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11

Pentadic Criticism

Pentadic criticism is rooted in the work and thinking of Kenneth Burke, who made significant contributions to our understanding of how and why human beings use rhetoric and to what effect. Although many of his ideas can be and have been used as units of analysis in criticism, in this chapter, the focus is on Burke's notion of the pentad and on pentadic criticism, derived from his theory of dramatism.

Dramatism is the label Burke gave to the study of human motivation through terms derived from the study of drama.[1] Two basic assumptions underlie dramatism. One assumption at the heart of dramatism is that language use constitutes action, not motion. Motion corresponds to the biological or animal aspect of the human being, which is concerned with bodily processes such as growth, digestion, respiration, and the requirements for the maintenance of these processes such as food, shelter, and rest. This level does not involve the use of symbols and thus is non-symbolic.

In contrast, action corresponds to the symbolic or neurological aspect of the human being, which Burke defined as the ability of an organism

to acquire language or a symbol system. This, then, is the realm of action or the symbolic. Some of our motives are derived from our animality—as when we seek food in order to sustain our bodies, but others originate in our symbolicity. When we strive to reach goals in areas such as education, politics, religion, commerce, or finance, for example, we are motivated by our symbolicity. To be motivated to act in these areas requires a symbol system that creates the possibility for such desires in the first place.[2]

Burke elaborated on his notion of action at the heart of dramatism by establishing three conditions for action. First, it must involve freedom or choice. If we cannot make a choice, we are not acting but rather are being moved, like a ball hit with a racket—we are behaving mechanically. Of course, we never can be completely free, but implicit in the idea of action is some choice. A second condition necessary for an act is purpose or will. Either consciously or unconsciously, we must select or will a choice—we must choose one option over others. Finally, action requires motion. While motion can exist without action (as when an object falls, through the force of gravity, to the ground), action cannot exist without motion. Symbolic activity, or action, is grounded in the realm of the non-symbolic, although action cannot be reduced to motion.[3]

This distinction between motion and action is largely a conceptual or theoretical one, for once organisms acquire a symbol system, we are virtually unable to do anything purely in the realm of motion. Once we have a symbol system, everything we do is interpreted through that system. To cook a meal, for example, may be considered motion since it involves the biological need for food. Yet, creating a meal is impossible without the involvement of our symbolic conceptions of eating; the process, which has a biological basis, quickly becomes an action.

A second assumption of dramatism is that humans develop and present messages in much the same way that a play is presented. We use rhetoric to constitute and present a particular view of our situation, just as the presentation of a play creates a certain world or situation inhabited by characters who engage in actions in a setting. Through rhetoric, we size up situations and name their structure and outstanding ingredients. How we describe a situation indicates how we are perceiving it, the choices we see available to us, and the action we are likely to take in that situtation. Our language, then, provides a clue to our motive or why we do what we do. A rhetor who perceives that one person is the cause of a particular problem, for example, will use rhetoric that names that perception. She will describe the situation in such a way as to feature that person's characteristics and to downplay other elements that may be contributing to the problem. Once a critic knows how a rhetor has described a situation, the critic is able to discover that rhetor's motive for action in the situation.[4]

As rhetors describe their situations, they do so using the five basic elements of a drama—*act*, *agent*, *agency*, *scene*, and *purpose*. These five terms constitute what Burke called the *pentad*, and they are used as principles or a "grammar" for describing any symbolic act fully: "you must have some word that names the *act* (names what took place, in thought or deed), and another that names the *scene* (the background of the act, the situation in which it occurred); also you must indicate what person or kind of person *(agent)* performed the act, what means or instruments he used *(agency)*, and the *purpose*."[5] For those who are acquainted with journalistic writing, these elements will be recognized as the five questions a journalist must answer to write an adequate story about an act or event: who? (agent), what? (act), why? (purpose), when? and where? (scene). The agency is concerned with how the act was done.

In addition to terms for act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose, Burke sometimes included attitude as an element to be considered in the analysis of motivation. *Attitude*, in this case, designates the manner in which particular means are employed. The act of cultivating a garden is done through specific agencies such as seeds, plants, and water. To cultivate with extraordinary diligence and care, however, involves an attitude or a "how." Burke stated that "on later occasions I have regretted that I had not turned the pentad into a hexad, with "attitude as the sixth term,"[6] but saw attitude as part of agent: "But in its character as a state of mind that may or may not lead to an act, it is quite clearly to be classed under the head of agent."[7]

Procedures

The critic who chooses to use pentadic criticism as the source for units of analysis approaches an artifact in four steps: (1) formulating a research question and selecting an artifact; (2) selecting a unit of analysis; (3) analyzing the artifact; and (4) writing the critical essay.

Formulating a Research Question and Selecting an Artifact

The first step in the process of rhetorical criticism is to develop a research question to ask about rhetoric and to select a rhetorical artifact to analyze that provides an initial answer to the question. Because pentadic criticism provides a means to understand the way in which a rhetor encompasses a situation through rhetoric—through the selection and highlighting of particular terms—it is particularly useful for

answering questions about rhetors' motives or their attempts to structure audiences' perceptions of situations.

Selecting a Unit of Analysis

The critic's next step is to select a unit of analysis that can help the critic answer the research question. The unit of analysis is that aspect of the artifact to which the critic attends in the analysis. The units of analysis offered in pentadic criticism are the five terms of the pentad—act, agent, agency, scene, and purpose.

Analyzing the Artifact

In criticism in which the terms of the pentad are used as units of analysis, two operations are performed by the critic: (1) labeling the five terms of agent, act, scene, purpose, and agency in the artifact: and (2) identifying the dominant term.

Labeling of Terms. The first step in a pentadic analysis is to identify the five terms in the rhetorical artifact from the perspective of the rhetor. Identification of the *agent* involves naming the group or individual who is the protagonist or main character of the situation as it is presented by the rhetor.[8] The agent could be the rhetor him- or herself or another person or group. In a presentation to the jury at a murder trial, for example, a lawyer—the rhetor—could choose as the agent the murderer, the murder victim, or the victim's family. In a speech by a president of the United States, the agent is the person, group, or institution that is the primary subject of the speech—perhaps Congress, the CIA, or the president's mother. The naming of the agent also may involve descriptions of what the agent is like—for example, *kind*, *vicious*, *unscrupulous*, *dangerous*, or *generous*.

The *act* is the rhetor's presentation of the major action taken by the protagonist or agent.[9] The critic who is studying the speeches of a United States president, for example, may find that the act is the effort to accomplish health-care reform, with the president serving as the agent. In a speech honoring someone for her community service, the act might be the creation of a literacy program by the person being honored. If the artifact being studied is the work of an artist, the critic may find that in a particular painting, the act is bathing a child, with the agent the woman who is featured as the subject of the work.

The means the rhetor says are used to perform the act or the instruments used to accomplish it are labeled the *agency*.[10] In a speech about health-care reform, for example, a president might depict the agency as hard work, careful compromise, or futile attempts to gain the cooperation of the opposing party. In a song about love gone wrong, the agency for the lover's departure might be portrayed as callous disregard for the protagonist's feelings and needs.

Scene is the ground, location, or situation in which the rhetor says the act takes place—the kind of stage the rhetor sets when describing physical conditions, social and cultural influences, or historical causes.[11] In a presidential inaugural address, for example, the new president might describe a scene of division and hatred among Americans. In an environmentalist's testimony before a city council on the impact a particular policy has on the local environment, the advocate might describe a scene of abundant nature in harmony and balance.

The *purpose* of the act is what the rhetor suggests the agent intends to accomplish by performing the act.[12] It is the rhetor's account of the protagonist's intentions, feelings, and values. The purpose for a Native American's protest speech at a Columbus Day celebration, for example, might be to gain recognition for Native Americans' primary role in the creation of American civilization and culture. The purpose attributed to a community volunteer's actions might be to repay the support she received from others early in her life. Purpose is not synonymous with motive; purpose is the reason for action that is specified by the rhetor for the agent, while motive is the explanation for the rhetor's action, manifest in the rhetorical artifact as a whole.

Identification of the five pentadic terms results in an overview of the rhetor's view of a particular situation. The critic may discover, for example, that a hijacker's statement to the FBI reveals these five terms: the agent is the United States, the act is the United States' imprisonment of her friend for a crime he did not commit; the agency is denial of basic rights to an American citizen; the purpose is to publicize her friend's imprisonment; and the scene is conditions of injustice and cover-up. Such a naming of the situation helps explain the hijacking by pointing to the hijacker's conception of the situation. This same hijacker, of course, has virtually an unlimited number of options she can use to describe her situation, and each description constitutes a different vocabulary of motives. She could name, for example, the agent as herself; the act as a heroic act of desperation she took only after she had exhausted all legal options; the agency as bravery and heroism; her purpose of saving her innocent friend from life in prison; and the scene as one of battle and perhaps martyrdom.

Identification of Dominant Term. The naming of the five terms of the pentad is the first step in the use of pentadic units of analysis. The next step is to discover which of the five elements identified dominates the rhetoric or is featured by the rhetor. Discovery of the dominant term

provides insight into what dimension of the situation the rhetor privileges or sees as most important.

One way to discover the dominant pentadic element is to use what Burke called *ratios*. A ratio is a pairing of two of the elements in the pentad in order to discover the relationship between them and the effect that each has on the other. Each of the five elements, then, may be put together with each of the others to form these ratios: scene-act, scene-agent, scene-agency, scene-purpose, act-scene, act-agent, act-agency, act-purpose, agent-scene, agent-act, agent-agency, agent-purpose, agency-scene, agency-act, agency-agent, agency-purpose, purpose-scene, purpose-act, purpose-agent, and purpose-agency.

To use the ratios, the critic pairs two terms from those identified in the pentad. There is no right order with which to begin this process; the critic simply dives in and begins pairing various elements of the five named. With each ratio, the critic looks for the relationship between these two terms in the rhetor's description of the situation, trying to discover whether the first term influences the nature of the second term.

The critic may begin, for example, by putting together scene and act in a scene-act ratio. The critic's explanation of this ratio involves asking whether the nature of the scene, as described by the rhetor, affects the nature of the act the rhetor describes. (An act-scene ratio, in contrast, would explore whether the nature of the act dominates—whether the way the act is described takes precedence over the nature of the scene.) The critic may discover that there is a significant relationship between the two terms in a ratio or may find that the first term in the ratio has little impact or effect on the second. Let's say the rhetor describes the scene as a country in which oppressive and dangerous conditions exist, freedom is being repressed, and citizens are being denied the opportunity for self-determination; the act is described as the heroic invasion of that country. In a scene-act ratio, the scene is portrayed by the rhetor as the precipitating event that generates the act of heroism; there would be no need to perform acts of heroism without the dangerous scene. Thus, the scene dominates over act in this ratio.

If the critic discovers, on the other hand, that the rhetor describes a scene in which people are content and benefit from a country's political structure and names as the act the invasion of the country by the United States, the outcome of an exploration of the scene-act ratio would be different. In this case, the scene seems to have little influence on the act, but neither does the act have much effect on the scene. The critic probably would find, after investigating other ratios, that the dominant term of the rhetoric is something other than scene or act—perhaps agent (the nature of the United States as a domineering, imperialist power) or purpose (the United States' goal is to impose its will on other countries to bolster its own control and influence in the world).

The critic continues to pair terms in ratios, then, to discover if one term seems to affect the nature and character of another. Review of several of the ratios will produce a pattern in which the critic discovers that one term (or sometimes more than one) is the central, controlling term and defines the other terms in the pentad. This process of experimenting with the ratios to discover which term influences the others is not included in the essay of criticism the critic produces. This is work the critic does behind the scenes and prior to the writing of the essay. What the critic does in the essay is to identify the featured or dominant term and provide support for it. This support usually takes the form of a discussion of how this particular term influences the other elements of the rhetor's description of the situation.

Burke provided a suggestion for gaining a more in-depth view of a rhetor's definition of a situation once the critic has discovered the dominant term of the pentad. Once the critic discovers the dominant term, it can be used to identify the philosophical system to which it corresponds, with that system generating ideas about the definition of a situation, its meaning for rhetors and audiences, and its possible consequences. If the act is featured in the pentad, Burke suggested, the philosophy that corresponds is realism, the doctrine that universal principles are more real than objects as sensed. This philosophical position is opposite that of nominalism, the doctrine that abstract concepts, general terms, or universals have no objective reference but exist only as names. If the scene is featured, the philosophy that corresponds is materialism, the system that regards all facts and reality as explainable in terms of matter and motion or physical laws. If the agent is featured, the corresponding philosophy is idealism, the system that views the mind or spirit as each person experiences it as fundamentally real, and the totality of the universe is believed to be mind or spirit in its essence. If the means or agency is featured, the pragmatic philosophy corresponds. Pragmatism is the means necessary to the attainment of a goal—instrumentalism or concern with consequences, function, and what something is "good for." In this doctrine, the meaning of a proposition or course of action lies in its observable consequences, and the sum of these consequences constitutes its meaning. If the purpose is featured, the corresponding philosophy is mysticism. In mysticism, the element of unity is emphasized to the point that individuality disappears. Identification often becomes so strong that the individual is unified with some cosmic or universal purpose.[13]

In a speech by an anti-abortion advocate on the appropriateness of killing doctors who perform abortions, for example, the rhetor may describe the agent—himself—as a heroic savior, the act as stopping murder, the agency as any means necessary to stop murder, the purpose as saving innocent lives, and the scene as one of desperation in which

legal tactics to stop murder have been unsuccessful. The critic may discover, as a result of application of the ratios, that the dominant term is purpose—to save innocent lives—suggesting that those who are persuaded by his argument accept a definition of the situation as focused on purpose. The corresponding philosophy is mysticism, which features identification with a cosmic or universal purpose. The critic then could speculate that the motivating force for the rhetor and those who share his definition of the situation is a belief that they are representatives of divine will, doing on earth God's work of honoring human life. The sacredness of this mission allows whatever acts are necessary to fulfill it.

Writing the Critical Essay

The critic who chooses to use the pentad as the unit of analysis writes an essay that includes five major components: (1) an introduction, in which the research question, its contribution to rhetorical theory, and its significance are discussed; (2) description of the artifact and its context; (3) description of the unit of analysis, the pentadic terms; (4) report of the findings of the analysis, in which the critic identifies the five pentadic terms and suggests which one is dominant; and (5) discussion of the contribution the analysis makes to answering the research question.

Sample Essays

Following are three sample essays in which the pentad has been used as the unit of analysis to discover the ways in which rhetors have chosen to describe their situations. The critics use these descriptions to understand various aspects of rhetoric. David A. Ling uses the terms of the pentad to explore and evaluate Edward Kennedy's efforts to persuade an audience to see him as the victim of rather than responsible for an accident. The research question that guides Ling's analysis is, "What types of definitions of situations are effective in enabling rhetors to maintain or regain their credibility?" In her pentadic analysis of a novel by Abigail Scott Duniway, Jean M. Ward seeks to answer the question, "How can rhetors define situations in ways that empower audiences?" In the third sample, Diana Brown Sheridan uses pentadic elements as units of analysis to explore an act of protest, guided by the research questions, "How are personal symbols used in public protests? What characteristics of the symbols make their use effective?"

Notes

[1] For a discussion of dramatism, see: Kenneth Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), p. 54; Kenneth Burke, *The Philosophy of Literary Form* (1941; rpt. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), p. 103; Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* (1945; rpt. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), pp. xxii, 60; Kenneth Burke, "The Five Master Terms: Their Place in a 'Dramatistic' Grammar of Motives," *View*, 2 (June 1943), 50–52; Kenneth Burke, "Dramatism," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, ed. David L. Sills ([New York]: Macmillan/Free Press, 1968), VII, 445–52; and Kenneth Burke, "Rhetoric, Poetics, and Philosophy," in *Rhetoric, Philosophy, and Literature: An Exploration*, ed. Don M. Burks (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1978), pp. 32–33. The dramatistic approach is not limited to the work of Kenneth Burke. One good example of work by others in this area is James E. Combs and Michael W. Mansfield, eds., *Drama in Life: The Uses of Communication in Society* (New York: Hastings, 1976).

[2] The distinction between action and motion is discussed in: Burke, "Dramatism," p. 445; Kenneth Burke, *Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose* (1954; rpt. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), pp. 162, 215; Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action*, pp. 28, 53, 63, 67, 482; and Kenneth Burke, *The Rhetoric of Religion: Studies in Logology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), pp. 16, 274.

[3] Burke discusses conditions required for action in: *The Rhetoric of Religion*, pp. 39, 188, 281; *A Grammar of Motives*, pp. 14, 276; *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, p. xvi; and "Dramatism," p. 447.

[4] For more on the process of sizing up a situation through rhetoric, see Burke, *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, pp. 1, 6, 109, 298, 304.

[5] Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*, p. xv.

[6] Kenneth Burke, *Dramatism and Development* (Barre, Massachusetts: Clark University Press, 1972), p. 23.

[7] Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*, p. 20.

[8] For a discussion of agent, see Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*, pp. 20, 171–226.

[9] For a discussion of act, see Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*, pp. 227–74.

[10] Agency is discussed in Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*, pp. 275–320.

[11] Scene is discussed in: Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*, pp. xvi, 12, 77, 84, 85, 90; Burke, *The Rhetoric of Religion*, p. 26; and Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action*, p. 360.

[12] For a discussion of purpose, see Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*, pp. 275–320.

[13] Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*, pp. 128–30.

A Pentadic Analysis of Senator Edward Kennedy's Address to the People of Massachusetts July 25, 1969

David A. Ling

On July 25, 1969 Senator Edward Kennedy addressed the people of the state of Massachusetts for the purpose of describing the events surrounding the death of Miss Mary Jo Kopechne. The broadcasting networks provided prime time coverage of Senator Kennedy's address, and a national audience listened as Kennedy recounted the events of the previous week. The impact of that incident and Kennedy's subsequent explanation have been a subject of continuing comment ever since.

This paper will examine some of the rhetorical choices Kennedy made either consciously or unconsciously in his address of July 25th. It will then speculate on the possible impact that those choices may have on audience response to the speech. The principal tool used for this investigation will be the "Dramatistic Pentad" found in the writings of Kenneth Burke.

The Pentad and Human Motivation

The pentad evolved out of Burke's attempts to understand the bases of human conduct and motivation. Burke argues that "human conduct being in the realm of action and end . . . is most directly discussible in dramatistic terms."[1] He maintains that, in a broad sense, history can be viewed as a play, and, just as there are a limited number of basic plots available to the author, so also there are a limited number of situations that occur to man. It, therefore, seems appropriate to talk about situations that occur to man in the language of the stage. As man sees these similar situations (or dramas) occurring, he develops strategies to explain what

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is happening. When man uses language, according to Burke, he indicates his strategies for dealing with these situations. That is, as man speaks he indicates how he perceives the world around him.

Burke argues that whenever a man describes a situation he provides answers to five questions: "What was done (act), when or where it was done (scene), who did it (agent), how he did it (agency), and why (purpose)."[2] Act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose are the five terms that constitute the "Dramatistic Pentad." As man describes the situation around him, he orders these five elements to reflect his view of that situation.

Perhaps the clearest way to explain how the pentad functions is to examine Burke's own use of the concept in *The Grammar of Motives*.[3] In that work, Burke argues that various philosophical schools feature different elements of the human situation. For example, the materialist school adopts a vocabulary that focuses on the scene as the central element in any situation. The agent, act, agency and purpose are viewed as functions of the scene. On the other hand, the idealist school views the agent (or individual) as central and subordinates the other elements to the agent. Thus, both the materialist and the idealist, looking at the same situation, would describe the same five elements as existing in that situation. However, each views a different element as central and controlling. In Burke's own analysis he further suggests philosophical schools that relate to the other three elements of the pentad: the act, agency and purpose. What is important in this analysis is not which philosophical schools are related to the featuring of each element. What is important is that as one describes a situation his ordering of the five elements will suggest which of the several different views of that situation he has, depending on which element he describes as controlling.

This use of the pentad suggests two conclusions. First, the pentad functions as a tool for content analysis. The five terms provide a method of determining how a speaker views the world. Indeed, this is what Burke means when he says that the pentad provides "a synoptic way to talk about their [man's] talk-about [his world]."[4]

A second conclusion that results from this analysis is that man's description of a situation reveals what he regards as the appropriate response to various human situations. For example, the speaker who views the agent as the cause of a problem will reflect by his language not only what Burke would call an idealist philosophy, but he will be limited to proposing solutions that attempt to limit the actions of the agent or to remove the agent completely. The speaker who finds the agent to be the victim of the scene not only reflects a materialist philosophy but will propose solutions that would change the scene. Thus, an individual who describes the problem of slums as largely a matter of man's unwillingness to change his environment will propose self-help

as the answer to the problem. The person who, looking at the same situation, describes man as a victim of his environment will propose that the slums be razed and its inhabitants be relocated into a more conducive environment. The way in which a speaker describes a situation reflects his perception of reality and indicates what choices of action are available to him.

The Pentad and Rhetorical Criticism

But what has all this to do with rhetoric? If persuasion is viewed as the attempt of one man to get another to accept his view of reality as the correct one, then the pentad can be used as a means of examining how the persuader has attempted to achieve the restructuring of the audience's view of reality. Burke suggests how such an analysis might take place when he says in *The Grammar:* "Indeed, though our concern here is with the Grammar of Motives, we may note a related resource of Rhetoric: one may deflect attention from scenic matters by situating the motives of an act in the agent (as were one to account for wars purely on the basis of a "warlike instinct" in people): or conversely, one may deflect attention from criticism of personal motives by deriving an act or attitude not from traits of the agent but from the nature of the situation."[5]

Thus beginning with the language of the stage, the Pentad, it is possible to examine a speaker's discourse to determine what view of the world he would have an audience accept. One may then make a judgment as to both the appropriateness and adequacy of the description the speaker has presented.

Edward Kennedy's July 25th Address

Having suggested the methodology we now turn to a consideration of Senator Edward Kennedy's address of July 25th to the people of Massachusetts. The analysis will attempt to establish two conclusions. First, the speech functioned to minimize Kennedy's responsibility for his actions after the death of Miss Kopechne. Second, the speech was also intended to place responsibility for Kennedy's future on the shoulders of the people of Massachusetts. These conclusions are the direct antithesis of statements made by Kennedy during the speech. Halfway through the presentation, Kennedy commented: "I do not seek to escape responsibility for my actions by placing blame either on the physical, emotional trauma brought on by the accident or on anyone

else. I regard as indefensible the fact that I did not report the accident to the police immediately."[6] Late in the speech, in discussing the decision on whether or not to remain in the Senate, Kennedy stated that "this is a decision that I will have finally to make on my own." These statements indicated that Kennedy accepted both the blame for the events of that evening and the responsibility for the decision regarding his future. However, the description of reality presented by Kennedy in this speech forced the audience to reject these two conclusions.

Edward Kennedy—Victim of the Scene

The speech can best be examined in two parts. The first is the narrative in which Kennedy explained what occurred on the evening of July 18th. The second part of the speech involved Kennedy's concern over remaining in the U.S. Senate.

In Kennedy's statement concerning the events of July 18th we can identify these elements:

> The scene (the events surrounding the death of Miss Kopechne)
>
> The agent (Kennedy)
>
> The act (Kennedy's failure to report immediately the accident)
>
> The agency (whatever methods were available to make such a report)
>
> The purpose (To fulfill his legal and moral responsibilities)

In describing this situation, Kennedy ordered the elements of the situation in such a way that the scene became controlling. In Kennedy's description of the events of that evening, he began with statements that were, in essence, simple denials of any illicit relationship between Miss Kopechne and himself. "There is no truth, no truth whatever to the widely circulated suspicions of immoral conduct that have been leveled at my behavior and hers regarding that night. There has never been a private relationship between us of any kind." Kennedy further denied that he was "driving under the influence of liquor." These statements function rhetorically to minimize his role as agent in this situation. That is, the statements suggest an agent whose actions were both moral and rational prior to the accident. Kennedy then turned to a description of the accident itself: "Little over a mile away the car that I was driving on an *unlit* road went off a *narrow bridge* which had *no guard rails* and was built on a *left angle* to the road. The car overturned into a *deep pond* and immediately filled with water." (Emphasis mine) Such a statement placed Kennedy in the position of an agent caught in a situation not of his own making. It suggests the scene as the controlling element.

Even in Kennedy's description of his escape from the car, there is the implicit assumption that his survival was more a result of chance or fate than of his own actions. He commented: "I remember thinking as the cold water rushed in around my head that I was for certain drowning. Then water entered my lungs and I actually felt the sensation of drowning. But somehow I struggled to the surface alive." The suggestion in Kennedy's statement was that he was in fact at the mercy of the situation and that his survival was not the result of his own calculated actions. As an agent he was not in control of the scene, but rather its helpless victim.

After reaching the surface of the pond, Kennedy said that he "made repeated efforts to save Mary Jo." However, the "strong" and "murky" tide not only prevented him from accomplishing the rescue, but only succeeded in "increasing [his] state of utter exhaustion and alarm." The situation described is, then, one of an agent totally at the mercy of a scene that he cannot control. Added to this was Kennedy's statement that his physicians verified a cerebral concussion. If the audience accepted this entire description, it cannot conclude that Kennedy's actions during the next few hours were "indefensible." The audience rather must conclude that Kennedy was the victim of a tragic set of circumstances.

At this point in the speech Senator Kennedy commented on the confused and irrational nature of his thoughts, thoughts which he "would not have seriously entertained under normal circumstances." But, as Kennedy described them, these were not normal circumstances, and this was *not* a situation over which he had control.

Kennedy provided an even broader context for viewing him as the victim when he expressed the concern that "some awful curse did actually hang over the Kennedys." What greater justification could be provided for concluding that an agent is not responsible for his acts than to suggest that the agent is, in fact, the victim of some tragic fate.

Thus, in spite of his conclusion that his actions were "indefensible," the description of reality presented by Kennedy suggested that he, as agent, was the victim of a situation (the scene) over which he had no control.

Kennedy's Senate Seat: In the Hands of the People

In the second part and much shorter development of the speech, the situation changes. Here we can identify the following elements:

The scene (current reaction to the events of July 18th)
The agent (the people of Massachusetts)
The act (Kennedy's decision on whether to resign)

The agency (statement of resignation)
The purpose (to remove Kennedy from office)

Here, again, Kennedy described himself as having little control over the situation. However, it was not the scene that was controlling, but rather it was agents other than Kennedy. That is, Kennedy's decision on whether or not he will continue in the Senate was not to be based on the "whispers" and "innuendo" that constitute the scene. Rather, his decision would be based on whether or not the people of Massachusetts believed those whispers.

Kennedy commented: "If at any time the citizens of Massachusetts should lack confidence in their senator's character or his ability, with or without justification, he could not, in my opinion, adequately perform his duties and should not continue in office." Thus, were Kennedy to decide not to remain in the Senate it would be because the people of Massachusetts had lost confidence in him; responsibility in the situation rests with agents other than Kennedy.

This analysis suggests that Kennedy presented descriptions of reality which, if accepted, would lead the audience to two conclusions:

1. Kennedy was a tragic victim of a scene he could not control.
2. His future depended, not on his own decision, but on whether or not the people of Massachusetts accepted the whispers and innuendo that constituted the immediate scene.

Acceptance of the first conclusion would, in essence, constitute a rejection of any real guilt on the part of Kennedy. Acceptance of the second conclusion meant that responsibility for Kennedy's future was dependent on whether or not the people of Massachusetts believed Kennedy's description of what happened on the evening of July 18th, or if they would believe "whispers and innuendo."

Rhetorical Choice and Audience Response

If this analysis is correct, then it suggests some tentative implications concerning the effect of the speech. First, the positive response of the people of Massachusetts was virtually assured. During the next few days thousands of letters of support poured into Kennedy's office. The overwhelming endorsement was as much an act of purification for the people of that state as it was of Kennedy. That is, the citizenry was saying, "We choose not to believe whispers and innuendo. Therefore, there is no reason for Ted Kennedy to resign." Support also indicated that the

audience accepted his description of reality rather than his conclusion that he was responsible for his actions. Guilt has, therefore, shifted from Kennedy to the people of Massachusetts. Having presented a description of the events of July 18th which restricts his responsibility for those events, Kennedy suggested that the real 'sin' would be for the people to believe that the "whispers and innuendoes" were true. As James Reston has commented, "What he [Kennedy] has really asked the people of Massachusetts is whether they want to kick a man when he is down, and clearly they are not going to do that to this doom-ridden and battered family."[7] The act of writing a letter of support becomes the means by which the people "absolve" themselves of guilt. The speech functioned to place responsibility for Kennedy's future as a Senator in the hands of the people and then provided a description that limited them to only one realistic alternative.

While the speech seemed to secure, at least temporarily, Kennedy's Senate seat, its effect on his national future appeared negligible, if not detrimental. There are three reasons for this conclusion. First, Kennedy's description of the events of July 18th presented him as a normal agent who was overcome by an extraordinary scene. However, the myth that has always surrounded the office of the President is that it must be held by an agent who can make clear, rational decisions in an extraordinary scene. Kennedy, in this speech was, at least in part, conceding that he may not be able to handle such situations. This may explain why 57 percent of those who responded to a CBS poll were still favorably impressed by Kennedy after his speech, but 87 percent thought his chances of becoming President had been hurt by the incident.[8]

A second reason why the speech may not have had a positive influence on Kennedy's national future was the way in which the speech was prepared. Prior to the presentation of Kennedy's speech, important Kennedy advisers were summoned to Hyannis Port, among them Robert McNamara and Theodore Sorensen. It was common knowledge that these advisers played an important role in the preparation of that presentation. Such an approach to the formulation was rhetorically inconsistent with the description of reality Kennedy presented. If Kennedy was the simple victim of the scene he could not control, then, in the minds of the audience that should be a simple matter to convey. However, the vision of professionals "manipulating" the speech suggested in the minds of his audience that Kennedy may have been hiding his true role as agent. Here was an instance of an agent trying to control the scene. But given Kennedy's description of what occurred on July 18th such "manipulation" appeared unnecessary and inappropriate. The result was a credibility gap between Kennedy and his audience.

A third factor that may have mitigated against the success of this speech was the lack of detail in Kennedy's description. A number of questions

relating to the incident were left unanswered: Why the wrong turn? What was the purpose of the trip, etc.? These were questions that had been voiced in the media and by the general public during the week preceding Senator Kennedy's address. Kennedy's failure to mention these details raised the speculation in the minds of some columnists and citizens that Kennedy may, in fact, have been responsible for the situation having occurred: the agent may have determined the scene. If this was not the case, then Kennedy's lack of important detail may have been a mistake rhetorically. Thus, while Kennedy's speech resulted in the kind of immediate and overt response necessary to secure his seat in the Senate, the speech and the conditions under which it was prepared appear to have done little to enhance Kennedy's chances for the Presidency.

Conclusion

Much of the analysis of the effect of this speech has been speculative. Judging the response of an audience to a speech is a difficult matter; judging the reasons for that response is even more precarious. The methodology employed here has suggested two conclusions. First, in spite of his statements to the contrary, Kennedy's presentation portrayed him, in the first instance, as a victim of the scene and in the second, the possible victim of other agents. Second, the pentad, in suggesting that only five elements exist in the description of a situation, indicated what alternative descriptions were available to Kennedy. Given those choices, an attempt was made to suggest some of the possible implications of the choices Kennedy made.

Notes

[1] Kenneth Burke, *Permanence and Change* (Los Altos, California: Hermes Publications, 1954), p. 274.
[2] Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives and a Rhetoric of Motives* (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1962), p. xvii.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 127–320.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 56.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 17.
[6] This and all subsequent references to the text of Senator Edward Kennedy's speech of July 25, 1969 are taken from *The New York Times*, CXVII (July 26, 1969), p. 10.
[7] James Reston, "Senator Kennedy's Impossible Question," *The New York Times*, CXVII (July 27, 1969), section 4, p. 24.
[8] "C.B.S. Evening News," C.B.S. Telecast, July 31, 1969.

A Pentadic Analysis of Abigail Scott Duniway's *The Happy Home; or, The Husband's Triumph*

Jean M. Ward

The Happy Home; or, The Husband's Triumph was the fourth of 17 serialized novels written by Abigail Scott Duniway (1834–1915) for the *New Northwest*, her "human rights" newspaper published weekly in Portland, Oregon, between 1871 and 1887. The popular novel appeared in 26 installments between 1874 and 1875 and was designed by Duniway to show that the "aristocracy of sex," which privileged men and disadvantaged women, should be replaced by equality of the sexes. To convince her readers of the need for social change, Duniway combined an argument from justice with an argument from expediency: Structural changes in unjust, inherently flawed, socially constructed systems will improve the human condition—woman's good is also man's good.

Duniway, who achieved regional and national prominence as an advocate for women's rights and equal suffrage, believed in the power of the "realistic novel" to inform, teach, persuade, and give pleasure—a combination of the rhetorical elements of verisimilitude, didacticism, advocacy, and entertainment. Over the course of 46 years, she published a total of 22 novels, all set in the Pacific Northwest. Her first novel, *Captain Gray's Company; or, Crossing the Plains and Living in Oregon* (1859), later was serialized in the *New Northwest*. Seventeen novels were written specifically for the *New Northwest*, and three other serialized novels appeared in the Portland *Pacific Empire* from 1895 through 1897. Duniway's last novel, *From the West to the West; Across the Plains to Oregon*, was published in 1905 by A. C. McClurg of Chicago.

The Happy Home is representative of Duniway's basic serial story of a woman who struggles to cope with adversity in a male-dominated world, and, like most of Duniway's serials, the novel has a happy conclusion. Mattie Armstrong, the central character, achieves a state of "honest independence" and chooses to participate in mutually beneficial social relationships with her sisters and brothers; new friends; and the doctor who becomes her husband, Amos Harding.

This essay was written while Jean M. Ward was a student in Sonja K. Foss' rhetorical criticism class at the University of Oregon in 1988. Used by permission of the author.

The novel is divided into two parts, which are bridged by the turning point when Armstrong becomes self-reliant and achieves independence from the male system that has dominated her life. In Part I, Duniway presents a graphic picture of the individual anguish and social disharmony that result from the oppression of women. As the eldest of Isaac Armstrong's 12 children, Armstrong appears to be trapped in Stonehenge—her father's cold, neglected, and loveless home. She has watched her mother die of overwork and successive pregnancies, and her young and feeble stepmother is "dying from apathy, the natural result of deferred hopes and crushed ambitions." Life at Stonehenge is characterized by circumscribed communication, patriarchal control of all goods and services, and abusive relationships. Finally, with the encouragement of Harding, Duniway's spokesperson for the unborn "law of woman" and redefined gender relations, Armstrong secures management of Stonehenge from her father, who has been worn down by her constant challenges to his authority.

In Part II, Duniway presents a contrasting vision of the individual accomplishments and social harmony that result from independent womanhood. Under Armstrong's hand, Stonehenge is transformed into a "human paradise" and "an acme of bliss." Equality for all, regardless of sex or age, characterizes the new "republic" of Stonehenge.

My purpose in this essay is to analyze Duniway's novel using as units of analysis the pentadic elements of act, agent, agency, scene, and purpose. As a result, I hope to suggest how an artifact's structure affects understanding of the need for social change and encourages readers to act in ways that facilitate that change. In other words, I will explore how the overall description of a situation, built on a featuring of particular elements, facilitates individual and societal transformation.

The progressive form of *The Happy Home* involves two related sets of pentadic elements. Set I is the pentad for the first half of the novel, when Armstrong seeks a state of independence by defying law and custom for women. Set II is the pentad for the second half of the novel, when Armstrong uses her newly found independence to create and sustain an appropriate setting for kin-keeping and other positive social relationships. Thus, the gains of Set II are linked to the achievement of Armstrong's independence in Set I. The two sets are outlined below.

Set I

Act: defiance of law and custom for women

Scene: the old Stonehenge—a bleak and oppressive house and grounds

Agent: oppressed woman (Mattie Armstrong), attitude of growing defiance

Agency: rejects dependency in marriage, reorganizes family life, assumes financial responsibility for siblings and self, works to fulfill responsibilities

Purpose: to reach a state of "honest independence" and autonomy as a woman

Set II

Act: creation of a "human paradise" of attractive social spaces

Scene: a new Stonehenge—an example of "thrift, taste, adaptation, and comfort"

Agent: independent woman (Mattie Armstrong), attitude of determination and compassion for others

Agency: physical work and planning with an eye to beauty, the exercise of "a molding power"

Purpose: to facilitate positive social relationships, including kin-keeping

My ratio pairings of the terms in Set I showed that the major term is the act—defiance of law and custom for women. The act is related strongly to the oppressed condition and defiant attitude of the agent, to the agency or means she uses, and to her purpose. Armstrong achieves the autonomy she desires by acting against the male paradigm that makes women the dependent property of men. Her act is not one of flight or escape from the life she "can't endure"—the circumstances of her oppression at Stonehenge. Instead, her act is one of challenge and defiance.

The featuring of act as the major term in Set I provides insight into Duniway's definition of women's situation in the first half of her novel. Burke found a correspondence between featuring of the act and the philosophy of realism, the doctrine that universal principles are more real than objects sensed. With an emphasis on realism, Duniway argues that universals of oppression and freedom—injustice and justice—are real and exist outside the mind or perception of the individual. Duniway's featuring of act in Set I is to point out what is wrong with law and custom and thereby convince readers that they must act to establish and sustain principles of independence and full personhood for women. In a didactic manner, Duniway uses the story of Armstrong's rebellious act to develop a progressive syllogistic form: Those who seek

the principle of full personhood for humankind must take action against oppressive systems and forces. The success of Armstrong's action provides support for Duniway's argument.

Although the act is the major term in Set I, my ratio pairings showed that the major term for Set II is the scene—a new Stonehenge that is "an example of thrift, taste, adaptation, and comfort." The scene is related strongly to the independence, determination, and compassion of the agent—Armstrong; to the agency of her physical work and planning; to her act of creating a "human paradise"; and to her purpose of facilitating social relationships, including kin-keeping. After Armstrong's independence is achieved at the end of the first half of the story (Set I), the novel progresses to an emphasis on marked qualitative changes in the tone of social spaces and social relations at the new Stonehenge. These changes of beauty, comfort, caring, and love contrast with the bleakness, austerity, and coldness of the old Stonehenge. The emphasis on scene in Set II corresponds to what Burke has identified as the philosophy of materialism, a regard for facts and reality as explainable in terms of matter and motion or physical laws. Duniway shows that, once Armstrong is a free and creative agent, the world around her flourishes.

Undoubtedly, Duniway wanted to show her readers the "rightness" of the qualitative material changes at Stonehenge and thereby convince them that independent women could change the world for the better. Throughout her writings and speeches, Duniway pointed to the desirability of "self-reliant womanhood," and she wrote that the "general aim" of all her novels was to prove that "woman's greatest freedom leads to man's highest good" (*New Northwest*, August 21, 1884).

I find, however, a more specific function for the structure of terms in Set II. It points to an interactive effect between social spaces and social relations. The pentad and controlling element (scene) of Set II reveal this interaction: Attractive social spaces—"beautiful surroundings"—contribute to positive social relationships; positive—"loving"—social relationships contribute to attractive social spaces. Conversely, as seen in the old Stonehenge of Part I, ugly social spaces contribute to destructive social relationships, and destructive social relationships contribute to ugly social spaces.

My earlier readings of *The Happy Home* had led me to consider the agent, Armstrong, as the central element throughout the novel. Surely, I thought, a novel written by a woman about a woman would feature the woman character/agent. Conditioned to identify the agents in women's fiction as the controlling sources for identification/consubstantiation, I had overlooked the possibility of other powerful major elements. The process of pentadic analysis, however, revealed that the

act in Set I and the scene in Set II are the controlling elements. This is not to say that Duniway's readers could not identify with the agent but rather that Duniway's worldview involved an emphasis on action to achieve changed circumstances for *all* women.

Duniway's structure in *The Happy Home* has implications for the study of rhetors' attempts at the empowerment of their audiences. To empower and not merely convince her readers, Duniway developed two complementary structures or sets of terms. She showed in Set I that women's acts of defiance against oppression are both desirable *and* possible, even in the most difficult of circumstances. Despite the overwhelming constraints of life at old Stonehenge, Armstrong refused to be a victim; literally armed herself as a strong, self-reliant woman; and successfully challenged male authority. In Set II, Duniway shared her vision of desirable *and* achievable social change—a world transformed by sexual equality. Rather than simply suggesting to readers that a strongly armed, independent woman such as Armstrong might improve the human condition, Duniway focused on particulars of Armstrong's creation of the new Stonehenge—an interactive scene of positive relationships and pleasant surroundings. Through the combination of these complementary pentads, Duniway sought to empower her audience with the knowledge that self-reliant womanhood and societal transformation are linked, needed, *and* attainable.

Teddy Bears at Greenham Common

Diana Brown Sheridan

At Greenham Common Royal Air Force Base in Newbury, Great Britain, nine miles of chain-link fence divide two worlds. The fence straddles what was once an idyllic English park, Greenham Common, purchased in 1938 for the enjoyment of local people. On one side are the wildflowers, gorse, heather, and silver birches of the park; on the other is an air base, jointly constructed by the United States and Great Britain. The base contains silos built from enormous mounds of concrete and movable offensive launching vehicles that can roam the countryside with cruise missiles of incomprehensible destruction.

In response to the construction of this military complex, 40 Women for Life on Earth walked the 110 miles from South Wales to this new base in August of 1981. Balking at society's enactment of military power and its incursions on the well-being of the human race, these women started the protest that came to be known as the Women's Peace Camp at Greenham Common, a 12-year testimony to women's commitment to waging peace. Although the Camp closed in 1993 with the end of the Cold War, the legacy of the women's life-affirming visions continues to affect the consciousness of those who work for peace around the world.

The fence, separating the protest and military groups, enshrouds a plethora of intense symbols that reflect the protesting women's intentions to soften the hard and sharp contours and angles that represent the unwavering persistence of military power. Over the years, women decorated, painted, encircled, climbed over, and cut through the fence in an effort to transform it into a celebration of life and beauty in contrast to its intended pronouncement of sterility and fear. They attached balloons, posters, baby clothes, stuffed animals, and photographs of children and loved ones. Weaving yarn, string, and ribbon in and out of the links in the fence, the women tried to revise the concept of the fence as an imprisoning chain, reformulating an image of repression into multiple webs, representing women's interconnectedness with all of life.

My purpose in this essay is to examine one personal form of expression that appeared on the fence in order to determine how personal symbols operate rhetorically in public protest action. I have chosen as my rhetorical artifact a pair of small, dark, furry-looking teddy bears

This essay was written while Diana Brown Sheridan was a student in Sonja K. Foss' rhetorical criticism class at the University of Oregon in 1988. Used by permission of the author.