

KENNETH BURKE, MUSIC, AND RHETORIC

by

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Abbreviations

In this dissertation, I use the following abbreviations for Kenneth Burke's major works:

CS *Counter-Statement*

ACR *Auscultation, Creation, Revision*

P&C *Permanence and Change*

AtH *Attitudes toward History*

GM *A Grammar of Motives*

RM *A Rhetoric of Motives*

RR *The Rhetoric of Religion*

LSA *Language as Symbolic Action*

Introduction

“Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. . . . You listen for a while, . . . then you put in your oar” (110-11).

*Kenneth Burke
The Philosophy of Literary Form*

“There are as many Burkes as there are books and essays by him and probably more Burkes than there are books because there are often many Burkes in one book” (3).

*William Rueckert
Encounters with Kenneth Burke*

In a 1916 letter to his dear friend Malcolm Cowley, Kenneth Burke proclaimed, “I am going for certain to take up exclusively the study of music” (17 April 1916; Jay 24). Cowley, in a response to Burke’s newfound fascination with music, protested against his “devoting [himself] to music for those years” (3 May 1916; Jay 25). Instead, Cowley encouraged Burke to explore music while insisting that it be “taken in connection with something else. The piano by all means, but the pen too” (Jay 26). It is with these instruments—piano and pen—that the almost 19-year-old Kenneth Burke began his foray into the study of music while simultaneously pursuing his interests in literature and writing.

Burke displayed a passion for music throughout his entire life. Though it appears that Burke’s musical aspirations were tempered by Cowley’s protest, various aspects of Burke’s life suggest that he continued to make connections between music and rhetoric. It is clear that Burke took Cowley’s advice of taking up

both the piano and the pen to heart since much of Burke's early poetry and fiction contain indications of his interest in music. For instance, the poems "Adam's Song, and Mine," "Spring Song," and "Hymn of Hope," and the short story "Scherzando," illustrate a tendency to incorporate musical themes into his literary works. In addition, Burke wrote music reviews for *The Dial* and *The Nation* while drafting and publishing such notable theoretical works as *Counter-Statement*, *Permanence and Change*, and *Attitudes toward History*. Even in his daily correspondence with musical friends such as Ed Cone or Louis Calabro, Burke would write a few bars of musical notation or discuss music as a subject matter at length. In fact, during the 1960's Calabro and Burke regularly exchanged original music compositions to solicit feedback from each other. Burke wrote polished original music scores such as "A Solemnity," "A Major Waltz," and "Chorale" and composed hundreds of pages of journal entries filled with unpolished stream of conscious writing set to musical notation. Burke even made tape recordings of his piano improvisation sessions, which includes one instance after the family attended the funeral of Kenneth Burke's mother when he came home and improvised at the piano for quite a while. An array of archival evidence compellingly suggests that Kenneth Burke's music interests regularly intertwined with his interests in rhetoric and social change.

This dissertation examines the intersection between Burke's interest in music and his rhetorical theory to a) show how Burke's interest in music substantially influenced his rhetorical ideas; b) reveal a Burkean theory of aurality through the incorporation of recent multimodal scholars such as Kristie Fleckenstein and Richard Lanham; c) understand Burke's view on nonlinguistic

language by aligning him with language theorists such as Susanne Langer and Ernst Cassirer; and finally, d) show how Burke himself employed rhetorical principles in his own musical and multimodal works. Although many scholars suggest Burke is too focused on alphabetic symbolism to contribute to discussions of aural rhetoric, I argue that Burkean theory provides insight into the rhetorical issues of today's digital age, where symbol-users have technology at their fingertips that allows them to easily compose non-discursive and nonlinguistic texts. Using a rhetorical history methodology, I investigate archival evidence of Burke's musical interests alongside historical evidence of various music scenes to rhetoricize Burke's interest in music as a part of his larger project of understanding social change. In other words, my historiographic investigation of Burke's interest in music examines the scene from which Burke's theories emerged, providing a window into how those same theories can apply to today's digital age. It is my contention that Burkean theory serves as a companion to current multimodal theory, and my dissertation brings the lens and context of multimodal theory to Burke in order to reveal more about our understanding of current theories of multimodality in today's digital world.

Literature Review: Burke and Music

Although music was a major part of Burke's life, scholars have mostly ignored this aspect of his work. The notable exceptions are Denise M. Bostdorff and Phillip K. Tompkins and, more recently, Debra Hawhee, Jeffrey Carroll, and Greg Clark. Specifically, Bostdorff and Tompkins's 1985 essay "Musical Form and Rhetorical Form: Kenneth Burke's *Dial* Reviews as Counterpart to *Counter-Statement*" connects Burke's music reviews in *The Dial* with his theories of form in

Counter-Statement by noting that Burke perceived music, like rhetoric, as “the use of language in such a way as to produce a desired impression upon the hearer or reader” (210). Burke’s reviews, they argue, forecast the development of *Counter-Statement’s* theory of rhetorical form.¹ Bostdorff and Tompkins’s essay represents an early and suggestive foray into Burke’s musical interests, but its narrow focus on Burke’s *Dial* reviews leaves room for more thorough investigations.

Similarly, Debra Hawhee examines Burke’s *Dial* music reviews in the first chapter of her 2012 work *Moving Bodies: Kenneth Burke at the Edges of Language*. Hawhee uses the reviews, which primarily examine audience reaction, as an early example of Burke’s fascination with the body as a transition from aesthetics to rhetoric. For Hawhee, the reviews demonstrate Burke’s “inclination toward bodies . . . that first sets [him] to investigate rhetoric, communication, meaning making, and language” (14). While the chapter examines Burke’s *Dial* music reviews in coordination with Burke’s fiction, Hawhee aims to illuminate Burke’s discussion of the body rather than provide historical insight into Burke’s fascination with music. For Hawhee, Burke’s writings serve as examples of “how language, meaning, and communication both emerge from and help constitute bodies” (9). The reviews, themselves, are a minor element of Hawhee’s larger argument. My study provides a more thorough investigation of Burke’s musical interests by building on the work of Bostdorff and Tompkins and Hawhee.

¹ Burke identifies 5 different types of form in the main essay “Lexicon Rhetoricae” in *Counter-Statement*: syllogistic progression, qualitative progression, repetitive form, conventional form, and minor or incidental form

Perhaps the most extended examination of Burke's interest in music appears in Jeffrey Carroll's article "The Song Above Catastrophe: Kenneth Burke on Music." Carroll provides a substantial overview of Burke's music criticism for both *The Dial* and *The Nation* while also examining "texts on music in the work of Kenneth Burke . . . with the aim of finding their concordance, their sense together" (n.pag.). Carroll, who refers to his expansive article as a "little book," claims his subject is Burke's "work on music as work on music and not on symbolicity or rhetoric" (n. pag.). While Carroll's examination of Burke's music criticism and music references remains focused on providing a fuller understanding of "Burke on Music" as the title suggests, Carroll claims "it is not the point of this little book to try to illuminate what would follow the work on music" (n. pag.). Thus, Carroll's aim is to understand Burke's musically focused texts as a contribution to music criticism and not as a contribution to rhetorical theory or symbolicity. My investigation will, instead, focus on the latter subject by examining Burke's musical interests as a contribution to rhetorical theory.

Finally, recent works by Gregory Clark combine Burke's rhetorical theories with the art of jazz music as well as Hawaiian song. Unlike the previous three examples, Clark's studies are not explicitly focused on examining Burke as a musician or music critic. Rather, Clark is interested in using principles in jazz and Hawaiian music to both develop new rhetorical principles and more fully illuminate Burkean terms. In "Aesthetic Power and Rhetorical Experience," Clark discusses Burke's distinction between semantic and poetic meaning as a distinction between the rhetorical appeals in linguistic reasoning and the rhetorical appeals of aesthetic

experience. Using a jazz concert on the radio to illustrate the importance of experiential rhetoric, Clark asserts, “the experience of the rhetorical is much more pervasive and penetrating in our lives than we think it is—and *that*, I believe, is the primary lesson that Burke’s work on rhetoric has to teach” (106, emphasis Clark’s). Similarly in “‘A Child Born of the Land’: The Rhetorical Aesthetic of Hawaiian Song,” Clarke examines Hawaiian music to illustrate how Burke’s theory of aesthetic form in *Counter-Statement* emphasizes the rhetorical importance of experiential rhetoric, which engages sensation and emotion. Clark claims “ideas and arguments bind people together or push them apart, but aesthetic experience does that as well and perhaps to greater effect” (251). By using Hawaiian songs as his object of analysis, Clarke compellingly argues that aesthetic experience—often viewed as separate from rhetoric—is a vital part of rhetoric. Finally, in “Virtuosos and Ensembles: Rhetorical Lessons from Jazz,” Clark uses the metaphor of a jazz performance to find “better terms to describe the possibilities for a positive relationship between individuals and collectives” (33). Throughout the piece, Clark employs Burke’s rhetorical vocabulary such as identification and constitution to describe the art of jazz. In concluding, Clark claims “jazz improvises order out of chaos, cooperation out of conflict, art out of the everyday . . . [N]ow rhetoric and politics must do that as well” (43-4). Rather than specifically examine Burke’s interest in music, Clark’s work uses Burkean terms to illuminate how rhetorical principles in jazz music can serve as a representative model for political and rhetorical communities. In contrast, this dissertation further illuminates and understands Burkean theory through the specific theoretical lens of Burke’s interest in music. It is my argument

that while Burke wrote criticism on opera or composed classical pieces of his own, he was also in the throes of developing rhetorical and theoretical ideas, and these musical scenes appear to influence his theoretical works.

In addition to these previous works about Burke and music, a growing number of Burkean scholars such as Clark and Dana Anderson have begun to theorize Burkean terms such as identification and semantic and poetic meaning² as contributions to nonlinguistic forms of symbolization.³ Though Burkean theory has largely been understood as a theory on alphabetic forms of communication such as poetry, literature, propaganda, and other forms of writing, these scholars make the argument that Burke can be used to theorize nonlinguistic texts as well. For instance, in *Rhetorical Landscapes in America*, Clark uses Burkean identification to analyze the rhetorical significance of landmarks in the United States National Parks as sites for establishing a national identity. Clark claims that the rhetorical experiences of a landscape along with the discursive descriptions of that landscape are highly persuasive through Burke's rhetorical appeal of identification. Similarly, in *Identity's Strategy*, Anderson focuses on life-altering experiences that lead to a personal conversion where the persuasive strategy of identification helps to define our rhetorical selves. While Clark and Anderson have used Burkean theory to analyze nonlinguistic modes of persuasion, this dissertation extends their investigations by uncovering what Burke himself had to say about the use of his

² In *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, Burke examines the difference (or lack thereof) between semantic and poetic meaning in a chapter with the same name. Burke essentially tries to dissolve the difference between the two by arguing that purely semantic rhetoric does not exist.

³ As Susanne Langer defines in *Philosophy in a New Key*, non-discursive or non-alphabetic symbolism is "furnished by our purely sensory appreciation of forms" (93).

theory to analyze nonlinguistic persuasion. While contemporary multimodal theory will not serve as the object of analysis for this dissertation, the terminology used in the theories of multimodal texts can help construct Burkean theory as a contribution to multimodality.

Literature Review: Methodology

Recently, the field of Burkean scholarship has focused on two distinct yet not entirely separate methodologies: text-based analysis and historical analysis. In his review essay “Kenneth Burke’s Continued Relevance: Arguments Toward a Better Life,” Bryan Crable examines this methodological divergence, asserting that Burkean scholarship, which initially focused on providing close readings of Burke’s texts, “move[d] away from Burke’s writings, and toward ‘KB,’ the man behind the corpus” (118). As M. Elizabeth Weiser describes, a text-based analytical methodology closely examines Burke’s theoretical works in order to emphasize “timeless” aspects of Burke’s theory while a historical methodology focuses instead on the “time-bound” Burke writing in response to specific political and social scenes (xv). Though Burkean scholars often blur the lines between these two methodologies—many historical Burkeans use a rhetorical history in order to provide close readings of Burkean theory and vice versa—my intent is to keep these categories separate to provide salient descriptions of the two methodologies. Before describing my own methodology in this project, I’ll more closely examine these two prominent methodological threads in Burke scholarship to more fully explain how my methodology builds upon previous scholarship.

Text-based Methodology

The pioneer scholars within the field of Burkean studies typically employed text-based analysis, which closely examines Burke's texts to understand or illuminate the purpose of his theory. Because of the challenging nature of Burke's theoretical ideas, a text-based methodology enabled early scholars to do the important work of clarifying Burke's terms and critical methods. This methodology often cuts across the many academic disciplines that claim Burke such as composition, rhetoric, communication, and psychology because of his tendency toward interdisciplinarity within his own writing. Many Burke scholars have used a text-based analysis methodology.⁴

One prominent example characteristic of early Burke scholarship is William Rueckert's *Encounters with Kenneth Burke* published in 1994, which represents a key text for the blending of text-based analysis with a historiographic approach. Text-based studies such as Rueckert's were quite popular in the nascent stages of Burkean studies because few were familiar with the many texts and key terms Burke developed, and these ideas needed further explanation. Though Rueckert's book still continues to be representative of previous text-based Burkean scholarship, the first chapter begins to value the many different literary personas of Kenneth Burke. In this chapter "Some of the Many Kenneth Burkes," Rueckert briefly details his personal and professional relationship with Kenneth Burke in order to claim that "there are as many Burkes as there are books and essays by him" (3). Rueckert writes this summary with the premise that there are many historical

⁴ A text-based methodology has been used in several edited collections (*Landmark Essays on Kenneth Burke*, *The Legacy of Kenneth Burke*, and *Representing Kenneth Burke*) as well as a handful of single-authored monographs (Rueckert, Wess, Crusius, and Bygrave).

angles from which to observe, summarize, and interpret Burke's writing because he was a man of many interests. In order to understand the many possibilities of meaning for each of Burke's theoretical works, Rueckert argues that we must interpret Burke's writing by first understanding the many characters that Burke played in his own drama. However, Rueckert limits his interpretation of the different Burkes to generalized personas, including Burke the aphorist, Burke the comedian, Burke the dialectician, Burke the logologer, Burke the dramatist, and Burke the poet. While Rueckert provides some historical insight into Burke's life, his primary aim is to provide close, timeless readings of Burkean texts.

In general, text-based Burke scholars argue for the continued relevance of Burke's theories within contemporary rhetoric—their timelessness—while trying to convey an understanding of those theories. Bryan Crable claims that scholars using text-based analysis demonstrate that “Burkean scholarship *matters*, there is *something at stake* in our readings of Burke” (118, emphasis Crable's). While close readings are important in Burkean scholarship due to the number of Burkean texts that have yet to be thoroughly examined, I argue, alongside Weiser, that a historiographic methodology also makes the argument that Burkean scholarship matters because these studies place Burke's ideas in the historical context from which they emerged. In fact, a historiographic methodology allows for close readings while providing a wealth of useful historical lenses for interpreting Burke's texts.

Historiographic Methodology

In the second, and newly burgeoning methodological direction, recent Burke scholars have composed rhetorical histories to examine Kenneth Burke within his own cultural scene. Often aiming to provide close readings of Burke's theory as in text-based approaches, these historiographers view Burke as an agent within a given scene, creating theories in response to elements of the historical period. While some who study the time-bound Burke have focused on providing straightforward historical accounts by publishing "objective" descriptions of the past, most Burkean scholars have focused on the subjectivity of historical work through historiographic approaches. In a personal interview I conducted with rhetoric scholar Cheryl Glenn, she clarifies this difference between the historian and historiographer. Glenn claims, "The historian takes a stance of objectivity, which is a stance available only to those already in power." However, the historiographer, according to Glenn, "claims his or her interestedness" and is "conscious of the subjectivity that couples history and writing about history." In other words, historians strive to create a narrative of the past that focuses primarily on imparting knowledge through a plain and seemingly objective style, which leads to the false assumption that a historical text can be accurate. In contrast, historiographers are predominantly concerned with acknowledging the subjectivity of representations of history. While they also produce a narrative of historical events, they acknowledge that this narrative comes from a particular point of view. The majority of historical Burkeans use this historiographic subjectivity to illuminate Burke's theoretical writing. In this case, historiography allows the Burke scholar to provide a unique and often unexplored perspective on Burkean theory through a specific historical lens.

In 1974, the Special Collections Library at the Pennsylvania State University purchased the first of three collections of correspondence, notes, drafts, and photographs from the Kenneth Burke estate, enabling the possibility for historiographic approaches, yet much of the Burke archive was relatively unknown and unused until after Burke's death in 1993. Around that time in the early 1990s, Jack Selzer, a professor of rhetoric at Penn State University, began examining myriad archival materials in the Kenneth Burke Papers such as correspondence between Burke and other major literary and political figures, unpublished writings, and drafts of Burke's major works as well as other primary sources such as reviews of and by Burke, texts by those close to Burke, magazine articles, and even several memoirs that mention Burke. Selzer's resulting project *Kenneth Burke in Greenwich Village: Conversing with the Moderns 1915-1931* is a landmark book for the historiographic method in Burkean studies and the first of a series of projects that establishes this new methodology for using the Kenneth Burke Papers at Penn State University and other archives around the country to contextualize Burke's theoretical writing as a contribution to a cultural conversation.

For the purposes of clarity, I will call the historiographic Burkean researchers the "parlor historiographers." Burke's parlor metaphor provides an appropriate representative anecdote for describing the emerging "parlor historiographic" methodology. In *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, Burke creates the metaphor of the rhetorical parlor to describe the situation of the unending debate: "Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated

for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. . . . You listen for a while, . . . then you put in your oar” (110-11). Within this metaphor, which Burke originally developed in *Auscultation, Creation, and Revision*, the participants within this metaphorical parlor respond to other contributors based on conditions that arise within their specific historical moment. As Burke later claims in *Language as Symbolic Action*, “unless we interpret a text in terms of the times in which it arose, we’ll necessarily miss many considerations that contribute vitally to the meaning of some particular passage” (36). In using the myriad textual evidence by, about, and between Burke and other major literary and political figures of the twentieth century, the parlor historiographers analyze Burke’s writing as a product of the parlors he occupied and not as an isolated symbolic action.

Burke scholars have utilized the historiographic methodology in two distinct ways: 1) to historicize Burke’s theory and 2) to rhetoricize⁵ Burke’s theory.⁶ In terms of the parlor metaphor, historiographers providing a *historicized* interpretation examine Burke’s texts in relation to other texts outside of a historically constrained scene while historiographers providing a *rhetoricized* interpretation examine Burke’s rhetorical actions as a response to other agents or events in a particular historical parlor. More specifically, while historiographers who engage in a historicizing project can examine archival artifacts, historical inquiry is typically limited to a close examination of Burke’s theories as a

⁵ “Rhetoricize” is a term developed by M. Elizabeth Weiser in *Burke, War, Words* that advocates a method of time-bound historical interpretation.

⁶ The division between these two historiographic methodologies is not always clear. Though some studies predominately use a historicizing methodology (Feehan, Crusius) and other studies more clearly use a rhetoricizing methodology (George, Selzer, Tell, Enoch), most studies contain differing ratios of historicizing, rhetoricizing, and text-based analysis (Sproat, Crable).

development of prior philosophical and rhetorical theories. On the other hand, historiographers with a rhetoricizing approach understand Burke's theories as rhetorical acts, using archival artifacts and primary research within the specific scene in which theory emerged to recreate the contemporary rhetorical scene in which Burke was participating. Using Burke's own concept of pentadic analysis from *A Grammar of Motives*—which involves act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose—a rhetoricizing project narrows the scope of analysis to the contemporary scene in which the author composed the work.

Two articles by Debra Hawhee help to illustrate the differences between historicizing and rhetoricizing approaches. In "Burke and Nietzsche," Hawhee uses a historicizing methodology to illuminate Burke's key terms of perspective by incongruity, motive, terministic screens, and dramatism by demonstrating the ways in which they relate to Nietzsche's ideas, particularly those that Burke struggled with. While Hawhee uses archival evidence such as Burke's notes and correspondence about Nietzsche in order to link Burke with Nietzsche, the historical evidence does not develop the rhetorical scene in which Burke participated because Burke and Nietzsche were not contemporaries. Rather, Hawhee examines Nietzsche's influence on Burke even though Nietzsche was a static author for Burke rather than an active participant in Burke's parlor. In an other article "Burke on Drugs," Hawhee uses a rhetoricizing methodology to closely examine Burke's relationship with Colonel Arthur Woods while working at the Bureau of Social Hygiene. Hawhee identifies her research question in this article as "what effects were produced when Burke moved outside of his vibrant lefty, literary circles and

into other realms less strictly configured as intellectual?" (5). Hawhee focuses heavily on the relationship between the socially conservative Colonel Woods and Burke through original correspondence.⁷ In profiling Burke's relationship with Colonel Woods, Hawhee asserts that the correspondence reveals a "resistant worker who effectively becomes hooked on the question of bodies and habits even as he at times explicitly rejected the aims of his boss" (5). By rhetoricizing Burke's relationship with Colonel Woods at the Bureau, Hawhee values the relationship as part of Burke's parlor while he was writing *Counter-Statement* and *Permanence and Change*. This allows Hawhee to assert that Burke's experience at the Bureau of Social Hygiene contributed to his formation of the concepts of efficiency and piety of the body by expanding his understanding of the body's participation in rhetorical acts. My dissertation will use a similar rhetoricizing approach to examine the scene in which Burke's musical interests and subsequent theory emerged.

Research Questions

1. Given Burke's interest in music as a symbol system, how does this influence his investigation of social change in his major works from 1931-66, particularly *Counter-Statement*, *Permanence and Change*, *Attitudes toward History*, *A Rhetoric of Motives*, and *Language as Symbolic Action*?
2. Does Burke's discussion of music in lesser known publications and archival materials forecast a development of aural or musical rhetoric?
3. What can multimodal and language theories illuminate about Burke's theory?

⁷ Jordynn Jack's article "'The Piety of Degradation': Kenneth Burke, the Bureau of Social Hygiene, and Permanence and Change," which uses a similar rhetoricizing approach to discuss Burke's time at the Bureau, more fully details the connections between Burke's Bureau reports and the terms he developed in *P&C* rather than focus on his relationship with Colonel Woods.

4. What can a rhetorical history of Burke's interest in music add to Burkean studies and rhetorical studies?

My Theoretical and Methodological Framework

Imagine Kenneth Burke in a musical parlor. This initial act of analyzing a specific scene, which characterizes a rhetoricizing methodology, I argue, is the best method for answering the above research questions. Many recent “parlor historiographers” who rhetoricize Burke's theory have been recreating the many real parlors Burke actually frequented during his long life. For instance, Jack Selzer imagines Burke debating modernism in a parlor set in Greenwich Village from 1915-1931. Similarly, Selzer and Ann George imagine Burke in a parlor debating the ends and means of social change in the 1930s—and, especially the role of the artist—with self-described aesthetes, leftists, Southern Agrarians, Chicago school intellectuals, and pragmatists; David Tell imagines Burke in a World War II-era parlor clarifying the relationship between rhetoric and epistemology with John Crowe Ransom, the editor of the *Kenyon Review*; and Debra Hawhee imagines Burke in a parlor developing the rhetorical theories of efficiency and piety in response to his work as a drug researcher at the Bureau of Social Hygiene between 1926 and 1930. These are all real historical parlors that Burke opened the door to and walked in as a participant, and each historical parlor provides a window into Burkean theory that was previously closed in text-based analyses.

My dissertation imagines another group of parlors that Burke frequented throughout his life: musical parlors. These parlors vary based on historical chronology and the type of contribution Burke added to the cultural conversation,

but all the parlors I examine have music as the central subject matter. At times, Burke used words to enter the discussion about music as a symbolic system, and on other occasions, he played and wrote music as part of his contribution. In recreating this history of Burke's interest in music, this study illuminates how Burke's published theoretical works such as *Permanence and Change*, *Attitudes toward History*, and essays in *Language as Symbolic Action* can contribute to an understanding of the nonlinguistic symbol system of music.

In terms of approach, I write my dissertation in the genre of a rhetorical history to rhetoricize Burke's interest in music as a part of his larger project of understanding social change. The rhetorical history genre allows me to reanimate the cultural and political situations that constitute Burke's music parlors in order to understand how his theory emerged as an element of that historical context. Toward that end, I evaluate and discuss a variety of primary historical documents from the time period in which Burke developed theory. The main focus of my analysis in each chapter is largely unexamined documents that Burke wrote regarding the subject of music such as music reviews in the mid-1930s in chapters two and three, correspondence with friends on the subject of music in the early 1960s in chapter four, and Burke's own musical compositions in chapter five, which he composed throughout his life. Stemming from this investigation, I then examine Burke's major theoretical works to make connections between these lesser-known writings on music and his rhetorical theory. This comparison allows me to examine how Burke's texts on music might have influenced his rhetorical theory as well as how his rhetorical theory may have been focused on musical concerns. To that end,

my analysis emphasizes theoretical terms found in both Burke's writing about music and in his theoretical works such as *graded series*, *piety*, *perspective by incongruity*, *integration*, *symbolicity*, and the *nonsymbolic motion/symbolic action* pair. Finally, my rhetorical history integrates a variety of primary and secondary sources from each historical period such as program notes and reviews by other musical critics, literary reviews by and of Burke, and historical evidence of the broader social changes happening in each scene in order to examine the musical influences on Burke's theory of social change.

My examination of Burke's music-focused texts recreates the cultural scene surrounding the development of these texts to understand how they participated in the larger cultural conversation. According to Steven Mailloux, who envisioned the rhetorical history methodology in *Rhetorical Power*, a literary or theoretical text within a given cultural conversation "can be a participant motivated by and affecting the conversation" (61). In terms of my project, my interpretation of Burke's musical compositions and his writing about music partially focuses on how these ideas emerged as a part of the cultural context as well as how these texts participated in the development of Burke's theoretical works. As Mailloux claims, literary or theoretical texts "can take up the ideological rhetoric of its historical moment—the rhetoric of political speeches, newspaper editorials, book reviews, scholarly treatises, and so forth" (61). My rhetorical history explicitly focuses on the available evidence of these historical scenes in which Burke's texts participated to reveal how his musical texts were shaped by and participated in a specific socio-political conversation.

However, my study is based on a slightly different approach to rhetorical history than Mailloux's—one articulated by M. Elizabeth Weiser—to specifically examine *Burke's* cultural conversation. Weiser defines the historiographic methodology used by Selzer, George, Hawhee and others as "rhetoricizing." In *Burke, War, Words*, Weiser claims that a rhetoricizing methodology attempts "to capture the persuasive, dialogic conversation with the audience from which theory arose" (xii), asserting, "the construction of theory is as much a conversational product as are the situations that theory can define" (xii). In further distinguishing her methodology from Mailloux's rhetorical hermeneutics, Weiser claims that instead of "using rhetoric to practice theory by doing history" (Mailloux qtd. in Weiser xiii), "rhetoricizing theory involves practicing rhetoric by using history to do theory. That is rhetoric is enriched when its universal theories are fully informed by the contextual conversations of their history" (xiii). In other words, while Mailloux's rhetorical hermeneutics provides a methodology for understanding the rhetorical politics of many interpretations of theory, Weiser's rhetoricizing methodology argues for the analysis of a rhetorical theory using the interpretive lens of the specific historical conditions of its emergence. Weiser contends that the advantage of a rhetoricizing methodology is that "when a theory's time-bound nature is 'rhetoricized,' its timeless application is enhanced" (xvi). Burke scholars use a rhetoricizing methodology to examine Burke as a drug researcher (Hawhee and Jack), a critic of World War II (Weiser), a teacher (Enoch), or a companion with other thinkers of his time to understand how his theories emerged as a response to his own time period.

My adoption of a rhetoricizing methodology as articulated by Weiser contains two purposes for my project moving forward: a) to explain the cultural context in which Burkean theory that was influenced by and about music has emerged in order to b) show how Burke's theory can be useful in today's digital contexts. Weiser argues "a rhetoricized treatment enriches the theory not merely to understand it better but also so that the theory can better, more fully, guide responses to contemporary situations" (xiii). I claim alongside Weiser that a rhetoricized theory becomes useful for analyzing current situations once it has been located within the original conditions for emergence. My use of a rhetoricizing methodology will focus on this two-step approach in order to make the case for Burkean theory as an ideal approach for theorizing our current digital symbolic situations.

Following Weiser's described rhetoricizing methodology, I argue that the intersection between Burke's theoretical texts and his interests in musical scenes of the 1930s and 1960s helps to illuminate possible applications of Burkean theory for the current digital, multimodal age. To do just that, my investigation focuses initially on Burke's musical parlors, examining whether or not Burke's discussion of music in lesser known publications and archival materials forecasts a development of aural or musical rhetoric in his major theoretical works. Following this rhetoricizing move, I integrate multimodal and language theorists in two ways. First, I introduce key multimodal terms from Kristie Fleckenstein, Richard Lanham, and others alongside Burke's theoretical terms in order to examine similarities or tensions between them. These multimodal terms serve to frame Burke's theoretical terms as

important contributions to present day multimodality. Second, I use multimodal theories in order to more fully understand Burke's multimodal compositions. Burke's multimodal, musical compositions not only serve as evidence that he composed in multiple modes but also as an enactment of his own rhetorical terms, which have largely been understood as theories of linguistic symbols. As a result, this new knowledge of the "conversational product" of Burkean theory provides insight into multimodal applications for Burkean theory in the context of the recent emergence of digital rhetoric.

While my examination of Burke's music parlors rebuilds specific historical scenes surrounding the emergence of Burke's theories, the scope of my rhetorical history will be limited by the time periods in which Burke composed these musically focused texts: 1933 music reviews for the *Nation* while composing *Permanence and Change* in chapter two; 1934 music reviews while drafting *Attitudes toward History* in chapter three; 1961 correspondence with Louis Calabro on the subject matter of music while imagining lectures and articles for *Language as Symbolic Action* in chapter four; and 1970s and 1980s while Burke composed original music compositions late in life in chapter five. By first locating Burke's theory as a response to a specific socio-political or musical scene in these time periods, this dissertation more fully explains current applications of that theory. In rhetoricizing Burke's theory in light of his musical interests, my historiographic methodology can more purposefully and productively intersect Burkean theory and multimodal theory by revealing Burke's encounters with multimodality when theorizing and composing multimodal texts.

A rhetoricizing methodology can more fully contextualize Burke's rhetorical theory using textual evidence of Burke's musical interest (music reviews, correspondence, music compositions) to build historiographic claims about the relationship between his music parlors and his rhetorical theory. While textuality can constrain historians who aim to "get it right," historiographers view textuality as a way to expand and validate the past for present purposes. In *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, Linda Hutcheon discusses the importance of textuality within the field of historiography, claiming that history is

being rethought—as a human construct. And in arguing that *history* does not exist except as text, it does not stupidly and "gleefully" deny that the *past* existed, but only that its accessibility to us now is entirely conditioned by textuality. We cannot know the past except through its texts: its documents, its evidence, even its eye-witness accounts are *texts*. (16)

While this dissertation, in some way, reclaims Burke's musical past, it does so with the awareness that my representation of the past is mediated by the textuality of the archival evidence. This rhetorical history puts Burke's published and well-known theoretical texts in dialogue with his substantial yet unexamined musical texts in order to gain historiographic insight into the development of Burke's rhetorical theory.

I argue that my subjective historiographic interpretation of Burke's major theoretical works using Burke's musically-focused texts creates what Van Wyck Brooks calls a "usable past" for the future of Burkean studies. In *Attitudes toward*

History, Burke claims, “a history of the past is worthless except as a documented way to talk about the future” (159). Similarly, in “On Creating a Usable Past,” Brooks claims the historian often “puts a gloss upon the past that renders it sterile for the living mind” (38). Due to the chaotic and barren nature of the present, Brooks argues that we need organized and usable interpretations of the past to help order our present in fertile and productive ways. Brooks claims that “the past is an inexhaustible storehouse of apt attitudes and adaptable ideas; it opens of itself at the touch of desire; it yields up, now this treasure, now that, to anyone who comes to it armed with a capacity for personal choices” (39). The subjectivity with which my interpretation organizes familiar Burkean theory aims to produce new applications for his theory. Along with Hans Kellner, my historical interpretation argues “the only purpose the discourse of history can legitimately claim is to designate and transform the field of evidence into *as many persuasive models as can possibly be fashioned*” (37, emphasis Kellner’s). Like many parlor historiographers in Burkean studies, my investigation into Burke’s musical interests values as many possible interpretations of the past as are able to persuasively shed light on an application of Burkean theory to the current digital age.

Using archival materials as described earlier, I explore how Kenneth Burke’s rhetorical theory contributes to our understanding of multimodal rhetoric, and it is the goal of this dissertation to investigate how rhetorical studies can use Burke to talk about other realms of symbol systems. My examination of Burke’s music parlors provides a unique opportunity to view Burke’s rhetorical theory—largely understood as a theory of linguistic symbolism—as a contribution to the newly

emerging field of multimodal rhetoric by bringing his theories into conversation with other current multimodal theorists. In order to answer “what multimodal and language theories illuminate about Burke’s theory,” I quote from specific contemporary multimodal and language theorists to bring Burke into conversation with contemporary multimodal theory. Using the terminology developed by contemporary multimodal theorists to describe Burke’s rhetorical theory as a multimodal approach, my dissertation integrates such terms as “imageword” developed by Kristie Fleckenstein, “At/Through oscillation” from Richard Lanham, and “mythical thought” from Ernst Cassirer to provide a contemporary lens with which to view Burke’s contributions to multimodality over seventy years ago. At times, Burke reveals his linguistic bias in his focus on multiple modes, which serves as a limitation for some of his ideas within present day multimodality. However, on other occasions, Burke appears to develop principles unique to nonlinguistic modalities. Though this dissertation serves as a way to anachronistically add Burke’s voice to the multimodal parlor by adding his work alongside theorists discussing contemporary digital situations, the primary subject for analysis remains the rhetorical parlor of Burke’s musical interests. Furthermore, contemporary multimodal theorists such as Gunther Kress, Theo Van Leeuwen, Jeff Rice, and Cynthia Selfe provide a unique theoretical lens for analyzing and understanding Burkean theory in light of Burke’s music parlors. In order to understand Burke as a multimodal theorist, I frame his rhetorical theory using theories from current multimodal scholars.

As a result of this theoretical framework, my dissertation will involve 5 types of general activities throughout my investigation: summary of Burke's published writings on the subject of music; examination of Burke's music reviews and correspondence on the subject of music; analysis of Burke's musical compositions; comparison of Burke's major theoretical works (*Permanence and Change, Attitudes toward History, The Philosophy of Literary Form, A Grammar of Motives, A Rhetoric of Motives, Rhetoric of Religion, Language as Symbolic Action*) with lesser known music-focused texts; and most importantly, the contextualization of archival and published texts within the musical scene Burke occupied. Each of Burke's texts on the subject of music provides insight into Burke's published rhetorical theory, which I believe can be viewed as a contribution to theories of multimodal rhetoric.

Objects of Analysis

This project uses various archival materials such as correspondence, musical compositions, articles, and private music journals composed by Burke to musical performances, letters, articles, and historical events experienced by Burke to rhetoricize Burke's rhetorical theory in his major published works. Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of heteroglossia provides insight for approaching the myriad texts that contributed to Burke's music parlors. In "Discourse in the Novel," Bakhtin examines the social layers of language, which he claims are stratified "into social dialects, characteristic group behavior, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups, tendentious languages, languages of the authorities, of various circles and of passing fashions" (262-3). In other words, Burke's theoretical works represent instances when Burke drew upon a multitude

of ideologies, experiences, relationships, and languages to compose a unitary text under a single name and title, organizing many culturally saturated ideas under one text. The analysis within this dissertation works to reveal the heteroglossia in Burke's texts by examining many historical artifacts as culturally influencing elements within Burke's major theoretical works. These artifacts provide a unique window into Burke's major works, and understanding the genesis of Burke's ideas, in turn, creates a broader understanding of the dialogic nature of his writing.

The second and third chapters of my dissertation will focus on rhetoricizing theoretical ideas from *Permanence and Change* and *Attitudes toward History* using the eleven music reviews Burke wrote for *The Nation* from 1933-1936. Since Burke drafted the music reviews and these two books of rhetorical theory at the same time, the music reviews provide insight into the musical nature of Burke's key rhetorical terms such as *piety*, *perspective by incongruity*, *graded series*, and *integration* from his more familiar published works. In the fourth chapter, I more fully examine what Burke wrote about music as a symbol system to illuminate Burke's evolving theory of aurality in language. In particular, Burke's substantial correspondence with Bennington colleague and Italian American composer Louis Calabro in 1961 provides significant insight into his view of nonlinguistic symbols systems in relation to his theory of language. The fifth and final chapter of my dissertation shifts from examining Burke as a music critic to examining Burke the musician and multimodal composer. Throughout his life, Burke composed a variety of polished classical works as well as less refined music journals written late in life during the 1980s. These historical artifacts reveal Burke's focus on the rhetorical

abilities of music based on his own focus as a musical composer and rhetorical theorist.

The Nation Music Reviews

Burke served two stints as a music editor: first with the literary magazine *The Dial* and second with the political journal *The Nation*. During his time with *The Dial*, Burke composed fifteen music reviews between 1927-1929. In a 1985 *Pre/Text* article, Bostdorff and Tompkins connect Burke's music reviews in *The Dial* with his theories of form in *Counter-Statement* by noting that Burke perceived music, like rhetoric, as "the use of language in such a way as to produce a desired impression upon the hearer or reader" (210). Since Bostdorff and Tompkins have substantially analyzed the music reviews in *The Dial*, this dissertation will focus more heavily on the music reviews Burke wrote for *The Nation*, which largely remain unexamined.

In addition to his music criticism for *The Dial*, Burke composed music reviews for *The Nation* that focus not only on the performance at hand but also on the rhetorical effect of music. Of the eleven music reviews written for *The Nation*, Burke composed four reviews while drafting *Permanence and Change* and seven reviews while drafting *Attitudes toward History*. While the reviews often provide a window into Burke's own views about the rhetorical appeal of music, they also forecast theoretical concepts that later appear in these books. In addition to examining Burke's reviews of these musical performances, I also use music reviews of the same musical performance written by other reviewers to provide a contrast to Burke's ideas.

First Edition of Attitudes toward History

While Burke's first edition of *Attitudes toward History* published in 1937 has largely been preserved through the second and third editions, one glaring exception involves his removal of over 23 pages from the "Cues" section in his "Dictionary of Pivotal Terms" at the end of the book. In the fourth chapter of my dissertation, I take a close look at the reason for the absence of these pages in later editions, which largely focus on the tonal characteristics of words, in order to understand Burke's hesitance to theorize the sounds of words in his theoretical works. By closely examining this largely unknown aspect of Burke's third theoretical work, I trace Burke's development of a language theory that eventually includes nonlinguistic symbols. Though Burke admits that his focus on the overtones of words were "tentative and incompletely formed at the time" ("Twelve Propositions" 248), my examination focuses as much on the absence of this section in later editions as well as what Burke says in this section.

Burke/Calabro Correspondence

In early 1961, Burke struck up a friendship with Italian-American composer and Bennington colleague Louis Calabro. Aside from fostering their friendship as coworkers and through family get-togethers, Burke and Calabro began a vigorous correspondence about "music as subject matter" (Burke to Calabro 25 Jan. 1961). Burke's responses demonstrate not only a manifestation or working out of several key terms from his published theoretical works but also an evolving theory of language that accommodates musical symbols. Throughout the 21 letters in the correspondence, Burke and Calabro critique each other's work, discuss the nature of music as a symbol system, and discuss progressive and repetitive appeals within

music, providing a step toward a Burkean theory of language and aurality. While Burke conducted much of his work toward a comprehensive theory of language and aurality in the background such as this correspondence, these ideas culminate in essays Burke wrote in *Language as Symbolic Action*. This correspondence helps tell the story of Burke's continuously evolving theory of aural rhetoric.

The Music Journals

Late in life in the 1970s and 1980s, Burke kept a daily music journal that consisted largely of entries in stream of consciousness style combined with written scores of various musical melodies. Each of the 16 journals contains approximately 40 pages of musical staff paper that are filled with Burke's original music compositions. Because of time constraints and limited memory on my camera, I was only able to collect data from 11 music journals. According to his son Michael, Burke would use a 15-key electric keyboard to compose these melodies aloud in the kitchen or bedroom before notating any musical notes. These journal entries along with 9 polished original music scores titled "A Solemnity," "A Major Waltz," "All I Want Is," "Sarrusaphone Surrounded (with Trumpet and Tuba)," "Towards Heroics," and "A When About to Part," "Not Without Gloominess," "Call a Lovely," and "Chorale" provide the strongest evidence for Burke's theory of aural symbolism enacted as a musical composer.

Chapter Outline

My investigation of the Burkean music parlors reveals two major new areas of investigation for Burkean studies. First, this study places contemporary multimodal theorists alongside Burkean theory to understand how Burke's

rhetorical theory contributes to a theory of aurality. Burke notes in his 1983 afterword to the 3rd Edition of *Permanence and Change* that humans are “Bodies That Learn Language,” deliberately expanding the human aptitude for *language* to “include the ability to behave with other such arbitrary, conventional symbol systems as dance, music, sculpture, painting, and architecture” (“In Retrospective Prospect” 295). In this afterword written fifty years after *P & C*’s original publication, Burke argues that his larger project of symbolic action applies to multiple languages and modalities rather than just linguistic symbolism. However, he pursues this claim no further, leaving the reader to decide how his rhetorical theory might apply within nonlinguistic settings. I argue that Burke’s rhetorical theory already contained considerations of multiple modes, and Burke’s reflective comment in *P & C*’s afterword, which he repeated throughout many of his later works,⁸ provides the incentive to examine Burke as a multimodal theorist. My use of current multimodal theorists helps frame Burkean theory as a compliment to multimodal theory while also showing how multimodal theory can contribute to Burkean studies. Second, this study includes Burke’s multimodal and musical compositions as an important scene within his theoretical corpus, which I detail largely in chapter five. These compositions reveal Burke as a musician working rhetorically within an aural symbol system to persuade musical audiences, and I

⁸ In *Language as Symbolic Action*, Burke claims “‘symbolicity’ would also include all other human symbol systems, such as mathematics, music, sculpture, painting, dance, architectural styles, and so on” (5) and echoes this sentiment on pages 21, 60, and 61. In *The Rhetoric of Religion*, Burke discusses the three orders of words as “the natural, the socio-political, and the verbal (or the symbolical in general, as with the symbol-systems of music, the dance, painting, architecture, the various specialized scientific nomenclatures, etc.)” (15).

argue that musical principles clearly influenced the rhetorical principles Burke puts forth in his major theoretical works.

Following this first chapter, in which I have provided a description of the overall study, chapter two makes the argument that musical principles Burke encountered in his music reviews for the *Nation* influenced his rhetorical theory. This chapter addresses my first two research questions, examining Burke's interest in music as a symbol system to understand how this influences his investigation of social change in his major works from 1931-34, particularly *Counter-Statement* and *Permanence and Change* and exploring if Burke's discussion of music in lesser known publications and archival materials forecasts a development of aural or musical rhetoric by analyzing Burke's first four music reviews from *The Nation* as an adumbration of the rhetorical theory Burke wrote in *Permanence and Change*. Burke mentions the terms *piety*, *perspective by incongruity*, and *graded series* in these music reviews as terms for analyzing music performances before he finished drafting *Permanence and Change*. My analysis will trace Burke's development of these rhetorical terms by providing the historical context surrounding their emergence in musical criticism.

In Chapter 3, I examine both the American and German music scenes of the 1930s to more fully argue that Burke developed a multimodal approach to music during the lead up to WWII. Two of Burke's music reviews for *The Nation* reveal a significant and fundamental change in how he viewed musical symbolism from *Counter-Statement* to *Attitudes toward History*. As Burke's socio-political scene shifts from modernist circles to Marxist and socialist circles, and he realizes the dangers of

Nazi fascist art through his engagement with works by Thomas Mann, he more fully embraces a multimodal purpose for musical symbols. In this chapter, I address how multimodal theories can illuminate Burkean studies by adding the voices of several current multimodal theorists alongside Burke's ideas in order to demonstrate similarities and tensions between the two ideas. Also, I investigate what a rhetorical history of Burke's interest in music can add to Burkean studies and rhetorical studies by examining in detail the highly political nature of German and American musical works from 1934. As a result, I contend that a Burkean theory of multimodality adds theoretical and historical weight to current multimodal scholarship. It is my contention that in these instances Burke was identifying rhetorical principles within nonlinguistic symbol systems and advocating for a multimodal solution to fascist uses of art.

In Chapter 4, I examine Burke's encounters with Marxist critic Margaret Schlauch in 1937, the work of language theorist Ernst Cassirer in 1946, and Italian American composer and Bennington professor Louis Calabro in 1961 to argue for the influence of these events in Burke's development of a language theory that accounts for aurality. Following this investigation, I outline three principles in language that lead Burke to value nonlinguistic modes of meaning. This chapter examines both how language theories might illuminate Burkean studies and how Burke's discussion of music in lesser known publications and archival materials forecast the development of a theory of aural or musical rhetoric.

In Chapter 5, I examine Burke's original and largely unpublished music compositions to argue that Burke develops music principles unique to the aural

mode. I argue that Burke understood and utilized rhetorical principles in his own musical practices, and my investigation of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Baroque uses of oral principles of rhetoric for musical works aims to demonstrate that Burke went beyond superimposing oral principles on top of musical symbols. Instead, I argue that Burke developed and used rhetorical principles that were germane to the aural mode.

Ch. 2 Music as Kenneth Burke's Secular Conversion

"Permanence and Change was written in the early days of the Great Depression, at a time when there was a general feeling that our traditional ways were headed for a tremendous change, maybe even a permanent collapse" (xlvii).

*Kenneth Burke
Permanence & Change*

"The audience . . . dreams, while the artist oversees the conditions which determine this dream" (36).

*Kenneth Burke
Counter-Statement*

The lights dimmed in the newly constructed Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in 1913 Paris while Russian composer Igor Stravinsky waited anxiously in the auditorium for the world premiere of his new ballet *Le Sacre du Printemps*.⁹ As conductor Pierre Monteux lowered his baton, the woodwinds began the solemn first lines of the controversial piece, spurring much conversation in the music hall. Once the aggressive and dissonant smattering of string instruments joined in, the audience responded "with a storm of hissing" ("Parisians Hiss New Ballet," C5). As Stravinsky retreated to the wings of the auditorium, audience members, according to Monteux, "began to hit each other over the head with fists, canes or whatever came to hand" (qtd. in Kelly 292). Eventually, the manager of the theatre had "to turn up [the] lights ... to stop hostile demonstrations as [the] dance [went] on" (C5). For Burke, who reviewed the piece 14 years later in his first music review for *The*

⁹ Also known as *The Rite of Spring*.

Dial, *Le Sacre du Printemps* presented a modernist challenge to classical form. Though Burke claimed in *The Dial* review to be “bowled over” after first listening to the piece, upon later encounters, he found the work “to have lost all [its] strangeness and gained in solidity” (537). In the 15 reviews Burke wrote for *The Dial* in the late 1920s, he continued to ponder modernist issues that arose from avant-garde works such as *Le Sacre du Printemps*, most of which stretched musical form to the limits.

In this chapter, I examine Burke’s conversion from focusing primarily on modernist issues that he faced while writing music reviews of modernist artists such as Stravinsky to focusing on social change in the 1930s. This investigation of Burke’s own conversion demonstrates what theories emerged at the nexus of his modernist-focused musical and socialist-focused political interests. First, I set out to introduce the modernist Burke by examining his musical interests in *Counter-Statement*. Contrary to Jack Selzer’s claim in *Kenneth Burke in Greenwich Village* that the economic crisis in the early 1930s “shifted Burke’s concern fundamentally and finally away from narrowly aesthetic concerns” (xvii), I argue that Burke attempted to preserve a modernist and aesthetic focus for the purposes of converting large audiences toward socialist causes in his 1935 work *Permanence and Change*. In order to trace Burke’s conversion from a focus on modernism to a “proletarian avant-garde” approach,¹⁰ this chapter begins by examining the modernist Burke in his 1931 work *Counter-Statement*. As Selzer claims, Burke’s theoretical and literary

¹⁰ In *The Cultural Front*, Michael Denning claims the “proletarian avant-garde” approach largely began in the late 1920s when young, avant-garde writers and artists began to form “proletarian literary clubs, workers theaters, camera clubs, dance troupes, choruses, and composers collectives” (64) toward socialist aims. Denning claims the “proletarian avant-garde” movement largely collapsed in 1935.

work in the late 1920s, including *Counter-Statement*, was largely a “contribution to the modernist conversation” (6), and my examination of this work serves to not only introduce the modernist Burke but also to more fully understand how music and modernism fit together for Burke.

Following this, I focus on Burke’s transition into social criticism following *Counter-Statement* in order to understand his proletarian political aim as he also integrated earlier

aesthetic focus when
developing theories for
*Permanence and
Change*. Burke’s
continued engagement
with the modernist

Timeline of Burke’s Music and Major Works	
1927 to 1929	Burke writes 15 music reviews for the <i>Dial</i>
1931	<i>Counter-Statement</i> is published
1932	Burke composes but does not publish <i>Auscultation, Creation, and Revision</i>
1933	Burke writes 4 <i>Nation</i> reviews while drafting <i>Permanence and Change</i>
1935	<i>Permanence and Change</i> is published

Figure 2.1

music parlor of the late 1920s and early 1930s, I argue, led to a “proletarian avant-garde” approach in the work.

Then, drawing on Burke’s first four reviews in late 1933 and early 1934 for *The Nation*¹¹ as well as largely unexamined archival material including letters, drafts of music reviews, and notes, I argue that the changing musical scene of the 1930s provided an arena for Burke to study how the perspectives of a large group of people can be changed to embrace new ideas. In contrast to Hawhee’s and Jack’s

¹¹ Burke composed four reviews while drafting *Permanence and Change*, and these reviews provide the most insight into how music symbolism influenced rhetorical terms in that major theoretical work.

studies,¹² which focus on Burke's exploration of how the perspective of an individual changes, this study identifies Burke analyzing a group of individuals within larger-scale change. In this scene, audiences familiar with performances of classical compositions by Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven were suddenly confronted for the first time with performances of the jarring atonal compositions of Schönberg, Debussy, and others, and Burke was in the theatre, watching their reactions. This music parlor reveals Burke working with modernist compositions to argue for their place in the vibrant social debate of the mid-1930s. Burke did not abandon avant-garde art in the face of challenges in the 1930s, but instead, he shifted his attention to how he might utilize aesthetic principles from these discordant compositions for the emerging social debate.

As a result, these *Nation* reviews of modernist compositions, I contend, are laden with adumbrations of Burke's modernist-inspired ideas for methods of change such as *piety*, *perspective by incongruity*, and *graded series*, which he presents in *Permanence and Change*, a work developed in response to Depression-era upheavals. My examination of Burke's discussion of music in lesser known publications and archival materials such as these reviews not only forecasts Burke's development of these terms in *Permanence and Change* but also provides a glimpse into Burke's evolving theory of aural rhetoric. By examining how Burke's interest in music as a symbol system influenced his investigation of social change, this chapter

¹² Debra Hawhee in *Moving Bodies: Kenneth Burke at the Edges of Language* and Jordynn Jack in "The Piety of Degradation': Kenneth Burke, the Bureau of Social Hygiene, and *Permanence and Change*" examine Burke's work at the Bureau of Social Hygiene to understand how he developed such theoretical terms as *perspective by incongruity* and *piety*.

argues that Burke viewed music as a means to persuade through a shift in perspective.

A Modernist Approach to Music in *Counter-Statement*

Burke's early and substantial attention to form from 1925 to 1931 further reveals a modernist critic concerned primarily with the aesthetic appeals of art. From the outset of *Counter-Statement*, Burke focuses on theorizing the nature of symbolism in general, attempting to account for both the formal elements of a symbol as well as the informational elements. Selzer has compellingly argued that Burke's early approach to music as rhetorical form was largely influenced by his participation in the modernist circles of the 1920s, claiming "Burke's works through 1931—not only his poetry and fiction but also his criticism—may be understood as responses and thrusts in this cultural conversation" (7). For instance, throughout *Counter-Statement*, Burke attempts to make form the most important element in art—a central concern of many modernists—by examining Flaubert, Mann, Gide, Cezanne, Eliot, Joyce, Dostoevsky, and Baudelaire among others. In addition to Burke's focus on form, these authors were also of utmost concern for modernist critics in the late 1920s. In this section, I will first provide a brief overview of *Counter-Statement* followed by an examination of Burke's early approach to form as a considerable step toward a Burkean theory of musical rhetoric. Finally, I will amplify the scattered music references Burke provides throughout the book to see how Burke's modernist theories of form and audience intersect with his interests in music.

Aside from his music reviews for the *Dial* from 1927-29 and the *Nation* from 1933-36, Burke theorizes musical symbolism most comprehensively in his 1931 book *Counter-Statement*, a work he claims was “intended as a machine . . . for criticism” (ix). Selzer suggests that Burke’s general aim in *Counter-Statement* is “to delineate the essential character of art and the relationships that exist between art and society, [which] is a modernist staple” (137). Burke accomplishes this aim throughout the collection of eight essays in *CS*, which are arranged in the original order of composition. Several of the opening essays in *Counter-Statement* were published earlier in various venues, including “The Poetic Process” in *The Guardian* on May 1925, “Psychology and Form” in *The Dial* on July 1925, and sections of “The Status of Art” published as a review of Spengler’s *Decline of the West* in *The Dial* on September 1926.

Burke’s focus on modernist issues led him to develop two important rhetorical concepts in *Counter-Statement* that relate to his interests in music: rhetorical form and audience psychology. Burke most notably theorizes the concept of rhetorical form as a symbolic sequence that leads to “an arousing and fulfillment of desires” (124),¹³ which Selzer claims, “is a tremendous innovation” (143). Though issues of form reach back to antiquity, Burke’s concept of rhetorical form is revolutionary because it is “far less a static textual feature and far more a dynamic act of cooperation among writer, reader, and text that is more broadly rhetorical and social than purely aesthetic” (Selzer 143). In his final chapter in *CS*, Burke identifies five kinds of rhetorical forms that lead to anticipation and gratification:

¹³ Burke’s definition of rhetorical form often privileges linear symbolism, which is often found in linguistic as well as musical symbolism.

sylogistic progression, qualitative progression, repetitive form, conventional form, and minor form. These five kinds of form, which Burke claims often overlap, appeal to audience emotion through a variety of symbols. For Burke, music is the epitome of rhetorical form because it “deals minutely in frustrations and fulfillments of desire” (36). While Burke theorizes five kinds of rhetorical form within literature, these forms also provide significant insight into a Burkean theory of musical symbolism. While Burke claims to examine primarily “literature” in *CS*, by which he means “written or spoken words” (123), Denise Bostdorff and Philip Tompkins have compellingly argued that Burke’s development of rhetorical form in *CS* largely emerged from his encounters with music while writing music reviews for the *Dial*. Their argument suggests that while Burke wrote *CS* with linguistic forms such as narrative and metaphor in mind, he used his experience in the musical realm to identify the formal appeals in linguistic symbolism. Since Bostdorff and Tompkins have sufficiently dealt with the *Dial* reviews from the late 1920s, my investigation will primarily focus on music in *CS*.

While Burke worked to develop a philosophy of literature that more fully accounted for affective logics, Burke’s development of the concept of rhetorical form also provides important insight into his early views of music. Burke’s concept of rhetorical form is notable for two reasons. First, rhetorical form helps to theorize the dual informational and formal logics within all symbols. While some symbols, such as words, may be more suited to informational meaning for specific audiences, those same symbols also contain an appeal to form, which Burke claims is largely linked to an audience’s emotion. Second, Burke’s concept of rhetorical form creates

a unique approach to art through the rhetorical concept of audience. Symbols such as images or music often emphasize formal appeals to specific audiences, which provide Burke with the incentive to examine audience psychology in relation to symbols that might emphasize form. Burke introduces rhetorical form as a concept in his 1925 essay "Psychology and Form," expands upon the concept in the 1925 article "The Poetic Process," and most fully lays out the theory in his later 1931 essay "Lexicon Rhetoricae." Throughout "Lexicon," Burke categorizes the different types of rhetorical form, identifying the five main categories and providing examples for these forms. As a result of his attention to rhetorical form throughout the book, Burke focuses more fully on the psychology of an audience rather than the rational logic of a message.

Burke's development of the form/information pair in "Psychology and Form," originally published in *The Dial* in 1925 and later included in *CS*, provides him with the conceptual framework for describing the dual elements an audience identifies in a symbol. In this essay, Burke primarily attempts to demonstrate how "the hypertrophy of the psychology of information is accompanied by the corresponding atrophy of the psychology of form" (33) and vice versa. From the outset of this chapter, Burke distinguishes two ways in which symbolization works. One is through the "psychology of information," where symbols refer to specific objects, ideas, and feelings in a symbol-user's perceived reality. These informational symbols overtly name a thing. In contrast, the "psychology of form" covertly symbolizes through formal structures such as narrative and metaphor, which

arouse and fulfill desires (124). For Burke, formal appeals can create and fulfill expectations through many kinds of symbols, including musical symbols.

In addition to the dual form/information logics, Burke's theory of rhetorical form is notable for expanding the concept of audience to include psychological and experiential considerations. Rhetorical form in "Lexicon Rhetoricae" is, as Selzer claims, "a major contribution not so much in acknowledging audience . . . but in pointing to new conceptions of audience and art" (152). Burke's conception of audience, which coincides with his dynamic approach to rhetorical form, identifies symbolic experience as a key element of rhetorical form.¹⁴ In "Lexicon Rhetoricae," Burke emphasizes that "a form is a way of experiencing" (143). In other words, the artist creates an experience through formal patterns in his work to evoke desired emotions in the audience. While these rhetorical forms are often "ambiguous and fluctuant" (177), the ambiguity provides the artist with a means for persuading an audience through emotional associations. For example, Burke claims a locomotive would likely evoke divergent emotions in an audience: "A locomotive can cause terror if onrushing, or relief if it takes us away from an unsatisfactory environment" (177). However, since ambiguity provides the conditions for rhetoric, the artist is able to use various rhetorical forms associated with a locomotive to evoke a desired emotion based on experiencing the locomotive form. In terms of musical form, a composer could adjust the tempo of an orchestration that mimics the sounds of a locomotive to evoke the desired emotion. A fast tempo with loud timpani drums and

¹⁴ Greg Clark most notably expands upon Burke's concept of rhetorical experience in *Rhetorical Landscapes* and more recently in his article "'A Child Born of the Land': The Rhetorical Aesthetic of Hawaiian Song." Clark argues in the latter that "ideas and arguments bind people together or push them apart, but aesthetic experience does that as well and perhaps to greater effect" (251).

blaring horns would convey a sense of terror through the sound of a locomotive while a slower tempo could possibly communicate a smooth ride on a sunny day. Though the orchestration in Burke's locomotive example would continue to remain ambiguous due to the lack of less ambiguous linguistic symbols, the ambiguity provides the composer with room for persuasion.

In further expanding the concept of audience, Burke claims experiential forms are often developed through repetition of the physical forms of our bodies through a psychological approach to audience. In the 1925 essay "The Poetic Process" later included in *CS*, Burke examines how form "parallels certain psychic and physical processes which are at the roots of our experience" (45). As Debra Hawhee notes in *Moving Bodies*, Burke's attention to musical form largely propels him into an investigation of audience psychology and bodily response. Burke claims that such bodily rhythms as "systole and diastole, alternation of the feet in walking, inhalation and exhalation" (140) are rhetorical forms that emerge as a result of our physical experiences. In particular, Burke examines the musical form of a crescendo or climax in "The Poetic Process" as one of the many "basic forms of the human mind" (49) that an artist employs to tap into audience emotion. A composer uses "his emotional and environmental experiences" to create a personal example of a crescendo, which the audience experiences as their own form of emotional crescendo. While the rhetorical form of a crescendo or climax may have different informational meanings to an artist and his audience, both composer and audience share the experience of the rhetorical form, which creates an immediate formal meaning depending on the kind of audience.

Burke revisits the form/information pair in the 1931 chapter “Lexicon” to more fully characterize two different kinds of audience: one which prefers form and the other which prefers information. As Selzer claims, “audience in ‘Lexicon’ is conceived not as the simple, passive, relatively monolithic, and unproblematical collection of individuals of ‘Psychology of Form,’ but as complex and heterogeneous” (153). Burke complicates his view of audience in the essay “Psychology and Form” by identifying types of audience members who prefer either form or information: connoisseurs and hysterics, respectively. An audience of connoisseurs would more likely appreciate the various rhetorical forms that add meaning to a text while hysterics, a term that reveals Burke’s distaste for an information-focused audience, see form as a distraction from the linguistic and informational meaning of a text. Richard Lanham provides a useful description of Burke’s distinction between hysterics and connoisseurs: information-minded “hysterics” “look THROUGH a textual surface to the ‘content’ that can confirm or deny their hysterical need for consolation” and form-attuned “connoisseurs” “look AT a stylistic surface and contemplate it in a Wildean manner” (72).¹⁵ As stated earlier, Burke’s description of hysterics and connoisseurs largely focuses on audience psychology to identify which of the form/information pair an audience prefers. By complicating a rhetorical approach to audience through the form/information pair, the “Lexicon Rhetoricae” is strikingly focused on multiple modes of symbolism.

As Burke was finishing up *CS*, he was content with examining music as a symbolic system that primarily evokes affective logics through rhetorical form much

¹⁵ As Lanham suggests, this creates a “frontstage/backstage oscillation” between informational and formal meanings within a given text.

like the connoisseurs he described. In his 1926 article "The Status of Art" later included in *CS*, Burke claims that the artist should devote "himself to his purely aesthetic problems" because, in art, "the ways of influence are devious and unpredictable" (91). For Burke, music was also a devious and covert form of symbolization that relied heavily on ambiguity as its primary source of rhetorical power. Throughout *CS*, Burke discusses music's ability to distract or conceal the ideological message behind tonal and rhythmic symbolism. In "Psychology and Form," for instance, Burke claims music "is most capable of lulling us to sleep. A lullaby is a melody which comes quickly to rest, where the obstacles are easy to overcome" (36). Within music, formal appeals convey the ideological message, lulling the audience to sleep before they can consider the position they are persuaded toward through rational, linear reasoning. This example demonstrates how form and information are not easily separated, but rather an audience often privileges one appeal over the other. Thus, Burke's examination of rhetorical form appears to be an attempt to theorize audience preferences in order to provide the critic with a way to analyze the sometimes overly ambiguous nature of literary form as well as musical symbolism.

When Burke discusses music in a minor way in *CS*, he provides insight into his understanding of how music symbolizes: primarily and almost solely through formal appeals. In music, rhetorical forms appeal to an audience's emotions through the sonic forms created in the musical structures of rhythm, melodies, and tonalities. For Burke, repetitive form is the most important rhetorical form within musical symbolization because repetition is the only way music can begin to set

expectations for an audience. Burke specifically discusses musical repetition as a formal element that is more likely to hold the attention of a musical audience whereas repetition in other forms of symbolization is less likely to appeal to a mainstream audience. Burke claims, "One reason why music can stand repetition so much more sturdily than correspondingly good written prose is that music, of all the arts, is by its nature least suited to the psychology of information, and has remained closer to the psychology of form" (34). In linguistic symbolism, repetition of information often frustrates an audience, but repetition of form creates a formal pattern that will more likely intrigue an audience.

My close reading of Burke's theory of rhetorical form in this previous section demonstrates, as Bostdorff and Tompkins have argued, that Burke's discussion of rhetorical form forecasts a development of aural or musical rhetoric. Though Burke's discussion of music is minimal in *CS* and few scholars have examined the musical focus of rhetorical form, I have attempted to amplify the musical focus of Burke's early work. This analysis of rhetorical form as a musical term also shows that—with the publication of *CS*—Burke was primarily focused on modernist discussions of the aesthetic. However, as the affects of the 1929 financial crisis became much more apparent, Burke's theories of aesthetic form gained a more practical application in this new social situation. As this next section will demonstrate, Burke carried aesthetic principles developed in response to modernism into his next major works *Auscultation, Creation, Revision* and *Permanence and Change*, which were much more focused on the socio-political scene of the 1930s.

From Modernism to Marxism

Shortly after the publication of *Counter-Statement* in September 1931, Burke signaled a shift in scene for his theoretical ideas from modernism to the socio-political scene of the 1930s. In his next major, yet unpublished, work, *Auscultation, Creation, and Revision* as well as in articles such as “My Approach to Communism” in 1933 and “The Nature of Art Under Capitalism” in 1934, Burke shifts focus from modernism in general to Marxist purposes for modernist art. Prior to the publication of *ACR* in a letter to his friend William Carlos Williams, Burke poses the question “What next?” (15 Oct. 1931; East 54):

Am eager to spend a couple of months on a long political tirade, but who would want it? All poets should now attempt to write Areopagiticus, proclaiming anew the dignity of their craft, outlining the good life, and vilifying every authority and public institution that fails to place the aesthetic far above the practical. . . . All poets should sally forth, to taunt, to reaffirm, to make the debacle unforgettable through the use of skilled metaphors. (15 Oct. 1931; East 54)

This quote reveals that Burke’s unpublished work *Auscultation, Creation, and Revision*—which he finished composing in October 1932—appears to have been his promised “political tirade.” In this work and in his *Nation* music reviews, Burke enacted this promise, believing that artists should be on the front lines of the cultural wars, advocating a socialist ideology through “skilled metaphors” as well as unique musical forms. While *ACR* remained unpublished until 1993 when it appeared in James Chesebro’s *Extensions of the Burkeian System*, the work was

Burke's first book-length foray into the realm of political commentary. Following Burke's completion of *ACR*, he wrote a letter to his friend Malcolm Cowley summarizing his thesis in the book that "the esthetic slant of the pre-Communist esthete is preserved in the esthetic-reborn-as-Communist" (7 Oct. 1932). By emphasizing the "aesthetic over the practical" in political discourse as he does in letters to both Cowley and Williams, Burke maintained his focus on aesthetic theories from *CS* to argue in *ACR* that art could affect socio-economic change in a failing nation.

While Burke's music references are limited to brief metaphorical examples in *ACR*, I contend that his vision for the role of the artist in advocating leftist ideology in this work causes him to more fully explore an aesthetic approach for political persuasion, which makes room for the more subtle persuasive techniques found in Western musical forms. In *ACR*, Burke "redefines aestheticism so that it might be understood not as an art-for-art's-sake movement but as a more general aesthetic attitude of protest against materialism" (George and Selzer 71). While Burke's attempt to dissolve the division between the pure poet and the agitator is not all that different from his attempt to pair form and information in *CS*, *ACR* shows Burke's renewed attention to discussing aesthetic forms of symbolism in a new socio-economic scene.

In *ACR*, Burke turns from the modernist concerns of *CS* to focus instead on what he sees as an unproductive antithesis between the "pure poet" and the "agitator" in Marxist criticism. In attempting to dissolve this antithetical distinction, Burke argues for the use of poetic forms of literature, *music*, and other arts as a way

to persuade a financially crippled nation of the value of socialist thought. Burke's renewed definition of aesthetics, this time in the service of advancing socialism, represents a significant shift from the modernist scene to the socio-economic scene of the 1930s. Burke's view of the purpose of art, including music, is much more focused on how aesthetic meaning can persuade an audience to an attitude through emotional appeals. Whereas Burke's focus in *CS* is on form and emotion in general, he suggests in *ACR* that emotion can more effectively persuade an audience toward a socialist attitude. In *ACR*, Burke emphasizes aestheticism as a way to foster an attitude that resists Marxist antithesis, which aesthetic forms often avoid because they resist dialectic symbols. Burke rejected the prevailing Marxist view that the "pure poet" and "agitator" should be separate, claiming "there is no categorical breach between the poem and the pamphlet" (55). Burke claims, "If the pamphleteers had their way, they would think it enough to reveal again and again, without dance-steps" (56). In other words, Burke claims that many Marxist propagandists were too focused on informational symbols without considering what formal appeals might have to offer. However, Burke advocated for more eloquent ways to go about persuading others, advocating the use of various literary forms for persuasion. In this way, Burke sees a common purpose for the poet and the pamphleteer: "Essentially, the work of the 'pure' poet and the work of the agitator coincide: each, that is, is contributing to make the mind at home in the fluidities of change" (139). Thus, Burke's aim to shift his 1930s audience from a capitalist attitude toward a socialist attitude in *ACR* causes him to examine and advocate how so-called "pure poets" could utilize and emphasize the political

“information” present in their work and how “propagandists” might integrate a less didactic approach through emphasizing the formal appeals in their work. Burke’s ideal persuasion resisted the dichotomy between form and information established by the pure poet and propagandist distinction but, instead, involved acknowledgement that every symbolic appeal utilizes both form and information. The most effective appeal for Burke uses both form and information to persuade.

Following the completion of *ACR* in October 1932 and while drafting *Permanence and Change*, Burke continued focusing on the role of the artist in leftist socio-political debates through several articles. In “The Nature of Art Under Capitalism” published in *The Nation* in December 1933, Burke argues that “contemporary emphasis must be placed largely upon propaganda, rather than upon ‘pure’ art” (314). While Burke appears in this article to completely change positions from his argument of placing the “aesthetic over the practical” as in his earlier letter to Williams, Burke’s view of propaganda continues to align with using aesthetic symbolism for advancing an ideology. In other words, Burke was aiming his comments to a different audience in this essay. Rather than address communist propagandists and advocate the use of aesthetic symbols, he advocates his aesthetic propaganda approach to “pure poets,” who resisted the idea that their art could be used for any other purpose than art for art’s sake. In a sense, Burke is advocating an aesthetic approach to propaganda because, as he later claims in *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, “‘Pure’ art tends to promote a state of acceptance” (320). Burke’s shift away from an “art for art’s sake” model provides “a ‘corrective’ kind of literature”

(314) to combat unproductive ethical and work patterns inherent in capitalism that Burke claims lead to the financial crisis.

Most notably on March 1934, Burke argues in “My Approach to Communism” published in *The New Masses*¹⁶ “words themselves derive their emotional and intellectual content from the social or environmental texture in which they are used” (20). In other words, Burke continues to dissolve the dichotomy between the idea that words are only propagandistic and formal appeals are only art for art’s sake by advocating a method of persuasion that emphasizes both aesthetic and propagandistic approaches. Burke claims that words can evoke emotion and forms can evoke a didactic message as well, countering the prominent views of both pure poets and propagandists in the 1930s. While many scholars view this article as Burke’s decisive commitment to Communism, Stacy Sheriff argues that examining the article alongside a much longer speech Burke delivered for the John Reed Club¹⁷ in January 1934 reveals “a Burke less committed to Communism than in *The New Masses* and a Burke more interested in the desired effects of social change” (285). Sheriff, who directs attention to Burke’s approach rather than focus on his support for communism like many other Burkean scholars, shows Burke as “a man committed to the need for social change, but torn between support for Communism’s promise and concern over its potentially orthodox and exclusivist development in America” (285). At the same time, Burke is torn between understanding, praising, and analyzing modernist art and arguing for its place in the

¹⁶ Stacy Sheriff claims *The New Masses* is “a resolutely leftist magazine committed to promoting Communism in America and to courting recognized writers in support of the movement” (283).

¹⁷ The John Reed Clubs, which were originally founded by staff members at *The New Masses*, often called upon authors, intellectuals, and artists to forward the ideas of the Communist Party USA.

leftist socio-political scene in which he is writing his music reviews for *The Nation*. *Auscultation, Creation, and Revision* along with the above articles reveals a shift in Burke's focus from modernism to Marxist purposes for modernist art. These ideas would come to fruition in his next major project.

Burke and the Pen: *Permanence and Change*

Permanence and Change—a book largely focused on identifying methods of change to shift perspectives of a capitalist society toward socialist ideas—was Burke's second published theoretically focused book and was written during the Great Depression in the wake of the stock market crash of October 29, 1929. Burke claims he wrote the book "at a time when there was a general feeling that our traditional ways were headed for a tremendous change, maybe even a permanent collapse" (xlvii). Much of the book focuses on the change that Burke and many other leftists hoped might take place as a result of the financial crisis while the final part of the book suggests an "ideal new order" (lix) that should replace the current Capitalistic system.

Permanence and Change is divided into three parts: Part 1 "On Interpretation," Part 2 "Perspective by Incongruity," and Part 3 "The Basis of Simplification." In Part 1, Burke examines "permanence." In particular, Burke discusses how a person's "'orientation' (or general view of reality) takes form" (3). For Burke, an orientation is "a bundle of judgments" (14) that shape an individual's worldview, and while these orientations may be criticized or challenged, they should also remain partly "intact in order to have a point of reference for ... criticism" (169). In part 2, Burke is concerned primarily with "change." This section

examines the “resources and embarrassments to do with the modifications of meanings, once they have taken form” (lix); essentially, Burke examines the abundant resources for modifying unproductive, even harmful perspectives or orientations such as industrial capitalism to include a socialist perspective. Finally, in part 3, Burke advocates what he calls a poetic orientation that is ethically grounded in metabiology or the limitations of the natural world. In particular, Burke argues for a reorientation of the largely capitalist society in 1930s America to a poetic worldview because of its “great stress upon the communicative,” which “would emphasize important *civic* qualities” (270), as opposed to the orientation of the industrial capitalist, which would emphasize efficient action and profitability. These aims led Burke to develop methods for change in the middle section of *Permanence and Change*.

For the purpose of this chapter—which is to examine how Burke’s music reviews led him to identify methods of change—my close examination of part 2 “Perspective by Incongruity” explores how music influenced Burke’s development of what he calls *secular conversion*, a psychoanalytic term that Burke describes as “a simple technique of non-religious conversion” (125).¹⁸ In this section, Burke aims to understand “the intermediate stage between an old and new way of reading the signs” (167) by looking at examples of secular conversions within music and psychotherapy. These examples serve as representative anecdotes for what could happen in the larger social debate of the 1930s. While Burke identified with some Communist and Marxist approaches in the 1930s, he viewed *secular conversion* as a

¹⁸ Burke draws on several religious terms throughout *Permanence and Change* to theorize conversions in an individual’s orientation, but his application of those terms is secular.

way to convince an audience to accept leftist solutions to the current economic and social crisis.

One important term involved in secular conversions is *piety*,¹⁹ which Burke identifies as an important obstacle to change. Burke defines piety as “a system-builder, a desire to round things out, to fit experiences together into a unified whole. Piety is the sense of what properly goes with what” (74). In adapting the religious term for secular purposes, Burke understands piety as the system that shapes an orientation, which an individual clings to before secular conversion takes place. In “Burke on Drugs,” Debra Hawhee argues that Burke’s view of piety was shaped by his work with the Bureau of Social Hygiene, where he “frames piety as both a visible bodily phenomenon and way of seeing” (21). After he researched drug addicts as a part of his position for the Bureau, Burke developed the term piety by focusing on how “the formation of ‘ruts’” (22) in drug addicts led to psychological and emotional reverence to a particular way of seeing or even hearing. Similarly, Burke’s music reviews reveal that the term piety easily lends itself to musical examples as well.

For instance, the typical classical music enthusiast would exhibit a type of musical piety. In order for a composer of classical music to ingratiate this audience member, s/he will employ the chord progressions, key signatures, and rhythms conventional in classical music. If the composer deviates from these characteristics too drastically, s/he is in jeopardy of violating this audience member’s sense of piety because a classical music enthusiast expects, for instance, a 4/4, 3/4, or 6/8 time signature. Classical music audiences are pious toward these musical rhythms

¹⁹ The chapter that introduces the term *piety* “The Range of Piety” was originally conceived as the opening of *Permanence and Change*, perhaps suggesting the concept’s importance in Burke’s argument.

because they properly go with the expectations they have developed. As Jack notes in “The Piety of Degradation,” “any new orientation will seem ‘impious’ if it cannot somehow connect to the old orientation” (451). For Burke, secular conversion can take place when a classical composer slightly distorts one aspect of the audience’s piety while keeping most of the other elements in place, such as inserting a few bars of a 5/4 time signature in a predominately 4/4 composition to surprise the audience. The conflict for a musical composer involves knowing when to be pious and fulfill the audience’s expectations and when to be impious and surprise the audience. Too much impiety might cause an audience to abandon the work altogether. However, a slight shift in the audience’s perspective allows them to accept change while clinging to their own piety.

Another key term involved in secular conversions, which according to Hawhee Burke arrives at as a result of wrestling with the philosophies of Friedrich Nietzsche, is *perspective by incongruity*,²⁰ which is often described as “a rhetorical strategy that helps break open an old piety” (Jack 459). Early in *Permanence and Change*, Burke discusses what he calls “trained incapacities” or limitations to a person’s understanding where “a way of seeing is also a way of not seeing” (49). In other words, the trained incapacity is the result of conditioning that causes an individual to misinterpret a sign because he remains loyal to his particular piety. As a result, people struggle to view reality from perspectives outside of their own pieties. Thus, perspective by incongruity provides a strategy for challenging a person’s trained incapacities to see outside one’s own piety. For example, an

²⁰ In *Permanence and Change*, Burke explores many examples of *perspective by incongruity* from psychotherapy.

audience that holds a piety toward a more organized style of music such as the waltz would demonstrate a trained incapacity when they are unable to identify the improvisation style of jazz as a valid form of music. In order to shift an audience's perspective so they see "reality" in another light, Burke develops the term perspective by incongruity to move people away from a "system [they] are largely familiar [with] ... by depriving [them] of this familiarity" (121). To use the prior example, a composer can only achieve a perspective by incongruity in classical music once an audience forgoes traditional aspects of the classical music piety, such as the familiar I-IV-V chord progression, in order to accept unconventional chord progressions as a valid contribution to music. The difficulty of achieving perspective by incongruity, particularly in the case of this music example, is the unlikelihood that an audience will accept such a drastic change.

This difficulty leads Burke to develop what will become, I argue, one of the most important methods of secular conversion in *Permanence and Change*: the *lex continui* or *graded series*.²¹ The *lex continui* was a theory of continuity in physics that was originally developed in the 17th century by Gottfried Leibnitz. His philosophical idea, which Burke describes in *P&C*, holds that "all basic constituents of the universe are continuous" (*P&C* 142), and our vocabularies should reflect this gradual series of constituents within nature rather than rely on binary terms. According to Burke, the graded series creates a perspective by incongruity through representing a spectrum

²¹ Rhetoricians have often talked about a climactic series that encourages persuasion. In "Series Reasoning in Scientific Argument," Jeanne Fahnestock discusses the classical figures of incrementum and gradatio, which present "a continuum where there were once divisions" (18). Burke even discusses the figure of gradatio in *A Rhetoric of Motives* in connection with antithesis. While Fahnestock claims that "Burke's definition of the formal appeal of figures like gradatio...does not go far enough" (16) in *A Rhetoric of Motives*, the graded series in *Permanence and Change* provides an extended definition of a Burkean rhetorical figure that bridges antithesis.

of terms that many would classify as gradients between polar opposites, and Burke's graded series essentially joins together polarities by focusing on how meanings encompassed within these graded terms convert one into the next. In the graded series, Burke explains, "We move step by step from some kind of event, in which the presence of a certain factor is sanctioned in the language of common sense, to other events in which this factor had not previously been noted" (142). With the graded series in place, Burke suggests a metaphorical secular conversion called "exorcism by misnomer." This method of secular conversion allows a person to change orientations "by *misnaming* them. It is not the *naming* in itself that does the work, but the *conversion downward* implicit in such naming" (133 emphasis Burke's). For example, the concept of wetness can be converted upwards in the graded series to become soaked, then drenched, until it is sopping. Similarly, wetness can be converted downward in the graded series to become moist, then damp, and eventually dry. Because the change in perspective is achieved by degrees, people might be more inclined to consider a position that had seemed unconnected to their orientation. The graded series provides the framework for misnaming an idea to create a perspective by incongruity that is only one step away from one's original orientation. This shift in perspective becomes much less threatening to an individual's piety because the conversion is only one remove away.

For Burke, music helped him to develop these three concepts of secular conversion. In *Permanence and Change*, Burke uses the example of how the composer Arnold Schönberg

takes us step by step from the methods of classical music to the methods which he employs—and if we follow his gradients we are imperceptibly eased from a region of sound where the logic of composition is generally apparent into a region of sound which might have seemed to the uninstructed hearer as chaotic. (142-3)

This statement echoes Burke's discussion of Socratic transcendence in *A Grammar of Motives* where he argues that a Platonic dialogue is a "process of transformation whereby the position at the end transcends the position at the start" (422). As Burke's third example of dialectic in *A Grammar of Motives*, "transcendence" represents the progressive steps taken from one term to its apparent opposite. Through this discussion of the "transcendence" from classical music to other dissonant styles of contemporary music of the 1930s, we see Burke thinking about "transcendence" as a way to bridge oppositions in a dialectic through the "graded series" well before introducing his term *dialectic* in *A Grammar of Motives*.

Piano and Pen: *The Nation* Music Reviews

Burke wrote and published four music reviews for *The Nation* before he finished drafting *Permanence and Change* in May 1934, and these reviews represent a music scene in which Burke's key terms of *perspective by incongruity*, *piety*, and the *graded series* emerged. As I examine the conditions for emergence of these terms, my description of this musical scene will, in M. Elizabeth Weiser's words, "rhetoricize" Burke's theory. Weiser's methodology suggests that "the construction of theory" in *Permanence and Change* from Burke's musical interests "is as much a conversational product as are the situations that theory can define" (Weiser xii).

Burke envisioned “conversations” with several audiences through these *Nation* reviews. While in these *Nation* reviews Burke continued to examine modernist works as in his *Dial* reviews of the 1920s, his discussion of these works for the *Nation* were geared more toward a left of center political audience. At the time, the *Nation* authors and readers were primarily concerned with political issues, and Burke’s reviews appeared alongside articles in the *Nation* in support of the New Deal, labor unions, and socialist Russia. Burke’s first four reviews of these works, which were of live performances he attended a few weeks prior to the review, appeared in *The Nation*: “Schönberg” on November 29, 1933; “Orpheus in New York” on January 10, 1934; “Two Brands of Piety” on February 28, 1934; and “The End and Origin of a Movement” on April 11, 1934. Though Burke largely wrote music reviews to supplement his minimal income as a writer, his lifelong interest in music led him to pursue such a position at the *Nation*. Although Burke primarily reviewed performances in New York City, his criticism often focused on a diverse array of music, including opera, ballet, and American and Latin American symphonies; most of his criticism, however, concerns works written during the early twentieth century. Frequently, Burke would review two performances in one criticism, juxtaposing them to show how each is effective or not.

However, what is important about these reviews for rhetoricians is that, in each case, Burke shifts quickly away from the performance itself to comments on the composition, specifically to how differences in form affect the audience. Because this modernist music was often highly unconventional, Burke became most interested in how the composers were able to shift the audience’s responses to

accept new musical forms, a project with clear parallels to his theories of psychic and social change in *Permanence and Change*.

Perspective by Incongruity

One of Burke's early reviews for *The Nation* forecasts his development of perspective by incongruity in *Permanence and Change*. In "Orpheus in New York" published in January 1934, Burke reviewed two performances by the New York Symphony Orchestra, which included works by Strauss, Brahms, and Debussy. Burke is particularly interested in how Debussy's 1888 cantata "Blessed Damozel" emotionally affects the audience, which reveals Burke playing with the concept of perspective by incongruity well before the term appeared in *Permanence and Change*. He claims that it "reminded [him] of the 'Poesque' aesthetic" (52), the ability to leave the audience with the mood that the poet has imposed upon them. Burke ponders, at length, how music such as Debussy's could have such a magical effect on an audience that they would "acquiesce in a melancholy" (53). In trying to understand the audience's somber yet favorable reaction to Debussy's composition, Burke takes a closer look at the forms of contemporary music in which "dissonance and irregularity of rhythm happen to take the place occupied by trills, arpeggios, cadenzas, and runs in an earlier age" (53). He claims that contemporary music continues to rely on the conventions of classical music forms and that Debussy deviates from classical form "only so far as the emotions unmistakably followed" (53). In other words, Burke claims that Debussy's compositions successfully move away from classical conventions by taking into account the audience's emotions, shifting perspectives from the formal elements in music to the emotional appeals of

sound. Ultimately, Burke concludes that Debussy's composition is a "religious enchantment" (53), acknowledging that sometimes "rare modalities of feeling ... go with the rare modalities of tone" (53). By shifting the audience's perspective from traditional forms to an emotional response evoked by tones and harmonies, composers such as Debussy are able to implement less accepted musical forms effectively. However, the use of emotion as a method for conversion, Burke suggests, leads the audience to "suspend their resistance only for the duration of the work" (53). In this way, Burke was also discovering methods for change that were insufficient in shifting an audience's perspective permanently.

Burke's attention to Debussy's ability to suspend an audience's resistance to an unconventional musical composition shows Burke playing with the concept of perspective by incongruity in this music parlor. Burke is fascinated by the willingness of an audience to accept Debussy's work and proposes that a musical audience achieves a perspective by incongruity only by "the suasive strategy of a magician" (53). By using emotional appeals to open up the audience, Debussy is able to "suspend [the audience's] resistance" to the unfamiliar forms of early twentieth century modernist music. For instance, rather than allow the audience to focus on the unconventional forms of music that he employs in his composition, Debussy shifts the audience's perspective to the melancholic emotional qualities within the music through the use of closely related parallel chords and bitonality, which is the use of two key signatures at the same time. Rather than employ these techniques to create dissonance like many other modernist composers, Debussy aimed for a more harmonic feel to these strange musical forms. According to Burke, this more

harmonious technique allowed the audience to suspend their criticism of anomalous musical forms because the emotional mood or perspective has already been established. The audience's emotional reaction to the unexpected musical tones helps them to achieve perspective by incongruity for the work by abandoning their pieties toward other, more preferable, emotions.

However, Burke suggests that the audience's resistance to unfamiliar forms returns after the work plays out its last chord. Throughout this particular review, Burke details how an artist can more easily achieve a perspective by incongruity through art to change social perspectives through sounds that resonate with emotion like Debussy. However, these changes through artistic forms appeared to be temporary as the composer would still need to begin with familiar forms in the next work. While Burke understood perspective by incongruity as an effective method for change in lower stakes situations such as musical styles, he realized that as a method for social conversion, it succeeds only so far as the audience is willing to let go of their own perspective. In other words, Burke believed that perspective by incongruity was an effective method for interpretation, but when a person's orientation or identity is at stake, piety to that identity often stands in the way of conversion.

Piety

A second key term from *Permanence and Change* that is first illuminated through Burke's *Nation* reviews is the concept of piety. In fact, Burke's third review for the *Nation* is likely only the second time he used the term piety in print, examining the term first in an article published weeks earlier in *Plowshare* titled "On

Interpretation.”²² In “Two Brands of Piety,” published in *The Nation* on February 1934, Burke juxtaposes two separately-performed operas—“Four Saints in Three Acts” with words by Gertrude Stein and music by Virgil Thomson and “Merry Mount” with libretto by Richard L. Stokes and music by Howard Hanson—that are superficially “antipodes” but actually contain a common element: they both effectively entertain their intended audience. Burke claims that “Four Saints” “at its worst is effete, and content with mere tonal wisecracking” (258) while “Merry Mount” is “manly and imposing” (258). He observes that “Four Saints” “would probably be found on analysis to have been built about the simplest and most fundamental chords [while] Merry Mount was much more highly developed” (258). Although “Four Saints” used a simpler theatrical style and “Merry Mount” was more suited to the typically ornate operatic genre, both operas, Burke argues, effectively ingratiate the pieties of their intended audience. In other words, Burke’s review juxtaposes two stylistically opposite operas to illustrate the concept of piety through two very different kinds of opera audiences. Burke examined musical piety in this review largely because it provided an example in which secular conversion succeeded, which he hoped to replicate in the service of advancing socialist ideas in *Permanence and Change*.

As mentioned earlier, Burke defines piety in *Permanence and Change* as “a system-builder, a desire to round things out, to fit experiences together into a unified whole” (74). The prior experiences of a concert audience lead them to develop a piety toward a variety of music forms they have already experienced

²² Burke eventually used this article as the first chapter of *Permanence and Change*.

while, at the same time, viewing forms outside of these familiar forms as impious. While an audience might ultimately be delightfully surprised by impious musical forms, audiences more vehemently resisted impious socio-political ideas in the 1930s, and Burke used this effective example to test out a method of change that might work in the socio-political realm. Throughout the review, Burke identifies two pieties that characterize the opera audience of the 1930s: a piety toward traditional operatic forms and a piety that privileges theatricality and spectacle. Throughout the review, Burke is highly interested in how “Four Saints” is able to win over the audience despite breaking the conventions of the traditional operatic genre. Ultimately, Burke asserts that “Four Saints” is effective because “all art in the end must ingratiate itself,” and as a piece of ingratiation, “Four Saints prevails” (258) because it played to the pieties of its intended audience. Burke claims that “Four Saints” defies some of the conventions of a typical opera, which could possibly lead to the audience’s rejection of it. But, since it relies on the conventions of flamboyant theatricality that a general audience is familiar with, “Four Saints” succeeds in bringing a new style of music into the more ornate genre of opera. “Merry Mount” is more effective at anticipating what the audience wants, which hinges on the conventions of traditional operatic form. Yet, because each opera embodies its own brand of piety, they are both able to gratify their respective audience: the seasoned opera crowd and the “spectacle-loving masses” (258). Though each opera functions within the audience’s piety, Burke claims that “Four Saints” does this more effectively. Ultimately, however, Burke declares that both operas succeed in ingratiating themselves to their particular audience within their own brand of piety:

“Merry Mount” as the bold and frank opera and “Four Saints in Three Acts” as the light and entertaining opera. Burke’s review of these two operas sheds light on the conditions for emergence of the concept of piety in *Permanence and Change*.

Graded Series

In “Schönberg,” Burke’s November 1933 music review for *The Nation*, Burke uses the graded series to explain an unfamiliar contemporary music environment both in the modernist music parlor and, more specifically, within Arnold Schönberg’s compositions. The review focused on the first United States concert of Schönberg’s work performed by the League of Composers, a New York organization “devoted to American contemporary classical music” (*League of Composers*). The concert was an all-Schönberg program that featured works by the Austrian-American composer, spanning from his earliest “periods of development, up to and including the present period [1933]” (633). When reviewing the first American performance of Arnold Schönberg’s compositions—which *New York Times* reviewer Olin Downes claims were hissed by audiences in Europe—Burke once again veers away from the League’s performance to focus, instead, on Schönberg’s compositions. Schönberg altered earlier forms of classical music by introducing more dissonant tones to produce a new musical form, using the twelve-tone technique, a method of using all twelve notes in a chromatic scale without emphasizing one over the other.²³ While a traditional chromatic scale typically utilizes only eight of the twelve available notes on a piano, Schönberg used all twelve notes equally. For the purposes

²³ Classical music typically features an eight-note scale with typical I-IV-V chord structures in a major key signature and VI-II-III chords within a minor key signature.

of his rhetorical theory and the graded series in particular, Burke is interested in how the progression of Schönberg's compositions from traditional forms of music to twelve-tone forms in one single composition "had rationalistically extended some underemphasized qualities in Bach and Mozart until they become the center of emphasis in his own music" (633).

Burke argues that, in some of the works, Schönberg's style does "not seem any longer 'usable.' It is the music of the future, to be sure, but the present would pass it by" (633). In other words, in most of these works, Burke claims, Schönberg distorted the classical form so drastically that the 1930s audience unfamiliar with Schönberg or the twelve-tone technique no longer had a point of reference with which to understand it. However, according to Burke, Schönberg's Opus 10 drew the audience into the performance because the strings "contemplate[d] the entire matter for some considerable time, until our removal into another realm does gently take place" (634). The Schönberg compositions that effectively earned the audience's acceptance, in Burke's estimation, were the works that were able to gently shift the audience's perspective by relying on their previous conceptions of musical form to gently move them into unfamiliar territory.

The "Schönberg" review makes an important connection between the music of the 1930s and the "graded series," a key term that most Burke scholars have overlooked. Schönberg is famous for inventing twelve-tone music, a technique that refrains from emphasizing one note above the other eleven notes in a chromatic scale, resulting in a musical work that is written outside of a conventional key signature. Schönberg's twelve-tone technique is considered by some twenty-first

century music critics such as *New York Times* critic Anthony Tommasini to be “arguably the most audacious and influential development in 20th-century music, ... a radical departure from tonality, the familiar musical language of major and minor keys” (31L). For Burke, Schönberg’s new musical form was a unique opportunity to theorize how audiences could accept radically different ideas such as dissonant and discordant styles of music as well as a socialist perspective in a predominantly capitalist society.

Early in the review, Burke attempts to link Schönberg’s compositions to the Leibnizian *lex continui*. Schönberg’s new technique embodied the *lex continui* in musical form by refusing to choose an essence of the chromatic scale such as a key signature and, instead, emphasizing each note equally. Burke discusses the productive ambiguity that may arise from refusing to choose an essence of a linguistic graded series because it doesn’t “provide a clue as to which point we should select as the essence of an entire scale” (145). For example, Burke examines the graded series between play and terror in order to describe the emergence of philosophical theory: “play, idle curiosity, curiosity, interest, wonder, reverence, awe, fear, dread, terror” (145). A writer’s philosophical ideas may differ based on the essence term a philosopher selects. Burke claims that a person’s orientation helps him or her choose the essence term, or the representative word, for a linguistic scale, but the productive ambiguity from one conversion upward or downward aids in a change of orientation. Although, in the review, Burke claims that Schönberg’s compositions are ineffective when he attempts to wholeheartedly embrace this new form of music without using the conventions of the previous

classical form, he acknowledges that Schönberg's compositions are effective when they gently shift the audience into a new realm.

In conceptualizing the graded series in *Permanence and Change*, it is clear that Burke was influenced by Schönberg's revolutionary twelve-tone technique. When introducing the "graded series" in *P&C*, Schönberg is one of the first examples used:

Thus, in harmonic theory, the composer Arnold Schönberg takes us step by step from the methods of classical music to the methods which he employs—and if we follow his gradients we are imperceptibly eased from a region of sound where the logic of composition is generally apparent into a region of sound which might have seemed to the uninstructed hearer as chaotic. (142-3)

Therefore, Burke extended his concept of the graded series, which he initially intended to understand secular conversions in a musical audience, for the purposes of his aim in *Permanence and Change* to effect social change in the 1930s. Burke witnessed an unproductive dichotomy between capitalism and socialism in the 1930s socio-political scene, and the graded series appeared to be an effective and less threatening tool for moving people toward a socialist perspective. Two years earlier in his 1931 article "Boring from Within," Burke suggests a similar kind of tool for social change: "we must promote changes which can be put into effect by utilizing the mentality already at hand" (327). Essentially, Burke argues in this article for enacting socialist ideas within the capitalist mindset. For Burke, each ideological term implies the opposite term, and the graded series provides a series

of terms that reveal the possibility for secular conversion to take place. For example, magnanimous and miserly appear to be opposite worldviews, but the graded series of magnanimous, philanthropic, generous, contributing, sparing, penny pinching, and miserly reveal varying levels of giving or withholding money. Burke's aim would not be to completely shift an audience's worldview but, instead, to convert the audience to a term that would be closer to his preferred socio-political perspective. For Burke, the graded series enabled this kind of social conversion.

Burke continues to expand upon the "graded series" in his fourth review for *The Nation*. In "The End and Origin of a Movement," written in April 1934, Burke focuses mostly on performances of contemporary music and suggests that "much of the resistance to modern works has been the fault of performers rather than composers" (422). Yet, Burke examines four concerts put on by the Roth Quartet at the New School for Social Research, who are able to offer interpretations of contemporary works that are near to what the composer intended. These particular musicians, he says, "understand the art of gradation – and the versatility of their resourcefulness has made their concerts a succession of engrossing changes" (422). One of the main reasons that the Roth Quartet is able to offer interpretations that most resemble the composer's intention is the shift from vocal compositions to purely instrumental compositions. Burke claims, "Any attempt to translate specifically musical effects into the abstract equivalents of speech must make the designs of the composer seem few" (422). He appears to acknowledge the need for more contemporary works in the 1930s to be performed solely with instruments, yet he also concedes that if the trend continues, we are headed for "an increasingly

non-vocal conception of musical problems” (424). This shift, in which “the authority of instruments was coming to replace the authority of the voice as a major stimulus to musical imagination” (424), Burke claimed, was a miniature version of the “vast cultural transition” (423) that was taking place as a result of the Great Depression. Perhaps these transitions in contemporary music helped to illuminate his theoretical writing, but it was also this vast cultural transition during the 1930s that led Burke to develop his theories of change in *Permanence and Change*.

Conclusion

While the music parlor was changing in the 1930s, of course, Burke also encountered other more substantial changes in the socio-political parlor of the Great Depression and lead up to World War II. In contributing to both of these parlors, Burke, I argue, was compelled to develop a rhetoric of “secular conversion” in *Permanence and Change*. In an abandoned introduction from the original manuscript of the music review “Two Brands of Piety,” Burke describes a moment shortly after hearing about anti-parliamentarist demonstrations in Paris:

It is with a strong sense of incongruity that I lay down the morning’s paper, with its reports of the recent Dollfuss horrors, and attempt to piece together my notes on the two premieres of American opera ... only a few days before, when the papers were vibrant with the news of the uprisings in Paris, I became aware of a similar mocking combination: the radio had been inattentively left on, a jazz orchestra had ceased its fifteen minutes of dutiful ether-disturbance, and now one of our many available professors was explaining, in dulcet and

soothing tones, the several ways still open to the wise investor. In the face of ultimate despair ... all art seems to belong in the category of the dulcet and soothing voice of that available professor: an incongruous talk framed to entice the interests of the wise investor. (“Two Brands of Piety” draft)

Burke describes this moment to convey art’s capacity to change an audience, especially in times of uncertainty. In his conclusion to this abandoned introduction, which appears to go off topic from the review at hand, Burke proposes, “the example of good and significant forms [of art] in print or upon the stage can supply the needed prototype of similar forms carried into the arrangements of society” (“Two Brands of Piety” draft). Similarly, Burke interprets “good and significant” forms of art in his music reviews to discover three key concepts toward a rhetoric of *secular conversion* in *Permanence and Change: perspective by incongruity, piety*, and the *graded series*. Each of these terms that Burke introduces in a musical context plays an important role in his aim to develop a theory of social change in the 1930s.

Placing *Permanence and Change* in the context of the contemporary music scene of the 1930s helps us understand and properly emphasize an undervalued concept—graded series—which Burke revisits in various forms in *A Grammar of Motives*. While many in rhetorical studies have viewed *Permanence and Change* as a book on epistemology in social situations, closer attention to Burke’s list of secular conversions reveals a book that is fundamentally on rhetoric, offering methods for enacting social change. Furthermore, an examination of these secular conversions illuminates well-known terms in more familiar works such as Burke’s dialectic in *A*

Grammar of Motives. In “Dialectic in General,” Burke speaks of a “gulf between other terms” (402) within a dialectic. He claims that “one expects to find terms possessing ambiguities that will bridge”(402) this gulf, a bridge, I argue, that was initially conceived as the “graded series.” Within any given dialectic of opposing terms exists a spectrum of linking terms in between. Each intermediate term appears to possess more of one term and less of the opposite until one encounters the neutral terms in the middle with the most ambiguity. As a method, the graded series illustrates Weiser’s emphasis on Burke’s philosophical habit of falling on the bias or “cutting across positions, envisioning an alternative that was parts of each as well as new” (1). When we understand Burke’s dialectic in the context of the *graded series*, the possibilities of linguistic transformation between this spectrum of terms illuminate Burke’s continuously merging, dividing, and transcending dialectic in *A Grammar of Motives*.

In my next chapter, I will examine Burke’s remaining reviews for *The Nation* as well as his subsequent book of rhetorical theory *Attitudes toward History*, which attempted to complicate the use of music for changing an audience’s perspective with an eye toward the drastic and frightening changes taking place in Nazi Germany at the time. While *Permanence and Change* was written at a time when change was exhilarating for the socialist left in America, many also feared the rise of fascism in Europe as well as in America that was enabled by this period of social change. As Burke turns his attention toward art’s capacity for causing unproductive social change as in Nazi Germany, chapter 3 will similarly examine the music parlor

in the lead up to WWII. Burke shifts his attention permanently away from modernism to examine the power of music as propaganda.

Ch. 3 Kenneth Burke and Multimodality

*“Pure’ art tends to promote a state of
acceptance” (320).
Kenneth Burke
“The Nature of Art Under Capitalism”*

*“There is no ‘no’ in music” (22).
Kenneth Burke
Attitudes toward History*

Kenneth Burke began his morning on August 24, 1974 by writing a poem titled “Thoughts on Music, softly piped into a place of business” in a letter to his longtime friend James Sibley Watson:

As Music, so the Word – each way could glisten

or go as deep as with a lover’s wound.

But in the Word there’s one convenience missing,

Compared with the Musician’s kinds of sound:

Singly to words you listen; music, like things, can be background.

This poem—later published in *Late Poems, 1968-1993: Attitudinizings Verse-Wise, While Fending for One’s Selph, and in a Style Somewhat Artificially Colloquial*—illustrates Burke’s key distinction between verbal and aural modes of symbolization. While Burke claims words explicitly hold the attention of a listener, he believes that music can more implicitly persuade in the background. In other words, Burke understood that audiences often directly attend to words whereas attention to the musical mode is much less direct. Burke’s illustration of this distinction between

words and music returns to a distinction he made nearly 40 years prior to his composition of this poem.

In this chapter, I examine Burke's 1934 distinction between words and music through his participation in the leftist American and Nazi German music parlors to more fully understand why Burke advocated a combination of linguistic and musical modalities when persuading a 1934 American audience toward a socialist perspective. This multimodal approach is, I argue, a deliberate attempt to augment meaning through multiple modes. As I examine Burke's own multimodal approach in this chapter, I answer my research question "what can multimodal and language theories illuminate about Burkean studies?" by integrating the work of multimodal theorists such as Richard Lanham, Kristie Fleckenstein, and Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen to frame Burke's multimodal approach. Since multimodal and new media studies have become an emerging area in the field of rhetorical studies, I argue that it is vital for those in Burkean studies to show how Burke's theory joins the multimodal conversation. By examining two reviews Burke wrote for the *Nation* in late 1934 and the musical and political context surrounding these reviews, my investigation reveals a multimodal Burke interested in the intersection of musical and linguistic modes.

First, this chapter examines the American leftist music parlor Burke encountered in 1933 in order to describe one historical context to which Burke's music reviews responded. Around this time, leftist artists, writers, and musicians argued about the role of art in advancing a political agenda, and Burke's reviews join this debate. Next, I examine a second music parlor that greatly influenced Burke's

understanding of the interplay between music and words: the 1933-4 German musical parlor. With Adolf Hitler’s rise to power in 1933 pre-war Nazi Germany, Burke shifted his attention from debate about the role of music in advancing leftist ideology at home and profoundly toward the role of music in the rise of fascism abroad. As the Nazis began to use works by Wagner, Hindemith, and other German musicians to advance

Timeline of Burke’s Music and Major Works	
January 1934	Burke reviews work by Wagner critic and German exile Thomas Mann
October 1934	Burke’s review of Paul Hindemith’s <i>Mathis der Maler</i> appears in the <i>Nation</i>
December 1934	Burke’s review of Roy Harris’s “A Song for Occupations” appears in the <i>Nation</i>
1935	<i>Permanence and Change</i> is published as Burke is developing ideas for <i>Attitudes toward History</i>
1937	<i>Attitudes toward History</i> is published

Figure 3.1

National Socialism, and as Thomas Mann as well as other German critics condemned the misappropriation of these works, Burke took notice. In addition, Burke became aware of German music critics who were increasingly hostile to anti-Nazi musicians while reviewing Paul Hindemith’s *Mathis der Maler* symphony in October 1934.²⁴ I argue that these political events greatly influenced Burke’s multimodal recommendation for the use of music and lyrics in the 1934 political context.

Following my examination of these two music parlors, I turn to Burke’s response within these parlors through his reviews in late 1934 of a music symposium, Hindemith’s *Mathis der Maler*, and Harris’s “A Song for Occupations.” Burke’s reviews along with the historical context in which they were composed

²⁴ In this review, Burke responds for one of the first times in print to the rise of Nazi Germany, which provided him with a politically volatile music parlor that finally and fundamentally shifted his critical aim away from advocating a proletarian avant-garde approach many favored in the Communist party. Burke first mentions Nazism in “Fraught with Freight,” his review of Thomas Mann’s *Past Master* for *The New Republic*, but the *MATHIS DER MALER* review appears to be Burke’s first stance against Nazism.

provide important insight into Burke's multimodal focus in *Attitudes toward History*. First, I provide a brief summary of *Attitudes toward History* in order to highlight Burke's rhetorical purpose in the work: to align with many leftist and communist thinkers. At that time, Burke was actively involved in leftist circles, working for the cause as a socialist propagandist. Just four months after Burke published his review of "A Song for Occupations" in December 1934, he would go on to deliver his notable yet controversial speech "Revolutionary Symbolism in America" to the First American Writers' Congress, where he advocated a shift from the Communist party symbol of the "worker" to the "people." Later in *Attitudes toward History*, Burke claimed his "program, as literary critic, is to integrate technical criticism with social criticism" (331). In other words, Burke's aim in *AtH* was to outline writers' tactics in order to equip socialist critics and propagandists to argue for social change. As a result of his engagement with the German music parlor abroad and the leftist music parlor at home, Burke advocated a more practical approach to art and propaganda in order to address the exigent issues America faced. In the final section, I return to Burke's music reviews to show how the music parlors shifted Burke's approach toward multimodality in *Attitudes toward History*.

Marxism, the New Deal, and 1930s Music

As Burke argued for artists to join the front lines in advocating a socialist ideology in his 1932 work *Auscultation, Creation, and Revision*, a group of leftist musicians were doing just that. As early as 1931, Burke encountered a dramatically shifting American music scene, in which some musicians advocated a leftist ideology. While Burke tangentially participated in this leftist music parlor by

advocating a role for art in general in advancing leftist solutions in *Auscultation, Creation, and Revision* and *Permanence and Change*, he does not fully participate in this parlor until his review of Roy Harris's "A Song for Occupations" for the *Nation* in December 1934.²⁵ As a product of this leftist music parlor, Harris's "A Song for Occupations" provided Burke with an opportunity as a music critic to advocate an aesthetic solution for advancing ideology using musical symbols, yet Burke joins the conversation only after his encounter with the 1934 German music and political parlor. This section will examine the leftist music parlor prior to Burke's review of Harris's work in order to more fully understand how the German music parlor might have prompted Burke toward multiple modes of symbols. Both the leftist music parlor and the German music parlor in 1934 directly influenced Burke's rhetorical theory in *Attitudes toward History*, and a historical examination of these two parlors helps to frame Burke's contribution to multimodality.

In 1931, many leftist groups advocated for the development of a proletarian culture through literature, painting, music, and other forms of art to be used as a weapon in the class struggle. As the depression increased artists' sense of urgency in establishing communism in America, many depression-era artists, poets, and musicians began devising ways to effect social change through art and literature. Several prominent American musicians and composers joined in this effort by actively creating proletarian songs that were "by, for, and about the working class" (Lieberman 35). In early 1931, with the working-class music movement already thriving in Europe, members of the John Reed Club in New York such as V. J. Jerome

²⁵ Though the work was officially published in 1935, Burke originally encountered the debut performance of "A Song for Occupations" in November 1934.

and Mike Gold began translating radical leftist lyrics into English so that musically inclined members could set the lyrics to music.²⁶ While the John Reed Clubs around the country were in favor of using music to awaken class-consciousness, initial production of these communist or socialist songs was “sporadic and slim” (Ruess 43). In the summer of 1931, the John Reed Clubs elected members to serve on the newly formed Workers Music League not only to create songs that projected the class struggle but also to educate workers in the creation of their own songs. By the fall of 1931, the Workers Music League had grown to over 18 different chapters in various cities, including Philadelphia, Chicago, and Boston (Ruess 44).

However, the most important arm of the Workers Music League remained in New York and attracted accomplished American composers such as Jacob Schaefer, Leon Charles, and others, who held “seminar[s] in the writing of mass songs” (Clarke). In 1933, the New York branch of the Workers Music League changed their name to the Pierre Degeyter Club,²⁷ and many of these members later formed what was called the Composers’ Collective.²⁸ The collective—which in later years would serve as an example for other organizations and pioneers of the activist folksong movement such as People’s Songs and the Almanac Singers as well as Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger—strived to “create a new music, simultaneously revolutionary in content and form, which would inspire class struggle and uplift the musical tastes of American workers” (Dunaway). This led the group to pursue two

²⁶ Named after the late journalist and activist John Reed, the John Reed Clubs were formed around the country to recruit Marxist writers, intellectuals, and artists for the purposes of advancing communism in America.

²⁷ Degeyter was the composer of the song “Internationale,” a socialist work that served as the official anthem of Communist Russia until 1944 (Internationale).

²⁸ Other sources claim the Composers’ Collective was initially an offshoot of the Communist Party’s International Music Bureau (Dunaway 159).

sometimes-conflicting goals: 1) to create music by, for, and about the working class and 2) to elevate the musical tastes of the working class.

In the following years, other notable composers such as Norman Cazden, Robert Gross, Alex North, Elie Siegmeister, Hanns Eisler, and Charles Seeger²⁹ would join the collective and even Aaron Copland³⁰ contributed original music compositions. By 1934, the Composers' Collective—which had grown to more than 20 members educated at such influential schools as Harvard, Columbia, and Julliard—published the first of two *Workers' Song Books*, with a foreword that proclaimed:

Music penetrates everywhere

It carries words with it

It fixes them in the mind

It graves them in the heart

Music is a weapon in the class struggle. (*Workers' Song Book*)

While most in the collective agreed that music by, for, and about the working class would use revolutionary lyrics, many of the composers debated the best way to uplift the musical tastes of American workers or disputed the need to even do so in the first place. For instance, Charles Seeger, who joined the Composers' Collective in 1931, was initially “scornful of folk and popular music” (Dunaway 160) and its use in collective-sponsored songs. However, by the end of his tenure in the group in November 1935, he “was determined to use traditional American folk music to unify

²⁹ Seeger, who is the father of the iconic folk singer Pete Seeger, composed songs for the Composers' Collective under the pseudonym Carl Sands.

³⁰ Copland only visited the group (Dunaway) and contributed a song or two to the Songbook (Lieberman).

diverse sectors of America” (159). Additionally, he viewed the Composers’ Collective as an organization that made “‘Good Music,’ capital G, capital M, songs which the common people would sing to the revolutionary words” (qtd. in Dunaway 162). Other composers such as Aaron Copland maintained their devotion to uplifting musical tastes. Copland abstained from simplified musical forms in his own work for the Collective by leaning instead on “loud, rhythmic chords on the piano” (160), which were often accompanied by elaborate orchestrations. However, while Seeger conceded that Copland’s compositions were musically superior, he pointed out that his own entry was more singable, claiming “what worker would carry a piano with him on a march?” (*An American Musicologist*).

As the Composers’ Collective advocated social change through music, Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal was also beginning to aid many musicians who were out of work as a result of the Great Depression. In November 1933 with the first round of New Deal legislation, the Civil Works Administration was established as a temporary solution to put millions of Americans back to work. Among those Americans who benefited from the \$200 million-a-month program were musicians, hired to put on community choruses (Eldridge 159). Following the end of the Civil Works Administration in the spring of 1934, the second New Deal established a much more substantial program called the Works Progress Administration, which used over \$4.9 billion in funds to provide economic stimulus and further employment. As a result, many programs were created to help artists, including the Federal Music Project in 1935 headed by Nikolai Solokoff (159). The FMP, which persisted for four years until 1939, employed over 6,000 musicians and formed

orchestras as well as an education branch to address the rampant unemployment among music teachers (159). While many composers did not benefit directly from FMP funding, the FMP provided them with an opportunity for their new works to premiere through Composer-Forum Laboratories. These events often involved using FMP funded musicians to premiere a new work from a major composer with a chance for the composer to discuss the work with the audience afterward.

Composers such as Aaron Copland, Roy Harris, and Marion Bauer were provided with “unlimited rehearsal time with as many FMP performers as they required” (164) in order to prepare for these events. While many in the Composers’ Collective were not afforded the opportunity to use government-paid musicians for their work, they would have applauded the socialist mission of the FMP. As the musical activities of John Reed Clubs, the Composer’s Collective, and New Deal-funded artists continued to advocate for leftist solutions to the economic and political turmoil in America, Burke shifted his attention abroad to a much different music parlor.

German Music and Nazi Critics

While Burkean scholars are relatively familiar with Burke’s criticism of Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* in his 1939 essay “The Rhetoric of Hitler’s ‘Battle,’” few have explored the implications of the rise of Nazism on his rhetorical and aesthetic theory in the mid 1930s, particularly in *Attitudes toward History* published in 1937.³¹ In *AtH*, his companion piece to *Permanence and Change*, Burke first mentions “Hitler,” “Nazis,” and “Germany” in one of his major works, and as he was contemplating

³¹ Though M. Elizabeth Weiser provides a useful look into the effects of WWII on Burke’s work in the 1940s, her study only goes as far back as 1938.

ideas for *Attitudes toward History*, several events caused Burke to turn his attention abroad, which influence him to change his approach to aesthetics. Burke distinguishes his approach in both works in a 1956 afterword to the 3rd edition of *Counter-Statement*, "Curriculum Criticum," claiming *Permanence and Change* "think[s] of communication in terms of *ideal* cooperation" (216 emphasis added) whereas *Attitudes toward History* outlines the "tactics and patterns of conflict typical of *actual* human associations" (216 emphasis added). I argue that Burke's encounter with fascist and Nazi issues abroad led him to turn away from the proletarian avant-garde approach he espoused in early *Nation* music reviews while writing *Permanence and Change* and toward political realities both at home and abroad. As a result of his participation within and understanding of the 1934 German music parlor, Burke shifts from advocating the use of avant-garde art for advancing leftist ideologies in American culture to a multimodal approach in the face of fascist uses of art. My further historical examination of the 1934 music parlor frames Burke's music reviews as an act within the leftist and German music parlors. In the summer of 1934, Burke was actively aware of the German music and political parlor as a result of his close study and translation of works by German writer Thomas Mann, his study of German music critics, and his review of Paul Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler* symphony.

As Hitler rose to power in early 1933, Burke was beginning to conceive of ideas for *Permanence and Change* according to George and Selzer, yet events in Germany did not influence Burke's ideas in this work. Burke submitted a draft of *Permanence and Change* in May 1934 over a year after Adolf Hitler was installed as

the chancellor of Germany on January 30, 1933.³² With the burning of the Reichstag building in Berlin one month later, Hitler assumed dictatorial power over Germany.³³ Even as many artists and writers fled Germany at this time to avoid persecution by the Third Reich, Burke continued to theorize “ideal cooperation” in *Permanence and Change* rather than take stock of the spread of fascism in Europe by making any reference to the fascist events abroad.³⁴ By May 1933, book burnings in Germany were becoming a regular occurrence with works by authors Burke translated such as Thomas Mann, Emil Ludwig, and Stefan Zweig thrown into the burning piles.³⁵ Eventually, Burke joined a protest at the German consulate in New York in October 1933 to contest the trial of Communists blamed in the burning of the Reichstag building. While these events were not addressed as a part of Burke’s critical theory in *Permanence and Change*, Burke’s attention is later drawn to the political situation in Europe as he contemplates ideas for *Attitudes toward History*.

In the summer of 1934, Burke turned his attention more directly toward fascist Germany. At this particular moment, Burke fundamentally shifted toward examining “actual human associations” in *Attitudes toward History* at least in part as a result of his encounter with the 1934 German music parlor. In June 1934 after Burke submitted *Permanence and Change* to Harcourt Brace, Hitler escalated the activities of his fascist regime, meeting with Mussolini for the first time and

³² Burke finished a draft of *Permanence and Change* for submission to Harcourt Brace and Company. After they rejected the work, Burke continued to tinker with the draft through July 1934.

³³ The Reichstag building housed the German parliament, and the fire served as a symbolic destruction of plurality within the German government.

³⁴ Though Burke appears to ignore the spread of fascism in Europe, Ann George claims he mentions “the coming war in Japan” in his 1933 overview of “metabiology” for *Permanence and Change* (“Metabiology, Outline for a Minimized Ethic” 3;(Tm, 3pp, P9c).

³⁵ Burke translated Mann’s *Death in Venice*, Ludwig’s *Genius and Character*, and Zweig’s article “Charles Dickens.”

arresting or exiling hundreds of so called “plotters” against him soon after. Burke’s discovery of this music parlor caused him to more fully devote attention to fascist realities in *Attitudes toward History* and readjust his views on the role of music in advancing leftist ideals. While Burke’s participation within this music parlor was limited by geography and foreign language, he examined works by Thomas Mann, German music critics, and Paul Hindemith within this German parlor, which provided him with insight into the socio-political debate at home.

Burke had already become quite familiar with Thomas Mann, reviewing and translating many of his works for the *New Republic* and the *Dial*, before Mann came into conflict with the Nazi regime in 1933. Mann was not only a highly accomplished and widely praised German novelist but also a respected critic and champion of German music. On the 50th anniversary of Richard Wagner’s death in February 1933 and coincidentally one month after Hitler’s rise to power, Thomas Mann took the stage at the University of Munich to deliver a speech titled “The Sorrows and Grandeur of Richard Wagner.” While in 1925 Mann had protested “the misappropriation of Wagner by the Nazis and their sympathizers” (Vaget 163), this speech “provided a subtle and critical analysis of Wagner and his work, obliquely attacking the Nazi view of Wagner as a prophet of German nationalism and indeed of National Socialism” (Joll). Mann’s expansive speech, which he claimed in a letter to Ernst Bertram “turned out to be a small book” (“To Ernst Bertram” 90), is often considered to be one of the “best things written about Wagner” (Joll). Following this event, Mann traveled to Amsterdam, Brussels, and Paris to deliver the same speech

while a group of enemies³⁶ used the opportunity to oppose Mann's critique in "Protest from Richard Wagner's Own City of Munich," published in the magazine *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* in April 16, 1933. Fearing for his own safety, Mann never returned to Germany, moving to Switzerland and later to America.

Mann's problems within the political and music parlors in 1933 Germany were indicative of an identity crisis involving Germans and their music. In *Music & German National Identity*, Celia Applegate claims German identity was intimately tied to music. Mann's own words from *Im Schatten Wagners* reveal his claim that music is central to the German identity. Mann claims music is "Germany's national art" more than any other art; "more than literature and politics, it has the power to bind and unite" (63). Since German musicians and audiences privileged instrumental music above vocal music, the appeal of German music appeared to be universal, crossing language barriers to unite diverse cultures. German philosophers from Nietzsche to Adorno believed that prior to the rise of Nazism, German music would unite rather than divide. Similarly, Mann remained uncritical of what many Germans took for granted: "that great music produced by German composers was universal; that German music spoke to all the world (*'diesen Kuß der ganzen Welt'*) and was appreciated by everyone" (Vaget 173). However, facing political exile and the rise of the Nazi party, "Mann now considered it his responsibility to caution against the cult of music and warn against its political exploitation" (Vaget 162).

³⁶ While many sources attribute this uproar to a group of Nazi critics, Vaget claims that of the 40 who signed the document only a handful were local Nazi officials. Instead, Vaget claims Mann's exile was largely a result of personal vendettas with Richard Strauss and Hans Pfitzner in particular.

As further evidence of Burke's shift in attention toward fascism abroad, which would later influence Burke's work in *AtH*, Burke extolled Mann's exile as an "honor" in his review of Mann's *Past Masters and Other Papers* for *The New Republic* in January 1934. In his review of Mann's work, which includes an essay titled "Nietzsche and Music," Burke claimed Mann eloquently "warns the Nazis that they are choosing the way of darkness" (452) while simultaneously identifying with the "cult of darkness" (452) surrounding the Nazi attitude. Burke admired Mann's duality in these essays, which resembled his own praise of and resistance to the Communist party. However, in July 1934, Burke began rejecting this duality. After he reviewed Mann's novel *Joseph and His Brothers*³⁷ for *The New Republic* and with a greater understanding of the Nazi and fascist threat, Burke urged Thomas Mann to oppose Hitler more directly through a petition (George and Selzer 215). Though Burke never discusses reading Mann's speech "The Sorrows and Grandeur of Richard Wagner," his urging of Mann to oppose Hitler as well as his review of *Past Masters* reveals his close engagement with Mann's anti-Nazi criticism. As Burke more fully understood the dangerously powerful use of music for advancing fascist ideas, he began to question his own advocacy of music in advancing leftist ideas in his music reviews for the *Nation*.

In addition to his close engagement with Thomas Mann, Burke also encountered the 1934 German music parlor through reading German music criticism. Though Burke may have only encountered German critics while

³⁷ Mann was in the middle of composing this work when he was exiled to Switzerland in 1933. His children and friends had to rescue this manuscript and forward it to his new address ("The Sorrows and Grandeur of Richard Wagner" 91).

researching his music review of the *Mathis der Maler* symphony, he disagrees with an unnamed critic in his Hindemith review. At the beginning of his October 6, 1934 review for the *Nation* titled “Hindemith Does His Part,” Burke claims to have read a German music critic who “was imbued with the typical Nazi attitude, the notion that there is some fundamental psychological conversion and purification involved in the acceptance of Hitler’s state” (487). As Nazi music critics started turning on Hindemith in the musical presses in early 1934 (Luttman), Burke was engaged with Nazi music criticism that highly suspected Hindemith, a reluctant member of the Nazi music organization *Reichsmusikkammer*, of national treason. The article—most likely “*Hindemith eine kulturpolitische Betrechtung*” by Friedrich Welter—“publicly questions Hindemith’s ability to quickly remake himself in accordance with the ‘new’ pattern” (Burke 487).³⁸ On the contrary, Burke argues that Hindemith successfully conveys the Nazi attitude in *Mathis der Maler*.

Burke’s engagement with the 1934 German music parlor culminates in his review of Paul Hindemith’s *Mathis der Maler*, which leads to a significant shift in his view of aesthetic and musical symbolism in the face of fascism. For the purposes of this section, I will provide information about the work while the final section of this chapter will more closely examine Burke’s shift in light of his review. On October 6, 1934, Burke attended the U.S. premiere of Hindemith’s *Mathis der Maler* symphony performed by the New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra.³⁹ As a German

³⁸ In late 1933, nominated by Nazi officials to become a representative of a new generation, Hindemith appeared to be placating the Nazi party by joining the *Reichsmusikkammer*, a Nazi institution founded by Joseph Goebbels to promote German music. Nazi leaders hoped that Hindemith would be a model of conformity to the Nazi party for other contemporary German composers.

³⁹ The “*MAthis der Maler*” symphony is an early iteration of Hindemith’s opera of the same name, which premiered in 1938. Otto Klemperer was the conductor for the performance that night.

composer in pre-war Nazi Germany, Hindemith was contemplating the political uses and reception of his work, and Burke was particularly attuned to the ideological themes in the symphony. While Hindemith's musical composition does not intentionally advocate Nazism,⁴⁰ Burke's review identifies elements in the work that would appeal to Germans and Nazis alike, uniting religious pacifists and war-crazed radicals in Germany through their identification with musical forms that represent disparate ideologies. Burke witnessed how Hindemith's work could serve as a symbolic bridge that merged diverse attitudes under one representative symphony and was troubled by the way in which the symphony merged these attitudes under the ideology of Nazism.

Though contrary to Hindemith's intention, Burke's interpretation of the musical forms within the *Mathis der Maler* symphony suggested that Hindemith united diverse German attitudes by integrating both ancient and modern musical practices. In his review of the same performance for the *New York Times*, Olin Downes recognizes Hindemith's attempt in this work to integrate the classical Austro-German musical forms of his previous compositions with modern forms, claiming "this music is a curious compound of the style of the younger and the older Hindemith" (28). Downes claims the musical forms in the work are "nearer that of the 'sinfonia' or, in some details, the 'concerto grosso' of the eighteenth century" (28). In reviving the Austro-German symphonic tradition, Hindemith's work even imitates "traditional structures" such as "Gregorian chant" and "sonata form"

⁴⁰ Many critics who initially reviewed the work also believed Hindemith was attempting to advance a Nazi ideology, and though a brief examination of Hindemith's life leading up to the composition of the *Mathis der Maler* symphony contradicts their assertions, composer intent has no bearing on Burke's ultimate conclusion.

(Schubert) while integrating forms popular in the early 20th century. The success of the symphony led to further scrutiny of Hindemith's political beliefs since he was already under the suspicion of Nazi officials.⁴¹

In addition to the musical forms, Hindemith's work also integrates religious themes through "tonal symbols, associated with thoughts of the paintings" (Downes 28). Hindemith's 20th-century symphony is inspired by three archaic 14th-century triptych paintings by Matthias Grunewald for the Monastery of St. Anthony's Isenheim alter at Colmar, Alsace. The three movements of the work represent the three main themes from the triptych: an Angelic Concert, the Entombment, and a Hallelujah Hymn. In the program notes Burke held in his hand while listening to the 1934 performance, musicologist Lawrence Gilman claimed, "the dynamic curve descends from the festive and happy Angelic Concert of the beginning to the quiet elegy of the Entombment, and then proceeds, after the music of the Saint's ordeal, to the concluding Hallelujah Hymn of the final visionary exaltation" (8). In Burke's interpretation of Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler* in his music review, these tonal images of paintings as well as the musical forms appeared to convey an "integrative" work that merged many ideologies under Nazism such as "German, archaic, devotional, and militaristic." Burke's experience of these music parlors caused him to reexamine and more fully join his own leftist music parlor of the mid-1930s.

Burke's Contribution to the 1930s Leftist Music Parlor

⁴¹ Further evidence of Hindemith's disapproval of the Nazi party can be found in the plot of the *Mathis der Maler* opera, which premiered four years later in Zurich, Switzerland. The protagonist of the opera, 16th century painter Matthias Grunewald, decides to give up painting and join the peasants in a revolt against those in power. Throughout the staging of the opera, Hindemith overtly indicts Nazi practices such as in Scene 4, where in a restaging of the Peasant's War of 1524, the federal army overpowers the peasant army and burns Lutheran literature, evoking the Nazi burning of "politically and morally un-German writings" (Kemp 30).

Following his encounter with the 1934 German music parlor in general and the *Mathis der Maler* symphony in particular, Burke returned to the leftist American music parlor in 1934 to directly advocate a multimodal approach when advancing ideological meanings through music. While many of Burke's reviews for *The Nation* focus on performances of European and Russian musical works, two of his *Nation* reviews ("A Most Useful Composition," and "A Bright Evening, with Musicians") primarily address his vision for music's role in advancing leftist ideas in 1930s American culture. These two reviews reveal Burke's direct engagement with the leftist music parlor in 1934 America, and Burke integrates ideas from these reviews into *Attitudes toward History*.

In his review of Harris's *A Song for Occupations* titled "A Most Useful Composition," Burke identifies rhetorical tactics at the intersection of music and lyrics. While Charles Seeger "debated the relative importance of music and language for promoting ideology and social change" (Pescatello) in the *Daily Worker*, Burke worked a similar angle in the *Nation*. Burke's music criticism appeared alongside advertisements for communist books such as *The New Road to Progress* by Samuel S. Schmalhausen, which claimed "the one effective remedy for all ills is communism" (Kirkpatrick), and next to articles by known socialist advocates such as "End Poverty in Civilization" by Upton Sinclair and "What Business Men Think: IV. See the New Deal Through!" by Edward A. Filene. Among these other writers, Burke describes his encounter with two very different musical works that lead him to identify rhetorical tactics in music that could advance Communist party ideology most effectively.

Harris's *A Song for Occupations*, performed by the Westminster Chorus at Carnegie Hall, was very much a product of the 1934 leftist American music parlor in which Burke participated. Though Harris was never officially involved in the Composers' Collective, his works integrated many of the ideas that Collective-affiliated composers used in their own compositions such as using worker-themed lyrics and a folk musical style. Through his close friendship with Aaron Copland, Harris similarly relied on incorporating folk musical forms with more intricate orchestrations. However, in contrast to Copland, Harris often privileged vocal symbolism over instrumental orchestrations. As a result, Harris was able to integrate lyrics into his compositions, preferring to use the words of Walt Whitman in many of his works.

In *A Song for Occupations*, Harris's use of the homophonic, declamatory style—a style in which two or more choral parts move together in harmony with identical rhythm—tends to accentuate the lyrics in his work. While musical recordings of *A Song for Occupations* are scarce, the 39-page musical score offers insight into the “socialistic emphasis” that Burke heard at the 1934 concert. With an estimated 15-minute performance time, the eight-part a cappella chorus of mixed voices begins grandly with every voice singing “a song for occupations” in rhythmic unison. Then, the rhythm of each vocal part slows from repetitive quarter notes to a half note over the short o sound in “song” and the long a sound in “occupations” much like the natural stress in each spoken word. This homophonic rhythm continues throughout the piece with lyrics such as “in the labor of engines and trades, and the labor of fields, I find the developments” (4-5) and “house-building,

measuring, sawing the boards, blacksmithing, glass-blowing, nail-making, coopering, tin-roofing, shingle-dressing, ship-joining, dock-building, fish-curing, the flagging of sidewalks by flaggers” (15-17).⁴² At various points in the work, the sopranos and altos move out of line with the tenors and basses, who repeat after the female vocalists. In other passages, each vocal part sings a solo, yet they all return to unison with other parts several bars later, emphasizing a socialistic appeal through unified melody. Throughout the work, Harris sets “prosody according to its natural speech inflection . . . mirroring the meanings of words and musical images” (Copland qtd. in Stehman 230). In his review of Harris’s work, Burke lauded the cooperation with which all voices enhance the socialistic meanings of Whitman’s lyrics: the words evoked images of an ideal socialist world, and the music helped to compliment the importance of socialistically focused words.

In his final review for the *Nation*, Burke examines a December 1935 concert and symposium of four speakers, which included collective-affiliated composers Aaron Copland, Henry Cowell, and Hans Eisler. Though the Composers’ Collective did not have the widespread influence on the masses as originally intended, they appeared to have influenced figures in the Communist party and left-leaning critics, including Kenneth Burke. As a music critic for the *Nation*, Burke was aware of the collective’s dispute between artistic merit and “singability” and was anxious to add his voice on the matter. At this symposium titled “Music in the Crisis,” which largely focused on the role of music and the music critic within society, speakers such as Eisler claimed “music itself must help in removing the crisis” (qtd. in “A Bright

⁴² Text of the entire lyrics can be found at the end of this chapter.

Evening” 27). Similarly, Copland advocated for a closer connection between music and society, arguing for new music “that is somehow an expression of the times” (qtd. in “A Bright Evening” 27).

Burke reviews each speaker at the “Music in Crisis” symposium, and his alignment or disagreement with each speaker in this review reveals his argument for a prominent role for both artist and critic in advocating leftist solutions. In advocating a role for the musician for inciting revolution, Burke appears to agree with both the necessity of Eisler’s view of musical “simplification in the interests of propaganda” (27) as well as Copland’s caution of musical oversimplification. Though Burke acknowledges the danger of Copland’s aim to uplift the musical tastes of the working class, which might relegate music into the realm of the music specialist, this cautious approach to social change, which Burke elaborates upon in *AtH*, appears to have been tempered by Burke’s participation in the 1934 German music parlor.

In addition, Burke shared the views of Charles Seeger and Elie Siegmeister—who published music criticism in the Communist Party’s *The Daily Worker* from January 1934 to November 1935 under the pseudonyms Carl Sands and L. E. Swift—that the critic should also have a role in advancing leftist ideology through music criticism. Together, these critics disagreed with Oscar Thompson, the second speaker of the symposium and music critic for the *New York Times*, who argued the critic must not represent “some group, some clique, some movement” (qtd. in “A Bright Evening” 27). In his review of the symposium, Burke characterizes Thompson as “impartial, aloof, and Olympian” (“A Bright Evening” 27), suggesting his own view that the music critic should also be involved in advancing ideology. Burke may have

agreed with Charles Seeger's aka Carl Sand's assertion in a January 1934 review for the *Daily Worker*, that "music is propaganda—always propaganda—and of the most powerful sort" (5). While Burke's attendance and review of this event represents his only public interaction with other members of the Composers' Collective, Burke indirectly engaged with the ideas of the collective in his two earlier reviews for *The Nation*. Burke would continue to elaborate upon his view of the role of the leftist artist and critic as well as his multimodal approach in his next major work *Attitudes toward History*.

Summary *Attitudes toward History*

In May 1934, Burke began thinking of ideas that would later find their way into *Attitudes toward History*, a book that, I argue, builds upon and responds to Burke's experiences in the leftist and German music parlors. This summary examines the main arguments of *AtH* in order to revisit how these ideas were influenced by Burke's work as a music critic for the *Nation*. The book, which was financed by a Guggenheim award in March 1935, "grew out of and attempted to amend his associations within the committed leftist political community" (George and Selzer 142). Though many, including Burke, call *Attitudes toward History* published in 1937 a sequel to *Permanence and Change* published in 1935, Burke later claims *AtH* is a "revision" of *P&C* in his afterword to the 3rd edition of *AtH* (377). I argue that Burke's aim in each work differs slightly as he attempts to both appease those in the leftist political community and head off undesirable fascist uses of "pure art" in musical symbolism. This difference in aim is Burke's shift from theorizing "ideal communication" as he did in *P&C* to examining "actual human

interaction” in *AtH*, dealing, as he says in the introduction, “with the characteristic responses of people in their forming and reforming of congregations” (n.p.).

Attitudes toward History is divided into three main parts: Part 1 “Acceptance and Rejection,” Part 2 “The Curve of History,” and Part 3 “Analysis of Symbolic Structure.” In Part 1, Burke outlines a method of approaching the structures of symbolism through an examination of various literary categories. In particular, Burke examines poetic genres such as tragedy, comedy, humor, elegy, satire, burlesque, etc. to show how literary genres can embody an attitude through acceptance, rejection, or even indifference. Burke’s use of these literary genres, as George and Selzer claim, suggests Burke was developing his theory of “dramatism [in *AtH*] without explicitly explaining and arguing for his methodology in a sustained way” (160), and Part 1 appears to use dramatism as a method for analyzing attitudes. As Burke says in the Introduction, in Part 2, he “seeks to chart the over-all problems with merger and division” (n.p.) by tracing actual historical developments in western culture—the “curve of history.” Part 2 delivers on Burke’s goal to shift from theorizing “ideal communication” toward examining “actual human interactions” by examining “Christian Evangelism,” “Mediaeval Synthesis,” “Protestant Transition,” and “Naïve Capitalism.” Following these subsections of Part 2, Burke, in an attempt to mend relationships with those on the left, aligns most fully with communism in the section “Emergent Collectivism,” which leads to his final section “Comic Correctives.”

In Part 3, Burke examines the “General Nature of Ritual” and develops an alphabetical list of theoretical ideas within his “Dictionary of Pivotal Terms.” In this

section Burke most fully examines the need for a constant “symbolic tinkering” on the part of the artist in order to bridge the vast chasm between private experience and social norms. In order for artists to communicate, they must first integrate the various attitudes of an audience to construct a “symbolic synthesis.” An audience’s attitudes or sub-identities reject or align with symbols, and Burke uses this section to show how a writer, artist, critic, or even musician might synthesize these multiple sub-identities to create a symbolic merger with an audience. To do so, Burke claims the artist must go through “a kind of ‘parting with,’ or symbolic ‘dying,’ when the ‘implicitly imaginative’ attains its ‘explicit bureaucratization’ in public materials” (197-8). In other words, for communication or symbolic merging to take place, which appears to be Burke’s renewed aim in this work, the artist must emphasize previously bureaucratized symbols (familiar musical forms, words, images, etc.) alongside neologisms or even new musical forms such as the twelve-tone technique.

Furthermore, Burke addresses the ambiguities of symbolism within Part 3 by examining the (over)reaction of Russian critics to Shostakovich’s opera *Lady Macbeth of Mzensk*, a work he also reviewed for the *Nation*. Responding to this particular situation in which Russian critics derided the opera for proletarian symbolism, Burke classifies some musicians as specialists who often “may develop his trade to the point where he does not communicate to the musical layman” (187). In *Attitudes toward History*, Burke argues that the specialist who uses highly ambiguous and often misunderstood artistic symbols may eventually lack the ability to communicate. For the specialist to effectively create symbolic mergers, he must symbolize in the realm of the propagandist who uses less ambiguous,

bureaucratized symbols to communicate. Burke's solution is a symbolic synthesis of the artist's specialist symbols with the bureaucratized symbols that can more effectively create accurate symbolic mergers. In short, as he suggests in his review of Roy Harris's *A Song for Occupations*, Burke argues for music with words for the purposes of propaganda. Though Burke rarely displays intolerance for ambiguity, his primary aim in the pre-war 1930s was to use just enough ambiguity to persuade an audience to join the socialist cause in America.

Burke's Reviews and Multimodality

Burke's music reviews in late 1934 illustrate his aim to use both musical and linguistic modalities to persuade an audience to embrace a socialist perspective. In the opening chapter to part 3 of *AtH*, Burke acknowledges the challenge of using music to persuade by nodding to the dualistic nature of all humans, existing in corresponding states of sleeping and waking. Drawing on psychoanalysis, Burke claims "man is 'dualistic' at least in the sense that his sleeping self is radically dissociated from his waking self. Each morning and each night, he crosses and recrosses a threshold, thereby changing his identity" (180). Having just encountered the *Mathis der Maler* symphony alongside the 1934 German music scene, Burke witnessed how music as a symbol system could tap into an audience's "sleeping" self, gaining acceptance from a variety of audience members. In CS, Burke claims "the audience . . . dreams, while the artist oversees the conditions which determine this dream" (36). Within German instrumental music, which uses only the musical modality, Burke witnessed the increased capacity for an audience to receive music in this dream-like state whereas Harris's *A Song for Occupations* provided both

music and words to reach an audience through the waking and sleeping self, crossing and recrossing from dreaming to awareness in one symbolic synthesis. Contrary to fascist uses of musical symbolism for propaganda, Burke advocates the use of musical and linguistic modalities, which becomes, I argue, Kenneth Burke's multimodal approach for advancing leftist ideas.

Furthermore, Burke's encounter with "A Song for Occupations," I argue, led to his most thorough exploration of the intersection between linguistic and aural symbolism, which he expanded upon in the first edition of *AtH*. Recent multimodal theorists such as Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen provide a useful terminological framework for discussing Burke's theory as a contribution to contemporary multimodal theory. This section will use Kress's and Van Leeuwen's definition of multimodality—"the use of several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event, together with the particular way in which these modes are combined" (20)—to explore how Burke's contribution can be useful to present day multimodal theorists. Kress and Van Leeuwen provide three ways in which modes combine: 1) by reinforcing each other; 2) by fulfilling complementary roles; or 3) by hierarchical ordering. Burke's multimodal approach in "A Song for Occupations" emphasizes the second way, by arguing that musical symbolism should complement words or lyrics when advancing leftist ideals. In addition, Burke appears to anticipate the powerful rhetorical impact of multimodal meaning well before the New London Group⁴³ claimed in 1996 that multimodal meaning "is the most significant [symbolization], as it relates all the other modes in quite

⁴³ The New London Group consisted of Courtney Cazden, Bill Cope, Norman Fairclough, Jim Gee, Mary Kalantzis, Gunther Kress, Allan Luke, Carmen Luke, Sarah Michaels, and Martin Nakata.

remarkably dynamic relationships” (80). In the face of fascist uses of music, Burke acknowledged the significance for multimodal meaning to create a symbolic synthesis of modes.

While Burke gives both Hindemith’s and Harris’s works favorable reviews, he claims that Harris’s piece is the most ideal combination of musical and linguistic symbols because each modality helps to effectively persuade an audience to a socialist perspective. As a result, Burke’s review of Harris’s work becomes more concerned with analyzing the usefulness of *A Song for Occupations* for the purposes of forwarding a socialistic ideology in contrast with the Nazi fascism Burke claims to discover in *Mathis der Maler*. Ultimately, these reviews provide differing examples of how musical symbols can both conceal and enhance ideological symbols of authority through what Burke calls “the deviousness of musical symbolism” (“Hindemith Does His Part” 488). In this final section, I examine Burke’s music reviews to reveal his early approach to identification within musical symbolism, his multimodal approach to musical audiences, and his view of the importance of aurality in linguistic symbolism.

Identification/Integration

From the beginning of Burke’s entry on “Identity, Identification” in his “Dictionary of Pivotal Terms” in *AtH*, Burke addresses “disastrous identifications” such as “the normal tendency of Germans, for instance, to identify themselves with Hitler” (263). With the German music and political scene weighing heavily on his mind, Burke claims “all the issues with which we have been concerned come to a head in the problem of identity” (263). Burke views identification as central to

creating mergers and divisions between an individual and society; an individual may merge with or divide from society through identification. However, with music as the source for creating identification as in Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler* symphony, Burke abandons his proletarian avant-garde approach from *Permanence and Change*.

Burke's *Mathis der Maler* review provides insight into his early development of identification⁴⁴ as a tool for bridging conflicting attitudes without resolving conflict. Hindemith's work integrates four differing attitudes to conceal the underlying Nazi ideology of the work, combining musical symbols that appeal to Nazism and pre-Nazi Germany. Burke concludes that the work "seems fully to sum up the requirements of the German psyche at the moment" (488) because its musical symbolism integrates four key attitudes in the Nazi frame of acceptance: German, archaic, devotional, and militaristic. According to Burke, each of the represented attitudes within the work merge or bridge conflicting orientations in pre-war Nazi Germany. In this work, Burke witnesses the ability of musical form to bridge disparate identities, to create identification between conflicting attitudes without resolving conflict. For instance, Burke claims Hitler's Nazi orientation was at conflict with the religious orientation of German pastors. By employing various types of musical forms commonly associated with a devotional attitude shared by Nazis and pastors such as the Gregorian chant used in the first movement, Hindemith subtly identifies religious attitudes with Nazi attitudes.

⁴⁴ While Burke initially developed the idea of identification in his 1931 article "Boring from Within," he first elaborates on the concept in *Attitudes toward History* in his "Dictionary of Pivotal Terms."

Burke contends that Hindemith's work effectively creates identification between a wide variety of German values and coordinates these values under Nazism using specific rhetorical forms. Hindemith repeated, reiterated, or reinvented classical and romantic musical forms in the *Mathis der Maler* symphony to pay homage to his Austro-German musical heritage. However, Burke claims that *Mathis der Maler* exhibits German and archaic musical forms as a way to bridge conflicting political orientations in pre-war Nazi Germany. Burke claims that Hindemith successfully retains his "archaistic mannerisms . . . without the earlier effrontery" (488) of his previous works, and *Mathis der Maler* can be more fully identified with "the period of German decadence preceding the Hitlerite 'sanitation'" (487). Nazi German music critics such as the one cited at the beginning of Burke's review believed Hindemith must undergo a psychological conversion and purification to accept Hitler's state. This advocated conversion might require Hindemith to abandon his Austro-German musical heritage by avoiding the "archaic," "German" musical forms and inventing new Nazi musical forms. However, Burke asserts that Hindemith's integration of pre-Nazi German musical forms (German and archaic) with forms that advocate the current Nazi ideology (devotional and militaristic) represents a much more "devious" symbolism because audiences with differing ideologies merge without resolving important conflicting ideas. Burke claims that Hindemith's integration of these four musical forms into one symbolic synthesis allows him to "integrate a political attitude which requires disintegration" (488). In other words, Hindemith's work uses musical symbols to obscure important differences that should be acknowledged instead of uniting those

ideological differences under one work of art. In the end, Burke claims that all good art should have a coordinating capacity, but Hindemith's work dangerously coordinates values that Nazi supporters and detractors share while concealing the economic and racial divisions that were the epitome of Nazi ideology.

Prior to the debut of *Mathis der Maler*, Hindemith's previous work was already identified as German and archaic, but Hindemith most fully adopted the classical and romantic styles of his musical ancestors in this work. The musical forms within Hindemith's work were most notable for their "symptomatic qualities and for the bold polyphonic shapes" (488).

In other words, many of the instrumental parts of the work resisted rhythmic similarities, moving independently in polyphonic rhythm. In addition to the similarities in musical form with previous classical and romantic Austro-German works, Burke claims that Hindemith's work



Figure 3.2

creates identification with his audience through archaic and German attitudes. (see figure 3.2). Hindemith's use of the ancient paintings by Matthias Grunewald as the subject of his work allows his audience to identify with an archaic frame of acceptance. Thus, the thematic elements of the paintings become thematic elements within the musical symbolism of the three movements. As Burke describes *Mathis der Maler* in contrast with Roy Harris's *A Song for Occupations* in the second review, he claims that each movement of Hindemith's work "is a contrapuntal projection of

that profound but ominous trinity—hymn, lullaby, and military march” (719). The first movement of *Mathis der Maler* uses Grunewald’s painting the “Concert of Angels” as inspiration, where Grunewald “contrives to make song pour forth with the profusion of a heavy rain” (488). Hindemith’s second movement focuses closely on Grunewald’s painting the “Entombment,” which as Burke describes, accentuates the grief of “mourners with unpleasantly distorted faces, a piteously maltreated and drooping corpse, a rectangular sarcophagus with sharp lines indifferent to the modulations of the body, a sparse and desolate landscape in dull light” (488). The second movement is equally gloomy, evoking the archaic emotions conveyed through the painting of the 14th-century altarpiece as well as the archaic emotions felt by those mourning the death of Christ. The third and final movement is based on Grunewald’s “Temptation of Saint Anthony,” which, Burke says, “discloses the typical religious dualism” (488). The painting contrasts the apocalyptic visions of beasts engulfing Saint Anthony on earth with images of clouds and golden pillars at the gates of Heaven said to represent Saint Anthony’s reward for enduring the torture of the gnashing, clawing beasts. Since Hindemith’s symphony was inspired by Grunewald’s 14th-century painting, the musical forms in all three movements compel a German audience to identify with archaic forms of art.

In addition to the two attitudes Hindemith’s work already exhibits—German and archaic—Burke claims that *Mathis der Maler* also integrates two attitudes not typically found in a Hindemith composition: devotional and militaristic. According to Burke, the *Mathis der Maler* symphony exhibits a devotional attitude through the hymn qualities of the first movement, which is based on Grunewald’s “Concert of

Angels” painting. Hindemith “is prompt to draw upon the hymnal for its obviously associational effects” (488) though Burke concedes that other Hindemith adherents might disagree. For Burke, Hindemith’s use of the hymn form creates a “fusion of religious and nationalistic attitudes” (488), creating identification between two ideologies that Hitler struggled to bring together. Furthermore, Burke declares that Hindemith establishes a militaristic attitude through the third and final movement, which is based upon the “Temptation of Saint Anthony.” While the thematic focus of the music is on the religious conflict between good and evil in the painting, Burke claims the movement has been reimagined “in secular music-drama: the battlefield of tonal conflicts above which some favored theme of the composer eventually proclaims itself victorious” (488). At the end of the movement, Hindemith’s preferred musical theme, a final devotional hallelujah “blared by the brasses” (488), triumphs over the other conflicting tonalities. As the Nazis beat the drum to war, Burke sees Hindemith’s piece as a representation of their militaristic attitude.⁴⁵ While this militaristic element may have been present as a result of Hindemith’s experience as a bass drum player for the German regimental band during WWI, Burke’s interpretation points out the possible uses for Nazi propaganda.

My analysis of Burke’s review reveals a second term that emerges when using *identification* to theorize musical symbolism: *integration*. As Burke describes in *A Rhetoric of Motives*, “identification implies division” (45), yet in musical symbolism, as detailed in *Attitudes toward History*, “there is no ‘no’” (22). Similarly in his 1933 essay “The Nature of Art Under Capitalism,” Burke claims “‘pure’ art

⁴⁵ Weeks before Burke attended the concert, Hitler had violated the treaty of Versailles by creating a German air force and by expanding the German army and navy.

tends to promote a state of acceptance” (320). As a result of his analysis in this review, Burke realizes that pure art and instrumental music lack a negative, lack the ability to create division within that symbol system.⁴⁶ Therefore, music and other so-called “pure” art forms rely on other less ambiguous symbol systems such as words to create division, so identification can take place. Without these other modes of symbolization, music creates integration instead, merging a variety of musical forms and the many disparate experiences they represent for an audience into one symbolic synthesis. Burke’s advocacy of combining words with music should not be misunderstood as intolerance for ambiguity. Instead, Burke’s review of Hindemith suggests that the musical mode provides necessary ambiguity for the linguistic mode in order for persuasion to take place. Similarly, words function in the other way to limit ambiguity and communicate more specifically as a compliment to music.

While Burke praises the rhetorical function of integration within artistic symbol systems, he’s also wary of the ideology which integration is used to support. The four attitudes exhibited in this piece—German, archaic, devotional, and militaristic—represent conflicting attitudes within Nazi Germany at the time, but Burke claims that Hindemith’s work effectively integrates these four attitudes into a cohesive and coordinated whole. For Burke, within a fascist state, “where there is need of revolution, it is not until the revolution has occurred that the integrative function of art can fully operate without tending to obscure issues and alignments that should be sharpened” (488). Rather than reveal the distinctions in diverse

⁴⁶ In chapter four, I examine the lack of a negative in nonlinguistic symbol systems such as music in depth.

attitudes within pre-war Nazi Germany, Burke claims that Hindemith's instrumental work unites these attitudes by concealing their important differences. As the final movement of the piece enacts the militaristic war between tonalities, all four attitudes are united in the triumph of the brass finale, silencing the German, archaic, and devotional attitudes in favor of the victorious military state.

Participant/Receptive Audience

In addition to Burke's analysis of the integrative function of music in his review of Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler*, Burke addresses the issue of passive, receptive audiences in his review of Harris's "A Song for Occupations." Even with lyrics, music continues to possess the characteristic of luring an audience into inattention, and Burke expands upon the importance of multimodality for audience engagement in his review of Harris's "A Song for Occupations." Burke's attention to audience response, as in his review of Schönberg, demonstrates his attention to rhetorical matters unlike many music critics of the time. Burke viewed "A Song for Occupations" as a work that not only advocated a socialistic ideology but also one that compelled the audience to participate in art. In his review, Burke characterizes two kinds of audiences that emerged in the 1930s: a participant audience and a receptive audience. According to Burke, a receptive audience often fosters the "amuse-me-or-off-with-your-head attitude" while the participant audience appears willing to take part in the work, identifying with the lyrics and musical symbolism. Burke appears to have encountered both kinds of audiences while attending performances in the 1930s, and Harris's piece, a purely a cappella work that emphasized both aural and linguistic modes, elicited greater participation from an

audience than instrumental music. Burke claims art that restores this participant function helps to remake “our whole philosophy and methodology of living” (720) into a socialistic and cooperative society, and “A Song for Occupations” provided a more “useful” way to communicate with a participant audience by combining the formal symbols used in music with the informational symbols used in words.

Richard Lanham, author of the multimodal-focused collection of essays *The Electronic Word*, helps to further illuminate Burke’s conception of audience psychology based on the form/information pair, which Burke originally developed in *Counter-Statement*. In *The Electronic Word*, in which Lanham voices his hope that electronic text will engender “a theory of prose style as radical artifice rather than native transparency” (9), Lanham theorizes an AT/THROUGH oscillation in electronic text, where looking closely “AT” the radical artifice on the “stylistic surface” of a symbol is as important as looking transparently “THROUGH” the symbol to the informative meaning. For Burke, form and information functioned similarly to the way Lanham describes the electronic text almost 70 years later; musical form causes an audience to observe “AT” or hear the stylistic surface while informational appeals emphasize hearing “THROUGH” to the information.

Within his review of “A Song for Occupations,” Burke describes how musical forms in Harris’s work complimented, as Kress and Van Leeuwen describe, informative appeals of Whitman’s words, creating an oscillation between the familiar, “bureaucratized” symbols of words and the unfamiliar, “imaginative” symbols of musical form. This back-and-forth oscillation between familiar and unfamiliar symbols not only creates a heightened awareness of the musical form

within the audience but also allows Harris to tap in to the audience's sleeping and waking selves. Since, as Burke claims, Harris leaned more heavily on linguistic symbols, the work was able to more fully communicate with the non-music specialist while creating a multimodal appeal through art. Harris's work resembled the workers' songs circulating through the Composers' Collective at the time and other leftist circles through worker's lyrics, and it provided a propagandistic message that advanced Burke's socialist ideas through engaging a participant audience. Burke claims, "Harris's new work goes far toward restoring the participant function of audiences as distinct from a merely receptive one. And it probably does so precisely because of its anchorage to Whitman" (720).

For Burke, a participant or a receptive audience is directly connected with the composer's choice to use vocal symbols or instrumental symbols. In interpreting a purely instrumental work lacking linguistic symbolism, Burke misunderstood Hindemith's intentions in the *Mathis der Maler* symphony as he maintained that Hindemith intended to advocate a Nazi ideology. Regardless of whether or not Burke recognized this as a misinterpretation of Hindemith's intention once he discovered further biographical evidence⁴⁷, he makes clear in his review of "A Song for Occupations" that tonal symbolism alone is too ambiguous for advocating an ideology. Since Hindemith's work relied only on instruments, the linguistic mode was unavailable to him as a composer, and his work as pure art would only attract a receptive audience. As a result of this realization, Burke argues that musical

⁴⁷ Burke owned a copy of Hindemith's 1937 work *The Craft of Musical Composition: Book I Theoretical Part*, in which Hindemith explains his rationale for integrating familiar musical forms in his works. I have yet to discover evidence that Burke commented further on Hindemith's "MAthis der Maler" after reading this work or listening to the "MAthis der Maler" opera.

symbolism “must be purely preparatory and subservient to vocal affirmation” (720). In other words, Burke shifts his focus from theorizing the purely formal appeals of tonal logic to advocating the use of linguistic symbolism alongside aural symbolism when forwarding an ideology. For instance, a photograph might be too ambiguous to articulate an intended ideology, so the photographer includes a caption with words in order to complement the intended meaning in the image. This multimodal approach anchors ambiguous tonal symbols with less ambiguous linguistic symbols and draws a participant audience for advancing appropriate leftist ideals.

Imageword/Soundword

From the opening title of his review, “A Most Useful Composition,” Burke lauds Harris’s work as a strong example for coordinating both lyrical and tonal/rhythmic symbols for advancing a preferred ideology. As Burke examines Harris’s ability to combine Walt Whitman’s lyrics with appropriate rhythms and tonalities to enhance the rhetorical appeal of the work, he also recognizes the integral function that sound offers for linguistic symbols. While, as Burke claims, the work gains a socialistic emphasis from “Whitman’s generous catalogue of efforts and tools,” the work benefits most from Harris’s “musical magnification of the fluencies inherent in the poet’s syllables” (719). For Burke, the combination of linguistic symbols with musical symbols provides the most “useful” form of ideological symbolism because each mode compliments the other. Burke praised Harris’s technique of enhancing ideologically laden linguistic symbols through the natural sounds of the words, most likely propelling him into a further investigation of the sounds of words in the first edition of *Attitudes toward History*.

Burke most fully examines the intersection between aural and linguistic lyrics in his definition of “Cues” from the first edition of *AtH*’s “Dictionary of Pivotal Terms,” a section that provides a more explicit description of Burke’s early approach to multimodality. In this section, Burke fully aligns himself with Richard Paget’s gesture speech theory, which holds that the origins of language might be traced back to “‘gestures’ of the throat, mouth, and tongue” (238). Burke originally outlines his support for Paget’s theory in *Auscultation, Creation, and Revision* and further claims in the third edition of *AtH* that Paget’s book *Human Speech* is “the perfect physiological counterpart to a ‘Dramatistic’ theory of language” (238). Burke devotes 30 pages to his definition of “Cues” in his first edition, but he later cut 23 pages in this section for the second edition of *AtH*⁴⁸. That means the currently read third edition of *AtH* does not contain some of Burke’s most useful comments on the importance of the aural symbols in words, which I will discuss at length in chapter four. In both the first and third editions of *AtH*, Burke claims when an “author selects one word rather than another because it ‘sounds better’ to him, his choice is guided by ‘overtones’” (3rd ed, 237). He then goes on in the first edition to “track down, as an experiment, the emotional overtones that might be lurking behind [his] preference for the word ‘comic’” (84). His exploration of the emotional overtones of words largely attempts to account for sound as a vital element of a word that also creates symbolic mergers.

⁴⁸ It’s not clear exactly why Burke chose to cut from this section, but it’s possible that Burke was responding to Margaret Schlauch’s review of the first edition of *AtH*. As a linguist, Schlauch largely disagreed with Burke’s and Paget’s assertion that language emerged as a result of sound gestures.

Burke's investigation of sound in both his review of "A Song for Occupations" and in the first edition of *Attitudes toward History* reveals a theory of language that elevates the aural mode alongside the linguistic mode. Multimodal scholar Kristie Fleckenstein's concept of "imageword" provides a useful way to understand Burke's view of sound as a central element in creating symbolic mergers. In *Embodied Literacies*, Fleckenstein claims "images of sound, movement, taste, touch, and smell" (3) are inextricably fused with words. That is, words offer a "double vision" because they symbolize at both the linguistic level as well as the image level. Fleckenstein claims this creates a "doubling of embodiment as both incarnation and unification, the doubling of image and word" (4). Like Fleckenstein, Burke views linguistic symbolism as a heterogeneous mixture of visual and aural meanings alongside linguistic meanings.

Fleckenstein's term "imageword" provides a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of language and thought by focusing on image, and in order to more specifically focus on a Burkean theory of aural symbolism, I propose the term "soundword." For Burke, the sound of a word is tightly fused with meanings that may coincide or even differ from the actual linguistic meaning. For instance, Burke speculates at length in the first edition of *AtH* about key terms he has chosen for his theoretical works. He wonders if his key terms "like 'metaphor,' 'mysticism,' and 'magic' might be food-and-mother words" (89) because the "m" sound gravitates towards maternal feelings from the word "mama." Burke claims "the 'essential genius' of 'm,' for instance, might very properly center in the first 'occupation' of the infant, which is that of sucking at the breast" (89). Though he admits that this

example may be somewhat trivial, he claims that the sounds of words can provide the audience with a complimentary meaning that a poet is trying to convey. With word and sound fused together, Burke provides an explanation of meanings that both critic and artist should consider.

Additionally in the “Cues” section, Burke emphasizes “identification” as an integral element of aural symbolism when paired with words, providing a basis for a “soundword” approach to identification. Burke speculates that he chose the key term “comic” in *AtH* because he “identifies” the sound with the last name of his “sparring partner Malcolm Cowley” as well as with his own first name *Kenneth* (*AtH* II 85). In Burke’s definition of “identification” in *RM*, he claims, “you persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, *identifying* your ways with his” (55). Burke first claims that “tonality” is a key element of identification in his comic-Cowley-Kenneth example. In *Rhetorical Bodies*, Debra Hawhee, who examines the Burke/Paget connection in the first edition of *AtH* claims “identification, so frequently figured by scholars as a sheerly social formation, first presented itself to Burke as an alliance formed between sounds made through similar laryngeal postures, or through physical mimesis” (117). Burke continues to list the various identifications he makes with the hard “c” sound to elaborate on how other poets might create extralinguistic meaning. In contrast to his earlier assertion, Burke recalls an incident in public school when his teacher claimed the hard “c” was “pronounced as though you had a fishbone caught in the throat and were trying to cough it up (a variant of ‘gagging’)” (*AtH* II 84). Again, while Burke claims these may be “tenuous examples,” he is

merely trying to “indicate, by various kinds of evidence, the ways in which ‘symbolic mergers’ occur” (87).

Burke develops this “multimodal” approach to symbols in order to equip socialist propagandists. Burke argued that the propagandist should remain aware that his symbols “must and do synthesize a whole infinity of ingredients” (*AtH* II 110). With the escalation of German aggression in Europe, Burke appeared to be startled by the strategy of many propagandists that create “thin” symbols that are “more like the symbols of a filing system than the symbols of the ‘linguistic dance’” (110). While he claims that many poets such as E. E. Cummings, “who thinks of his poetry as the *opposite* of over-simplified propaganda, can be shown to exemplify his own peculiar variant of the ‘didactic’ weakness” (111), he warned that the propagandist should proceed with the notion that their symbols “‘radiate’ in many directions” (109). While Burke embraced ambiguity in certain contexts, the socio-political context in 1934 caused him to argue for the complementary use of musical and linguistic modes of meaning in his review of “A Song for Occupations.”

While Burke does not provide specific examples from his review of “A Song for Occupations” in which sound and word combine to emphasize dual modes of meaning in the work, he claims the work is “the most satisfying amalgamation of tonal and ideological symbolism” (719). Had Burke provided examples of soundwords from the work, he might have pointed to the socialistic emphasis of the lyrics and vocal rhythms on page 8, which more fully emphasize the word “women” over the word “men.” With the passage of the nineteenth amendment only fourteen years earlier, which allowed women in the United States the right to vote, Harris’s

lyrics and vocal rhythms attempted to bring socialistic equality to women in the work by focusing on them.

8
Poco meno mosso ♩ = 86-92

mf Souls of men and wo - men,
mf Souls of men and wo - men,
mf Souls of men and
mf Souls of men and

40

p Souls of men and wo - men!
p Souls of men and wo - men!
p men and wo - men!
p men and wo - men!

p Souls of
p Souls of
p Souls of
p Souls of

Figure 3.3

In this section of “A Song for Occupations,” Harris uses the lyrics “Souls of men and women” to convey an emphasis on the word “women.” Not only do the male vocal parts emphasize the first syllable in the word “women” through a quarter note after a string of eighth notes but also most male parts shift to a higher tone on that syllable. Following this, the sopranos sing the same lyrics beginning with a string of quarter notes and slowing to two half notes on the word “women.” The altos follow suit one measure later. For Burke, the repetitive form of the first four words “souls of men and” sets up the possibility for the emphasis on the word “women.” Though in the lyrics alone the word “women” appears to hold equal weight, Harris’s

rhythmic and tonal choices emphasize women to provide the socialistic meaning Burke admired in one soundword.

Conclusion

As Burke negotiated the financial and political uncertainty of 1934, he realized that the political climate called for a much different approach to aesthetics. After shifting his attention from modernism to the political realities of America's financial crisis, Burke continued to emphasize a proletarian avant-garde approach when advocating leftist ideas, an approach that integrated modernist art for socialist purposes. However, after finally taking stock of the fascist turn in Nazi Germany as a result of his engagement with the 1934 German music parlor, Burke realized that in this context music and words needed to complement each other to advance a socialist ideology. While Burke embraced ambiguity in linguistic and nonlinguistic symbols, the political and social context of 1934 caused him to advocate a multimodal approach to symbols that provided the ability to "communicate."

While the propagandist may want to emphasize an informational quality within his or her work, Burke argues that he or she must also pay attention to the aesthetic appeals of the sounds and rhythms of words in order to use the aural mode as a compliment to the linguistic mode. In the 1930s context, Burke argues shy of trying to describe the correlation between music and meaning largely because these connections between thought and language are based on individual experience and are typically ambiguous. To return to Burke's form/information pair from *Counter-Statement*, Burke viewed music as a medium where formal appeals dominate. As a result, audiences typically deemphasize informational appeals in

instrumental music, but vocal music often balances form and information due to the added linguistic element of lyrics. Because music adds ambiguity and lyrics provide more direct informational appeal, audiences are more likely to be persuaded of the lyrics because the musical form lulls an audience to sleep and catches the audience at their weakest. Though ambiguous instrumental music such as Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler* symphony can cause much confusion, vocal music can harness ambiguity through multiple modes, emphasizing form and information through sounds and words. Ultimately, Burke embraced multimodal symbolism—music with lyrics—in this situation because the various modes provided a rich symbolization in a time when he needed to communicate what he was trying to say.

This leads Burke to cultivate a theory of language that accounts for multiple modalities within symbols. Though it would take Burke over 25 years to develop this theory of language, he eventually comes to the realization that the capacity for language also involves the symbolic systems of music as well as painting, sculpture, architecture, mathematics, dance, etc. This is the subject of my fourth chapter. As Burke attempted to develop this theory of language following his review of “A Song for Occupations,” he was met with resistance from a variety of philosophical and linguistic corners. However, this resistance also provides a rich and insightful language theory for current scholars of phenomenology and multimodality.

Ch. 4 Burke's Aural Rhetoric

*"But I have here been offering coordinates for the analysis of musicality pure and simple, without concern for the possible expressionistic relation between certain types of tonal gesturing and certain types of attitude...though I shall fight shy of expressionistic correlations for the present" (378).
Kenneth Burke
"Musicality in Verse"*

*"Persuasion cannot be confined to the strictly verbal; it is a mixture of symbolism and definite empirical operations" (161).
Kenneth Burke
A Rhetoric of Motives*

After the publication of *Attitudes toward History*, Burke's focus shifted into the realm of war as Japan invaded China in 1937, Italy invaded Ethiopia in 1937, Germany invaded Poland in 1939, and Japan attacked the United States at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. These war years sidetracked Burke's aim to develop a comprehensive theory of language that included nonlinguistic symbols found in music, dance, painting, sculpture, and even architecture. Instead, during and after the war, Burke examined primarily linguistic symbols such as in his analysis of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, "The Rhetoric of Hitler's 'Battle.'" Though Burke remained largely focus on the linguistic mode in *A Grammar of Motives*, Burke's review and inclusion of Ernst Cassirer's phenomenological approach to language from *Myth of the State* in *A Rhetoric of Motives* would provide inspiration for Burke to wrestle with a theory of aurality that avoided reliance on linguistic modes of meaning—a

theory first presented in his 1961 correspondence with Italian American composer Louis Calabro.⁴⁹

I examine a handful of reviews, archival documents, and lesser-known articles by Burke in this chapter to argue that Burke worked to integrate nonlinguistic symbols into his schema of dramatism and logology without relying on linguistic symbols for meaning with varying degrees of success. In order to examine the evolution of Burke's theory of language that accounted for nonlinguistic symbols, I will focus on three important sound-focused parlors. The first important parlor is Burke's exchange with Margaret Schlauch, who wrote a negative review of *Attitudes toward History*. Burke included over 30 pages in his first edition of *Attitudes toward History* that focused on the sounds of words, and Schlauch largely rejected Burke's attempts to theorize the meanings of sound. The second important parlor is Burke's encounter with Ernst Cassirer's phenomenological theory of language, which he details in *A Rhetoric of Motives*. This encounter leads Burke to return to important theories about rhetorical form and the importance of sensory experiences when theorizing music. Finally, the third parlor and source of the most significant evidence of Burke's discussion of music and rhetoric is his correspondence with Louis Calabro, a music professor and colleague of Burke's at Bennington College. In a series of letters, Burke claims that music is based on a system or language. In Burke's most substantial investigation of music since his music reviews in the 1930s, he makes the case for a rhetorical approach to sound

⁴⁹ In contrast to positivist approaches to language, which treat sensory experiences as empirical data, a phenomenological approach values an individual's consciousness and personal experience when interpreting the symbolic elements of language (Eagleton). This focus more fully accounts for the importance of sensory experience within language practices.

that coincides with much of his theories of dramatism, dialectic, and logology. Taken together, these three rhetorical parlors reveal a Burkean theory of aural rhetoric.

Following my examination of these music parlors, I propose three Burkean principles of aural rhetoric:

1. Nonlinguistic symbols articulate ideologies through rhetorical form
2. Nonlinguistic symbols connote meaning through functioning as what Burke calls a *title* in his theory of *logology*
3. Nonlinguistic symbols, which rarely symbolize using the negative, participate in higher orders of language such as the dialectic and ultimate order through relying on linguistic symbols or utilizing rhetorical form

These three principles represent Burke's struggle in later works on language theory to include nonlinguistic symbols. Throughout this chapter, I will more explicitly align Kenneth Burke's language theory with those of Ernst Cassirer and Susanne Langer in order to construct a Burkean theory of language that includes, as Burke claims, "the ability to behave with other such arbitrary, conventional symbol systems as dance, music, sculpture, painting, and architecture" ("In Retrospective Prospect" 295). As Burke looked back at his own work on symbolic action late in life, he saw the need to frame his work with this statement.

In order to recreate Burke's music parlors as a contribution to his theory of language, I will investigate the "Cues" section of the first edition of *Attitudes toward History* (largely omitted in later editions), Schlauch's review of *Attitudes toward*

History, Burke's 1938 University of Chicago course on Coleridge, Burke's review of Ernst Cassirer's *The Myth of the State*, and his 1961 correspondence with Louis Calabro. These texts reveal the continued struggle, as I discussed in Chapter three, to develop a comprehensive theory of language, which included linguistic symbols alongside images, sounds, movements, etc. At various points in his development of a language theory, Burke was chastised, criticized, or discredited by a variety of theorists, which caused him to conduct this work on the margins. My aim in this chapter is to amplify these lesser-known Burkean ideas to more fully understand and come to terms with a comprehensive view of Burke's theory of language.

Burke's Dustup with Margaret Schlauch

A handful of events beginning in 1937 and later in 1946 and 1961 contributed to Burke's evolution of a theory of aural rhetoric. The first of these events is Burke's encounter with Marxist critic Margaret Schlauch in 1937-8, which likely caused Burke to take out over twenty-three pages of material for his later editions of *Attitudes toward History*. As I discussed in chapter three, Burke narrows his multimodal focus to the interplay between music and words in 1934 largely because of the dire socio-political context in which he was writing. This first section examines Burke's further hesitance to theorize nonlinguistic modalities apart from words following the publication of *AtH* as a result of the harsh critical reviews he faced in the wake of the book's publication. In tracing Burke's initial word-focused theory of multimodality, I argue that Burke's approach evolved to more fully include and value nonlinguistic forms of meaning in later works. Schlauch's highly critical review of *Attitudes toward History* in 1937 and Burke's response titled "Twelve

Propositions” in early 1938 draw attention to two important sound-focused aspects of Burke’s development of a language theory: 1) his methodological disagreement with other Marxist critics—a division that provided Burke with the means to integrate multiple modes of symbolism—and 2) his tendency to theorize the mode of sound outside of his later major works in smaller venues such as journal articles or personal letters to friends. My investigation of Burke’s exchange with Schlauch and the pages deleted from the second edition of *Attitudes toward History* demonstrates Burke’s theoretical work toward a language theory that provided the framework for including sound as an important mode of symbolism.

Following the publication of the first edition of *Attitudes toward History* in 1937, Burke began to receive a handful of negative reviews from Marxist critics⁵⁰ as a result of his aim in *Attitudes toward History* to counter what he saw as overly scientific approaches to Marxism. For Burke, *Attitudes toward History* represented an attempt to more fully align with Marxists—or as George and Selzer suggest, “bore from within” as a Marxist—while recommending psychological as well as economic methods of analysis for Marxist critics. Burke’s psychological approach, which focused on an array of possible lenses for Marxist analysis based on the array of human motives, attempted to counter the prevalent scientific methodology popular with Marxist critics at the time. While, as George and Selzer claim, Burke viewed “the single ‘scientific’ lens of Marxist methodology [as] too narrow,” Burke’s

⁵⁰ Eliseo Vivas wrote in the *Nation* that Burke’s “work suffers from a serious defect,” claiming that the method of the comic corrective “would prove useless in practice in the face of the resistance offered by the entrenched opposition” (723). Sidney Hook’s scathing review in *The Partisan Review*, according to George and Selzer, “provided one long paragraph of fair summary of Burke’s book and ten just-as-long and not-nearly-so-fair paragraphs of sustained, often withering criticisms” (170). However, several reviewers provided positive reviews such as Groff Conklin’s review in *New Masses* and Henry Bamford Parkes in *Southern Review*.

symbolic and psychological approach claimed to “provide a fuller view of human action because it was calculated to understand ‘man in society, man in drama’” (159). This psychological approach, however, did not sit well with Marxist critics such as Margaret Schlauch,⁵¹ who as one of four editors for the newly founded Marxist magazine *Science and Society*, criticized Burke’s approach in her review of the work.⁵²

Though Schlauch, like other reviewers, takes issue more broadly with Burke’s entire psychological and rhetorical methodology in *Attitudes toward History*, she is also heavily critical of Burke’s analysis of the sounds of words.⁵³ Over thirty pages in the “Cues” section of his “Dictionary of Pivotal Terms,” Burke theorizes sound as an important semiotic mode of meaning, claiming when an “author selects one word rather than another because it ‘sounds better’ to him, his choice is guided by overtones” (82, 1st ed.). To illustrate, Burke ponders his own personal example of the tonal relationship in his choice of the term “comic frame” as a key term for *Attitudes toward History*. Focusing closely on the hard C consonant, Burke metaphorically sits in the chair reserved for a psychoanalyst’s patient and ponders what psychological reasons might factor into his word choice based on sound. First, Burke reveals his experience at a younger age when a teacher taught him how to pronounce the hard C consonant. Then, he details two other experiences with the hard C consonant such as a throat ailment he endured as an adolescent and a bout

⁵¹ Schlauch had deep ties to the communist party and eventually became a victim of McCarthyism, fleeing to Poland in 1951 to escape charges of espionage.

⁵² *Science and Society* was founded one year earlier in 1936, and the editors were anxious to use the magazine to forward the scientific approach to Marxist analysis.

⁵³ While I examine the “Cues” section in the first edition of *Attitudes toward History* in chapter 3, my focus in this chapter will explain the relevance of this section for Burke’s development of a language theory.

with whooping cough. In addition, Burke calls attention to his fondness for the hard C consonant in earlier works as well such as the “Mann and Gide” essay in *Counter-Statement* and in *Permanence and Change*, which feature such terms as *correspondence, cult of conflict, communion, communism, and cooperation*. Burke claims these experiences created for him psychological overtones, which partially led him to choose words in his theoretical writing. As Burke indicates in this section, he is attempting to explore all the available possibilities for “symbolic mergers” to occur, which leads him to this psychological investigation of the sounds of words. Burke claims his personal experience with the hard C consonant led him to create symbolic mergers between these experiences and the theoretical terms he developed.

This psychological methodology of analyzing the sounds of words in the “Cues” section reveals a seemingly non-Burkean approach to language. Rather than examine the socially constructed nature at the heart of symbols, Burke, instead, uses this section to suggest expressionistic correlations between the sound of a word and the personal experience of the author. Though Burke acknowledges these examples to be “tenuous,” he also claims “the lesson to be drawn from our over-drawn example is simply that one derives ‘cues’ from the perception of ‘correspondences’” (1st ed. 87). While Burke focuses on audience psychology in *Counter-Statement*, his examination of the sounds of words in this section of *Attitudes toward History* leads him to a Freudian emphasis on the inner truth of an author to understand how sound can provide the Marxist critic with cues for analyzing the meanings of a

symbol. In other words, Burke's psychological focus runs counter to the scientism of many Marxist critics, including Margaret Schlauch.

In her review of *Attitudes toward History*, Schlauch begins by objecting to Burke's overall method and ends by criticizing his analysis of the "phonetic structure" of words. Schlauch's criticism followed that of many Marxist critics who objected to Burke's psychological approach in *Attitudes toward History*, claiming, "The integration of Marxism with Freudianism, if it is to be made at all, will not be accomplished by this method" (131). Schlauch along with the editors of the young magazine *Science and Society*, as George and Selzer claim, were attempting to emphasize "a methodology for social analysis—a scientific methodology—and were eager to exemplify how that 'manner' or 'method' might be deployed in the service of social change" (159), and Burke's methodology too often strayed from the scientific frame of analysis for Schlauch's comfort. In addition, Schlauch criticizes Burke's linguistic theory in the "Cues" section because it implies what she calls a "hostility to change" (131). Schlauch claims, "If you isolate a word at any given moment of its history, and declare that precisely then its phonetic pattern conforms to its symbolic structure, you must admit that it not only lacked such harmony in the past, but will lack it again in the future" (131). As a noted linguist, Schlauch appears to disagree with the theoretical assumptions of language in Burke's phonetic analysis that expressionistic or personal correlations are worth exploring for a Marxist methodology. Schlauch claims this distracts the Marxist critic from more important economic issues.

In his response titled “Twelve Propositions,” which Burke claims is “an attempt to codify my ideas on the relation between psychology and Marxism” (242), he both clarifies and, in a sense, redacts ideas from the work. Burke’s clarifications in “Twelve Propositions” are most notable because they lead him to identify the method for which he would become most famous. As Michael Feehan claims, proposition number eleven of “Twelve Propositions” leads Burke to name his method as dramatism (405), which he later elaborates on in *A Grammar of Motives*. However, I argue that “Twelve Propositions” is as significant for the concessions he makes in the “Cues” section about the overtones of words as it is for Burke’s clarifications of his dramatistic approach. In this response to Schlauch’s review, also published in *Science & Society*, Burke acknowledges Schlauch’s claim that his phonetic “quest for symbols turns out to be a very risky game indeed when applied to language” (131):

I admit that my remarks on this subject were tentative and incompletely formed at the time. In fact, I considered omitting this section on “cues” entirely, because I recognized its weakness; but feeling that there was some element of truth here somewhere, though phrased in slovenly fashion, I finally decided to include the paragraphs for purely “suggestive” purposes. (248)

For Burke, personal experience supplies this important element of truth within the sounds of words, which is a key tenet of phenomenological theories of language

emerging around the same time in French and German language theory.⁵⁴ However, Burke was not engaged with any phenomenological thinkers at the time, and Schlauch's criticism of Burke's phonetic analysis in the "Cues" section also revealed an underdeveloped linguistic theory. Rather than further theorize this idea in subsequent editions of *Attitudes toward History*, Burke removed over 23 pages from this section but continued to puzzle over the sound component of language, which led him into a theory of language that might include sound.

Schlauch's review and Burke's response are important for two reasons: first, Burke's response shows an early foray into personal experience as a key component in a theory of language that accounts for sound as a mode of symbolization, which would later allow him to develop a phenomenological approach to language. Though Burke characterizes his own theorizing of sound in *Attitudes toward History* as "weak," he continues to question elements of sound within language in "Twelve Propositions," claiming "a mature mind is in some way bound up with a linguistic texture" (249). In other words, Burke's response shows that he is still forming and questioning a theory of language that accounts for the textures (sound, font, color) in linguistic symbols as a vital element of meaning. While Burke continues to exhibit a linguistic bias in multimodality in this 1938 exchange, Burke's response reveals his continued concern for sound as a mode of meaning. The evidence of Burke's continued formation of this idea is most fully demonstrated in the questions he poses in his response to Schlauch:

⁵⁴ While phenomenologists such as Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger were also developing phenomenological theories of language, Burke may not have encountered phenomenology until Cassirer.

Perhaps I might make my point most readily clear by posing this question: When a poet alliterates, is any alliterated sound of the same value as any other; i.e., would a poet be doing the same “symbolic act” if he stressed the alliteration of “m” as if he alliterated “r,” “s,” “v,” or “p”? It is my notion that each letter would symbolize a different attitude. (248)

This passage reveals Burke’s continued investigation of sound in coordination with words even though he would redact elements of this inquiry in later editions. As I described in chapter 3, the 1934 musical parlors in both Germany and the United States led Burke to lean more fully on linguistic symbols when examining sound and music in *Attitudes toward History*. Though he resisted investigating the sounds of words in his later published works, his continued discussion of the appeals of sound in “Twelve Propositions” shows that sound and music continued to be a concern for Burke in his evolving theory of language.

Second, and more importantly, this exchange provides further insight into the reason why following this exchange Burke might have conducted this sound-focused theoretical work on the margins of his published writing. If Schlauch’s critical review did not fully cause Burke to abandon early considerations of sound within his theory of language, it may have caused him to move his investigation behind the scenes in lesser-read publications and other venues. One such example is Burke’s summer course on Coleridge at the University of Chicago in 1938, which was a series of lectures later published as a 1940 essay in the journal *Poetry* titled “On Musicality in Verse” and reprinted in *Philosophy of Literary Form*. In planning

the course, Burke decided to primarily lecture during each class, which “cost him many hours of preparation but provide[d] material for later essays, especially on Coleridge” (George and Selzer 224). The resulting essay, which like Burke’s “Cues” section also examines the tonalities and rhythms of words, reveals one important missing element: Burke makes “no attempt to establish any correlation between musicality and content” (378). The absence in this essay of Burke’s theoretical investigation of sound as a vital element in language diverges sharply from his earlier analysis of sound in *Attitudes toward History*.⁵⁵

Though Burke continues to examine the sounds of words in “On Musicality in Verse,” he more fully works to theorize sound apart from linguistic meaning, focusing solely on the phonetic patterns within words to examine complimentary or even contradictory meanings that might emerge through sound. Burke claims the essay “offer[s] coordinates for the analysis of musicality pure and simple” (378). Burke returns to his examination of consonants and vowels in the “Cues” section from *AtH* to suggest analysis through relationships in sound. In other words, Burke charts sound relationships to show how specific sounds in poetry can form patterns in verse. Many of the words in Coleridge’s poems, Burke claims, contain an underlying musical appeal by using “repetition of a sound in cognate variation, acrostic scrambling, chiasmus, augmentation, and diminution” (373). For instance, Burke suggests that several consonants are cognates of each other such as *j* and *ch* or the hard *g* and *k*. These phonetic cognates can be arranged by the poet in order to

⁵⁵ Around the same time that Schlauch’s review was published in *Science & Society* in December 1937, “Burke accepted the contract for \$1,300 to teach two courses at the University of Chicago in the summer of 1938—one on Coleridge and one on literary criticism” (George and Selzer 223). Burke seized this opportunity to develop an exploratory course on Coleridge’s poetry that examined phonetic themes.

create specific patterns using rhetorical figures such as the ones mentioned above. Rather than examining alliteration, onomatopoeia, or some other literary figure of sound, Burke claims to be examining phonetic themes separate from linguistic meaning.

While “On Musicality in Verse” provides an interesting approach to analyzing the musical elements in poetry, Burke’s course on Coleridge shows his further reticence to approach sound as an element of language after his encounter with Schlauch, and I would argue that his reluctance is largely because he realizes his theory of language remains underdeveloped. In this essay, Burke claims he avoids establishing any correlation between sound and meaning because “the extra burdens I should take on, if I attempted to deal with this controversial realm, would be enormous” (40). Toward the end of the essay, Burke hints at the reason why, claiming to “fight shy of expressionistic correlations for the present” (378). Following his encounter with Schlauch, Burke understands that his analysis in the “Cues” section is largely based on an expressionistic theory of language. This theory of language, which largely relies on the discovery of inner truth in an individual for meaning in language, contrasts sharply with Burke’s typical social approach to language. Though Burke claims to “fight shy” for now, this statement also suggests that his investigation of a theory of language which includes sound is ongoing. While Burke never comprehensively discusses musical symbolism in any of his following major works, his theoretical approach to language remains heavily influenced by his desire to expand language to nonverbal realms of symbolism. Nine years later,

Burke would encounter a theoretical work that would help him more fully integrate nonverbal symbols into a phenomenological and rhetorical theory of language.

Burke's Review of Ernst Cassirer's *The Myth of the State*

Burke's review of Ernst Cassirer's *The Myth of the State* in 1946 and his use of this review in *A Rhetoric of Motives* reveal a renewed focus on rhetorical form and nonlinguistic symbols. In the buildup to WWII as I outlined in chapter three, Burke's instinct as a socialist propagandist was to anchor words to musical symbols to provide complimentary modes of meaning. Following WWII, Burke examined postwar theorists such as Cassirer to more fully understand how meaning could disperse into unethical areas through linguistic and nonlinguistic symbols.⁵⁶

Depending on the historical context, Burke's comfort with ambiguous symbols such as music fluctuated, and Cassirer's language theory may have enabled Burke's shift back toward examining aesthetic and nonlinguistic symbols without demonstrating a linguistic bias. Though Burke examines audience psychology as early as *Counter-Statement*, his engagement with Cassirer's theory of language allows him to more explicitly focus on the nonverbal sensory phenomena experienced by an audience in *A Rhetoric of Motives*. Among many things, *A Rhetoric of Motives* is most notable for how Burke carves out a rhetoric "often from materials not generally thought to fall under the head" (viii). In other words, Burke expands the scope of rhetoric in *A Rhetoric of Motives* to include a wide array of rhetorical appeals and practices that

⁵⁶ Burke was never a proponent of capital "T" Truth, but in *Permanence and Change*, he attempts to add an ethical element to language through his examination of *metabiology*, which is Burke's attempt to ground language and thought in the physical realities of the body. Burke further explores the ever-shifting nature of truth through his examination of the *paradox of substance* in *A Grammar of Motives*, which uses the term (sub)stance as an illustration of the detached nature of symbolism and thought.

builds on the classical theories of Aristotle, Quintillian, and Cicero as well as contemporary theorists such as I.A. Richards.⁵⁷ While Burke never explicitly discusses music in *A Rhetoric of Motives*, he works to more fully theorize nonlinguistic symbols in this work, and Ernst Cassirer is one influence on Burke's more overt expansion into the nonlinguistic.

Cassirer's approach, like that of many early phenomenologists, has three main areas of focus: 1) it acknowledges ambiguity in language; 2) it examines sense-experiences in language; and 3) it emphasizes connotative meanings. In particular, Cassirer claims "all forms of human knowledge ... are linked together and directed to the same end. Far from being an obstacle to intellectual knowledge, sense-experience is the beginning and prerequisite of it" (114). Cassirer's elevation of the importance of sense-experiences in language may have influenced Burke to more fully accommodate the auditory-based symbol system of music. Cassirer is well known for his examination of the mythical beginnings of language in pre-logical and primitive societies. In his 1946 work *The Myth of the State*, Cassirer revisits much of his early theories on language and myth to examine language during "the period between the first and the second World Wars [when] we have been confronted with quite new theoretical problems" (3).⁵⁸ In his focus on language and myth, Cassirer finds that "the primitive mind feels the desire and the need to discern and divide, to order and classify the elements of its environment" (14). For Cassirer, language,

⁵⁷ It should be noted that Burke initially broadens the scope of rhetoric in his earlier work *Permanence and Change* but is less explicit than in *A Rhetoric of Motives*. I would argue that Burke's engagement with Cassirer is one made possible as he more explicitly expands the scope of rhetoric in *A Rhetoric of Motives*.

⁵⁸ Cassirer died prior to the publication of his final work in 1946, and the book is one of two he composed entirely in English. As a result, he summarizes much of his earlier work originally written in German for *The Myth of the State*.

which helps to order mythical thought, is then used to “analyze and systematize the world of sense-experience” (15), yet mythical thought, which defies all logical rules and is “incoherent, capricious, irrational” (18), remains at the heart of language.⁵⁹ In order for a society to share symbols and communicate, language must be rational and logical, but myth continues to prevail through unordered forms of meaning. Cassirer’s examination of language and myth in *The Myth of the State*, similar to Burke’s examination of grammar and rhetoric, was an attempt to understand how fascist politicians in the 1930s and 1940s wielded language to lead a seemingly rational society into a violent and largely irrational war, arguing “mythical thought has overtaken rational thought in modern political systems” (3).⁶⁰

In his *Nation* review of *Myth of the State*, “Homo Faber, Homo Magus,” Burke seizes on Cassirer’s final chapter “The Technique of the Modern Political Myth.” In this section, Cassirer examines how the politician inhabits the role of both *homo magus*, man the magician, and *homo faber*, man the creator, to become “priest of a new, entirely irrational and mysterious religion” (282). Cassirer claims this “blending of two activities” (282) relies on two functions of language: semantic and magical. For Cassirer, the semantic meaning of a symbol reflects the relative stability in language whereas the magical meaning of a symbol reflects incoherent and illogical shifting toward mythical thought. Politicians such as those in the Nazi regime were able to create new words or symbols or modify meanings of previously used words or symbols through the magical function of language. While stable

⁵⁹ While Burke examines a similar account of this cognitive process in *Permanence and Change*, he had yet to apply this approach specifically to primitive or mythic ideas.

⁶⁰ Cassirer avoided persecution, fleeing to Switzerland and then later to the United States to teach philosophy and literature at Yale University.

societies can often maintain the rational function of language, Cassirer claims, “in politics we are always living on volcanic soil. We must be prepared for abrupt convulsions and eruptions” (280). Therefore, in societies in great turmoil, “the magic word has a predominant and overwhelming influence. It does not describe things or relations of things; it tries to produce effects and to change the course of nature” (282-3). For Cassirer, the revolutionary politician is able to employ the magical meanings of language through a variety of verbal and nonverbal symbols to shift authority from law, justice, and constitutions to his or her own political ideas.⁶¹

Having also examined “the well of Nazi magic” (192) in his 1939 review of *Mein Kampf*, Burke seizes on Cassirer’s definition of magical meaning to articulate a rhetorical approach to language that includes a more detailed examination of nonverbal, sensory-based symbols such as music or image. While Burke embraces Cassirer’s semantic and magical functions of language, he also suggests a third function of language: rhetorical.⁶² Though Cassirer’s definition of the magical meaning involves the use of language to “move people” into “action,” Burke claims that “rhetoric” is the more preferred term. In juxtaposing magical and semantic meaning, Cassirer, Burke claims, sets up an unproductive dichotomy, which equates magic with “bad science.” By moving Cassirer’s view of “magical meaning” under the

⁶¹ Cassirer originally conceived his term *myth* as a function in primitive societies, but he also claims that myth prevails in the “advanced stages of man’s political life” (279). In this way, Cassirer opposes myth to rational thought, claiming “if reason has failed us, there remains always the *ultima ratio*, the power of the miraculous and mysterious” (279).

⁶² In his 1938 essay “Semantic and Poetic Meaning” later published in *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, Burke makes a similar distinction between semantic and poetic meaning: “The semantic ideal would attempt to *get a description* by the *elimination* of attitude. The poetic ideal would attempt to *attain a full moral act* by attaining a perspective *atop all the conflicts of attitude*” (147-8). In addition, Burke discusses a magical function of language as early as 1935 in *Permanence and Change* as a result of his engagement with Sir James Frazer’s *The Golden Bough*. However, Burke’s investigation of magical/rhetorical meaning takes a more direct turn toward understanding nonverbal symbols. Both Burke and Cassirer cite Frazer as an influence or point of departure for their own theories.

head of rhetoric, Burke reiterates in *A Rhetoric of Motives* that rhetoric is and always has been intrinsic to language: “[rhetoric] is rooted in an essential function of language itself” (43). Burke’s use of Cassirer’s “magical” function of language, which is often focused on nonverbal sensory phenomena, allows Burke to articulate a more explicit rhetorical approach to nonlinguistic symbols.

Following Burke’s discussion of Cassirer’s magical and semantic functions of language in the opening part of *A Rhetoric of Motives*, Burke expands his examination of nonverbal symbols to more than just an investigation of rhetorical form. In a later section of *A Rhetoric of Motives*, “‘Administrative’ Rhetoric in Machiavelli,” Burke analyzes a variety of nonverbal symbols such as physical objects, threats of action, and other conditions in Machiavelli’s *The Prince*. I interpret Burke’s use of the term *nonverbal* in *RM* to mean nonlinguistic, which suggests that Burke’s encounter with Cassirer may have shifted his attention toward the symbolic potential of objects and other nonlinguistic symbols. Essentially, Burke returns to ideas from his 1931 work *Counter-Statement*, which I discussed in chapter two, to examine how nonverbal sensory-based symbols produce “effects upon an audience” (158). In this section in *A Rhetoric of Motives*, Burke claims “persuasion cannot be confined to the strictly verbal; it is a mixture of symbolism and empirical operations” (161). In examining characters in Machiavelli’s *The Prince* and Ovid’s *Ars Amatoria*, Burke claims that “the nonverbal, or nonsymbolic conditions with which both lover and ruler must operate can themselves be viewed as a kind of symbolism having persuasive effects” (161). For instance, Burke claims the nonsymbolic conditions associated with power can lead a ruler to inadvertently

demonstrate a persuasive threat of war through an “administrative” ingredient. That is, a ruler is persuasive merely based on the fact that he or she has the power to declare war. Burke claims, “Military force can persuade by its sheer ‘meaning’ as well as by its use in actual combat” (161). In addition, Burke examines how “material instruments themselves have a symbolic ingredient” (161) as well. For instance, Burke claims that the symbol of a “policemen’s clubs” provide a persuasive appeal without needing to be articulated through linguistic symbols. Though this analysis is short and seemingly insignificant within the larger scope of *A Rhetoric of Motives*, Burke’s more explicit examination of a wider scope of nonverbal symbols shows his evolution toward a consideration of sound as an essential element in language that would culminate in his correspondence with Louis Calabro in 1961.

Most importantly, Burke’s move back into the realm of nonverbal symbols compels him to reemphasize “rhetorical form” in *A Rhetoric of Motives*. Burke claims in his analysis “that an approach to [Machiavelli’s *The Prince*] in terms of rhetoric is necessary if one would give an adequate account of its *form*” (162; emphasis Burke’s). Earlier in *A Rhetoric of Motives*, Burke examines a host of formal appeals such as that of “antithesis,” “repetition,” and “sameness of sound” to discuss how “many purely formal patterns can readily awaken an attitude of collaborative expectancy in us” (58). In other words, Burke’s return to a more complex theory of rhetorical form from *Counter-Statement* coincides with his influence of Cassirer’s language theory, which emphasizes an audience’s individual and social experiences and the persuasive effects that result from experience. In this discussion of form, Burke is able to explain formal appeals in coordination with his more complex

rhetorical theories such as “dialectic,” “transcendence,” and “identification” to show the rhetorical appeal of nonverbal symbols. As in his music reviews for the *Nation*, Burke is largely concerned with how “nonverbal conditions or objects can be considered as signs by reason of persuasive ingredients inherent in the ‘meaning’ they have for the audience to which they are ‘addressed’” (161). Like Cassirer, Burke is concerned with how verbal and nonverbal symbols can induce an audience to act, yet Burke deals with these symbols under the head of rhetoric. Burke’s discussion of nonverbal symbolism in *A Rhetoric of Motives* reveals a return to the aesthetic theory he was developing in *CS*, and Burke’s 1961 correspondence with Calabro more specifically focuses on the persuasive appeal of music.

Burke and Calabro 1961 Correspondence

In early 1961, Kenneth Burke struck up a friendship with Italian-American composer and Bennington colleague Louis Calabro, and their correspondence remains Burke’s most significant discussion of music and rhetoric. Burke’s responses in the correspondence articulate, in my view, three important ideas moving toward a language theory that includes music: 1) music utilizes a kind of language that relies on creating expectations through form; 2) music relies on both personal and audience experiences for content or meaning; and 3) music is the epitome of rhetorical form.⁶³ Though Calabro does not appear to change Burke’s mind about music and language from his original discussion in *Counter-Statement*, which only contains a few brief elaborations about music and form, he does provide Burke with the opportunity to discuss music as a symbol system in light of his

⁶³ Burke’s letters to Calabro help to provide the context for Burke’s language theory and the musical influence it contained in *The Rhetoric of Religion* and in articles from *Language as Symbolic Action*.

adoption of a phenomenological theory of language. Thus, this correspondence is the culmination of many ideas Burke has been working on since *Counter-Statement* but had yet to articulate their importance in a musical context.

As Burke began to include more of a focus on nonlinguistic symbols in *A Rhetoric of Motives*, this correspondence redirected his focus more specifically on music. In addition to fostering their friendship at school as coworkers and through family get-togethers, Burke and Calabro began corresponding about “music as subject matter” (Burke to Calabro 25 Jan. 1961). In his responses, Burke returns to the rhetorical forms he described in *Counter-Statement* to examine the rhetorical appeals of sound. These letters provide strong evidence for Burke’s turn toward a theory of aural symbolism, and following my examination of these letters, I propose three principles that guide Burke’s understanding of music and language. Since Burke composed these letters well after writing *Counter-Statement*, *A Grammar of Motives*, and other major works, he revisits his theory of rhetorical form to discuss ways in which form functions as a part of rhetorical ideas he developed in later works such as *dramatism* and *logology*. In one of the letters, Burke even reveals, “I found out this morning that two more of my books are going to paperback editions” (8 March 1961), which may suggest that ideas in *A Grammar of Motives* and *A Rhetoric of Motives* were at the forefront of his mind as he discussed musical ideas. In this section, I examine this 1961 musical parlor occupied by Burke and Calabro to argue that Burke more fully articulates a theory of aural rhetoric that coincides with his expansion of rhetoric in *A Rhetoric of Motives*, through Burke’s own music as language, and on a renewed theory rhetorical form. First, I examine the friendship

between Burke and Calabro to provide historical context before more fully examining the three ideas that Burke's responses articulate.

Burke's correspondent Louis Calabro was a highly accomplished musician and composer. Initially, Calabro couldn't afford to attend the prestigious Julliard School of Music in New York City even though he became friends with several of the students in the program. Many of these students, who were enrolled in the legendary Vincent Persichetti's music composition classroom at Julliard, despised the composition exercises assigned to the class, so Calabro volunteered to ghostwrite these exercises for several of the performance majors "to keep up his technique and save money for tuition" (Dorff 8). In order to avoid Persichetti's suspicions, Calabro would invent various strengths and weaknesses for each student. Eventually, Calabro made enough money to attend Julliard where he studied piano and composition, graduating in 1952. A few years after earning his postgraduate degree from Julliard, Calabro secured a position teaching music at Bennington College at the young age of 29. While at Bennington, a job he held until his death in 1991, Calabro also wrote over 100 compositions for various performances, ranging from chamber music all the way to large orchestras. Throughout his career, Calabro was awarded several prestigious fellowships, including two Guggenheim fellowships for music composition in 1954 and 1959, two NEA fellowships in 1973 and 1976, and the Vermont Governor's Award for the Arts in 1991. In 1971, ten years after he initially met Burke, Calabro founded and conducted the Sage City Symphony, an all-volunteer orchestra that performed many of his original works for the first time in North Bennington, Vermont.

Shortly after the inauguration of President John F. Kennedy in the winter of 1961, Calabro initiated the correspondence to write an apology for a misunderstanding at a social gathering. According to Michael Burke, Kenneth and his wife Libby invited the Calabros to dinner at their house in Andover, New Jersey where this incident occurred:

My mother [Libby] had a record player. People were in [the living room], and my mother just wanted to put on some background music. I don't even know what she went to put on. It didn't matter. She put on something. Louis Calabro leaped up and went running in to rip off the [record] because he didn't want any of this sort of normal music polluting his brain. (Interview with Michael Burke)

A few days after this event, Calabro acknowledged, "I am an angry young man. What I'm angry about is the way I behave at social gatherings!" (23 Jan. 1961). Burke quickly offered his forgiveness in a letter two days later: "As for slashing-about when under the infloonce of alky: I haint exactly in a position to cast the first stone" (25 Jan. 1961). This event reveals the heart of Calabro's disagreement with Burke that would play out over the remaining letters in the correspondence: Calabro believed that "form cannot be divorced from its content. Form is created simultaneously with the creation of the materials" (16 Feb. 1961). In avoiding "normal music," Calabro reinforced his belief that musical form should be "organically-conceived" and should coincide with content developed by the composer. In other words, Calabro sought as a composer to discover new and

original musical forms without the consideration of an audience like many in the “pure art” movement in the 1930s.

With their relationship mended, these two men began exchanging “lively letters”; Burke wrote thirteen letters and Calabro wrote eight over a two-month period.⁶⁴ Burke and Calabro regularly sent original musical compositions to each other for critique or to elaborate on something discussed within the letters.⁶⁵ For example, in a 1977 letter to Burke, Calabro mentions that he is excited to see Burke’s original composition titled “Andor!,” and in return, Calabro says that he is sending Burke “a copy of Voyage which you may scrutinize” (2 March 1977). At each turn, Burke uses Calabro’s or his own works as examples for closely examining music as a persuasive symbol system.

The first important move Burke makes in this correspondence is his examination of music as a language, an approach that was facilitated by his attention to nonverbal sensory-based symbols in *A Rhetoric of Motives* such as the symbol of the policeman’s club. In Burke’s first letter to Calabro, he claims to have been “tinkering tentatively with some ideas as to the possible relation btw. music and the

⁶⁴ While Burke maintained a correspondence about music with Calabro, he also discussed or wrote musical bars in letters to other friends and colleagues as well. For example, in a letter to Malcolm Cowley in 1944, Burke writes, “guess I’ll go in and play the piano,” discussing his attempt at “contriving some new sounds, with progressions from one to another, and so on to the next, etc.” (262). In a letter to Ed Cone, music professor at Princeton, Burke thanks him for his “handsome card-with-note” (1961). Following Burke’s sign off “sincerely,” he adds “P.S.” followed by two musical bars of 3-part harmony in 4/4 time, providing no context or explanation for this added element. Later in a December 1967 letter to Howard Nemerov or as Burke puts it “Hovvard” from “Us Charter Members of the Scrooge Society,” Burke writes, “since this is an eclectic age, I have begun eclecticizing. And I think we must work along these here lines.” Again, Burke uses 6 bars of musical notes, this time to score his own Christmas medley: “I’m dreaming of a silent night holy jangle balls jangle balls Christmas” (Letter to Hovvard). Burke inserts lyrics to evoke the desired musical tones that he hopes to communicate.

⁶⁵ In one exchange, Calabro even offered to allow Burke to sit in on his Music Theory course. Though it’s unclear whether Burke ever attended, he stated in the letters that he hoped “to creep in on [Calabro’s] next class” (undated letter).

non-musical or extra-musical situations which it may ambiguously symbolize or sum up” (25 Jan. 1961). This statement reveals Burke’s return to his desire in “On Musicality in Verse” to examine the “expressionistic relation between certain types of tonal gesturing and certain types of attitude” (378). Burke’s turn toward phenomenological sensory-based symbols following his encounter with Cassirer facilitated this renewed investigation into the language of aesthetic symbol systems. For Burke, musical language relies on a “system of expectations” (7 March 1961), which is built with the use of conventional forms. Conventional forms are developed over time as a result of repetition of a work and repetitive forms. In addition, Burke expands his investigation more broadly to symbol systems because “music, like language, is a symbol-system. And all symbol-systems are initially encountered in situations that are not reducible to them alone” (27 Jan. 1961). Burke’s examination of the “situations” in which language is developed through sensory experiences reveals a renewed effort toward a Cassirerian theory of language. Burke further explains that all symbol systems depend on situational experiences by both the symbol user and the symbol interpreter.

In the second important aspect in his correspondence with Calabro, Burke goes on to claim that symbol systems are rooted in experience, and a composer and audience rely on personal as well as social experiences to give meaning to symbols. In particular, Burke’s focus on experience, an important theoretical component of phenomenology, leads him to identify three steps toward symbolic meaning within music. Burke claims the musical composer starts out with “(1) Almost limitless possibilities of permutation and combination” (27 Jan. 1961). Then, the composer

creates “(2) limitation by personal equation, which incidentally involves non-musical or extra-musical motives whereby themes are secretly like titles or class-names for personal situations partly buried in one’s past” (27 Jan. 1961). Finally, the audience brings in their own experiential meanings, which emphasize “(3) the simultaneously restrictive and creative effect of ‘formal’ attention” (27 Jan. 1961). For Burke, Calabro’s insistence that music must be organically conceived without any attention to an audience’s prior experience neglects the rhetorical aspect of all symbolic situations. In this correspondence, Calabro leads Burke back into an investigation of the importance of personal as well as communal experiences for creating and interpreting musical symbols.

The third and final important element in the Burke and Calabro correspondence is Burke’s explicit discussion of rhetorical form in music. While in *Counter-Statement* Burke alludes to the importance of rhetorical form for music, his correspondence with Calabro is the first time he fully explores all possible angles of form and music. The majority of Burke’s discussion of rhetorical form in *Counter-Statement* examines form in literature. Among the five rhetorical forms⁶⁶ Burke discusses in *Counter-Statement*, he elevates two formal appeals in his 1961 correspondence with Calabro that he claims are central to the realm of music: repetitive form and progressive form.⁶⁷ In particular, repetitive form⁶⁸ is considered

⁶⁶ Burke’s five categories of form are syllogistic progression, qualitative progression, repetitive, conventional, and minor or incidental form.

⁶⁷ The term “progressive form” actually covers two of Burke’s five kinds of form from *Counter-Statement*: syllogistic progression and qualitative progression. In syllogistic progression, one idea logically leads to the next one step by step, whereas, in qualitative progression, the progression is much more subtle, based on quality of mood or emotion.

⁶⁸ Repetitive form should not be confused with Burke’s discussion of conventional form in *Counter-Statement*. In music, conventional form represents all the musical forms that have been employed by

by Burke to be a vital form for setting up the audiences' expectations. "Repetitive form," Burke describes to Calabro, "carries a principle of consistency into new areas" (20 Feb. 1961). In other words, symbolic systems that primarily rely on formal appeals such as music depend on repetitive forms to create the illusion of stability in musical language while, at the same time, altering other forms around the repetition. For example, a composer might maintain a rhythm while altering the tone of a work.

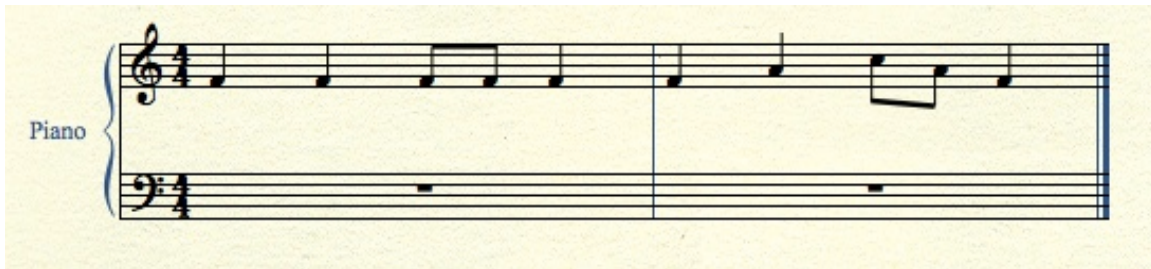


Figure 4.1

Using my own example in figure 4.1, the above rhythmic repetition (two quarter notes followed by two eighth notes and another quarter note) from one bar of music to the next provides a way for the composer to integrate new musical tones in the second bar while maintaining rhythmic consistency. As Burke claims to Calabro, "There can be no form without consistency of expectation" (15 Feb. 1961). Without repetitive form, other formal appeals in music as well as other realms of symbolization would lack the ability to communicate with and/or surprise an audience. Therefore, Burke views repetitive form as the foundation for all other musical forms.

previous composers. Conventional forms carry prior expectations with them, and Burke argues, "an audience that is familiar with these expectations can get peculiar delights from their violation under certain conditions. But such violations also imply the same principles of expectation" (20 Feb. 1961).

While Burke examines rhetorical form and sound in *Counter-Statement* and later in “On Musicality in Verse,” he largely abandons his theoretical investigation of form and music until 1961. Burke’s correspondence with Calabro serves to shift his attention back to music in 1961 following his development of dramatism, identification, and other theoretical ideas. Burke’s emphasis of rhythmic repetition in these letters demonstrates how a composer can create cooperation between the musical audience and a composer. In his correspondence with Calabro, Burke uses the example of the more dissonant works of Stravinsky who relied heavily on repetition to establish form within a piece. While much of Stravinsky’s compositions were not as easily accessible to an audience due to the dissonant and sometimes violently unfamiliar tone of his work,⁶⁹ Burke marveled at how Stravinsky “managed to keep mulling over some element or other whenever he spurted out of line with another” (15 Feb. 1961). Since Stravinsky was continuously trying to push the envelope with his musical compositions, repetition allowed him to build expectations without having to rely fully on conventional musical forms already familiar to an audience. This repetition allows an audience to cooperate with the work by first setting up expectations, and Burke claims to “treat such cooperation as an aspect of communication” (15 Feb. 1961). Surprise comes from violating expectations, but repetition of those violations of expectations can also condition an audience to expect surprise, leading to further communication in form.

As repetitive forms establish relative stability within music and other nonlinguistic symbol systems, progressive forms gradually change the audience’s

⁶⁹ See my example in the introduction to Chapter two.

perspective from the beginning of a work to the end. Burke describes progressive form to Calabro as a “series of disclosures, each stage preparing us for the next” (25 Jan. 1961). Progressive forms as described in these letters involve the gradual steps from one musical form to another, creating a cooperative audience that follows the work. For example, Burke suggests, “In classical music the most obvious way of arousing and fulfilling expectations was by the resolving of a dissonance (the IV-V-I cadence)” (27 Jan. 1961). While this example may be difficult to understand for non-specialists, it further demonstrates Burke’s elaboration on and further development of ideas from *Counter-Statement* in this correspondence following his focus on musical and linguistic modalities in 1934. To illustrate using my own example in figure 4.2 below, the IV chord represents a dissonant major chord while the I chord is the resolution to the dominant major chord.

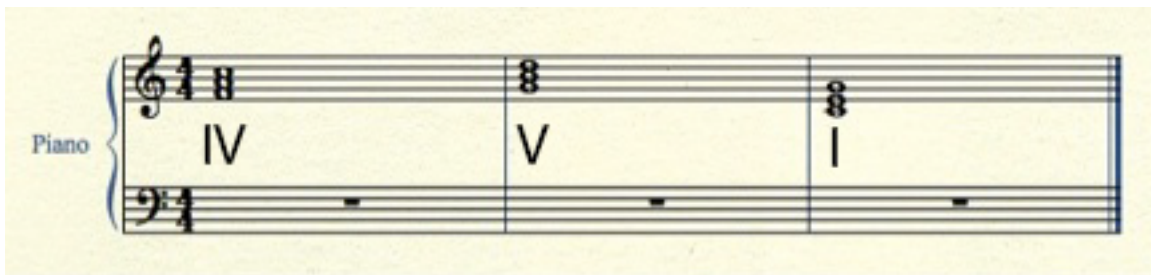


Figure 4.2

However, since the V chord contains two notes with one major pitch below two notes in the I chord, Burke claims it becomes musically logical to resolve these notes one step upward, progressing from IV to V to I.⁷⁰ Though at times these examples shift Burke’s theories into the realm of the musical specialist, they also provide

⁷⁰ In the key of C, the notes in a V chord are G-B-D and in the I chord are C-E-G, creating a musical exigency to hold the G note and resolve the B to C and the D to E. Thus, the IV-V-I progression leads the audience step by step from a dissonant IV chord to a major V chord one step above and finally resolves to the I chord.

evidence that Burke was highly concerned with theorizing a wider scope of language rather than focusing narrowly on linguistic symbols. In this correspondence, Burke returns to a consideration of the affective appeals of the aural modality without attaching or superimposing linguistic symbols as a way to resist ambiguity. Burke's return to his theory of rhetorical form in this correspondence sets the stage for Burke's more thorough investigation of language principles involved in linguistic and nonlinguistic symbols.

A Burkean Language Theory of Nonlinguistic Symbols

Shortly after his 1961 correspondence with Calabro, Burke most definitively claims in his 1961 work *The Rhetoric of Religion* that his view of the realm of symbolism in general includes "the symbol-systems of music, the dance, painting, architecture, the various specialized scientific nomenclatures, etc." (15). Burke would repeat this statement three more times in articles collected for his 1966 work *Language as Symbolic Action* and once in his 1983 afterword to *Permanence and Change*. Scholars have rarely mentioned these statements, but I argue they are significant for two reasons. First, they reveal Burke's first definitive declarations in his major works that his rhetorical theory accommodates other symbol systems such as music. As Burke was putting the finishing touches on *The Rhetoric of Religion* and conceiving essays for *Language as Symbolic Action*, he was also heavily involved in discussing musical symbolism with Calabro. In these later works, rather than focus primarily on the term *language*, which often narrowly includes only words as symbols, Burke shifts to the term *symbolicity* to theorize many kinds of symbols that lead to symbolic action. Additionally, Burke adds these statements

cited above to frame his earlier language and rhetorical theory as in his afterword to *Permanence and Change*, which I argue suggests that Burke's early rhetorical theory contained accommodations for nonlinguistic symbol systems from the start.

Second, these statements in support of the inclusion of nonlinguistic symbol systems as language are significant because they help reveal the similarities between Burke's rhetorical theory and other language theorists such as Ernst Cassirer and Susanne Langer. In particular, alongside Langer's theories in *Feeling and Form*, which Burke read and heavily annotated, Burke appears to be examining rhetorical principles solely in the aural mode without pairing music with words. Following Burke's more overt focus on nonverbal symbols in his 1950 work *A Rhetoric of Motives*, Burke sought to examine key distinctions between linguistic modalities and nonlinguistic modalities in his 1961 work *The Rhetoric of Religion* and his collections of essays published in the 1960s titled *Language as Symbolic Action*. In this final section, I will investigate a few of these late Burkean works on language from *RR* and *LSA* ("On Words and the Word" in 1961, "What Are the Signs of What?" in 1962, and "Poetics in Particular, Language in General" in 1966) to examine how Burke's expanded view of language influences his rhetoric of aurality.⁷¹ Based on this examination, I generate three principles of language that are key to a Burkean theory of aural rhetoric:

1. Nonlinguistic symbols articulate ideologies through rhetorical form

⁷¹ In Chapter five, I suggest several principles of aurality through examining Burke's own musical compositions.

2. Nonlinguistic symbols connote meaning through functioning as what Burke calls a *title* in his theory of *logology*
3. Nonlinguistic symbols, which rarely symbolize using the negative, participate in higher orders of language such as the dialectic and ultimate order through relying on linguistic symbols or utilizing rhetorical form

These three principles help Burke make important distinctions between linguistic and nonlinguistic symbols in order to more fully understand how aural symbols function separately from words.

Principle 1: Nonlinguistic symbols articulate ideology through rhetorical form

Burke returns to his 1931 theory of rhetorical form from *Counter-Statement* following his 1961 correspondence with Calabro to more fully examine the ideologies that form evokes. Though Burke focused on the intersection of musical form and ideology in his 1934 *Nation* review of Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler*, Burke's renewed investigation uses dramatism to interpret formal appeals. While Burke's initial outline of dramatism in *A Grammar of Motives* largely focused on the "linguistic instrument" (317), in *Language as Symbolic Action*, Burke expands his dramatic and pentadic analysis to interpret nonlinguistic symbols that rely on form to articulate ideology. Several scholars have called for further attention to Burke's rhetorical form such as Drew Loewe, who argues in "Rewiring Kenneth Burke for the 21st Century" that "Burke's examination of rhetorical form's linkages with ideology are important and useful" (80). Similarly, I argue that Burke makes these

linkages more explicit through a focus on how dramatic terms coincide with many kinds of nonlinguistic symbolic forms.

Burke had already been reexamining his theory of rhetorical form over ten years earlier in *A Rhetoric of Motives* and in “Form and Persecution in the *Oresteia*” published in a 1952 issue of the *Sewanee Review*. In the revised version of this essay published later in *Language as Symbolic Action*, Burke claims:

Years ago, in *Counter-Statement*, we had analyzed form as the arousing and fulfilling of expectations. We now found ourselves again covering some of the same ground, but with a notable difference. Originally, we had meant by ‘form’ all those devices whereby an audience is led to acquiesce in the destiny, good or bad, of the various characters in a tragedy. Now, we saw that such a network of expectancies and fulfillments can be summed up *dramatically* in such terms as Law, Right, Fate, Justice, Necessity. (127)

While Burke’s early consideration of form was primarily concerned with the creation and fulfillment of expectations in an audience, this new approach examines how forms articulate essences in Burke’s theory of dramatism. For example, Burke uses essence words such as law, right, fate, justice, and necessity in the above quote to sum up the connotative meanings form articulates within a drama. In particular, Burke focuses on how the plot of the story reveals a tragic form, claiming that this method “points *beyond* purely aesthetic form, as usually conceived, to the view of the plot as being, in essence, not just this story or that, but a viaticum that carries us through the process of ritual initiation or cleansing” (131). Having already theorized

dramatism, Burke moves past merely examining audience psychology to understand how rhetorical forms figure into the larger scope of human motives.

For Burke, ideology is embedded in the rhetorical forms of literary works as well as musical or visual forms. Whereas Burke claims in the above quote that in 1931 he viewed form as merely a “device” to persuade an audience, his new understanding of form involves what he calls “a network of expectancies and fulfillments,” which, I argue, elevates nonlinguistic forms of meaning into the realm of language. Like WJT Mitchell, who claims in his 1986 work *Iconology: Image, Text, and Ideology* that “the notion of ideology is rooted in the concept of imagery” (4), Burke suggests that ideologies are embedded in networks of form, which then function as a rhetorical act. As Henderson claims, “Forms, for Burke, are ways of encompassing experiential and ideological complexities” (140). For example, in his detailed analysis of Hindemith’s *Mathis der Maler*, Burke claimed Hindemith articulated four ideologies including a Nazi aesthetic through formal logic. According to Burke, the work united audiences through the integration of a variety of rhetorical forms, yet because he believed that in times of great change art often tended to “obscure issues and alignments that should be sharpened” (“Hindemith Does His Part” 488), Burke largely abandoned his focus on rhetorical form in the mid-1930s as a result of his engagement with leftist critics and German fascists. However, Burke returned to his theory of form in the early 1960s to show how nonlinguistic symbols participate in the shaping of human motives.

Burke’s refocus on examining the ideologies that are articulated through rhetorical form demonstrates a theoretical approach to language that resonates

with many current multimodal and new media theorists. While many recent multimodal and new media theorists devote much attention to the *forms* in which digital media can deliver content,⁷² Burke developed a theory of rhetorical form many years earlier in the 1930s and elaborated on a wider application for his theory of rhetorical form in his 1961 correspondence with Calabro. Most notably, Susanne Langer's work in *Feeling and Form* resonates with Burke's theory of rhetorical form. Langer examines formal elements in music to understand how an audience experiences a direct passage of time by "undergoing tensions and their resolutions" (112). Similarly, in *Non-discursive Rhetoric*, Joddy Murray draws attention to non-discursive symbolization as "a form not limited to the chain-of-reasoning we require in discursive text" (5). In claiming, "image, not word, is the basic unit of meaning-making" (187), Murray examines the centrality of the imagistic forms we encounter through our senses in everyday symbol use. Though Burke's concept of rhetorical form emerged in a different historical context from these writers, he similarly focuses on theorizing form as an essential element of symbolization. More importantly, Burke's attention to form in later works such as *LSA* demonstrates Burke's aim to theorize nonlinguistic symbols as a part of his larger theory of dramatism and logology.

Principle 2: Nonlinguistic symbols as a title of titles

Within his theory of *logology*, Burke further explores how nonlinguistic symbols such as music can abbreviate or entitle experiences in the natural world by encompassing a variety of connotative meanings under one symbol. Though Burke

⁷² Marshall McLuhan's adage "the medium is the message" (1) suggests that the form of a message is more important than the content. Burke reviewed McLuhan's *Counterblast* for *The New Republic* in 1970.

clearly continues to privilege linguistic symbols within his theory of *logology*, which he describes as “words about words” (1),⁷³ I argue that his 1961 correspondence with Calabro—conducted at the same time *The Rhetoric of Religion* was in the final stages of publication—encourages him to explicitly discuss words about songs, sounds, or music as well. Burke resists positivist views of language in this work, claiming to investigate a theory of language in which “even the things of nature can become ‘symbolic’” (9). Later in a footnote in “What are the Signs of What?,” Burke illuminates his theory of entitlement, a key tenet of *logology*, by claiming a song can function as a *title of titles* or a *god term* that sums up “a manifold of particulars under one head” (RR 2). Burke claims in this footnote:⁷⁴

I have since come to think that the theory of language as entitlement could best be illustrated by thinking of a sentence as a theme song, for instance, as ‘East Side, West Side, all around town’ became the theme song for Al Smith’s presidential campaign. It thus summed up the motives of the whole campaign, and a few bars of it could serve as an appropriate abbreviation. (“What are the Signs” 373)

For Burke, *logology* helps to explain the tendency in language to seek out terms that rise “to ever and ever higher orders of generalization” (25) that can encompass a variety of positive and negative meanings under one idea, and after his correspondence with Calabro, he suggests that music provides a theoretically rich

⁷³ Burke unveiled his theory of *logology* in his 1961 work *The Rhetoric of Religion*. In *logology*, Burke adapts a variety of theological terms to describe language. Burke claims “statements that great theologians have made about the nature of ‘God’ might be adapted *mutatis mutandis* for use as purely secular observations on the nature of *words*” (1). Such terms as *god term* and *scapegoat* take on new secular meaning in Burke’s theory of *logology*.

⁷⁴ This footnote was likely added to the original essay for its reprint in *Language as Symbolic Action*, placing this statement later in time, around 1966.

example of a title of titles or god term. As Burke describes in the above footnote, music has the capability to “sum up” a motive with wide appeal to an audience’s bodily rhythms or tonalities. While the words of a political campaign have the potential to divide, nonlinguistic symbols of a campaign are more likely to unite due to the way they resonate in other areas of experience.

Thus, in his correspondence with Calabro, Burke applies his theory of *logology* and entitlement to music. Burke writes to Calabro:

I am wondering whether ‘experience’ ... is in itself nonmusical or extramusical, at least to a degree. I have in mind something of this sort: Our hero went back to a place where he had been, many years before. Of a sudden, a “new” theme popped into his head. He wrote it down, but wondered where it came from. Later, looking at it physically, he disclosed behind it a stupid popular tune that had obsessed him, at an earlier period in his life.... He suddenly recalled a related theme he had known since a child. This theme itself routed back into his “experience” in general. (27 Jan. 1961)

In Burke’s anecdote of the composer above, he claims “this theme, in all its variants, was in fact the musical name or title for that original experience, much of it extramusical” (27 Jan. 1961; emphasis Burke’s). As Burke thinks “of speech as the ‘entitling’ of complex nonverbal situations” (“What are the Signs” 361), he also argues that nonlinguistic symbols can serve as the title of nonverbal situations. But in Burke’s theory of entitlement, a symbol is “more like the ‘title’ of a situation than like the description of an act” (“What are the Signs” 361). In this sense, music can

serve as a title of experiences because Burke claims that any version of a symbol (words, sounds, images) may serve as an abbreviation of an object, idea, or act. For Burke, the composer can utilize music to symbolize experiences, but “the audience must have had a similar extra-musical dimension, if it is to be similarly moved” (27 Jan. 1961). Therefore, Burke believes that symbolic mergers in music are more likely to occur when both the symbol and the personal experience behind the symbol resonate with an audience.

One limitation of Burke’s focus on musical entitlement in “What are the Signs of What?” is his continued focus on the denotative meanings through musical symbols. In *Philosophy in a New Key*, Langer claims music “is preeminently non-representational” (178), which largely aims at deemphasizing the linguistic bias that often overshadows nonlinguistic symbols. Instead, Langer claims that “music articulates forms” (198), which function quite differently from linguistic symbols. Since Burke’s theoretical principles of dramatism and logology primarily use linguistic symbols as a method for analyzing human motives, Burke’s attempts to integrate nonlinguistic forms of meaning into his theories of dramatism and logology are clumsy and reveal a linguistic bias. However, Burke’s attempts to integrate nonlinguistic symbol systems into his theoretical approaches causes him to more fully question a key difference between linguistic and nonlinguistic symbols: the negative.

Principle 3: Music in Dialectic and Ultimate Orders of Language

As Burke worked to include many nonlinguistic symbols in his linguistic-focused theory of language, he also distinguished these symbol systems from the

linguistic realm through one important characteristic: the absence of *the negative*. Burke emphasized the negative in linguistic symbols because it provides a moral or ethical principle within words. As Burke outlines in his 1934 reviews of Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler* and Harris's "A Song for Occupations," words provide a framework for rejection of an ideology because of the presence of the negative whereas music promotes primarily acceptance. Burke most famously describes the negative in his essay "Definition of Man" in *Language as Symbolic Action*. Burke claims, "Man is the symbol-using (symbol-making, symbol-misusing) animal, inventor of the negative (or moralized by the negative), separated from his natural condition by instruments of his own making, goaded by the spirit of hierarchy (or moved by the sense of order), and rotten with perfection" (16). Burke argues that music, painting, sculpture, dance, and the many other kinds of nonlinguistic symbols of representation lack the ability to articulate an opposition to unproductive ideologies. However, Burke's detailed examination of language in his later essays for *Language as Symbolic Action* provide him with a way to understand how nonlinguistic symbol systems can participate in his three orders of language that rely on the negative: positive order, dialectical order, and ultimate order.

Any vocabulary, Burke claims, can fit in the positive order (symbols that represent physical things in the world), the dialectical order (symbols that serve as a title of a complex situation or idea often in coordination with opposing terms), or the ultimate order (symbols that are arranged in order with neither positive nor negative connotations). Burke often worked to find ways to transcend dichotomies or dialectical misunderstandings and shift perspectives toward an ultimate order of

language, which he details in *A Rhetoric of Motives*. Burke advocated for a *transcendence* from the positive and negative binaries contained within the dialectical order to an arranged grouping of symbols within the ultimate order. For instance, the terms “rich” and “poor” represent two dialectically opposed concepts, one which has a positive connotation in areas of society and another a negative connotation. For transcendence to take place, this dichotomy in the dialectical order would transcend upwards to a higher order term such as “wealth.” This higher order term encompasses both the positive and negative descriptions of wealth into one unified term.

Burke claimed that aesthetic symbols could not only assist linguistic symbols in moving toward the ultimate order, but they could also inhabit the dialectical order when imbued or paired with linguistic symbols and achieve transcendence within an aesthetic symbol system. That is, in Burke’s estimation, nonlinguistic symbols cannot participate within the dialectic order unless imbued with, influenced by, or paired with linguistic symbols. Burke’s work, and that of a handful of other philosophers who have tried to account for aesthetic symbols in their own theories of language, has often been passed over or deemphasized by positivist theorists as a result of this inability to account for nonlinguistic symbols within the dialectic order. For instance, Langer’s theory of aesthetic forms lost influence, according to Berthoff, because her “biology of feeling and [her] philosophy of mind ran counter to the scientism which in the post-war years was everywhere on the rise” (113). Berthoff attempts to push back against this kind of scientism, which she

characterizes as *gangster theories* that refuse “to acknowledge ambiguities, contradictions, and paradoxes” (15).

I argue that Burke’s conversation with Calabro reveals how musical forms can participate in the dialectical order of language, which relies on the negative to symbolize. While Burke appears to embrace nonlinguistic symbols in his correspondence with Calabro and in his essay “What are the Signs of What?,” he also clearly still shows a linguistic bias when theorizing language. In “A Dramatistic View of the Origins of Language and Postscripts on the Negative” published in *Quarterly Journal of Speech* in 1963, Burke claims, “theorizing about language heads in the all-importance of the negative” (470). For Burke, nonlinguistic symbols are most fully distinguished from linguistic symbols by the absence of the negative. As Burke claims, “There are many notable aspects of language, such as classification, specification, abstraction, which have their analogues in purely nonverbal behavior. But the negative is a peculiarly linguistic resource” (419). These statements reveal why Burke primarily focuses on linguistic symbols and why many in the field of Burkean studies continue to regard Burke as primarily a “word man.” However, as Burke illustrates in his correspondence with Calabro and in his notated copy of Susanne Langer’s *Feeling and Form*, music and other nonlinguistic symbols can articulate dialectical meaning through the use of dialectical form, providing a way for nonlinguistic symbols to participate in the dialectical order of language.

In addition to theorizing the intersection of music and linguistic symbols as in his review of Harris’s “A Song for Occupations,” Burke further discusses musical forms that function on the dialectical order of language separately from linguistic

symbols. In his correspondence with Calabro, Burke describes how progressive forms in music can create a dialectical kind of form, which leads to a musical transcendence. In one of his later letters to Calabro, Burke writes:

I'd cite you as an earnest guy who had carried on the oldest job: the search for new kinds of formal integrity each of which will develop its own kind of implicit contract with the audience, a contract on the basis of which the audience can begin to swing along with, or in tune with, the work it is appreciatively communing with, participating in. If I understand it, it's what I'd call a 'dialectical' kind of form...each step ends on a kind of take-off into the one that follows. (20 Feb. 1961)

Burke illustrates this dialectical kind of form in comments he wrote in his copy of Susanne Langer's *Feeling and Form*. In Langer's chapter on music and "The Image of Time," after describing the various progressions of musical form a composer employs within music, Langer argues, "when a progression reaches its point of rest in a piece, the music does not therefore stand still, but moves on" (108). In other words, music is always moving through both tones and silence over a duration of time until the end of the piece.

Burke's version of the dialectical form of music involves the use of different musical forms to draw an audience from one style of music to another. While many musicians and non-musicians alike would contend that a musical tone and a musical rest are opposite concepts within musical terminology, Burke suggests that an audience expects to hear sound soon after a musical rest within progressive form. In figure 4.3 below, Langer examines Beethoven's finale in his Op. 9 No. 1, which ends

with eight consecutive eighth notes, followed by a series of alternating quarter notes and quarter rests and finishing with a full bar and a half of rests. In his copy of *Feeling and Form* where Langer is commenting on these final bars of a Beethoven piece, Burke scribbled at the top of this same page, “in fact, would not this concluding rest be treated as the completing of a symmetry a ‘consequent’ number of bars to match the number in its corresponding antecedent?” (note in Burke’s copy of *Feeling and Form* 109, emphasis Burke’s).



Figure 4.3

While Langer suggests that duration and motion continue even in a timed musical rest, Burke takes this one step further by suggesting Beethoven’s progressive form slowly shifts an audience from sound to silence. This creates symmetry between the audible notes and the silent rests, leading an audience to easily and progressively accept the end of the work. The gradual step-by-step movement from sound to silence bridges these two opposing ideas, allowing the audience to transcend these opposing musical forms.

Burke interprets Beethoven’s movement from musical tones into silence as an instance of progressive form that allows the audience to anticipate the shift into the final silence of the piece through dialectically opposing forms of music. Sound and silence are opposing concepts within musical form, and Burke suggests that the

arrangement of these opposing components represent a musical transcendence. The two middle bars of music help the audience transcend from sound to silence through progressive form, using both quarter notes and quarter rests. Each musical bar includes some sound and some silence, allowing Beethoven's work to bridge the musical dialectic between sound and silence over a duration of time. Burke's interpretation of dialectical form in music explains his understanding of this musical transcendence in Beethoven's work, but more importantly, Burke reveals in this section a desire to examine the musical mode separately from the linguistic mode.

Conclusion

Burke and Calabro's written dialogue about music lasted only a few months, and the letters between them after 1961 show only a casual relationship thereafter. However, this correspondence helps reveal the tension Burke encountered when trying to theorize sound outside of the constraints of the linguistic mode. At times, Burke suggests that musical symbols should rely on the logical meanings within linguistic modes of meaning to function in his theories of dramatism and logology, which is a theoretical idea that does not typically resonate with contemporary multimodal theorists. Even as Burke attempted to theorize the intersection between linguistic and aural modalities in the first edition of *Attitudes toward History*, he faced opposition from scientific Marxist critics such as Margaret Schlauch because of his overly psychological approach. Yet in other instances, Burke more fully attempted to theorize auralty outside of the linguistic mode as in his examination of nonverbal symbols in *A Rhetoric of Motives* or in his written comments in his copy of Susanne Langer's *Feeling and Form*. Burke's correspondence with Calabro provides

the evidence that his close attention to formal concerns led him to contemplate a more complex theory of aurality through further examination of the function of rhetorical forms in musical symbolism.

In my final chapter, I will shift from examining what Burke said about music to an analysis of Burke's own musical composition practices. Burke enacted many of these rhetorical principles in his own musical works such as the form/information oscillation and attention to bodily experiences of musical form. In this final chapter, I argue that Burke's musical compositions provide insight into these musical principles through an examination of Burke's practice in the aural mode.

Ch. 5 Kenneth Burke, Multimodal Composer

*“My God, I forgot! I want a pey-annuh,
unless we can rent a pey-annuh. I’m lousy
at said instrument, but I am cleansed by
the opportunity, at times of my own
choosing, to be thus lousy.”*

*Kenneth Burke
Letter to Lee Odell
March 30, 1966*

*“For although it’s obvious that the History
of Music will be same whether or not I jot
down my tunes, there’s much more
hygienic for me personally, since such
divulgings afford one a lift without a
hangover.”*

*Kenneth Burke
Letter to Butchie Burke
November 15, 1982*

In the corner of Kenneth Burke’s living room in his Andover, New Jersey home sits a grand piano. Just to the side of the instrument, which was crafted by Mehlin and Sons in New York, a bookshelf holds about 30 hard-backed books on musical theory and history as well as three-ringed binders filled with Burke’s unpublished original musical compositions. In addition to two songs published as sheet music (“One Light in a Dark Valley” in *Book of Moments* 1955 and “Chorale” in *Critical Inquiry* 1977), Burke composed a number of formal music compositions and also filled 16 journals with musical notation and lyrics. Next to the musical literature on the bookshelf, a stack of postcards addressed to “Mr. Burke” reads as follows:

“Dear Customer,

Regular tuning means greater enjoyment for you and longer life for your piano. Your piano was last tuned 1 ½ years ago. For best results, I would suggest that you have it tuned at this time.

Sincerely,

Alan P. Baker”

For Burke, this piano was an important element in his life. In an interview with Kenneth Burke’s son, Michael Burke, he describes the piano as “an important part of that living room. There [were] always a lot of things going on around it.” While my previous chapters have focused on Burke’s contributions to and interactions with metaphorical music parlors such as Burke’s encounter with avant-garde and leftist musical works both abroad and at home and Burke’s dialogue with Louis Calabro, this chapter focuses on Burke’s physical music parlor in his living room. While Burke composed a majority of his theoretical works in his upstairs closet-sized office, the downstairs living room provided Burke with an opportunity to work out his rhetorical theory in aurality.

Through an examination of Burke’s written music compositions, I argue that Burke enacted his rhetorical theory within an aesthetic realm of symbolization: his own musical compositions. My argument builds on Gregory Clark’s claim in “Aesthetic Power and Rhetorical Experience” that “the *means* of [Burke’s] rhetoric—that its *function* as we experience it—is primarily aesthetic” (98). In terms of methodology, this chapter diverts from a rhetoricizing methodology by closely examining a few of Burke’s more formal music compositions, as well as informal music from his music journals, as evidence of Burke’s foray into aural rhetoric.

While this method allows for a close analysis of Burke's work in the realm of nonlinguistic symbols, it also creates two issues moving forward. First, Burke's musical scores are discursive artifacts, which provide a plan for his nonlinguistic musical performances and not the actual "soundwords" he intended. In other words, the notes on the staves of sheet music limit analysis to the sounds Burke proposed in writing. In a letter to Little, Brown and Company editor Roger Donald, Burke expresses a similar sentiment:

I hold that a poem is like a piano score (or a musical score in general). The words of a poem, like a musical score, are not a finished performance, but instructions for performance. A painting or drawing, on the other hand, is a finished performance. A reader must imaginatively "play" a poem, as a musician may read a score. (7 April 1981)

Therefore, while my analysis of these musical artifacts helps animate the multimodal elements of Burke's symbolic practices, they also constrain Burke's intended sounds to notes on a sheet of paper. Though Burke collected actual recordings of his performances of these discursive artifacts, my analysis of the musical scores works to generate principles of musical rhetoric from Kenneth Burke's practice within the aural mode. Similar to Maureen Daly Goggin's aim in "An *Essamplaire Essai* on the Rhetoricity of Needlework Sampler-Making" to recover women's rhetoric through a historical examination of the practice of needlework, my investigation aims to understand Burke's practice of composing music alongside an analysis of his musical compositions to suggest aural principles of rhetoric.

Second, my discussion and interpretation of Burke's music scores will similarly be discursive. Though a truly multimodal presentation would provide a rich experience of Burke's use of sounds, rhythms, and words, the dissertation format restricts my examples to images of sheet music and analysis through linguistic symbols. As suggested in the often-cited epigram, "Writing about music is like dancing about architecture" (Ross xi), linguistic symbols can only convey so much. Through images of Burke's original sheet music, I examine Burke's own "instructions for performance" in order to draw rhetorical principles of aural symbols through Burke's own practice within the aural mode.

This chapter will use Burke's music compositions to examine whether Burke's lesser-known musical compositions help forecast a development of aural or musical rhetoric. Along the way, my analysis will also integrate principles from contemporary multimodal theorists to explore what multimodal theories can illuminate about Burke's theory. In this chapter, I first examine Burke's background with music and as a musical composer. Next, my investigation brings me to an examination of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century practices of composing music using principles of oral rhetoric followed by a discussion of Burke's position on whether or not music and rhetoric fit together. Finally, using Burke's musical compositions as evidence, I plan to illuminate Burke's rhetorical principles of aural symbolism. As a result of my investigation of these artifacts, I argue Burke not only forecasts a development of aural rhetoric, but he also shows these rhetorical principles in action in his own musical compositions.

Burke, the Composer

While many know Burke for his textual contributions to the field, little attention has been paid to his use of sound as an aspect of composing. This is no surprise given that Burke is predominantly known for his written contributions to the field of rhetoric. Yet, few are familiar with Burke's music criticism, and even fewer scholars know that Burke was a prolific music composer, who regularly scored songs and orchestrations as a hobby. According to Michael Burke, some of these compositions were even performed by a well-known tenor at a nearby music hall. Burke also wrote "One Light in a Dark Valley," a song Burke composed about a light shining in the house across the valley from his Andover home, which was later professionally recorded by his famous grandson Harry Chapin on his album *Dance Band on the Titanic*. Once at a conference, Burke even complained "that he made more money off the recording than he did on his books" (Simons and Melia 154).

Apparently, Kenneth Burke's interest in music began at a very young age. According to Michael Burke, music was often emphasized in the Burke household because of "Daddy" Burke, Kenneth Burke's father. Michael claims, "He would sing a wonderful Irish Tenor and play [the piano].... As kids, [Burke and his siblings would] all get around a piano," and he would sing made up lyrics to the tune of some famous song such as "Finculi, Fincula." At one point, when Kenneth Burke "was young, he was going to take piano lessons... They sat him down in front of the piano, and they wouldn't let him touch the keys. He was only allowed to do finger exercises over the keys, so he said, 'forget it.'" As far as Michael knows, this was the last time Burke participated in conventional music lessons. However, for the grown-up Burke, the living room piano continued to hold a prominent role in the Burke family. According

to Michael, anytime Burke's friends were invited over for dinner, they would later gather around the living room piano to perform for each other. In one instance, artist Peter Bloom and his wife, Malcolm and Murial Cowley, and Kenneth and Libby Burke were all in the living room when Malcolm stood up and sang the song "Bastard King of England." On other occasions, William Carlos Williams would read aloud a new poem he had written or Ralph Ellison would sit at the piano bench and read a new chapter from his yet-to-be-published novel *Invisible Man*.⁷⁵

While Burke often composed music through improvisation, possibly using his own emotion, he also treasured the opportunity to compose music for an audience. As early as 1955, Burke published the sheet music to "One Light in a Dark Valley" in his collection of poems titled *Book of Moments*, and later in 1977, he published a work titled "Chorale," a hymn in 6-part harmony with lyrics in both Latin and English. In addition, Burke shared his own compositions with Louis Calabro ("Schmaltz Waltz" and "Andor") and Henry Brant ("A Major Waltz"). Burke also provided direct feedback on the musical works of his friends and family. He commented on Calabro's "Ceremonial March" in his correspondence, and he also gave composing advice to famous grandson Harry Chapin: "your song lyrics lose out a bit rhythmically, not as you fit the words to the actual music, but owing to the fact

⁷⁵ The living room piano also occupied a more personal place in Burke's life. According to Michael Burke, he "would sit at the piano and improvise regularly, almost daily." In a letter to friend and poet Howard Nemerov, Burke claimed, "Several times a day I go to the piano and make up absolutely ordinary pretty tunes" (13 July 1962). While he knew how to read traditional sheet music, Burke mostly spent time in front of the piano as an impromptu expression of whatever he might be feeling at the moment. For instance, after the family attended the funeral of Burke's mother, he came home and plucked away at the ivory keys for quite some time. As was the case with many of these regular piano sessions, Burke's son Butchie set up the cassette recorder and produced a tape recording of this improvisation. On this occasion, Burke played a slow and droning tune that concentrated heavily on the lower tones of the piano. The sorrow that Burke must have felt was channeled into this recording session. Perhaps, he was composing his emotions within the aural mode.

that these adjustments do not convey themselves to the reading eye alone” (24 Jan. 1976). In other words, Burke largely examined the poetic potential of Chapin’s lyrics apart from the musical context, suggesting the lyrics might benefit from a rhythm more natural to the words as words.⁷⁶ For Burke, musical composition involved both close attention to an audience’s expectation as well as the artist’s own attempt to convey emotion.

Rhetoric and Musical History

Burke goes beyond merely using principles of oral rhetoric for his musical compositions and, instead, designs and implements rhetorical principles unique to music. Historically speaking, artists, painters, and musicians have long been adapting principles of oral rhetoric for the purposes of creating persuasive art. As George Kennedy points out, “the application of theories of rhetoric outside of the field of oral expression was not limited to literature” (215). Some foundational figures in classical rhetoric such as Quintilian and Aristotle have spoken about the persuasive nature of flute playing or singing. Even the classical oral tale of Homer’s *Odyssey* uses the sirens as characters in the story that appeal to the sailors through irresistible sounds. Not until the seventeenth and eighteenth century, however, did musicians begin using the rhetorical appeals of the verbal realm as a model for persuading audiences in the aural realm. From about 1601 to 1745, a handful of musicians and musical theorists developed catalogues of musical figures much like the ancient rhetorical handbook *Rhetorica ad Herennium*. Beginning as early as the

⁷⁶Burke’s suggestions for Chapin’s lyrics appear to be quite similar to the suggestions he offered his University of Chicago course and later published in “On Musicality in Verse,” which involved the use of musical and linguistic modes as complementary modes of meaning.

seventeenth century, musicologists and rhetoricians attempted to develop a theory of musical persuasion relying heavily on rhetorical principles of verbal persuasion (Burmeister, Nucius, Kircher). However, instead of developing and working within rhetorical principles that are inherent to musical symbolism, as I would argue Burke did, these composers largely implemented verbal rhetorical principles in musical symbols.

These musicians and musical theorists admired rhetorical principles developed by classical Greek and Roman rhetoricians, and they used these principles to compose with musical symbolism by superimposing oral principles on top of musical symbols. As Rodney Farnsworth describes in his survey of musicians in the Baroque and Rococo period, “Musical rhetoric functioned under the assumptions and principles of verbal rhetoric” (208). Farnsworth further claims, “the Baroque theorists drew heavily from Cicero and Quintilian; however, they freely adapted these terms for musical application” (209). In addition, these musical composers also used Aristotle’s rhetorical appeals:

Ethos was central to the choice of rhythm ... when projecting royal dignity at court locations, when delineating operatic characters, or when setting the words of a prophet or of Christ in a sacred cantata or passion. *Pathos* by means of the effective use of keys—one which harmonically creates the desired emotion in the hearer. *Logos* was the essence of the *fugue*—which is a highly systematic application of *topoi* rather than a musical form. (209)

Similarly, Farnsworth claims that “the French employ[ed] the *staseis*” (209) within their musical works. While Baroque and Rococo musical composers attempted to more fully integrate a rhetorical approach to musical composition, they continued to make music subservient to verbal symbols by superimposing oral principles on top of music.

In addition to musicians, musical theorists of the seventeenth century examined music—both vocal with words and instrumental without words—in coordination with principles from oral rhetoric. In other words, music was viewed not as a stand-alone symbolic system but as ornament. For this reason, much seventeenth-century rhetorical theory of music focuses on oral principles of *decoratio*. Music theorists such as Johannes Nucius (*Musices Practicae* 1613), Athanasius Kircher (*Musurgia Universalis* 1650), and Christoph Bernhard (*Tractus Compositionis Augmentatus* 1657) compiled extensive lists of rhetorical principles at work in music (Buelow). Seventeenth-century German poet, composer, and music theorist Joachim Burmeister claims, “we must conclude that there is only little difference between music and the nature of oration” (qtd. in Bartel 57). In his 1606 work *Musica Poetica*, Burmeister establishes a vocabulary of musical figures, which often resemble figures in oral rhetoric. For instance, Burmeister adapts the rhetorical figure of *anadiplosis* or “word repetition for emphasis” in order to describe the use of repetitive form within music (musicapoetica.net). Other music theorists of the time attempted to develop musical figures germane to music symbolism such as *kyklosis*, which is “a series of usually eight notes in a circular or

sine wave formation” (Bartel 445). However, Baroque musical composers and theorists tended to privilege figures of rhetoric generally attached to oral rhetoric.

More recently, rhetorical scholar Brian Vickers not only denounces the Baroque use of rhetorical figures for musical symbolism but altogether rejects the use of rhetoric in music. In “Figures of Rhetoric/Figures of Music?,” Vickers examines the explosion of rhetorical figures for musical symbolism in the Baroque period, which leads him to claim “rhetoric is inalienably about communication, and can only use words, and meanings” (44). While other scholars such as Bartel and Farnsworth reject Vickers’s claim as “riddled with musical misunderstandings and inaccuracies” (Bartel 57) or on the grounds that it “shows scant knowledge of music and little sympathy with musical/rhetorical comparisons in general” (Farnsworth 207), I would argue that Vickers is on to something. Similar to my own assertion in this section, Vickers claims “verbal compositional practices were—one is tempted to say—superimposed on music” (16) during the Baroque period. While I agree with Farnsworth’s latter claim that Vickers shows little sympathy for a music/rhetoric connection, Vickers’s article also importantly points out that many Baroque musicians were adapting oral principles for musical rhetoric. Though some seventeenth-century Baroque music theorists attempted to make a clearer distinction such as Kirschner who claims, “There is a great power yet still latent within music—a greater energy and capacity to influence effectively the human mind, than that possessed by rhetoric” (qtd. in Farnsworth 212), most continued to adapt oral principles for musical rhetoric. This theoretical approach continued to

elevate linguistic symbolism above other kinds of symbols and kept music theorists from truly evaluating rhetorical principles that were found only in musical symbols.

Unlike many Baroque musicians and musical theorists, Kenneth Burke more fully developed a rhetoric of music unique to the rhythms and tonalities which music employs. As both a musical composer and literary writer, Burke would most likely agree with Vickers's assertion that "music obeys quite different laws to [verbal] language, with its words, concepts, signs, syntax, denotation and connotation" (41). Burke's expanded theory of rhetorical form largely attempts to capture the rhetorical appeals of music. Like Susanne Langer, Burke views music as an "articulate form" (*Feeling and Form* 31) that conveys meaning, and Burke's transcendence from the term language to the term "symbolicity" in his later essays for *Language as Symbolic Action* demonstrates his attempt to more inclusively theorize linguistic symbols as well as music, architecture, dance, painting, etc. While at the end of his article Farnsworth "wonder[s] why such a profound rhetorical thinker wasted so much critical space and time on literature rather than music" (223), he didn't have the benefit of examining Burke's musical works as well as unpublished reviews Burke never submitted to the *Nation*.

For Burke, music implements the manipulative instinct because of its ability to symbolize at the subconscious level of language. In the unpublished version of his review of a 1933 performance of Debussy's "Blessed Damsel," Burke examines what he calls the "manipulative instinct" in music, which he claims "serves to unite the practical and esthetic activities by a common motivation" (1). As Burke suggests in a footnote in *Permanence and Change*, the mode of sound often remains

unexamined because the scientific attitude “tends to think of understanding as *ocular*, a matter of *seeing*” (201n). Basing this assumption on Nietzsche’s distinction between “eye men” and “ear men,” Burke claims society “has developed a style of expression which poorly recommends itself to the ear” (201n).⁷⁷ Thus, Burke claims in his review of Debussy that music “is mainly ‘decorative.’ But when it is not decorative, when it does elicit a deeply emotional appeal, it draws us into exceptional reasons and leaves us there. Our return is a matter of our own contrivance” (4). In other words, Burke acknowledges that music functions at an ornamental level much like the appeals to *decoratio* that Baroque composers discovered. However, he also claims that music functions on the subconscious emotional level as well, which is beyond logical reasoning. Much like Langer, who claims musical symbolization is like a “kaleidoscopic play, probably below the threshold of consciousness, certainly outside the pale of discursive thinking” (*Philosophy in a New Key* 244), Burke views emotion as a second, more latent way musical symbols make meaning.

Burke’s vast knowledge in the fields of rhetoric, music, and even psychology allow him to more fully develop a rhetoric of music outside of linguistic symbolism than previously believed. This knowledge also provided him with a way to develop a theory of multimodality through his musical compositions and rhetorical theory. Many composition scholars point to the New London Group’s 1996 publication “A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies” as seminal for the multimodal turn in the composition classroom, yet this storyline has also tended to obscure prior approaches to

⁷⁷ Similarly, scholars such as Martin Jay have suggested a “crisis of ocularcentrism” (63) that has privileged image-based symbolism over sound-based symbols.

multimodality such as Kenneth Burke's. As a result of the rapid increase in digital technology shortly before 1996, the New London group claimed to be anticipating an increasing "multiplicity and integration of significant modes of meaning-making, where the textual is also related to the visual, the audio, the spatial, the behavioral, and so on" (64). Additionally, Kress and Van Leeuwen in their 2001 work *Multimodal Discourse* aim "at a common terminology for all semiotic modes" (1), expanding upon the New London Group's call to reverse the dominance of monomodality prevalent in Western culture over the past centuries. While several multimodal and new media scholars have positioned themselves in opposition to the monomodality of print culture, others such as Anne Wysocki and Cynthia Selfe have attempted to bridge this dichotomy. In *Writing New Media*, Wysocki claims that "new media texts do not have to be digital," but the text should be "designed so that its materiality is not effaced" (15). In other words, Wysocki argues new media studies should pay more attention to materiality and form rather than to the digital contexts in which some of these texts are created. Additionally, in her *CCC* article "The Movement of Air, the Breath of Meaning," Selfe explores a history of aural composing modalities such as speech, music, and sound to argue that prior to the nineteenth century, writing instruction in America actually relied heavily on aurality. Though Selfe claims, "we need to pay attention to both writing and aurality, and other composing modalities, as well" (618), I argue that Burke did pay attention to writing and aurality. A look back at the importance of aurality in Kenneth Burke's composing process reveals a multimodal composer and theorist working in this so-called monomodal era. In other words, Burke's experience as a musician and

rhetorical theorist provided him with the perspective to value modalities of meaning separately and together. More importantly, Burke's musical compositions provide ample evidence for understanding his theories of multimodality and aural rhetoric.

Kenneth Burke's Musical Compositions

In one of his untitled poems included in *Late Poems, 1968-1993*, Burke attempted to capture his aim when composing with images and music:

You can twist all things, Sight or Music-wise,
can give them every chance to misbehave.

And Those-Who-Know will take it in their strides,
Finding for each such item its enclave—

But every Word to every single Wordlessness is slave. (216)

In this short poem, Burke describes the likelihood that images and music will resist interpretation for some audiences while words might appear to be quite stable for other audiences. Though Burke argued for “an *attitude* of linguistic skepticism” (319) in *A Grammar of Motives* in which all kinds of language—including linguistic—misbehave, he appears to compose music to “twist things” in some works and communicate in other works. Throughout his life, he composed many kinds of musical pieces for a wide variety of rhetorical purposes. Burke shows facility with a diverse array of musical composition techniques in such works as “A Major Waltz,” “All I Want Is,” “Sarrusaphone Surrounded (with Trumpet and Tuba),” “Not Without Gloominess,” and “Chorale.” From gospel hymns to chamber music arrangements, Burke composed a multitude of instrumental and vocal pieces for a variety of

rhetorical purposes, ranging from the purely aesthetic to the didactic. In addition, Burke maintained a regular music journal in the later years of his life, beginning in 1985 and continuing until at least 1990. As Burke was in his early 90s, Burke's son Anthony bought and dated 80-page notebooks filled with blank music staff paper. Burke would proceed to write a musical score to the descriptions of his everyday mundane experiences. According to Michael Burke, Kenneth Burke owned a small 15-key keyboard that he would take with him to the kitchen table and use as an aid to composing the music within these journals. Typical journal entries include a description of what he ate for breakfast and complaints about being unable to sleep at night. The words are written underneath the musical notation, but it doesn't appear that the words are intended as lyrics since the rhythm of the words and musical notes are out of sync. These journals clearly show Burke composing in the multiple modalities of written and aural.

In the following analysis, I will focus on three of Burke's musical works to illuminate the rhetorical principles Burke used within musical symbolism to both "twist things" and communicate with "those-who-know." Since the majority of the evidence of Burke's musical work is from late in his life, these musical compositions reveal both a composer and multimodal theorist working to craft music based on an extensive body of work in rhetorical theory. The first section will focus on Burke's 1980 work "A Solemnity" to understand how he emphasized a multimodal approach to music, using both linguistic and musical symbols to appeal to an audience through form and information. Next, I examine Burke's own musical journals to examine Burke's motion/action pair and the role it plays in musical symbolism's

embodiment of the natural rhythms of life. The final section will focus on Burke's work titled "Towards Heroics" to show how Burke intended to shift a receptive audience to a participant audience.

Form/Information in "A Solemnity"

Burke composed "A Solemnity" in July 1980 at the age of eighty-three, roughly eleven years after his wife Libbie died in May 1969.⁷⁸ The work, which is written in the key of A minor, is a grave composition utilizing the lower ranges of a baritone voice and a bass voice. These two vocal parts set to mournful lyrics such as "Solemn as requiem as though lamenting yet not clamorous" begin and end in polyphony or counterpoint, which is two simultaneous yet independent vocal melodies. The rhythm of the work, which is composed in common 4/4 time, relies primarily on quarter and eighth notes.

Throughout "A Solemnity," Burke emphasizes an oscillation between form and information using lyrics and music. As I described in chapter 2, Burke developed the form/information pair in "Psychology and Form"—which was an essay originally published in *The Dial* in 1925 and later included in *Counter-Statement*—to set up the conceptual framework for describing the dual multimodal appeals of a symbol. In this essay, Burke primarily attempts to demonstrate how "the hypertrophy of the psychology of information is accompanied by the corresponding atrophy of the psychology of form" (33) and vice versa. In the "psychology of information," symbols refer to specific objects, ideas, and feelings in a symbol-user's perceived reality. These informational symbols overtly name a

⁷⁸ Lyrics from this song are viewable in the appendix.

thing. In contrast, the “psychology of form” covertly symbolizes through formal structures such as narrative and metaphor, which arouse and fulfill desires (124).

These dual appeals are evident within “A Solemnity.”

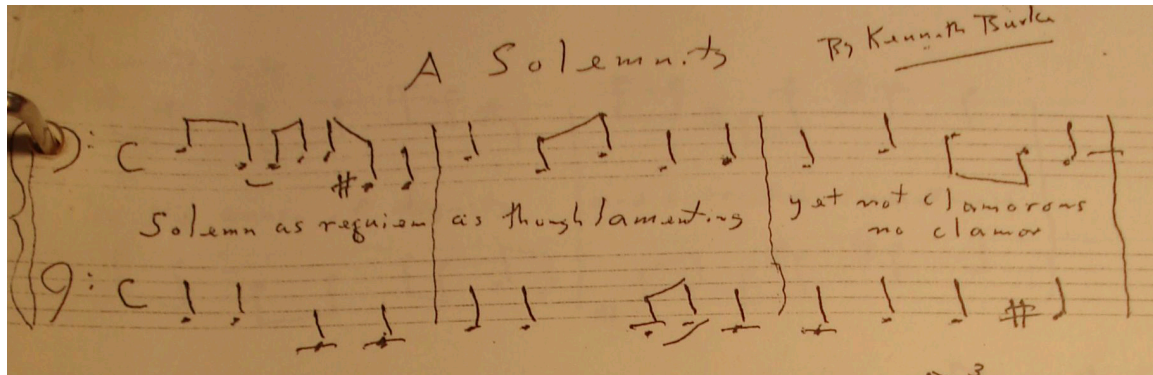


Figure 5.1

In the first few lines of “A Solemnity,” the audience should be able to decipher a variety of formal appeals such as the ruminating melodies in a minor key, two vocal parts with mostly disparate rhythms, and rhythmic emphasis on the lyrics in the baritone line but not the bass line.⁷⁹ While these formal elements convey a solemn mood,⁸⁰ words give the tones and rhythms an important logical appeal to reinforce this emotion. Words articulate Burke’s emotion in the linguistic realm, but without the use of music, certain elements of the lyrics are not articulated as clearly. In particular, Burke’s use of counterpoint and staggered lyrics are more effective when sung and not spoken. To illustrate, speak the beginning lines of “A Solemnity”:

“Solemn as requiem as though lamenting yet not clamorous/no clamor”

In these lyrics—which were later published as a stand-alone poem in *Late Poems, 1968-1993*—the baritone line and bass line diverge ever so slightly to call attention to the logical appeal with “not clamorous” and “no clamor” sung simultaneously.

⁷⁹ To listen to the piano version of “A Solemnity,” visit: <http://www.joeloverall.com/kbmusic>

⁸⁰ Many musical scholars often consider a minor key to be “solemn.”

Without musical tones and rhythmic cues, these doubled lyrics not only appear unnecessary but also the doubling cannot be conveyed as dynamically through linear linguistic symbols. When combined with music, these words can be more easily doubled without causing an audience to resist or question repetition as a rhetorical device. In *Counter-Statement*, Burke addresses this issue, claiming music “deals minutely in frustrations and fulfillments of desire, and for that reason more often gives us those curves of emotion which, because they are natural, can bear repetition without loss” (36). With the addition of words, music can contain repeated elements that emphasize informational appeals without drawing attention to repetitive forms.

More importantly, music combined with words can often cause an audience to oscillate between the formal appeals of music and the logical appeals of words. This oscillation enhances Burke’s emotional message by covertly and overtly presenting informative appeals through musical symbolism. In “Music with Words: Semiotic/Rhetoric,” rhetoric scholar John McClelland describes this interaction between two semiotic levels: “On one level the music ‘de-rhetorizes’ the words while on other levels it reinforces their rhetorical effect” (211). In other words, music can remove words from their logical functions as well as draw important attention to their rhetorical effect.

At various moments within this piece, Burke works to create this oscillation between form and information through music and words. For example, Burke returns to the melodies and lyrics from the opening three bars of music two more times throughout the work.

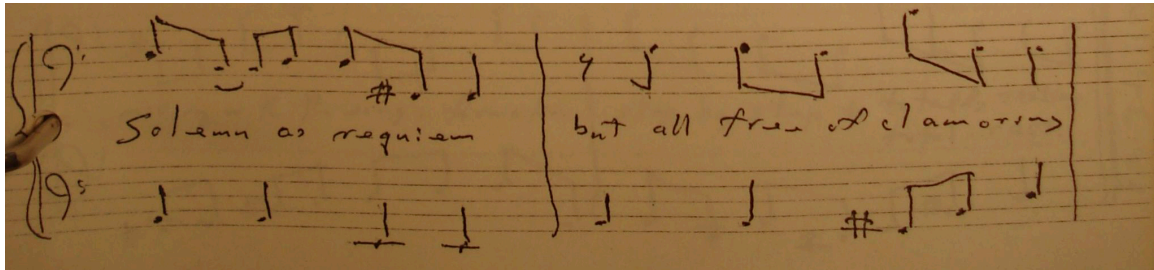


Figure 5.2

However, in the first instance of repetition above, Burke alters the lyrics and melodies slightly in the second bar in order to surprise the audience and direct attention to the musical forms. In the above example, Burke changes the lyrics from “as though lamenting” to “but all free of clamoring.” While the words resemble lyrics from the third bar of the opening line “yet not clamorous,” the melodies are quite different. Initially, the repeated form and lyrics in the first bar of music cause an audience to focus on the words “solemn as requiem” because the form does not surprise the audience whereas the drastically different melody in the second line causes the audience’s attention to shift toward the formal appeals such as the varied rhythm in the baritone line. Burke’s variation of repetition shifts an audience’s perspective from overt informational symbols toward covert formal symbols, masking the overt appeals the musician makes through words.

Throughout the piece, the audience shifts attention toward one realm of symbolization, which corresponds with less attention to the other. The oscillation between musical and lyrical symbols allows Burke to integrate ideas of sorrow conveyed through linguistic symbols by both revealing and concealing those ideas within a single musical work. Burke claims in his review of Roy Harris’s “A Song for Occupations that this is the most “useful” way to persuade through musical

symbolism because words are able to identify an attitude while musical form often reaffirms those linguistic qualities. As Burke employs both words and musical symbols in “A Solemnity,” he sometimes works to reaffirm linguistic symbols through repetitive rhythms and familiar tonalities. However, he also appears to draw attention away from words through surprising melodies or tonalities such as an augmented note in a minor chord or the addition of a triplet rhythm. While the composer can only transcend what Burke calls “the deviousness of musical symbolism” by anchoring a message in less ambiguous linguistic symbols, music will continue to both conceal and possibly enhance lyrics.

Burke’s Music Journals

For Burke, music, more than any other symbolic system, can “deceive” largely because of the ability of musical symbols to resonate with our natural, bodily rhythms and motions.⁸¹ As a result, musical forms often blur the boundaries between biological and symbolic rhythms while the problematic ideologies they represent are submerged underneath natural bodily rhythms. Much earlier in the 1931 work *Counter-Statement*, Burke claims:

The appeal of form as exemplified in rhythm enjoys a special advantage in that rhythm is more closely allied with ‘bodily’ processes. Systole and diastole, alternation of the feet and walking, inhalation and exhalation, up and down, in and out, back and forth,

⁸¹ Burke uses the term “deceive” in his *Nation* review of Hindemith’s *Mathis der Maler* to describe the potential in music to articulate ideologies without acknowledgement of ideological differences. Rather than making an argument about deception from truth, Burke’s focus on the word “deceive” describes how the musical mode can conceal ideology as a kind of natural rhythm.

such are the types of distinctly motor experiences ‘tapped’ by rhythm.

(140)

This passage illustrates Burke’s early focus on the bodily forms and similarities within symbolic forms. As Hawhee argues in *Moving Bodies: Kenneth Burke at the Edges of Language*, Burke’s “quest to theorize language and rhetoric consistently led him to bodily matters and back again, to language’s edges” (106). In the later years of his life, Burke kept a musical journal to jot down not only the linguistic details of his everyday experiences but also the rhythms and tonalities he experienced and played on a small electric keyboard. The journals provide evidence that music blurred Burke’s own distinction between the symbolic action within musical symbols and nonsymbolic motion of his ailing body.

Burke’s distinction between nonsymbolic motion and symbolic action provides a useful framework for understanding the biological and symbolic similarities in his music journals. Prior to composing his music journals, in his 1978 article “(Nonsymbolic) Motion/(Symbolic) Action,” Burke reveals his own understanding of the motion/action pair.⁸² According to Weiss, Burke’s article “seems to have been more a source of confusion than clarification for those interested in understanding the relationship between motion and action” (1). However, in reading this article through the lens of Burke’s interest in musical symbolism, I argue that Burke’s action/motion pair reveals an important advantage of musical symbolism: the medium of music is based on motion. Burke describes

⁸² Burke initially developed the motion/action pair in a little known 1972 article “Dramatism and Development,” but most scholars attribute Burke’s 1978 article “(Nonsymbolic) Motion/(Symbolic) Action” as the authoritative word on the matter.

motion as the domain of the human body whereas action involves “modes of behavior made possible by the acquiring of a conventional, arbitrary symbolic system” (809). Thus, Burke’s definition of *motion* involves natural, unintentional movement, which becomes *action* once used intentionally or interpreted as an act by an audience. While Burke attempts to embrace rather than bridge the binary of the action/motion pair, he also appears to advocate “attitude” as a third term that links this pair. In other words, the natural motions of the body become symbolic actions once an audience interprets motions into an attitude. However, for Burke, “the sights and sounds of a motion picture are, in themselves, wholly in the realm of motion” (833). Thus, music as a symbol system has the rhetorical advantage of masquerading as biological, natural motions whereas the composer of such music may have intended a symbolic action. Burke’s musical journals help to illustrate this point.

Burke began keeping a regular music journal at the age of eighty-eight and continued until he turned ninety-one. In dating each of his entries, he uses a roman numeral for the month and an Arabic number for the date. Most entries also begin with the exact time of day before the words begin. For example, on December 17, 1987 at 9:55 am, Burke begins his morning with 20 bars of music without words. At 1:05 pm of the same day, Burke writes, “Just back from my walk with the beginning of this one. No notable mail to have influenced its development.” The purpose of these words in the music journals ranges from Burke’s inner monologue about the music he is composing to his description of daily events and struggles with

insomnia. In some areas, the musical bars have no writing underneath, and in other areas there are two or three lines of writing per musical bar.

In these journals, Burke incorporates words not as lyrics for the music but as a companion to or explanation for the sounds and rhythms he is symbolizing. Though Burke's purpose in crafting these abbreviated musical vignettes takes him away from reaffirming musical qualities in words, which would emphasize an oscillation between musical and linguistic symbols, these journals reveal the intimate relationship between the musical rhythms Burke employs and Burke's daily bodily rhythms. For Burke, the rhythms of a musical work create an experience of bodily motions, drawing attention away from music as symbolism.

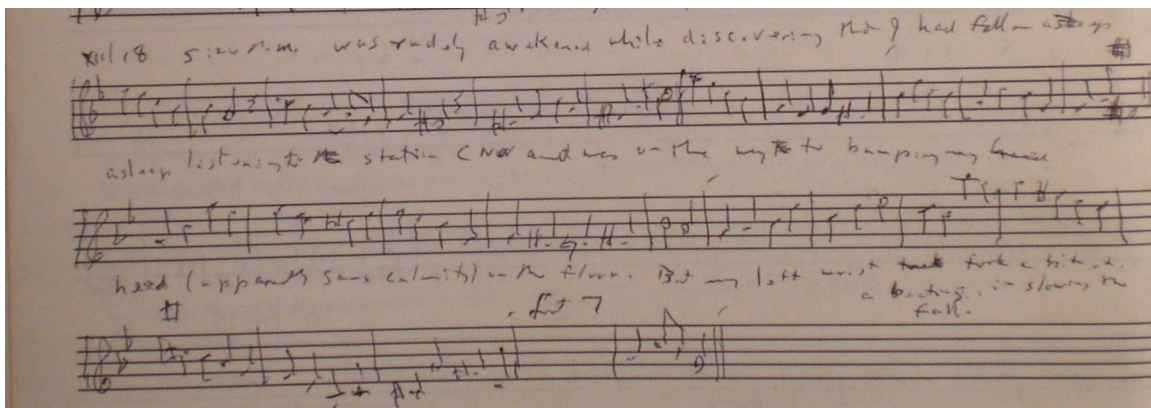


Figure 5.3

For example, in the above instance on December 18, 1987 at 5:20 pm, Burke writes, "I was rudely awakened while discovering that I had fallen asleep listening to the station CNN and was on the way to bumping my head (apparently sans calamity) on the floor. But my left wrist took a bit of a beating in slowing the fall."⁸³ The musical lines that Burke pairs with this description rely heavily on repeated quarter notes,

⁸³ To listen to a performance of the music that accompanied this journal entry, visit: <http://www.joeloverall.com/kbmusic>

and the melody in the key of B flat major fluctuates from a high E flat to a low C sharp. The melody consistently rises and falls throughout the duration of the piece and builds up to a dramatic fall in the second line of music in the above figure, possibly imitating Burke's fall while watching CNN.

While I could easily speculate on the meanings of each bar of music, examining which particular rise and fall in tonality or rhythm could possibly correspond with Burke's described fall on the floor, the important thing to note here is that Burke appears to be using rhythm and tone to convey bodily motions, which he then translates linguistically from bodily motion into music and then into words. My interpretation of Burke's ambiguous musical symbols relies primarily on the linguistic symbols below to move from the motion-focused medium of music into the realm of symbolic action. Based on his description through linguistic symbols, Burke appears to be articulating bodily motion in these lines of music, and the audience similarly experiences these lines of music over a duration of time, which symbolizes a bodily experience. Without these linguistic symbols, according to Burke, his music becomes symbolic action only upon performance and interpretation, and music remains within the realm of motion.



Figure 5.4

As my above figure attempts to illustrate, Burke's definition of the action/motion pair in musical symbolism begins with a bodily experience that a musical composer captures through sound and rhythm. This translation of a bodily

experience into musical symbols represents a movement from nonsymbolic motion to symbolic action. However, once the music has been composed, the audience experiences it as nonsymbolic motion, and their interpretation of the work becomes symbolic action. Burke seems to suggest that music does not fully articulate an attitude until an audience interprets it, and often, this interpretation occurs in subtle, subconscious ways for an audience through identification. As Greg Clark has shown, motion-based mediums such as landscapes or music persuade by creating identification through aesthetic experiences. For Clark, these experiences are “as aesthetic in their form and content as they are rhetorical in their effect” (“Aesthetic Power and Rhetorical Experience” 97). Though Clark and Burke would claim that identification is an act of interpretation, an audience may not interpret music as overtly because they are identifying musical rhythms with bodily rhythms. As Hawhee claims, “The body can reveal or conceal attitude” (115), and Burke’s music journals help to illustrate this close alliance between bodily rhythms and musical rhythms. More importantly, music as experience teeters between the action/motion pair because music relies on a medium that uses rhythmic motion to symbolize.

From Receptive to Participant: “Towards Heroics”

Burke’s 1970s Vietnam war-era work “Towards Heroics,” which he wrote for a baritone voice without accompaniment, reveals a composer eager to cultivate a participant audience. As Burke theorized in his 1934 review of Harris’s “A Song for Occupations,” music can appeal to a receptive and/or participant audience. While he acknowledges the convenience of persuading a receptive audience, which often leaves music in the realm of motion, Burke’s stated goal as music critic in his *Nation*

review of Harris and later as musical composer is to shift his audience towards participation with the work as a medium of motion that articulates symbolic action. Rather than composing a work that the audience will merely receive, Burke aims for his audience to interact with the many formal and linguistic appeals in his work. Throughout the thirty-three bars of melody in the somber key of E minor, Burke's lyrics call on the audience to "be brave" and speak out to "start things right." Though Burke employs lyrics to compel his audience to join in protest against the war in Vietnam, his main purpose appears to be for the audience to wrestle with the decision to protest. While the rhythm of the work written in 4/4 time relies heavily on repeated eighth notes, Burke, at times, slows the rhythm to quarter or half notes to emphasize specific words or phrases. This combination of words and musical forms shows Burke's aim to use music and words to more overtly persuade an audience toward the "heroic" act of protesting the war.

Burke initially examined receptive audiences in *Permanence and Change*, where he claims "the ear is primarily receptive" (201n), suggesting musical symbols are most often encountered at a receptive level. In other words, music has the advantage of concealing meaning through the motion of rhythmic forms. This is not to say that music for a receptive audience is arhetorical. In fact, music encountered at the receptive level is highly rhetorical largely because it appears to be masquerading as nonsymbolic motion. Because the tones and rhythms symbolize through motion, the audience either interprets the musical and linguistic symbols by participating with the work or receives the work without questioning the formal identifications. Burke's purpose as a composer in several of these later works is to

draw an audience into the realm of participation by integrating less ambiguous modalities such as words.

Several recent rhetorical scholars have examined this receptive/participant pair from the point of view of the audience. For instance, Krista Ratcliffe emphasizes rhetorical listening as “a stance of openness that a person may choose to assume in relation to any person, text, or culture” (1). This kind of listening may be used “to hear people’s intersecting identifications with gender and race (including whiteness), the purpose being to negotiate troubled identifications” (17). Though Ratcliffe’s term “rhetorical listening” encourages an audience to more critically listen to a text with the full awareness of the identities and sub-identities they bring to the table, Burke approaches this problem from the perspective of the musical composer. For Burke, the role of the music composer is crucial to point out ways in which to move past receptive listening and cultivate participant audiences as demonstrated in his work “Towards Heroics.”

For Burke, cultivating a participant audience as a composer involves using both musical form and lyrics to compel an audience to listen more critically within a motion-based medium. While Burke continued to compose and praise grand instrumental musical compositions, he also advocated a less devious style of music that invites an audience to consider musical and linguistic symbols as a more overt form of symbolic action. In other words, Burke advocated the use of lyrics combined with musical forms to oscillate between formal and informational symbols. Rather than allow a musical composition to ruminate only in formal appeals, which an audience can sit back and admire, or focus only on the didactic, information-focused

elements of lyrical music, Burke strove to appeal to both form- and information-minded audiences to compel them to participate. In other words, Burke's participant audience is compelled to oscillate between formal and information appeals through the composer's use of both aural and linguistic modes, and Burke's "Towards Heroics" demonstrates this multimodal appeal to a musical audience.

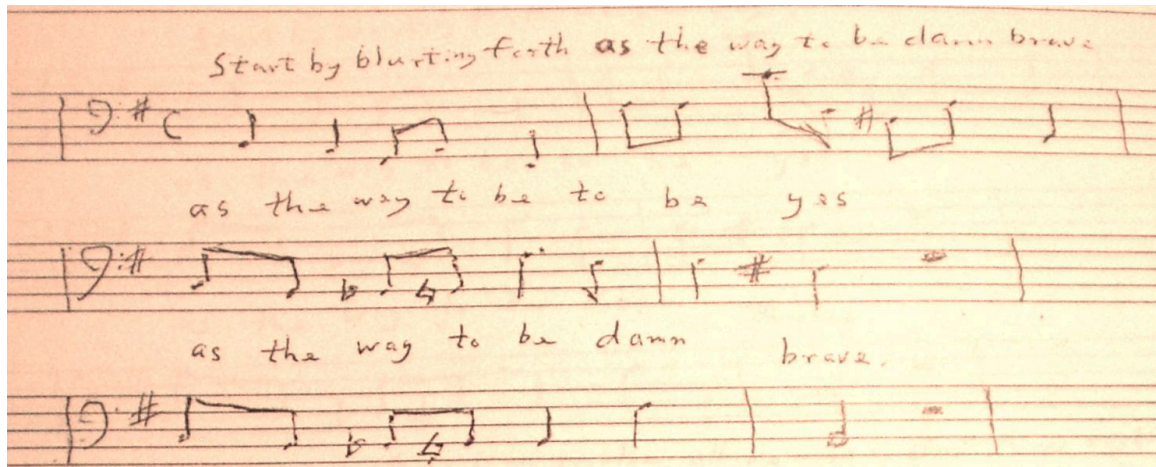


Figure 5.5

In the first few lines of "Towards Heroics," we are able to hear a variety of formal appeals such as the serious tone of a minor key; the slowed, rhythmic stress at the end of certain lines; and a half-rest pause for emphasis before a repeated line. While these formal elements convey a serious mood, words give the tones and rhythms an important informative appeal to speak out on issues in the 1970s. Burke's attention to form AND information draws an audience into participation in this work. Words provide the call to action in "Towards Heroics," but without the use of Burke's intended rhythmic motion, certain elements of the lyrics are not as dynamic. In particular, Burke's use of repeated words is more effective when sung and not spoken. To illustrate, speak the beginning lines of "Towards Heroics":
"Start by blurt-ing forth as the way to be damn brave,

as the way to be to be yes,

as the way to be damn brave.”

Without musical forms, these lines come across as choppy and the repetition seems a bit distracting and unnecessary. The words are able to convey a specific linguistic appeal to the audience in order to encourage them to consider “blurting forth,” but words accompanied by music can fully take advantage of both aural and linguistic modes to encourage a participant audience.

Now listen to my performance of the first few lines of “Towards Heroics” at: <http://www.joeloverall.com/kbmusic>. As you listen, you hear the rhythm of the piece begin slowly and pick up the pace on the two syllable word “blurting” much like the normal rhythms of speech. The rhythm continues at this faster pace until the final words of the lyrical line “be to be yes” and “be damn brave.” Burke’s rhythmic accentuation of the natural sounds and pacing of these words not only emphasize the rhythmic nature within the words but also return the words more fully to the bodily rhythms used to say them such as the necessary pauses for breathing. Music provides Burke with the opportunity to compliment the sounds and rhythms within these words as well as the logical meaning contained in them. In this way, Burke emphasizes the dual meanings or the *soundwords* of his lyrics.

In addition, Burke accentuates the rhythms of speech in order to emphasize certain words and phrases throughout the piece.

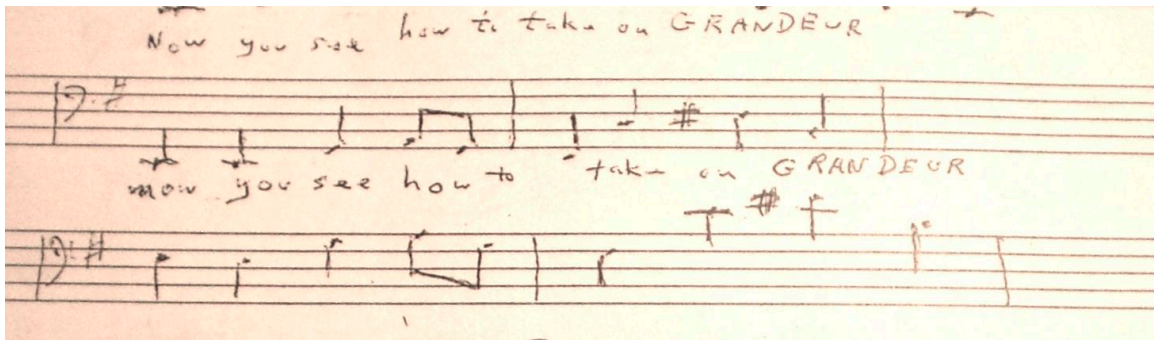


Figure 5.6

For instance, the above section demonstrates Burke's attempt to slow down the rhythm to draw importance to the words, which likely provides an informational appeal for many audiences. Following a string of lyrics in repeated eighth notes, Burke methodically integrates the lyrics "now you see how to take on grandeur" by relying primarily on repeated quarter notes. The one exception to this repeated rhythms is the less important words "how to," which help to quickly shuffle the listener between the two more important phrases. This slowed and repetitive rhythm helps to deemphasize the rhythmic motion of the music and draw attention to the symbolic action within the words. In this way, Burke causes his audience to oscillate their attention from the rhythmic and tonal appeals in the work and toward the overt linguistic appeals of the words. For form-focused audiences, this causes them to abandon merely receiving the work and participate in the informational focus of the work.

In other areas of the piece, Burke speeds up the rhythm and integrates unexpected tonalities, causing an information-focused audience to more closely participate in the musical form of the work.

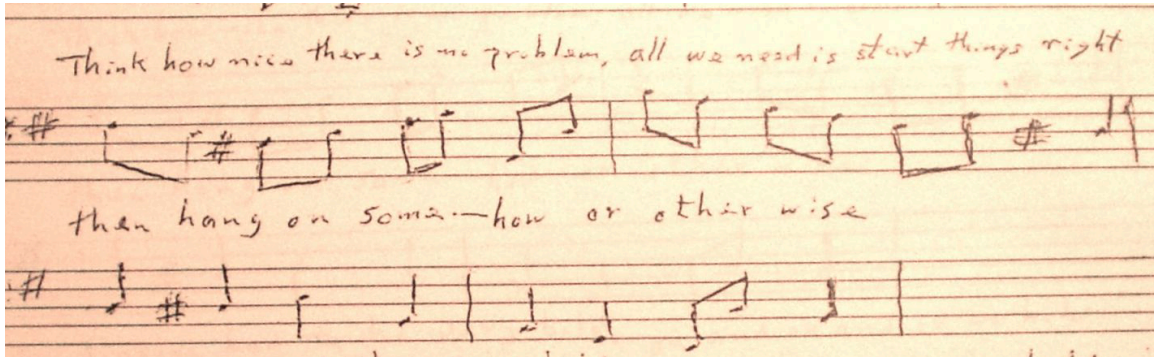


Figure 5.7

In the above example, Burke returns to the more commonly repeated eighth notes with much more variance in tonality. In the third note on this line, Burke even integrates a D sharp note, which lies outside of the typical diatonic E minor scale. Within these two bars of music, Burke draws the audience's attention away from the lyrics "Think how nice there is no problem, all we need is start things right" in order to shift attention to the more surprising elements in rhythm and tone. While these surprising elements remain outside of bodily rhythms that might resonate with an audience, the surprise in rhythm deviates from the audience's expectation. The audience's attention is drawn to the musical motions, which causes them to divert their attention momentarily away from logical reasoning, inviting the information-focused audience to participate in the formal aspects of the work.

Through this oscillation between the musical and the lyrical symbols, Burke eases both form- and information-focused audiences into a logical argument through words while continuing to resonate with their natural bodily rhythms through music, causing them to participate in the entirety of both aural and linguistic modes. In this way, Burke can more effectively use the advantages of musical symbolism while simultaneously integrating linguistic symbols to put forth

a logical argument. Though Burke's distinction of nonsymbolic motion and symbolic action provides an important set of concepts for encouraging a variety of audiences to participate in a multimodal work, Burke's suggestion to integrate words with music continues to demonstrate a linguistic bias. While words often invite an overt interpretation into an attitude, music and other motion-based symbol systems articulate meanings in much more covert ways. As a result, musical interpretations often diverge in many different and often contradicting directions. Words not only help to anchor these interpretations but also help to make musical motions more overtly musical actions in which any audience can participate.

Conclusion

As a musician, Kenneth Burke was an amateur at best, but his musical compositions provide a window into the aural focus of his rhetorical theory. While seventeenth- and eighteenth-century musical theorists attempted to apply rhetorical principles designed for oral rhetoric, Burke's experience as a musician caused him to seek out rhetorical principles that were germane to music and aurality. In this way, Burke developed a rhetoric that was unique to music by focusing on principles such as the form/information pair, the motion/action pair, and receptive vs. participant audiences. These principles allowed Burke to consider the aural mode alongside principles he developed for the linguistic mode. While I have integrated various contemporary multimodal theorists in this chapter to help explain Burke's multimodal focus, I also argue that Burke's rhetoric of music is important for the field of multimodal rhetoric. In my final concluding chapter, I will examine the overall contribution of this dissertation to the field of rhetorical studies

and more specifically to the subfields of Burkean studies and multimodal rhetoric while suggesting directions for future scholarship.

Ch. 6 Conclusion and Further Research

Throughout this dissertation, I have examined evidence of Kenneth Burke's interests in music such as music reviews, correspondence with musicians, and original musical compositions not only to recreate Burke's music parlors but also to understand how Burke's rhetorical theory supplements contemporary theories of aurality and multimodality. While I have integrated multimodal theorists throughout this dissertation in order to illuminate multimodal aspects of Burkean theory, this concluding chapter situates Burke in contemporary discussions of multimodality and digital rhetoric. As I claim in my introduction, Burkean theory is useful for today's digital contexts, and this conclusion will demonstrate that usefulness. In the first part of this conclusion, I will examine each musical parlor from each chapter to argue for Burke's place in the present-day field of multimodal rhetoric. Then, I suggest further directions for future scholarship at the intersection of historiographic research methodologies and multimodal rhetoric.

Conclusions

One challenge of this dissertation has been the extension of Burkean ideas into the realm of new media and multimodality. Many multimodal scholars such as Jeff Rice claim to "look beyond the canonical texts that we believe have shaped our discipline in order to draw upon areas not normally considered relevant to composition studies" (9). Rice, who leans heavily on Marshall McLuhan, aims to discover "rhetorical moves" inherent in digital situations such as chora, appropriation, juxtaposition, commutation, nonlinearity, and imagery. Since Burke theorized multiple modes of meaning in non-digital contexts, his examination of

aurality may, at times, find difficulty addressing digital situations. However, multimodal scholars such as Anne Wysocki as well as Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, who seek to theorize the materiality of modes of meaning, help draw multimodal theory away from digital contexts that might obscure a Burkean approach to multimodality. Kress and van Leeuwen define “a mode” as that “material resource which is used in recognisably stable ways as a means of articulating discourse” (*Multimodal Discourse* 25). Similarly, Wysocki argues for closer attention to the material functioning that “occurs when we *produce* any text” (7) whether it be a print or digital text. Burke may not have developed theory in the digital age, but his focus on nonlinguistic modalities through rhetorical form helps to extend his theories of *dramatism* and *logology* to multimodal rhetoric.

In this dissertation, I have made contributions to rhetorical studies by showing the multimodal side of Kenneth Burke. Many scholars, particularly in communication studies, have advocated the use of Burkean terms for analysis of nonlinguistic artifacts. For instance, Philip L. Simpson uses Burke’s term *terministic screen* to analyze nonlinguistic elements of the film *Copycat*. Similarly, Sonja K. Foss specifies in her widely used textbook *Rhetorical Criticism* that “virtually any artifact is appropriate for a pentadic analysis. Discursive and nondiscursive artifacts work equally well, and the length and complexity of the artifacts generally do not matter in an application of the pentadic method” (357). In fact, Foss also includes an example of a Burkean cluster criticism that examines the painting *The Hay Wain* by Hieronymus Bosch. While scholars have long used Burkean theory for analyzing nonlinguistic texts, my dissertation rhetoricizes Burke’s theory to argue that Burke

actually set out to develop terms that applied to multimodal texts. This leads me to four broad conclusions:

- 1) Burke often developed rhetorical terms and methods for multimodal purposes, and scholars should seek to use them in such a way
- 2) Rhetorical studies should continue to pay attention to the multiple modes of any text
- 3) Music as well as other nonlinguistic symbol systems should be included in investigations of language and semiotics
- 4) Nonlinguistic texts can provide insight into the rhetorical practices of nonlinguistic composers

First, I argue that many of Burke's rhetorical terms were intended and developed for interpreting, analyzing, or composing multimodal symbols, and by examining the multimodal origins of these terms, I argue that scholars in rhetorical studies should use these terms in such a multimodal way. In Chapter two of this dissertation, I examined Burke's engagement with audiences encountering the dissonant works of 1930s modernist composers such as Schönberg, Debussy, and Stravinsky to argue that rhetorical terms Burke developed for *Permanence and Change* initially emerged as a result of his music reviews for the *Nation*. Specifically, Burke developed terms such as *piety*, *perspective by incongruity*, and *graded series* to interpret musical symbols. While Burke later unveiled these rhetorical terms with a linguistic focus in *Permanence and Change*, their genesis in music provides an initial multimodal use for each term. Through this rhetoricized view of a term like the graded series, multimodal scholars can apply such a term to digital *forms* of meaning

as well as linguistic symbols. For instance, the graded series could be used as a method for charting the hierarchies of color in a webtext or kinds of fonts in a textual document. This type of analysis would be useful for examining the ways in which digital forms might motivate or persuade an audience rather than simply examining an author's linguistic terms.

Second, Burke's encounter with the musical practices of pre-war Nazi Germany reveals the need to, at times, pair words with nonlinguistic symbols in order to more fully interpret a text or communicate with an audience. In Chapter three, I focus on Burke's engagement with the 1934 German and American music parlors in order to understand why he advocated a multimodal approach in desperate political and social situations such as the buildup to WWII. Burke's cautious approach to music without lyrics demonstrates the importance to account for the wide spectrum of modes in any given text. Though Burke privileges linguistic symbols and advocates that music or other nonlinguistic forms of symbols should be paired with words to articulate a more stable meaning, he acknowledges in this chapter that language often breaks down in both linguistic and nonlinguistic symbols, and attention to the multiple modes of meaning in the composition and interpretation of a text can strengthen the communicative aspect of that text. While Burke emphasizes "an elaborate analysis of linguistic foibles" (319) in *A Grammar of Motives* to question the weaknesses in terms that shape perspectives, I argue for an elaborate analysis of nonlinguistic foibles as well. Burke suggests several ways in which to carry out this kind of multimodal analysis such as paying attention to the *cues* provided by the sounds of words, which he describes in the first edition of

Attitudes toward History, or through examining the formal and informational appeals within a symbol, which he discusses in *Counter-Statement*. I argue that an analysis of the nonlinguistic elements of symbols is as important as an analysis of linguistic foibles.

Burke's focus on linguistic and nonlinguistic foibles often privileges the social aspect of language much like multimodal theorists Richard Lanham and Gunther Kress. In fact, Lanham borrows heavily from Burke in his work *The Electronic Word* to articulate his AT/THROUGH oscillation as a kind of "frontstage/backstage" movement within electronic texts. Whether the stylistic façade or the logical meaning of a word is prioritized in Lanham's AT/THROUGH movement largely depends on the social situations in which an audience encounters the electronic symbol. Additionally, Kress argues in *Multimodality* for a social semiotic approach to multimodality because semiotic resources are rarely fixed but have stability in social occasions. As Burke provides an analysis of the aural modality in Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler*, he largely relies on a social approach to meaning in music. Through terms such as integration, Burke's focus on the social capabilities of the aural mode provides a multimodal resource alongside Lanham and Kress.

Third, I argue that the field of rhetorical studies should analyze music as a language that is inherently rhetorical. Until recently, there has been much resistance to expanding the term "language" to include any symbol system outside of the discursive. In Chapter four, I examined how Burke's engagement with Schlauch, Cassirer, and Calabro shaped his language theory, which ultimately included music and other kinds of symbol systems. While Burke often eschewed positivism in his

discussion of symbolism, he more fully developed a phenomenological approach to symbols much later in his career. In his 1983 afterword to the 3rd edition of *Permanence and Change* “In Retrospective Prospect,” Burke argues “for language to be understood to include the ability to behave with other such arbitrary, conventional symbol systems as dance, music, sculpture, painting, and architecture” (295). Similarly, other theorists,⁸⁴ such as Joddy Murray, have argued for a widening of the scope of language to include “the symbol systems of music, film, sculpture, dance, et cetera” (1). By expanding the term language to include nonlinguistic symbols, these highly rhetorical but scantily theorized symbol systems will be paid the attention they deserve in rhetorical studies. As Burke reviewed music in the 1930s, the rhetorical features he identified within music became useful in the verbal realm. I argue that there is still much in Burke’s writing yet to be analyzed that offers this expanded view of language, and Burkean scholars should seek to identify and emphasize these moments in order to make Burkean theory relevant to present day digital contexts.

Finally, I argue that Burke developed principles of aural rhetoric unique to the symbolic capabilities of sound as a result of his interests in music. In Chapter five, I examined Burke’s musical compositions, which utilize multimodal principles unique to aural symbols. These compositions reveal not only a talented amateur musician who was familiar with traditional musical forms but also a rhetorician developing and integrating principles of rhetoric into his own music. Through the

⁸⁴ Susanne K. Langer in both *Philosophy in a New Key* and *Feeling and Form*, Gunther Kress in *Multimodality*, and Cynthia Selfe in “The Movement of Air, the BreAth of Meaning” are further examples of theorists who have operated with this view of elevating the importance of nonlinguistic symbol systems.

form/information pair and the capacity for music to create bodily experiences, Burke provides much needed language of analysis for multimodal rhetoricians to explain current digital contexts. Burke's claim that form *and* information often appeal to different audiences creates further rhetorical awareness for digital composers to become more versatile by paying attention to overt informative appeals and covert formal appeals. For instance, a digital composer might integrate both information-focused images as well as formal-focused poetic words to appeal to a variety of audiences. Burke claims this multimodal focus will lead to the cultivation of participant audiences that will think critically about the kinds of multimodal messages in front of them. As the digital world further encroaches upon our society, Burke's aim to engage a participant audience that resists the passive indulgence of symbols is increasingly important.

Further Research

In this study, I have answered Cynthia Selfe's call to examine aurality as well as other composing modalities rather than focusing solely on writing as a mode. While my use of a historiographic research methodology has been quite challenging because much of the archival evidence I have examined is discursive and remains focused on linguistic symbols, I argue that scholars should seek out the multiple modes of meaning within the archives. By paying attention to typography, image, the sounds of words, or, in Burke's case, sheet music, the historiographic rhetorical scholar will be able to enliven the multimodal aspects of an archive. At various points in this dissertation, I have attempted to do just that through performance or description of the multimodal elements within the discursive evidence. My project

has attempted to redefine what constitutes an archive by performing and interpreting the available textual material. Perhaps future historiographic projects in the field of Burkean studies or rhetorical studies in general can utilize this multimodal approach to archives.

Additionally, further interdisciplinary study is warranted to continue to investigate such a diversely talented thinker as Kenneth Burke. Burke's interests in music represent merely one area out of a variety of interests in nonlinguistic, aesthetic symbols. Burke wrote reviews of the ballet, discussed paintings by Kandinsky and Buschor, and maintained a strong interest in music throughout his life. Parlor historiographers with interests in these areas might continue to investigate the archives to shed further light on the multimodal angle of Burke's rhetorical theory. Music was more than a hobby for Burke; it was a lifelong passion and an arena in which he explored many of the foundational concepts for his rhetorical theory. In fact, music helped Burke to see two ways at once as his music reviews, correspondence with musician friends, and musical compositions demonstrate. Burke took Malcolm Cowley's advice to heart at a young age by focusing on both the piano and the pen throughout his life, providing him with two perspectives, two ways of interacting with the world, two tools that were clearly interwoven in his life and work. He moved seamlessly from one to the other. Thus, we'll more fully understand what came out of Burke's pen if we also consider the insight he gained through the piano.

Appendix A: Song Lyrics of Works Analyzed

“A Song for Occupations” by Roy Harris

A song for occupations, a song,
a song for occupations, a song,
a song for occupations, a song.
In the labor of engines and trades,
and the labor of fields,
I find the developments,
I find the developments,
I find the developments,
developments,
developments,
developments,
the developments.
A song, a song, a song, a song,
And find the eternal meanings,
eternal meanings,
eternal meanings,
souls of men and women!
souls of men and women,
souls of men and women,
souls of men!
It is not you I call unseen, unheard, untouchable and untouching;
It is not you I go argue pro and con about,
settle whether you are alive or no,
and to settle whether you are alive or no;
I own publicly who you are,
if nobody else owns.
Grown, half-grown, and babe,
of this country and every country,
Indoors and outdoors,
one just as much as the other, I see,
and all else behind or thro' them.
The wife and she is not one jot less than the husband;
daughter and she is just as good as the son;
The mother and she is every bit as much as the father.
A song for occupations,
house-building, measuring, sawing the boards,
blacksmithing, glass-blowing, nail-making,
coopering, tin-roofing, shingle-dressing,
ship-joining, dock-building, fish-curing,
the flagging of sidewalks by flaggers,
The pump, the pile-driver, the great derrick,
the coal-kiln and brick kiln, and all that is down there,

the lamps in darkness, echoes,
what meditations,
what vast native thoughts looking thro' smutched faces,
Iron-works, forge-fires in the mountains,
or by river-banks feeling the melt with huge crowbars,
lumps of ore, the due combining of ore,
limestone, coals, the blast furnace and the puddling furnace,
the loup-lump at the bottom of the melt at last,
the rolling mill, the stumpy bars of pig-iron,
the strong, clean-shaped, T-rail for railroads;
Oil-works, silk-works, white-lead-works,
the sugar-house, steam-saws, the great mills and factories;
A song for occupations,
Stone-cutting, shapely trimmings for facades,
or window or door-lintels,
the mallet, the tooth chisel, the jib to protect the thumb,
the caulking iron, the kettle of boiling vault-cement,
and the fire under the kettle,
the cotton bale, the stevedore's hook,
the saw and buck of the sawyer, the mould of the moulder,
the working-knife of the butcher, the ice saw,
and all the work with the ice,
the work and tools of the rigger, grappler, sail-maker, block-maker,
Foods of gutta-percha, papier-mâché, colors, brushes,
brush-making, glazier's implements, the veneer and glue-pot,
the confectioner's ornaments, the decanter, and glasses,
the shears and flat-iron,
The awl and knee-strap, the pint measure, the counter and stool,
the writing pen of quill or metal, the making of all sorts of edged tools,
Flour-works, grinding of wheat, rye, maize, rice,
the barrels and the half and the quarter barrels,
the loaded barges, the high piles on wharves and levees;
The men, and the work of the men on ferries,
railroads, coasters, fish-boats, canals;
the hourly routine of your own or any man's life,
the shop, yard, store, or factory;
These shows all near you by night or day,
Workman, whoever you are, your life!
In that and them the heft of the heaviest,
in that and them far more than you estimated,
and far less also;
In them realities for you and me,
in them poems for you and me;
In them, not yourself
you and your Soul enclose all things,
regardless of estimation;

In them the development of good
 in them, all themes, hints, possibilities.
 I do not affirm that what you see beyond is futile,
 do not advise you to stop;
 I do not say leadings you thought great are not great;
 But I say that none lead to greater, than these lead to.
 Will you seek afar off?
 You surely come back at last,
 In things best known to you,
 finding the best or as good as the best,
 In folks nearest to you finding the sweetest,
 strongest, lovingest, sweetest,
 strongest, lovingest, sweetest,
 strongest, lovingest, sweetest,
 strongest, lovingest, sweetest,
 Happiness, knowledge,
 not in another place, but this place,
 not for another hour, but this hour;
 Man in the first you see or touch,
 Always in friend, brother, nighest neighbor.
 Woman in mother, lover, wife;
 The popular tastes and employments
 taking precedence in poems or anywhere,
 You work-women and work-men of
 These States having your own divine and strong life,
 And all else giving place to men and women, like you.
 A song!
 You work-women and work-men of These States!
 A song!
 having your own divine and strong life!
 A song!
 and all else giving place to men and women like you.
 A song,
 a song for occupations!

“A Solemnity” by Kenneth Burke

Solemn as requiem as though lamenting yet not clamorous
 But somehow afflicted all as towards a working out of an answer
 Such as to let a questing wordless fleeting answer seem to be
 Absent present past and future. Linger, malingering on wise as a lichen
 And with thoughts of victimage done some hero(ine)
 In the course of dignity and corrective sweetness
 Words putting something there poignant with a presence absent/gone
 Singing not to lead to weeping but in singing telling what

Song should choose as perfect subject if our weeping were its aim.
Solemn as requiem but all free of clamoring
How now what is the burden? What must fatally be the entanglements?
Out of a what, then where to? In the slope of statuesque/building
Or in grave remembrance, or propound a doctrine lapidary
Solomon as requiem out of lamenting
Moving with the wing's formation step-by-step totally resting.

"Towards Heroics" by Kenneth Burke

Start by blurting forth as the way to be damn brave
as the way to be to be yes
as the way to be damn brave
Think how nice there is no problem, all we need is start things right
then hang on somehow or otherwise
Singing how to be very bold, on and on and on we hold
forward forward unto glory.
Though things may be quite awful
and to be a perfect ec-estrovort
tell a pretty story to help us get along
watch us forge ahead like progress ever ever onward
Now you see how to take on GRANDEUR
Now you see how to take on GRANDEUR
Here is how to how to be a hero
and to get along.

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ABSTRACT

KENNETH BURKE, MUSIC, AND RHETORIC

by Joel Lane Overall, Ph.D., 2013
Department of English
Texas Christian University

Dissertation Director: Dr. Ann George, Professor of English

Dissertation Committee: Dr. Joddy Murray, Associate Professor of English

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My dissertation focuses on the important but largely unexplored intersection between Kenneth Burke's interest in music and his rhetorical theory. Throughout his life, Burke expressed a deep interest in reviewing, writing, and playing a variety of musical genres, and my examination focuses primarily on music reviews Burke wrote for *The Nation* in the 1930s, correspondence he kept with friend and musical composer Louis Calabro in 1961, and music journals and compositions Burke wrote throughout his life. Based on my analysis of these artifacts, my dissertation a) shows how Burke's interest in music substantially influenced his rhetorical ideas; b) reveals a Burkean theory of multimodality through the incorporation of recent multimodal scholars such as Kristie Fleckenstein and Richard Lanham; c) understands Burke's view on nonlinguistic language by aligning him with language theorists such as Susanne Langer and Ann Berthoff; and finally, d) shows how Burke himself employed rhetorical principles in his musical and multimodal works.

In Chapter one, I outline my project, which employs a rhetorical history methodology. This methodology allows me not only to examine historical approaches to multimodality but also to argue for its value in current approaches.

Drawing on four of Kenneth Burke's music reviews in *The Nation*, I argue in Chapter two that the shifting music scene of the 1930s heavily influenced Burke's development of the key concept "secular conversion" in *Permanence and Change*.

In Chapter three, I focus on Burke's later *Nation* reviews to recreate the important socio-political role music was serving in Burke's rhetorical theory as WW II approached.

Chapter four more fully examines Burke's views on music as a symbol system through his 1961 correspondence with Bennington colleague and music composer Louis Calabro.

In the final chapter, I shift from examining Burke as a music critic and language theorist to examining Burke the musician and multimodal composer. Burke's musical compositions reveal an enactment his rhetorical theory in a nonlinguistic symbolic system.