

## APPENDIX D How Aristotle, Goffman, Burke, and Sartre Approach Rhythm

Classic IN-THE-BOX Situation Leadership is expanded to understanding Rhythms. Rhythm is possibly unknown to you. Here is an introduction: Rhythm for Aristotle (350 BCE) was too obvious to explain. Rhythm – (or Melody, his other term) is “what is too completely understood to require explanation” (1449b: 35). Aristotle did say, rhythm is the “means of their [i.e. stories’] imitation” (1449b: 31, bracketed addition mine); i.e. it is agency; Agency is what Kenneth Burke (1945) picked upon it and combined Rhythm and Dialogue into just Agency (in his Pentad); I hate the reduction and prefer to leave them separate. Rhythm in contemporary times is all about self-organizing, patterns of complexity, emergence, and chaos. Think about it this way: Rhythms are order and disorder forces of environment and organization. Rhythm can be smooth-running in order or encounter blocks, such as novelty, or a market pattern that was expected to recur, like the last time around, but did not. Reading, creating, and changing rhythm is fundamental to Leadership Theatre.

### Theatrics of Situation Leadership

Another way to Think Out of the Box is for us to apply theatre to situation leadership. One of my favorite approaches is Kenneth Burke's Pentad, which I have modified to a Hexad ([See Boje, 2002a](#)). We have been building up to this point in the study guide. We moved from two to three and four sided boxes of leadership. Now we go to six.

The Pentad (5-sides) supplemented to Hexad has these six elements, which I will translate into the terminology of Situational Leadership. Finally, a box that has six sides:

1. Act – What was done? Names what took place, in thought or deed (sequence of actions). What did the leader do? Acts are behaviors by a leader. The "basic unit of action" is defined as "the human body in conscious or purposive motion" (Burke, 1945: 14).
2. Scene – When or where it was done? Scene is the Situation of the leader's act. scene contains actions (and agents). Background of the act, the situation in which it occurred; physical, geographic and cultural environment or setting in which the act or action takes place. Acts can dramatically affect scene and vice versa; scenes can motivate or influence characters to take action (e.g. crisis on a battlefield versus reunion after give different motivation or a more comic Frame).
3. Agent - Who did it? What actor or kind of person (agent) performed the act? The Actor's identity and role- played out in terms of the action. Non-human elements can be agents, e.g. the tornado tore up the town. In Situation leadership, the leader is the agent; in Substitutes for Leadership, the substitutes are agents. "The term agent embraces ... all words general or specific for person, actor, character, individual, hero, villain, father, doctor, engineer, but also any words, moral or functional, for patient, and words for the motivational properties or agents, such as, 'drives,' 'instincts,' 'states of mind'... 'super-ego,' ... 'generalized I'" (Burke, 1945: 20).
4. Agency – How it was done? The instruments (means) agents (i.e. leaders) used; how characters initiate and accomplish action. Or characters can claim there are instruments, tools of those they report to in the chain of command. Agency can be personal leadership or by way of substitutes.
5. Purpose – Why? Intended effect or outcomes of the action. What motivates the leader to act and the counter-agents (followers) to follow?
6. Frame - Dialectic between "Frames of Acceptance" and "Frames of Rejection." The frame of situation leadership is narrow, down to the level of the small group, type of technology, the characteristics of followers (counter-agents), etc. For Burke, Frames are grander, more about the paradigm or grand narrative in which something happens.

Leaders (agents) perform their behaviors (acts) inside a situation (scene), and the accomplishment of leadership takes into account the means (agency) and the ends (purpose), and this all happens within a social and historical Frame. The six sides are not in isolation, they are part of an interdependent and dialectic system. The rules of the leadership game are governed by ratios.

Ratios - Burke proposes we look to two ratios (act-scene and scene-agent). "A ratio is a formula indicating a transition from one term to another" (Burke, 1945: 262). This question for Burke is which of the six elements mostly defines the Situation? I have added a few to Burke's original listing (1945: 15). The ratios says Burke (1945: 15) "are ratios of determination." The six elements work together as an embedded system or Grammar. For example act and agent require scenes that "contain them. Scene-act and scene-agent ratios position leadership behavior (acts by agents) in a scene. The pairs of elements form dialectics and the leadership analysis is to figure out which term (dialectical counterpart) dominates in a situation.

Scene-Act Ratio - Is behavior (act) or situation (scene) more important? Leaders can engage in acts than transform the scene more to their purpose. The scene inspires new acts. Some scenes call for participative acts; others call for directive, even authoritarian acts. Leaders can change the nature of the scene to be in keeping with preferred acts. Situation Leadership sees the scene as the motive force behind acts of leadership. Behaviorists look to the acts to dominate over the scene. Leaders can strategically modify the arrangement of the scene in such a way it will contain the quality they want to enact. Yet, Burke makes it clear that there are many other, often more important ratios (dialectic counterparts).

Scene-Agent Ratio - Is the situation (scene) or the leader (agent) more important? Let's say it is the scene: "Thus, a mode of thought in keeping with the scene-agent ratio would situate in the scene certain potentialities that were said to be actualized in the agent" (Burke, 1945: 262). The office of the President (the scene) affects the agent (President) who occupies it. Scenes can change over time, making different agency, purpose, and acts more appropriate. Or, let's say we assume it's the agent; the hero, for example, has a role to play in the scene: to bring back the Holy Grail. The following statement by Burke (1945: 18) sounds much like substitutes for leadership: "One may place 'fools' in 'wise situations,' so that in their acts they are 'wiser than they know.'" A historical situation (scene) can "bring to the fore... certain kinds of agents (with their appropriate actions) rather than others" (Burke, 1945: 19). One scene may call bureaucratic leaders as the appropriate voice, another may call a more heroic voice; yet another can call a leader that listens to other voices. Certain scenes amplify the leader's trait or character.

Scene-Agency Ratio - Changes in the means (agency) such as computers instead of calculators, internet instead of telegraph are now determinant of scenes.

Scene-Purpose Ratio - Changes in the scene have a motive (purpose) impact upon scenes. Changes in motives can affect the scene. Morale can become an aspect of the situation.

Act-Purpose Ratio - Certain acts may be compatible or incompatible with particular motives (purpose).

Act-Agent Ratio - Suggests a more sequential relationship than the purely positional (act-scene or scene-agent) ratios. The character traits of a leader (good or bad, wise or shallow) can rule over the act. The agent's acts are in keeping with their nature (character) as an agent. Where do you (as observer) lodge responsibility, with the act or with the agent of the act? We could, for example, situate motives (purpose) for an act (behavior) in the agent (leader) through our attributions. People act as agents for democratic or bureaucratic organizations, making their acts democratic or bureaucratic. The act-agent ratio can fit the scene or tug at its edges (Burke, 1945: 20).

Act-Agency Ratio - Do you lodge responsibility for an act with the act or with the means (resources) that are set in motion? A person's location in a hierarchy can modify a leader's character, so he or she acts differently. Democratic acts (behaviors) are thought by some to derive from agents (leaders, who are democratic agents/leaders).

Agent-Purpose - Agents act heroic to prove their patriotic motives (purpose).

Frame-Scene - When street protestors resisted the WTO in Seattle in 1999, there is a Frame of a global economy affecting the local street theatre (local scene). The protestors indict the global Frame through local scenes of street theatre. In doing so, they hope to stretch the global Frame, by making spectators to their theatre scenes more conscious consumers.

Frame-Act Ratio - Political economy structures (Frames) affect the manifestation of local acts (behaviors). We would credit Marxism and Capitalism as frames that determine different acts of worker involvement and resistance.

Frame-Agency - The political economy has many agencies. A Marxist view is the material aspects of production set in motion various agencies, capital and labor. Marx and Lenin's Manifesto saw the working class as the agency for the coming revolution. Yet the revolution did not happen; rather the Frame got stretched quite another direction.

Frame-Purpose - Our motives are situated in political and historical projects. A dialectical materialist sees purpose in the economic and material conditions.

Frame stretches the leadership box. Adding more than just situation and leader (scene and agent) stretches the box, as when we look to Frame, Purpose, Agency, and Act. The Hexad provides a more precise analysis of the leadership theatrics that is ubiquitous. See [What is situation?](#)

## **Goffman on Rhythms -**

Rhythm in Goffman's (1974) work is about framing, scripting, and performing, within a closed system framework. In constructing a dramaturgical theory of organizations, the early studies looked at internal theatrical processes, using closed system assumptions. For example, Goffmanesque (1959) studies of organizational dramaturgy focus on charismatic leadership behaviors (e.g. Gardner & Alvolio, 1998; Harvey, 2001), emotional improvisation (e.g. Morgan & Krone) where the leader is the spokesperson and dramatist of organizational life (See Boje, Luhman & Cunliffe, 2002 for a review). Gardner and Alvolio's (1998) charismatic leadership study is a combination of Goffman's impression management process enacted theatrically in acts of *framing, scripting, staging, and performing*. *Such an analysis of how leaders cast themselves as charismatic characters within organizations is a closed system analysis of the Theatre of Capitalism* (Boje, 2002c). Harvey's (2002) study of Steve Job's charisma uses Goffman concepts of 'exemplification' (embodying the ideal of being morally responsible, committed to the cause, and taking risks) and 'self-promotion' (and less often organization-promotion) to construct his character as charismatic leader (Gardner & Alvolio, 1998, p. 257). Besides Goffmanesque charisma studies, there are small group studies within organizations, such as, Morgan and Krone (2001, p. 317) who found that the emphasis on maintaining a "professional" appearance in care giving largely constrains actors to perform along their scripted roles. In Boje, Luhman, & Cunliffe (2002), we review how Goffman's perspective is not that dramaturgical because he focuses on well scripted, pre-rehearsed performances rather than momentary and creative drama. Here, I just want to look at the way that earlier studies of organization as theatre adopt a closed system perspective.

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## **Burke on Rhythms**

The second dominant approach organization *is* theatre, which builds upon Burke's (1945) *pentad* (act, agent, agency, purpose, & scene). There are important differences between the dramatics of Aristotle (350 BCE), Goffman (1974), and Burke (1945). Burke preferred to keep acts separate from plots; characters were essentially agents. Agency for Burke is how the act was accomplished (Burke, 1945: 231). Burke notes that Aristotle said dialog and rhythm were the means. The Burkean applications in organization studies are legion, but, by in large, also take a closed system perspective. For example, Czarniawska (1997) explores how the identities of organizational actors are constituted theatrically through role-playing and image construction in the Swedish press. In another example, Pine and Gilmour (1999) use Burke's dramatism to assert work *is* theatre and every business is a stage. I agree, but would like to explore the capitalist context of that stage, in a more open systems view of organization/environment theatrics. Much of capitalist life is carefully scripted on what I term a *Tamara* (Boje, 1995) of stages where we play our scenes, according to games of agent and agency, within an institutional web of political economy.

I think in the postmodern theatrics turn, it is time to unbundle rhythm from agency (means), and give it a critical postmodern flavor. Burke's (1937) early work, before *Pentad* (i.e. 1945), was as sociological analysis of the frame and framing processes of capitalism. Burke rejects both the progress myth and the Meliorist position suggesting these are "frames of acceptance" (1937, p.20-25) that over-emphasize what is favorable, and under-emphasize any unfavorable consequences.

In looking at the dialectic of Leader and Society, it is important to explore what leadership theorists mean by Situation?

The basic idea is that leaders change their behavior to fit the situation. Some situations call for more supportive leader behavior, others call for more autocratic and initiating structure behavior. And in some cases the situation is so structured that leaders trying to add more structure or initiate structure or even consideration is also redundant. In leadership, this is a situation which has its own substitutes for leadership.

This still does not tell use much about Situation. To get at a deeper understanding of situation we can look a Sartre's (1963) *Search For a Method* and Burke's (1945) *A Grammar of Motives*. Sartre's idea is that changes in the situation change the individual. The leader takes action within a human and task situation. Sartre assumed that Situation is not as mechanistic and determined as it is presented to be in the Leadership approach to Situation.

Burke looks at the Grammar that various sciences use to describe events. For example, the Pentad is a grammar of theatre, the act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose (and if we add Frame, as Burke wanted to do, it is a

[Hexad](#)). Leaders (agents) enact behaviors (acts) in a Situation (scene) would be simple, if situations could be easily read, comprehended and appropriate acts determined. By scenes (situations) of leadership also have agency, purpose and frame. Burke's terminology would provide a new Grammar of Leadership. The new grammar, I think, adds something to our understanding of Situation (scene) where we now look at acts of agents in scenes (as in traditional leadership theory), but also the agency in scenes, the purpose and frames operative in the scene.

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We (Boje, Luhman, & Cunliffe, 2002) argue that there are two ways one can theorize dialectic of theatre-*as*-organizing opposed to theatre-*is*-organizing. One way would be to follow Kärreman (2001) and look at the transition from modern to the more postmodern dramaturgy of Baudrillard. We prefer a second, option, to follow the more "critical postmodern" approach of dramaturgy in Guy Debord (1967), rooted in the dialectic of Marx (critical theory) and postmodern theory, in looking at the accumulation of consumption rather than production.

Spectacle is defined as both a (ante) narrative and a (meta) theatric performance that legitimates, rationalizes, and camouflages production, distribution, and consumption in late modern capitalism (Source, Boje, Luhman, & Cunliffe, 2002).

"The spectacle is not a collection of images, but a social relation among people mediated by images" (Debord, 1970, #4)[i|i|i].

**And the production, distribution, and consumption of antenarratives and Metatheatre is accomplished with the inter-rhythm of organization and environment.**

Jean-Paul Sartre (1956) Existential Critique of Situation Leadership using three temporality dimensions One way out of the Leadership Box, is to focus on its Existential Crisis. Jean-Paul Sartre (1956) presents a temporality theory of Being and Nothingness which can be used to enrich the Situation approaches to leadership. The basic issues is that while Fred Fiedler says the leader does not change his or her stripes, all the other situation models posit that the leader does (perhaps Substitutes is somewhere between). The leader who changes leader behavior to fit a conception of the situation is both being and nothingness. The leader sacrifices their ensemble character, they consciously adjust style, seeking to enact a set of behaviors consistent with the reflected situation. Nothingness is the being the leader is not being, and the leader is being what the leader can not be to be successful.

This dilemma sets off three ekstastic dimensions of temporality and nihilation (Sartre 1956: 137).

To not-be what the leader is being

To be what the leader is not being

To be what the leader is not being and to not-be what the leader is being.

The leader nihilates the Present style of being to not-be what the leader is being and the to be what the leader is not being. The leader tries to be what the leader is not. The leader takes flight from their style, to become some other character, yet they are themselves being and not being. The three ekstastic nihilations represent the changes in consciousness of behavior and situation, as the leader lets one character pass away to become what is presently nothingness, a style to be enacted.

The leader reflects upon the situation in a pause of self-reflection chooses to transcend one character for another. The cessation of one leaderly character, puts the leader into some doubt; the character they are being is not sufficient to the situation. The leader consciously reflects upon the future possibilities of their character and envisions nihilation.

For more on Existential Leadership, we must move out of the box. And See What is situation?

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