

# *Punctuating Rhetorical Acts*

Alternative accounts and  
their imprint

# Purposes

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- Importance of Perspective in Criticism
- Consistency of Model of Communication
  - Sharp versus blurred vision

# Burke's Pentad

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## *Criticism: accounts of rhetorical acts*

- The terms
  - Act
  - Agent
  - Agency
  - Purpose
  - Scene
- The ratios

# A traditional acct of rhetorical act

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- Agent: *The speaker*
- Act: . . . *plans a speech*
- Scene: . . . *to address a particular audience and situation*
- Purpose: . . . *with a particular goal in mind*
- Agency: . . . *using techniques (which we map as rhetorical strategies)*

Our main critique of Obama

## Alternative Acct: A society responds to events

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- Agent: A society (social grouping) . . .
- Agency: . . . uses discursive exchange (which we map as rhetorical strategies) . . .
- Act: . . . to understand and respond to . . .
- Scene: . . . events . . .
- Purpose: . . . to which it must respond appropriately.

Klumpp, James F., and Hollihan, Thomas A. "Debunking the Resignation of Earl Butz: Sacrificing an Official Racist." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 65 (1979): 1-11.

## Alternative Acct: Situation dictates strategies

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- Scene: The situation . . .
- Act: . . . dictates . . .
- Agent: . . . to the speaker (or speakers) . . .
- Agency: . . . the techniques available (which we map as rhetorical strategies) and . . .
- Purpose: . . . what s/he must achieve with them.

Know an example?

# Alternative Acct: Situation dictates strategies

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- **Scene:** Our multi-racial society, its traditional colorblindness, and the emergence of social media. . .
- **Act:** . . . dictates . . .
- **Agent:** . . . to Obama and users of social media . . .
- **Agency:** . . . new strategies akin to a chorus . . .
- **Purpose:** . . . that address colorblindness differently.

## Important ratios:

- Scene/agent
- Scene/agency
- Purpose/agency

# Alternative acct: Languages contain possibilities

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- Scene/Agent: The Language &/or ongoing praxis of language in a culture
- Act: . . . defines the possibilities and limits (which we map as rhetorical strategies)
- Subagents: . . . through which the speakers of a society
- Agency: . . . respond to the needs of the culture
- Purpose: . . . to coordinate their responses to the events encountered by the culture

Terri and Alyssa?



## Alternative acct:

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- Corporate agent: A movement (or its leaders?) . . .
- Agency: . . . uses a protest event (which we map as rhetorical strategies) . . .
- Purpose: . . . to overcome . . .
- Scene: . . . efforts to silence them . . .
- Act: . . . thus, creating voice.

Know an example?

## Alternative acct:

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- Corporate agent: The Wisconsin Statehouse protest (or its leaders?) . . .
- Agency: . . . used their sit-in (with chants, signs) . . .
- Purpose: . . . to overcome . . .
- Scene: . . . Governor & Republican efforts to silence them . . .
- Act: . . . thus, creating voice.

### Important ratios

- Scene/purpose
- Act/purpose
- Agency/purpose