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Language as Sensuous Action: Sir Richard Paget, Kenneth Burke, and Gesture-Speech Theory

Debra Hawhee

This somatic genealogy of Dramatism's core terms—symbolic action, attitude, identification—argues for the importance of keeping rhetoric, rhetorical theory, and rhetorical pedagogy more closely tied to bodies that generate, induce, and respond to rhetoric. It does so by examining Burke's use of Sir Richard Paget's theory that spoken language derives from the use and development of bodily gestures. An examination of Paget's theory in Burke's early work serves as a jarring reminder that rhetoric is always a joint performance of body and mind.

Keywords: Body; Performance; Gesture; Sir Richard Paget; Kenneth Burke

The question of where spoken language comes from is as intriguing as it is unanswerable. This may be why the question belongs to philosophers—and why linguists and other scientists have more often than not considered it taboo. And yet in 1920s London, a full-time physicist and part-time philologist believed he had found the answer with a clever mix of physical science and evolutionary theory. His findings appeared in a 1930 book called *Human Speech*, which was instantly reviewed in the *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. According to the five-page review, the book “comes to our profession from the hand of a research worker who is only incidentally connected with us, and yet it is a monumental contribution to our field of knowledge.”¹ That research worker, Sir Richard Paget, would later become known in speech and speech pathology circles for his role in developing the Paget-Gorman system of signed English, but in the 1930s it appeared that his signature contribution to the field

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would be his unique formulation of gesture-speech theory, the longstanding and highly debated notion that spoken language originated as bodily gesture.

Dating back to the Epicurean poet Lucretius, who held that gestures helped give early human sounds something like meaning, the gesture theory of language's origins has had wavelike resurgences thanks to proponents such as 18th-century philosopher Etienne Condillac, and even, as I'll discuss in more detail shortly, Charles Darwin.² Yet in *Human Speech* Paget not only asserts that language was formed by gesture; he deploys a variety of methods drawn from his training in physics, phonetics, philology, linguistics, and acoustics, as well as his study of Darwin, to assert why and, more intriguingly, how.³

The resulting book, according to the *QJS* reviewer, should "certainly" be purchased by "every teacher of speech who has any interest whatever in the scientific aspects of his subject," and offers the readers of *QJS* "a veritable treasure-house of information."⁴ Indeed, Paget includes photos and long descriptions of his simulated vocal cavities complete with a larynx, tongue, and lips fashioned out of plasticine, paraffin, and a rubber band. These simulated cavities were meant to display the variety of "postures" performed during speech.⁵ Such postures, formed through minute and articulated movements—gestures—of the human mouth and its connected parts, Paget surmised, are pantomimic outgrowths of bodily postures and gestures originally performed solely by the limbs, torso, and hands.

Paget's theory of gesture-speech, with its highly suggestive emphasis on language as a physiological formation, can, even now, make a difference in the way we approach rhetoric critically and theoretically. For starters, a reconsideration of Paget's bodily theories of language turns on its head the relatively recent commonplace of "the body as a discursive formation," offering instead discourse as bodily formation.⁶

In the decade since scholars in rhetorical studies began to consider more intently how bodies figure in to rhetorical theory and criticism, those in political rhetoric and performance studies have been confronting live bodies—activist bodies, minority bodies, disabled bodies, rhetorical bodies—in order to incorporate bodies and all their intensities, energies, and movements into rhetorical theory and criticism. Such work is often as difficult as it is groundbreaking. In his article on the use of bodies as performance and proof, Kevin DeLuca hints at the difficulty of developing a coherent theory of the body precisely because, as he puts it, "the body is a site of incoherence."⁷ Similarly, as Gerard Hauser demonstrates, bodies are frequently antithetical to rhetoric's disciplinary touchstones: argument, persuasion, and reason.⁸ According to Melissa Deem, emerging work on publics and counterpublics sustains that commitment through its allegiance to critical-rational discourse, often rendering bodies moot and even mute.⁹ Scholars such as Deem, DeLuca, Sharon Crowley, Phaedra Pezzullo, and Mindy Fenske have challenged rhetoric's unwavering commitment to reason, stressing instead the interrelated roles of affect, desire, movement, and bodily sensation in rhetorical practice and performance.¹⁰ Of course bodies are arguably not new to rhetoric, and this is where new theories and histories can productively converge.¹¹

As this article will demonstrate, Sir Richard Paget's theories of gesture-speech have already played a productive role in rhetoric's history, and revisiting them in that context may well prove fruitful for those scholars currently theorizing how bodies and language come together. In the 1930s, Paget's theories formed a major point of focus for Kenneth Burke, then hard at work developing his theories of rhetoric and communication, most notably dramatism and the related Burkean cluster, symbolic action, attitude, and identification.¹² Examined closely, Burke's use of Paget reveals an early insistence on the body's role in communicative practices and a resulting bodily poetics: the body both models and performs the physical movements to produce speech, and, in doing so, almost literally breathes life into words. Somatic theories such as Paget's, then, tend toward theories of language that focus on energy, vitality, and liveliness as rhetorical elements that cannot be fully accounted for by theories of argumentation grounded primarily in cognition, reason, or epistemics.

For Burke-inflected rhetorical criticism, too, overlooking this important historical connection between Paget and Burke leaves in most critics' hands rather deflated, decidedly *unlively* notions of Burke's most important conceptual legacies. The pentad (act, scene, agent, agency, purpose), Burke's dramatistic tool *par excellence*, so frequently tends to produce two-dimensional, flat analyses when it could, if historically reconnected with Burke's use of Paget's bodily theories, become so much more lively.¹³ In order to reconnect the twin Burkean legacies of dramatism and symbolic action with Paget and therefore with the body, and in hopes of offering a new and jarringly different way to think bodies and rhetoric together, I propose to examine in succession the moments when Burke engages Paget in his writings. Doing so chronologically, in the order that Burke wrote and revised (though not necessarily published), and filling in details from Paget's theories, will help give a full account of Paget's varied role in Burke's rhetorical theories and offer an alternative, somatic genealogy of Burkean Dramatism, symbolic action, identification, and attitude. By doing so, I hope to offer an historian's cautionary tale about how bodily theories of rhetoric, when used in strict service of reason, persuasion, and argument, can all too easily become bodiless.

This somatic genealogy pinpoints the first edition of *A Grammar of Motives* as the Burkean text which, in a departure from Paget's theories, produces an overemphasis on the mind that Burke would later try to amend. And because Burke's *Grammar* remains the most consulted Burkean text, particularly in regards to Dramatism, scholars such as Daniel O'Keefe are led to conceive of Dramatism as a "distinctly non-physicalist framework."¹⁴ Following a similar pattern, Dana Anderson, Sarah E. Mahan-Hays, and Roger C. Aden locate Burkean attitude wholly in the mind or on the level of consciousness.¹⁵ In focusing solely on Burke's *Grammar*, these scholars reproduce notions of dramatistic action that are all too easily separable from the body.¹⁶

Attention to Burke's Pagetian side will show instead that attitude both stems from and manifests in generative, connective, bodily movement. Attitude, importantly, forms one of Burke's most pointed amendments to *Grammar* and to the dramatistic pentad. I consider this attitudinal revision in more detail toward the end of this essay,

to show how Burke's subsequent addition of attitude brings with it the crucial mind-body correspondences that Burke's theories honored all along.¹⁷ Before moving into Burke's writings, however, it is important to situate Paget's theory and its own allegiances more carefully.

Tongue-Tied: A Darwinian Origin of Speeches

Glossogenetic theories, or theories about language's origins, matter less to rhetorical studies for their loyalty to origins than for the assumptions they present about language's functions and rhetorical processes. Here, Jacques Derrida's point about the "purely additive, mythical" force of origin theories is well taken, and so my purpose in examining Paget's glossogenetic theory and Burke's subsequent use of it is to identify their respective beliefs about language and rhetoric, and in particular to consider the implications of their account for figuring language as simultaneously a communicative and sensuous, bodily act. Glossogenetic theories, mythical and slippery as they are, help to sort through the entanglements of biological, rhetorical, and linguistic apparatuses.¹⁸

In a recent treatment of glossogenetics, "the American dean of classical rhetoric"¹⁹ George Kennedy attributes humans' unique capacity for language to their ability to produce a variety of sounds "by manipulation of the lips, teeth, and tongue, and much greater control of the vocal cords"—that is to their facial and laryngeal morphology—more than any "great chain" notion of "higher reason."²⁰ Such a view, which unfolds as thoroughly Darwinian, leads Kennedy into a theoretical discussion of rhetorical situations and a highly speculative account of humanoid rhetoric.²¹ It also leads Kennedy, a committed Aristotelian, to a surprisingly naturalist view of rhetoric, and yet one that also centers on emotion and energy.²² Paget, equipped with his training as both a physicist and philologist, takes his account far further than Kennedy, and yet both Kennedy and Paget stand in sharp contradiction to more widely accepted neocartesian theories of language that assume its beginnings lie in humans' unique ability to think and reason.²³

Because it begins with the body rather than the mind, with emotive force rather than reasoning ability, and as I'll show in the next section, with animals rather than humans, Paget's theory of gesture-speech also offers a way to trouble structural linguistics from a direction other than poststructuralism's critique of social structures, offering instead material, mobile, and mutable bodily structures. Whereas Saussure argues that the signifier—a word—arbitrarily invokes a signified, an image of meaning, Paget holds that the word is frequently not arbitrary at all, but gestural, and it in turn evokes a gestural signified—i.e., an image or sense of the gesture (rather than a concept or idea). As this essay will show, Burke, building on Paget, offers neither a thoroughly structural nor even a poststructural theory of language as most scholars have heretofore contended, but an accretive theory of language whereby the gestural force decreases by degrees as abstractions are built up. In the Burkean scheme, the building up of abstractions happens in reciprocal relation with biological processes and development, thereby producing a theory of symbolic action

inseparable from—and indeed dependent on—the body’s capacity for mimetic variation and migration, which results in what Burke formulates as bodies’ “emergence into articulacy.”²⁴

Significantly, Paget attributes his first flash of insight on mimetic articulation to his reading of Charles Darwin’s observation in *Expression of the Emotion in Man and Animals* “that persons cutting with a pair of scissors often moved their jaws sympathetically, and that children learning to write often twisted their tongues as their fingers moved.”²⁵ Darwin raises these instances in his discussion of what he calls serviceable associated habits, whereby certain modes of expression such as lip biting or head scratching began as accompaniments to other more central actions or states of mind (nervousness, thoughtfulness) and are considered by Darwin to be vestiges of habit. And yet the mouth-focused instances cited by Paget—the “scissoring” of the mouth or the “writing” of the tongue—inhabit a murky area for Darwin, who introduces these examples with a kind of qualified verbal head scratching: “[T]here are other actions which are commonly performed under certain circumstances, independently of habit, and which seem to be due to imitation or some sort of sympathy.”²⁶ While Darwin calls these associated habits “complex actions,” the principle is itself rather simple; as Darwin puts it, “[W]hen our minds are much affected, so are the movements of our bodies.”²⁷

The point here is that these sympathetic, mimetic movements operate on a logic of contagion, that physical actions have the capacity to affect other parts of the body.²⁸ It is this dual capacity for movement that Paget believes enabled language’s development: the migration of movements from one part of the body to the other, combined with his mechanical models that more or less reproduce laryngeal postures, helped him imagine gesture being converted into laryngeal and tongue movements. The ability for those movements to “catch on” across bodies helped him account for the spread and resulting “staying power” of language.²⁹ Put still more simply, speech gestures are communicative because they are both communicable and communal.³⁰

The result of the mouth’s unconscious tendencies to mimic the emotional, postural state of the rest of the body, as well as its gesticulations, Paget concludes, is human speech. As he puts it:

[H]uman speech arose out of a generalized unconscious pantomimic gesture language—made by the limbs and features as a whole (including the tongue and the lips)—which became specialized in gestures of the organs of articulation, owing to the human hands (and eyes) becoming continuously occupied with the use of tools. The gestures of the organs of articulation were recognized by the hearer because the hearer unconsciously reproduced in his mind the actual gesture which had produced the sound.³¹

Paget even uses a curious dramatic analogy when he casts the tongue, lips, and jaw as “understudies” of the hands:

The consequence was that when, owing to pressure of other business, the principal actors (the hands) retired from the stage—as much as principal actors ever do—their understudies—the tongue, lips and jaw—were already proficient in the pantomimic art.³²

Enter a new set of stage stars.

Paget's theory is itself remarkable for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is that it sets up a physical sort of philology, whereby words result from the mouth's mimetically performing their originary gestures and frequently preserve the vestigial gesture as meaning. Words, for example, that contain the consonant blend "sp," "commonly mean something that comes to a fine point or edge or jet—as in *sper*, *spire*, *spout*, *spit*, *spue*,"³³ and those that begin with "str" "mean something that extends longitudinally—as in *stream*, *string*, *strap*, *stretch*, *strain*, *stroke*, *street*."³⁴ That is, the explanation depends not on root "meaning," as in traditional philology, but rather on root motion—in order to form *sp*, the lips form a *spewing* motion, and the formation of "str" entails a kind of elongation of the mouth. Paget's *physio-philological* theory, in short, figures speech as a bodily, mimetic, even affective art, thereby imagining bodily feeling, gesture, and posture as unconsciously contagious and iterable movements—spreading from body part to body part, almost literally from hand to mouth. More than a decade later, the animal intelligence specialist E. L. Thorndike would name Paget's theory the "'tongue-tied' theory, meaning that the tongue is yoked with the body by subtle bonds of mimetic kinship."³⁵

Before moving to Burke, I want to finally tie together Paget and Darwin, because a discernible Darwinian logic drives his research premise and his methods. While Darwin does not himself detail a theory of language's origins in *Expressions*, an inkling of such a theory can be found in *Descent of Man*, where he writes, "I cannot doubt that language owes its origin to the imitation and modification of various natural sounds, the voices of other animals, and man's own instinctive cries, aided by signs and gestures."³⁶ Not foreclosing the possibility of gesture-speech theory, Darwin also articulates some of Paget's key premises in *Expression* when he speculates that "laughter, as a sign of pleasure or enjoyment, was practised by our progenitors long before they deserved to be called human; for very many kinds of monkeys, when pleased, utter a reiterated sound, clearly analogous to our laughter."³⁷ Importantly, such bodily sonic reiterations also mark a creature's vitality. A mere three pages later, when discussing the physiology of rage, disgust, and blushing, Darwin explicitly states that such expressive movements "give vividness and energy to our spoken words," an assertion that Paget—and, by extension, Burke—would take very seriously.³⁸ The Darwinian origins of Paget's theories and methods therefore help account for three crucial features of Paget's—and Burke's—theories of language: (1) the strong emphasis on language's rendering of bodily attitude, its energy and vitality; (2) the dual emphasis on the communicable (i.e., contagious) and communal features of bodily language; and (3) the menagerie of animals both Paget and Burke use to argue their points.

Paget's Fox Terrier: Animal Attitudes

Darwin's imprint is perhaps most evident in the way Paget and Burke deploy examples from the animal world to support their arguments about language and gesture. Paget locates in animal communication instances of gesture as symbolic

action, laying the conceptual groundwork for what will become key Burkean notions of *purpose* and *attitude*.³⁹ The section of *Human Speech* concerning glossogenetics begins with a section on animal gestures.⁴⁰ Here, Paget leaves unstated his phylogenetic assumption which places species life on a developmental continuum. Instead, he simply begins: “We need not be surprised at this idea, for it is clear, when the evidence is studied, that gesture is a common method, in use throughout the animal world, for inducing action on the part of another individual.”⁴¹ Paget then goes on to cite his conversations with animal biologist and evolutionary theorist Julian Huxley, which yielded “some interesting examples of animal gestures.”⁴² What follows in Paget’s chapter is a brief catalogue of gestures ranging from courting Empis flies to dancing bees.⁴³

In his discussion of insects, Paget is quick to set aside issues of intentionality even as he preserves a symbolic reading of these gestures: “In these cases,” he writes, “it need not be assumed that the gestures are intentionally symbolic, or indeed that they are intentional at all.”⁴⁴ He then goes on to recount an instance of an African grey parrot that “evolved a gesture which meant ‘I want to be let out.’”⁴⁵ Apparently the parrot “held on to the bars of its cage with its beak and left foot, and pawed the air repeatedly, at about 100 beats per minute, with its other foot.”⁴⁶ As Paget sees it, the parrot’s movements fall in the category of “truly symbolic gestures.”⁴⁷ Such willful gestures show the animal body exhibiting what Paget calls purpose, much like the purpose he observes in his own dog, Joseph, a fox terrier who, according to Paget, “was especially devoted” to Paget’s cook, Mrs. Wright. Paget continues: “When Joseph wanted to be taken out for a walk, or thought it was time to be taken up to bed, he pulled Mrs. Wright by her skirt in the direction required.”⁴⁸ Paget even includes a photo montage of a Joseph-guided trek to the stable yard. Such activity, Paget believes, is symbolic, purposive, and even more importantly for Paget’s theory, shows the dog’s mouth joining in with bodily cues—Joseph’s urging body is accompanied by (or in Darwinian terms, associated with) his gripping jaws and tugging teeth.

Because dogs provide a host of bodily cues along with distinctive vocal movements, they allow Paget to further theorize the relationship between gesture and sound: “[T]he bark or yap or growl signifies the emotional state, but purpose is expressed by action and expression.”⁴⁹ This division of expressive or communicative labor whereby sounds convey feeling but the body performs purpose lays the groundwork for Paget’s theory in which the laryngeal area becomes the place on the human body where both functions converge—that is, through the bodily action or gesture of the lips and mouth and the emotive intonations of the voice. The resulting movements—i.e., words—combine and recapitulate the body’s emotive energy and purposive action. Paget goes on to theorize that the art of gestures must have had a “sister art,” which he believes is “based on the use of the larynx.”⁵⁰ He continues,

The power of expressing the emotions by laryngeal tones is (as we have noted) almost universal among the higher animals, and it may be imagined that, in early stages of human development, mankind roared and grunted and sung, on the one hand, to express his emotions, and gesticulated and grimaced on the other to

explain his ideas. In some cases he may have used both methods together, as when a dog makes the threatening gesture of showing his teeth, and energizes or phonates this gesture by the addition of the laryngeal growl.⁵¹

Paget's laryngeal theories are thoroughly documented at the book's outset, and thereby form the bases for his theory of gesture-speech. His plasticine resonators—model larynxes—were carefully crafted to physically and repeatedly produce particular vowel sounds. The variation in size and shape alone suggests that different sounds depend on different positions. Paget also recreated various chest resonances which, together with the laryngeal formation, simulate tone and volume. These resonating organs are all assisted by the tongue, which Paget describes as “a muscular organ, constant in volume, but highly and very rapidly variable in form. It can take a great variety of different positions inside the mouth, so as either to alter the shape of the cavity as a whole or close it altogether in different positions.”⁵² Paget's models are therefore crucial for visualizing the astonishing variety of laryngeal movements, postures, and gestures that form the basis of his gesture-speech theory.

Paget's mechanical experiments with resonance, along with his observations of animal gestures, allow him to account for energy and emotion in language, and it is this lively account of communication as energy, as movement, and as bodily attitude that first attracted Burke to Paget. Paget's machinic and animal models helped Burke to think about mimetics, confirming his suspicion that attitude and purpose—two features that would form important components of the pentad—are crucial components of communication.

Auscultating Paget

The first appearance of Paget in Burke's writings occurs shortly after the publication of *Human Speech* in Burke's long unpublished “Auscultation, Creation, and Revision.”⁵³ According to Burke's “introductory note” to ACR, the piece details Burke's interest in “local literary processes as they may be related to broader biologic or historic processes.”⁵⁴ His rather clumsily subtitled section “The Present State of Language and Ideology (the Chief Productive Force of Writers) As It Affects the Problems Peculiar to Writers” documents a twofold concern about the “present state” of language on an evolutionary continuum: (1) the move to a “terminology”-based language, which Burke calls “a very obvious process of conceptual naming,” and which derives from a shift to a specialized, individualized, conceptual, even abstract way of thinking,⁵⁵ and (2) a concomitant move away from language's attitudinal and collective forces. As a reminder of language's more attitude-based and collective beginnings, Burke offers Paget:

According to the mimetic theory of Sir Richard Paget (a theory which he offers in place of the old “bow wow” school, which held that speech arose out of onomatopoeic naming), language arose as “gesture speech,” not a way of naming, but a way of expressing attitudes. At first these attitudes were probably expressed by the set of the entire body, as a terrier's back bristles when he expresses the attitude

of rage, or his tail wags and his body relaxes to express an attitude which we, without tails, convey by saying "I like you."⁵⁶

With this introduction of Paget, and with an oblique but altered reference perhaps to Paget's terrier Joseph, Burke hits on what most interests him about Paget's theory: it takes seriously the body's role in communication.⁵⁷ Of course there's a problem with this particular passage in that it makes tailless, wordy humans sound somewhat robotic by comparison to the animated, tail wagging terrier. Burke redresses this problem at once with a transitional "No," and a corrective that continues,

[E]ven now we do not wholly convey our meanings in this way. If a man said "I like you" in thunderous accents, frowning and clenching his fists, we should have the most uneasy doubts as to his real attitude. A good actor still expresses his attitudes by the set of the entire body; a fairly expressive person uses facial gestures to a large extent; and those who would draw one card when they have four aces can conceal their glee only by the rigid donning of a mask, the "poker face," that says nothing because it changes not.⁵⁸

Here, by moving from a hypothetical example to the scenes of drama itself and then to poker, Burke meditates on the body's purposive communicative action. The repetition, from the terrier passage above, of the phrase "the set of the entire body," indicates the analogical function of animals, and also places disposition foremost on Burke's list of the body's signifying capacities. According to Burke à la Paget, the use—or restriction, in the case of poker—of "facial gesture" also betrays meaning or, better, sense. The body can reveal or conceal attitude. Here's Burke's summary of Paget:

Sir Paget suggests that by greater and greater economy, this gesture speech which generally began with the whole body was localized in the facial muscles, and thence even many of the facial gestures could be dropped as the conveying of attitudes became generally confined to the throat and the sounds issuing from it (the "tone of voice" probably conveying different meanings, before this in turn was made more precise by sounds being schematized into words).⁵⁹

This last parenthetical reference to "tone of voice" compacts Paget's theory of laryngeal sound discussed above, in which the division of communicative labor gets made more completely. Paget, again working with canine gestures, observes that "the bark or yap or growl signifies the emotional state, but purpose is expressed by action and expression."⁶⁰ In Paget's and Burke's schemes, words as human analogs of barks or yaps become re-infused with emotive force, while bodily disposition and movement exhibit purpose. And yet if gestures and sounds come together in the larynx, as Paget contends, then human speech is doubly infused with emotion *and* purpose, and together these movements form a palimpsest with the broader "scene" of bodily movements. Bodily movements, that is, do not recede into the background but work in tandem with wordy movements. Recall that in Burke's first mention of Paget, he renders the energy and emotion Paget locates in the dog's body and in the human larynx with the single word, attitude.

Attitudes I: Gagging on Cs

Burke's focus on Paget and attitude in "Auscultation" carries over into the first edition of *Attitudes Toward History* (1937), which contains an impressive 30-page exploration of what Paget's theories might mean for a critical theory of language. This discussion can be found in Burke's "Dictionary of Pivotal Terms" under the heading "Cues," where, it should be noted, Burke pushes Paget to wild extremes. At stake in this lengthy entry is the material basis of attitudes that form and inform what Burke would later call "symbolic action." For Burke, "pivotal verbalizations," or words and phrases favored by particular writers, may offer material—indeed, physical—cues to a writer's "emotional overtones."⁶¹ Recall that for Paget, the dog's growl emotes, and in his evolutionary scheme, the emotive function combines with bodily purpose when transferred into the dual shape and sound of words. According to Burke, treating "words as postures," what he variously calls "tonal opportunism" and "the mimetic function," should even "be traceable more often in the verbal salencies of poetry."⁶² And yet the Pagetian implications should not, Burke contends, stop with verse:

But we are suggesting that the "key" words of even a conceptual writer, the words *singled out* for extra duty because of a writer's unanalyzable preferences, could legitimately be examined with mimetic criteria in mind. For the repetition of a concept, its constant recurrence, does function in emphasis like a poet's alliterations, and hence would bear examination for its role as "choreography."⁶³

Burke of course is one such conceptual choreographer, so he tries out the method on himself, setting out to find some "cue" "as to why, with a whole world of sounds to choose from, we selected 'comic frame.'"⁶⁴ What he "came upon" in this analysis, which focuses on *Counter-Statement's* Mann and Gide essay, is a peculiar bodily response induced by speech gestures:

"And as we finished the essay, in the period of nausea that usually follows the completion we complained that the essay had 'gagged' us. And we cited its key terms: 'correspondence,' 'conformity,' 'cult of conflict,' 'conscientiousness,' and 'corruption.'"⁶⁵ While at the time, Burke contends, he "thought no more about it,"⁶⁶ he nevertheless began to notice, through this Paget-inspired analysis of his own work, that the post-Mann and Gide gagging "episode" suggested "emotional overtones that might be lurking behind [his] preference for the word 'comic.'"⁶⁷ He continues,

And we were surprised to note how many words we have since selected as our coordinates, similarly begin with the sound of a hard "c." To list at random some of them from the present work and "Permanence and Change": coordinates, key concepts, cooperative, communion, community, communism, collectivism, cooperation, Catholicism, Calvinism, capitalism, conversion, cues, clusters, and criticism.⁶⁸

Burke goes on to identify three psycho-physical associations with the letter c. First, apparently a teacher of Burke's in Pittsburgh urged her students to pronounce the hard "c" "as though you had a fishbone caught in the throat and were trying to cough it up," a physical formation that Burke calls "a variant of 'gagging.'"⁶⁹ His analysis

radiates into his adolescent throat ailment, which led to an “obsessive fear that we might choke”⁷⁰ as well as a “decidedly ‘formative’ attack of whooping cough, strong in the experience of choking.”⁷¹

Second, Burke notes Paget’s discussion of “words as physical acts,” and in particular his treatment of the hard c sound. He quotes Paget: “The grip of the back of the tongue against the soft palate which produces a *k*, *g*, or *ng* is either associated with such action as swallowing, or it refers to a grip at the back.”⁷² Significantly, this observation leads Burke to write, for the first time, about an identification: “During adolescence, our closest friend and sparring partner was Malcolm Cowley. We were, in the wise popular usage, ‘identified’ with him. Also, our own given name begins with the sound of a hard ‘c.’”⁷³

That Burke’s engagements with Paget’s work produce a somatic notion of identification becomes even clearer when he begins “tying it all together”:

A man writes his name, he says his number. Your correspondent’s name and number begins with “c.” In trying to appropriate the forensic material, he continues to pronounce his name. He says “you” and “it,” but he is secretly saying “I.” He can do no other. He “identifies” himself with as much of the corporate, public material (in the contemporary, in history, in philosophy) as he can encompass. Yet, if we are correct in feeling that illnesses and our fears are also lurking, along with personal identities, behind the “quality” of this consonant for us, might not such a sense of choking or gagging (inherent in the mimetic act of pronouncing these “key” words in hard “c”) contain therefore as overtones a preoccupation with death?⁷⁴

Here, what Burke liked to call the “correspondences” between mind and body become apparent, and a focus on the physical gestures of language forms a crucial early component of Burkean identification. 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. At least in its early formation, Burkean identification is as much postural and somatic as it is social and psychological.⁷⁵ By the end of the “Cues” entry, Burke has settled on language with strong Pagetian overtones: “Words are rich in ‘linguistic action’ only insofar as there is a ‘dance’ implicit in their ‘naming.’”⁷⁶ This “linguistic dance,” reminiscent of Paget’s dancing bee, helps Burke render the way that “words, used with engrossment, are ‘attitude’” and, importantly, how such attitude is conveyed through rhythms and movements that are thoroughly physical.

It’s important to note here that this “linguistic dance,” especially in Paget’s scheme, isn’t just a metaphor, but serves to explain the connection between bodily and linguistic rhythm, a connection Burke had been working on since at least *Counter-Statement*.⁷⁷ Paget explains the dance in this way:

When language is realized as a system of descriptive mouth gesture, we shall be better able to understand the relationship between the purpose of rhyme and rhythm in poetry, and that of gesture and rhythm, or harmony and rhythm, in the sister arts of dancing and music. When we make a rhyme, we have momentarily brought our organs of articulation into the same posture as before; when we so time these repetitions of posture that they occur rhythmically, so that our gestures

of articulation (as a whole) form a pattern in Time, we have performed a dance with our tongue and lips.⁷⁸

Such an explanation helps situate Paget's notion of verbal choreography, again marking a kind of literalness: speech is not *like* a rhythmic dance, but performs one.

The Paget-inflected theory of linguistic dance developed in the "Cues" entry carries over into the "Conclusion" of *Attitudes Toward History* and leads Burke to figure verbalizations as acts themselves.⁷⁹ "Such acts," he writes, "on the rudimentary biological or mimetic level, occur when the poet feeling, let us say, agitation gives us agitated sound and rhythm; or feeling calmness, he slips into liquid tonalities."⁸⁰ Here Burke returns to the idea of "verbal choreography," which he claims forms "the material basis of linguistic action": words and bodies exist and act in reciprocal relation.⁸¹ Again, to illustrate, Burke draws from Paget to compose a long parenthetical aside, part of which reads as follows:

[T]he body . . . may require *acts* of grasping—and these acts have their counterparts in *attitudes* of grasping when, in expressing some attitude of contact, he alliterates with the letter "m"—or he may "dance rejection" in another situation by the selection of words featuring the letter "p," etc.⁸²

And yet, through a process of what Burke calls "accretion," the physical mimetic level of linguistic action is "buried beneath many kinds of social accretion,"⁸³ including the will to abstraction, the dull "transcendence" of overschematized concepts that Burke laments earlier as being on par with a "filing system" rather than a "linguistic dance."⁸⁴ R. R. Marett formulates this accretive transformation as "the perpetual re-imitation of imitations, which alters and embroiders as when gossips repeat a tale."⁸⁵ What Burke's meditations on verbal choreography produce, then, is an extension of Paget by which the linguistic dance develops in reciprocal, mimetic relation between and among biological, psychological, and linguistic processes as suggested in his use of identification above.

And for the Burke of the mid-1930s, the guiding force of this complicated tangle of relations is attitude: "[P]erhaps the most important thing is not our formulae, or any other formulae, as it is the *attitude* to which *any* formulae give substance."⁸⁶ Such attitudes are choreographed in part through bodily responses to situations, and the ways those responses in turn set up rhythmic expectations and corollary movements, such as gagging or choking, or, in an example Burke develops in his next meditation on Paget, spitting.

Toward a Bodily Poetics—Or, On Spitting Symbolically

Burke's 1941 essay "Philosophy of Literary Form" begins where he left off in the dictionary of *Attitudes*, with an opening section called "Situations and Strategies," where he emphasizes the cluster of attitudes, tonalities, and stylizations supplied by the body's energetic and emotive forces. He poses this mundane scenario: "Let us suppose that I ask you: 'What did the man say?' And that you answer: 'He said 'yes.'"⁸⁷ Such an account, when appearing on the page as direct discourse, contains

none of the important expressive bodily, facial, or tonal movements Burke discusses in "Auscultation, Creation, and Revision." With such atonality, meaning is at best fuzzy; as he puts it after posing the scenario, "You still do not know what the man said."⁸⁸ At stake for Burke is the attitude of "critical and imaginative works," which he figures as "answers to questions posed by the situation in which they arose. They are not merely answers, they are *strategic* answers, *stylized* answers."⁸⁹ He continues, "[T]hese strategies size up situations, name their structure and outstanding ingredients, and name them in a way that contains an attitude towards them."⁹⁰ The point is so important for Burke that he more or less repeats it two pages later: "And in all work, as in proverbs, the naming is done 'strategically' or 'stylistically,' in modes that embody attitudes, of resignation, solace, vengeance, expectancy, etc."⁹¹

Then, in a section called "Symbolic Action," he sutures one of the earliest instances of this crucial phrase to attitude via the dance. "The symbolic act," he writes, "is the *dancing of an attitude*," and in elaborating this point he meditates on "the correlation between mind and body" by suggesting that "the whole body may finally become involved" in "this attitudinizing of the poem."^{92,93} To illustrate, Burke turns to William Hazlitt's discussion of Coleridge and Wordsworth's habits of walking. Drawing from Hazlitt, Burke contrasts Coleridge's movement across uneven terrain, his manner "more full, animated, and varied," with that of Wordsworth, who walked "up and down a straight gravel-walk, his manner more equable, sustained, and internal."⁹⁴ The link between the poets' respective ambulatory habits and their poetic "manner" allows Burke—à la Hazlitt—to read their poetry as symbolic enactment such that "the whole body is involved in an enactment."⁹⁵

The discussion of symbolic action as poetic enactment leads Burke to a kind of mobile, bodily poetics, even as it leads him back to Paget. This bodily poetics forms the basis of Burke's only Paget-directed critique, that Paget "offers his theory as a *philological* one, whereas it should be offered as a contribution to *poetics*."⁹⁶ This point builds nicely on the work Burke did in *Attitudes Toward History* to theorize the social accretions that cover over evidence for Paget's theory. As Burke puts it in "Philosophy of Literary Form," "Philology, because of its involvement in historicism, really deals with *the ways in which, if Paget's theory were 100 per cent correct, such linguistic mimesis as he is discussing would become obscured by historical accretions*."⁹⁷

The passage preceding this important distinction between philology and poetics helps seal the point, and since it is the most lucid account of Burke's Paget available, I quote it in its entirety:

Sir Richard Paget's theory of gesture speech gives us inklings of the way in which such enactment might involve even the selection of words themselves on a basis of tonality. According to Paget's theory, language arose in this wise: If a man is firmly gripping something, the muscles of his tongue and throat adopt a position in conformity with the muscles with which he performs the acts of gripping. He does not merely grip with his hands; he "grips all over." Thus in conformity with the act of gripping, he would simultaneously grip with his mouth, by closing his lips firmly. If, now, he uttered a sound with his lips in this position, the only sound he could utter would be *m*. *M* therefore is the sound you get when you "give voice" to the posture of gripping. Hence, *m* would be the proper tonality corresponding to

the act of gripping, as in contact words like “maul,” “mix,” “mammas,” and “slam.” The relation between sound and sense here would not be an onomatopoeic one, as with a word like “sizzle,” but it would rather be like that between the visual designs on a sound track and the auditory vibrations that arise when the instrument has “given voice” to these designs (except that, in the case of human speech, the designs would be those of the tongue and throat, plastic rather than graphic).⁹⁸

The gripping Burke describes is the same gripping posture enacted by Paget’s terrier Joseph, and that in humans migrates to the mouth through a Darwinian process of first association and then migration—re-imitations of imitations. This theory of mimetic traveling has strong poetic overtones for Burke, in the sense that the gestures begin to travel materially through words themselves: that is, expressive rhythms arise through physical rhythms of movement and work.⁹⁹ At the heart of this poetics is the utterance’s enactment or performance, so that the letter “m,” in Burke’s example above, performs what Paget calls the “closing, containing or gripping actions.”¹⁰⁰ When the lip closure of the “m” is released, however, as in the letter “p,” the action is reversed, resulting in “bursting, expelling, releasing.”¹⁰¹ The placement of an “s” sound before the “p” exacerbates such expelling or releasing, and that same movement, extended, forms an “f,” as Burke discusses in “Philosophy”:

Let us suppose, for instance, that *f* is an excellent linguistic gesture for the *p* sound prolonged, and the lips take the posture of *p* in the act of spitting—hence, the *p* is preserved in the word itself, in “spittle” and “puke,” and in the words of repulsion and repugnance. The close phonetic relation between *p* and *f* is observed in the German exclamation of repugnance, “*pfui*.” Mencken, in *The American Language*, cites two synthetic words by Winchell that perfectly exemplify this faugh-*f*: “phfft” and “foofff.” These are “nonsense syllables” Winchell has invented to convey, by tonality alone, the idea that is denoted in our word “pest.” Here, since the inventor has complete freedom, there are no historical accidents of language to complicate his mimesis, so he can symbolically spit long and hard.¹⁰²

For Burke, because Winchell’s words are made up and are therefore unencumbered by the “social” or historical, reasoned accretions that form on the surface of gesture speech, they present an instance of pure sensuous symbolic action—a performance of repugnance through sound. Because Paget allows Burke to present an instance of words-as-postures, he is able to translate the bodily poetics into a hermeneutic that can begin to account for performed “meanings,” what he also terms “tonal values,”¹⁰³ or attitudinal force.

Paget, placed at the beginning of Burke’s crucially formative piece, reverberates throughout the long essay and returns as the essay builds to its crescendo with the section “Ritual Drama as ‘Hub.’” Here, Burke hits on drama as the most useful term for organizing his emergent principles of criticism: “The general perspective that is interwoven with our methodology of analysis might be summarily characterized as a *theory of drama*.”¹⁰⁴ Such a perspective, he proposes, would view “ritual drama as the Ur-form, the ‘hub,’ with all other aspects of *human* action . . . as spokes radiating from this hub.”¹⁰⁵ Viewing all sorts of spoken and written utterances as drama would reveal the points of overemphasis:

An essayistic treatise of scientific cast, for instance, would be viewed as a kind of Hamletic soliloquy, its rhythm slowed down to a snail's pace, or perhaps to an irregular jog, and the dramatic situation of which it is a part usually being left unmentioned.¹⁰⁶

As dramatic features, the pace and rhythm or speed and slowness tie in with the energetic movements and signifying postures Burke gleans from Paget. Indeed, the footnote Burke appends to the Hamletic sentence indicates as much: "The Paget theory of 'gesture speech' obviously makes a perfect fit with this perspective by correlating the origins of linguistic action with bodily action and posture."¹⁰⁷

The last of 10 principles Burke offers in "Philosophy of Literary Form" as the "broad outlines of our position," or what he would soon call dramatism, makes a curious analogy between his burgeoning method and biology. He writes: "(10) Being, like biology, in an indeterminate realm between vital assertions and lifeless properties, the realm of the dramatic (hence dramatic criticism) is neither physicalist nor anti-physicalist, but physicalist-plus."¹⁰⁸ When read through the Paget-inflected genealogy given here, this observation foregrounds a twofold role for the body in relation to dramatism. The first is analogical: each combines things "vital and lifeless," as Paget did with his kinetic terrier and his plasticine resonators; the second is reciprocal: the constant interaction between the biological body and dramatism exceeds the limits of life and matter. The term "physicalist-plus" thus exceeds the analogy itself, for what Burke is describing here is a vital, poetic method that always attends to bodily matters. The "physicalist-plus" axiom perhaps best characterizes what Burke renders, à la Paget, as attitude.

Attitudes II: Dramatistic Language

When, in the mid-1950s,¹⁰⁹ Burke faces the challenge of revising his two-volume *Attitudes Toward History* for a one-volume edition with Hermes, he also returns to Paget, this time with a gagging, choking cut. He excises a full 21 pages about Paget, including all the material discussed in the *Attitudes I* section above, and replaces them with a short, carefully qualified, and revealing explanation:

We have . . . omitted . . . speculations based on Sir Richard Paget's book, *Human Speech*, attributing the origin of speech sounds to "gestures" of the tongue, throat, and mouth. However, the omissions should not be taken to imply any loss of faith in his theory, which still seems wholly convincing, particularly since it seems the perfect physiological counterpart to a "Dramatistic" theory of language. But our discussion here lacked the distinction between *philology* and *poetics* which we consider essential for our purposes (as explained in *Philosophy of Literary Form*, pp. 12–17).¹¹⁰

In addition to reaffirming his allegiance to Paget, Burke reaffirms the philology-poetics distinction he hit on in *Philosophy of Literary Form*, a distinction that rendered his work on Paget in the first edition of *Attitudes* not necessarily moot, but somehow, at least in the process of trimming, superfluous. The point about poetics

turns out to be utterly crucial to Burke's theories of language as symbolic action and to the pentad, and it is also his unique formulation of Paget's theories.¹¹¹ If the purpose of this essay is to provide a somatic genealogy of dramatism, then the most crucial line from the above passage is the one in which Burke claims that Paget's gesture speech theory offers "the perfect physiological counterpart to a 'Dramatistic' theory of language." This line, written more than a decade after Burke's dramatistic tome *Grammar of Motives*, suggests that, together, Paget and Burke offer a complete account of language, or at the very least that dramatism and gesture-speech enjoy a complementary relation.

And so even though Burke's *Grammar* does not contain a single mention of Paget, it still nevertheless wrestles with issues of the "body in motion," which Burke figures as the "basic unit" of dramatistic action.¹¹² Burke's *Grammar* also keeps alive the notions of "linguistic dance," bodily poetics, and attitude. Burke's counterpart line, however, can most usefully be read through Burke's later tinkering with both *Grammar* and dramatism, and is particularly revealing in relation to his shifting attitude toward attitude.

Burke's Attitude toward Attitude: A Representative Anecdote

The word "attitude" has historically shifted from body to mind, which makes it a tricky concept as well as a useful one for considering the conceptual difficulties Burke and, really, most rhetorical theories encounter with regard to theorizing the body. According to the OED, the earliest instances of the word "attitude" occur in a design arts context as a substitute for aptitude, and refer specifically to bodily posture or disposition, as in statuary or painting. The bodily meaning persisted alone until the 19th century, when cognitive overtones moved in. Both bodily and cognitive uses continued to persist in both realms, with the dispositional associations moving into dance by the 20th century, even as cognitive researchers officially took on attitude measurement as an area of study. While my somatic genealogy favors Paget's use of attitude in the bodily sense, it's safe to say that in Burke there's considerable migration, suggesting a reciprocal mind-body relation. Early on in both editions of *Grammar of Motives*, Burke, in attempting to determine where attitude would "fall within our pattern," settles on its "character as a state of *mind*" and therefore wants to locate it pentadically near the "agent" node.¹¹³ Such a notion of attitude rubs against the Pagetian or Darwinian attitude which forms and manifests physiologically, as their favored example of the bristling dog suggests.

Read in the context of this early *Grammar* line, a Pagetian genealogy of attitude suggests that Burke's location of attitude is ambiguous at best.¹¹⁴ And yet of course Burke accounts for ambiguity in his pentad-driven method when he emphatically states: "Accordingly, what we want is *not terms that avoid ambiguity*, but *terms that clearly reveal the strategic spots at which ambiguities necessarily arise*."¹¹⁵ A good example of this sort of ambiguity occurs later in Burke's discussion of agency and purpose with regard to motion: "Two men, performing the same *motions* side by side, might be said to be performing different *acts*, in proportion as they differed in their

attitudes toward their work.”¹¹⁶ When considered alongside Burke’s “Strategies and Situations” discussion at the opening of *Philosophy of Literary Form* (above), this example could easily lead to a consideration of how such differing attitudes are *danced* or performed on and through the bodies that differently enliven the labor and the motions with which one approaches labor. This reciprocal relation between motion and action and body and mind, a relation that Burke would later formulate as the (nonsymbolic) motion/(symbolic) action pair, is actually crucial for the ambiguous, shifting, situation-bound relations between and among the pentad’s terms. When moving between the pentadic terms, attitude hangs in the balance, as Burke indicates retrospectively in an “Addendum for the Present Edition”:

With regard to the Dramatistic pentad (act, scene, agent, agency, purpose), I have found one modification useful for certain kinds of analysis. In accordance with my discussion of “attitudes” (in the section on “‘Incipient’ and ‘Delayed’ Action,” pp. 235–247), I have sometimes added the term “attitude” to the above list of five major terms. Thus, one could also speak of a “scene-attitude ratio,” or of an “agent-attitude ratio,” etc. “Agency” would more strictly designate the “*menas*” (*quibus auxiliis*) employed in the act. And “attitude” would designate the manner (*quo modo*).¹¹⁷

Quo modo—the Latin phrase for “in what manner”—designates not just manner, but insofar as it contains a form of the Latin *modus*, mode, also entails measure, quantity, or physical limits, and in its specialized poetic meanings encompasses issues of rhythm and harmony.¹¹⁸ The manner at issue here cannot be separated from the bodies that perform manner or move in a particular manner. Burke’s example illustrates this bodily force of attitude: “To build something with a hammer would involve an instrument or ‘agency’; to build with diligence would involve an ‘attitude,’ a ‘how.’”¹¹⁹ Diligence here involves just the kind of energetic force Burke ascribed early on, through Paget, to the body in terms of both attitude and purpose. The second edition’s addendum therefore shows Burke emphatically adding attitudes back in to dramatism. These attitudes are bodily ones, as indicted by a *QJS* article Burke published in 1952, where he writes: “Dramatistically, we watch always for ways in which bodily attitudes can affect the development of linguistic expression.”¹²⁰ He then adds parenthetically: “(We like Paget’s theory of ‘gesture speech’ for this reason).”¹²¹ This line, with its modest parentheses, buried in the middle of a near-column long footnote, still shows Burke thinking about Paget, especially along the lines of the bodily poetics—the ways the body energetically and attitudinally forms language. Burke’s abiding interest in Paget’s Darwinian theory of verbal choreography and its status as poetics continues to persist, if intermittently and stealthily, for the next 20 years. It’s detectable, for instance, in Burke’s constant return for the language of dance, in his enduring respect for and insistence on rhetoric’s energetic force, and in his wrestling with the reciprocally-related Burkean pair (nonsymbolic) motion/(symbolic) action (or NSM/SA), a pair he contends informed his dramatistic method from the start.¹²² Burke’s formulation of the NSM/SA pair, where nonsymbolic motion aligns with sheer movement such as that of the body, and symbolic action aligns with language, is crucial because it is the scene for more

body-mind wrangling later in Burke's career. And yet the pair has also allowed scholars to bracket the body when they misread the slash mark as a firm distinction.¹²³ The notable exception is Bryan Crable's 2003 essay, "Symbolizing Motion: Burke's Dialectic and Rhetoric of the Body," which takes seriously the connective force of Burke's slash and reads the pair, as I do, in reciprocal relation—noncorresponding yet inseparable.¹²⁴ Burke's work with Paget intensifies or speeds up the reciprocal dialectical movement, and, however momentarily or provisionally, renders language as *sensuous* action.

As the physiological counterpart to and genealogical forebear of dramatism, Paget's gesture-speech theory can never be fully separated from Burkean dramatism. And yet Burke's *Grammar*, by suspending his earlier concerns of the body, cleaves mind and body most thoroughly—albeit temporarily. The net effect of an overreliance on *Grammar* is a disembodied critical apparatus, which in turn can yield somewhat lifeless analyses. As rhetorical critics we would all do well to remember the lesson Burke learned from Paget: rhetoric is difficult to separate from language's materiality, which is never very far from communing, communicative bodies. At long last, the pentad—and rhetorical theory more broadly—would have attitude.

Notes

- [1] A. T. W., "Review of *Human Speech*," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 16 (June 1930): 364. Richard Paget, *Human Speech (Some Observations, Experiments, and Conclusions as to the Nature, Origin, Purpose and Possible Improvement of Human Speech)* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1930).
- [2] For Lucretius detail, see George Kennedy, *Comparative Rhetoric: An Historical and Cross-Cultural Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998): 36. The most recent resurgence of this theory is discussed in a 1999 issue of *American Scientist* which describes "manual gestures" as "'behavioral fossil' coupled to speech" (138). Kennedy's treatment is interesting for its overt attempt to connect glossogenetics and even animal communication to Aristotelian categories of rhetoric. See also Adam Kendon, *Gesture: Visible Action as Utterance* (New York: University of Cambridge Press, 2004), especially pages 35–61, for a review of glossogenetics from the point of view of gesture studies.
- [3] Paget's training in multiple fields is discussed in A. T. W.'s *QJS* review, 364. He was a fellow of both the Physical Society of London and the Institute of Physics.
- [4] A.T.W., 368.
- [5] "The Progress of Science: Voice and the Telephone. Mechanism of Speech," *The Times*, September 13, 1926, p. 10 col. D.
- [6] I hesitate even to footnote the phrase "body as discursive formation" since it is so widely used, but, for an example, see Gerard Hauser's "Incongruous Bodies: Arguments for Personal Sufficiency and Public Insufficiency," *Argumentation and Advocacy* 36 (Summer 1999): 1.
- [7] Kevin DeLuca, "Unruly Arguments: The Body Rhetoric of Earth First!, Act Up, and Queer Nation," *Argumentation and Advocacy* 36 (Summer 1999): 20.
- [8] Hauser, 2. In this, his introduction to a two-part special issue on body argument, Hauser writes, "The body is an ambiguous form of signification. Arguments are warranted assertions. They are claims supported by evidence and reasoning. But the body, as a corporeal entity, is an organism; its biological status is not symbolic."

- [9] Melissa Deem, "Stranger Sociability, Public Hope, and the Limits of Political Transformation," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 88 (November 2002): 450.
- [10] Sharon Crowley, *Toward a Civil Discourse: Rhetoric and Fundamentalism* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006); Phaedra Pezzullo, "Resisting 'National Breast Cancer Awareness Month': The Rhetoric of Counterpublics and Their Cultural Performances," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 89 (November 2003): 345–65. For a sustained, productive emphasis on the body's capacity for movement and the resulting connections to life and energy, a major focus of the present article, see two articles by Mindy Fenske: "The Aesthetic of the Unfinished: Ethics and Performance," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 24 (January 2004): 1–19; and "The Movement of Interpretation: Conceptualizing Performative Encounters with Multimediated Performance," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 26 (April 2006): 138–61.
- [11] My book *Bodily Arts: Rhetoric and Athletics in Ancient Greece* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005) in fact argues that rhetoric has long been intertwined with bodily matters; it's just that our Aristotelian commitments to thought and reason have historically produced trained incapacities, most notably our difficulty theorizing the body's relationship to rhetoric. See also James Fredal, *Rhetorical Action in Ancient Athens: Persuasive Artistry from Solon to Demosthenes* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2006).
- [12] Paget shows up in almost as many of Burke's books as do Nietzsche and Marx, and in fact Paget's book *Human Speech* is shelved in the core of Burke's home office between *Capital* and the Modern Library's *The Philosophy of Nietzsche*. And yet to my knowledge not a single Burke scholar has given Paget so much as a mention. His theories were folded into Burke's early rhetorical theories at such an early point that they are both formative and forgotten; even, in one notable instance that I will discuss later on, cut out between the first and second editions. (Thanks go to Burke's sons, Michael and Butchie, for allowing me the chance to visit Burke's fully intact study.)
- [13] See Jeff Bennett's review of an article on Burkean attitude, which aptly characterizes this "flatness" phenomenon from another perspective: "It is no small irony . . . that Burke's many writings are often utilized in pedagogy and research as a systematic approach to criticism, not as a rhetorical heuristic for inspiring invention" (<http://kbjournal.org/node/48>).
- [14] Daniel O'Keefe, "Burke's Dramatism and Action Theory," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 8 (1978): 8.
- [15] Dana Anderson, "Questioning the Motives of Habituated Action: Burke and Bourdieu on Practice," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 37, no. 3 (2004): 255–74; Sarah E. Mahan-Hays and Roger C. Aden, "Kenneth Burke's 'Attitude' at the Crossroads of Rhetorical and Cultural Studies: A Proposal and Case Study Illustration," *Western Journal of Communication* 67, no. 1 (Winter 2003): 32–55.
- [16] Anderson: "[T]he preparation for action that Burke signifies through *attitude* here refers to conscious preparation." This reading of course is fair enough, and much more understandable given the *Grammar* passage than the version of attitude offered by Mahan-Hays and Aden, which I believe goes too far. O'Keefe's earlier piece is interesting because it grapples with the "troublesome" difficulties posed by Burke's formulation of dramatism (10), and hints that Burke may have gotten it wrong. Later writings by Burke, as I'll demonstrate—including Burke's article "(Nonsymbolic) Action/(Symbolic) Motion," published in the same year as O'Keefe's article, corroborate O'Keefe's hunch.
- [17] For Burkeans, this argument also helps distinguish between structuralist or poststructuralist theories of language, where Burke's theories are so frequently slotted, and Burke's lively, robust, and, importantly, materialist theory of dramatism. See Celeste Condit, "Framing Kenneth Burke: Sad Tragedy or Comic Dance?" *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 80 (1984): 79. What's more, in assuming dramatism, identification, and symbolic action's complete commensurability with structuralist or even poststructuralist linguistics, rhetoric scholars commit an act of anachronism, an act that continues to ignore the body's importance for

Burke's subsequent theories, as well as—more broadly—the body's crucial poetic role in communicative activity. For a structuralist Burke, see Joseph Gusfield, "Introduction," in *Kenneth Burke on Symbols and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989): 2–3; and William Rueckert, "Kenneth Burke and Structuralism," *Shenandoah* 21, no. 1 (Autumn 1969): 19–28. For poststructuralism, see Cary Nelson, "Writing as the Accomplice of Language: Kenneth Burke and Poststructuralism," in *The Legacy of Kenneth Burke*, ed. H. W. Simons and Trevor Melia (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989): 156–8; Barbara Biesecker, *Addressing Postmodernity: Kenneth Burke, Rhetoric, and a Theory of Social Change* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1997): 2–23; and Robert Wess, *Kenneth Burke: Rhetoric, Subjectivity, Postmodernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Wess's book actually links Burke to postmodernism, which I take to be distinct from and yet frequently amenable to poststructural theories of language. Condit, "Framing," 79, also bristles at attempts to characterize Burke as a poststructuralist—"The blending of human linguistic prowess with our animality is Burke's unique strength"—and warns that "effacing any material component . . . requires one to ignore the ties to history and physicality that are implicit in Burke's notions of 'familial' and 'geometric substance.'"

- [18] Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976): 167. For a terrific model of such sorting that happens along the lines of neurology rather than glossogenetics, see Elizabeth A. Wilson, *Psychosomatics: Feminism and the Neurological Body* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), which follows the biological models of Darwin, Freud, and Sacks, and ultimately offers biology as a surprisingly productive venue for feminist theory. Celeste Condit's 2004 lecture—"How Should We Study the Symbolizing Animal?" *NCA's Carroll C. Arnold Distinguished Lecture* (Boston: Pearson, 2004): 9—works through the risks and rewards of integrating biology into humanistic work, with frequent reference to Burke.
- [19] This quote about Kennedy's "deanship" is from Wilfred E. Major's review of *Comparative Rhetoric: An Historical and Cross-Cultural Introduction*, in *Argumentation and Advocacy* 35 (Summer 1998): 33.
- [20] Kennedy, 29.
- [21] Kennedy, 39–41.
- [22] Kennedy, 3, 4. See also Victor Vitanza, "Editor's Preface, Dedication, and Acknowledgments," in *Writing Histories of Rhetoric* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1994): ix, for an account of rumorous reception of Kennedy's piece: "I had heard through the grapevine that Kennedy had written a 'wild,' perhaps savage, article. And indeed, he has."
- [23] It's a bit surprising that Kennedy's survey of glossogenetic theories does not include Paget's. Paget wasn't, after all, a little known figure, though his development of the Paget-Gorman system of signed speech may have eclipsed his earlier work in glossogenetics. For a critique of neocartesianism in regards to gesture studies, see Brenda Farnell, "Developments in the Study of 'Gesture' in Language," *Anthropological Linguistics* 46 (Spring 2004): 100–15.
- [24] Kenneth Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966): 67. For more on Burke's counter-relation to abstraction, see William Rueckert, *Kenneth Burke and the Drama of Human Relations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963): 136, where Rueckert rightly observes that the separation between humans and biology occurs, in Burke's scheme, by dint of what Rueckert calls "a movement to abstraction." Celeste Condit's rejoinder to Phillip Tompkins and George Cheney offers Korzybski as a useful point of contrast in regard to the usefulness of abstraction. See Condit, "Framing," 78.
- [25] "Origin of Human Speech: Combination of Two Arts. Sir R. Paget's Theory," *The Times*, September 7, 1928, p. 17, col. G.; Paget, *Human*, 133. See also Charles Darwin, *Expression of the Emotion in Man and Animals*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998): 40.
- [26] Darwin, *Expression*, 40. In a footnote, Darwin even broadens the mimetic, responsive sympathy to more collective scenarios, such as when audience members begin to clear their own throats when the singer they are observing sounds hoarse, or when his American

- physician friend while assisting childbirth “finds himself imitating the muscular efforts of the patient.” *Expression*, 40–41.
- [27] Darwin, *Expression*, 37.
- [28] As well as others’ body parts. See footnote 26.
- [29] Saussure refers to that “staying power” of language as stability. Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, ed. Charles Bally, Albert Sechehaye, and Albert Riedlinger, trans. with an introduction and notes Wade Baskin (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1966): 72.
- [30] The habit here of course is on a phylogenetic rather than an individual scale, and this set of Darwin’s theories closely approximate Lamarck. Paget’s explicit crediting of Darwin with his insights about gesture, and Burke’s subsequent engagement with Paget’s theories, challenges Adam Kendon’s view that “Darwin had little direct bearing on the development of gesture studies” until the latter half of the 20th century (44).
- [31] Paget, *Human*, 174.
- [32] Paget, *Human*, 133.
- [33] Richard Paget, *This English* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Turbner & Co., Ltd., 1935): 2.
- [34] Paget, *This English*, 2. It is important to note that Paget’s theories are not drawn exclusively from English or even Indo-European languages, but from a variety of Eastern and ancient languages as well, with a strong leaning toward Polynesian languages.
- [35] E. L. Thorndike, “The Origin of Language,” *Science* 98 (July 2, 1943): 1, 3. In this article, Thorndike surveys the various by then “dishonored” glossogenetic theories of the 1930s and 1940s. Paget’s theory was considered by many (including Thorndike) to be the new replacement for origin theories already in circulation. First there was the “ding-dong” theory, wherein certain things mysteriously elicited certain arbitrary human noises that thus came to serve as names. The second theory is the well-known “bow-wow” theory, wherein “men formed the habits of using the sounds made by animals,” and then there’s the even more opprobriously named “pooh pooh theory,” which posits a set of instinctual interjections. Thorndike ultimately calls Paget’s theory “ingenious.”
- [36] Charles Darwin, *Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*, 2nd ed. (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1897): 87.
- [37] Darwin, *Expression*, 356: “It is a curious, though perhaps an idle speculation, how early in the long line of our progenitors the various expressive movements, now exhibited by man, were successively acquired.”
- [38] Darwin, *Expression*, 359.
- [39] It’s worth noting, too, that Kennedy’s theory of rhetoric as energy derives neither from his extensive and monumental research on the history of rhetoric, nor from translating Aristotle, but from his observation of crows calling to each other on his campus in Chapel Hill. See Vitanza, ix.
- [40] This is also the section of Burke’s copy of *Human Speech* that is the most marked up and worked over. Thanks (again) go to Michael and Butchie Burke for allowing me the chance to examine Burke’s copy of *Human Speech*.
- [41] Paget, *Human*, 126.
- [42] Paget, *Human*, 126.
- [43] Paget, *Human*, 126–7.
- [44] Paget, *Human*, 127.
- [45] Paget, *Human*, 127–8.
- [46] Paget, *Human*, 128.
- [47] Paget, *Human*, 127.
- [48] Paget, *Human*, 128.
- [49] Paget, *Human*, 128.
- [50] Paget, *Human*, 132.
- [51] Paget, *Human*, 132.

- [52] Paget, *Human*, 36.
- [53] James Chesebro, *Extensions of the Burkean System* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1993): 46. Chesebro places the composition of ACR between 1930 and 1934, although since this piece precedes Burke's writing of *Permanence and Change*, which was happening in 1933 (cf. Debra Hawhee, "Burke on Drugs," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* (2004): 17), I would narrow Chesebro's estimation by a year.
- [54] Kenneth Burke, "Auscultation, Creation, and Revision," in Chesebro: 61.
- [55] Burke, "Auscultation," 126.
- [56] Burke, "Auscultation," 124.
- [57] See also Burke, "Auscultation," 53–4, which indicates a possibility that Burke is responding to his own dog, Ping (whose brother's name is Pong), who gets an explicit reference earlier in ACR, when Burke describes how Ping taught him an important lesson about anthropocentrism:

Gathering up the family, including the pup, who was small enough to be transported in a cardboard box with square holes cut here and there for ventilation, I started off on a slow train which—it being early spring—was heated both by steam from the engine and by slanting sunlight. The pup . . . in his eagerness to see, would stick his nose into one of the holes, thus blocking his vision and leading me to realize that had he been less eager he would, by not pressing so tensely forward, have avoided plugging the hole with his nose, and so would have seen much better. I thought of calling the attention of all my daughters to this parabolic fact, but I was not quite sure of what it was parabolic, and insofar as dogs recognize by scent rather than vision, his nose was exactly where it should have been.

- [58] Burke, "Auscultation," 124.
- [59] Burke, "Auscultation," 124.
- [60] Paget, *Human*, 128.
- [61] All quotes in this sentence are from Kenneth Burke, *Attitudes Toward History*, 1st ed. Vol. 2. New York: The New Republic, 1937.
- [62] Burke, *Attitudes*, 1e, 2: 92.
- [63] Burke, *Attitudes*, 1e, 2: 92.
- [64] Burke, *Attitudes*, 1e, 2: 83.
- [65] Burke, *Attitudes*, 1e, 2: 83.
- [66] Burke, *Attitudes*, 1e, 2: 83.
- [67] Burke, *Attitudes*, 1e, 2: 84.
- [68] Burke, *Attitudes*, 1e, 2: 84.
- [69] Burke, *Attitudes*, 1e, 2: 84.
- [70] Burke, *Attitudes*, 1e, 2: 84.
- [71] Burke, *Attitudes*, 1e, 2: 84–5.
- [72] Burke, *Attitudes*, 1e, 2: 85.
- [73] Burke, *Attitudes*, 1e, 2: 85.
- [74] Burke, *Attitudes*, 1e, 2: 86.
- [75] Sociologists like Gusfield, 18, are particularly keen on identification's social, persuasive functions.
- [76] Burke, *Attitudes*, 1e, 2: 110.
- [77] Kenneth Burke, *Counter-Statement* 3rd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968): 140:

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 in walking, inhalation, and exhalation, up and down, in

and out, back and forth, such are the types of distinctly motor experiences “tapped” by rhythm. See also Hawhee, “Burke on Drugs,” 16.

[78] Paget, *This English*, 101–2.

[79] Burke, *Attitudes*, 1e, 2: 249. Readers might recognize the rudiments of speech act theory in the passage preceding:

In names, there are implicit the act and the command (Piaget shows us the child picking up a block and saying: “This is a boat.” The child next moves the block, commanding itself: “Now, make the boat go across the ocean.” In time, name and command become inextricably intermingled, the command being *implicit* in the name.) To name various manifestations by the same name, is to organize a strategy with reference to these manifestations.

[80] Burke, *Attitudes*, 1e, 2: 249.

[81] Burke, *Attitudes*, 1e, 2: 249–50.

[82] Burke, *Attitudes*, 1e, 2: 250.

[83] Burke, *Attitudes*, 1e, 2: 250.

[84] Burke, *Attitudes*, 1e, 2: 110.

[85] R. R. Marrett, *Tylor* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1936): 60.

[86] Burke, *Attitudes*, 1e, 2: 256.

[87] Kenneth Burke, *Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973): 1.

[88] Burke, *Philosophy*, 1.

[89] Burke, *Philosophy*, 1. Emphasis in original.

[90] Burke, *Philosophy*, 1.

[91] Burke, *Philosophy*, 3.

[92] *Philosophy of Literary Form* marks, as best as I can tell, the first time Burke uses the phrase “symbolic action,” and he of course uses the phrase in *PLF*’s subtitle: *Studies in Symbolic Action*. To be sure, he’s circling “symbolic action” in *Attitudes Toward History*, 1e, 22 and 2e, 194 when he discusses symbolic kinship.

[93] Burke, *Philosophy*, 9, emphasis in original.

[94] Burke, *Philosophy*, 9–10.

[95] Burke, *Philosophy*, 11.

[96] Burke, *Philosophy*, 13.

[97] Burke, *Philosophy*, 13, emphasis in original.

[98] Burke, *Philosophy*, 13.

[99] Burke, *Philosophy*, 16–17.

[100] Paget, *Human*, 154.

[101] Paget, *Human*, 154.

[102] Burke, *Philosophy*, 13.

[103] Kenneth Burke, *Attitudes Toward History*, 2nd ed. (Hermes: 1957): 238.

[104] Burke, *Philosophy*, 103.

[105] Burke, *Philosophy*, 103.

[106] Burke, *Philosophy*, 103.

[107] Burke, *Philosophy*, 103, n. 23.

[108] Burke, *Philosophy*, 116.

[109] August 1955 is the date of his new preface to the second edition, which appeared in 1957, and so that year, I assume, is roughly when he made the revisions. Burke, *Attitudes*, 2e, “Introduction,” unnumbered pages.

- [110] Burke, *Attitudes*, 2e, 238. It is telling that the conclusion of *Attitudes Toward History*, so inflected by Paget's theories, as I demonstrate in "Attitudes I" above, can be left fully intact and unrevised for the second edition.
- [111] A. T. W.'s *QJS* review, which opens this essay, also foreshadows the possibility of poetic implications when A. T. W. suggests that Paget's theory offers speech "as the basis of the arts of literature, poetry and song," 365.
- [112] Kenneth Burke, *Grammar of Motives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969): 14.
- [113] Burke, *Grammar*, 20.
- [114] At the very least this genealogy troubles the recent assertion of Mahen-Hays and Aden, 35, that Burkean attitude is "a strategy of interpretation and thus more of a cognitive activity that is then reflected in one's symbol use." Mahen-Hays and Aden's error is their assumption that interpretation—especially Burkean interpretation—is necessarily and wholly cognitive.
- [115] Burke, *Grammar*, xviii, emphasis in original.
- [116] Burke, *Grammar*, 276.
- [117] Burke, *Grammar*, 443.
- [118] Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *Latin Dictionary Founded on Andrew's Edition of Freund's Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).
- [119] Burke, *Grammar*, 443. See also Burke, *Attitudes Toward History*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984): 394. Here, in the "Retrospective Prospect," Burke writes:
- But, whereas the *quo modo* of the medieval formula was originally treated as but a figurative variation on the theme of "agency" ("he did the job with hammer and saw, with alacrity"), in time the strategic role of the term began to become apparent. For it designates the point of *personal mediation* between the realm of nonsymbolic motion and symbolic action. Its "how" refers to the role of the human individual as a physiological organism, with corresponding centrality of the nervous system, ATTITUDINIZING in the light of experience as marked by the powers of symbolicity (both in themselves and in the realm of the Counter-Nature that has developed as the results, intended and unintended, of those powers).
- [120] Kenneth Burke, "A Dramatistic View of the Origins of Language, Part One," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 37 (1952): 254, note 2. This piece is the first in a series of three articles which are most useful for Burke's account of negative, which is why I don't focus on them more here (this despite their title, "A Dramatistic View of the Origins of Language"). This series is reprinted in Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action*, 419–69.
- [121] Burke, "Dramatistic View," 254, note 2.
- [122] For the dance point, consider Burke's rejoinder to Wayne Booth, "Dancing with Tears in My Eyes," *Critical Inquiry* 1, no. 1 (September 1974): 1–31, and Booth's meditation in *Critical Understanding* called "The Dance as Cure." In Wayne Booth, *Critical Understanding: The Powers and Limits of Pluralism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979): 124–6.
- [123] Cf. Anderson, 259, and J. Clarke Rountree, III, "Coming to Terms with Kenneth Burke's Pentad," *American Communication Journal* 1, no. 3 (1998): <http://www1.appstate.edu/orgs/acjournal/holdings/vol1/iss3/burke/rountree.html> (accessed February 13, 2006). See also, of course, the *Critical Inquiry* exchanges between Burke and Jameson, beginning with Burke's article "Nonsymbolic Motion/Symbolic Action," *Critical Inquiry* 4, no. 4 (1978): 809–38.
- [124] Bryan Crable, "Symbolizing Motion: Burke's Dialectic and Rhetoric of the Body," *Rhetoric Review* 22, no. 2 (2003): 121–37.