Using Burke’s Dramatism to Unpack Intractable Conflict: Bush 43 and the Process of Peace in the Middle East

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ABSTRACT

I investigate how the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as an exemplar case study of intractable conflict, might be re-envisioned by destabilizing the paradigms of the belligerents. I detail how paradigms and our perceptions of and interactions with them influence, direct, and even defeat attempts at understanding social situations (of which violent conflict is one). Furthermore, with the premise that proposed solutions are reactions to existing paradigms, I analyze the potential benefits and risks of revealing the assumptions, premises, and biases of the paradigms with which belligerents, and those who represent them, construct their realities. In addition, I demonstrate how narratives and rhetorical myths prescribe action, not passively reflect action. Ultimately, I demonstrate the recursive relationship amongst originating paradigms, rhetorical myths, and the terms and concepts of narratives. This problem set transcends the motives of individual Agents and directs the focus on the rhetorical nature of the conflict’s intractability, not its ultimate resolution. I destabilize the assumption underpinning demonstrated U.S. policy
regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: direct negotiations, as the core of the peace *process*, will result in peace.

This project joins current efforts to extend Burke’s dramatism into arenas where multiple rhetorical artifacts must be critically analyzed simultaneously to produce a more synoptic perspective. My approach leverages the heuristic character of Burke’s pentad to reveal a set of variables and relationships which account for a phenomenon: a “dramatistic” methodology for unpacking intractable conflict. My methodology also treats other Burkean concepts generally nested under the Dramatism moniker: god terms, comic and tragic frames of acceptance, entelechy, and the pitfalls of the scapegoat. I demonstrate how the suite of Dramatistic terms and concepts might be leveraged to reveal the interconnectivity amongst U.S. policies, the Scenes the artifacts call forth, and the Agents who manipulate them. Furthermore, to address the implications of prescriptive paradigms on problem formulation, I align my approach with Burke’s mythic, constitutive, and narrative projects.

This study is significant for rhetorical studies and peace and conflict studies because it provides a rhetorical framework to destabilize paradigms: a first step toward shifting a conflict from an intractable to a tractable condition. To that end, policy makers should be able to assess phenomena, like the Arab Spring, as part of a Dramatistic framework burdened with countless motives, rhetorical myths, competing narratives. For these reasons, this project is immediately relevant for understanding problem constitution at the intersection of rhetorical studies, peace and conflict studies, and policy development.

INDEX WORDS: Paradigms, Pentadic analysis, Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Rhetorical myth, U.S. foreign policy
USING BURKE’S DRAMATISM TO UNPACK INTRACTABLE CONFLICT: BUSH 43 AND THE PROCESS
OF PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

by

TRENT MILLS

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
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USING BURKE’S DRAMATISM TO UNPACK INTRACTABLE CONFLICT: BUSH 43 AND THE PROCESS OF PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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1 INTRODUCTORY MATTERS

Politics, insofar as it concerns relations among states, seems to signify—in both ideal and objective terms—simply the survival of states confronting the potential threat created by the existence of other states...the art of politics teaches men to live in peace within collectivities, while it teaches collectivities to live in either peace or war (Aron 6-7)

Raymond Aron’s 1966 theory of international relations delineates foreign affairs from any other form of social intercourse because interstate relations “take place in the shadow of war or, to use a more rigorous expression, relations among states involve, in essence, the alternatives of war and peace” (5). From this dire characterization alone, rhetoricians have rightfully focused on the rhetorics of international politics by focusing on the most influential statesman in U.S. politics: the president. The perception of the institution of the president is perhaps more valuable than the efficacy of any solitary rhetorical act. In terms of rhetorical power in interstate social discourse, the privileged position of the institution of the president relies on the preeminence of political realism; a concept of realism where the “the focus of international relations is on the behavior of the state, its security and interests being the highest priority of political life” (Haslam 12). As a successful sociologist and political journalist in early twentieth-century France, Aron’s theory of international relations resists traditional political realism credited to Morgenthau which considers politics a “constant across time and space” (Davis 91) and is overly reliant on rationalism (Haslam 10). Instead of the conventional realism that is arguably still the dominant paradigm for international relations (Kraig), Aron views the social discourse at the core of international relations though the “refracting prism of a very specific circumstance indeed, namely, state sovereignty” (Davis 90, emphasis mine). For Aron’s theory, sovereignty serves as a “god term” from which all other terms and concepts gain consistency and
relevance from, or as Burke would designate it: “the ultimate motivation, or substance, of a Constitutional frame” (*A Grammar of Motives* 355). Joining the abundant scholarship focused on presidential rhetoric, this study interrogates the rhetorical functions of the *statesman* as the very definition of *statehood* is problematized.

As a requisite for understanding historical causation, rhetoric and communication scholars have leaned on rhetorical methods to analyze the relationship between presidential discourse and the rhetorical context a president navigates to achieve political objectives (Medhurst 4, Winkler 4-7, Campbell and Jamieson 3-6, Graham 2, Kraig 3, Wander 340). With ample scholarly distance between the historical event and the associated analysis, most contributors to Medhurst’s *Critical Reflections on the Cold War* map presidential rhetorical artifacts (and their commensurate labels) as they help construct our perceptions on history. Because of the centrality of the office in U.S. culture, there is an indisputable exclamation point that punctuates presidential oratory no matter how subdued the delivery. Furthermore, as Campbell and Jamieson argue, understanding the presidency-as-institution relies on consideration of public rhetorical artifacts instead of the non-public correspondences that lead up to the public ones (4). Instead of an exclamation point, it would seem that an ellipsis or some other inconclusive icon generally accompanies bureaucratic policy documents. Of Medhurst’s many contributors, only Newman distinguishes between presidential oratory and the policy documents that physically operationalize a president’s vision; documents produced through a discrete dialectic *process* facilitated by policy *advisors*.

Whereas oral policy can frame a public discussion on an issue, written policy, like Newman’s analysis of how the declassified National Security Council memo 68 (the oft-cited blue-
print for U.S. Cold War policy) provides useful insight into the policy-making process that accounts for the behind-the-scenes actors Campbell and Jamieson avoid. As it relates to interstate conflict, an emphasis on the lesser known nodes of the policy-making system is important because it emphasizes the rhetorical nature of a policy-making system—what Graham calls “policy web construction” whereby rhetorical justifications are linked (5)—and invites a consideration as to how policy makers wielding rhetorical analytics might re-envision problems as they constitute them.

From the perspective of a rhetorical critic, there is little substantive difference between a political context and a historical context. Political reality is constituted by political rhetoric (Medhurst 7) just as history is historicized through whatever paradigm is used; both are rhetorically constructed. Medhurst’s compilation of Cold War analyses partners the methods of the rhetorical critic with the “tools of historiography” to discern how a message functions to create change in its original context as well as how we historicize events retrospectively (268-269). The historian, according to Medhurst, shares characteristics with rhetoricians and political scientists in that a historian assigns labels, prescribes meaning to the labels, and “uses language to make and remake the world around us” (6). This study follows Medhurst’s attention on the methods of rhetorical critics but instead of historiography, my focus is on possible rhetorical tools and approaches for shifting a conflict from an intractable to a tractable condition.

1.1 Background to the Problem

When the Arab Spring—Revolt, Awakening, or Uprising based on your perspective—began in early 2011, the world tuned in to watch how this turbulence might translate into positive transformation. But as North Africa and the Middle East continue to experience their in-
ternal shifts of power, one wonders how these simultaneous upheavals might affect the direction of long-standing regional conflicts that have traditionally carried global economic and security implications. For example, the international effort to resolve the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians (colloquially known as the Middle East Peace Process or MEPP) is several decades old having endured several attempts at the publically-stated, shared objective of a two-state solution. Results and motives notwithstanding, nearly every nation that borders Israel and the Palestinian territories is now either a failed or potentially failing state based on even the most charitable metric making the geopolitical context as uninviting as possible. Yet, the U.S. administration has made negotiations between the government of Israel and the political representative of the Palestinians, the Palestinian Authority\(^1\) (PA), a centerpiece of its regional foreign policy strategy (National Security Strategy of the United States 2010). The decision to attempt to disrupt the status quo in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, i.e. bring focus on final status agreements between the belligerents, is therefore an interesting one. With the region in turmoil, why interrupt a “peaceful” status quo?

In the week preceding President Obama’s first presidential trip to Israel and the Palestinian territories in early 2013, columnists, activists, and policy wonks clamored enthusiastically about where he might focus his visit. While the calls for renewal of the MEPP were predictably well represented, other voices made note of the evolving function of a peace “process” itself and the dramatically shifting regional environment framed by the War on Terror; an unpredictable Arab Spring; Iranian influence across Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon; threat of nuclear prolifera-

\(^1\) The PA is the political apparatus of the internationally-recognized representative of the Palestinians: the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). The PA was created in 1993 to help transition the PLO into a Palestinian state.
tion; the U.S. *pivot* to the Pacific; China’s *pivot* to the East; and civil war in Syria. Complementing those concerned voices were columns by Thomas Friedman and David Brooks citing forecasts that the U.S. will be the largest exporter of oil by 2020 and the possible foreign policy reprioritization the U.S. might have to make regarding its traditional commitments to the Middle East region. Vali Nasr argues in his unflattering critique of the first Obama administration’s foreign policy decisions that the “eye of the storm in the Middle East” has shifted east from the fractures in the Levant\(^2\) to the Arab-versus-Persian and Shia-versus-Sunni tensions centered on the Persian Gulf region (199). Regardless, President Obama leveraged much of his foreign policy political capital and momentum from his first term toward restarting the MEPP in his second term. As an example of this emphasis, the U.S. Secretary of State, John Kerry, invested the first half of 2013 and six personal trips to the Levant just to get Israelis and Palestinians to return to direct negotiations. An assumption underpinning the overall U.S. policy is that the efforts of direct negotiations, as the core of the peace *process*, will actually result in peace.

In an interview on the topic of the MEPP, Hrair Balian, the Director of President Carter’s Conflict Resolution Program, outlined two narratives to help explain part of the complexity. One narrative was oriented on “human rights” and prioritized universal rights for the people of both belligerent communities over the second narrative he referred to as, “facts on the ground” which reacted to the frequent, often politicized and traumatic events like the fence (or wall based on who you ask) between Israel and the West Bank. These narratives as Balian offered them prompt three claims pursued in this study: 1) the narratives were rhetorically-constituted and could be disentangled and analyzed as such, 2) the narratives are reactionary approaches

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\(^{2}\) The Levant region predates borders established following WWI. From north to south, it runs from Turkey to Egypt. From east to west, it includes Israel and the western border of Iraq.
to at least two different paradigms for experiencing and understanding the same reality, and 3) the narratives may explain events, but they also revivify the paradigms and myths which influence future action. This study interrogates the above claims by analyzing how intractable conflict can be re-envisioned through unpacking and reconstructing the rhetorical paradigms of the belligerents thereby revealing avenues for resolution. I address how rhetorical paradigms and our perceptions of and interactions with them influence, direct, and even defeat attempts at understanding—let alone predict outcome in—social situations (of which war is one). I investigate how and why narratives and rhetorical myths prescribe action, not passively reflect them and ask whether myths are something that can (or should) be changed or controlled via rhetorical methods. Following the premise that proposed solutions are reactions to existing paradigms, I analyze the potential benefits and risks of revealing the assumptions, premises, and biases of the paradigms with which belligerents, and those who represent them, construct their realities. Ultimately, I provide a heuristic framework for disentangling intractable conflict based primarily on Burke’s dramatistic methodology.

1.2 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is linked to the role paradigms play in problem formulation in foreign policy decision making. Treating paradigms begs the question whether conflict resolution should focus on solving problems or changing paradigms, via rhetorical methods, or even to accept the problems as organic to the situation while working to make them less relevant. Moreover, isolating paradigms can be problematic as there are multiple belligerents and collaborators each burdened with a distinct paradigm through which to (re)define a single environment. A poignant example of this problematic is the posturing of Israel and the Palestinian
Authority regarding the Syrian civil war. Peace between Israel and Syria has long been argued to be an integral step (if not prerequisite) for eventual peace between Israel and the Palestinians (Ross and Quandt). It follows that anyone interested in Israeli-Palestinian peace must figure the civil war in Syria in terms of potential changes to the existing network of relationships that comprise the *problem* between Israelis and Palestinians. Therefore, if one defines a prerequisite for progress toward Israeli-Palestinian peace as peace (or at least stasis) between Israel and Syria\(^3\), then any threat to the later relationship should be considered a concern for Israeli-Palestinian peace. In fact, Michael Eisenstadt of the Washington Institute, points to the paradox of instability in Syria contributing to breaking the stasis between Israel and the Palestinians.

As long as Syria is in a state of civil war, the negotiation table is “clear of painful decisions” regarding Syria-Israel and therefore Israeli-Palestinian issues can be dealt with one less Agent at the table (Eisenstadt).

Although there is a nascent body of analysis regarding the impact of the Arab Spring on the region, few have articulated it as a trigger to re-visit—perhaps revise?—the paradigm upon which the MEPP was originally conceived and is currently operationalized by the U.S. and endorsed by numerous foreign secretaries in the Middle East and Europe. Following Sil and Katzenstein’s work with analytic eclecticism, I establish interdisciplinary links to investigate how paradigms of Middle East peace provide context for competing paradigms, myths, and narratives (of which the Arab Spring is just one) which recursively contribute to the U.S. policy perspective for better or worse. There are as many paradigms, with resultant myths and narra-

\(^3\) Syria and Israel have fought three wars (1948, 1967, 1973) and have never had diplomatic relations. This relationship has always been considered a key component to the “comprehensive” peace represented by the MEPP.
tives, as there are disciplines and interest groups. For example, a humanitarian paradigm may privilege the impact of Syrian refugees on regional efforts to deal with an already calamitous, half-century-old, Palestinian refugee problem. An economic paradigm may frame issues in light of instability along Israel’s border with Egypt due to the unrest following President Mubarak’s ouster and subsequent political turmoil. A U.S. security interest paradigm will privilege the balance of power (lethal and political) between Israel and Egypt. In contrast, if rhetorically constructing the Arab Spring as a focusing event reveals new policy opportunities for peace makers, how might a narrative of paralysis manifest itself to work against progress in any paradigm?

As the global socio-political environment changes, so do the various disciplinary and cultural paradigms through which we understand peace and its alternatives. The U.S. has considered the Israeli-Palestinian conflict using various paradigms since the earliest wars between Israel and its neighbors beginning in 1948. This is not to imply the problems began after WWII; only that it was a situation Great Britain was burdened with. At the outset, the U.S. paradigm was arguably a post-WWII (Holocaust) perspective followed by a 40-year Cold War lens (nested within was the influential rise of the oil-states). Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the post-Cold War decade was a paradigm bracketed by the liberation of an Arab nation (Kuwait) by predominantly Western powers and ended with the outset of the War on Terror decade(s) of which we are now a part of and I will treat in detail in Chapter Four. Of course none of these paradigms are as clearly delineated in reality as I have made them out to seem here. Moreover, each one overlapped with its predecessor and successor and often only defined in retrospect. Regardless, with each paradigm came proposed solutions to the problems the paradigm itself determined were relevant. Solutions not consistent with the dominant paradigm were either
ignored, or they forced the paradigm to shift to accommodate it. Thus, I contend that, to date, proposed solutions in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are simply reactions to a prescriptive paradigm or as “explanations that gratify our own ideological preferences and prejudices, but that function like mental stencils: they are a priori patterns we superimpose on events to create the picture we want to see, but only by concealing other events that do not fit the pattern” (Thornton). Therefore, this study is significant for the disciplines of rhetorical studies and peace and conflict studies because it provides a framework to destabilize paradigms: a first step toward revealing new potentials—the Arab Spring being an unavoidable potential.

Although resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is well outside the scope of this project, this research has implications for policy makers and peace and conflict practitioners interested in unpacking intractable conflict through an appreciation of the intractable(ness) of conflict: an undoubtedly rhetorical condition. Integral to this appreciation is the task of expanding what Burke describes as the “circumference” of key concepts in a paradigm. As outlined in Chapter Four, treating the “circumference” of the “god term” security, will change how terms and concepts animate a narrative which in turn reifies the dominant paradigm. For example, as a point of contention between belligerents, the term border may bring with it strictly physical connotations like separation and protection. Approaching the term with an eye on the circum-

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4 Framework-Theory-Model. Framework: set of variables and relationships that presumably account for a set of phenomena (may include a hypothesis). Theory: Denser and more logically coherent set of relationships. Several theories may be consistent with the same conceptual framework. From Aron’s description of theory of international relations, 

... the meaning of theory is dependent to some degree upon the meaning of the object. We cannot determine the structure and function of economic theory, for example, until we have first determined the nature of economic behavior. Similarly, we cannot establish the nature and purpose of a theory of international relations until we have first determined the nature of international relations ... the structure of theory, like the structure of all intentional objects, is thoroughly dialectical. (Davis 88)

Model: representation of a specific situation; narrower in scope; precise assumptions; increasing logical interconnectedness and specificity in scope.
ference of terms may expand the meaning of \textit{border} to account for metaphysical issues like \textit{human rights} or \textit{equality}. As the narrative (comprised of numerous concepts and terms) affects its governing paradigm, the terms of the paradigm may shift to the point where the very frame of acceptance is shifted from a tragic to comic. Although it may sound counter-intuitive, I investigate what happens if policy-makers carefully avoid the \textit{objective} of peace when trying to design an often clumsy path \textit{toward} peace. Phrased differently, what if reaching peace was less about reconciliation (or breather between wars) and more about arriving at a shared understanding of how intractable conditions are rhetorically constructed?

1.3 Chapter Overview

With these stakes in mind and in the chapters that follow, I contend that by joining the conversation with an eye toward the rhetorical (re)construction of paradigms and investigating how rhetorical methods might be used in understanding intractable conflict, this research may help make explicit the interconnectivity of competing agendas within and between nation-states, unpack intransigence, and approach a heuristic framework to disentangle motives shaped and constrained by paradigms. The balance of this chapter provides a structure of knowledge on the topic which addresses the myriad relationships between paradigms and ways policy makers approach interstate conflict. In addition to demonstrating how the trends and potentials in the study of paradigms converge with understanding intractable conflict (specifically the MEPP), I show how key tenets of Burke’s dramatism can be deployed in conjunction with an appreciation of prescriptive paradigms to reveal gaps relevant for rhetorical and peace and conflict studies. Informed by Burke’s dramatism, I outline the methodologies employed to refine the problem, guide collection, and frame the interpretation of results. With Burke as a
methodological guide for discerning motives in a human situation, I demonstrate in Chapter Two how discerning the rhetorical myths underlying the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is fundamental to understanding the recursivity of paradigms, the myths that emerge from paradigms, and the narratives that animate the myths. Chapter Three situates the conflict within Burke’s comic framework and demonstrates how the comic frame might be used to unpack the intractable conditions that comprise the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Chapter Four argues the viability of applying dramatistic methodologies toward understanding the intractable(ness) of conflict by analyzing key artifacts from the early years of the George W. Bush administration relevant to the MEPP. With this timeframe of the MEPP as rhetorical context, Chapter Four also demonstrates how rhetorical methodologies can help U.S. policy-makers build a synoptic analysis of a body of rhetorical artifacts in order to map the (potential) trajectory of a policy initiative. Taken together, these chapters provide a thoroughly rhetorical, yet also pragmatic, way of understanding the malleable conditions of intractable conflict and what it might take to transform it.

1.4 Review of Literature

To the intrinsic difficulties of the enterprise we might add that Averroes, who knew neither Syriac nor Greek, was working from a translation of a translation. The night before, two doubtful words had halted him at the very portals of the Poetics. Those words were “tragedy” and “comedy.” He had come across them years earlier, in the third book of the Rhetoric; no one in all of Islam could hazard a guess as to their meaning. He had pored through the pages of Alexander of Aphrodisias . . . and he had found nothing. Yet the two arcane words were everywhere in the text of the Poetics—it was impossible to avoid them. (Borges 236)

1.4.1 Paradigms of Peace, War, and the Spaces Between

Nathan Funk and Abdul Aziz Said’s Islam and Peacemaking in the Middle East, invites consideration for new approaches to conflicts within and with the Islamic world in the context
of a post-9/11 world. They argue that Islamic precepts provide a coherent and affirmative position on the desirability of peace for human flourishing. To that end, Islamic culture provides not one but multiple paradigms to help translate Islamic precepts into reality while shifting discussion of Islam and peace away from the hackneyed dichotomy of extremist versus moderate.

Funk and Aziz argue that variances between Western and Islamic “peace vocabularies” may frustrate but should not be misconstrued to signify inevitable conflict. Common ground exists when concepts of Western peace (i.e. “smoothly functioning social order”) are compared to Islamic understandings laden with religious conceptions of “social solidarity and justice” (50). Their five paradigms of Islamic peacemaking draw out the interconnectivity among the political, religious, and cultural spheres of Muslim nations and provide a framework for resisting “those who fatalistically resign themselves to escalating conflict [because they] tend to view Islamic-Western conflict as an unalterable fact of history, an outcome of incompatible doctrines and values” (231). Considering peacemaking through these paradigms sensitizes us to meanings that are central to collective identity and provide a basis for shifting away from paradigms presupposing exclusion, injustice, and war (54). Their assumptions and research methods are not bracketed by a West versus Islam binary; instead, Funk and Aziz focus on conflict amongst Muslim nations reaching back to embryonic Islam. As components to their ultimate recommendations, the authors also emphasize the importance of reconciling Islam with democracy and development: two concepts generally considered as Western models with Western definitions (246).

According to Funk and Aziz, as some peace vocabularies center around the absence of war, others burden the definition of peace with broader connotations “implying a presence of
social, spiritual, or ecological harmony” (52). I agree with the authors’ claim that concepts for peace should be the foundation for any critical analysis of value systems within which goals as development, democratization, and conflict resolution are selected, defined, and pursued (52).

Of particular relevance to the object of this study is Funk and Aziz’s delineation of the concept of peace between Israelis and Palestinians. Although Israeli conception of peace is best represented in “shalom”, which includes expectations for wholeness and safety, a Palestinian conception includes overtones “suggesting a desire for dignity, justice, and honor” (52). Although not irreconcilable, observers should not be surprised by divergent paths towards peace.

The authors assemble resources for intercultural and interreligious peacemaking by crafting a welcoming common ground where Western peace paradigms might intersect with Islamic ones. Their proposed paradigms for peace may appear familiar to non-Muslims, but as the authors employ a truly Islamic set of terms of reference, the difference among paradigms become quite dramatic and invites discussion of Western paradigms for understanding peace. I agree with the authors that Western conceptions of international relations are based on Westphalian secularism that originated as a response to thirty years of Protestant versus Catholic warfare. If such a characterization is accurate, a charitable critique may be that Western conceptions of international relations are constrained by secularism’s overreliance on rationalization or political realism. Western policy theorists have tempered this through a concept of bounded rationality and agenda-setting which accepts politics as never driven solely by rationally-calculated interests (Jones). Funk and Aziz did not treat the differences between Western international relations and Western peace paradigms. In fact, their approach focused more on “Western” as a homogenous people instead of a way of thinking about peace and conflict (as
they applied it to Muslims). To remedy this, the authors might have contrasted their five Islamic peace paradigms with the numerous Western peace paradigms outlined by Milton Rinehart in 1995.

Rinehart goes further than simply listing major Western peace concepts, he assembles them into two contrasting orientations of peace: Popular and Numinar paradigms. By Popular, Rinehart means the prevailing paradigm practiced by presidents and other world leaders seeking the absence of war, violence, and conflict—a (negative) paradigm that continues to inform Western concepts of peace (Boulding). Rinehart appropriates “Numinar” from a body of philosophies linked to “numinous” individuals belonging to a paradigm of peace represented by Buddha and Jesus and manifested by Gandhi. The Numinar paradigm is a micro-social approach to peace exampled when “previously antagonistic parties are able to hear and understand each other, resolve their disagreement, and leave making plans for friendly get-togethers” (386). “Numinar” does not appear to have gained the traction Rinehart hoped for but it can still be useful as a way to structure knowledge on the topic if we follow Funk and Aziz’s recommendation that ‘concepts for peace should be the foundation for any critical analysis of value systems’.

From a practitioner’s perspective (albeit Western), the peace paradigms proffered by Funk, Aziz, and Rinehart (among others) tend to be more useful when they can be operationalized and then applied to unique situations. Perhaps “Numinar” did not take as an applicable paradigm for peace because it was not fully regimented for use? Even Rinehart’s example of Gandhi is problematic as a case study of the Numinar paradigm—as I will discuss later in regards to Burke’s comic frame. That leaves us with the Popular paradigm which focuses on one
end of the peace spectrum: absence of war, conflict, and suffering. With a set of measurable conditions to represent peace, one can appreciate why politicians and diplomats are comfortable with the Popular paradigm which further reifies the approaches of the conflict theorists.

No-Yang Park would likely scoff at both of Rinehart’s paradigms and instead direct attention on the source of both. In his 1948 book, *The White Man’s Peace*, Park refuses to entertain any path toward peace which does not first address the “state of anarchy” where militarism is an inevitable condition. On the heels of WWII and the birth of the United Nations, Park’s thesis was an intriguing one: the cause of all wars is the absence of a means of preserving international and intrastate justice (50). Park blames the state of anarchy where humans struggle for survival and develop “militant cultures and institutions” and expectations for nationalism, patriotism, and “absolute sovereignty” that then feed a perpetual cycle of war. For Park, even the vocabulary of the current world order is a reaction to the state of anarchy:

. . . a state cannot survive in anarchy without sovereignty, because without the exercise of absolute sovereignty, it cannot coerce its citizens or subjects to sacrifice their private interests for the safety of the state . . . [it] is the symbol of life and liberty and the inalienable right to survive. In other words, sovereignty is not the cause of lawlessness; it is the lawlessness which is the cause of sovereignty. (51)

The fourth edition of Plano and Olton’s *The International Relations Dictionary* (1988) begins with a definition of *balance of power* which can be problematized just as readily as Park treats sovereignty. According to Plano and Olton, the balance of power phenomenon is necessary “because states are sovereign and seek to maximize their individual national interests, the balance of power is normally in a condition of flux” (3). Their definition concludes with a caveat
that reaches back to Park: the balance of power mechanism would be irrelevant if the world was organized on a basis other than “that of a decentralized system of independent sovereign states” (4, see also Haslam 7). Extending from balance of power, the editors overlay several categories of competing ideologies, economic theories, international laws, and vocabularies of war and peace—in all, 570 terms and concepts to help diplomats and politicians maintain our international system of relationships—all based on an assumption regarding sovereignty.

Evans and Newnham provide a well-cited dictionary for international relations (1998) which subtly, if not inadvertently, rehabilitates Park’s thesis and points to my general interest in disentangling the paradigms underlying intractable conflict. Unlike Plano and Olton, Evans and Newnham’s view on sovereignty considers a post-Cold War international environment coupled with the exponential growth of economic and social interdependence. This pivot from a pre-dominately binary balance of power (U.S. vs U.S.S.R.) points to turbulence in the traditional parameters of sovereignty: “sovereignty has been eroded on all fronts, especially with the development of human rights and humanitarian intervention norms” (43). Although Evans and Newnham acknowledge the consequences of such a shift, their purpose is not to initiate or propagate a paradigm shift. Furthermore, it is not Plano and Olton’s responsibility to reconsider their 570 terms through an eroding perspective because that would not serve their audience well. These dictionaries offer definitions involving factual propositions that Edward Schiappa might consider a reasonable combination of facts of “essence” and facts of “usage” (6) that are dominant in that they remain unchallenged (31). Both sets of dictionary editors reflect a particular perspective on reality and offer terms of art as they are commonly used and reinforced within the parameters of that reality. Challenging the factual propositions of contemporary in-
ternational relations dictionaries is outside the purview of this literature review. However, following from Schiappa’s distinction between “definitional gaps” and “definitional ruptures” (8), what might be revealed when focus shifts from reconciling a misunderstanding using a dictionary as arbitrator (gap) and destabilizing the assumptions of the entire dictionary (definitional rupture) used by the belligerents or their policy advisors?

According to Schiappa, a “definitional rupture” occurs when “the natural attitude has been disrupted because the assumption that dominant [concept] usage as recorded in dictionaries corresponds to what things are has been called into question in such a way that the participants in the conversation have to reconcile the difference” (9, emphasis original). It is important to note that Schiappa’s definition presumes one or both participants recognize that there is a controversy regarding how words are defined—I wonder if this is always the case? In fact, it might be argued that one or both participants actually benefit domestically from the ‘rupture’ and take pains to maintain confusion as integral to perpetuating the status quo. Regardless, Schiappa’s methods for mitigating a ‘definitional rupture’ may offer an interdisciplinary approach to discerning the motives of belligerents in an intractable conflict much in the same way Burke uses “identification” to establish common ground in the communicative act (see also “adherence” in Perelman, Realm of Rhetoric 42). Furthermore, Shiappa’s analysis of how the act and process of definition functions within the rhetorical situation is also revealing. Of particular relevance to this study is how he attributes prescription to definition (50, 131), the social influence of “framing” (165), and the normative implications of definition (175). Although he addresses ethical obligations for an arguer (45), perhaps the most relevant component of Shiappa’s project is his claim that all consequential definitions are political because they serve a
particular interest and are empowered through rhetorical methods (69). From a characterization of politics as who gets what and why, Shiappa’s project might be considered a framework for a political paradigm which can control, as well as inform, a rhetorical environment.

Jurgen Habermas’s “public sphere” can be shown to be an example of such a controlling paradigm. The depth and breadth of scholarship across multiple disciplines is testament to the relevance and, by the prevalence of calls to “rethink” it, controversy of his theory. But as the theory is applied as a paradigm for social discourse, it may work to silence alternative democratic models. Fraser’s well-known critiques of Habermas acknowledge the appeal of a public sphere that “provides a way of circumventing some confusions that have plagued progressive social movements and the political theories associated with them.” Unfortunately, Fraser continues, successful circumvention conflates the state apparatus with the public sphere of discourse causing all sorts of confusion by appropriators (“Rethinking the Public Sphere” 56). Fraser’s mitigation is a post-bourgeois conception of the “public sphere” designed to undermine the normativity of the bourgeois “public sphere” and introduce a critical theory of an “actually existing democracy” (77). This later objective was initially comprised of four tenets functioning together to resist the exclusionary determinism of the public sphere. The core of her proposal is to “expose ways in which the labeling of some issues and interests as ‘private’ limits the range of problems, and of approaches to problems” (77). Thus, Fraser proposes a counter-theory to expose the limitations of capitalist democracy. Fraser’s strategy shifts, however, in her 2005 re-rethinking on the topic. Instead of proposing a new theory, she seeks to “reformulate the critical theory of the public sphere in a way that can illustrate the emancipatory possibilities of the present ‘postnational constellation’” (“Transnationalizing the Public Sphere” 2, emphasis origi-
nal). This pivot to the underlying paradigm, or constellation, argues for “major institutional renovation” to force critical and social theorists to “rethink the [public sphere] theory’s basic premises, both institutional and normative” (Ibid 7, emphasis mine). While Fraser’s particular proposal to “repoliticize” public-sphere theory is not the focus of this review, the evolution of her theory demonstrates the important distinction between a paradigm and the theories constrained by it.

This review does not seek yet another rethinking of Habermas’s public-sphere theory nor his broader theory of communication; however, I am interested in how scholars are refining our understanding of prescriptive paradigms in general as they are often invisible: Habermas’s public sphere being a poignantly relevant one that I will return to shortly. Bracketed by Thomas Kuhn and Kenneth Burke, the next section brings forward rhetorical concepts applicable to understanding intractable conflict.

In the landmark work, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Kuhn explains how the relationship between a paradigm and the community it serves reveals the prescriptive role a paradigm can play in the development of a theory or model that then informs the actions of the community. Although Kuhn seeks to understand how paradigm shifts in certain scientific communities result in revolutions across multiple communities, one can appropriate his work to illustrate epistemic patterns and reveal useful implications in the fields of rhetoric and communication. A complex environment where a problem may not have a solution seems a perfect fit for rhetorical theory; however, if the paradigm is taken for granted, Kuhn warns us that the determinism of paradigms can trap us into fulfilling only the desires of the paradigm (23). Moreover, a community, according to Kuhn, deems a problem acute because it is important to fur-
tering the aims of the paradigm and is solvable according to the rules of the paradigm (37). It follows that a paradigm can assume an instrumental function because it determines the objectives, means, and ways available to the rhetor. Finally, a paradigm can “insulate the community from those socially important problems that are not reducible to the puzzle form, because they cannot be stated in terms of the conceptual and instrumental tools the paradigm supplies” (37). This ‘insulation’ is perhaps the most problematic for scholars interested in the role of paradigms in social scenarios because the paradigm may inadvertently discipline a scenario into irrelevance.

In his extended defense of Habermas, Goode concludes with a challenge to extend Habermas’s body of work into the arena of reflexive democracy. While he addresses Habermas’s comprehensive theory of communicative action, Goode argues specifically that the narrative of the “public sphere” destabilizes the terminology of democracy that the public sphere was intended to support. Terms like politics and citizenship are contested because of a process of constant reinvention that is less about a “clean break with the past” and more about recognition of shifting political models that “bubble up to the surface in the context of opaque and shifting power relations which increasingly escape the grasp of liberal democracy’s official polity” (121-122). Goode incorporates a fundamental element of Kuhn’s concept of “paradigm shift” but maintains focus on the downstream positive effects of the “public sphere” thus, he neglects the prescriptive influence of the paradigm as Kuhn warns. Both Goode’s conception of Habermas’s public-sphere theory and Kuhn’s structure of revolutions consider overlapping paradigms as the process whereby change occurs. In fact, Kuhn reinforces Goode’s refrain of ‘constant reinvention’ when Kuhn characterizes scientific paradigms along what one might consider
a Burkean “terministic screen” where “once a first paradigm through which to view nature has been found, there is no such thing as research in the absence of any paradigm” (Kuhn 79).

As Sil and Katzenstein define paradigm usage in accordance with Kuhn’s precepts, they also point to intersections with terministic screens like ideology, narrative, perspective, religious faith, and even research tradition:

Proponents of particular paradigms proceed on the basis of specific sets of a priori assumptions not shared by others. They pose research questions, establish boundaries for investigations, and evaluate research products in a manner that reflects these assumptions. Based on ontological and epistemological principles established by fiat, they posit clusters of theories or narratives that assign primacy to certain kinds of causal factors rather than others. (2)

One should see from this description that paradigms precede the tangible markers typically associated with a paradigm, e.g. narratives or scientific processes. Paradigms are also exclusive-by-design as once one it is employed, it obscures or marginalizes new inputs that do not conform to the a priori assumptions of the community. It follows then that the same paradigm that excludes also mandates epistemology and even truth. In other words, if the “markers” of the paradigm fail to keep up with the shifts, or revolutions as Kuhn would say, that “occur in those brief interludes when scientific communities, frustrated by increasing numbers of anomalies, begin to focus on new problems and take up new approaches that help resolve such anomalies . . . a new door opens for the emergence of new paradigm” (Sil and Katzenstein 5). The same door that opens for a new paradigm “closes only when the paradigm theory has been adjusted so that the anomalous has become the expected” (Kuhn 53 and 64). In other words, new inputs
(potential knowledge) adhere to the community’s a priori assumptions because the a priori assumptions have been redefined. A new vocabulary and concepts for interrogating events are prerequisites for the paradigm shift.

In contrast with Kuhn’s criteria for paradigm shift, Burke’s *bureaucratization of the imaginative* explains how “an imaginative possibility is bureaucratized when it is embodied in the realities of a social texture, in all the complexity of language and habits, in the property relationships, the methods of government, production and distribution, and in the development of rituals that re-enforce the same emphasis” (*Attitudes Toward History* 225). A heavily-rhetorical process; what was once imaginative becomes a “cow path” in the epistemological structure of the community that represents a body of abstract concepts (Ibid 228). Ultimately, a shift occurs when a nomenclature fails to explain a phenomenon and “value placed upon a new phenomenon . . . varies with our estimate of the extent to which the phenomenon violated paradigm-induced anticipations” (Kuhn 56).

Lucaites and Condit’s analysis of the culturetypal and counter-cultural rhetorics of Martin Luther King and Malcom X offer a useful contrast to Burke’s version of paradigm and paradigm shift. According to the authors, *characterizations* begin as labels placed on agents, acts, scenes, etc from outside a community. *Narratives* then connect the characterizations to form a “network of a community’s public vocabulary” and in so doing infuse the characterizations with “rhetorical puissance and resonance.” Ultimately, narratives become *ideographic* as per McGee, e.g. liberty and equality, thus contributing significantly to the identity of a community (7-8). The contrast between Burke’s and Lucaites and Condit’s models emerge as one analyzes
the transition between paradigms, e.g. what causes them, who causes them, and who uses them.

Within Lucaites and Condit’s characterization-narrative-ideograph model, conditions demand social change (authors use displaced groups as an example). This demand requires the existing public vocabulary be “managed and reconstituted” via culturetypal and counter-cultural rhetoric—rhetorics wielded by rhetors like Martin Luther King and Malcom X to pursue their political objectives. In sum: a demand for social change is the purpose, a rhetor wielding rhetorics is the agent, and the same rhetor uses the “new” public vocabulary as agency to achieve a political objective.

The significant differences turn on the question of what causes change in the respective systems. As I mentioned earlier, paradigm shifts occur when a nomenclature fails to explain a phenomenon and ‘value placed upon a new phenomenon . . . varies with our estimate of the extent to which the phenomenon violated paradigm-induced anticipations’. Was there an indiscernible phenomenon that occurred in the 1960s that could not be conceptualized using the existing vocabulary? Perhaps, but I don’t think this is what Lucaites and Condit were arguing. In fact, the authors credit the “historical confluence of [Martin Luther King’s and Malcom X’s] personal experiences with those of their listeners” as what enabled black people to even hear the culturetypal and counter-cultural rhetorics (19). A displaced group (African-Americans) judged something (equality) was inadequate in the dominant system; rhetors identified weaknesses in the dominant system and exploited them rhetorically; finally, the dominant system changed from within to account for the judgment. I return to Lucaites’s and Condit’s characterization-narrative-ideograph in Chapter Two as it relates to Burke’s mythic project.
1.4.2 Narrative, Myth, and Burke’s Dramatism

The previous section of the review is not intended to simply reify the power of paradigms to better understand epistemic revolutions. Rather, I hope to have offered reasons to reconsider prevalent, and in many cases omnipresent, paradigms for their biased, prescriptive, and constraining influence on any discipline. As to the efficacy of any given paradigm, one might pivot the emphasis from the delivered text to what Burke called the “more or less organized system of meaning by which a thinking man gauges the historical situation and adopts a role with relation with to it” (Attitudes Toward History 5). Incorporating Burke’s “frames of acceptance” into a conversation about paradigms is immediately problematic, yet revealing. Burke would likely reject the centrality with which I have characterized Kuhn’s conception of paradigms as being essentialist while simultaneously acknowledging the bracketing of human motives his own “frame of acceptance” purports. Coope’s 2005 analysis of Burke’s myth project best captures his reluctance. For Burke, the adoption of a paradigm necessarily involves selectivity, overemphasis, and even distortion, so that it is a theorist’s duty to remain open to the possibility of error . . . [and that] theoretical orientations should include some scope for the critique of their own premises, that they should be knowingly provisional and partial, on the grounds that ultimate, integrated knowledge is a long-term aim rather than an immediate objective. (45)

Therefore, the ameliorative nature of Burke’s “frames of acceptance” provides a useful contrast to Kuhn’s brand of determinism which can be used to further frame the paradigmatic elements of Habermas’s theory.
As Goode argues, the “public sphere” debate continues around fault lines like public and private, system and lifeworld, universal and particular, moral and ethical, and expert and citizen (113). Kuhn might enter this debate by arguing how the paradigm itself acts to delimit the argument with predetermined methods and instruments so as to produce a result commensurate with the designs of the paradigm. In contrast, Burke would caution us to beware the essentializing nature of paradigms and instead recommend transcending the binary construct of the public sphere for his “frames of acceptance.” In fact, Burke preempts Habermas’s idealistic notion of a bourgeois public sphere (and its accompanying binaries) that arguably sought to “fix attitudes that prepare for combat . . . it was the bourgeois interregnum that tried to eliminate [social classes] by fiat, in treating the bourgeois class as universal mankind” (Burke, *Attitudes Toward History* 20). Instead, Burke argues that it is “out of such frames we derive our vocabularies for the charting of human motives. And implicit in our theory of motives is a program of action, since we form ourselves and judge others . . . in accordance with our attitudes” (Ibid 92). Whereas both Burke and Kuhn transcend the binary for the higher paradigm and its associated premises, the distinction as it relates to prescription is that Burke’s vocabulary for motives helps us chart motives whereas Kuhn’s brand of determinism would direct human motives in accordance with the paradigm.

Burke’s description of the “didactic frame” may also contribute to the rationale for investigating the problem-solving power of myth and myth’s mode of conveyance: narrative. In *Attitudes Toward History*, Burke’s didactic “frames of acceptance” provide space for an artist or rhetor to transcend conflict by creating a higher category that obviates the binary conflict and offers a rhetorical common ground where productive discourse can take place. This value
judgment sets up a higher level synthesis based on a fabricated class the artist or rhetor uses to “coach” his attitude according to a class philosophy. Furthermore, the propagandist, according to Burke, transcends the apparent discontinuity by appealing to a “higher synthesis” (Ibid 80). The didactic poet recognizes binaries, but refuses to submit to them as the dominant framing elements. Instead, he or she perceives the world through a “frame of acceptance” that resists the “us versus them” narrative that can so easily restrict avenues for understanding the conditions of intractable conflict (see also Schiappa 112).

In a rhetorical analysis of the 1993 Oslo Peace Accords, Michael Carcasson describes a way to approach the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a paradigm situating peacemakers against enemies of peace (214). Through Carcasson’s paradigm—akin to Burke’s “frames of acceptance”—observers and practioners of conflict resolution could consider actions as steps to fulfill, or operationalize, competing narratives. The narratives allow for members of the belligerent communities to both belong to the “peacemaker” category. Thus, it rhetorically reframes the conflict from between opposing sides to between different categories. This paradigm invites belligerents to look inward to realize the problem may not be a question of “us versus them” but instead one of “us versus us.” According to Carcasson and others, one can use narrative as a schematic to better understand the rationale behind seemingly incoherent actions (see also Rotberg). In contrast, practioners of conflict resolution, like Robert Rothstein, might argue that a narrative can become stagnant and even inextricable from our conceptions of the conflict. And, when left unattended, a dominant narrative can devolve into a normative logic that constrains potential solutions instead of revealing them (Rothstein 2). What if the use of narrative was not limited to retrospective understanding as Carcasson argues and Rothstein warns?
As a way to interrogate the tension (and positive potential) inherent in narratives, one might consider conflict through a rhetorical perspective that accommodates the normative attributes of narrative: Robert Rowland’s model for rhetorical myth.

The central claim of Rowland’s 2011 model is that myths evolve as they are rectified with changing perceptions of reality. Citing shifts in the “Zionist myth,” Rowland argues that even the most obstinate myth system will eventually be tempered by the constraints of reality. It follows then that Rowland’s framework for a peace process begins with the Palestinians and Israelis revising their “mythic symbol systems” that left as is will continue to thwart any attempt at peace through the more visible means of shuttle diplomacy and peace initiatives (“Mythic Rhetoric and Rectification in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict” 44). Rowland’s criteria provide a useful model for deconstructing conflict by understanding its underlying myths, but in order to create the change Rowland hopes for, his program requires a party “rectify” its mythic system according to a singular reality: a prerequisite Schiappa would likely criticize as being grounded in “metaphysical absolutism” (40) and thereby reject Rowland’s project completely.

Following Schiappa (and by extension Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca) I too would characterize Rowland’s “rectification” as an effort to “maintain a given lexicon while changing its referents.” In other words: an attempt at dissociation (Schiappa 36-39). Dissociation can be problematic for practical and philosophical reasons (Ibid 39-41); when applied to a discernible context, however, the rhetorical act of dissociation can “remodel our conception of reality” (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 413) thus destabilizing the referents that contribute to incompatible myths. Perhaps Rowland presumes too much by making the act of rectification a blunt object to apply directly to a rhetorical situation as a way to reject connecting links. I will expound
on this assertion in Chapter Two. Whereas Rowland would use rectification to change one side of an incompatible equation once it becomes problematic (when it is likely too difficult to change), Jullien would instead advise us to “intervene upstream” from where the turbulence is likely (42). Applied to Rowland’s process of mythic rectification, looking upstream from the proximate problem would require shifting the focus away from the point where the incompatible myths intersect and result in violence. Such a re-focus would invite a longitudinal analysis of relevant myths and their narratives simultaneously.

In regards to conflict resolution, practitioners have tried to understand the role of myth in the policy-making process in order to understand where an “upstream” policy might be emplaced to compel or coerce the situation into alignment with U.S. objectives. One of the most prolific scholars on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and early foreign policy advisor to President Obama, Dennis Ross, frames his assessment of the MEPP with the pervasive myths held by Israelis, Palestinians, and Arabs in general (*A Missing Peace*). However, in his recent work written in coordination with David Makovsky, he makes no effort to distinguish between myth and assumption; in fact, he characterizes them as synonymous. Moreover, Ross and Makovsky argue that the benefits of myth emerge only when they are debunked by reality. For the authors, “we use the term ‘myths’ because these assumptions don’t reflect reality but are taken as givens. They may be untrue or invalid, but for those who embrace them, they are unquestioned . . . [however] they fail to fit the reality of the Middle East” (8). Specific to the MEPP, Ross and Makovsky attempt to debunk key assumptions that they argue realists and neoconservatives involved in U.S. policy in the Middle East operated under for decades; I address this move in
Chapter Four. Instead of debunking Ross and Makovsky’s approach, however, my study adheres to Burke’s warning about debunking in *Philosophy of Literary Form*:

> I think the typical debunker is involved in a strategy of this sort: He discerns an evil. He wants to eradicate this evil. And he wants to do a thorough job of it. Hence, in order to be sure that he is thorough enough, he becomes too thorough. In order to knock the underpinnings from beneath the arguments of his opponents, he perfects a mode of argument that would, if carried out consistently, also knock the underpinnings from beneath his own argument. (171, emphasis original)

This review of literature is not a defense against those looking to debunk myth; such a move would simply be another manifestation of debunking. Instead, I wish only to draw attention to a perspective on myth held by an expert on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which may provide space for a broader question regarding disentangling the conditions of intractable conflict of which myth and narrative are integral components.

There are countless narratives to account for the many perspectives on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For the purpose of this review of literature, I include a representative collection from Rotberg which offers a set of contrasting historical narratives and the myths that underpin them. Rotberg does not propose a theory or model of understanding how the narratives function rhetorically. Instead, he argues that ending the immediate conflict and achieving eventual reconciliation will require mutual recognition of the legitimacy of both narratives. In addition, a recurring theme throughout Rotberg’s work is a call for changes in the belligerents' "collective narratives." For the purposes of this review, Rotberg’s collection is also a useful example of how historical events can serve as focus points for myth and by doing so trap its
members in a paradigm that limits options. One essay in particular attempts to "build" bridges between the narratives as if they were static banks of a river. By applying elements of Burke's dramatistic methodology, I will describe how the banks of this river are shifting and eroding. Therefore, it does not matter what kind of rhetorical bridge you build, the central span of the bridge will always be too short. While my characterization admittedly sounds cynical, it also begs the question whether the Israeli-Palestinian conflict requires a bridge, a dam, a dredging, or following Jullien, an intervention “upstream”.

In his 2006 study for the U.S. Institute of Peace, “How Not to Make Peace, ‘Conflict Syndrome’ and the Demise of the Oslo Accords”, Rothstein blames the failure of the 1993 Oslo Peace Accords on a “set of attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs that become embedded over decades of bitter conflict and are difficult to unlearn even if some kind of peace agreement—or exploratory truce—has been signed” (1, see also Carcasson). Rothstein calls this condition Conflict Syndrome and he argues it brought with it a vocabulary and a cognitive framework that doomed the diplomatic proceedings in 1993, each subsequent effort to reconcile, and by extension likely doom the 2014 effort. In contrast to Carcasson’s more optimistic framework where belligerents can share the moniker “peacemaker”, acts of political violence (or terrorism) fit neatly into the narrative of Conflict Syndrome. Although political violence is often a symbolic act designed to achieve a desired effect (fear), Conflict Syndrome shapes an environment where violence is the dominant form of symbolic action. Therefore, it can be argued this embedded model of perception restricts action as well as thought. Concessions can only be tentative because distrust of the opposite side’s motives is the default position (Rothstein 3). Con-
cessions, or any other form—or rhetorical trope—of negotiation, becomes an invitation for cheating and thus construed rhetorically as politically naïve or dangerous.

Using Burke’s dramatistic methodology to re-envision the rhetorical environment may enable an alternative model to Rothstein’s Conflict Syndrome or binary narratives like Carcasson’s and perhaps reveal opportunities that always existed in the system, but were simply concealed by the dominant vocabulary. If our actions are constrained by our vocabularies, then discerning the origin and movement of a vocabulary is essential if one wishes to learn from Oslo and perhaps recognize future opportunities as paradigms U.S. policy-makers use come into view.

1.4.3 Peace as Process

This section of the review deals with three prominent American scholars on U.S. policy regarding the MEPP. All three have experienced the process first-hand as senior advisors to multiple U.S. administrations and so provide wide-ranging and largely apolitical perspectives on a constantly shifting environment. The purpose of this section is to articulate the general framework (including shared vocabulary) for U.S. policy-making by emphasizing commonalities amongst the scholars and revealing where they differ. Ultimately, I hope to outline the U.S. paradigm for the MEPP prior to George W. Bush. In Chapter Four, I will narrow the scope towards a finer understanding of the underlying paradigms of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict employed by the early George W. Bush administration.

Quandt’s third edition of Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict Since 1967 (2005) concludes with a first draft of the history of George W. Bush’s administration in the MEPP and is widely considered by the U.S. foreign policy community as a com-
prehensive guide to how previous administrations have envisioned, executed, and often revised their paradigms of the MEPP. Beginning as a senior advisor during the Nixon and Carter years, Quandt was sought after as a theoretician by every preceding administration and as recently as 2006 participated in a United States Institute of Peace (USIP) study group (the subject of the third book in this section by Daniel Kurtzer). As a product of his vast experience, Quandt provides a framework for understanding U.S. policy that has endured largely unmodified since the Clinton administration. Key elements and assumptions are the following:

- The basic U.S. principles toward the MEPP are predictable, presidential “policies” are not.
- There are three primary perspectives that must be accommodated: Arab, Palestinian, and Israeli.
- To understand policy-making in the MEPP, three models for U.S. policy development must be considered: strategic (president-centered), bureaucratic politics, and domestic politics.
- There is a general consensus amongst all parties as to what a permanent solution looks like.
- Success requires maximum energy from all parties, especially the U.S. as a third party.
- Incremental improvement or incremental effort towards peace is ineffective.
- U.S. policy-making has a procedural bias and is “rhetoric-heavy” over substantive.
- Israeli flexibility regarding negotiations is tied to the perceived strength of its relationship with the U.S.
• U.S. administrations consider Israeli settlements in the West Bank (and previous settlements in the Gaza Strip) as obstacles to peace.

• The most important metric for progress is the number of negotiated settlements between the parties to address the primary points of contention: settlements, borders, refugees, Jerusalem, and security.

• The majority of Israelis and Palestinians consider a final negotiated settlement the best way to solve the conflict. Same analysis found that majorities on both sides supported hard-line political leaders who privilege national self-interest over reconciliation.

• Visionary speeches must be supported by visionary strategies.

There are others. But the above elements represent the primary thematic movements in Quandt’s approach that are readily interrogated using rhetorical methods as well as pointing to the methodological assumptions Quandt makes. His approach is unapologetically prescriptive as he implores the reader to adopt his principles and recommendations for the sake of peace. There is a dramatic sense of urgency in his recommendations to U.S. policy-makers underlined by a tone of impatience (on his part) or perhaps frustration. Moreover, Quandt emphasizes in multiple places and ways how integral understanding what has worked and what has not worked in the past is to any future American effort to break the Israeli-Palestinian stalemate (2, 16, 416, and 424). The near-certainty of his historical (deductive) analysis does well in crafting a feasible solution, but his narration borders on presentism and may sacrifice understanding the problem for his readily acceptable and clearer solution. Although he admits that the adaptive environment means that “successes change the environment, leaving new problems in
their wake” (424), he does not propose a methodology for how to learn from those successes and failures.

Having served in senior advisory roles in the George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama administrations, Dennis Ross might be considered as the only practical and theoretical continuity for U.S. policy in the Middle East (Quandt 420). Ross’s approach incorporates Quandt’s suite of feasible solutions, but instead of only emphasizing the particulars of mistakes and successes, Ross adds that “it is important to recognize what is possible and what is not possible and shape objectives accordingly. If a solution is not possible at a given moment, then act in ways designed to defuse tensions and hostility” (777, see also Jullien 84-103). This nod to alternate, perhaps intermediate, objectives is important because it shifts the emphasis from final resolution elements that typically entail great political risk for great political gain, towards “narrowing the gaps” among the three narratives (44). As Ross entertains the issue of mismatched narratives, it draws attention to the consequence of negotiating from unsynchronized departure points.

Perhaps the most striking difference between Quandt and Ross, which also creates space for my project, is that Ross takes the material events and issues of the MEPP I abstracted from Quandt earlier and reconfigures them as part of distinct mythic superstructures. Considering this divergence as part of Ross’s methodological assumptions provides an avenue to unpack elements of the MEPP project through a rhetorical perspective.

Aligned with the three perspectives (Arab, Palestinian, and Israeli) on the MEPP outlined in Quandt, Ross attributes three explanatory myths. For the Arab nations the fundamental myth was that they could capitalize on the Palestinian crisis for their own self-interest and never be
threatened by it. For the Israelis: any compromise for land degrades Israeli nationalism or correlates to a loss of Jewish identity. For Palestinians: their victimhood means they do not have to compromise nor acknowledge mistakes of their own making (41-45, 773-775). Instead of unpacking these myths to learn how to amend them, Ross summarily “debunks” them simply as obstacles to “getting all parties to adjust to reality” (773, see also Burke, *Attitudes Toward History* 106 regarding debunking, and Coupe 80-81). Although Ross underestimates the prescriptive potential of myth by denigrating it as primarily a subset of untruth, he manages to expand the conversation from proposed solutions to include mythic sub-structures thus inviting a critical approach to disentangle underlying motives. Following Ross, therefore, I hope to avoid the false choice Quandt offers: that of focusing either on the traditional peace process or the product.

As with both Ross and Quandt, Daniel Kurtzer and Scott Lasensky conclude their 2008 analysis of U.S. policy-making in the Middle East with recommendations for future administrations. Their concise review incorporates interviews with top officials from previous administrations involved with the MEPP portfolio—to include Ross and Quandt. It reads like Machiavelli advising his prince as Kurtzer and Lasensky boil down Ross’s 800 page tome into a handbook of ten lessons in 85 pages with 100 pages of reference material. I include this text in the literature review primarily because it represents the perspective of an elite practitioner: Kurtzer served as U.S. Ambassador to Egypt (97-01) and Israel (01-05). Kurtzer’s scathing characterization of George W. Bush’s foreign policy as being disconnected and the seemingly unobstructed clarity of his recommendations reveal an interesting discontinuity. Kurtzer is joined by Ross and Quandt in the opinion that George W. Bush broke with 30 years of diplomatic precedence re-
garding the MEPP (discussed in Chapter Four). However, Kurtzer’s assessment of efficacy is based on a metric that demands overt U.S. engagement to “move the parties toward a settlement” (77), i.e. focus on the ends. As he chastises George W. Bush for his disengagement, Kurtzer’s penultimate recommendation is to invest heavily in a form of unorthodox diplomacy coined by many as “Track II” which creates connective tissue between academics, economists, and social scientists and deemphasizes the punctuation marks associated with presidential involvement (82). The apparent incongruity of Kurtzer’s recommendations is a reflection of the ever-shifting context framing the MEPP: a dynamic context with deep-running roots yet influenced dramatically by events on the ground.

The purpose of this section is not to evaluate George W. Bush’s policy decisions or its legacy regarding the MEPP. As evidenced in Kurtzer, the fluidity of the rhetorical environment makes the task of mapping the structure of knowledge on this topic all the more reliant on recognizing predominant assumptions that shape paradigms of peace, war, and peace-making. At the time of this writing, the numerous trips to the region by the U.S. Secretary of State and the one visit by President Obama has successfully restarted negotiations between Israel and the PLO. The images of Secretary Kerry flanked by representatives Israel and the PLO adhere to the prevailing diplomatic wisdom originally espoused by Quandt, Ross, and Kurtzer. However, much like Kerry in 2013, Ross entered the diplomatic stage of the MEPP in the late 80’s and also wondered if his efforts could to bring the parties together to negotiate. When Ross left the Bush administration in 2004 he wondered whether negotiations could ever produce peace (Ross 45).
According to Secretary Kerry, the current U.S. strategy is based on a long-standing framework called the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative (API) which was reaffirmed by its signatories twice since then. As recently as March, 2014, Secretary Kerry has endorsed both the API as a viable solution to the conflict as well as reaffirmed what the “end-game” looks like:

- security arrangements that leave Israelis more secure, not less; mutual recognition of the nation-state of the Jewish people and the nation-state of the Palestinian people; an end to the conflict and to all claims; a just and agreed solution for Palestinian refugees, one that does not diminish the Jewish character of the state of Israel; and a resolution that finally allows Jerusalem to live up to its name as the City of Peace. (Kerry, 3 Mar, 2014)

As discussed in many of the texts in this review and in Chapter Four, the API was originally supported by 22 Arab nations, yet summarily rejected by Israel as untenable. Is it adherence to Quandt et al’s strictures regarding the MEPP that has created an environment where a failed approach like the API might suddenly succeed? Or has the Arab Spring changed the calculus of the parties? Perhaps the Arab Spring will frame the negotiations as the Cold War, Saddam Hussein, and the War on Terror did in the past? These may be the wrong questions because they focus on a current environment that shifts almost daily. So perhaps to understand where the Arab Spring might take the MEPP, one must understand where the War on Terror left the peace process.
1.5 Methodology

For years I myself accepted the Dramatistic perspective as a metaphor, but now I’ve gone up in my price. I claim that the propositions “things move, persons act,” is literal. (Burke, “Dramatism” 331, emphasis original)

Kenneth Burke’s epigram to *A Grammar of Motives*, “Ad Bellum purificandum” or “towards the purification of war” offers an introduction-purpose-conclusion to his entire work that may help in my own theoretical framing. By following Weiser, one avoids characterizing Burke’s epigram as a call to purify our world of war by somehow replacing it with a pure peace. Instead, *A Grammar of Motives* along with its complement, *A Rhetoric of Motives*, “promotes a persuasive dialectic as an alternative” to the “monologic unity” that can lead to war (Weiser 290-291).

Integral to his wider body of work, Burke outlines a way to discern the common motives behind (or underlying) competing doctrines: a process of “identification” theorized in his *Attitudes Toward History*, operationalized as his broader dramatistic methodology, and ultimately formalized through his pentadic model of analysis.

As I consider the motives feeding an intractable conflict through an application of this methodology, my findings shapes a heuristic framework for understanding conflict where one belligerent can look across the negotiating table and be confident that he or she is just as comfortably uncertain about the truth as the other belligerent is—defaulting to skepticism of reality instead of reductive intolerance or ‘monologic unity’. I acknowledge that Burke might take issue with the heuristic character I am applying to his dramatistic methodology. His emphasis is undoubtedly more on *appreciation*: “[dramatism] offers a system of placement, and should enable us, by the systematic manipulation of the terms, to ‘generate,’ or ‘anticipate’ the various classes of motivational theory. And a treatment of these terms, we hope to show, reduces the
subject synoptically while still permitting us to appreciate its scope and complexity” (*A Grammar of Motives* xxiii). This project applies Burke’s dramatism as both a heuristic and as a tool for appreciation. To refine the problem, guide collection, and frame the interpretation of results, my theoretical framework is best aligned with Burke’s dramatism which serves as “a technique of analysis of language and of thought as basically *modes of action* rather than a means of conveying information” (Burke, “Dramatism” 332, emphasis mine). With Burke as a methodological guide for discerning motives in a human situation, I ultimately address how unpacking paradigms following Burke’s dramatistic framework can help U.S. policy-makers negotiating issues of intractable conflict by revealing the constructed nature of the terms and concepts which operationalize a narrative and the recursive influence those same terms and concepts have on the originating paradigm.

1.5.1 **Dramatism: Refining the Problem**

Without choice of terms, human beings would be incapable of their unique and defining gift, symbolic action. But each choice becomes a screen that is both a reflection of reality and a deflection of reality . . . Each [terministic] screen tends thus to distort the whole of things by exploiting a partial view that pretends to be the whole and that struggles to perfect itself by triumphing over all other views. The result is of course more conflict—conflict of a kind that shows an inherent drive toward total confrontation. (Booth 256)

Using Burke’s dramatism-as-method encourages a resistance to defining a human problem in certain, and rhetorically loaded, terms while acquiescing to the criticism associated with admiring the problem for too long. Instead of naming a problem of social relations using the established lexicon of the MEPP, dramatism-as-method invites what Overington calls the construction of “a vocabulary of terms” (97). With a new vocabulary of terms, perhaps better questions and better problems will emerge that can resist the constraints of the dominant para-
Andrew King warns the rhetorical critic against using Burke’s Pentad “as a cookie cutter” approach that can be used “almost mindlessly” and instead encourages using it as a heuristic device to break the gridlock of polarized alternatives which “generally ended badly, in violence, horror, and death” (175-177). Others consider the Pentad within the context of Burke’s larger dramatistic method because for Burke, “dramatism was the way in which people interacted with their language. Burke did not analyze language as a means of conveying information or truth, but as a vehicle of action” (Anderson et al 147). For sake of brevity I will not detail the process of pentadic analysis itself (Robert Ivie offers an appropriate application); instead, I offer Burke’s own summary of his pentad offered to colleagues in 1966: “For there to be an act, there must be an agent. Similarly, there must be a scene in which the agent acts. To act in a scene, the agent must employ some means, or agency. And there cannot be an act, in the full sense of the term, unless there is a purpose . . . the Dramatistic pentad” (“Dramatism” 332).

For rhetoricians familiar with the three constituencies of Bitzer’s rhetorical situation—exigence, constraints, and rhetorical audience—the distinction between Burke’s Scene and Bitzer’s three constituencies turns on causality. Whereas Scene is called forth by the rhetorical artifact, e.g. a stage play set in a prison calls forth conditions of isolation, the three constituencies working together calls the rhetorical artifact into being, i.e. the artifact is a response to the situation. Maintaining the link (overtly) between the Pentad and Burke’s more encompassing dramatistic method invokes other Burkean ideas like god terms, frames of acceptence, scapegoating, and circumference, which are not typically addressed in traditional Pentadic analysis.

Although this study is concerned with world events and problems that will not be resolved within the timeframe of this project, my research is situated within the ongoing efforts
of the various communities currently working to improve (or perhaps better understand) the guiding assumptions and logics of the MEPP from a U.S. perspective. To that end, an important aspect of my methodology is that it be situated within a qualitative research paradigm agile enough to deal with the often unforeseen changes in the political and rhetorical environments like the recent re-start of formal negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians facilitated by U.S. Special Envoy Martin Indyk. What problem or problems are within Indyk’s mandate? What problems are ignored? From the scant published reports available, one might presume that the “final status issues” outlined by Quandt are on the negotiation agenda, i.e. borders, settlements, Jerusalem, refugees, etc; however, agenda items are not necessarily the problems that need to be solved. What if the conditions which make the agenda items relevant are the actual problems that need to be addressed by the peace process? Ultimately, my study capitalizes on the distinction between the reality of a problem, and the rhetorically-constructed perception of a problem.

1.5.2 Dramatism: As a Guide for Collection

As a representative international intractable conflict, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict provides the context for this study, and the rhetorical actions regarding the MEPP by the George W. Bush administration serves as the case study from which I have assembled rhetorical artifacts for analysis. Artifacts include, but are not limited to, presidential correspondence, treaties, speeches, transcripts of conferences, press releases, reactions to diplomatic correspondence, and interviews with conflict resolution practitioners and scholars. Primary source research includes analysis of political discourse, media commentary, and key Presidential foreign policy decisions made throughout the MEPP. As Burke approached poetry with an interest in the poet-
ic act, not solely the poetic artifact, my research is focused on what the policy does in the rhetorical environment and not just how an Agent used the artifact.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a useful context for my study for several pragmatic reasons. First, because it is an ongoing conflict, the literature is constantly describing a shifting reality. Each new truth is born obsolete as the volatile geo-political context resets premises, hypotheses, and guiding assumptions. As illustrated in my Review of Literature, describing a common reality or theorizing causal relationships and motives in an on-going conflict is elusive and invites skepticism and revision. Second, the adaptive and porous rhetorical environment is patient. Although a catastrophic success is always possible—Secretary Kerry succeeded in getting the belligerents to the negotiation table, now he needs them to produce—to my knowledge there is little reason to expect final agreements regarding the primary points of contention in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict within the short timeframe of this project. The demand for a “new theory” to unravel the paradigms of this particular conflict will likely remain low. Moreover, although renewed attention on negotiations reflect “motion” along the MEPP (to borrow from Burke), I contend there is little “action.” Therefore, my scholarly interests benefit from a perceived lack of interest in changing the way policy-makers think about U.S. policy in the MEPP. There is space for introspection. Third, as a political focusing event for many cultures, the rhetorical artifacts are limitless in quantity, scope, and ideological orientation. A helpful by-product of the renewed negotiations is that scholars are flooding the conversation with timely research which reaches back to the timeframe of my project: the early years of the George W. Bush administration.
The foundation of this study is the library-based research necessary to build a meta-level understanding of major concepts. This analysis includes how policy makers on all sides of a conflict negotiate the commonplaces of the rhetoric of conflict resolution: speeches, letters, state-controlled press, and published interviews with strategic leaders. With Burke’s dramatism as primary research guide, complementing methods for rhetorical analysis include mythic (Rushing, Burke, and Rowland) and constitutive (Burke and Charland). To problematize this rhetorical foundation, my data collection strategy incorporates the personal insights and experiences of practitioners of conflict resolution and philosophers of war and peace making, keeping, and building. Interview subjects include conflict resolution experts at the Carter Center, the Peace Keeping and Stability Operations Institute at the U.S. Army War College, former diplomatic senior staff, and active contributors to Washington DC think tanks.

My interview strategy focused more on the subject’s underlying assumptions and cognitive frameworks and less on their professionally charged opinion on the MEPP itself. The longer-term objective is to abstract my findings upwards so as to not be channeled into a heuristic framework applicable to only the MEPP. Therefore, my interview tactic was to seek pentadic elements in the subject’s responses to help structure my own learning about what and how paradigms guide practitioners as they engage complex problems. Moreover, I selected participants who had a direct role in either the development or implementation of the very rhetorical artifacts I selected to represent the early years of the Bush administration’s perspective on the MEPP. Implications for policy makers are apparent, but implications for communication and rhetorical studies also emerged as pentadic ratios, e.g. Scene-Act or Scene-Agency, ultimately privileged Scene over other pentadic terms. Although my subjects provided valuable eviden-
tiary insight into the issues related to intractable conflict, as a generating principle, the emph-
asis on Scene in their interviews (which themselves became rhetorical artifacts) provoked ques-
tions of determinism that Burke cautions about in *A Grammar of Motives* and which I will detail in Chapter Four.

My professional and personal interest in the MEPP also shapes my collection strategy. Years of designing approaches for the pursuit of U.S. national security objectives related to the Middle East has greatly influenced the terministic screens through which I approach complex problems. This study does not propose a general theory or distinct model for solving intractable conflict. Guided by the general rules of the pentad—as a logic of inquiry or “analytic model of the social world” (Overington 104)—my approach leverages the heuristic character of Burke’s dramatism to help reveal a set of variables and relationships that presumably account for a set of phenomena: a “dramatistic” framework for unpacking intractable conflict.

1.5.3  **Dramatism: Framing the Interpretation of Results**

Dramatism also effects how the data might be analyzed. One example how dramatism frames the interpretation of results is with discourse analysis. Overington argues that a “pursuit of dialectical substance” is the fundamental operation in Burke’s pentadic framework (106). Although absent a replicable method, this fundamental operation is perhaps best understood through the clustering of words around the “master” pentadic term that emerges through an analysis of the pentadic ratios evident in the rhetorical act or artifact. In addition, the connotational logic of the cluster means that pulling on any one term within the cluster will mobilize the entirety of the cluster toward an explanation (Ibid): a critical move to recognize as it happens in a rhetorical act, but one that only works if the rhetorician can demonstrate fidelity
between the audience’s cultural expectations and the discursive moves that take place. Arriving at the “master” pentadic term then enables the emergence of the “god term” representing “the unitary substance in which all human diversity of motives” are grounded (Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* 111). Therefore, choice of terms can reveal motives—what Andrew King calls, “a strategic symbolic summing up of an action” (167)—which shape how an advisor to a U.S. Secretary of State might consider a complex problem.

As a tool to interpret results from primary and secondary source research, Burke’s dramatistic method invites questions about how a rhetorical act or artifact leads to *identification*—as opposed to mere persuasion—and points to the power inherent in defining or redefining a particular event. The distinction between *identification* and persuasion turns on the role of the audience and the goals of the rhetor. In his overview of pentadic criticism, King argues that while persuasion includes appeals to emotions and deeply held values, Burkean *identification* is characterized by an increase in mutually beneficial interaction and shared common feelings amongst an audience (165). But as they inform the *ends* of a rhetorician’s charge, both terms chart a movement to act using different ways and means. For example, if the rhetor’s objective is to move an audience to action, then persuasion offers a plethora of tools. On the other hand, if the rhetor’s task is to shape an environment which then enables an audience to pursue its own tendencies, then Burke’s critical method (*identification*) is the better choice. Ways and means may differ, but action is still the ultimate objective of both approaches. As a guide for interpreting results, dramatism-as-guide serves to unmask intentions and reveal logics that comprise the paradigms employed by anyone party to an intractable conflict.
Using pentadic ratios to analyze data and interpret results is a technical process providing necessary shape to a “dramatistic” framework for unpacking intractable conflict.

Dramatism-as-guide, however, involves the creation of a “perspective of perspectives” of which pentadic analysis is but a part of. As detailed earlier, my methodology also treats other Burkean concepts generally nested under the Dramatism moniker: god terms, comic and tragic frames of acceptance, and the scapegoat. Furthermore, to address the implications of prescriptive paradigms on problem formulation, I align my approach with Burke’s mythic, constitutive, and narrative projects—perhaps the most understudied in regards to problem formulation: myth.
2 A ROLE FOR MYTH IN “PERFECTING” THE PROBLEM

Mythology for Burke is at once historical and universal, temporal and transcendental. He reads myth not only as a means of affecting social cohesion but also as a bridging device to relate humanity to the earth and the wider universe—in short, the cosmos. (Coupe 4)

The MEPP brings with it a vocabulary, an agenda, and a set of codes and myths which generations of Palestinians and Israelis (as well as an ever-growing body of international parties) have internalized. For example, the term concession means more than its lexical definition. To a Palestinian, it may mean give up land. To an Israeli, it may mean give up security. To both it means sacrificing a bit of their identity (Ross, The Missing Peace 15-29). What is at risk when concession emerges as a rhetorical commonplace which can threaten the identities of both distinct communities?

Following Lucaites and Condit, this chapter appreciates how narrative connects characterizations to form a “network of a community’s public vocabulary” and then addresses how characterizations of agents, acts, and scenes are shaped by a community’s myths. In this way, I argue for what provides the foundation for Lucaites and Condit’s characterization-narrative-ideograph model: myth. For Burke, myth “sums up all the principles felt to have been guiding the socio-political order . . . the ‘perfecting myth’ becomes like the originator of the order it perfects” (The Rhetoric of Religion 240-241, emphasis original). It follows then that one might begin with myth in order to understand how terms like concession might be recognized as a rhetorical commonplace and understand the potential of narrative. As a way to interrogate the tension (and potential) inherent amongst competing narratives, one might consider the intractable nature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a perspective which accommodates for
both the prescriptive and normative attributes of narrative: Robert Rowland and Burke’s models for rhetorical myth.

As noted in the Review of Literature, the central tenet of Rowland’s model for rhetorical myth is that myths change as they are rectified with changing historical and rhetorical contexts. Decades-old myth systems made obstinate by wars, unstable peace, and pervasive animosity will eventually be pulled into alignment with and by physical reality. Rowland’s framework for a peace process begins with the Palestinians and Israelis revising their “mythic symbol systems” that left as is will continue to thwart even the latest attempt at the MEPP facilitated by Secretary Kerry (Rowland, “Mythic Rhetoric and Rectification in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict” 44).

While Rowland accounts for the Israeli “revisionist” myth in accordance with prevailing scholarship on the issue, his treatment of the Palestinian myth is overly reductive because he elevates the myth of Hamas (a Palestinian political and military body the U.S. classifies as a terrorist organization) as the representative myth of all Palestinians. While many consider rockets from Gaza, launched or passively supported by Hamas, as the preeminent problem that needs to be solved, others would argue Hamas is simply a symptom of a greater problem. When foreign leaders consult with Hamas instead of the Palestinian Authority regarding Palestinian security and economics, it is understandable why observers like Rowland would hope to make solving the Hamas “problem” synonymous with solving the much broader Palestinian crisis. Accordingly, many might agree with Rowland when he states that “the mythic foundations of Hamas, as expressed in its charter, explain its commitment to maximalist territorial claims and willingness to use violence” (43). But what if focusing on Hamas only distracts from addressing the conditions that make the Hamas “problem” relevant?
In this chapter, I argue that Rowland’s application of his own criteria for myth can provide a useful model for understanding intractable conflict by laying bear its underlying myths to a critical eye. However, in his attempt to reveal the underlying myth of the Palestinian people, Rowland constitutes a Palestinian myth through the lens of his own mythic criteria and inadvertently subordinates the arguably broader problem, lack of Palestinian unity, to the symptom, Hamas. Therefore, Rowland’s programmatic decision reveals the vulnerabilities in his narrow definition of myth that was interrogated thoroughly in a 1990 volume of Communication Studies. This chapter addresses these fundamental vulnerabilities first, then draws correlations and distinctions between Rowland and Burke concerning myth, and concludes with thoughts as to how an “end” of the rhetorical myth underlying the Israeli-Palestinian conflict might be used to emphasize what Burke considers humanity’s “pursuit of perfection.” Ultimately, by creating fissures in Rowland’s mythic criteria and his posture on entelechy, I incorporate elements of Burke’s foundational work on myth and reinvigorate the generating principle behind paradigms and the myths in which paradigms are manifested.

2.1 The Problem-solving Power of Myth

Robert Rowland entertained a maelstrom of resistance when he proposed an exclusionary set of criteria to determine whether a text or narrative is mythical. As Rowland emphasizes in his rejoinder, his purpose for establishing a “functional/formal” definition of myth is less about judging a particular artifact and more about “the appropriateness” of the rhetorical method a critic uses to analyze it (Rowland, “On a Limited Approach to Mythic Criticism—Rowland’s Rejoinder” 151). Many of his circa 1990 critics endorsed his characterization of myth as the ultimate problem solver and Rowland offers perhaps the best explanation of the problem
solving attributes of myth when he writes, “myths are stories which symbolically solve the problem facing the society, provide justification for a social structure, or deal with a psychological crisis” (Ibid 103). Rowland eventually considers rhetorical myth within the context of violent conflict. Therefore, it is important to discuss further how rhetorical myth functions in a problem-solving capacity.

According to Rowland, instead of analyzing *E.T.* or *Star Wars* as myths, critics should instead reserve the myth-moniker for texts that function to answer “human problems that cannot be answered discursively . . . to transcend ordinary life and provide meaningful grounding for that which cannot be supported rationally” (Rowland, "On Mythic Criticism" 102-103). Rowland’s detractors were generally less affronted by how he defined the function of myth and more concerned with how he defined the structure of myth. This is understandable because by proposing the structure of myth, Rowland establishes what myth is not. For Rowland,

Myths are our most powerful stories. It is therefore quite exciting to discover a heretofore unrecognized myth. But the power associated with myth is precisely why the function/formal definition is useful. If myths are our most powerful stories, then it is important that we not confuse such powerful narrative forms with works that lack the power. An overly broad approach to myth risks losing the capacity to draw such distinctions. (Rowland, "On Mythic Criticism" 102)

Contention over what myth is and is not is warranted and important not just for the critics who traffic in rhetorical analysis, but with the policy makers envisioning a path to peace but are paralyzed, perhaps unbeknownst, by the myths underlying the conflict. Policy makers who underestimate, or simply misunderstand, the relationship between a people and their myths may find
their perfectly rational approach to a problem doomed before its even implemented. The prize (the definition of myth) is worthy and Rowland’s rejoinder to his critics calling for a broader definition of myth does not concede an inch of the argument. Detailing his structural criteria for myth as well as some of his informal components from 1990 provides a framework for how Rowland describes conflict in his own 2011 article on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

For Burke, social contexts where we “presume myths sponsor communal identification and division, affirm a preferred order while simultaneously opposing others, and offer humans transcendent meaning” (Rowland, “Mythic Rhetoric and Rectification in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict” 42) are surely rhetorical situations that can be explicated as such. Furthermore, Burke’s description of the “didactic frame” may also contribute to a defendable rationale for the problem-solving power of myth. The didactic poet recognizes binaries, but refuses to submit to them as the dominant framing elements. Instead, he or she perceives the world through a “frame of acceptance” that resists the “us versus them” narrative that can so easily restrict avenues for approaching problems.

Burke even criticizes Marx for his own narrow concept of antithesis “pitting one ‘morality’ against another, without analyzing the possibility that the imaginative writer tends to ‘adumbrate’ the eventual synthesis, hence confusing the simple for-or-against attitude that prevails in lawyer’s-brief polemic” (Attitudes Toward History 76, emphasis original). Transferring the didactic attributes of Burke’s “frames of acceptance” to the problem-solving aspects of Rowland’s rhetorical myth offers a method to disentangle relationships contributing to a conflict. Furthermore, as ascribed in the systemic nature of Burke’s didactic “frames of acceptance,” the community that employs the myth must exist as a coherent system if the prob-
lem-solving attributes of myth are to be realized. Rowland echoes this sentiment when he claims that the myth must be taken “deadly serious” by the audience where the myth operates ("On Mythic Criticism" 108).

In the conclusion to his 1990 essay, Rowland writes that “the power of traditional myth largely can be traced to its form” (Ibid 102). Moreover, he argues that as the form loses resiliency, it also loses its ability to function as a model for action for the community it serves; thus the importance of defining the structure of myth. For Rowland, myth is comprised of the following criteria: 1) myths are stories believed to be true by their community; 2) the greater the problem facing the community, the greater the hero required to solve it. There must be heroes; 3) “myths usually occur outside of normal historical time (such as the American Revolution) that, because of the great symbolic power associated with it, has been transformed into mythical time” (104); 4) as myth usually occurs outside normal time, it is also located outside our normal conception of space and is bestowed a “special symbolic power” for the community; and 5) a lexicon of archetypal language that situates the myth as universally human. But, fulfilling Rowland’s formal criteria is only part of the equation. There are informal components that hold the whole theory together and often compensate for a deficiency in one criterion or another. Because Rowland’s critics have already taken his formal component to task as an overly-exclusive theoretical model of myth, I focus on Rowland’s own application of his method and the gaps which emerge. Moreover, because Rowland seeks to articulate the rhetorical myth underlying the Palestinian narrative, my analysis does not attend to the aesthetic components of myth often associated with literary myth.
2.2 Form and Function of Rhetorical Myth

With a rationale for myth-as-problem-solver, this chapter now moves into the specifics of Rowland’s formal and functional definition of *rhetorical* myth. The first structural requirement is that myths are stories which “symbolically solve the problem facing the society, provide justification for a social structure, or deal with a psychological crisis” (Ibid 103). This categorization would easily encompass both J.R.R. Tolkien’s work and the U.S. frontier stories if it were not for the role of truth. As he critiques mis-applications of myth later in his 1990 essay, Rowland extends this first criterion by carefully distinguishing between literary and rhetorical myth. Whereas Tolkien’s work might be considered literary myth, rhetorical myth (often termed social myth) requires a component of literal or psychological truth.

Rowland approaches truth from a necessarily broad perspective. For him, truth is not dependent on historical evidence or a sense of objectivity and is more reliant on whether something is treated as true by the community that practices it. Truth is something constituted, not revealed. This gives Rowland space to consider the interpretive attributes of a given community but it also creates a vulnerability in his mythic model due to the inherent instability of a truth in constant revision. In terms of efficacy, Rowland’s model warns of the vulnerability by noting that “if the basic story in a myth loses its character as ‘objective truth’ the power of the myth dissipates” (Ibid 103). Thus, there is an inherent instability to a rhetorical myth with numerous interconnected components reliant on a tenuous truth.

It should be noted that this discussion of truth is within the context of a ‘true story’ that a community takes ‘deadly serious’. By following Rowland’s criterion for perceived objective truth, texts like the movie *E.T.* shift away from rhetorical myth and closer to literary myth with-
out much controversy. Although the truth prerequisite demonstrates how easily Rowland can exclude a text like *E.T.* from the rhetorical myth category, it invites a wider discussion as to the importance of context. What if the rhetorical context for *E.T.* somehow invited its viewers to consider “the basic story of the myth” (Rushing 138) as an objective truth? If so, would the revised context then shift *E.T.* from literary to rhetorical myth? My point here is not to defend Rushing’s “evolution of cultural consciousness” nor out-rightly endorse Rowland’s stringent criterion regarding stories. My purpose is to create space where Rowland’s contextual nature of truth can still serve as a prerequisite for rhetorical myth if rectified with how Burke describes the relationship between form and truth.

Burke provides a necessary conflation of scientific truth and truth realized through ritual or revelation: “revelation is ‘scientific,’ whether its ‘truth’ be founded upon magic, religion, or laboratory experiment. Revelation is ‘belief,’ or ‘fact’” (Burke, *Counter Statement* 168). From this conflation, Burke and Rowland might agree about the legitimizing role the community plays in creation of truth and by extension, myth. Furthermore, both consider myth as a model for action: a prescriptive characterization which ends with the fulfillment—or in Burke’s parlance, “perfection”—of the myth.

In his earlier work, Burke distinguishes between a psychology of information and a psychology of form to argue that scientific criteria was being “unconsciously introduced into matters of purely aesthetic judgment” thus creating breaches between form and subject-matter and one between technique and psychology (Burke, *Counter-Statement* 31). Burke’s distinctions are important because they demonstrate how form and function exist in an oscillating relationship in much the same way that Rowland distinguishes literary and rhetorical myth along the
lines of literal and “believed” truth. For Burke, ‘form’ is the delivery of a desired satisfaction to an audience by an artist (Ibid 31). The ‘psychology’ comes in to play because the artist must first create the appetite in the audience before satisfying it. This methodology requires an understanding of audience that cannot be based on a generalized formula or checklist (read: scientific). Instead, the methodology raises—if not returns—expectations for the artist to produce subject matter that is valuable to a specific audience because it shapes their future appetites, not just informs them about a set of facts. Therefore, assessing aesthetic value equates to judging artistic truth. For Burke, the goal of articulating an aesthetic truth is less about the assemblage of facts, which is more appropriate for the “psychology of information,” and more about how the presentation adheres or supports human propriety regarding poise and rhythm (Ibid 42). In other words, aesthetic truth is assessed in terms of appropriateness to the rhetorical context. In contrast, Rowland treats truth as a product of a rhetorical myth that shifts, if and only if, the myth itself is rectified with reality and changed accordingly (Rowland, “Mythic Rhetoric and Rectification in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict” 54). For Rowland, rectifying the arc of myth with reality determines what will endure as truths promulgated by the terms and concepts employed by a narrative. The process of “rectification” becomes an important amendment to Rowland’s original criteria for myth that he revises and then applies to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In contrast, my project considers rhetorical myths as organic components which can only be affected indirectly by attending the narratives which connect a rhetorical myth to its public. In other words, the recursive relationships amongst paradigm, myth, and narrative invite an appreciation for the centrality of myth not as something to change unilaterally in an effort to direct corresponding narratives, but as the connective tissue between para-
digm and narrative. To be clear, this is not to argue that rhetorical myths are impermeable and so should be accepted axiomatically; instead, as I argue in Chapter Four, we should focus on the terms and concepts employed by a narrative (which by extension are manifestations of the rhetorical myth). My own treatment of rhetorical myths “as our most powerful stories” is a distinct contrast from Rowland’s “rectification” of myth which is essentially, in my assessment, another way of “debunking” a myth.

Written in coordination with David A. Frank, a scholar well-versed in the rhetoric of the Palestinian crisis, Rowland’s 2011 article extends his 1990 criteria for myth with the concept of “rectification.” The article argues that peace between the Israelis and Palestinians is achievable only when the belligerents rectify their mythic symbol systems with reality—put a bit more provocatively, to change the truths of the environment. This hypothesis would be useful if it was allowed to transcend the common binaries (a la Burke’s transcendence) and reveal areas for “identification” from which to address the underlying problems. Instead, Rowland extracts Hamas from the wider Palestinian community and then argues that Hamas represents the entire Palestinian body when he states that “for Hamas to admit the existence of Israel at this point would be to cede its ‘historic right’ to the land of Palestine and would serve to undermine Palestinian identity” (Rowland, “Mythic Rhetoric and Rectification in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict” 50). This decision enables Rowland to elevate the Hamas Charter synecdochically as the preeminent text reflecting the underlying myth of the Palestinians. Although there are surely those who agree with Rowland’s synecdochic move, this move runs counter to other scholars and peace practitioners who view the narratives of the Palestinian crisis as ones which should transcend the violent resistance to the “state” of Israel (espoused by Hamas) and focus instead
on the issue of human rights for all (Bar-on 143). Moreover, reducing the conflict to a “Hamas versus Israel” binary ignores the regional and global socio-political contexts which may result in solving the wrong problem and exacerbating the “right” one.

My purpose is not to refute a proposed solution to the conflict—I don’t have a better one—my interests are in revealing the methodologies theorists and practitioners follow as they seek to understand the intractable-ness of conflict. To that end, I grant that in an analysis of the myths of Hamas, Rowland fulfills much of his own myth criteria without much controversy. Rowland argues that as a political resistance movement with a violent apparatus, Hamas is founded upon a myth that is widely believed in: a Palestinian right to land occupied by Israel. Returning to his myth criteria, two criterions involve a return to a “mythical time” and a space with “special symbolic power” for the community; for this Rowland easily connects the 1988 Hamas Charter with an implied narrative calling for a return to the glories of the early Islamic caliphates. Rowland’s approach becomes problematic, however, when he pursues the criterions involving heroes and archetypal language.

The criterion regarding heroism is perhaps the broadest in Rowland’s structure for myth but suffers from vulnerabilities that his critics revealed and I will also address as they relate to his own formal application. Rowland cites the numerous articles in the Hamas Charter that recall the initial glories of the rising Islamic caliphates in the eighth and ninth centuries through the successes of Saladin and into the birth of the Palestinian resistance movement triggered by the creation of Israel in 1948. However, Rowland over-extends the purview of the Hamas charter across all Palestinians when he argues that for Palestinians, the “jihadist fighter” is the mythic hero opposing the physical invasion of Palestine and the ideological invasion that began
with the Crusades and continues with Zionism (Rowland, “Mythic Rhetoric and Rectification in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict” 50). It is undeniable that the Hamas myth is appealing to Palestinians who consider violent resistance the best (or only) way to achieve Palestinian objectives. The charter does provide a clearly defined enemy (Israel and its allies) and the problem (Zionism) that makes the jihadist fighter the logical hero to align with Rowland’s criterion for heroic action (Hamas Charter 1988). The trouble with this ready hero is that if the jihadist must symbolically solve the problem facing the community, the problem must be a literal one the community can agree upon.

To be a rhetorical myth underlying a “true” story, Rowland’s jihadist hero relies on a shared belief in what is true according to all Palestinians, not just the slice of the community that Hamas represents or claims to represent. Achieving this level of representation is made even more difficult due to the disparate “community” of Palestinians where hundreds of thousands are still refugees spread across the Middle East. It might also be argued that there is a hierarchy of truths, which even if all were accepted, would spawn myths that would contrast if not contradict each other. Proposing that a representative rhetorical myth must be rectified with reality as a precondition to peace between Israelis and Palestinians invites high expectations. The mythic hero is not just a product of a mythic narrative, it helps constitute the myth. Without the hero, the myth (thus the narrative) becomes something less.

In contrast to a rhetorical myth, I contend that Rowland offers more of a cultural myth that Janice Rushing might characterize as “embodying fundamental values that are widespread throughout the culture, or that impose the ideology of a privileged class upon under-classes” (Rushing 143, emphasis mine). Similarly, Michael Osborn’s “culturetypes” provides a con-
trasting model to reconsider a Hamas Charter as trying to spread ideology, not presuppose it. Osborn points to the seams between archetype and culturetype by way of their respective scopes:

Culturetypes could be read as including the more restricted category of ideographic abstractions, but they also must embrace specific, concrete sacred symbols such as Rowland has mentioned—Valley Forge, for example or the New Frontier, which would be intelligible in few if any other cultural contexts. To complete the circle again, culturetypes receive their charge of special symbolic meaning through narratives that are heavily freighted with social significance . . . archetypes and culturetypes brace and complement each other, culturetypes expressing the special values and meanings of a society, archetypes anchoring the cultural system in enduring meaningfulness. (Osborn 123)

Arguing for a broader interpretation of myth, Rushing and Osborn recommend ways of refining myth through additional layers of categorization—to increase fidelity—instead of elimination. In her resistance to Rowland’s formal mythic system, Rushing reminds us of the relationship between cultural and archetypal myth that points back to a vulnerability in Rowland’s fifth formal criterion (the need for archetypal language) as applied to the Hamas Charter. For Rowland, this fifth criterion may be the least useful defining characteristic (“On Mythic Criticism” 105), but it nevertheless destabilizes his own formal application because it clearly excludes the Hamas Charter from possessing the archetypal attributes necessary for myth (Ibid 104 and Rowland, “On a Limited Approach to Mythic Criticism—Rowland’s Rejoinder” 156). Therefore, whereas the Hamas Charter provides a clear hero against a clear villain, the consequence is that it also excludes those Palestinians who do not ascribe to violent resistance to Israel.
To find a mythic hero to meet Rowland’s criteria, one might benefit from turning to Burke’s twelve “motivational ingredients” for hypothetical myth outlined in his 1947 essay, “Ideology and Myth.” Burke calls for a revision of ancient notions of heroism based on great achievements against great problems: “Above the sincere praise of great deeds, should hover the thought of human folly, the concern ever with the ironic possibility that much courage, power, ambition have been misdirected: not the ‘explaining’ of this so much as the constant meditating upon it” (Burke, “Ideology and Myth” 205 quoted in Coupe 21). Coupe continues this introspective move as he argues that “humility directs us not only to see our culture in historical context . . . but also to acknowledge the inevitable contradiction of all human endeavors, whereby apparent progression often turns out to be regression” (21). It follows then that when applied to the Palestinian crisis, a mythic hero is not one who resists an invasion even though the resistance creates a perception of progress. Although the jihadist fighter may not be elevated to mythic hero status, it might instead assume an important role as a “culturetype,” to return again to Osborn, which may remind Palestinians that identity is a harmonious combination of culturetypal and archetypal symbols (Osborn 123). Therefore, because of Rowland’s own constraints regarding heroism and archetypes, the charter should not be considered a reliable articulation of the rhetorical myth for all Palestinians.

Thus far I have introduced some of the vulnerabilities in Rowland’s approach with the strengths associated with Burke’s foundational understanding of myths. Although there are useful intersections, I contend that in order to solidify his premise that privileges the Hamas myth, Rowland overextends Burke’s treatment of entelechy, and in so doing further undermines his own mythic criteria.
2.3 Burke and Rowland on Entelechy: A Necessary Distinction

According to Burke, entelechy is a vital component to myth because “there is a kind of ‘terministic compulsion’ to carry out the implications of one’s terminology” (“Definition of Man” 18). An entity may have a desire to “fulfill the possibilities intrinsic to its nature” (Burke, “Doing and Saying” 110), but this should not be taken to mean that the group—in this case, Hamas—exists on some kind of linear path with an inflexible end determined by some myth-maker.

For his 2011 pragmatic demonstration of his mythic criteria, Rowland introduces a rejection of entelechy as a new informal element to hold his model together. He argues that when threatened, an ethnic group will deploy an entelechial mythic system to protect its identity. This tendency, according to Rowland, eventually results in an intransigent mythic system “impervious to the suffering of others and [resistant to] historical change”: a brand of obstinacy that mirrors the “terrible results” achieved by the Nazi pursuit of perfection (Rowland, “Mythic Rhetoric and Rectification in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict” 43). For Rowland, the logical correlation is that any recognition of Israeli claims for legitimacy represents a clear threat to Hamas’ identity (Ibid 43). Therefore, Rowland’s version of the entelechial principle explains tautologically why Hamas is forced to pursue obstinacy and violent resistance over compromise.

As Rowland applies it, the entelechial construct diverts responsibility for conflict from the group committing a violent act to whatever act threatens the group’s identity. One might consider this move an extension of his second formal myth criterion where “myth takes us out of history to solve the problems posed by history . . . [and] can now signify not only the perfection of beginnings in the mythical past but also the perfection that is to come in the future”
(Rowland, "On Mythic Criticism" 104, emphasis mine). In other words, violence is perfectly commensurate with the expectations inherent in Hamas’ mythic system. However, there are two immediate problems with Rowland’s application: 1) He assumes an unwarranted level of certainty as to the “threats” to Hamas. According to Rowland, the singular threat is conclusively Israel and its foreign benefactors; however it is often argued that there are other internal threats to Hamas, e.g. economic security, waning Arab support, legitimacy of political rivals like Fatah (C. Smith 517). In contrast, Rowland characterizes the threat to Israeli identity as being predominately internal (“Mythic Rhetoric and Rectification in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict” 48); this move puts the cause for Israel’s militancy squarely on its own publics and enables Rowland to propose tautological solutions that can be defended by his myth criteria; and 2) The problem most relevant to my interest in rehabilitating Rowland’s approach is that he extends entelechy to a brand of essentialism Burke would likely find unnecessarily constraining.

Although Rowland cites “The Rhetoric of Hitler’s Battle” as an “obvious” demonstration of entelechial myth and the “terrible results” associated with entelechy, I agree with Coupe that Burke is actually less concerned with a single myth system, e.g. Nazi, and more concerned with articulating the dangerous potentials inherent in his concepts of “scapegoating” and “congregation by segregation” (Coupe 171). Furthermore, I contend that Burke’s conception of a “perfect enemy” in “The Rhetoric of Hitler’s Battle” was meant to depict an ironic aspect of the principle of entelechy, e.g. “perfect fool,” (“Definition of Man” 19), not as a predictive formula to apply to a current situation as Rowland does. Pertinent to Rowland’s myth project, Burke takes pains to rectify what he evidently considered a prevailing tendency of mythographers at the time when he writes,
in adapting the principle of fulfillment that is central to the genius of Aristotelian ‘entelechey’, I propose what I would call a ‘logological’ critique of the mythologists . . . This [words about words] critique also involves my claim that the mythically tinged cult of the ‘archetype’ over-universalizes the nature of such symbolizing in human relations. (‘Doing and Saying’ 117)

It follows that Burke would likely take issue with the very idea of overlaying a deterministic paradigm—entelechial or not—on a myth. There is a tendency, Burke warns, that “just as the search for paradigms leads one in the direction of such words as ‘prototype’ and ‘archetype,’ so the essentializing nature of mythopoeia attains its terministic fulfillment in narratives which deal with things now, in terms of imputed origins from which the relevant manifestations now are said to be temporally descended” (Ibid 110). Coupe picks up on Burke’s concern about the hunt for archetypal language when he states, “when Burke refers to the ‘cult’ of the archetype, he seems to have in mind any theory of myth in which the theorist himself adopts the role of tribal ‘myth-man,’ claiming to offer a ‘rounding out,’ a ‘symbolic doubling,’ a ‘formal culmination’ of mythology” (Coupe 49-50). Where for Rowland a prescribed end is necessary to understand the symbols and traditions of a mythic system, I contend that a prescribed end closes off the myth to potential narratives (of which violence could be an expected attribute). Instead, the end of a rhetorical myth would serve as an “orientation,” to borrow again from Burke, that would welcome non-linearity and uncertainty, not the ‘terrible results’ from Rowland’s application.

Burke further burdens the “theorist of myth to recognize the project of ‘perfection’ involved . . . [and yet] one must be careful not to carry the mythic project over into the theory
itself, lest various intellectual maneuvers be made surreptitiously” (Coupe 47). Stripped of Burke’s nuance, entelechy becomes a convenient way for Rowland to rationalize why Hamas embraces a “fundamentalist (entelechial) ideology/myth system” and to explain its “commit-
ment to maximalist territorial claims and willingness to use violence” (“Mythic Rhetoric and Rectification in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict” 43). In stark contrast to Burke’s definition of man as one “rotten with the pursuit of perfection” (16-19), Rowland argues that “human beings are not entelechial beings by nature” and so instead of confronting Hamas, the international community (and Israel) should offer patience and support for Hamas as it deals with its unnatu-
ral challenges and eventually rectifies its obstinate charter with reality (Ibid 43-53). It seems that Rowland successfully recognizes the ‘project of perfection’ at play in the Hamas myth, but over-extends his conclusions when he elevates the Hamas myth as the representative Palestini-
an myth.

Rowland’s deterministic use of entelechy might be made more pliable by contrasting it with a more elegant application of the “principle of perfection” in Burke’s own literary criticism. Burke’s 1966 essay, “Myth, Poetry, and Philosophy,” is an extended criticism of “Python, A Study of Delphic Myth and its Origins” by Joseph Fontenrose. Through a literary analysis of the “combat myth,” Burke offers us another way to conceive of the entelechial principle which piv-
ots gently from a tendency toward perfection to a pursuit of “thoroughness.” At the risk of oversimplifying, one might consider “thoroughness” a step back from the pursuit of perfection without losing fidelity with the Aristotelian principle of entelechy. As a “thoroughness” test, Burke proposes two stories depicting dream sequences representing the theme of lost love. One dream involves a man dropping a garment of the jilted lover. The other describes a woman
being dropped off a cliff by her lover. Although both dreams include the act of dropping, the later is obviously a “more thorough” depiction of tragic fulfillment (“Myth, Poetry, and Philosophy” 392-393). Burke does not judge the efficacy of the two dream sequences; he simply distinguishes them from each other in order to illustrate variances in the “entelechial pressure” toward a perfect paradigm. I contend that one might nullify the obstinacy of Rowland’s strict application and replace it with an “attitude” toward “thoroughness” indirectly crafting a more pliable mythic system for Hamas which, according to Rowland’s own approach, would reveal potential for re-determining where the Hamas myth leads.

The search for an underlying Palestinian rhetorical myth should be a recursive one which puts the Lucaites and Condit model of characterization-narrative-ideograph into oscillation. If Rowland would have envisioned the rhetorical environment more systemically, he might have seen Hamas as but a single aspect of the Palestinian myth, not the representative of the whole, i.e. Hamas as synecdoche for Palestinian. Burke warns of such an oversight when he notes in his essay “Four Master Tropes” how

a similar synecdochic form is present in all theories of political representation, where some part of the social body (either traditionally established, or elected, or coming into authority by revolution) is held to be ‘representative’ of the society as a whole . . . And though there are many disagreements within a society as to what part should represent the whole and how this representation should be accomplished, in a complex civilization any act of representation automatically implies a synecdochic relationship insofar as the act is, or is held to be, “truly representative”. (Grammar of Motives 508)
Ultimately, Rowland becomes comfortable with Hamas pursuing an entelechial myth, but, as I have argued, Hamas (like any political organization) represents its own ends, not the ends of a broader Palestinian myth. Therefore, Rowland becomes entangled in his own constraining criteria and perhaps misses an opportunity to reveal and perhaps interrogate the underlying Palestinian myth that, as I will argue in the following section, may be refined by studying the criteria for what constitutes intractable conflict. This chapter detailed how rhetorical myth provides a paradigm within which narratives can then connect characterizations and develop ideographs along the lines of Lucaites’ and Condit’s culturetypal/counter-cultural model. With rhetorical myth on one side of the equation, the concluding section points to another model for peace (like the Oslo Accords) and demonstrates how proposed solutions might be mapped onto rhetorical myths in an effort to understand how a conflict is perceived.

2.4 Toward a Shared Myth

The 2009 English publication of the Geneva Accords articulates the final (albeit informal) agreements made in 2003 between non-governmental representatives of the Israeli and Palestinian peoples. Although the Geneva Accords are generally agreed upon as an ideal state of affairs for both parties (Balian and Larocco), as a strictly rhetorical artifact it is not as useful in and of itself. Rather, the Geneva Accords provides a helpful taxonomy to begin a rhetorical analysis. For example, it cartographically delineates a shared vision of future borders thus avoiding rhetorically charged terms like, “1967 borders” or “land swaps” that are so prevalent in the popular consumption of the conflict. Rhetorical critics and political theorists might work backwards from this purported end state to analyze the myriad rhetorical moves on all sides of the conflict as a general approach toward a shared agreement. In so doing, one might conclude that neither
myth system (Israeli or Hamas) ends with the equitable peace outlined in the *Geneva Accords*. Here I agree in part with Rowland who describes the *Geneva Accords* as a general consensus on the “shape of peace” frustrated by the recalcitrance of the belligerents’ myth systems ("Mythic Rhetoric and Rectification in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict" 44); but for different reasons.

Whereas Rowland sees the *Geneva Accords* as the solution and the recalcitrant myths as the obstacle, I contend the myths should be accommodated for as natural conditions of the rhetorical environment and the effort should be to mitigate the negative effects of myth on the *Geneva Accords* (or any other solution): a rhetorical task.

Frameworks, theories, and models for peace have been proposed in the past, and like the *Geneva Accords*, these were also solution-oriented. As such, they have been trumpeted in varying degrees to the point where all concerned believe they knew the “answer” to the “problem” and their respective publics were carried along with them. The *Geneva Accords* was a unique exercise in that it was a 500 page description of how a future two-state solution would actually function. Unfortunately, it were these same details which naysayers would pick apart as a way of delegitimizing the entire project (Abrams 85-86). Although the belligerents were able to codify the ends of concession in a political artifact, e.g. borders, the artifact still failed to articulate what the act of concession meant to both parties. Furthermore, the *Geneva Accords* was written under the assumption that the belligerents considered the problem and solution through a shared paradigm. Finally, it reified the misnomer that there are two distinct paths that invariably intersect at this place, or condition, called Peace. As a plan, the *Geneva Accords* leapt past the myths and established a goal—orientation—at the intersection of all of the con-
flict’s underlying myths. Unfortunately, it failed in implementation: a pattern I will explore in detail in the next chapter.

If one considers the Geneva Accords a transcendent “higher synthesis” of desires as Burke might seek, the conversation would shift away from Rowland’s focus on competing myths and instead seek arena where they overlap or intersect. Instead of trying to rectify individual myths with reality as Rowland argues, one could look to reconcile contrasting myths at points where they might intersect productively: the terms and concepts of their respective narratives. Such an approach would not ask for time and support for the belligerents to rectify their myths with a changing reality. Instead, this approach deconstructs contrasting myths where they intersect, e.g. terms like sovereignty, legitimacy, and security. For example, it would acknowledge the tragedy of occupation (Palestinian) and the right to self defense (Israeli) but transcend both by merging the issue as one of protection of human rights which could apply to both. Instead of obstinately protecting identity as Rowland requires, all would have to compromise positions on identity and perhaps sovereignty; following this deconstruction, this approach would require a reconstruction of respective narratives so that the threats to identity do not equate to threats to existence, i.e. narrowing the circumference. In fact, the very concept of threat would be destabilized (at the paradigm level) so that the terms and concepts of the narrative might then promulgate an expanded conception of threat which includes, if not privileges, an appreciation for human rights.

The prescriptive potential of the paradigm would not be diluted because of its instability. In fact, it should direct actions of belligerents and collaborators (like the U.S.) alike toward a single objective with the foreknowledge that an amalgamation of the details of the agreement
does not equate to peace. In other words, peace is not a sum of its parts and should not be discarded because of deficiency in one part. To accommodate for the intransigent mythic systems which invariably frustrate reconciliation efforts as Rowland argues, one might introduce additional myths to incorporate expectations for the international community’s incremental investment in the process. Additional rhetorical myths would still have Rowland’s heroes and archetypal language and be initiated by a literal or psychological truth, but it would not be constrained by an aversion to entelechy. Instead, it would invite entelechy with open arms because fulfilling the potential of a rhetorical myth is the best way to map the trajectory of a paradigm. Moreover, what I hope to demonstrate in the following chapter is how using Burke’s comic framework might reveal the recursive tendons amongst paradigm, rhetorical myth, and narrative. Revealing the rhetorical myth is just one element in Burke’s larger dramatistic methodology. One needs to understand how all three elements work together to constitute intractable conflict.
3  THE COMEDY OF INTRACTABLE CONFLICT

How did the desire for peace supplant the safety of the status quo in Northern Ireland, South Africa, or Bosnia where the backdrop was hundreds of years of ethnic, racial, religious, and political tension? For all the investigative approaches to understanding why conflicts end and some kind of peace replaces it, scholars are still absent a methodology or logic for understanding the “intractableness” of some conflicts. Does the conflict end? Or just its intractable condition? Even the term peace resists definition and formula because it is a social construction and can be almost as unpredictable and unstable as war.

As a framework for motives, Burke argues that comedy engenders a level of introspection or “maximum consciousness” enabling people to transcend the binaries of conflict by revealing their own motives (Burke, Attitudes Toward History 171) or as I argue, the motives of the system. A consciousness where people are “observers of themselves, while acting” may direct the belligerents toward what Matyok calls, “better problems” which effectively transforms the intractable conflict by offering new bridging motive for it (Matyok). Changing the form and function of an intractable conflict might help people avoid the trap of overemphasizing the actors who, constrained by political motives, engage in acts that seemingly defy rational decision-making. In fact, in terms of degrees of influence on a peace process, the actual motives of the actors may be subordinate to the cognitive framework (motives) chosen to understand the actions. As Crocker et al argue, the process of resolving intractable conflict can span decades. In fact, intractable conflict can be distinguished from tractable conflict by the durability of the conflict; the qualitative ability of the conflict to resist resolution (5). Moreover, the way a problem is understood and then promulgated will often outlast the people involved in solving
the problem. A framework that can accommodate the shifting definitions and the normative nature of terminology might also accommodate for the “bounded” rationality that is a pervasive condition of policy-making. Therefore, learning from diplomatic failure may sometimes require us to reframe what was thought as understood about causal and correlative relationships involved in those failures.

By deconstructing intractable conflict using the Burkean comic frame one can shift the emphasis from the competing discourses of belligerents to the discourses of the environment where “compromise” is part of the vocabulary and the peace “process” is no longer the desired end and paradoxically, neither is reconciliation. Put another way, using Burke’s comic frame enables an adjustment in the pentadic ratios that privileges the motives of the Scene over the Agent or the Act. For Burke, motives, as “shorthand for situations” provide both the rationale and direction for action. When Burke employs duty as a motive in *Permanence and Change*, it is as a term to “indicate a complex stimulus-situation wherein certain stimuli calling for one kind of response are linked with certain stimuli calling for another kind of response” (30). In the case of the MEPP, when a motive (e.g. security) belongs to and serves the Scene, it invites both belligerents to acknowledge the existence of contrasting realities which feed the motive. Realities are constituted rhetorically, not conveyed axiomatically.

In the previous chapter, I referenced Carcasson’s approach to the narratives of the MEPP which categorized its actors into *peacemakers* and *enemies of peace* (3); two narratives which became the motive, in the Burkean sense, for actions on both sides of the conflict. In the discourse of intractable conflict, however, a narrative can become stagnant, inextricable from our conceptions of the conflict. Robert Rothstein blames the failure of the 1993 Oslo Peace Ac-
cords on a “set of attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs that become embedded over decades of bitter conflict and are difficult to unlearn even if some kind of peace agreement—or exploratory truce—has been signed” (1); this embedded model of perception restricted action as well as thought. For Rothstein, Conflict Syndrome was a vocabulary and cognitive framework where each act of violence fit too neatly into the narrative of a self-perpetuating paralysis instead of the peacemakers and enemies of peace distinction that Carcasson proffered. In contrast, the presence of Conflict Syndrome meant that every action on the part of one belligerent, no matter how benign, was interpreted by the other belligerent as a threat.

Even the most recent effort to renew peace talks must accommodate for the syndrome. According to Secretary of State Kerry, “there are narrative issues; difficult, complicated years of mistrust that have been built up, all of which as to be worked through and undone, and a pathway has to be laid down in which the parties can have confidence that they know what is happening and that the road ahead is real, not illusory” (Kerry, January 4, 2014). Moreover, inaction on the part of a belligerent was interpreted as a weakness to be exploited. For example, if Israel did not respond militarily to a Palestinian suicide attack, Telhami argues, then the message would be that Israel was too weak to respond or that the tactic used in the attack was effective and should be repeated (367). Therefore, as the narrative adopts the characteristics of Conflict Syndrome it devolves into a normative logic behind the conflict that exacerbates biases and constrains potential solutions where eventually violence becomes the only form of symbolic action.

For the Middle East Peace Process, Conflict Syndrome became a “frame of acceptance” bracketing the U.S. paradigm for the MEPP with the potential to shape the attitudes of all in-
volved or concerned and “fix attitudes that prepare for combat” (*Attitudes Toward History* 20). An integral aspect of Burke’s work to understand human motives and subsequent actions, frames of acceptance can just as easily be used to justify actions instead of guide them: Burke warns of this tendency when he comments, “if you break your leg, thank God you didn’t break your neck. . . We have it when the fox, unable to reach the grapes, decides they were sour. We find it in the jokes whereby men, in the face of danger, dwarf the danger” (*Ibid*). Carcasson’s claim that an alternative narrative emerged from Oslo may be valid, but the narrative of *peacemakers* and *enemies of peace* is still constrained by Conflict Syndrome. Moreover, Carcasson’s narrative actually reinforces the tenets of Conflict Syndrome much like how Burke describes how “the whole terminology of capitalism is found remarkable for its clear simplification of social processes” (*Ibid* 93). The terminology not only describes reality; terminology constitutes reality.

The paths along a peace process are determined by attitudes and attitudes are determined by the frame of acceptance. Using a dramatistic “corrective” like Burke’s to reframe the rhetorical environment systemically may enable an alternative model to contrast Rothstein’s Conflict Syndrome or binary narratives like Carcasson’s and perhaps reveal opportunities which always existed in the system, but were simply concealed by the dominant vocabulary. If our actions are constrained by our motives (and by extension our vocabulary), then discerning the movement and potential of a motive is essential if one wishes to learn from Oslo and perhaps reveal future opportunities. For the balance of this chapter I discuss the comic framework within the context of intractable conflict, compare how others have applied the framework to un-
nderstand social movement rhetoric, and then demonstrate how the comic frame might be used to unpack the intractable conditions that comprise the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

3.1 Comic Frame: Defined in/by the Context of Intractable Conflict

Although the comic and tragic frames are often examined together, this is not to allude to a superiority of one over the other. They both belong to Burke’s larger literary framework concerning poetic forms that include epic, satire, etc. As a poetic form, comedy plays a distinct role in Burke’s project because it eventually becomes the core of his dramatistic methodology. Comedy is like the other poetic forms that provide paradigms through which one can come to accept or reject the situations faced. Each form can be categorized by it ends; the ends then affects the methods. For example, the epic form seeks to “make men ‘at home in’” primitive conditions; thus the method adopted includes magnification of the warlike hero to dignify the “necessities of existence” (Burke, Attitudes Toward History 35). The ends that Burke associates with comedy are ambiguous but he offers the following familiar summary: “The comic frame should enable people to be observers of themselves, while acting. Its ultimate would not be passiveness, but maximum consciousness. One would “transcend” himself by noting his own foibles” (Ibid 171, emphasis original). To achieve this ‘maximum consciousness’, Burke treats numerous approaches to comic framing that might be considered orientations or attitudes instead of methods. This section addresses the importance of transforming what is invariably a tragic framework underlying the U.S. paradigm for perceiving the MEPP into a comic one. I offer the following three orientations as the ones most relevant to this study of intractable conflict. These approaches are not constrained by sequence or prerequisite, yet they can overlap in useful ways.
The dialectic of the scapegoat is perhaps the most widely discussed marker of Burke’s tragic frame. In *A Grammar of Motives*, Burke outlines the dialectic of the scapegoat as a mechanism that when present in the discourse, an “enemy” is made knowable and can either serve as a vessel into which a community transfers its sins and expels as a way to “kill” the sin or as a unifying point upon which all parties can mutually agree upon as an “other” (406-408). By means of a scapegoat, a disparate people can constitute an identity even though they do not share a national border or flag. Such usage can be beneficial as a way to bridge a temporary obstacle, but the long-term viability of an identity dependent on an “other” is questionable. In contrast, the comic frame reduces the concentration of power in the scapegoat by chastising it as a clown instead of doing it violence (Carlson 448). In her discussion of comic ritual as the logic underlying Gandhi’s resistance strategy, Carlson demonstrates the closing of a ritual circle regarding the treatment of the clown: “comic rituals create social distance between reformers and the ‘clown,’ so that the clown’s faults first may be recognized, then chastised. After the clown’s foibles are revealed from a safe distance, the ritual demands a rapprochement, recognizing the potential clown in all human beings” (448-449). In this way, the comic frame shifts emphasis from the Act to the Scene and Agency; it shifts from the foibles of the clown to the ritual’s demand for rapprochement.

The second attitude that emerges in the comic frame is the premise that “the progress of human enlightenment can go no further than in picturing people not as *vicious*, but as *mistaken*” (Burke *Attitudes Toward History*, 41 emphasis original). Burke posits that seen through the comic frame, all people are inherently mistaken; thus, each situation brings with it the potential for chastisement instead of condemnation. Each situation must accommodate for a
“special kind of blindness” brought on by the human condition that shifts the evil of a crime from the Actor to the Act (Ibid). In discussing Gandhi’s strategy of peaceful civil disobedience, Carlson shows how applying the comic frame is a decision on the part of the resistance. This comic option enables a resistance movement to internalize a premise “that human beings must have social order, but that they easily can become trapped into ‘evil’ practices by that order without being evil themselves” (Carlson 448). Of the four approaches I discuss, this one is the most tenuous when applied to intractable conflict. It is hard not to be outraged by violence. Especially in the context of Conflict Syndrome, a violent act like a suicide bombing in Tel Aviv or an assassination-by-missile in Gaza is rarely admitted, or accepted, as a mistake.

Gregory Desilet and Edward C. Appel criticize Burke’s notion of comic framing partially for its lack of “warrantable outrage.” The authors contend that Burke marked Hitler as the “devil-function” while limiting the scapegoat moniker to only Hitler’s doctrine. However, the authors contend, Burke does not escape the consequences for splitting hairs and by doing so “slips out of the comic frame rhetoric of ‘all people are mistaken’ and into the rhetoric portraying not only one side (Hitler) as clearly wrong but also another side (Burke) as, by comparison, significantly right” (347, emphasis original). I will return again to Desilet and Appel’s criticism, but from this charge of inconsistency, one should already see the difficulty: are people dying because of the mistakes of others? Does applying the comic frame shift culpability for evil from Act to Scene? If so, then perhaps Scene might emerge as the “master term” and bring with it questions about the environment (social, diplomatic, economic) which were disguised by inadvertent focus on the Act or Agent.
Adjudicating this possible inconsistency depends on the context of the question. For Gandhi, non-violent resistance was *the Agency* for social change. The Scene constituted by the rhetorical artifacts (in this case, Ghandi’s oral speeches espousing non-violent resistance) created an orientation toward the comic framework which then reciprocated by shaping Gandhi’s strategy (Agency) of unquestioning and consistent non-violence. Even so, Desilet and Appel warn that the inward blindness that happens in the comic frame (due to acceptance of human foibles) can be dangerous as “blindness toward the inevitable limitation of human discernment, blindness toward the pervasive condition of blindness” (351). Any approach to unpacking intractable conflict should accommodate for this correlation between Scene (constituted rhetorically) and the Agency (rhetorical methods and strategies) available so as to avoid the potential blindness that confuses how the relationships amongst belligerents function.

The third approach refers to the many roles irony plays in the comic frame. Burke’s analysis of irony in his essay, “Four Master Tropes” points ultimately to “true irony” as a desired condition in the rhetorical environment. With true irony, as Burke outlines it, belligerents assume a state of consubstantiality with each other. They reinforce their respective identities by arriving at “a sense of fundamental kinship” where they *need* each other. Moreover, they are mutually indebted in a kind of codependency where one “is not merely outside him as an observer but contains him within” (Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* 514). Once achieved, this consubstantial condition enables numerous opportunities based on an unprecedented level of awareness of the other’s motives. In the context of the MEPP, this condition may never be achieved. It can, however, inform a comprehensive strategy of incremental social change targeting the paradigm, rhetorical myth, and the terms and concepts of the narrative much as it
did for Gandhi. There are two other approaches to the trope of irony that Burke discusses and might be helpful.

Burke introduces an aspect of irony that may work against his own goal of “true” irony outlined above. He posits that “we should ‘ironically’ note the function of the disease in ‘perfecting’ the cure, or the function of the cure in ‘perpetuating’ the influences of the disease” (Ibid 512). In this way, the disease and cure work in oscillation as the relationship adapts to the changing environment. Moreover, the identities of the Agents as well as the relationships that bind them must be constantly re-contextualized by observers. The adaptive nature of international conflict is similar in that belligerents come with particular motives underpinning a contentious issue.

As the discourses defining the issue evolve, the problem gains a kind of granularity that might not have been there previously because an original position is subsequently influenced by the perceived agendas and actions of an adversary. If access to water was a contentious issue between belligerents A and B, one might expect the value of the issue to ebb and flow as the level of sacrifice is experienced by each side. As the value shifts, it “perfects” the underlying problem presumably causing the friction in the first place. Soon what was once friction over water-rights becomes friction over something else that was previously concealed by an immature understanding of the other’s motives. Moreover, another criterion for intractable conflict is that the original or proximate cause of the conflict is not the reason a conflict actually becomes intractable (Crocker et al. 5). Instead, as the conflict resists resolution, it exponentially gains resilience through secondary and tertiary problems that confuse and distract resolution efforts. A current example of the impact of amorphous motives is in how Secretary Kerry de-
scribes the rationale behind the private negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians in late 2013:

Now, [the Israeli-Palestinian conflict] is deeply steeped in history, and each side has a narrative about their rights and their journey and the conflict itself. And in the end, all of these different core issues actually fit together like a mosaic. It’s a puzzle, and you can’t separate out one piece or another. Because what a leader might be willing to do with respect to a compromise on one particular piece is dependent on what the other leader might be willing to do with respect to a different particular piece. And there’s always a tension as to when you put your card on the table as to which piece you’re willing to do, when, and how. So it has to move with its particular pace and its particular privacy, frankly. And that’s why it’s so important not to be laying out any one particular component of it at any given moment of time, because it actually makes it more difficult for those decisions to be made or for those compromises to be arrived at, or for one of the leaders to have the freedom to be able to do what they need to do in order to figure out the political path ahead, which is obviously real for both. (5 Jan, 2014)

Although this lengthy extract from a press conference (in Jerusalem) reads like basic international relations, it demonstrates how “perfecting the cure” to the conflict requires more than a linear problem-solution paradigm. Secretary Kerry’s analogy of the mosaic is a useful one—more so than the puzzle. When complete, a ‘mosaic’ must be experienced holistically and simultaneously. It includes seemingly disparate components that range from political agents, economic forms of agency, diplomatic purposes, informational scenes, and military acts: components that may not fit together as planned but function together nonetheless. Building a mosa-
ic, as an artist might, invites an abductive approach which incorporates new inputs as steps to-
ward the “true irony” inherent in the comic frame instead of the victimage or scapegoating in
the tragic frame.

On the other hand, the puzzle analogy is problematic for several reasons. Unlike a mos-
aic, working on a puzzle begins from a certainty and is broken into component parts that then fit
in a predetermined way. Belligerents may sit across the table from each other with their re-
spective pile of pieces and assume they are working together toward a common goal, but they
may in fact be using pieces from different puzzles with different underlying motives. For exam-
ple, the ‘core issues’ in the MEPP may be the status of Jerusalem as capital of Israel and Pales-
tine, the right of return for Palestinian refugees, security, and territorial boundaries, but how
each party defines the core issues is far from certain. So while a shared Jerusalem may be the
stated shared goal, one party may envision a 90/10 split, while the other envisions a 50/50 split.
It follows that perhaps trying to make the core issues fit together into a coherent puzzle is the
wrong approach all together. At best, the various core issues, e.g. Jerusalem, might be separate
and distinct puzzles which happen to share a single table: an arguably manageable situation. At
worst, working under a faulty assumption of deterministic certainty can be calamitous.

The 2013 effort to restart negotiations began with the ambitious goal of final status so-
lutions, yet as the self-imposed nine month deadline (April 30, 2014) nears, the effort has quiet-
ly been repackaged as a project to establish a “framework for negotiations that will guide and
create the clear, detailed, accepted roadmap for the guidelines for the permanent status nego-
tiations” (Kerry, 5 Jan, 2014). This pivot from final solution to framework is perhaps a reaction
to domestic political pressures on all parties as tidbits of information leak out of the closely
guarded negotiations. The proximate and underlying causes for this apparent shift in purpose is the subject for another project and will likely follow precedents set by previous U.S. administrations subject to political motivations. What it does emphasize for this current study is that a peace “process” might best be considered as an approach for perfecting the cure through an ironic oscillation between the problem(s) and solution(s). The final aspect of irony, nested within a comic framework, I wish to address is irony’s role in actually reducing tension between adversaries.

In their criticism of Burke’s dramatistic theory of rhetoric, Desilet and Appel consider Burke’s use of comic irony as a conversion of warranted outrage through symbolic action (346). This is a helpful tactic when one wishes to confine a discourse to the comic frame and avoid the trap of evaluation that invariably creates an oppositional relationship (vice complementary). As mentioned earlier, slipping out of the comic frame can be triggered once the escalation to victimage and tragic scapegoating occurs. Comic irony provides a mechanism for adversaries to identify “internal blindness” and temper emotions before it exceeds its band of tolerance (349). As it might pertain to intractable conflict, this comic conversion is a “development” representing a confluence of symbolic actions: the adversaries perceive a “clown,” the clown’s action is accepted as a mistake, mistake is chastised, and exercise perfects the problem. One can see how a decisive shift from tragic to comic at the paradigm-level can cause secondary and tertiary effects manifested in the terms and concepts of the various narratives. When under a tragic framework, the concept of “Israeli security” can be readily understood in terms of physical borders and defensive systems. Acts like building the Separation Wall are perfectly consistent with the rhetorical myth of an Israel under siege by Arab neighbors since violence is scapegoated as
the primary threat to Israeli security. Considered comically, however, observers may begin to see the same Separation Wall as an articulation of a consubstantial relationship whereby victims and criminals are created by a single generative act.

Maintaining the relevance of the comic frame requires a dialectic component Burke also associates with comic irony. In “Four Master Tropes”, Burke conceives of irony as a product of the dialectic interaction of terms: “a development which uses all the terms.” He goes on to depict irony as a kind of master-perspective that creates an environment where the multiple subordinate perspectives can co-exist safely because they avoid evaluation and subsequent judgment. Most importantly for my argument, this amalgamation of perspectives consists of “voices, or personalities, or positions, integrally affecting one another” in a systemic fashion (Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* 512). The following two sections address Burke’s comic frame as it informs the systemic nature of social movements and introduces the comic frame as an approach to unpack the intractable(ness) of conflict.

### 3.2 Comic Frame: Distinctions and Methods

To my knowledge, applications of Burke’s comic frame to particular examples of conflict resolution focus primarily on social movement rhetoric—none on understanding intractable conflict. While useful in understanding how the comic orientation influences the methods of successful resistance movements, other applications of the comic framework are pragmatically focused on the resisting party and overlooks the consubstantial relationship that exists between resisting and resisted. Using Burke’s comic framework, Carlson and Powell both unpack particular social movements: respectively Gandhi’s resistance movement against British rule in India and U.S. Anti-Lynching Laws in the 1940’s. Both posit that as a nomenclature for re-
stance movements, Burke’s comic frame is especially well-suited because it reveals a movement’s logic as based on ritual drama (Carlson) and its goal is maximum awareness of the failures in the overall system (Powell).

Carlson deconstructs Gandhi’s non-violent resistance movement using the principles of the comic frame to establish “ritual drama” as a compromise posture between compliance and revolution. Central to Carlson’s argument is her revision of Leland Griffin’s familiar application of Burke’s dramatistic method to social movements by extracting Griffin’s approach from the tragic frame and resituating it in Burke’s comic framework. Doing so enabled Gandhi (and Carlson’s analysis) to ignore the tragic frame’s demand for a scapegoat and outright rejection of the social system (Carlson 446-448). Unfettered by the more revolutionary objectives demanded by the tragic frame, Gandhi could re-write the rules of resistance to fit his own plans that actually included the retention of aspects of the British system. Although the comic frame retains revolution as an option, it does not mandate it. Instead, as Carlson argues, it asks only adherence to a ritual form: drama. The ritual form conceived through the comic frame does not seek to overthrow a system, but to capitalize on its flaws (446). This is one example of the fluidity inherent in the comic frame that may be appropriate in my application of it to understanding intractable conflict. There are two other contrasts between the tragic and comic frames that are relevant to this study: homeopathic with allopathic treatments of conflict and open contrasted with closed systems.

As a footnote (albeit a four-page one) to his discussion of elegy in *Attitudes Toward History*, Burke distinguishes between homeopathic and allopathic styles. This distinction is important for both Carlson’s argument supporting the “method” of Gandhi’s non-violent strategy
as well as my own forthcoming proposition an upcoming next section regarding the lessons from Oslo. A homeopathic style considers conflict with an eye toward accommodation, while the allopathic seeks direct refutation, if not obliteration, of the conflict. Burke offers an anecdote about Benjamin Franklin’s lightning rod experiment where the rod served as a homeopathic remedy for lightning. The rod channeled the risk posed by the lightning instead of eliminating it outright (Burke, *Attitudes Toward History* 45). In effect, Franklin accepted the risk of lightning as a natural condition of the environment. Therefore, considering his environment through the comic frame provided necessary constraints on Franklin’s desired ends. However, if there was a potential to stop lightning, then as Burke further argues, “the stylistic homeopath tends to become ‘psychologically unemployed’, because his strategy becomes a bad fit for the situation at hand” (Ibid 45). Worse is when a homeopathic style is unilaterally usurped by an allopathic one. In such a case, it is unlikely that the allopathic solution was really right; the allopathic style simply shifted the problem so the available solution would fit. As an example, magic, according to Burke, regressed from its homeopathic principles when its “rituals became bureaucratized, they shifted towards the ‘allopathic’ category of spell, antidote” (Ibid 47). As it applies to understanding intractable conflict where a solution may or may not exist, one might be better served to encourage a *balance* of styles.

When balanced, or sequenced in some cases, the two styles can make up for the other’s shortfalls. The homeopathic style with its propensity for attenuating a negative condition, expectation management, and comfort with uncertainty may work to reveal potential in an otherwise intractable situation. It does not directly address the aspect of the perceived problem with the highest reward and highest risk. Instead, the homeopathic approach seeks the *periph-
ery of the problem. Avoiding significant risk by working in the periphery becomes a way to maintain connection, create momentum, and perhaps reveal potential as the intractable situation is perceived to be more porous, i.e. less intractable. The numerous iterations of the MEPP are prime examples of avoiding the core problems in exchange for tenuous lines of communication. On the other hand, the allopathic alternative is quick to provide an antidote to the perceived problem. When dealing with well-structured problems, the allopathic approach is of course appropriate. No one prefers an auto-mechanic comfortable with uncertainty. However, while one may not be comfortable with a homeopathic auto-mechanic, there may be times when uncertainty is an acceptable temporary condition as the problem is reduced to its essential logic. Even the most expert of mechanics may resort to a “let’s see what happens” approach until the real problem is uncovered.

Social phenomena (of which conflict is one) are rarely well-structured because for the most part they function as open systems. I could associate well-structured problems with closed systems, for example: automobile-as-system, but I would not consider an automobile a pure closed system because it still requires an input of energy and direction. I contend that the formal efforts to resolve aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Oslo 1993, Hebron 1997, Camp David II 2000, Aqaba 2003, Annapolis 2007, and Kerry 2013-2014) began as open systems as belligerents near the negotiation table, but become increasing closed as the actual negotiations take place. Paradoxically, a conflict devolves into intractability due in part to repeated attempts to resolve it (Crocker et al. 8, Northrup 63, Cohen 350). As each attempt to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict fails, or is perceived to fail by its constituents, the intractability of the conflict becomes more pronounced as expectations of intractability replaces hope for resolu-
tion. It is not surprising that in a sixty-year-old conflict, hope and optimism must be carefully earned and can easily be lost: a dynamic I will address further in a later section.

In their analysis of social movements as interpretive systems, Stewart et. al outline B. Aubrey Fisher’s systematic view of communication; the warp and woof of which is the difference between open and closed systems. For Fisher, closed systems are governed by the “principle of equilibrium—the final state of the closed system is determined by its initial state because a self-contained system must sustain balance without any help from the outside” (Stewart et al 31). Moreover, a closed system has few response options when faced with “the principle of entropy” which exposes a system to an “irreversible process of disintegration” (31). It can only offer a counterforce—Fisher calls it negentropy—to slow down the process. There is a correlation between the propensity for antidote in Burke’s allopathic style and the use of a counterforce in Fisher’s description of a closed system. There is also a correlation between an intractable conflict where “the sources of intractability are not the same as the original causes of the conflict” (Crocker et al. 5) and the determinism inherent in the “principle of equilibrium.” Arguing the opposite, Fisher notes that an open system adheres to a “principle of equifinality [where] you can get anywhere from anywhere else, and you can get there from a variety of paths” (31). And as expected, an open system would assume a homeopathic posture toward the principle of entropy that triggered an antidote response before.

3.3 Comic Frame in Application

An open system would be comfortable with the dis-equilibrium described above because its ends are more about growth, not reifying certainty. To that end, Burke might associate
the “principle of equifinality” inherent in an open system with his own description of a Platonic
dialogue in *A Grammar of Motives*:

> A Platonic dialogue is not formed simply by breaking an idea into its component parts
and taking them up in one-two-three order . . . [it] is rather a process of transformation
whereby the position at the end transcends the position at the start, so that the position
at the start can eventually be seen in terms of the new motivation encountered en
route. (442)

Identical to Fisher’s “principle of nonsummativity” which describes the whole of interdepend-
ent parts as something “other than the simple sum of the individual parts” (Stewart et al 28),
Burke’s requirements for a Platonic dialogue may only be appropriate in an open system where
the interconnected motives are already untangled. In the context of intractable conflict, the
nodes of the system may be connected by relationships but those relationships are based on
the various motives the parties bring to bear. As convoluted as they are likely to be, the motives
should be made explicit (through a Burkean dramatistic methodology I argue) if the belligerents
sincerely hope to reduce the perceived intractability of their conflict.

An approach informed by Burke’s comic framework follows exhaustive work done by
peace and conflict scholars who have gone so far as to detail the myriad factors that make the
Israeli-Palestinian conflict a uniquely intractable one (Telhami and Cohen). From the applied
systems thinking community, David Stroh describes successful intervention in the Israeli-
Palestinian conflict as a process of “breaking a link between variables or changing variables” (6).
Although “breaking” connotes an allopathic approach to the problem that I do not support, the
systems perspective Stroh provides shifts the emphasis from a solution-set to problem-set in a
way under-emphasized by the peace and conflict studies community. Stroh’s systemic outline concludes with a recommendation to test “underlying mental models that drive so much of people’s behavior (6). Unfortunately, Stroh does not provide a pragmatic methodology for revealing the ‘underlying mental models’ let alone test them.

Although it may be obvious that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is an open system, following Stroh, I advocate constructing the intractable conditions of the environment as explicitly open so as to articulate the difference between comic and tragic frames. Doing so adheres to Fisher’s “principle of equifinality” and enables a homeopathic strategy which can learn from its environment and incorporate options as they are revealed. Finally, one should note how traumatic changes in the environment effect open systems differently than closed ones. Where a closed system would deal with a problem allopathically (via antidote or negentropy), an open system would incorporate the changes as natural conditions and seek to capitalize on the strengths and weaknesses uncovered by the change. This is all the more important in a region like the Middle East where the ongoing Arab Uprising is triggering countless reverberations in an open system that demands an almost daily review of the rhetorical context.

In sum: According to Carlson, Gandhi’s strategy for non-violent resistance proceeded according to a ritual characterized by a recognition of both social and individual power; attempts at identification with the social order; emphasis upon epiphany as a ritual goal; and combination of a pragmatic view of human motives with a transcendent view of human unity to create a comic balance (447). My study does not propose a similar ritual (solution) to reconcile Israelis and Palestinians. In fact, this problem set is not one of resistance and resisted, it transcends both and demands the focus be on framing the discourses maintaining the intractable condi-
tions instead of the Agents. It demands attention on the threats to identity for both sides and attracts focus to the rhetorical nature of the conflict’s intractable(ness), not the conflict’s ultimate resolution.

Although the first priority may be to weaken the paralyzing influence of Conflict Syndrome on the dominant paradigm, the first step in the process I am proposing is to introduce an alternative lens to unpack our understanding of the MEPP informed by Burke’s comic frame. Through dramatism (of which the comic frame is but one part), the unique characteristics and conditions which constitute an intractable conflict further undermined by Conflict Syndrome can be reframed and perhaps transformed such that the conditions function as part of a tractable conflict. To be clear, Dramatism will not end the MEPP, it may only serve to mitigate the influence of Conflict Syndrome and help move the perception of the conflict from an intractable to tractable category of conflict. Achieving such a shift then leaves the task of reconciliation, conflict resolution, or conflict management to the practitioners and policy makers in the field.

Before I end this discussion of the systemic distinctions between comic and tragic frames, I will clarify the correlation I am drawing among Burke’s comic frame, homeopathic solutions, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as an open system. First off, the three are not mutually exclusive concepts. As discussed earlier, their opposite concepts must be accommodated for because they may actually function better in oscillation with each other, e.g. following a homeopathic approach until the potential emerges for an allopathic solution. These concepts are also normative in that they shape one’s perspective on conflict which in turn shapes the actions one might consider. While best suited for what Burke calls, a “man in society” (Attitudes Toward History 42), to be useful in understanding intractable conflict on the scale I am propos-
ing, use of the comic frame must consider both the open nature of social systems and the homeopathic, i.e. incremental accommodation of tension, so the frame does not slip from comic to tragic. As I have shown, accommodating for the systemic nature of intractable conflict is pivotal if the comic frame is to reveal ways to transform it. Revisiting the rhetorical artifacts of the MEPP through this refined framework may reveal more questions than answers and will likely frustrate peace-process community justifiably weary of admiring the problem.

3.4 Intractable Conflict Revisited

Just as there are many definitions of peace, there are also many ways war can manifest itself as an extension of politics. By most accounts, however, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is currently in a state of not war and not peace. It is an intractable conflict in the sense that the belligerents have linked their socially-constructed identities to the presence of conflict and fear they cannot extract themselves from the conflict without threatening their identities. The inability to extract assumes the belligerents wish an end to the conflict; this is not necessarily the case in intractable conflict where the status quo provides a de facto conflict management which keeps the conflict from escalating. In fact, this particularly resilient conflict meets nearly every benchmark for “intractable” as defined in the peace and conflict studies community. In some cases, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the case study for what it takes to create, maintain, and fail to resolve an intractable conflict (Crocker et al).

As introduced earlier in this chapter, Rothstein attributed the failure to implement the 1993 Oslo Accords to factors like deficiency in the design of the accords, failures of implementation, and influence of domestic politics: factors identified by numerous scholars. But what makes Rothstein’s analysis poignant is that he accounts for the notion that all of the identified
factors were decisively undermined by the pervasive, yet transparent, condition of the intractable environment: Conflict Syndrome. Although not evaluative, this condition serves a normative function as a “frame of acceptance” in line with Burke’s tragic framework. In contrast, intractable conflict shifts along a continuum of conflict driven by rhetorically constructed perceptions of reality. As complementing brackets to the dominant U.S. paradigm, both Conflict Syndrome and intractable conflict shape perceptions which then guides actions and reinforces the perception of intractability. It follows then that violence is a uniquely visible phenomenon which can shape where a conflict lands on the conflict continuum and the efficacy of Conflict Syndrome.

As it is presently, ending or reducing violence seemed a helpful bridge between the representatives of the primary adversaries involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the early 1990s: Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and leader of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, Yasser Arafat. Constituencies on both sides could readily accept a reduction of violence as a key tenet of peaceful coexistence. In addition, violence is quantifiable and qualifiable; it can be packaged for domestic consumption based on the motives of the Agents. There were several concessions involved in the Oslo Accords (Klieman 227-229), but the mutual recognition and the reduction of violence were two environmental preconditions. The first precondition was met as soon as the two parties agreed to negotiate, but the reduction of violence was a condition to be maintained, not just achieved. Paradoxically, however, scapegoating violence was perhaps the fundamental error in the Oslo Accords. Politically-charged violence (rockets or bulldozing homes) may be a symptom or a result, but it is always already a symbolic act. Considered through Burke’s dramatistic methodology, one should immediately see the problem
caused by ignoring the discontinuity of motives underlying the violent acts. While the belligerents may agree on the viciousness of violence, scapegoating it over-emphasizes its causal role in the conflict and ignores the role it plays in the multiple discourses of the wider rhetorical environment. Scapegoating violence answers the demand of the tragic framework where “no social change is possible without some sort of violence” against a scapegoat upon which “evil” can be projected and then “killed” cathartically (Carlson 448).

Furthermore, prioritizing the reduction of violence over the rights and freedoms of the Palestinians meant that the dominant “terministic screen” would be one of Israeli security. As Weinberger argues, “the notion of ‘ending violence’ meant that Israeli security criteria would trump or greatly restrict the independent control within the spheres of authority transferred to Palestinians” (4). Therefore, as long as violence is scapegoated by the belligerents and the international community (and accepted by the dominant paradigm), solutions will always be short-sighted and the influence of Conflict Syndrome will likely prohibit progress.

As an example of the kind of paralysis Conflict Syndrome can effect, if one belligerent cannot deliver on promises to reduce violence, the other party will use it as a sign of non-compliance with the entire suite of negotiation topics. According to Northrup, the lack of capable institutions necessary to build confidence between belligerents is another marker for intractable conflict (488). This mismatch of policy and capability is a useful example of how Conflict Syndrome does not always result in an intractable conflict and vice versa. If the PLO had the institutions (security, political, economic, informational) necessary to implement the Oslo Accords, perhaps the impact of Conflict Syndrome would not have been as prolific. The institutions may have enforced the reduction of violence even as the “spoilers” within the Palestinian
community resisted steps toward resolution. Ultimately, the efficacy of the comic frame pivots on revising the symbolic *purpose* of violence, not the obliteration of violence. To achieve this revisionist objective, the violent act must be extracted from the rhetorical environment constrained by Conflict Syndrome and considered comically.

There are other terms that would require similar treatment—statehood and security are especially problematic—yet the example of *violence* is enough to warrant the approach. We are reminded that the comic choice invites the premise “that human beings must have social order, but that they easily can become trapped into ‘evil’ practices by that order without being evil themselves” (Carlson 448). I am not arguing that violent acts are mistakes by trapped individuals. Nor am I offering the evaluative criteria for culpability of a “factional” tragedy or melodrama whereby the “structuring of conflict appeals precisely because of its clarity and simplicity in assigning wrong predominately to one side” (Disilet and Appel 348). The comic frame simply destabilizes the Purpose of the violent Act by refusing to condemn an Agent with the “evil” moniker. As the criticism from Desilet and Appel emphasizes, it is difficult to avoid the charge of moral relativism here. But converting the “warrantable outrage” by way of symbolic action using the comic frame, helps reinforce Burke’s point that there is no room for irony in relativism (Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* 512). Raising expectations for peace from a *negative* absence of war to the *positive* “presence of social, spiritual, or ecological harmony” (Funk and Aziz 52) enables the deployment of Burke’s “true” irony—whereby belligerents accept their consubstantiality—as an attribute which shapes a homeopathic path towards a tractable conflict.

Regarding acceptance frames in general, Burke begins the process of understanding with self-imposed constraints: “Out of such frames we derive our vocabularies for the charting
of human motives. And implicit in our theory of motives is a program of action, because we form ourselves and judge others (collaborating with them or against them) in accordance with our attitudes” (Attitudes Toward History 92). By applying the comic frame in particular, the ironic relationship between a violent act and its cure can be revealed as a primary contributor to intractable conflict. For example, as a missile shield becomes the solution to rockets being fired from the Gaza Strip into Israel, it triggers a paradox of technology that abandons the underlying motives of the Act for its technological cure. The technological cure then refines the violent Act in the form of shifting tactics, e.g. suicide bombing instead of rockets, but it is a cure to the a proximate problem, not the underlying problem.

Peter Wineberger, from the U.S. Institute of Peace, offers another example where a physical act in response to a proximate threat assumes a symbolic function once there is enough distance between the proximate threat and the original act. During the height of the Al Aqsa Intifada in 2003, the Israelis endured a series of suicide bombing attacks thought to originate from the West Bank. In response to this proximate problem, the Israelis built a separation barrier between itself and the West Bank that is now 273 miles long and still under construction (planned for 430 miles). As Wineberger put it, “the thing about the Israelis is that they’re obsessed with security [and when] circumstances change, the measures they implement don’t. While I have some sympathy with the fact that were some suicide bombings in major cities in 2003 so they build this wall, but that isn’t necessarily the answer now. But the wall is there” (Wineberger).
Twelve years after the wall construction (Agency) began to stop suicide bombings (Pur-
pose), the wall construction continues under the same motive: security. The original threat
(Act), however, is effectively gone⁵ and the current threat to Israeli security, according to vet-
erian Israeli negotiator Shaul Arieli, is that “Israel has 15 times the gross domestic product per
per capita of the Palestinian territories—that motivates tens of thousands of Palestinians to seek
work in Israel, whether they have permits to do so. This slowly leads to a Palestinian ‘return’ to
Israel” (Arieli). Once it is acknowledged how violence and its cure work in oscillation (via the
comic corrective), one can begin to learn about the potential symbolic purposes of violence and
how they may disproportionately influence the pentadic ratios.

By re-situating violence—amongst myriad other terms—through the comic frame, one
might then pursue an attitude toward conflict shaped by the comic frame. To that end, the con-
trast between allopathic and homeopathic attitudes is critical because it shapes the desired

⁵ Some argue that the dramatic reduction of suicide bombings (from 55 in 2002 to 14 in 2004 when the
wall was only 20% complete) should be credited to the Israeli military incursions and unilaterally-declared cease-
fires by Hamas (Harel and Palti).
Purpose and Agency inherent in the strategy. Rothstein notes that the pragmatic tasks of the Oslo Accords were knowingly unachievable by the belligerents, yet the outside world seemed surprised when the implementation of the Accords failed almost immediately. These pragmatic tasks included the equitable division of territory and the rules for peaceful coexistence to support the division (Rothstein 6). The agenda for the Oslo process did not include achieving these tasks, only that these tasks were the ideal conditions that future negotiations should strive for. In other words, the underlying Purpose of the Accords was to achieve an “exploratory truce” so that both sides could contribute to an environment for discourse that would eventually enable the pragmatic conditions mentioned earlier (7). The Oslo Accords was a five-year, incremental approach homeopathic (comic) in design, yet might be judged from its poor reception that it was billed to the respective constituencies as an allopathic (tragic) one.

By most public accounts, the Oslo Peace Accords did little but reinforce the intractable nature of the MEPP. Although world leaders shook hands in front of cameras, the belligerents came away with little more than souvenirs from the White House. It would not be a stretch to condemn the Accords as a failure because few of its pragmatic objectives were achieved. Weinberger goes so far as to condemn the Oslo Accords as a demonstration of “complex co-optation” whereby the asymmetric relationship that privileged Israel was preserved by the Accords and codified internationally at the expense of the Palestinians (13). As Kelman argues, however, if the Oslo Accords are considered an exploratory step in the “process” of a complex peace, systemic problems and mistakes, which I contend are rhetorical in nature, may be revealed (102). One might blame cognitive frames like Conflict Syndrome for misunderstandings, but the selection of the frame is a choice. One could choose a frame that paralyzes our under-
standing of motives because it ends the relationship between dialectic and irony: one that suspends the Platonic dialogue necessary for learning about social systems. On the other hand, one could choose to approach the intractable environment as an open, adaptive system: one amenable to homeopathic solutions, comic irony, charitable attitudes toward the “enemy”, and results in a new vocabulary to deal with the motives of both sides of an intractable conflict.

Thus far, I have detailed how Burke’s comic frame and his broader dramatistic methodology (which includes his myth project) might inform approaches to unseating Conflict Syndrome and perhaps ways to disentangle the systematic features of intractable conflict. The next chapter brings forward the major movements of the earlier chapters to rhetorically analyze a decisive wedge of U.S. foreign policy artifacts regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This distinctly U.S.-centered perspective focuses on the early years of the George W. Bush administration and interrogates why and how the very phrase “peace process” was expunged from the U.S. foreign policy-web.
4 TO DESTABILIZE A PARADIGM: A QUESTION OF CIRCUMFERENCE

“Mr. President, if you change one comma, you will have changed U.S. policy in the Middle East” (Condoleezza Rice to President George W. Bush, 2002)

Robert Ivie uses Burke’s dramatistic methodology to offer a timely (2004) criticism of the War on Terror as it unfolded to support U.S. policy toward Iraq. However, for policy makers Iraq was not the War on Terror it was merely a campaign in a war (as was the invasion of Afghanistan). Elevating the invasion of Iraq as synecdoche for the War on Terror only simplifies the public consumption of the war by reducing the scope. In a similar fashion, Ivie uses Burke’s dramatism to simplify the complexity of war by making the relatively facile “devil” connection between Bush’s numerous speech acts regarding Iraq and Hitler’s dogma. Although Ivie’s analysis is an informative methodological exercise in Burkean dramatism, it serves only to invite support for an already growing body of anti-Bush criticism. What if Ivie’s (Iraq-centered) Burkean analysis is instead nested into a longitudinal framework of the broader war which took place across numerous battlefields both rhetorical and physical? Put it back into context, as Weiser might argue. This chapter demonstrates how scholars and practitioners might avoid the pitfalls associated with trying to simplify the complex-adaptive conditions of intractable conflict (usually through paradigm-fitting reduction). Situating the MEPP within the context of the broader U.S. War on Terror should help recontextualize tactical events of the conflict into a discernible strategic arc, or narrative, that is often more dialogically real than physically real. I con-

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6 According to Weiser’s analysis of Burke’s wartime writings, the implications of Burke’s dramatism “are obscured when it remains separated from the wartime context from which it emerged” (286).
tend that to understand the U.S. perspective on what makes the Israeli-Palestinian conflict intractable, one must unpack the underlying motives and vocabularies of the intractable criteria.

4.1 A Roadmap to Peace Situated Within a War on Terror

“Adopting a paradigm necessarily involves selectivity, overemphasis, and even distortion, so that it is a theorist's duty to remain open to the possibility of error. . . . [and that] theoretical orientations should include some scope for the critique of their own premises, that they should be knowingly provisional and partial, on the grounds that ultimate, integrated knowledge is a long-term aim rather than an immediate objective. (Coupe 45)

The previous chapter introduced the Oslo Peace Accords as an opportunity to learn from past mistakes regarding the MEPP by approaching it through Burke’s comic framework. Instead of the Declaration of Principles generated from the 1993 Oslo Accords, the 2003 “Performance-Based Roadmap to a Permanent Two-State Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” or Roadmap, provided a phased approach to resolving the conflict based on three principles: Israelis and Palestinians implementing the steps in parallel (instead of sequential), a robust monitoring apparatus comprised of the United Nations, Russia, U.S., and the European Union (the Quartet) to ensure accountability, and a clearly defined end state. As a plan, the parallel steps in the Roadmap assuaged Palestinians who were affronted by President Bush’s April and June 2002 speeches which called for the Palestinians to cease violence first before obligating the Israelis with any concessions. In implementation, however, the Roadmap adhered to a more U.S. centric paradigm and narrative.

Winkler warns that narratives that do not evolve risk “losing their definitional currency for the members of the collective” (11). Just as a myth, according to Rowland, changes as it is reconciled with reality, there is also relevancy for an agile narrative. For Winkler, an evolving
narrative enables the critical participation of a community in the maintenance of its ideographs. But what happens to myths and narratives nested within paradigms? If the “parent” paradigm evolves, does it bring its subordinate myth and narrative along with it or does it render the narrative obsolete or irrelevant? If the War on Terror was the paradigm guiding U.S. foreign policy in the George W. Bush administration (Winkler 166 and Elgindy 40), it makes sense that the U.S. narrative underpinning its policies in the Middle East and North Africa would follow suit even though the objectives of the War on Terror were not overtly connected with the objectives of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As outlined by Elliot Abrams, National Security Council member and senior director for Near East and North African Affairs in the Bush administration, implementation of U.S. policy regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was firmly rooted in the War on Terror paradigm.

Abrams attributes the clarity of U.S. policy regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to the foreign policy decisions following 9/11. Hunting and assassinating terrorists became the prescribed tactic of the War on Terror (2002 National Security Strategy 5) so how could the U.S. not support Israel as it also hunted and assassinated with impunity? Before 9/11, Israeli incursions into the occupied territories might be condemned by the U.S. and calls for restraint might echo in the halls of the United Nations. But as the U.S. took lethal steps to protect itself in accordance with its right to protect itself, so to did Israel. What prior to 9/11 was an understanding of an intractable conflict centered on a shared obligation and responsibility to reduce violence became instantly more one-sided. As President Bush recalls, “I was appalled by the violence and loss of life on both sides. But I refused to accept the moral equivalence between Palestinian suicide attacks on innocent civilians and Israeli military actions intended to protect
their people. My views came into sharper focus after 9/11” (Qtd in Abrams 21). Those views were reinforced in policy speeches, the National Security Strategy of 2002, and eventually in the 2003 Roadmap.

As a paradigm, the War on Terror also provided the “frame of acceptance” out of which U.S. policy makers could develop “vocabularies for the charting of human motives” (Burke, Attitudes Toward History 20). Foremost in the lexicon—the “god term”—was security. In Grammar of Motives, Burke argues the term money provides a common rationale to undergird all human action. Likewise, the War on Terror paradigm uses security as a “god term” in order to transcend “distinctions of climate, class, nation, cultural traditions” (110). The circumference around security would grow to encompass (and define) other terms like sovereignty, legitimacy, homeland, and occupation each term finding consistency, and perhaps controversy, through its relationship with security. For example, the term sovereignty set by Park in Chapter One of this study relied on ‘the state of anarchy’ for consistency. For Park, trying to understand sovereignty outside the circumference of ‘the state of anarchy’ would break the oscillating relationship between the concepts and destroy both—which was of course his purpose (51). Similarly, sovereignty relies on security for its definition as long as it is understood through the War on Terror paradigm. Using security as the “god term”, U.S. policy-makers could marshal an entire suite of terms to support objectives regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict while keeping an eye on wider regional issues, e.g. invasion of Iraq (Ross, The Missing Peace 788).

Evans and Newnham argue that the stability of the term sovereignty has been uncertain since the end of the Cold War. Increasing economic and social interdependence in the 1990s

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7 Not to be confused with “master term” which designates the dominant pentadic term, e.g. Agent
caused borders to be more porous and invitations for foreign intervention expanded to humanitarian concerns (Evans and Newnham 43). It follows that when sovereignty is understood within the circumference of security, it begs pragmatic and philosophical questions about how U.S. policy makers in the Bush administration understood security. These answers, I contend, may be found in the policy decisions and in the way such policies were implemented.

The sequence of security first (for the Israelis) and then sovereignty (for the Palestinians) emerged as a prominent rhetorical shift from the peace efforts in the 90s. Beginning with President Bush’s April and June, 2002 speeches, U.S. public policy supported the two-state solution as the objective in exchange for an enduring security environment. In speeches that, according to Condoleezza Rice, revealed philosophical and bureaucratic fissures between the Department of State and the White House (55), George W. Bush abandoned the precedents set by his father and President Clinton who both stridently supported “a Palestinian state without regard to what was within its borders” (Abrams 43). Instead of prioritizing the sovereignty of both parties, George W. Bush wanted the focus, thereby the rhetoric, to be on the security of Israel and reducing the centrality of violence in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Just as the 1993 Oslo Accords scapegoated violence, so too did Bush’s early policy-speeches. But instead of scapegoating violence in general, President Bush explicitly burdened the Palestinian leadership as the instigator and promulgator of violence. According to President Bush, the President of the PLO (and leader of the PA), Yasser Arafat, was the single obstacle to peace: “The situation in which he finds himself today is largely of his own making. He’s missed his opportunities, and thereby betrayed the hopes of the people he’s supposed to lead. Given his failure, the Israeli government feels it must strike at terrorist networks that are killing its citizens” (Bush, 14 Apr, 2002).
Two months later, Bush pronounced his policy preference even clearer: “Peace requires a new and different Palestinian leadership, so that a Palestinian state can be born; I call on the Palestinian people to elect new leaders, leaders not compromised by terror” (Bush, 24 Jun, 2002). In perhaps an uncharitable association, Bush scapegoated Arafat just as Hitler scapegoated the Jews (Burke “Rhetoric of Hitler’s Battle”). The resulting narrative shifted from one focused on “ending the cycle of violence” which constituted the Scene as a shared burden (Abrams 20) to a “war against terrorism” where an enemy could be identified; a problem outlined; and a solution implemented. The Bitzerian rhetorical situation did not call forth the rhetorical act; instead, the Scene emerged as the dominant “master term” and brought with it a propensity for determinism that the narratives reified only too well. The revised Scene manifested itself in speeches, policy directives (and actions), and peace plans emerging from the War on Terror paradigm: a narrative with terms and concepts necessarily consistent with the circumference of security.

Rice argues that the design of the War on Terror paradigm (instead of a War on al Qaeda) was based on a clear U.S. objective to establish an “international norm against terrorism . . . and to paint vividly an enemy against which the world could mobilize” (98). As the “new” paradigm, the War on Terror prescribed the evolution of the narrative from the “old” paradigm of the 90s which adhered to the expectation that security would follow negotiated settlement. When it came to implementing the steps in the internationally-endorsed Roadmap, what was presented as a parallel effort (Israelis and Palestinians taking steps together) moved almost immediately to a sequential process which was more in line with the expectations of the War on Terror paradigm. Following Kuhn’s instrumental characterization of paradigms, advocates of the War on Terror paradigm considered problems acute when they 1) reified the para-
digm and 2) followed the rules of the paradigm. Or how Burke might characterize it: a “way of seeing is also a way of not seeing” (*Permanence and Change* 49).

By its nature as a prescriptive, normative paradigm, the War on Terror was intended as an obstinate policy framework to eradicate all forms of “terror” using all elements of national power, e.g. diplomatic, military, and social. For example, Rice recalls:

But when it came to rhetorical support and, in some cases, tools such as freezing terrorists’ assets, we were liberal in the definition of who was in and who was out. We believed that we had to discredit terrorism as a weapon, with no exceptions. There would be no carve-out for ‘freedom-fighters.’ No cause could justify the use of terror. (99)

If the War on Terror paradigm demanded the preemptive eradication of potential threats to the U.S. or its allies (U.S. National Security Strategy 2002) then the problem represented by Palestinian suicide bombers had off-the-shelf (allopathic) solutions that U.S. policy makers could logically support with lethal actions and rhetorical strategies. Therefore, a theory like preemptive war and models like the invasion of Iraq demonstrate function as narratives with hierarchal linkages to the War on Terror paradigm.

The exclusivity of the paradigm, however, also meant that new inputs or recommendations which did not conform to the narratives and myths nested within the War on Terror paradigm would be marginalized and perhaps ignored altogether. Moreover, opportunities to improve relations between Israelis and Palestinians could only be exploited when they were recognized as such; recognition only available when the paradigm shifts because the terms at hand no longer adequately explain the phenomena. Although it appears ubiquitous in retrospect, the perspective of the Bush administration was constrained by the paradigm it chose. Therefore,
potential opportunities for progress did not reveal themselves and diplomatic inaction by the early Bush administration was perceived as aloofness (Ross, The Missing Peace 788). As a result, the first efforts of the Bush administration have largely been marginalized by some of the most prolific scholars and practitioners of conflict resolution relevant to the MEPP. As a measure of its relevancy to the MEPP, some analysts even skip the first six years of the Bush administration and treat its last two as the only relevant contribution to the MEPP because a major, international conference (Annapolis) was held to address final status issues (Muasher 26 and Alpher 58). Considered through the “old” paradigm of the 90s, the 2007 Annapolis conference, orchestrated by Secretary of State Rice, was a logical positive contribution to the MEPP because it answered the expectations of a paradigm which sequenced negotiated settlement before security. In Burkean terms, the 2007 Annapolis conference fulfilled the “form” of the old paradigm. As I have outlined, however, the War on Terror paradigm adopted immediately following 9/11 completely inverted the sovereignty-then-security sequence. Therefore, evaluative criticisms of policy maneuvers in the early years of the Bush administration which do not account for the revised Scene shaped by the War on Terror paradigm miss a vital connection to the constraints of the rhetorical context.

Whereas the Roadmap-as-written was endorsed by the Quartet (the E.U., Russia, the U.N., and the U.S.), the Roadmap-as-implemented signaled an early U.S. policy shift which privileged the Agent (Arafat) and Act (terrorism) over the Purpose (extracting Israel from the Palestinian territories) and Scene (security-then-sovereignty). In fact, in a “post-mortem” analysis of the Quartet, Elgindy argues that the U.S. and Israel never intended to implement a Roadmap which would obligate Israelis and Palestinians equally (14). Differences between a plan and its
implementation are normal: more so when dealing with complex, adaptive social systems.

Moreover, the iterative nature of international policy development means that the agendas of the four members needed to be reconciled in order to hold a coalition, and thus its legitimacy, together. To that end, principles of Bush’s June 24th speech which prioritized a “security first” approach were deliberately deemphasized in the officially endorsed Roadmap—choosing instead a “parallel” approach which deemphasized the quid pro quo inherent in Bush’s desired sequence. In a September 2002 National Security Council meeting to address the Roadmap drafting process, President Bush even expressed concern that the Roadmap “undermines the message on terrorism if we all appear to be rushing forward regardless of terrorist attacks and the lack of security reform on the Palestinian side” (Qtd in Abrams 58). The ‘message on terrorism’ was a pivotal component of the security narrative because the paradigm deemed it so.

One does not need to consider this particular rhetorical situation through a Burkean dramatistic perspective to discern the rhetorical elements of courses of action like the “security first” sequencing. As a key Middle East policy advisor to President Bush, Elliot Abrams’ perspective is a key component to understanding the U.S. administration’s approach. Abrams, arguably the architect of the Roadmap implementation, sees the problem of intractable conflict through a perspective governed by international relations paradigms, e.g. realism, idealism, or neo-realism. For Abrams, the proximate problem was the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and the violence and mistrust that it perpetuated. Within the circumference of the “god term” (security), occupation served a clear function; it meant security could be justifiably maintained by military means because diplomatic ones were not tenable. Policy makers understood that the terminological relationship between occupation and security could shift for pragmatic
reasons as Abrams remarks: “I believed [Israel] would leave most of the West Bank and Gaza as soon as it was safe to do so because I knew few Israelis who believed it was possible or sensible to continue ruling millions of Palestinians forever” (60). Ross also notes the propensity for a shift as he cites comments from the late Prime Minister Ariel Sharon as his cabinet was voting for the Roadmap in 2003: “the thought and idea that we can continue keeping under occupation—we might not like the word, but it is occupation—3.5 million Palestinians, is very bad for Israel, the Palestinians, and Israel’s economy” (The Missing Peace 792). Therefore, from a U.S. and Israeli perspective, the unsurprising solution was less concerned with the well-being of the Palestinians and more about achieving a set of manageable conditions for Israel. From a rhetorical perspective, one should note how the concept of human rights is absent from the rationalizations. Economic stability and logistical constraints are concepts within the circumference of security. In these examples, human rights is not within the circumference.

In Burkean terms, displacing occupation from the circumference of security would not guarantee a two-state solution; but it would be an important intermediate objective along the path of political realism whereby security and national interests are the highest priority of political life and policy makers generally assume a pessimistic view of the behavior of other actors or groups in the conduct of international relations (Haslam 12 and Fuller 227). Ross and Makovsky characterize Abrams’ realist perspective in a less charitable way as being a ominously “neoconservative” one:

For the neoconservatives, there is a basic myth when it comes to the pursuit of peace between Arabs and Israelis: the Arabs categorically reject Israel, and peace is not possible as a result. The corollary is that if the Arabs prove themselves in terms of accepting
Israel, then peace can be possible, but until that point there is no reason for U.S. engagement on peace. Engagement is futile at best and counterproductive at worst, and as a result, disengagement is the right policy prescription [according to neoconservatives]. (91)

Ross and Makovsky formulate the above characterization of “the” neo-conservative perspective using the writings of neo-conservative stalwarts like Neil Podhoretz and Doug Feith as they were both commenting on the Oslo Accords in the early 1990s (102). I mention this context because as Lucaites and Condit argue, ideographic decisions are guided by narratives which are guided by characterizations emplaced from outside a community (7-8). The characterization of “neo-conservative” in the post 9/11 U.S. policy community was different from the characterization in the early 1990s (Fuller 230). With the loss of a viable nation-state enemy (U.S.S.R.), “neo-conservatism” rapidly lost its relevance as a categorical contrast to political realism. “Neo-Con” became a derogatory moniker used by opponents and as a symbol of ideological purity by adherents. The “neo-con” narrative, however, became an anachronism of the Cold War. Therefore, following Lucaites and Condit, what would the narratives and ideographic characterizations of the early Bush policies be if they were evaluated as policies informed by political realism instead of “neo-conservatism?”

4.2 A Pentadic Process of Unpacking

The scene-act ratio can be applied in two ways. It can be applied deterministically in statements that a certain policy had to be adopted in a certain situation, or it may be applied in hortatory statements to the effect that a certain policy should be adopted in conformity with the situation. (Burke, A Grammar of Motives 13, emphasis original)
The rhetorical preeminence of security (and how the Palestinian leadership failed to provide it), initiated with a U.S. presidential speech, was complemented by a bureaucratic shift away from the process of peace. As a key advisor to the president, Abrams purged the phrase “peace process” from nearly every White House document because it connoted an “endless series of sessions that overlooked or even obscured realities on the ground” (Abrams 311). Dennis Ross served four U.S. administrations on Middle East affairs and interpreted Abrams’ purge of the phrase, “peace process” as an announcement to the world that “no longer would there be [a U.S.] envoy to the peace process” (Ross, The Missing Peace 784) and ultimately as a way to disengage from the region entirely (Ross and Makovsky 92-106 and Elgindy 40). Furthermore, Ross charges that the advisors to President Bush believed that nothing could be done regarding the conflict therefore no political capital should be committed (Ross, The Missing Peace 784). However, in a 2013 interview with this researcher, Abrams defended his bureaucratic move as one focused on the Purpose of the peace process:

I thought, when you talk about the Middle East Peace Process, you’re talking about essentially Arab-Israeli negotiations: comprehensive agreement [or] final status agreement. That’s how you get to [the] Camp David [Peace Conference, 2000] and [the] Annapolis [conference, 2007]. That’s not what I’m for; I’m for a bottom-up approach and therefore it seemed to me that I should not talk about—and I should get others not to talk about—The Middle East Peace Process, but rather about getting Israel and Palestine to a better situation. Getting them to work together. Getting Palestinians to live better. I thought it was a way of de-escalating the rhetoric. It’s not so fancy as the Middle East Peace Process, it’s just seeing if anything can be done. (Abrams)
The broad strategy of U.S. policy, according to Abrams, is to deal with Israeli-Palestinian issues directly, and not attempt a comprehensive (with all Arab nations) peace agreement that many veteran diplomats have espoused as the Purpose of the MEPP. Additionally, when considered through a realist U.S. paradigm with security as a fundamental component, the Purpose of the Roadmap is to achieve a state of affairs where the Israelis could safely extract themselves from the occupied territories. Extending from this amended Purpose, the primary Agents are Israeli and Palestinian leadership; the Scene, as characterized by the endorsed Roadmap, is an environment of mutual recognition of the problem-set as well as a mutual understanding of the solutions; Agency includes the instruments of diplomacy, e.g. treaties, economic leverage, and concessions; and the Act is the publicizing and physical implementation of the Roadmap. Using the pentadic framework is a useful way to arrive at the “master term” for the Roadmap around which “terms of explanation and justification may be shown to cluster” (Overington 106) and invites a debate as to which pentadic term is most influential as the artifact moves from draft to implementation. Moreover, the common substance amongst the pentadic terms is what Burke would call the product of a careful reduction of terms until common rationale is revealed, i.e. the “god term” (Burke, Grammar of Motives 110). It follows then that understanding the “god term” is a critical task in unpacking U.S. policy. But as Burke warns, “even if any given terminology is a reflection of reality, by its very nature as a terminology it must be a selection of reality; and to this extent it must function also as a deflection of reality” (Language as Symbolic Action 45, emphasis original). When security emerges as the “god term,” what aspects of reality are thereby deflected?
Reaching for a Burkean dramatistic method to overlay upon an international relations paradigm, like the realist one Abrams posits, is problematic because dramatism seeks to expose motives which guide action while political realism seeks to reify a chosen motive through action. Regardless of their independent functions, the approaches can complement each other as they are not mutually exclusive. As I outlined earlier, the aim of Burke’s dramatistic framework, according to Overington, is the pursuit of “dialectical substance” or essence (105-106). Furthermore, Burke’s dramatism is concerned with analysis of language, not reality, because “language is itself the motive” for human action (Overington 93-95). On the other hand, in the international relations community, political realism functions with the motive already in hand: security. Perhaps destabilizing the definition, thus the function, of security will reveal insights into the intractable nature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

The abbreviated pentadic analysis of the implementation of the Roadmap I offered above draws from multiple sources which I will address in detail later. It is important to note at the outset how this pentadic analysis contributes to the wider dramatistic methodology as applied to my particular topic: unpacking intractable conflict. As King argues, the Dramatistic Pentad is less concerned about truth and instead serves as a “method of discovering why people do what they do. Language is not analyzed for its truth, but for its strategic uses” (168). The results of a pentadic analysis can be a revelation as to which pentadic “master term” governs the implementation of the Roadmap. However, any emerging revelation is always temporary; it is always an understanding in process. Ultimately, the pentad is a heuristic device that can be useful in identifying, and perhaps fracturing, cognitive frameworks or the “gridlock” that accompanies polarizing approaches (King 173-175). Earlier I introduced the Purpose of the rhetorical Act
(Roadmap) within the wider context of the MEPP. As a U.S. perspective informed by political realism, the Purpose of the Roadmap (as an integral step in the MEPP) is to achieve a state of affairs so that the Israelis could safely extract themselves from the occupied territories. The following section details the influence the Scene had on the Purpose: a Scene-Purpose ratio.

Mapping the artifacts which informed or represented the Bush administration’s policies toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict provides a sine wave of outputs which peaked at the beginning and end of the administration’s two terms. The second Palestinian Intifada, or the “Al-Aqsa” Intifada, followed on the heels of ineffectual peace conference hosted by President Clinton at Camp David in 2000 (C. Smith 495). The (proximate) cause of the intifada was Israeli Prime Minister Sharon’s controversial visit to the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount in Jerusalem, Mosque in September 2000, but the Clinton administration and the wider western media held Arafat responsible for both the failures at Camp David and the intifada (Ibid and Ross, The Missing Peace 730). Regardless of its causes, the Al-Aqsa Intifada quickly consumed the attention of the foreign policy team of the incoming George W. Bush administration until 9/11 shifted how U.S. policy would constitute the Scene and thereby the Purpose of U.S. policy in the Middle East dramatically.

In her memoir, Condoleezza Rice notes that the Bush administration came into the geopolitical environment with the goal to “simply calm the region” (54). Abrams also notes that in the Bush administration’s first National Security Council meeting, the NSC’s senior director for the Middle East postured the U.S. neutrally: “Now is not the time for peacemaking; now is the time for conflict management. See if we can dampen this down . . . see if we can come up with a durable ceasefire and truce” (6). However, when extremists protected by their host govern-
ment attacked the U.S., the U.S. responded with a global policy of preemptive warfare which shaped over a decade of U.S. foreign policy. From a U.S. policy perspective, the Palestinian intifada assumed a new function as the rhetorical environment shifted because of the War on Terror paradigm. What was once a continuous exchange of Palestinian suicide bombings and Israeli incursions into the Occupied Territories, assumed a one-sided narrative depicting a democratic state (Israel) being besieged by extremists protected by a rogue government (the PA). How the Scene would be constructed would have a recursive effect on the paradigm through which policy makers considered both the problems and solutions.

Prior to 9/11 the Bush administration had two public, interconnected, policy efforts at play regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The first was an international fact-finding mission initiated by President Clinton and lead by U.S. Senator George Mitchell. The findings of the Mitchell Report were sent to President Bush in April 2001 with the following sequenced recommendations: End the Violence, Rebuild Confidence, and Resume Negotiations. The balanced attribution for the turbulence, as well as its resolution, in the Mitchell Report was representative of the pre-9/11 Scene:

Fear, hate, anger, and frustration have risen on both sides. The greatest danger of all is that the culture of peace, nurtured over the previous decade, is being shattered. In its place there is a growing sense of futility and despair, and a growing resort to violence . . . Political leaders on both sides must act and speak decisively to reverse these dangerous trends; they must rekindle the desire and the drive for peace. That will be difficult. But it can be done and it must be done, for the alternative is unacceptable and should be unthinkable . . . Two proud peoples share a land and a destiny. Their competing
claims and religious differences have lead to a grinding, demoralizing, dehumanizing conflict. They can continue in conflict or they can negotiate to find a way to live side-by-side in peace. (The Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee Report on the Middle East: Mitchell Report, emphases mine)

One can see from this significant extract how the pre-9/11 Scene could be characterized by a shared obligation for progress. From a U.S. policy perspective, both belligerents shared the blame for the intifada and both were obligated to act. In stark contrast, Abrams characterizes the rhetoric of shared obligation inherent in the Mitchell Report as one charged with a “moral relativism” easy to adopt in the pre-9/11 world (7). Abrams’ paradigm would prove to be much more constraining.

The second U.S. policy example was an effort to operationalize “phase one” of the Mitchell Report: End the Violence. Days after a particularly horrifying suicide bombing in Tel Aviv in June 2001, President Bush deployed CIA Director George Tenet to the region charged with crafting and implementing a detailed and measurable plan for ending the violence in accordance with the Mitchell Report. Sharing the pre-9/11 Scene with the Mitchell Report, the Tenet Plan consistently drew the belligerents together as part of the solution:

In keeping with its unilateral cease-fire declaration, the Palestinian Authority will stop any Palestinian security officials from inciting, aiding, abetting, or conducting attacks against Israeli targets, including settlers . . . In keeping with Israel’s unilateral cease-fire declaration, Israeli forces will not conduct “proactive” security operations in areas under the control of the Palestinian Authority or attack innocent civilian targets . . . Palestinian and Israeli security officials will identify and agree to the practical measures needed to
enforce “no demonstration zones” and “buffer zones” around flash points to reduce opportunities for confrontation. Both sides will adopt all necessary measures to prevent riots and to control demonstration, particularly in flash point areas. (Tenet Plan)

Although Tenet was able to secure signatures from both sides, the ceasefire never materialized (Elgindy 5), and the Al Aqsa Intifada raged for several more years. From the above extract, one should discern a Scene marked by the assumption of power symmetry between the Israelis and Palestinians. Both belligerents were expected to exert power over their constituents to effect change in behavior. One might easily expect an Act demonstrating this symmetry, e.g. a mutual cease fire, as an Act consistent with the Scene. Unfortunately, by correlating the actions in a policy statement with the power those actions implied, it would be a simple matter to destabilize the policy by proving one side was not meeting a stated expectation. Ultimately, where the Mitchell Report constituted a Scene of shared obligation, the Tenet Plan crafted a Scene under another pre-9/11 assumption that the Palestinian Authority (led by Arafat) could be held to the same expectations for action as the Israelis; an asymmetry Arafat could not overcome even if he wanted to (Ross, The Missing Peace 760-762). The asymmetric power structure invited concerns over Arafat’s legitimacy as the leader of the Palestinians and viable partner for peace for the Israelis (Ibid). But did policy makers allow consternation over the legitimacy of an Agent outweigh questions of power asymmetry? With such a power asymmetry in place, would a new leader even make a difference? Although speculative, these kinds of questions were exactly what Burke would have hoped the pentad might prompt as practioners and policy makers discern the underlying conditions of intractable conflict.
4.3 The Role and Influence of Scene on Policy: A Practioners Perspective

There are two types of tragedies: the Shakespearean where everyone dies and there’s the Kafkaesque one where everyone lives but all are confused. (Peter Wineberger of the U.S. Institute of Peace commenting on attempts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, discussion with the author)

The 2002 Arab Peace Initiative (API) joined a congested field of approaches to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Instead of a comprehensive plan, it offered a comprehensive solution (end) which could be used as a leverage to gain Israeli compliance: the Arab world offers peace with Israel if Israel withdraws from territories captured in the 1967 war. More a declaration than a detailed plan like the Roadmap or the Geneva Accords discussed earlier, The API was a reactionary counter-punch to the Quartet Roadmap in two significant ways: 1) Whereas the Roadmap was drafted and endorsed by the Quartet (U.S., E.U. Russia, and the U.N.), the API was drafted by the then Crown Prince (now King) of Saudi Arabia and signed by representatives of twenty-two Arab nations, and 2) the API sequenced the process as sovereignty first, security second: a pre-9/11 paradigm the U.S. was incapable of supporting in 2002. The two efforts did converge on an interesting point: neither the Israelis nor the Palestinians formally participated in the drafting of the documents. My purpose is not to evaluate the faults and efficacy of the API from a U.S. policy perspective, rather to situate the API as a rhetorical artifact constrained by the Scene. Although the API was subject to its unique 2002 rhetorical context, current U.S. policy toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is to leverage the API itself to gain compliance from those Arab signatories who have twice since confirmed the API as the Arab position (Kerry, Remarks 5 Jan, 2014). Therefore, as a relevant component of the current rhetorical environment, the API functions as a tool or method to perform a rhetorical act: Agency. But, as I will demonstrate, the recursivity of a pentadic analysis means that definitions exist as a product of co-
stantly oscillating ratios, e.g. Act-Scene. Burke warns of the iterative nature of the pentadic terms which also characterizes my approach to defining the contours of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict:

There is, of course, a circular possibility in the terms. If an agent acts in keeping with his nature as an agent (act-agent ratio), he may change the nature of the scene accordingly (scene-act ratio), and thereby establish a state of unity between himself and his world (scene-agent ratio). Or the scene may call for a certain kind of act, which makes for a corresponding kind of agent, thereby likening agent to scene. Or our act may change us and our scene, producing a mutual conformity. *(A Grammar of Motives 19)*

The balance of this section will introduce insights from those policy practitioners, like Abrams, who had first-hand knowledge of the pentadic ratios (although they never described them as such) surrounding the API and the Roadmap. In so doing, I demonstrate how a heuristic framework based on Burke’s dramatistic methodology detailed thus far might reveal potentials the U.S. could capitalize on if policy makers recognized the opportunities.

As director for the Levant and Israeli-Palestinian Affairs at the National Security Council (under then-National Security Advisor, Condoleezza Rice), Robert Danin had a rare perspective on the machinations at play throughout the Bush administration regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Although Danin served for three years on the National Security Council (where Abrams also served), he also served in the Department of State\(^8\) (working then with Secretary of State Rice); his view of the rhetorical situation is comprehensive. In an interview with

\(^8\)While at the Department of State, Danin served as deputy assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs. It is important to note that the National Security Council (NSC) is a separate assembly of select secretaries (and their staffs) in a president’s cabinet. The Secretary of State and the National Security Advisor are both members of the NSC. When Rice moved from the National Security Advisor position to the Secretary of State, she brought Danin with her.
this researcher, Danin detailed the rhetorical environment for the API (and by extension, the Roadmap and Geneva Accords) with a distinctly pentadic emphasis on the Scene as the indisputable master term, but one limited by “god term”: security.

For Danin, the API is a useful rhetorical artifact in that it can be used as a lens to understand the political and rhetorical environment in 2002 as well as the environment in 2014. The API was adopted by the Arab League at its annual summit in Beirut on 27 March, 2002. With Saudi Arabia the primary sponsor, and so soon after 9/11 where fifteen of the nineteen terrorists were from Saudi Arabia, initial interpretations were cynical. In retrospect, according to Danin, the API was not taken seriously by the U.S. or Israel because “the Saudis dropped it on the door and ran. The argument I always invoke is that it was a good product, but there was no marketing . . . there was no grand gestures, there was no Saudi equivalent of a [Anwar] Sadat to Jerusalem9” (Danin). Due to the lack of an amenable rhetorical environment, the Act (the Arab Peace Initiative) was received as a “glass half full—[Israeli leadership] pointed to its deficiencies instead of pointing to the parts that were attractive and saying, ‘wow this is interesting; this could serve as a basis for how to move forward’” (Danin). Considering Danin’s interview through a pentadic framework, one should discern a pointedly cynical Scene under development. For an Act to be consistent with the Scene Danin constitutes, the Act must be a predetermined failure. From Danin’s recollection of events, the API was interpreted to be more to do with Arab internal frictions regarding Arafat than any genuine intent to reconcile with Israel. In

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9 President Sadat (Egypt) spoke at the Israeli Knesset (Parliament) on 19 Nov, 1977 marking the first visit from an Arab leader. The visit broke an Arab policy in place since 1948 and contributed to the public reception of the eventual peace treaty between Israel and Egypt (Quandt 189).
dramatistic terms, such gestures are not only marketing tools, as Danin characterizes them, but as tools to complicate the “circumference” of the security.

As I detailed earlier, the “god term” (security) creates a circumference within which all other significant terms find their relational definition. For example, concession is defined by its relation with security; thus, concession connotes a threat to identity when it could connote less invasive attributes. With such a constrained scope, it is not difficult to see why, instead of a sincere declaration of intent for reconciliation, the Scene constrained the Purpose of the API to that of “a way [for Arabs] to reach above the head of the [Israeli] government to the people of Israel” and entreat them to choose leaders who will seek peace instead of those “implacably opposed to peace” (Danin). In detailing the Scene-Act ratio, Burke argues “the main point is that any change of the circumference in terms of which an act is viewed implies a corresponding change in the quality of the act’s motivation” (Burke, “Dramatism” 333). It follows then, to change the API (Act) one might look to change or expand the circumference of the terms.

Retired Ambassador James Larocco described the geo-political context for the API as “a perfect storm of rhetoric, of media, [and] tension [which] totally crowded out any serious reflection on the API. It was lost on arrival” (Larocco). In addition, the violence of the intifada was at its peak so the respective publics were not prepared for a cease fire, let alone a comprehensive peace. Furthermore, the medium chosen to present it to the U.S. audience was problematic. Abrams notes that the API was circulated a month before the Arab League summit in a New York Times column by Thomas Friedman: “an odd way to put something on the table if [then-Crown Prince Abdullah] truly sought American backing” (Abrams 29). And consistent with the Agent-centered perspective constituted in Bush’s early speeches, Abrams describes an “incorri-
gible” Arafat who was incapable of making peace; therefore, the API was an empty offer (Abrams, Interview).

Considered dramatistically, one should readily conclude that the Act (the API) could not be “contained” by the Scene constituted by the growing body of rhetorical artifacts (Burke, A Grammar of Motives 3-9). It follows that the Scene is something to be acted upon or shaped, instead of something which is simply a consequence of a series of intersections amongst the rhetorical artifacts like the API, the Roadmap, and Bush’s speeches. Even if the Act was not contained within the Scene, I do not think that Burke would condemn the API to the dustbin. Instead, he might offer two options inherent to the circular nature of the pentadic terms: 1) change the Act to fit the Scene, or 2) change the Scene to change to accommodate the Act.

In describing the Scene from a Department of State perspective, Larocco¹⁰, characterizes narrative as the “press guidance” necessary to support the U.S. public relations campaign. And although embryonic in 2002, what Larocco called the War on Terror “narrative”—what I would call paradigm—immediately constrained options and reduced the “bandwidth” for competing narratives (Larocco). This reduced capacity for multiple narratives meant that any narrative arc would serve primarily to explain events in relation to the broader War on Terror paradigm, not determine events to affect the paradigm. Without room for additional narratives, anything inconsistent or incompatible with the designs of a prescriptive paradigm was marginalized. With this reactionary, or passive, characterization of narrative-as-tool one can see how it might be useful in changing the Act to fit the Scene (Burke’s first option); a cursory listen to a “spin

¹⁰ U.S. Department of State, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Near Eastern Affairs under Secretary of State Colin Powell (2001-2004).
room” following a presidential debate or press conference would demonstrate this recursive process.

Changing the literal text of the API was not an option for U.S. policy makers. However, changing how the text was received or used in the policy web was something well within their capabilities. Without directly endorsing the API as a viable U.S. policy option, Danin, Abrams, and Larocco each commented on the positive potential of the 2002 API. Through a pentadic analysis of their interviews (as artifacts about the early Bush years), I can describe an intersection amongst the artifacts whereby an inhospitable Scene crafted by a series of rhetorical artifacts..

In regards to message reception, for Larocco, the relationship between narrative and myth is an adversarial one in contrast to the genus-species one I detailed in Chapter Two: “I’m a big believer in narratives because I think that’s the only way you can break through the myths.” Instead of considering myth in a generative capacity, getting through the myths of both the Palestinians and the Israelis becomes the Purpose of the rhetorical Act (Larocco). In other words, myths are obstacles to progress; narratives are simply ways to get past the obstacles. These are pragmatic applications of myth and narrative difficult to rebut. One can see how easily myth can become a static and paralyzing component of the rhetorical situation. That being said, is it reasonable for rhetoricians studying an intractable conflict to expect a practitioner trying to create change in an intractable conflict to apply rhetorical methodologies (narrative and myth) in such an introspective manner?

Burke’s second hypothetical recommendation—to change the Scene to accommodate the Act—is the province of the rhetorician, but arguably the responsibility of the policy maker.
By bringing forward the earlier recommendation to change the Scene by expanding the “circumference” of terms, the policy maker is asked to consider the terms of the Scene as it is being constituted. Instead of explaining what happened in the past, the policy maker designs and implements rhetorical artifacts to direct the Scene as it is becoming. Here a policy maker might consider how his or her use of the term border brings with it a cluster of terms revealing the motives of the Agent. A legal term, border connotes physical separation of parties and mutual recognition of each other as well as the physical demarcation. Other terms like legitimacy and defendable also emerge as relevant terms carried along with border; which we should be reminded gains its own consistency from security: the “god term”. Imagine if the circumference of terms (with security still at the center) was expanded to encompass the concept-term human rights. The stability of border would instantly be challenged and “kept off balance” as Booth would recommend. Border could then bring with it concepts like economic viability or potential. Legitimacy, concerned with human rights, could be mutually-defined so that both belligerents might share the definition. Even the undeniable physicality of the Separation Wall could be mitigated as its symbolic function is problematized by the increasing influence of human rights in the paradigm. Thomas Matyok, of the U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Center, characterizes what I am calling a focus on the circumference as the shift of emphasis away from the human—an ironic pivot for a scholar of peace and conflict studies:

Instead of focusing on the human, we need to be more focused on the context, the critical structure within which the person makes decisions. The person is bounded by the context they’re in . . . They can only make certain decisions because of the structure they’re in. To ask them to make a decision outside of that doesn’t make sense . . . Think-
ing outside the box is ridiculous: the issue is to get out of the box. As long as you’re still bounded by the box, you’ve limited what you can think [or] do. You’re bounded by the rationality of the box. (Matyok, Interview)

Matyok later describes the cultural shift his discipline is undergoing as it deals with criticism from the academy which sees peace and conflict scholars as “living in the question” and without any answers (Matyok, Interview). As he explains the expansion of his discipline, he returns to my emphasis on changing the circumference of terms: “The metaphor we were using: marginalization. Marginalized suggests you were at the center and moved to the edge. The issue is: we can move back to the center, or we can create large enough mass to create a new center of gravity” (Ibid, emphasis mine). Applied to expanding the circumference of the “god term”, a policy maker would need to build up enough “mass” around human rights to draw out the circumference of security.

Expanding the circumference to include human rights may require the current relationships amongst terms to change, if not break. As a task for the policy maker, the relationship between legitimacy and border, for example, may need to slip from a legal to moral one. This is not to mandate that the old relationship be obviated by the new one, but that the old relationship should account for the motives of the new one. Choosing from a wide array of rhetorical methods (myth and narrative are but two), a policy maker can increase the “mass” around a concept in order to compel the circumference, not coerce it. From the earlier extracts from their respective plans, one should see that U.S. special envoys Mitchell and Tenet attempted as much as they reified mutual obligation (albeit in a pre-9/11 context) using word clusters and a narrative of parallelism.
4.4 A Look Past the War on Terror Paradigm

Before becoming President Obama’s special envoy to the 2013-2014 Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, Martin Indyk described Obama’s approach to the peace process as a logical “theory of the case” whereby “the United States needed to repair its relations with the Arab and Muslim world because American troops were involved in two wars in the Middle East” (118). The primary tactic in this “theory of the case” was presidential outreach to the Arab and Muslim world to reduce animosity for U.S. and Israeli positions. According to the theory, Arab leaders would be more likely to “take risks for peace” by engaging with Israel on the core issues (Ibid 119). According to Indyk, diplomatic opportunities were assessed based on how well the engagement might “boost [Obama’s] credentials in the Muslim world and help him make peace at the same time” (121). Simultaneously, U.S. policy would focus narrowly on supporting Israeli physical security against neighboring (rockets from Gaza) and regional threats (Iran). This included continuing a 30 billion dollar military assistance package initiated by President Bush and a new $300 million package for the now well-known Iron Dome rocket defense system (118). There were other early initiatives along the U.S.-Israel track, but few of the diplomatic ones were successful, e.g. President Obama demanding an end to settlement construction in 2009 significantly strained U.S.-Israel relations (C. Smith 519). The Acts in support of Israeli security fit the War on Terror paradigm, i.e. security first, then sovereignty. The Acts to reach out to the Arab and Muslim world, however, were more in line with political idealism than realism and surely did not adhere to the War on Terror paradigm. These are significant disconnects that should be acknowledged when policy is not matched by strategy; yet as paradigms shift, the
turmoil of transition can be both a time of risk and of potential depending on whether a policy maker recognizes the shift if occurring.

President Obama’s famous Cairo Speech in June 2009 (where the API was first re-introduced as a U.S. policy preference) was an indisputable signal to the entire world that the U.S. paradigm through which it perceived the U.S.-Arab relations was in flux. However, the U.S. paradigm through which it perceived the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was firmly in line with the War on Terror paradigm: security first, then sovereignty. President Obama goes so far as to re-introduce the Roadmap as the source of the agreed upon obligations and even presents the prerequisite that Palestinians abandon violence first, followed by Israeli support a two-state solution. One might conclude from this discrepancy that the vocabulary and concepts that comprise the War on Terror paradigm were becoming inadequate for interrogating events, yet were still being deployed by U.S. policy. Perhaps a paradigm shift was underway.

On day two of the Obama administration, Secretary of State Clinton (re)assigned George Mitchell, fresh from a stint supporting peace in Northern Ireland, as the president’s special envoy for Middle East peace. Indyk characterizes this choice as an effort to bring direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians back into the U.S. policy arsenal as it was before 9/11 and following the inconsequential international conference of the Bush administration in 2007 (112). In addition, soon after bringing Mitchell back into the business of Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation, the administration moved Dennis Ross from the State Department to the National Security Council as the president’s “old hand” advisor on Israeli-Palestinian issues (Indyk 122). Both Mitchell and Ross served the Bush administration just as the War on Terror paradigm took hold on U.S. foreign policy. The notwithstanding the efficacy of their contributions, bringing
back these key actors in such prominent roles regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict also contributes to the notion that paradigms were overlapping.

Characterizing the rhetorical context welcoming Kerry-led U.S. policy, Danin outlines a geo-political environment where there is no intifada (yet), and Israelis, Palestinians, and Arabs-in-general have many more common interests due to external threats, i.e. Iran, which did not exist in 2002 (Danin). Considered through my “change the circumference” approach, the “god term” is still security, but there is potential to increase the “mass” around other terms in order to destabilize what the U.S. considers a threat to Israel. Perhaps by destabilizing threat using other concepts like economic viability or water security, policy makers might reveal opportunities to weaken the intractability of the conflict by fracturing the obstinacy of the current terms of reference. For example, on 8 March, 2014, the U.S. State Department presented an economic initiative to stimulate the Palestinian economy through international capital investment instead of donations (Patterson). Designed to generate billions in private sector growth, this initiative was presented as part of a narrative of self-reliance (for the Palestinians) while maintaining strict adherence to the U.S. policy of ensuring Israeli security. By bringing socio-economic issues to the fore, the State Department demonstrates an awareness of the importance of preparing both publics for the “benefits of peace” (Ibid). As additional policy initiatives come to fruition, security, as the U.S. policy web understands it, may begin to pull away from what the War on Terror paradigm demanded.

When asked how the rhetorical environment changed to warrant Secretary Kerry’s re-introduction of the API, Abrams cautioned that although the War on Terror may not have the rhetorical influence on U.S. policy it did in 2002, the geo-political context is actually less condu-
cive for progress along the Israeli-Palestinian peace track (Abrams, Interview). Moreover, the regional context is so unwelcoming that Abrams concludes that “the Secretary of State personally believes he [alone] can do this” (Ibid). However, as outlined throughout this study, with his numerous trips to the region and countless interviews and news conferences, Kerry has tenaciously re-constituted a pre-9/11 Scene capable of containing the Act. The question remains whether the Scene Kerry has crafted is prolific enough to hold back the influence of the geopolitical environment.
5 CONCLUSION

The best we can hope for, then, is Burke’s own “comic” choice: to produce and exploit stalemate, a kind of undivine comedy. We develop a dialectic of muddling-through, a deliberate *interference with perfection* by enforcing on every terministic screen an ironic reminder of other truths according to which it should be discounted . . . we shall try to cure mankind by *keeping things off balance*, by dissolving fixities, by turning the potential tragedy of fanatical annihilation into the comedy of muddled mutual accommodation. (Booth 257, emphasis mine)

Booth is not arguing for the status quo or for a life where belligerents learn to live apathetically without a solution in some kind of ‘muddled mutual accommodation’. Instead, Booth describes the systematic skepticism (critical theory) a rhetorical critic might practice as he or she unravels the motives of a rhetorical act. In other words, to destabilize objective certainties instead of organizing them hierarchically towards new knowledge. Refusing the tragic plot and embracing the comic is integral to Booth’s ‘dialectic of muddling-through’; and as argued in Chapter Three, embracing the comic is also integral to Burke’s dramatism. This study adheres to the comic impetus and offers a heuristic framework for approaching intractable conflict and for transforming its governing paradigms. In particular, this study treats the intractability of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in a post-“Peace Process” context. Although in flux, this paradigm is currently framed by the War on Terror and Conflict Syndrome and focused on the supposed reality of intractable conflict (instead of the intractable-ness of conflict). As this framework is operationalized by theories and context-specific models, the new paradigm can then be re-framed as comic, the effects of the War on Terror and Conflict Syndrome may be mitigated, and the circumference of *security* can be expanded to encompass metaphysical attributes like *human rights*. From this evolving paradigm, the supporting narratives (comprised of terms and
concepts) may in turn expand to account for—or create space for—new usages which then re-
inforce the dominant paradigm.

As this study closes, the *efficacy* of Dramatism-as-heuristic-methodology remains an un-
resolved question. The conclusions offered in these pages simply detail the *framework* for a po-
tential theory of action. Policy makers and scholars in the discipline of peace and conflict stud-
ies should find in this research both a rationale for investing the necessary resources into un-
packing the paradigms through which belligerents approach intractable conflict and a method-
ology for directing long-term epistemic shifts in the bureaucratic policy web. Applying
Dramatism as a heuristic should enable an analyst to unpack multiple rhetorical artifacts and
produce either a synoptic perspective on the body of artifacts, or to reveal useful trendlines
amongst them. With this kind of holistic understanding of the prescriptive potentials inherent
in the rhetorical artifacts, one might also discern the prescriptive potentials in the dominant
paradigm. As a study in the spaciousness of rhetoric, this research complements work by rhet-
oric and communication scholars extending the scope of rhetoric (as Burke did) to include iden-
tification, the drama inherent in all human interactions, and progress toward the “purification”
of war.

As the last “landmark” essay in a volume of landmark essays on Burke, Condit argues for
a post-Burke model of human discourse less aligned with the oppositional connotations of post-
modernity and instead extends “the essence of an older program into new contexts in light of
new understandings” (“Post-Burke: Transcending the Sub-stance of Dramatism” 271). In an ef-
fort to draw out the particulars of Burke’s dramatism, Condit extends Dramatism into the
“new” contexts of gender, class, and culture. Coming ten years after Condit’s work, this study
might be considered an extension into a “new” global context where the certainty of sovereignty can be destabilized. Moreover, my research is situated in a rhetorical environment which interrogates violent conflict and can determine, through its terms, whether the violent conflict is intractable or not.

As a set of variables and relationships that presumably account for a set of phenomena, the framework this study details should be applicable to any situation where social systems intersect in incompatible ways. The phenomenon of intractable conflict on the scale I have introduced has parameters well-defined by the peace and conflict studies community and is not isolated to the Middle East. Moreover, I have argued, a conflict does not become intractable in reality; it is constituted as such by the belligerents, the peace makers, and the publics themselves. If intractability can be rhetorically constituted, perhaps it can be rhetorically unconstituted. Thus the heuristic element of my framework directs a shift away from resolving the conflict itself and towards learning about what constitutes “intractable-ness.” Instead of trying to build a bridge across a river with unstable banks, my framework reveals how an intervention farther up-river may obviate the need for a bridge altogether.

My Dramatistic-heuristic framework is admittedly unwieldy. There is no checklist or easy way to package it as a pentad or sextad. In fact, applied as a model in a particular context, the framework may only exist as long as an intractable condition calls it into being. Or as Booth contrasts Burke’s comic framework with neo-Aristotelian criticism: “his method is better for solving the problem that his method has chosen to solve” (267). Once a conflict is no longer considered intractable, the intersections amongst rhetoricians, peace and conflict scholars, and policy makers become less self-critical and more instrumental. In other words, when resolution
is a viable option, the emphasis will shift from understanding the conditions, to enacting the solutions: the realm of policy makers.

When dealing with problems that adapt to their environment, there will always be multiple perspectives which evolve as the problem adapts to a changing environment. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is such a problem; and I have endeavored to characterize my use of it as a case study providing the units of analysis for my methodology, not to solve it or even propose possible solutions. As described in my rationale, the “truths” of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are born obsolete because the volatile geo-political context resets premises, hypotheses, and guiding assumptions. I would add to that characterization the deeply submerged paradigms upon which the premises, hypotheses, and assumptions are based upon. Paradigms that prescribe action, not just describe. Paradigms which can be paralyzed by decades of bitter conflict (Conflict Syndrome) and resist critical analysis.

Booth argues that the purpose for Burke’s comic project is “to insure critical warfare rather than diminish it” (258): a tenet of any critical approach. Far from having the psychological instruments and methods necessary to eradicate Conflict Syndrome, my heuristic framework may only be useful in understanding where and how Conflict Syndrome negatively affects a given paradigm. As long as Conflict Syndrome operates unchecked in a rhetorical environment, its paralyzing influence will remain imbued in a given paradigm; its negative effects as ubiquitous as the paradigm itself.

Approaching the case study from a deliberately U.S.-centric perspective is also problematic because the U.S. is not technically a belligerent in the conflict (although the U.S. enables both) and so there is a lesser sense of urgency. Moreover, a U.S.-centric perspective invites the
same criticism Condit unleashes on Burke’s “ethnocentric version of Dramatism [which] threatens to blind us to the multiplicity of different motive structures available in language” (“Post-Burke: Transcending the Sub-stance of Dramatism 276). Acknowledging that criticism, I have demonstrated that a Dramatistic-heuristic framework problematizes even the most submerged of paradigms. Therefore, following Burke’s maxim that all human interactions are inherently dramatic, the ‘multiplicity of different motive structures’ is an assumed component, if not a prerequisite.

Perhaps frustratingly so, this application of rhetorical methodologies is more a way of learning than a way of knowing or describing. It lacks the catharsis of an oppositional discourse like Marxism or as Wineberger laments his own shortfalls: a theory may help explain a conflict, but it does not offer a way out (Wineberger, Interview). And as a rhetoric, it enacts the nomenclature of identification rather than persuasion; an identification which reveals potential for literal action in addition to a way of describing a historical or literary event. This framework is not a toolbox for negotiators to use when outlining proposed concessions or for policy makers addressing well-developed problems with off-the-shelf solutions. Instead, I can conclude from my research that taking steps back from the clarity of what is both physically and temporally close is an uncomfortable (if not dangerous) proposition. The paradigms through which we understand the world are personal, embedded, and often bequeathed to us by the community that creates us. Making our paradigms explicit can be traumatizing because as a paradigm is revealed by the vocabulary used to describe and explain the phenomena we encounter, we leave ourselves vulnerable to a critical gaze.
Our rhetorical myths, shaped by our paradigms, can be refined into a logic which then calls forth certain narratives to convey the myths to our publics. Recursively, the narratives then reinforce the foundational myths and the myths push the paradigms further into the background until they are ubiquitous. With this self-perpetuating system in mind, I have argued that a critical step in shifting a conflict from intractable to tractable is to destabilize the paradigms at play. It follows that in the vibrations of a once concrete paradigm, we may recognize slivers of potential change. It is these slivers of potential change where the efforts of rhetoricians, conflict and peace studies scholars, and policy makers might intersect in a critical way. On the other hand, resisting narratives, creating shared narratives, and debunking myths and narratives are all downstream efforts that may distract if not degrade efforts to change an intractable condition. This is not meant to imply that treating narratives is an unnecessary activity; however, treating a narrative in isolation from its paradigm would amount to planning a trip without knowing the departure point.

Although invaluable for myriad other reasons, looking downstream tends to beg solutions instead of greater understanding of the problem. As I conclude, I must be careful in that I do not mischaracterize rhetorical myth as unidirectional; in fact, one might visualize rhetorical myth as the space between a paradigm and its narratives. As our “most powerful stories”, rhetorical myth provides theoretical grounding for both its generative paradigm and its progeny: narrative. What I hoped to convey in these pages is that discerning a rhetorical myth is one heuristic step in revealing a governing paradigm. This is not to argue the impenetrability of rhetorical myth; myths do evolve. However, to overtly target a myth as the chink in the armor (as Rowland does) is to underestimate the pervasiveness of our most powerful stories. Instead, I
have demonstrated how change occurs simultaneously along several avenues, i.e. paradigms and narratives, which in turn may mitigate the impact of a rhetorical myth. In other words, to lay bare an underlying myth is to offer a critical—in this case, comic—gaze onto both paradigm and narrative.

As an integral part of Burke’s dramatism, the comic corrective I have detailed in Chapter Three brings with it a capacity for “true irony” whereby the identities of belligerents are revealed as consubstantial constructs and sets conditions for a homeopathic approach to resolution. Key to the homeopathic path is the recognition of the ironic relationship between violence and its cure. For example, I offered the ongoing construction of the “separation wall” to demonstrate the potential consequences of ignoring the comic corrective. When we consider the ongoing wall construction a-rhetorically, we take the human action out of the drama and miss a heuristic opportunity to witness the epistemic break between a violent Act and its cure. Neglecting the comic corrective invites well-meaning publics to accept a constituted reality without the “critical warfare” Burke would recommend and what the “purification of war” would demand.
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