

## ABSTRACT

### AN EXPLORATION OF THE SOCIAL NETWORKING SITE MYSPACE USING KENNETH BURKE'S THEORY OF DRAMATISM

The objective of this thesis is to use Kenneth Burke's theory of Dramatism as a dialectic to determine if Internet-based communication on the social networking site MySpace is bringing about consubstantiality between users. To achieve this goal I examine the three essential components that affect communication on MySpace: the architecture of the site itself, identity presentation, and audience reception. Through the examination of specific communicative acts on MySpace with the theory of Dramatism, it is revealed that legitimate communication and therefore consubstantiality is not possible. The type of communication that is occurring on the Internet, and is being fostered by MySpace, is what I have termed *crowded isolation*, which refers to many individuals acting in the same place (MySpace) at the same time, but not with each other. This work argues that *crowded isolation* is the norm and cannot sustain legitimate communication or lead MySpace users to consubstantiality.

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