more dialogue, and avoids an agonistic trap.³³ He organizes this "step aside" in the "trans-substantial" exchange *between* logology and theology.

Burke at once separates and unites divine metaphors and linguistic structures, with social, humanistic goals in mind. We can connect this to differences between the Gospel of John and the Gospel of Thomas. In "Sacred Doubt," Lesley Hazelton notes Elaine Pagel's observation:

Where John insists that the human and the divine are separate realms. . . . Thomas sees one inside the other. In fact, another gnostic gospel, that of Philip, states the union of human and divine explicitly. . . . Whoever achieves gnosis, or true knowledge, becomes no longer Christian but Christ. (16)

As Appel has noted, Burke does not seem far from the gnostic view, wherein God as *Word* (*o*word as *god/God*) lurks already *within* pre-existing human understandings and "natural" conditions.³⁴ Theological words *cannot be* separated from secular and literary-critical ones, nor can rhetoric be easily divorced from dialectic. Such apparent oppositions exist as equal parts of a coherent human pursuit of what Pagel refers to as "true knowledge," translating Platonic and Christian vocabulary inside a secular framework. Burke's attraction to "indecision" and his disdain for "easy certainty" serve as dramatic parallels to the gnostic idea of "an open, paradoxical path to the divine, steeped in metaphor" (Hazelton 16).³⁵ Yet we must be careful not to botch the translation and box-up Burke inside a "pure" definition of gnosticism, either. Unlike Ramism, which seeks to use "catholic precepts of dialectic" as principles of "objective logic" (Miller 128), Burke's logology offers a window of engagement through which other windows may be viewed. Where Ramist dialectic poses as mere "discovery"—positing, in effect, a new Decalogue of academic laws, dichotomies and axioms—logology affirms its fundamental *interestedness* in the flux of social engagement and rhetoric.

Hinting at a kind of divine independence in language itself, Burke writes: "For language is innately innovative. No one could go on making his words mean the same, even if he expended his best efforts to make them stay put" ("Theology" 185). Such an awareness has been embraced even by theologians such as Harvey Cox and Conrad Ostwalt in their arguments for renewed rather than static, sectarian definitions of God and faith in the face of secularization. I find it helpful to see Burke's work as an "ecumenism" between rhetoric and dialectic, the sacred and the secular, between content and form, serving simultaneously linguistic and religious ends. In his response to Booth's directly "religious urgings" (Booth 199), Burke intimates an awareness that he (as "symbol-user") and his own words (as "signs") may already, implicitly, be "converted." Perhaps our job, then, is to read that conversion as already expressed. In a letter to Booth, Burke writes:

No need to *convert* a nonbeliever like I'm. St. Paul tells us that there would be no theology without language. . . . Why, then, should a shrewd logologer frustrate the 'natural' rite of speech? . . . When he hears himself talk, that would be the equivalent of Paul's pronouncement that "faith comes from hearing." (Booth 199; his emphasis)

Interestingly, Burke signs off this letter "as ever, *towards* freedom" (my emphasis). These words embed, logologically, the idea that this writer *isn't* yet "free," but is perhaps bound *in service* of selected conventions, altogether critical, theological, literary and aesthetic, in his own pilgrimage to some final release from generic classification.

Perhaps posthumously, Burke's writings will be finally canonized into freedom—which means that they will be re-gathered in service of transformations, not merely confined within comfortably familiar terminologies and paradigms. How we continue to engage with and reflect upon Burke in the future will depend upon how our own interpretative vocabularies *select* and *deflect* particular rites of canonization.

Notes

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¹ A recent "interdisciplinary" conference at the University of California, Riverside, for example, was organized under the title "(dis)junctions."

² Theorist John Kirk has connected this move to Heidegger's "uncertainty principle" and Weiner's "physics of contingency" (346).

³ For thirty-four pages following this set-up, McLuhan explores Ramus's association with *atextual* priority system in lieu of traditional *oral* authority. McLuhan also connects Ramism to text and knowledge as emerging "commodities."

⁴ Ong notes that "'the scientific approach' to literature arrived" inside Ramus's strategies for examining text (268). Ong cites as evidence Ramus's popularization of diagrams and "tabulations" to address texts and to generate "first principles" via reductive "method" (see 299-301).

⁵ Current obsessions with standardized testing can certainly be traced to Ramistic origins. As tables of public school test results are published in newspapers, in massive reports resembling NASDAQ, NYSE, and sports tables, we can locate a vast rhetoric of numbers posing as an "objective" or "teachable" documentation of the efficacy or inefficacy of "the learning process." The key to the Ramistic approach here, in light of Ong's observation, lies in the implicit *denial* of rhetorical argument. Burke himself refers to the work of "statistical jugglers" posing as "calm presenters of the facts," and thereby simply moving their trickeries one step farther along by . . . giving us their own selective version of "the facts" ("Secular Mysticism in Bentham," in *Permanence and Change* 191).

⁶ The three laws of organization in the liberal arts became the "creed" of Ramists: "By the first of them, Ramus said, an art achieves certainty; by the second, assurance that all its parts pertain to the whole; by the third, that all its parts are reciprocal" (141). Miller emphasizes that such doctrines of Ramist method were readily embraced on the American continent by schools such as Harvard and Yale, while remaining "disputed furiously in the universities of Europe" (141).

⁷ The current "standardization" movement in general perpetuates Ramism because it tends to bureaucratize content into easy (though often long) lists, fulfilled by "instructional maps" and "scripted lesson plans" now written and published by textbook companies such as Houghton Mifflin and Holt, Rinehart & Winston. Even twenty years ago, E.D. Hirsch couched his *Dictionary of Cultural Literacy* in the Ramist language of objective "discovery" as opposed to rhetorical "bias": "Ideological partisanship on the subject of national literacy is more empirical than ideological. . . . What follows from a commitment to literacy is determined more by reality than ideology" (xv).

⁸ Ong writes that Ramus's sensibility appealed to an evolving view of knowledge as "commodity" in his own day. He states, in "Ramist Method and the Commercial Mind," that "Ramus takes what might be called an itemizing approach to discourse . . . an approach which made discourse a kind of thing" (165). Ong also notes that the diagrammatic approach to knowledge helped reduce "the mysterious realm of knowledge . . . to something one could manage, almost palpably handle" (169). It doesn't seem too much of a jump to the post-modern PowerPoint lecture, which extends diagrammatic simplification beyond the "tactile" to an *evanescent* level—which, as Edward Tufte has argued, contains totalitarian overtones.

⁹ In "Counter-Gridlock," an interview published in Reuckert's 2003 compilation of Burke's later writings, *On Human Nature: A Gathering While Everything Flows 1967-1984*, Burke explains that his choice to discontinue graduate school emerged from a frustration that the university bureaucracy barred him from taking accelerated language courses, even though he was ready for them. With his father's financial help, Burke merely extended his education outside the "walls" of school. Consciously or subconsciously, Burke chose to reject what Ong describes as a Ramistic commodity view of education, something "dispensed" through exams and degrees "under the supervision of a corporation" (Ong, *Ramus, Method, and the Decay* 150). Lamenting his own disappointments with college, Edward Said, in *Out of Place*, writes, "My own intellectual discoveries were made outside what the regimen of Princeton required." It is hardly surprising that he mentions being "stirred" by Burke's visiting lectures on logology in the years between 1958-63 (290).

¹⁰ Samuel Southwell mentions that Burke corresponded in later life with a "Catholic priest" he doesn't identify. David Blakesley kindly directed me to the newly-published collection of letters between William Rueckert and Burke, wherein a specific reference to Walter Ong and his letters occurs on page 297.

¹¹ Timothy Crusius, in his "Case for Kenneth Burke's Dialectic and Rhetoric," notes that Burke's pentad, in particular—focusing on act, scene, agent, agency, purpose—has been "advanced as a useful heuristic" by textbooks such as the *Holt Guide to English* (23, 36 n).

¹² In his translation of *On Christian Teaching*, R.P.H. Green places Augustine's first writings of the text circa 395, with a completion date of 426/27 (xxvii). According to *NATC*, complete Bibles at this time remained rare (186).

¹³ Regarding Augustine's reference to "heretical punctuation" of a gospel verse in Book Three, Green points out that "ancient readers often had to punctuate for themselves," meaning that obviously different marks could radically alter the theology in a given passage (Augustine, *On Christian Teaching* 68-69, 155n). It so happens that the text in question for Augustine is John 1: 1-2, apparently "mal-punctuated" by the Arians. Even punctuation clearly has a rhetorical impact.

¹⁴ While Augustine does not directly analogize Logos, Pathos, and Ethos to the persons of the Trinity, the intuitive associations of each "person" and how each could appeal to a new believer cannot be underestimated. My suggestion is that Augustine is able to exploit such associations without identifying them, because he has already emphasized the need for "unity" of appeal when preaching. We can make connections to the idea of Logos (*Reason, Word, Platonic Truth*)

inside references to demands of the Christian God-as-Father in the Law, the Truth and the Commandments; we also find it, as Augustine emphasizes, in the passage: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God." Pathos (*Feeling, Response, Emotional Appeal*) resonates inside verses such as "For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son," not to mention the Catholic emphasis on the "Passion" of Christ as "Word made Flesh" to dwell among us and suffer for human sin. Connections to Ethos (*Credible Authority, Spirit, Character*) linger inside references to the "spirit" of the Law/Word/Lord/Father, as well as in urgings to "receive the spirit of Christ," "the gifts/fruits of the Spirit," or "moved by the Spirit." Stephen McKenna's translation of Books 8-15 catalogs recurrent examples of psychological trinities used as analogies to illustrate the new religious doctrine (see page 227). Such analogies have clear Platonic associations, given their focus on "mind" or aspects of mind. Like any good rhetorician, teacher or preacher, Augustine knew his audience.

¹⁵ See *A Grammar of Motives* 21-23.

¹⁶ See Edward C. Appel's article, "Kenneth Burke: Coy Theologian," page 104. Appel also cites Grieg Henderson's argument that Burke is a "surrogate theologian" as well as Trevor Melia's concern about how to categorize Burke's "type" of "secular Christian." Appel himself eventually argues that Burke's dramatism is ultimately negative, and that therefore "religious people should approach dramatism with caution."

¹⁷ The fluidity here between terms is compelling: communication = love = communion. A Burkean invitation might be: "Let us break open words together." But a corresponding (trans-substantiative) injunction would also reverse itself, pointing out that "Humans cannot live on Words alone." Thus, as "communicants" in a double sense, we would be directed back to the "providence" of actual bread.

¹⁸ In *Permanence and Change* (1935), Burke writes: "Any new way of putting characters of events together is an attempt to convert people, regardless of whether it go by the name of religion, psychotherapy, or science...It attempts, by rationalization, to alter the nature of our responses" (87).

¹⁹ The ultimate example of this conflation, as has already been discussed, is Augustine's affirmation of the Christian God as Word (Logos). At the beginning of Book Three in *On Christian Teaching*, his lengthy discussion about a "heretical punctuation" for John 1: 1-2 underscores not only the fundamental nature of the God-Word equation for Augustine's theology, but also emphasizes the theological implications of deceptively "objective" punctuation. Augustine in fact refers to a translation by the Arians which, according to him, articulates merely a kind of parallel relation between God and the Word, rather than affirming that the Word was God. His argument seems to turn on the grammar of translation—showing that grammatical choices can have profound religious significance (69, 155n69).

²⁰ Towards the end of *Permanence and Change*, Burke writes, "Any instigation to select one's means of persuasion from the realm of violence must come solely from the violence of those who attack him for his peaceful work as a propounder of new meanings—a state of affairs which he will strive to avoid as far as possible by cultivating the arts of translation and inducement. He will accept that the pieties of others are no less real or deep through being different from his, and he will seek to recommend his position by considering such orders of recalcitrance and revising his statements accordingly. In these troublesome antics, we *may even find it wise on occasion to adopt incongruous perspectives for the dwarfing of our impatience*" (272). Rejecting Ramistic simplification or standardization, Burke might say, could be one step to avoiding both rhetorical and actual violence. This is the frame in which he places subsequent references to "the eternally unsolvable Engima," the "Eternal Enigma," and the image of people "building their cultures together, nervously loquacious, at the edge of an abyss" (272).

²¹ In his chapter "On Words and The Word" in *The Rhetoric of Religion*, Burke stresses the reciprocal, transformative, association between theology and logology: "The relation between the two should not be conceived as proceeding one direction" (36). Logology, like religion, can be viewed as "central" to all disciplines and "specializations" of study "in the sense that all -ologies and -ographies are guided by the verbal" (26). Burke notes that this centrality could be only an "ideal" in practice, due to the "divisions of the curriculum" as they exist in the practical university (27).

²² Harvey Cox observes that the Greek word for church, *ecclesia*, is a "word of motion" (197), which connects domains of physical, symbolic, and spiritual action all at once.

²³ In what he calls a "rhetorical defense of rhetoric," Burke argues at once against a dialectically "neutral" vocabulary and against a Sophistic free-for-all. He points to a phenomenon noted by Toynbee as characteristic of founders of religious structures, "a period of

hesitancy, brooding, or even rot, prior to the formation of the new certainties." He suggests such "withdrawal" as a mode of both secular and monastic discipline, "building up a technical mode of analysis . . . 'bureaucratizing a purgatorial mood, turning a 'state of evanescence' into a fixity by giving it an established routine" (*Philosophy of Literary Form* 138). There is no "instant" curriculum in such a mode of analysis. Burke specifically rejects what he calls the "synechdochic fallacy" which diagrammatic understandings tend to foster (139). Burke's concept of "the bureaucratization of the imaginative" is valuable here as well. In "Counter Gridlock," he states that "the embarrassment of instrumental thinking" lies in the assumption that a policy, instrument, or dream "only has the nature that you use it for" (Rueckert and Bonadonna 363).

²⁴ *The Rhetoric of Religion* includes a thorough initial explication of these distinctions (38-42).

²⁵ Burke comments in "Counter Gridlock" that students often point to "germs" of his later ideas in this early text (Rueckert and Bonadonna 374).

²⁶ In his chapter titled "New Meanings" in *Permanence and Change*, Burke writes, "There is even some indication (in such formulae as the Logos and the Way) that the Christian evangelism started from questionings as intellectualistic as any that characterize science today. The formal philosophy out of which Christianity arose was also highly skeptical" (81).

²⁷ Years after this statement in "Theology and Logology," Burke says that he "cuts the corners of his whole pedantic hexadic process" to three elements, namely: equations, implications, and transformations (Rueckert and Bonadonna 371).

²⁸ In a letter to the editor included at the end of *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, Burke addresses an article written by an educator who simply pits "education" against "propaganda" and "indoctrination." Burke argues that dialectic should be part of the "education" continuum, and in fact should be "*absolutely affirmed and indoctrinated*" (his emphasis) in order to preserve an interrogative mode which allows for revision. Calling this "positive indoctrination," Burke suggests that education should not allow itself to resemble dictatorship in assuming a superior high-ground which protects its status as an "unanswerable opponent" (*PLF* 443-447).

²⁹ Of course, one of the most interesting enactments of appositional dialogue can be found in Burke's "Epilogue: Prologue in Heaven" at the end of *Rhetoric of Religion*. In the "drama" which ensues, Burke suggests that we can see "a communicative bond" even between The Lord and Satan (273).

³⁰ I myself discovered Burke accidentally via the Weaver route. As a young kid, I came to Weaver's books via a conservative and politically active uncle, who socialized with William F. Buckley, Jr., worked for the Philadelphia Society, and sat on the advisory board of *Modern Age* journal. I remember being most intrigued, even then, by Weaver's notes about Burke's concept of "god-term," which certainly complemented Weaver's own notions of secular priesthood.

³¹ In "A Case for Kenneth Burke's Dialectic and Rhetoric," Crusius prefaces his arguments by clearing up the association of Burke with Marxism, clarifying that he "internalized Marx without ever becoming a Marxist" (24). In similar vein, Appel, in "Kenneth Burke: Coy Theologian," argues that Burke "offers some direct instruction" for members of "the 'brand name' religions" (108) only after offering caveats about Burke's "quasi-gnostic" tendencies (106—see note 34 below).

³² In his concluding paragraph of *A Grammar of Motives*, Burke writes that "As an over-all ironic formula . . . we could lay it down that 'what goes forth as A returns as non-A.' This is the basic pattern that places the essence of drama and dialectic in the irony of the 'peripety,' the strategic moment of reversal" (GM 517).

³³ In "Variations on Providence," Burke translates the Greek word "martyr" as "witness" (Rueckert and Bonadonna, OHN 296). Considered inside his logological frame, Burke's refusal to identify himself as a "witness" to traditional theology works as a protection against "martyrdom," whether academic or religious. Referring back to *Attitudes Toward History* (1937), he discusses the "imaginative pliancy" which exists in the early stages of a plan, as opposed to the rigidifying effect of accumulating detail (298). It seems that Burke has tried to retain some of that "pliancy" in logology itself. He also makes the connection between martyrdom and witness in "On Stress, Its Seeking" (Rueckert and Bonadonna 20-21).

³⁴ Appel puts it this way: "Dramatism/logology might be fairly characterized as a quasi-gnostic universalism friendly to process theology, a three-way heresy to any orthodox Christian" (106).

³⁵ Burke would already be leery of a rigidly "perfect" definition of any "mystic" overtones of logology, for as he notes in the closing pages of *A Rhetoric of Motives*: "Mysticism is no rare thing. . . . And its secular analogues, in grand or gracious symbolism, are everywhere. But the need for it, the itch, is everywhere. And by hierarchy it is intensified. . . . The mystery of the hierarchic is forever with us" (*RM* 332-33).

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