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ABSTRACT

DELIVERING FAITH: TOWARD A NEW THEORY OF DELIVERY IN THE CONTEXT OF PREACHING

by Kerrie Lehman Carsey

This dissertation redefines delivery, the fifth canon of rhetoric, examining its traditionally low status in the field of rhetorical theory and employing the ancient art of preaching to reclaim delivery as a valuable site of persuasion. Throughout rhetorical history, the fifth canon has met strong and consistent denigration as mere ornament, or worse, a tool of manipulation. Its physical, noetic, and emotional elements render delivery resistant to classification and a unified theory for instruction. Even those who uphold delivery's importance to the art of rhetoric, such as Cicero, seem to privilege invention as the dominant realm of persuasion. My work uses preaching as a lens, striving for a better understanding of how delivery, from the politicized space of the pulpit, functions in this genre of religious discourse. I argue that in the context of the live speech event, consideration of the speaker's *ethos*, or character presentation, can best deepen our understanding of the effects of delivery upon an audience. As a rhetorical art, preaching offers fertile ground to study character presentation in the oratorical performance, and the ways delivery fosters assent and works to define group identity. Case study research at a Protestant church, involving taping sermons, interviews with the preacher, and focus group discussions with congregants explores the relational nature of delivery in discourse communities.

DELIVERING FAITH: TOWARD A NEW THEORY OF DELIVERY IN THE CONTEXT OF PREACHING

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To Rebecca, my mother, for your friendship

To Kate, my mentor, for your encouragement

And to James, my husband, for your strength

Introduction

Delivery's Denigration

Historically, delivery has been the most neglected of the five rhetorical canons—invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery. Along with memory, this canon often remains in the realm of simple oratorical skills, receiving cursory treatment to prepare students for classroom declamations or mock trials; with the rise of alphabetic text, both concepts have fallen to the margins in that they seem obsolete (Welch 18). However, unlike memory, delivery has met aggressive denigration from those who divorce what is said from how it is said. The Greek word *hypokrisis* shares a root term with and thus connects with acting (*hypokrites*) (Nadeau 53) and suggests using the body to portray a persona and accurately convey thought and emotion. This root eventually gave us the term "hypocrite" as it exists today, a negative term referring to one who wears a mask, who does not practice what he preaches, so to speak. The Latin terms for delivery, *pronuntiatio* and *actio*, split the canon into voice and gesture, respectively, but retain the idea of bodily skill, the physical communication of an oration.

In *On Rhetoric* (fourth century BCE) Aristotle himself viewed the very consideration of one's oral delivery of a speech a "vulgar matter" and did not seem to lament the fact that no system for teaching delivery existed (3.1.5). What he did lament is that attention to this vulgar topic is necessary, in that delivery "has great power… because of the corruption of the audience" (3.1.5). In other words, the listener's susceptibility to artifice requires that speakers take heed of their delivery, "not because it is right but because it is necessary" (3.1.5). Even this early in classical rhetorical theory, delivery seems to have been excluded from the process of knowledge production because of the suspicion that a charismatic oral performance might mask flawed logic and turn crowds away from the most prudent action. At best, delivery became a mere supplement to the text, an afterthought that leads the orator to make minute adjustments depending on the type of audience. In Aristotle's day and beyond, proponents of a more developed teaching of delivery met suspicion and often harsh repudiation, as evidenced by their defensive stances when justifying their consideration of the canon.

Gilbert Austin (1806) summarizes this "strange prejudice" against delivery, stating that past "injudicious use" and the difficulty in assembling a proper standard for delivery (5) have caused suspicion and a low status in rhetorical theory. Like many theorists of his day, Austin also used preaching as the means of exploring a rhetorical concept, critiquing the result of

delivery's denigration—preachers who "stand stock still in the pulpit" (6) for fear of seeming theatrical (7). Jacobi (2006) explains that throughout history, many have assumed that rhetors would "use artifice, ornamentation, sweetness to achieve the goals of the persuasion, and that shortcomings in delivery can harm their rhetoric's effectiveness" (22-23). Thus, the danger of delivery is that it might make false speech appealing or true speech unappealing.

Kathleen Welch (2006) deepens the claim, stating that memory and delivery have been put down in the field of composition as an attempt to suppress ideology and the political nature of language. She equates this denigration to that of the humanities and sees repeated attempts to invalidate writing by reducing it to mere tool (18). Memory and delivery, then, are "dangerous to the status quo of the process movement" because they challenge the primacy of invention as well as the notion of the autonomous writer (19). Welch claims that rather than being obsolete, these rhetorical canons morph and change form to fit conditions, thus challenging the written/oral binary and upholding the contested nature of language.

Despite this kind of attention to the fifth canon's potential in classrooms, courtrooms, and public debates, delivery "remains subordinate to language proper" (Fredal 251). Like James Fredal, I want to explore the fifth canon as a "nonlinguistic bodily skill of character presentation," and not just a supplement to a written or oral text (252). In other words, delivery itself can make meaning, both through and in addition to the prepared text. This is not to say that delivery can stand alone as a rhetorical art. Like the other canons, theorization of delivery seems to function best when it acts in recursive relationships. The canons tend to loop back to one another. Working on arrangement can generate (invent) new ideas. Consideration of *pronuntiatio* can help a speaker make critical stylistic decisions in the choice of words and phrases. Memorization (or the creation of note cards) loops back to inform the overall arrangement of the text. Therefore, I do not wish to treat delivery in isolation, but rather I try to consider its overall role in persuasion, taking into account context, purpose, and the larger rhetorical process of oral communication.

Ancient and later writers never seem to tire of reporting Demosthenes' (fourth century BCE) alleged claim that delivery is the first, second, and third most important element of rhetoric (Nadeau 53). However, the pattern persists of recognizing delivery's importance, defending against accusations that it acts as a realm of artifice and deception, but failing to produce a full study of the subject. As chapter one shows, because oral communication is so strongly culturally

bound and coded, any attempts at fuller treatments of the fifth canon eventually seem silly and outdated. However, I hope that by keeping fellow canons in scope and by focusing on the ancient art of preaching, I can create a framework within which scholars in composition and rhetoric can study the role of delivery in its varied forms and contexts.

Religious Rhetoric Today

For the purpose of this project, I consider delivery alongside various other rhetorical elements, such as *pathos*, the artistic proof of appealing to audience emotion. But primarily, I pair the fifth canon with the sermon. I assert that sermons and religious discourse are, like the fifth canon, valuable but neglected areas of study in composition and rhetoric. The presence of religious thinking within and surrounding public discourse seems undeniable, but too often, scholars in our field do not seem to know what to make of it. For example, in recent years, scholars have made significant effort to recover women's voices in Europe and America, examining their rhetorical strategies as they fought for their own and others' rights. Yet, despite this respect and attention, many ignore the fact that most of these pioneers who spoke out for women, slaves, child laborers, and other oppressed groups did so out of their faith. Margaret Fell (1614-1702) and Phoebe Palmer (1807-1874) delved into the scriptures to assert the right of women to speak publicly in both religious and political contexts. Angelina Grimké (1805-1879) utilized first-hand accounts of the abuses of slaves, but those examples always punctuated moral arguments that were based on the Bible and expounded upon by the Quaker preachers (men and women) she respected. In short, personal faith greatly informs public action. Religious belief directly shapes one's views about the nature of the world and the people in it, thus creating an articulated web (Crowley) of belief, subsequent action, and various levels of trust and assent (Miller).

Roxanne Mountford explains, "Religious rhetoric is a critically important part of national life and identity, and yet it is a neglected area of rhetoric studies. Religious rhetoric primarily filters through the nation's public and private spaces through oral discourse, and it is for this reason, I contend, that it has largely fallen off the map of contemporary rhetoric" (151). She adds that because discourses of religion are "vitally alive" in everyday spaces, "Unless rhetoricians attend to religious rhetoric, especially as it is performed in everyday spaces, a significant aspect of American rhetorical culture will remain beyond our borders" (151). Unfortunately, all too many are happy to keep consideration of religious belief beyond the

borders. For example, Lisa Shaver claims, "contemporary scholars are often uncomfortable addressing the religious influences of women rhetors. As a result their religious backgrounds and beliefs are frequently cropped from their portraits" (248). The faith of women abolitionists and women's right activists emerges in their writings and speeches, replete with scriptural references and appeals to obedience to Godly doctrine. However, as an effective form of proof, especially in the nineteenth century, these strategies can appear cloaked if not ignored in some scholarship. Further, students often have no idea what to expect, whether it be acceptance, awkward silence, or aggressive dismissal when they express religious views in the classroom or in their writing. I believe those curious and uncomfortable moments to be opportunities for teachers to discuss the relationships between belief and persuasion. These moments offer the chance to model and discuss the valuable practice of gathering opposing viewpoints and discussing effective arguments in various contexts and for various audiences. Shaver adds, "Categorically ignoring religion in our classrooms, our scholarship, and in our efforts to remap the history of rhetoric runs counter to the critical thinking (the complication and disruption of perceptions) we as scholars so strongly advocate (254). Therefore, I wish to join the efforts of scholars like Moss, Mountford, and Shaver and take into account the role of religious belief, applying those concepts to principles of rhetoric and public discourse, particularly at the site of the delivered sermon.

Scope and Methods

The practice of preserving and analyzing the texts of sermons is thousands of years old. But more context-based research is needed into the rhetoric of the contemporary sermon, especially in the field of composition and rhetoric. Therefore, my work takes a closer look at preaching, striving for a better understanding of how delivery functions in this genre of religious discourse, in an attempt to revive and reclaim delivery in rhetorical theory. Several factors combine to reveal the importance of the sermon as a rhetorical genre today. First, preaching is an ancient art, going back thousands of years. It not only has survived, but thrived in Western culture. Forgive the drama of this statement, but I do not think it hyperbole to say that some of the most influential figures in human history were preachers: Jesus, Paul, Augustine, Francis of Assisi, Martin Luther, Margaret Fell, Jonathan Edwards, Billy Graham, Martin Luther King, Jr., and the list could grow exponentially. And to this day, millions of people in this country alone gather at least once per week to hear a prepared sermon. As an oral rhetorical genre, preaching is

alive and well, affording speakers frequent and regular opportunities to stand and deliver their message to willing and (ideally) enthusiastic audiences.

This long history poses important questions about the scope of this project. How far back in history should I go when studying preaching? To what extent do I study homiletics texts that talk *about* preaching, and to what extend should I analyze sermons themselves? Would it be simplistic to compare Medieval thematic sermons with twentieth-century narrative sermons? Do the Reformation and other major controversies within Christianity prevent broad generalizations about preaching as an art? To address these questions, I try to achieve both breadth and depth in my research. I go as far back as Jesus himself to explore the nature of the sermon, and I paint in broad strokes the major shifts in sermon form and purpose. However, I also narrow my focus to preaching and preaching instruction in the Protestant tradition within the last fifty years as I move toward chapter five's participant observation case study of one preacher in a local evangelical church. This narrowing-down allows me to observe the evolving relationships between rhetoric and preaching, between preacher and congregation, and between delivery and persuasion.

Another reason for my focus on religious discourse is that the topic possibilities for sermons may seem narrow to some, but can actually be quite broad. Yes, most preachers base their texts on a biblical passage, but the poetry, narratives, epistles, prophetic texts, and wisdom literature in the Bible deal with everything from sibling rivalry, commerce, marital strife, oppression of the poor, war and violence, birth and death, obedience and rebellion, the treatment of animals, to countless other topics. Therefore, as Gilbert Austin states, "in the discharge of the duty of the preacher, a field of oratory is opened more splendid, and more interesting, than any in which either Demosthenes or Cicero ever expatiated" (146), in that social issues intersect with heart issues and arguments can be broadly philosophical and deeply personal. Below, I outline some of the peculiarities of preaching regarding subject, context, and purpose. However, for now, I posit that preaching boasts a broad range of topics and gives the speaker a wide berth to explore and inspire emotion. In his influential preaching manual (1870), John Broadus states, "There must be a *powerful impulse* upon the will; the hearers must feel smitten, stirred, moved to, or at least moved towards, some action or determination to act. Words that by carrying conviction, kindling the imagination, and arousing emotion, produce such an effect as this upon

the will, are rightly called eloquent words" (5). Therefore, both topically and emotionally, the preacher has at her disposal endless rhetorical possibilities.

As I move toward a definition of preaching, let me reiterate the frequent, personal, and oral nature of the sermon as a rhetorical genre. Preaching takes place within community. Congregants may have generational experience of listening to sermons, and possibly even decades of experience listening to one preacher week-in and week-out. The preacher joins couples in marriage, officiates at memorial services and graveside ceremonies, baptizes or dedicates babies, visits the sick and dying in the hospital, and participates in many other relational and intensely personal life events. The pastor, therefore, is much more than an orator to her congregation. The sermon is just one element of a network of contact points between pastor and flock, but an important one, in that preaching communicates the values and beliefs of the community. Certainly the rise of "mega-churches" with thousands of attendees mitigates the claim that the sermon contributes to personal relationship between pastor and congregation members, but most churches have fewer than 100 members, and the vast majority of churches in America have fewer than 300 members, allowing for close friendship, even feelings of kinship, between preacher and listener. My point is, preaching does have its unique qualities, and I do not think ancient or modern rhetoricians fully account for this type of rhetorical situation. However, the frequency and oral nature of the sermon do make it a compelling field for the application and development of ancient and contemporary rhetorical theory.

Throughout this project, I try to keep a focus on oral delivery, and studying the sermon allows me to do just that. Since the third century, written collections of sermons have been preserved, passed on, and even re-delivered. And today, preachers publish books, podcasts, and videos of their sermons, potentially expanding to a global audience. However, my *ethos*-based theory of delivery, as explored in case study research, zeroes in on the actual face-to-face oral delivery of the sermon within the gathered church community. This narrowed-down context has proven sufficient, if not a little overwhelming, in the data and theoretical possibilities it has yielded. To turn my attention to published, radio, television, or online preaching certainly would open new vistas for research, and I outline some of these avenues in my conclusion. However, for now, I remain in the gathered religious community, studying the physical presence of both preacher and audience as well as the physical spaces of religious oratory.

Other scholars have taken similar directions to study literacy and gender issues within American churches. Beverly Moss (2003) examined the rhetorical strategies employed by African American preachers and the sermon's role in church community literacy. The three preachers in her study used different strategies of preaching (manuscripts, partial manuscripts and notes, and extemporaneous preaching) to develop and deliver their sermons. Moss explores the ways these men keep their congregations in mind as they prepare for the preaching moment. These preachers also blurred the lines between preacher and congregation, creating in the sermon a complex, highly social community text (Moss 64). In this dialogic relationship, the call-and-response format of black preaching acts as only one layer of mutual participation of literate texts; church bulletins with corporate readings and updates on community news also create a bond. Moss's work shows the importance of studying written and oral texts in context; my work takes an even closer look at the sermon itself, showing the impact of the preacher's delivery strategies on the overall effect of the text.

Roxanne Mountford (2003) studied the rhetorical strategies of female preachers as they negotiated roles traditionally occupied by men. In *The Gendered Pulpit: Preaching in American Protestant Spaces*, Mountford follows three women and analyzes their use of the rhetorical space of the pulpit. She states, "Preaching is fundamentally an act of rhetorical performance, the gendered nature of that performance (voice, gesture, and movement) vitally reinforcing a congregation's beliefs" (4). I would add that a congregation's beliefs also reinforce the preacher's performance. Like Moss and Mountford, I interview a preacher to explore his process of sermon composition and his approaches to fostering growth through the sermon. And like Moss, I also interview groups of congregants. However, in focus groups, I do not only inquire about their pastor, but about a just-delivered sermon and the emotive and volitional impacts it has made. This method allows for the relational nature of preaching to emerge, highlighting the formation of belief and identity that can occur even during the sermon event.

Rhetorical Delivery and Preaching

For the reasons stated above, I believe preaching to be a ripe field for the exploration of the equally-neglected concept of rhetorical delivery. The great nineteenth-century American preacher John Broadus draws out the connections nicely, staying, "Homiletics may be called a branch of rhetoric, or a kindred art. Those fundamental principles which have their basis in human nature are of course the same in both cases, and this being so, it seems clear that we must

regard homiletics as rhetoric applied to this particular kind of speaking" (16). But the links between religious discourse and rhetoric go much deeper than a contemporary preacher's attempts to use rhetorical concepts in her sermons. James Kinneavy contends that "many of the major features of the concept of persuasion, as embodied in Greek rhetoric of the Hellenistic period, are semantically quite close to the Christian notion of faith," and that "a majority of the texts in the [New Testament] that mention *pistis* as faith can be read with a rhetorical interpretation" (4). In other words, ancient Greek rhetoric acts as a source for the Christian notion of faith as outlined by the writers of the New Testament (20).

The Greek term *pistis* had multiple functions, denoting both the techniques that bring about mental assent and conviction and that conviction itself (Kinneavy 17). The Greek translation of the Old Testament (The Septuagint, third – second centuries BCE) used the term *pistis* simply to mean "persuasion," casting faith as trust and not as a kind of intellectual assent (Kinneavy 6). However, just a few centuries later, New Testament writers had taken up the term, adding a spiritual element to its intellectual denotation and portraying faith as being persuaded. In this way, Christian faith set itself up for the same Platonic critiques of rhetoric as manipulation of mere belief and public opinion (17). Kinneavy examines every instance of *pistis* in the New Testament to show the strong connections between religious discourse and rhetoric. *Pistis* involves trust in one's salvation, voluntary intellectual assent to the truth of the scriptures (28), the gained field of knowledge that accompanies this assent ("the faith"), and trust in the pronounced word in the church (29). Therefore, the Greek concept of persuasion acted in sacred contexts as a technique for convincing would-be Christians and the subsequent "mental state of conviction" (33).

Delivery itself, when paired with the study of preaching, finds similar recasting. Many religious rhetors saw their task as more lofty, with much more at stake, than even the greatest ancient political speeches. After all, these preachers were communicating ideas about the human soul, its relationship to its Maker, and the daily action that reflects that relationship. And so, every rhetorical element, including delivery, required careful attention. Theodore Nelson (1946) quotes the lecture notes of the great British preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892), saying,

> Manner is not everything. Still if you have gathered good matter it is a pity to convey it meanly; a king should not ride in a dust-cart; the glorious doctrines of grace should not be

> slovenly delivered. Right royal truths should ride in a chariot of gold…Your mannerisms should always be your own; it must never be a polished lie, and what is the aping of gentility, the simulation of passion, the feigning of emotion, or the mimicry of another man's mode of delivery but a practical lie. (179)

Summarizing Spurgeon's teaching of delivery, Nelson offers, "All elements of the speech should harmonize with one another so closely that each is an essential, though unnoticed part of the whole activity" (179). Spurgeon seemed to subscribe to a more naturalist view of rhetoric and delivery in which rhetorical elements become inconspicuous and the speaker seems to "just talk" to the audience.

Jana Childers' 1998 preaching manual *Performing the Word* continues this mindset, warning preachers against artifice in their sermon delivery and encouraging them to smoothly and honestly present their text (48). Childers claims, "All the preacher's physical, mental, and spiritual skills are brought to bear in the task of interpreting and embodying the text" (52). Here, I see a complex but valuable intersection between rhetoric, delivery, and preaching. How does the preacher interpret ancient sacred text, and then wield this source of authority without alienating listeners? How can they present themselves, the biblical text, and the text of the sermon in ways contemporary audiences would find relevant? And how does sermon delivery work to reflect these priorities? My research shows that delivery itself, though often inconspicuous and seemingly "natural," emerges as critical to this process of interpretation and communication of identity-forming religious principles within churches. To further explore the ways delivery takes up new meaning in the context of preaching, below I examine preaching as a rhetorical art, but one with special considerations. I offer other scholars' descriptions of the preaching moment, then my own definition of preaching. This framework helps to outline the parameters of this project and sets the stage for my exploration of preaching as a rhetorical art and the ways this art can recast the rhetorical canon of delivery.

The Nature of the Sermon, and Preaching Defined

Exploring the preacher's rhetorical situation, John Indermark (2004) uses a threefold classification for the role of the sermon. Preaching involves information, a telling of Judeo-Christian history and doctrine. It also has an aspect of "formation" in that it "aims at shaping persons and communities" through an invitation to reflection (12). Finally, preaching is provocation, a call to service and action of some kind. Indermark's framework actually echoes

homiletic theory from the Reformation in the sixteenth century, as preachers, finally speaking the languages of the people during worship, took a fresh look at the purpose of the sermon. This time-tested rhetorical art usually poses this type of multi-layered rhetorical situation, as speakers address mind and heart and seek assent and action. This complicated dynamic results in high expectation for what may only be a twenty-minute prepared message.

Richard Heofler's 1984 manual *Creative Preaching and Oral Writing* offers a different stance when defining preaching. Whereas Indemark focused primarily on the preacher's rhetorical goals, Hoefler takes into account the context of the sermon. For him, preaching:

1. Takes place in the setting of divine worship
2. Is the development of a text
3. Is prophetic in that it relates the word of God to the contemporary situation (26)

This definition actually stems from a brief narrative in the fourth chapter of Luke (quoted in chapter 2), in which Jesus enters the synagogue on the Sabbath, reads a passage from the prophet Isaiah, and states simply, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." This event occurred in the context of worship and involved a sacred text (at the time Jesus read it, the text was over 500 years old). Jesus then prophetically applied the text to his own day, even his own ministry. Hoefler's definition, though simple, is attractive in that it addresses the fuller rhetorical situation, and not just a preacher's rhetorical goals. But notice that in both Indermark's and Hoefler's definition, there lies the purpose of telling, of rehearsing doctrines and histories.

More definitions of preaching are scattered throughout this project. For example, in chapter three, I explore the shifting power dynamics in American Protestant churches. And nineteenth-century American preacher Phillips Brooks' definition that preaching proves telling: "Preaching is bringing the truth through personality" (26). But in order to provide a framework for this project, here, I offer my own definition of preaching more in the Indermark and Hoefler tradition. I assert that preaching involves *practice*, *purpose*, and *place*. Admittedly, I am employing an ancient homiletical strategy of alliteration. This practice, although widely seen as somewhat outdated if not silly, does aid audiences in remembering main points. But I also view it as a nod to the countless preachers whose creative alliteration held audience attention through the ages.

Practice

The practice of preaching refers to the sermon event itself—its frequency and its oral nature. As a practice, preaching requires the speaker to "stand and deliver" before a group. Whether speaking from memory, extempore, or using notes or a full manuscript, preachers regularly deliver oral texts to their audiences. This event involves the presentation of the self (a concept I explore in detail in chapter four) and the use of the body to communicate. Phillips Brooks (1835-1893) asserts, "No multiplication of books can ever supersede the human voice. No newly opened channel of approach to man's mind and heart can ever do away with man's readiness to receive impressions through his fellow man" (29). Of course, Brooks' statement may prove highly controversial today. Electronic texts and their remediation of print (Bolter *Writing*) only echo the remediation of the body itself through television, radio, and internet video. And certainly, electronic media have become a primary means of communication in our culture. But Brooks' point does stand, that the human voice commands attention and that as social creatures, humans want to hear and be heard.

As a side note, I appreciate the athletic connotation that the term "practice" also carries. Effective preachers know that part of their job involves the work of studying and interpreting the community's respected text and shaping those ideas into an accessible oration. This habit of study and composition indeed resembles the regular, disciplined practice of the athlete, who repeats processes in preparation for the performance of competition. The preacher also prepares for the performance of the sermon; the work of study leads directly to presenting the self and engaging with listeners in the preaching moment.

Purpose

As John Indermark's definition of preaching suggests, the purpose of the sermon may entail several rhetorical goals: instruction, correction, exhortation, proclamation, and prophecy. I do not want to lose sight of these varied functions of preaching. However, a larger purpose, and one that distinguishes preaching from most other rhetorical arts, is interaction with the unseen. Preaching blurs the socially constructed lines between mind, body, and spirit, and between the human and the divine. Most Protestant groups view the Bible itself as a mysterious combination of human effort and divine inspiration. In this way, the scriptures are incarnational, the unseen moving through bodies and language, much the same way Christians believe Jesus had a duel human/divine nature. Therefore, the preacher's work of interpreting and presenting a sacred text is an act of taking inspired narratives and concepts and applying them to the immediate human

experience of the audience. The preacher participates with the holy and through the sermon draws listeners into the same experience, at the same time fostering religious experience and forming the community's religious identity. This point distinguishes preaching from much (but not all of) classical and political oratory.[1] Its source material (the Bible) and its "unworldly motives" (Broadus 16) lend a different kind of gravitas and purpose.

I realize that this part of my definition excludes many rhetorical events we commonly refer to as "preaching," such as the impassioned pleas parents and teachers often make as they try to influence younger generations to make good decisions. On one hand, I am tempted to say that these people are indeed preaching in that "the unseen" in this case would be the child's future. However, I stand by this emphasis on mingling with divinity because it takes into account the worldviews that draw preacher and congregation to gather in the first place. A belief in an unseen God, who has acted and does act within the human experience, is at the core of religious communities, and acts as the primary motivation to preach.

Place

Here, I take up Hoefler's emphasis on context for the act of preaching. Sermons take place in the context of worship, as one of the primary events within Christian groups. Obviously, especially in a free society, worship can happen in homes, parks, university auditoria, and virtually any other space. But usually, preaching occurs in buildings set aside for the express purposes of worship, fellowship, and instruction. Further, preaching often takes place in a central location in these buildings, in a sanctuary and behind a pulpit. Focusing on the places of preaching leads into discussion of the politics of space in chapter four. In short, because worship and preaching have such a long history, the acts themselves and the spaces surrounding them carry expectation and meaning. An emphasis on place also draws attention to the bodies that occupy those spaces, surfacing issues such as race and gender and the ways institutions and the sermons that take place within them can be oppressive or empowering, upholding or challenging cultural belief.

This framework of practice, purpose, and place serves to narrow my focus in this project as I examine the frequent, live, face-to-face sermon event in the context of religious communities. However, within these parameters, opportunities arise to explore strategies

[1] Many nineteenth-century American political speeches are so replete with scriptural references and appeals to Christian morality that they seem indistinguishable from a sermon.

preachers use to establish credibility and trust with the audience. And it is here, in the realm of the artistic proof of *ethos*, that the preacher's delivery becomes particularly important. Through character presentation in the performance of the sermon, the speaker fosters assent and works to define group identity.

This dissertation, then, in exploring delivery and preaching alone and then as a pair, consists of one prolonged argument that builds incrementally. I demonstrate the low status of delivery, establish preaching as a site for its recovery, outline the challenges in persuading through oral discourse in Protestant churches, and join preaching and delivery in an attempt to redefine the fifth canon's role in persuasion. Chapter one, "The Place of Delivery in the History of Rhetoric," surveys rhetorical history to explore the traditionally low status of delivery. Working through the major works of theorists such as Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian, I show that delivery involves the use of the speaker's voice and body, a "noetic" transfer of ideas from speaker to listener, and the communication (and attempted inspiration) of emotions. Along with these competing physical, noetic, and pathetic views, the difficulty of analyzing "natural" performative talent makes the fifth canon amorphous and resistant to neat division and classification, a dominant mode of analysis in Western thought. This chapter also outlines some of the champions of delivery and the obstacles they faced in developing a coherent theory for the fifth canon.

Having established the complexity of the fifth canon, in chapter two, "Preaching and Rhetorical Theory," I offer the rhetorical art of preaching as a lens through which I will redefine delivery. These two fields, classical rhetoric and preaching, share a troubled past. My broad historical research shows that starting with Paul the Apostle, early Christian leaders struggled to shape community identity within a pagan culture that often was hostile toward new religions. In this context, to what extent could sermons draw from the pagan art of rhetoric? After centuries of conflicting messages concerning the proper relationship between preaching and rhetoric, Augustine's *de Doctrina Christiana* finally gave preachers express permission to use the neutral rhetorical arts to persuade their congregations to faith and action. Yet, it would take several more centuries for Christian theorists to fully embrace classical rhetorical texts. The evolution of sermon forms such as the homily, thematic sermon, and expository sermon demonstrates the slow, labored merging of preaching and rhetoric in the Western tradition. From the early modern period and beyond, preachers such as Hugh Blair were producing the most influential theory for

rhetorical education. Thus, homiletics, the study of preaching, has become a significant contributor to the development of rhetorical theory.

In chapter three, "The Relevance Imperative," I focus on the writings of leading homileticians from the last fifty years, such as Fred Craddock and Haddon Robinson, to explore the shifting power relations in American Protestant churches. As institutional authority has waned in the Postmodern era, preaching itself has undergone transformation. Contemporary homiletics texts largely prioritize relevance as a primary goal of preaching, requiring preachers to rely not upon the dignity of their position as a source of authority, but upon the ancient authorities of the biblical text and one's personal *ethos*. They must bridge the ancient text with the lived experience of the listener, while presenting a seemingly authentic, transparent self. This approach to the art of preaching greatly elevates the need for the preacher to strive for identification with hearers. I assert that delivery, as the realm of *ethos* and the moment of contact between speaker and listener, directly shapes this all-important identification.

Given these shifts in preaching's rhetorical goals, in chapter four, "*Ethos* and the Politics of Delivery," I make the case for an *ethos*-based theory of delivery. I build from the work of such researchers as Roxanne Mountford and Beverly Moss to establish the pulpit as a highly politicized oratorical space, and cast preaching as an event during which both speaker and audience project belief and shape community identity. Three different approaches to the artistic proof of *ethos* provide a framework for a re-theorization of the fifth canon as involving different forms of self-presentation. In particular, the performance of cultural commonplaces, recognizable character types and attitudes, fosters identification and contributes to persuasion.

Finally, in chapter five, "Delivery and Identification in a Religious Discourse Community," I present findings from a participant observation case study at one local Protestant church, exploring and analyzing *in situ* this revised theory of delivery. I conducted interviews with the pastor, observed and videotaped a series of sermons, and held focus group discussions with congregants immediately after each sermon. This research reveals the valuable role of the speech event within the community, shaping identity and fostering identification in the preacher-listener relationship. I conclude by envisioning new avenues—in gathered and online communities—for continued study of delivery as a rhetorical art.

My research establishes the importance of rhetorical delivery in persuasion, opening pathways to reclaim the fifth canon in contexts such as classrooms, political events, or online

community interactions. I define delivery as a moment of contact in which politicized bodies occupy politicized spaces to form, solidify, and challenge beliefs. In other words, the delivery of a text can foreground the speaker's gender, race, age, and many other factors, thus surfacing social codes about appropriate practice in spaces such as the pulpit or the classroom, which have a long history of silencing many who would speak. In the classroom, student interaction through delivery of writing in process can develop rhetorical knowledge, as instructor and peers aid the writer in envisioning audience, understanding the rhetorical situation, and augmenting academic discourse. Further, this framework allows for closer analysis of the power relations inherent in these community interactions, inviting critique of the prohibitions placed upon certain speakers, as well as deeper understanding of the ideologies behind the privileging of some speakers and discourses over others. Therefore, this theory of delivery can serve to make these spaces of interaction and moments of contact more democratic and more empowering to community members.

A Personal Note

Before moving to Oxford, Ohio and starting my PhD work at Miami University, I earned a Master of Divinity and served as a pastor at a small church in northeast Ohio from 1999 to 2001. During that time, I took great joy in the act of preaching— interpreting ancient texts to address the ethical issues of our day, speaking to matters of pain and reconciliation, and exploring with the congregation our identities within this small community. Looking back, I see that I can almost sum up the whole experience with "negotiation and identification." In that church's 150-year history, I was first (and still the only) woman pastor. In fact, I do not remember anyone there telling me about having a female pastor at any church they attended. For most members, their only experience with women pastors was through the Methodist church across the road, with whom we shared an annual Thanksgiving service.

Therefore, as a twenty-six-year-old woman, my entry into that congregation was a constant negotiation of roles. I was now a member of the all-male trustee board that maintained the church building. How would my input be received? Some of the older women seemed delighted that the pastor could now participate in the occasional "women's tea" gathering. Was there some kind of priestly distance I should maintain in such situations? How should I dress on Sunday mornings or on a hospital visit? To what extent should I talk about my marriage in sermon illustrations? I imagined a woman's perspective in that context would be refreshing to

some, but how might I handle the situation if it made others uncomfortable? To the congregation's credit, not once did I encounter a cross word, a disapproving look, or a single sentence that began with, "Around here we've always…" Rather, they received me warmly and openly, making those two years overwhelmingly positive. Nonetheless, I had key decisions to make at every turn, especially when it came to preaching. I needed to maintain a balance between educating the congregation about the Bible and making concrete applications based on its principles. I had to mediate between an other-worldly focus and an emphasis on current social needs, and of course, like any other church, we had to struggle together to negotiate resistance and accommodation to the culture around us (Moss 22).

I found that identification was the means of negotiating all these issues, large and small. Through growing friendships, fostered primarily through frequent potluck dinners, I began to sense the varied worldviews and diverse backgrounds of the core forty (or so) members who attended every week. The teacher and mother of two school-age boys had a heart for the disabled. The florist and her auto-worker husband feared for their son's safety as he served in the military. The widows frequently spoke about health concerns, but also found comfort in the thought of heaven and the possibility of seeing their husbands again. The single mother treasured her own father more than ever because of the active role he played in his young granddaughter's life. This growing understanding directly informed my composition of sermons. I saw the pulpit as a relational space, and my own interpretation of scripture as an opportunity to encourage, educate, and exhort.

This project is the result of my experience as a teacher, a scholar, and a pastor. I have found that study and preparation, writing, relationships with students and congregants, and my own performance (delivery) in rhetorical moments are inextricably bound. My hope is that by looking through the lens of preaching, I can construct a framework for the study of oratory and delivery in multiple contexts, one that sheds light on the role of delivery in persuasion and in the formation of community.

Chapter One: The Place of Delivery in the History of Rhetoric

INTRODUCTION

In the Fall of 2009, I sat down with a group of congregants at a local Protestant church, for the last of three weekly focus group discussions. Just like the previous two weeks, the participants and I had just listened to our pastor deliver a sermon from the first chapter of the New Testament book of Ephesians. And just like the previous two weeks, the group was eager to talk about the sermon topic, the illustrations Pastor Jeremy used to communicate his points, and the ways the group would apply those ideas to their lives. However, I had noticed that with one exception, group members were reluctant to discuss how Pastor Jeremy delivered his sermon. In week one of the study, one group member, Christina, who had a background in theater, made thoughtful comments about Jeremy's delivery and his persona in front of the congregation. But due to out-of-state travel, Christina withdrew from the study after the first week, and I missed her. Although in the focus group discussions I did not want to push too hard to make the group talk about delivery, when the topic did arise over the next two weeks, the conversation seemed to fizzle into a short exchange on the extent of a speaker's reliance on written notes. One participant also offered an anecdote about childhood church experiences with a pastor who tended to shout from the pulpit. Finally, in this last focus group meeting, some of the participants expressed how they felt about talking about delivery:[2]

Charles: Typically when I notice body and voice, it means my attention is drifting. It's like when I notice the music in a movie, then maybe the movie's not so good. So today I didn't notice. It was all, well, it was a great package.

Samuel: I think that's my response too. I'd have to actually sit and think a lot because he kind of gets out of the way and lets the—I know he works hard at it. I just don't—

Charles: You don't see the work. You don't notice the effort.

Samuel: Yeah

[Pause]

Interviewer: And Jeremy doesn't do a lot of pacing or other dramatic movements—

Robert: Well those things become the focus if you're not careful, those motions.

[2] Names have been changed

Donna: And I never noticed any of that because I was listening to the word until you all brought it up. Now I'm being distracted because I'm looking for it [laughter]. And I have to pray beforehand that I'm not distracted from God's word [laughs]. And I'm like, "OK this is not the way you would want this, so please don't let me pay attention…"

What is it about the fifth canon that would drive a person literally to pray to God that she would *not* take note of it while watching a speaker deliver a sermon? How does focusing on delivery so effectively distract listeners from the content of the oration? I believe this exchange during the focus group indicates the extent to which delivery has perplexed those who would theorize it, for millennia. Certainly many have attempted to construct systems that could educate rhetors about delivering orations in courtrooms, senate chambers, classrooms, churches, and various kinds of public gatherings. But all too often, these attempts seem disparate, brief, and frankly shallow.

This chapter acts as an overview of delivery's place in rhetorical history, outlining both the competition and overlap between various approaches to theorizing the fifth canon. I assert that such competition and overlap have contributed to delivery's marginalization in rhetorical theory, to the point that even defenders of systems of delivery have erected safeguards, preconditions, in order to protect listeners from manipulation. Finally, I summarize periodic attempts to revive the fifth canon, paying special attention to efforts in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, to assert that grounding a theory of delivery in the person of the speaker, *ethos*, can more effectively reclaim the fifth canon, especially in contexts of oral rhetoric. Not only can a deeper exploration of delivery reveal ways speakers can skillfully present a text with an eye toward persuasion; an *ethos*-based theory of delivery also opens pathways to study audience beliefs and the ways an oration enacts and shapes the speaker-audience relationship.

THE PHYSICAL/NOETIC CONTINUUM

In her 1997 book, *Dramatizing Writing: Reincorporating Delivery in the Classroom*, Virginia Skinner-Linnenberg briefly traces the history of delivery. She identifies two predominant views of the fifth canon: physical, which emphasizes the use of voice and the body; and noetic, which stresses the transfer of information from speaker to audience (Skinner-Linnenberg 1). Those who emphasize the physical element of delivery offer speakers advice about specific vocal tones, hand positions, arm gestures, and eye contact. This conception of

delivery often results in a menu of vocal or bodily maneuvers from which the speaker can choose in order to communicate effectively. A noetic approach, on the other hand, focuses more on cognition; the oration is successful if the audience understands the speaker's ideas.

Physical

Skinner-Linnenberg categorizes Cicero as one who takes a more physical view. Indeed, he defines delivery as "the speech of the body" (3.59). Cicero's characters in *de Oratore* (55 BCE) discuss specific facial expressions, arm movements, and tones of voice. In this dialogue, Crassus advises, "the arm should be considerably extended, as one of the weapons of oratory; the stamping of the foot should be used only in the most vehement efforts, at their commencement or conclusion" (3.59). But he devotes more attention to the voice, asking "what is more adapted to delight the ear, and produce agreeableness of delivery, than change, variety, and alteration of tone?" (3.60). Most of Cicero's brief treatment of the topic in this dialogue focuses on the bodily action as a means of holding audience attention and gaining audience agreement. He makes a strong connection between delivery and acting, asserting that the ideal speaker should not only possess broad knowledge of subjects and skilled use of language, but also the "voice of tragedians, the gesture almost of the best actors" (1.28).

Roman rhetorician Quintilian (95 CE) offers more extensive detail about the physical element of delivery. In *Institutio Oratoria*, he spends considerable space discussing clear pronunciation (11.3.33), natural pauses (37), pace (52), pitch (41), and use of breath, even specifying that sounds such as hissing, panting, and wheezing can be distracting, but also can be used effectively, to show exasperation with an issue or an opponent (55). Quintilian also enumerates dozens of minute finger positions, teaching his readers which ones are appropriate in given situations, and which ones he considers to be indiscretions. The following quote gives a taste of the level of detail: "The commonest Gesture consists of bending the middle finger against the thumb and extending the other three. This is useful (a) in the Prooemium, the hand being moved slightly forwards with a gentle movement to either side, and the head and shoulders gradually following the direction of the hand…" (11.3.133). Quintilian follows this description with other gestures, some of which may or may not be suitable for the Prooemium or Narrative portions of the speech.

Hugh Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1783) defends the study of physical delivery and seems to retain this physical approach throughout the text. He states,

> To superficial thinkers, the management of the voice and gesture, in public speaking, may appear to relate to decoration only, and to be one of the inferior arts of catching an audience. But this is far from being the case. It is intimately connected with what is, or ought to be, the end of all public speaking, persuasion; and therefore deserves the study of the most grave and serious speakers as much as of those, whose only aim it is to please. (327)

In Lecture XXXIII, Blair devotes sections to each of the following aspects of delivery: volume, articulation, pace, proper pronunciation, emphasis, pause, natural tone, and airs), gesture.

Gilbert Austin, author of *Chironomia; or, a Treatise on Rhetorical Delivery* (1806), followed Blair's example of outlining the minute details of physical delivery. Lamenting audience members' inability to record and recall a speaker's strategies of delivery, his work tries to establish a notation system, in order to preserve physical details of the oration and make the teaching of delivery more uniform. Austin provides an impressive review of classical rhetorical theory, devoting chapters to such topics as the motions of the hands and the elevation of the arms, matching his own descriptions with engraved figures. Ultimately history has viewed *Chironomia*, as well as other primarily physical approaches to delivery, as sterile sets of rules, devoid of context (Skinner-Linnenberg 14). Like the finger positions described by Quintilian, many of the movements depicted in *Chironomia* are socially constructed and do not translate well across time and culture.

Noetic

Francis Bacon, on the other hand, demonstrates a noetic view of delivery in *The Advancement of Learning* (1605), defining it as "expressing or transferring our knowledge to others" (742). In other words, an oration's delivery is the moment during which the speaker transports her ideas into the minds of listeners. Of course, the body is the vehicle for this act of transportation, but "noetics" elevate the workings of the mind (Skinner-Linnenberg 2), seeing delivery as the way a speaker helps listeners to know what she knows. Francois Fénelon also falls into this category of theorists. He states in *Dialogues on Eloquence* (1679) that "The movement of the body is then a painting of the thoughts of the soul" (99), thus seeming to elevate those thoughts as the primary object of oratory, with the body as a communicative tool.

Thomas Sheridan, an important figure in the eighteenth-century elocution movement, also falls into Skinner-Linnenberg's noetic category of theorists of delivery. In his *Course of Lectures on Elocution* (1762), he states,

> Now, as in order to know what another knows, and in the same manner that he knows it, an exact transcript of the ideas which pass in the mind of one man, must be made by sensible marks, in the mind of another; so in order to feel what another feels, the emotions which are in the mind of one man, must also be communicated to that of another, by sensible marks. (qtd. in Skinner-Linnenberg 13)

The "marks" Sheridan refers to are tones of voice, gestures, and facial expressions. For Sheridan, voice, gesture, and countenance have their own language, which moves beyond words, and accesses the mind's faculties of passion and imagination. Speakers must utilize this language in order to effectively transport their ideas into the minds of listeners (Sheridan xi). In 1827, Ebenezer Porter's *Analysis of the Principles of Rhetorical Delivery* followed Sheridan's noetic view of delivery, defining it simply as "the communication of our thoughts to others, by oral language" (13). Again, physical elements of delivery, including vocal tones and gestures, act as tools or marks, aiding in the orator's ultimate goal of sharing ideas.

Tensions and Overlaps

Skinner-Linnenberg claims that "theorists of rhetoric have conceived of delivery as primarily either a physical or noetic activity. This tension between the two ends of the continuum eventually distanced delivery from the other parts of the rhetorical canon…" (1). In other words, the physical and the noetic, on separate ends of a continuum, seem too different, too difficult to merge into one coherent theory, which has caused consternation among rhetoricians and a subsequent separation of the canons, with invention, arrangement, and style categorized within written discourse, and memory and delivery relegated to oral performance (1).

Skinner-Linnenberg's binary definitions of delivery suit her analysis of the writing classroom. Traditionally, writing has been considered a noetic activity, one that communicates ideas from one person to others, while speaking is more of a physical activity that saw a sharp decline in the writing classroom in the nineteenth century.[3] Skinner-Linnenberg calls for a

[3] The decline of debate and oral presentation in the American classroom has itself become a topic of spirited debate. Growing class sizes have certainly contributed to the phenomenon, but the entrance of women into classrooms in the nineteenth century also pressed the issue. In his 1997 book *Composition-*

reintegration of spoken delivery in teaching strategies, bringing together the noetic and the physical, writing and speaking (34). She joins the critique of writing as a solitary activity (Welch 19), stressing that students who participate in dialogue with others throughout the writing process tend to see more clearly any misrepresentations and misunderstandings in their work (Skinner-Linnenberg 42). With the presence of an "other," students exchange meanings, internalize the conversation, and take that conversation into the writing medium (40), thus working with delivery in both the physical and noetic sense.

I appreciate Skinner-Linnenberg's call to allow dialogue to inform even the earliest phases of the writing process. I agree that teachers of writing who facilitate peer response groups merely for editing work are missing out on their students' potential to develop their writing strategies together. However, I disagree that an either/or tension between noetic and physical approaches to delivery has been the primary cause for its lower status among the canons of rhetoric. First, although Skinner-Linnenberg grants that rhetoricians can land "toward" one end of the continuum, thus allowing for degrees of identification with one extreme or the other, theorists she categorizes as either physical or noetic in their treatments of delivery usually include significant elements of the other. Cicero, for instance, whom Skinner-Linnenberg categorizes as firmly on the physical side, never discusses the body without including a noetic or emotional element. In *de Oratore*, Crassus states that "every emotion of the mind has from nature its own peculiar look, tone, and gesture" (3.57). He makes sure to tie voice and gesture closely with the communication of specific emotions and thoughts. Soon after the above quote about emotions, Crassus continues, "It is the eyes, by whose intense or languid gaze, as well as

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Rhetoric: Backgrounds, Theory, and Pedagogy (U of Pittsburgh Press) Robert Connors stated (somewhat notoriously) that because rhetoric is an agonistic activity geared toward male display (25), the idea of debating a woman seemed unnatural and demeaning for men (50). His description of the resulting focus on written discourse borders on an essentialist argument about the contrasting temperaments of men and women, and could even be interpreted as blaming women for the removal of oral discourse from American colleges. Several scholars (e.g. Sharon Crowley, Roxanne Mountford, Lisa Ricker) have critiqued his assessment as simplistic, claiming he downplays women's rhetorical activities in the nineteenth century. I would agree with Lindal Buchanan that the presence of women was indeed a major factor in the removal of argumentation and debate from the classroom, but that this removal, rather than an accommodation, was an "effort to withhold from women knowledge of and practice in the arts of public expression" (44). Buchanan explores in detail the relentless efforts of college administrators, teachers, patrons, and students to prevent women from participating in oratorical activities that in any way resembled the pulpit, the courtroom, or the political public gathering.

by their quick glances and gayety, we indicate the workings of our mind…for action is, as it were, the speech of the body, and ought therefore the more to accord with that of the soul" (3.59). Bodily maneuvers, then, correspond directly to the ideas and feelings of the speaker. Therefore, I find Cicero's physical view of delivery inseparable from mind and thought, as well as from emotion and soul. For this reason I hesitate to categorize him as one of the "physicals" when it comes to rhetorical theory.

Quintilian too complicates the very idea of a continuum between physical and noetic approaches to theorizing the fifth canon. Like Cicero before him, Quintilian specifies that there needs to be congruence between the speaker's thoughts, words, and use of the body. He states, "congruence lends additional force and appropriateness to the subject, and without it the voice and the mind will be making different statements" (11.3.175). Again, the rhetorician sees the physical body as integral to, if not inseparable from, the noetic goal of communicating ideas from one mind to another.[4]

Even Gilbert Austin's *Chironomia,* commonly considered the ultimate example of a physical conception of delivery taken too far, offers elements of a noetic approach. Austin cites Quintilian extensively, but he also quotes Le P. Nicolas Caussin (1619), who describes delivery as the mirror of the mind: "As light therefore proceeds from the sun, so does action proceed from the inmost recesses of the mind. Nay the mind displays itself by action as if in a mirror; and makes itself known externally, by the countenance, by the eyes, by the hands, and by the voice, the most excellent organ of eloquence" (qtd in Austin 176).

Therefore, while Skinner-Linnenberg claims that *separation* and tension between physical and noetic conceptions of the fifth canon has led to its denigration in rhetorical theory, I argue that the fluid *blending* of physical and noetic conceptions is a more significant cause for this denigration. The ease by which theorists have coasted between the two conceptions demonstrates delivery's resistance to firm categorization. In fact, I would add a third element, an emphasis on the pathetic effects of delivery, into this complicated mix. Even Francois Fénelon's metaphor that bodily movements are a "painting of the thoughts of the soul," which seems to

[4] Later in this chapter, I will address the relationship between these rhetorical goals and the requirement that the orator be a "good man." For Quintilian and many others, the speaker's *ethos* must be above reproach in order to be considered an orator at all. I will depict this "good man" requirement as a safeguard (against the abuses of rhetoric) which allows Quintilian to press further into theorizing delivery.

place him in the noetic camp, finds immediate complication in the text. The character "A," the wise teacher of the group who introduces this painting metaphor, goes on to explain that everything in the painting must "represent vividly and naturally the *sentiments* of him who is speaking and the nature of the things he speaks of" (emphasis mine, 99). Fénelon seems to agree with Quintilian's idea of congruence, using the metaphor not only to praise those noble thoughts of the soul (a noetic element), but also to stress the necessity of matching those thoughts with the appropriate emotions and expressing thought and emotion with appropriate physical delivery. Delivery, then, involves management of the body, communication of ideas, and an effort to inspire emotion in the audience, three elements which often overlap or blend together in rhetorical theory.

PATHOS AND DELIVERY

The parallel structure in the following quote (also quoted above) from Thomas Sheridan's *Course of Lectures on Elocution* shows that for Sheridan, communicating ideas and communicating emotions are two related but separate enterprises: "an exact transcript of the ideas which pass in the mind of one man, must be made by sensible marks, in the mind of another; so in order to feel what another feels, the emotions which are in the mind of one man, must also be communicated to that of another, by sensible marks" (qtd. in Skinner-Linnenberg 13). So according to Sheridan, there are marks (gestures, tones, and facial expressions) that accomplish noetic goals, and others that communicate emotions. This description lines up with faculty psychology in the eighteenth century. Sheridan's contemporaries would agree that these communicative goals appeal to separate faculties of the mind. However, Skinner-Linnenberg, while citing the above quote and occasionally mentioning emotion in rhetorical theory, fails to address the pathetic conception of the fifth canon, thus seeming to conflate the noetic with the emotional. While I see extensive overlap between these two elements of delivery, I believe that each deserves its own consideration, if only to demonstrate the complexity of the fifth canon.

This pathetic[5] aspect of delivery has a strong presence in rhetorical theory. Rhetoricians seem to include it in to their instructions just as regularly as they discuss the physical and noetic elements of the fifth canon. Just as the noetic view sees a speech's delivery as the moment of transfer of ideas between speaker and audience, so it also acts as a potential moment of

[5] By "pathetic," of course, I am referring to that which pertains to *pathos*, the artistic proof through which the speaker appeals to the emotions of the audience.

transportation or transference of emotions. The speaker not only attempts to communicate the emotions she is experiencing; she attempts to draw her listeners to feel those emotions themselves. Aristotle, in his very brief discussion of delivery, expresses the former goal, outlining parameters for a possible future consideration of the canon: "It is a matter of how the voice should be used in expressing each emotion, sometimes loud and sometimes soft and [sometimes] intermediate, and how the pitch accents should be entoned…" (3.1.4). He seems reluctant to discuss the latter goal of inspiring audience emotion, and tends to pile on the corrections and qualifications. He asserts, "to speak in one way rather than another does make a difference in regard to clarity, though not a great difference; but all these things are forms of outward show and intended to affect the audience" (3.1.6).

Cicero is much less hesitant in granting leeway to an orator who would appeal to the passions. In *de Oratore*, the character Crassus asks, "For who is ignorant that the highest power of the orator consists of exciting the minds of men to anger, or to hatred, or to grief, or in recalling them from these more violent emotions to gentleness and compassion?" (1.12). Later, in Book Three, Crassus connects this overall goal of oratory with the delivery of orations. In a statement foundational to his theory of delivery, he states "…every emotion of the mind has from nature its own peculiar look, tone, and gesture" (3.57). Crassus follows this claim with multiple quotes from literature and famous speeches, describing the necessary tone of voice or gesture to depict that particular emotion, be it fear, anger, lamentation, pleasure, or trouble (3.58). Therefore, for Cicero, the larger goals of oratory consist of inspiring emotions, but his consideration of delivery itself revolves around the expression of the speaker's feelings.

Quintilian blends the goals of expressing and inspiring emotion even more seamlessly. In his discussion of delivery, he references the emotional impact of theater, asking, "And if Delivery has this power to produce anger, tears, or anxiety over matters which we know to be fictitious and unreal, how much more powerful must it be when we really believe!" (11.3.5). To allow the delivery of an oration to carry even more emotional weight than a Greek tragedy is a significant move for this teacher of rhetoric. His emphasis on the virtue of the orator assures that this strong appeal to the emotions be genuine and not manipulative. Quintilian condemns those who view delivery as by definition mere artifice, "affected and unnatural," (11.3.10). He insists that genuine emotion has a valid place, and that delivery consists of a blend of nature and art, natural use of emotion combined with study and practice (11.3.11). The speaker should allow

herself to be emotionally moved by the subject, then design the delivery to "convey to the judge's mind the attitude it has acquired from ours" (62). In other words, delivery is a window to the speaker's inner self, letting the audience not only to know how she feels, but to experience that emotion with the speaker.

Like Cicero, Quintilian uses multiple examples, advising students of rhetoric to line up their rhetorical goal with the appropriate emotion, with a particular style of delivery. For example, to make a request or offer an apology, the rhetor should use a subdued style of delivery, which depicts humility (11.3.63). Therefore, the delivery of an oration allows the speaker to achieve the desired emotional impact when the audience recognizes the emotion in the behavior of the orator (in its many forms: volume and tone of voice, physical movements, and facial expressions), and connects that emotion to the content of the speech

Following Quintilian's teaching, Francois Fénelon speaks through his character, "A," to assert that

> Over and above simple conviction, persuasion therefore has this: that not only does she reveal the truth, but she also paints it as pleasant, and she moves men in its favor. Hence, in eloquence, everything consists in adding to solid proof the means of interesting the listener, and of using his passions for the purpose which one has in mind. One inspires him to anger at ingratitude, to horror of cruelty, to pity for misery, to love of virtue, and so on. (90)

This inspiration should never cross into manipulation; the speaker's feelings must be genuine. "A" continues, saying, "It is necessary to feel passion in order to paint it well" (105). However, this act of "painting" emotions using the body is an art that can be improved. The orator can observe people's actions when they are frightened or exultant, and imitate those mannerisms and vocal tones. Fénelon only advises, "If you use art, conceal it so well by imitation that one will take it for nature itself" (104). Again, if the speaker, in this case a preacher, is virtuous; he will not try to deceive, but will both portray and inspire the necessary emotions in order to persuade. Further, delivery is the moment of this portrayal, this painting of the speaker's inner thoughts, during which he tries to "enter the hearts of others to win them over" (90).[6]

[6] Cicero's three rhetorical goals, to instruct, please, and persuade, seem immensely successful in rhetorical history. Augustine in particular asserts that without first teaching the listener doctrine, then making that doctrine pleasing, the orator cannot inspire listeners to action (*Doctrina* 4.27). Similarly,

Obviously this *pathos*-based view of delivery has merit. Speakers can and do inspire emotional responses in listeners. I assert that delivery, which involves physical, noetic, and emotional elements, has been too multifaceted for a clean systematization. The mysterious aspect of talent only adds to the slipperiness of the fifth canon, making it that much more difficult to analyze.

TALENT: THE X-FACTOR

To what extent is delivery a learned art or technique, and to what extent is it a product of one's personality or charisma? If an orator has a natural gift for public speaking, can delivery be taught? It is hard to deny that some speakers simply communicate better, connect with audiences with more ease, and look more comfortable while delivering an oration. But how does one categorize or classify charisma? How can teachers and scholars of rhetoric systematically study talent, when its most popular synonyms are terms such as "it" or "X-factor"? Perhaps this mystery, this elusiveness, contributes to suspicions of delivery, or the brevity of content from those who would attempt to theorize the fifth canon.

In *Against the Sophists* (390 BCE), Isocrates lists in descending order the qualities of a strong orator: "ability" (14), "practical experience," and "formal training" (15). He condemns any teacher who claims to possess the power to turn any student into a great orator, especially if that teacher receives pay. This formal education can increase students' knowledge in a wider variety of subjects, but it "cannot fully fashion men who are without natural aptitude into good debaters or writers" (15). Although only a few of Isocrates' writings remain, it seems this teacher relied too much on practical assessment of each student to ever attempt a systematic analysis of rhetoric, because he believed that "hard and fast rules" could never suffice to prepare orators for public service (12).

Aristotle claims that whenever delivery does receive a fuller treatment, it will be similar to the study of acting. He asserts, "Acting is a matter of natural talent and largely not reducible to artistic rule; but in so far as it involves how things are said [*lexis*], it has an artistic element"

Hugh Blair's three goals of rhetoric are, in ascending order of importance, pleasing the hearer, informing the hearer, and causing the passions to "rise together," thus leading to action (236). I would say that this rising-together of passions contributes to this discussion of *pathos* and delivery. But what of pleasing an audience? I would refer to this goal as the "*pathos* of delight," which is certainly worthy of further attention, especially as an area of fascinating overlap between the canons of style and delivery. In chapter four, I discuss ways a speaker's delivery pleases the listener by portraying familiar audience attitudes.

(3.1.7). However, Aristotle does not delve into the details of this artistic element, suggesting only a few parameters for a future consideration. Cicero demonstrates that this natural talent is multifaceted, involving abilities of the mind to invent and remember arguments, as well as "volubility of tongue, strength of voice, strength of lungs, and a peculiar conformation and aspect of the whole countenance and body" (1.25). His use of the word "peculiar" is telling, as is his admission that "what is good may be made better by education." However, his emphasis on an orator's broad knowledge of all subjects seems to detract from greater detail regarding exactly how a rhetor's abilities can improve.

Francois Fénelon also includes the X-factor of talent in a list of qualifications for a good preacher. He claims, "A preacher who knows that book [the Bible] well, and who has a talent for speaking, joined to the authority of his ministry and his good example, will not have need of a lengthy preparation in order to make excellent discourses" (135). Ministers have the difficult and lofty task of diagnosing their people's needs and expressing what they need to hear in such a way that the flock will listen and be nourished. Therefore, "pastors should be chosen only from that part of the priesthood which has the gift of speech" (136). But again, the teacher does not even attempt to analyze such a gift. Perhaps Fénelon agreed with Augustine that eloquence, the ability to speak persuasively, was a divine gift (Augustine *Doctrina* 4.10), too mysterious to be subject to detailed analysis.

Viewing delivery through a broad historical lens demonstrates that this canon of rhetoric could quickly become a cumbersome subject, even for ancient thinkers well practiced in systematically subdividing and analyzing a topic. The physical element of delivery involves voice, including tone, volume, and pitch. The variety of human voices, plus the versatility of a speaker to alter his or her voice, plus the numerous rhetorical situations which call for these alterations, greatly expands the topic of voice. A detailed consideration of gesture, too, swells to an unmanageable size when one considers all the possible expressions of the human face and the movement of body parts (head tilt, shoulder and arm positions, finger positions, stance, walking, etc.). And what of the speaker's hair style and wardrobe choices? Certainly one's physical appearance carries just as much social and cultural meaning as facial expressions and bodily movements.[7]

[7] See below in chapter one, and chapter four for more detailed discussion about *ethos*, the speaker's reputation and presentation of self, in delivery.

Delivery also involves a noetic component—the communication of information in such a way that after a speech, the audience possesses the same knowledge as the speaker. But this element further complicates the issue, tying delivery to the invention and arrangement of that information. Further, can this knowledge be cleanly separated from the speaker's and/or listener's emotional response to it? A pathetic element of delivery involves both portrayal of the speaker's feelings and the attempts of the speaker to arouse similar feelings in the audience. Finally, when the rhetorician factors in talent, itself unexplainable in many ways, it becomes impossible to delineate the relationship between talent as a "gift" and learned speaking ability through education, imitation, and other forms of practice. I outline the collision of all these elements of delivery to assert that this canon has too many faces, too much overlap between the differing approaches, and too many inexplicable factors to allow for systematic treatment in rhetorical theory. This messiness violates Platonic beliefs about absolute truth and the scholar's role of neatly classifying topics, beliefs that dominated Western thought for millennia.

PLATONIC THOUGHT: TRUTH AND TIDINESS

Platonic notions of truth, coupled with a need for tidy classification and division of subjects, have combined to cause negative reactions to the fifth canon. Susan Jarratt lays a concise foundation for this point: "For Plato, rhetoric was the means of delivering truth already discovered through dialectic" (64). Dialectic, then, the practice of using philosophy in an intimate setting with a chosen few, is the means by which thinkers obtain objective truth principles. In *Phaedrus*, Plato specifies that a true orator knows the truth about the topic (156), and uses rhetoric to put that truth into motion. However, the risk for the speaker is high that "unless he pay proper attention to philosophy he will never be able to speak properly about anything" (157). Without this attention, the speaker will only persuade others to evil. Rhetoric, then, is a risky endeavor because it is separate from the dialectic process, removed from knowledge production, and apart from the safe confines of worthy philosophers.

Plato's *Gorgias* asserts a more severe critique of the nature of rhetoric. Instead of an art, rhetoric is a "knack" for flattering listeners and producing pleasure, regardless of truth (Plato *Gorgias* 462). Using their speaking abilities, rhetors convince crowds that their knowledge surpasses that of experts who actually possess the truth, all to sway those crowds in any direction they please (459). Like makeup that produces a false appearance of health, this form of flattery takes on the guise of truth, "caring nothing for the greatest good" (464). Certainly, in Plato's

day, some Athenian declaimers fit this description, priding themselves in their abilities to manipulate their listeners. But by demoting rhetoric from an art to a knack, and by making these sweeping claims about the nature of oratory, Plato essentially divorces rhetoric from truth and knowledge and undercuts the power of public discourse.

Plato levels his attacks on rhetoric as a whole. He does not break the field into its component parts, as future theorists would do as they teach, analyze, or assail rhetoric. However, I find critiques of the delivery of orations implicit in Plato's works. Most of his concern for rhetoric's destructive capability revolves around the moment of contact between the speaker and "the ignorant" (Plato *Gorgias* 459). In other words, the prejudices wielded against the larger field of rhetoric tend to mirror those wielded against the art of delivery. For Plato, these large public groups of listeners want to be flattered; they want to reject the expert doctor's advice in favor of "cookery" (think pastries) from a cook who merely claims medical knowledge (465). Therefore, because Plato seems most suspicious of the "public" part of public discourse, readers can infer that he does not limit his suspicions only to the education and preparation elements of rhetoric. The actual delivery brings to fruition the orator's skill at using flattery to sway the will for his own purposes.

Similarly, later writers discuss oratory using the same concepts and terminology they employ when specifically addressing delivery. Both rhetoric as a whole and its canon of delivery require some measure of talent, practice, imitation, and knowledge of audience. Both engage the emotions of the listener and communicate ideas between speaker and audience. Both make the truth more interesting and appealing. Granted, this overlap reflects (and occurs most often during) times of diminution of rhetoric, such as Peter Ramus's shrinking of rhetoric into style and delivery only. But the fact remains that the same suspicions of theatricality and falsehood, so often applied to rhetoric as a whole, also apply to delivery specifically, to a greater extent than to the other canons of invention, arrangement, style, and memory. Therefore, in addition to delivery's resistance to clear definition due to the inexplicability of natural talent and overlapping physical, noetic, and pathetic elements, Platonic suspicions of oratory as flattery and make-up further obstruct a robust consideration of the fifth canon in rhetorical theory.

The Platonic love of tidiness of thought, as demonstrated in the tendency to neatly classify and divide subjects, also acts as a barrier to fuller theorization of delivery. In *Phaedrus*, the character of Socrates uses two principles to rate his first two discourses with the young pupil.

First, he critiques his own ability in the speeches of "perceiving and bringing together in one idea the scattered particulars, that one may make clear by definition the particular thing which he wishes to explain" (160). Second, Socrates elevates the strategy of "dividing things again by classes, where the natural joints are, and not trying to break any part, after the manner of a bad carver" (160). Plato establishes the skills of grouping, defining, classifying, and dividing are valuable modes of thought for the theorist. In fact, Socrates goes on to specify just how valuable these skills truly are, stating, "Now I myself, Phaedrus, am a lover of these processes of division and bringing together, as aids to speech and thought; and if I think any other man is able to see things that can naturally be collected into one and divided into many, him I follow after and 'walk in his footsteps as if he were a god'" (160). Indeed, for millennia, Western thought has largely walked in Plato's footsteps, elevating classification and division as primary strategies for understanding a subject.

Aristotle granted rhetoric a higher place that did Plato, seeing the art as a means of finding the appropriate arguments to be persuasive in the process of decision-making (1.2.1). Although Aristotle agreed with his mentor that rhetoric is not a science that produces its own field of truth, he recognized the importance of debating probabilities and shaping belief (*pistis*) in a public setting. In short, Aristotle seems to distinguish between people's rhetorical agency and the manipulative demagoguery Plato feared (Olmsted 12). However, Aristotle's entire career, and most of his canon of work, operates through classification and analysis. He seems to revere that process of collecting and dividing, a process that became central to Western thought.

An extreme example of the continuation of this influence is the work of Peter Ramus. In strong disagreement with Quintilian, who defined the orator through virtue, Ramus divorces rhetoric from any consideration of virtue, stating, "rhetoric is not an art which explains all the virtuous qualities of character" (683). Rather, moral philosophers, using dialectic, determine these truths about good and bad. This strong denigration of rhetoric is the natural result of Ramus' division of humankind's greatest gifts into reason and speech. Because reason alone can determine what is good or evil, rhetoric (which along with grammar lies in the field of speech) must not have a place in this process. In fact, Ramus equates measuring a rhetorician by his virtue to measuring a geometrician by his ability to heal the sick (683). To allow any location of truth or virtue into the field of rhetoric would create an intolerable blending (684), so Ramus separates the canons of rhetoric, placing invention, arrangement, and memory within the realm of

logic and dialectic (684), leaving rhetoric to consist of only style and delivery (686), with its only concern being "the embellishment of speech first in tropes and figures, second in dignified delivery" (684). However, I do not believe that Ramus would say that a dialectician should not concern himself with rhetoric. He was not banishing all rhetoric from public discourse. First and foremost, Ramus was a teacher. I believe that these divisions were primarily a teaching aide, giving the esteemed professor clear outlines for instructing his students. Within these outlines, Ramus repeatedly admonishes his students that the different fields "must be kept separate and should not be confused" (684). Ramus simply could not tolerate overlap.

In contrast, Cicero believed that thinking logically and speaking gracefully are "naturally united" (3.16) and that logic and expression could indeed share material. Francois Fénelon agreed. In *Dialogues on Eloquence*, he states that "to separate rhetoric from philosophy is to destroy it, and to make orators into childish, superficial declaimers" (Fénelon 84). The two fields needed to coincide closely. But for Ramus, the process of invention *could* not exist in both the realms of dialectic and of rhetoric. Therefore, in my opinion, Ramus and others of the same mindset often painted themselves into a logical corner, creating clear-cut divisions where they need not be.

The canon of delivery does not fare well within this mode of thinking, this tendency to firmly classify and divide. As I have stated above, delivery is too slippery and unmanageable for neat classification of parts. The relationship between natural talent and improvement through practice is a true perplexity. Even with a detailed regimen of education and practice, some would-be orators could still fall short when debating a talented speaker. Further, the physical element of delivery, the use of the voice and body, offers endless possibilities for detailing the minutia of human expression. But when the actual words used, the ideas conveyed, and the emotions of the subject combine, the analyst is left with layer after layer of data. For example, an impassioned orator may recount an emotional narrative of injustice, while using powerful diction (the "helpless, humble farmer" versus the "greedy, cruel landowner"), while raising his voice and allowing it to crack with emotion, while placing his left hand on his chest, stepping forward, and reaching out to the audience with the right hand, while raising his eyebrows in a sign of distress.

Multiply this one rhetorical situation with other moods, motions, expressions, and tones, and the complexity of delivery becomes apparent. Further, my description of the above situation

has not begun to consider the orator's past experience with his audience, his reputation in the minds of the listeners, his race, class, and level of access to that public forum. Have these listeners heard this kind of speech in this particular setting, and how do those past experiences inform their psychological investment in this speaker and his performance? Cicero's excerpts from plays and speeches, with suggestions for expression, are a noble start for theorizing strategies of delivery. Also, Quintilian's analysis of specific bodily motions and hand positions give the rhetor a menu of choices, while also giving the historian a glimpse into the socially accepted practices of delivery in first and second century (CE) Rome. However, the more one thinks about delivery, the more it seems to expand, overlapping with the other rhetorical canons and venturing into areas of performance, affect, politicized spaces, and community belief.

Aristotle's reaction to this perplexity was to give a few basic, if not dismissive, concepts about how one might study the voice, but to state that he would not undertake such an endeavor. As mentioned above, Aristotle sees a close link between delivery and acting, and after ascribing most success in acting to "natural talent" which is "largely not reducible to artistic rule" (3.1.7), he segues quickly into his much more lengthy discussion of style. Rhetoricians such as Quintilian seemed much more willing to hold onto the hot potato of delivery for longer. However, in order to do so, they put on metaphorical gloves, safeguards against both the expanding nature of the field of delivery, and against the dangers of manipulation and theatricality. These caveats for delivering orations would counter Plato's stereotype of the manipulative orator whose only interest was gain through flattery, and would allow rhetoricians more leeway for theorizing the fifth canon, but at a price.

PRECONDITIONS FOR THE SPEAKER

Virtue/Morality

As mentioned above, Plato and his followers throughout the history of Western philosophy tend to divorce morality from rhetoric, creating suspicions that oratory too easily ignores the truths found through dialectic and thus falling into manipulation. Different theorists respond to this suspicion in different ways. In *Antidosis*, Isocrates defends against a fictional charge that he is corrupting his students. He claims that if a corrupt orator deceives an audience, it is his own fault and not the fault of oratory in general. In fact, rhetoric has the potential to improve such a man. Even an orator motivated by fame will emulate good qualities in order to

impress the audience, and thus virtue will become a habit and eventually change the inner person, making him more virtuous (Isocrates *Antidosis* 278). Isocrates continues, saying,

> the man who wishes to persuade people will not be negligent as to the matter of character; no, on the contrary, he will apply himself above all to establish a most honorable name among his fellow citizens; for who does not know that words carry greater conviction when spoken by men of good repute than when spoken by men who live under a cloud, and that the argument which is made by a man's life is of or weight than that which is furnished by words? Therefore, the stronger a man's desire to persuade his hearers, the more zealously will he strive to be honorable and to have the esteem of his fellow-citizens (278). …an honorable reputation not only lends greater persuasiveness to the words of the man who possesses it, but adds greater luster to his deeds, and is, therefore, more zealously to be sought after by men of intelligence than anything else in the world (279).

Here, one's personal virtue is not a precondition for oratory, but rather a practical goal. The savvy speaker simply *will* pursue virtue because audiences will be more prone to listen.

Aristotle denied that past reputation should have sway in whether an audience gives credence to a speaker. However, within the speech itself, "we believe fair-minded people to a greater extent and more quickly [than we do others] on all subjects in general" (1.2.5). Cicero seems to agree with Isocrates that virtue can appropriately act as a means toward the end of persuasion. In *de Oratore*, Antonius states, "It contributes much to success in speaking, that the morals, principles, conduct, and lives of those who plead causes, and of those for whom they plead, should be such as to merit esteem" (2.43). Respected orators give the audience a "favorable feeling," and so sensible speakers will work to appear modest and humble, free of selfishness or avarice (2.43). Cicero usually carries the reputation for not being hung up on virtue, allowing for non-virtuous speakers to deliver good speeches. However, his character Crassus clearly states that eloquence "should be united with probity and eminent judgment; for if we bestow the faculty of eloquence upon persons destitute of these virtues, we shall not make them orators, but give arms to madmen" (3.14). This more conservative view hearkens back to Cato (234-149 BCE), who originated the phrase *vir bonus dicendi peritus*, a good man skilled in speaking, to describe an orator. But it was Quintilian who took up that definition and based his treatise upon it, greatly influencing Western rhetorical theory.

Quintilian, who ascribes to the fifth canon "an extraordinary force and power in oratory" (11.3.2), makes virtue the primary precondition for one to be considered an orator at all. In *Institutio Oratoria* he heavily emphasizes the "good man speaking well," stating, "I am not only saying that the orator must be a good man, but that *no one* can be an orator *unless* he is a good man" (11.3.3). Of course, this move on Quintilian's part sparks several questions: Who decides who is "good"? Which traits would qualify one as good? Can a tainted reputation be atoned for and reversed? However, because the "good man" requirement immediately eliminates the greedy and power-hungry, it safeguards the study of rhetoric from Plato's sweeping accusations, mentioned above. Even delivery's greatest defenders would follow Quintilian and continue to erect virtue as the greatest safeguard against deception.

As was his custom, Augustine applied concepts from Greek and Latin rhetorical theory directly to Christian oratory, claiming that "the life of the speaker has greater force to make him persuasive than the grandeur of his eloquence, however great that may be" (*Doctrina* 4.59). For him, a life lived beyond reproach makes a sacred orator truly persuasive (4.61). Similarly, Francois Fénelon continued the safeguard of virtue, concluding, "Thus the speaker, to be worthy of persuading people, ought to be an incorruptible man. Without that, his talent and his art become a deadly poison in the republic itself" (76). But like Cicero, Fénelon seems to resist ascribing eloquence only to the virtuous. His character, "A," is unwilling to pass judgment on ancient orators whose speeches suggest self-interest. Instead, he simply holds up the example of Demosthenes as one who could cultivate and even emphasize delivery as a priority in rhetoric, but also have the well being of the state as his highest priority. In other words, due to his passionate defense of the republic, Demosthenes embodied the good, trustworthy man speaking, and thus could act as a proponent for the study of delivery (63).

In short, making the case for the virtuous rhetor simply worked in Western rhetorical theory. Through the centuries, this strategy countered, or at least mitigated, the dominant Platonic view that would demote rhetoric beneath philosophy and view delivery as mere make-up, meant to dazzle and deceive. Hugh Blair could insist, "In the first place, what stands highest in the order of means, is personal character and disposition. In order to be a truly eloquent or persuasive speaker, nothing is more necessary than to be a virtuous man" (338). And of course, this emphasis translated quite smoothly into homiletics, the study of preaching, as holiness and devotion to God were already important qualities for the religious rhetor.

The work of Desiderius Erasmus demonstrates well the fear of deceit and the resulting safeguard of virtue. In *Ecclesiastes*, the teacher advises would-be ministers to allow themselves to be affected by the scriptures and the sermons they present. Speech that "does not truly express the sentiments of (12) the heart, is no more worthy of the name of Speech, than a mask deserves to be called a face; or a painted cheek the natural color of the person so painted" (13). Again, the danger of the moment of delivery lies in the potential for falseness. However, audiences can rest assured that they are not the victims of manipulation when their speaker believes that "nothing is more profitable when it proceeds from a found and good heart; nothing more pernicious, when it flows from the fountain of a depraved and corrupted mind" (14).

Knowledge

A second precondition for participating in public discourse is the orator's knowledge of the subject. Certainly, there is much overlap between all canons of rhetoric, as knowledge is usually associated most closely with invention. However, as the above section about noetic views of the fifth canon explains, it is in the moment of delivery that the speaker attempts to transfer this knowledge to the minds of listeners. No such transfer can occur if the orator is merely declaiming, trying to dazzle with charisma. In *Phaedrus*, Plato requires the orator to have already obtained truth and knowledge through the process of dialectic reasoning (156), at least seeming to concede that the truly knowledgeable orator can exist. Plato's *Gorgias*, on the other hand, makes few such allowances. In that dialogue, rhetors are depicted as phony experts, deceiving crowds into believing the speaker knows more than those who actually possess knowledge (459). This attitude directly reflects Plato's faith in dialectic for the discovery of truth, while perpetuating the stereotype or the corrupt speaker who prides himself in his ability to remain ignorant of a subject while still swaying minds by delivering smooth-sounding speeches.

Cicero in particular uses the orator's knowledge to elevate the importance of rhetoric and to guard against the stereotype of the vacuous manipulator. Book One and most of Book Two of *de Oratore* are devoted to the broad knowledge necessary for being able to deliver persuasive speeches. Crassus asserts,

> I am of this opinion, that no one is to be numbered among orators who is not thoroughly accomplished in all branches of knowledge requisite for a man of good breeding…it is easily proved whether he who speaks has only been exercised in the parade of

> declamation, or has devoted himself to oratory after having been instructed in all liberal knowledge. (1.16)

Here, Cicero shows what could be called a Platonic awareness of the dangers of oratory—the ignorant speaker trained only to sway the audience. However, the simple commitment to knowing one's topic seems a straightforward remedy to this danger.

Augustine devotes the first three books of *de Doctrina Christiana* to knowledge of the scriptures. A Platonist insofar as he believes that true knowledge is of divine origin, the great theologian still places much responsibility upon the sacred orator to carefully study the scriptures. Almost one thousand years later, Augustine's influence continued. Robert of Basevorn (1322) specified that only those who live a pure life and have extensive knowledge of the scriptures can be called a preacher (4.124). Similarly, Francois Fénelon holds knowledge at the same level as virtue as essential for a good speaker. In particular, the sacred orator needs broad knowledge of the world and of human passions, because he must try to move those passions (83). Sermons are "thin and undernourished" when the speaker has not spent years building up "abundant resources" of knowledge of scripture (85).

Authority and Access

Both virtue and knowledge are forms of authority, giving speakers access to public spaces of discourse. Other forms of authority carry similar weight: divine calling to speak;[8] institutional sanction from rulers, governments, or the church; family position and reputation, etc. All these forms of authority can act as a direct means of maintaining class and gender hierarchies, and are tightly bound to delivery. Cicero insisted that orators use "proper" Latin grammar (3.10) when they speak. The orator also should study accepted speeches and the literary canon in order to obtain a similar "nobleness of diction" (3.10). The ramifications regarding class and the education of the wealthy are clear, as only a chosen few have access to early education in the rules of language. Writers such as Thomas Sheridan, an Irishman, wrote about proper use of language in an attempt to help his own countrymen avoid discrimination due to their accent. Unfortunately, these efforts toward standardization can become difficult to

[8] Chapter three will use preaching instruction to explore the idea of divine authority of the speaker and the relationship between speaker and the authority of scripture.

distinguish from other attempts to regulate the language for the purposes of gate-keeping and exclusion.

Quintilian acknowledges that gesture, too, taps into the audience's prejudices, giving an impression of the speaker. Commenting on the position of the orator's head, he states, "If lowered, it indicates humility; if thrown back, arrogance; if inclined to one side, languor; if held stiff and rigid, a certain brutality of mind" (11.3.121). However, for most of rhetorical history, no gestures or vocal tones are as destructive to an orator's message and *ethos* than those which opponents can label as feminine. Quintilian, like many other teachers, advised that the voice should not be "feeble, soft, or effeminate" (11.3.32). Here, he has merely continued a thought from his discussion of style in Book Eight: "But let the embellishment of our style…be manly, noble, and chaste; let it not affect effeminate delicacy, or a complexion counterfeited by paint, but let it glow with genuine health and vigour" (Quintilian 8.3.6).

Of course, referring to each other as being woman-like continues to be one of the highest forms of insult for men. Demosthenes, for example, was often called effeminate and weak, an *ad hominem* attack meant to distract from the argument at hand (Fredal 257). But there is much more than a fear of looking or sounding like a woman going on here. The warnings against the feminine in rhetorical treatises tap into ancient prejudices that link rhetoric itself with woman. As the above quote from Quintilian demonstrates, rhetoric and delivery both carry the feminine labels of ornament and make-up. That which is painted is deceptive and therefore corrupt; philosophy, on the other hand, carries the reputation for being masculine, vigorous, clear, and true.[9]

I see a connection between the above authority issues and the "naturalist" approaches to delivery that are so frequent in rhetorical theory. In their attempts to prevent rhetorical performances that are mechanical or overly theatrical, rhetoricians have used the idea of "natural

[9] See Miriam Brody, *Manly Writing*, for a fuller discussion of male-female binaries (forceful/timid, clear/vague, strong/weak, plain/ornamented, etc) to describe writing. Also see Ann Sutton's article "The Taming of the *Polos/Polis*: Rhetoric as an Achievement Without Woman" which explores the repeated tropes that connect rhetoric, woman, and horse as powers to be subjugated by masculine reason. Sutton explores how the archetype of the Amazon and the image of the painted whore depict rhetoric as powerfully dangerous as well as false and seductive. Reason, socially gendered as male, tames feminine forces to know their "proper place according to the grammar or rules that constitute language or the *polis*, respectively" (113).

delivery" as a theoretical safety net. They have a good point; in rhetorical situations such as political speeches, sermons, and trials, listeners should feel like the speaker is simply talking to them. However, what does "natural" mean? Usually, the natural is that which has been socially and culturally approved. Therefore, this correspondence between words, voice, body, and emotion (called for by Cicero, Quintilian, and countless other theorists) tends to morph alongside the social forces of language, communication, decorum, and fashion. The specific gestures detailed by Quintilian, and those illustrated by Gilbert Austin 1700 years later, are equally outdated today. Therefore, because rhetoric, and more specifically delivery, are so tightly bound to social norms, modern attempts to theorize the fifth canon must consider the shifting politics of today's rhetorical situations.

RECENT ATTEMPTS TO REVIVE THE FIFTH CANON

In the late twentieth century, scholars of rhetoric began to reclaim the fifth canon in a variety of contexts. Some theorists have depicted composition's emphasis upon the private writer as a detriment to consideration of delivery. The context-less alphabetic text so often produced in composition courses depoliticizes the discourse and the student. Mary Saunders and Kate Kessler both believe that an actual delivery of the text, whether it be an oral presentation to classmates or a mailed letter to a congressional representative (Kessler 90), makes student writing more meaningful. Kessler believes that composing with an actual delivery in mind "automatically invites audience response. Students imagine such response as they compose. Delivery is not independent of a written message; it is an integral part of the message" (93). Saunders expresses the point similarly, saying that considering a text's oral or written delivery, "students have the opportunity to perceive their written work in relation to listeners, a relationship that emphasizes the need for communication and highlights problems obstructing it" (359). Both writers claim that by adding a rhetorical context and an actual audience, their students' writing emerges from the awkward void that lies between a merely imagined audience and the teacher who in fact reads and assesses the text.

Andrea Lunsford casts further doubt on the image of the isolated writer, calling for a "return of orality, performance, and delivery to the classroom" (172). She views writing as a performance that combines speaking and textual production within a community of writers. Virginia Skinner-Linnenburg explains that this kind of interaction in the classroom is necessary for learning; students must actively exchange meanings through oral delivery of ideas in order to

learn (40). This process provides writers with the presence of an "other," and not just an internal other, who can affirm, question, or challenge the writer's stance, thus deepening the discourse (Skinner-Linnenberg 41). These scholars closely associate delivery with invention. By speaking in the classroom and by sharing their writing aloud, students are able to learn writing strategies from each other and can produce more effective arguments.

Robert Connors pays special attention to the delivery of alphabetic manuscripts, defining *actio* as "the manner in which material is delivered" (65), thus taking the term beyond voice and gesture. Connors focuses on the "final written product" for writers" (65). He uses legibility and design studies to assert the importance of a document's appearance. Tying together written and oral discourse, Connors asserts, "Like speakers, who are scrutinized as soon as they walk out onto the platform, writers are being sized up as soon as their manuscripts fall from a manila envelope or are pulled from a pile" (76). In other words, a manuscript gives the reader an impression of the writer's effort, intellect, and any number of other traits, which begs the question, "What can writers do in terms of the physical objects they present to readers that will affect readers' dispositions toward writers and their messages?" (66). Connors makes a significant move here when he states "delivery is the realm of *ethos*" (66).

Nancy Welch, Jay David Bolter, and James Porter adeptly expand this delivery-*ethos* connection into the area of digital communication. Welch asserts that delivery "has been reconstructed through electronic forms of discourse" (21). Writing for the same collection, Bolter points out that the flexibility and non-linearity of digital texts forces a reconsideration of delivery, because "the computer expands the ways in which materials can be delivered to the reader. As a new means of presenting or delivering text (and graphics), electronic writing compels us to reconsider the classical concept of delivery" ("Hypertext" 97). While print technology elevates invention and style, electronic technologies bring delivery back into consideration in new ways. Hypertext is "the mode of delivery for electronic texts" (99), and "the electronic text itself is defined in the act of delivery" (100), thus moving delivery back from the margins of rhetorical theory.

Bolter specifies that the classical goal of voice was to heighten emotional appeals by creating a connection or identification between reader and writer. With hypertext, "the reader can identify with the author, but this identification happens because the reader begins to take control of the text and therefore to usurp the role of the author. When these reader-authors

multiply, a text can become "polyvocal" (107). Furthermore, in the ancient conception, delivery comes after the text is formed…in hypertext there is not text prior to delivery" (106). Thus, because the text comes into existence "in the act of delivery," hypertext has a lot in common with extemporaneous speaking (106). Although I agree that the navigation of electronic texts can feel improvised to the reader, I hold that the composition of those texts can still have little to do with extemporaneous oral delivery. Regardless, when counted as versatile voices, multimedia elements such as audio, video, and graphics can combine to form an authorial *ethos*.

James Porter, while maintaining Bolter's emphasis on arrangement in digital texts, pushes further toward a new theory of delivery by connecting audio and video back to the body. When readers can see pictures or video of a writer, and can hear the writer's (live or recorded) voice, everything from the writer's race to her haircut gives an impression, and "These bodily features are intertwined with your *ethos* as a speaker" ("Recovering" 212). Therefore, the body itself is a text and a mechanism for delivery. I wholeheartedly agree. Porter develops a robust theory of delivery based on human-computer interaction, providing a framework for studying digital rhetoric. And unlike Connors, he resists the temptation to allow the canons of style (fonts, word choice, etc.) or arrangement (of digital elements on the screen) to overshadow the fifth canon.

The work of Roxanne Mountford and Lindal Buchanan have proven integral to my research. In *The Gendered Pulpit*, Mountford profiles three female ministers, their challenges of navigating the pulpit, and their rhetorical strategies for overcoming these challenges and establishing their own unique identities as preachers. The author especially considers the politics of the body and the politics of the pulpit as a space. The body is the instrument of oral performance and is "itself expressive of meaning" (Mountford 7). Also, because "delivery involves, first and foremost, the presentation of the self in a form that will be acceptable to the audience "(69), in order to theorize delivery, we must consider audience expectations and preconceptions of the bodies of speakers (70). Mountford bases her work on the assumption that "character presentation is necessarily bounded by cultural discourses of the body as well as by material space" (70). Discourse communities are steeped in history and in beliefs about what is acceptable within certain rhetorical situations. Further, because delivery is "creative, progressive, active, mobile," with political bodies occupying politicized spaces, the fifth canon "is based in and on cultural norms and the breaking of those norms" (152). In chapters four and

five, I employ this theory of delivery to study the act of preaching and its impact on the speaker-audience relationship.

In *Regendering Delivery,* Lindal Buchanan traces the history of rhetorical instruction in America, showing how women were denied access to public discourse through the withdrawal of rhetorical education. The "consistent elimination of *actio* and oratory" was an attempt to "control the dissemination of rhetorical knowledge, particularly knowledge of public speaking" (Buchanan 40). Thus, women were forced to find new avenues of delivery (3) in the face of strong cultural messages that held up submissiveness and domesticity as the feminine ideal (54). These cultural forces made women's public speaking look like "outright gender subversion" (55). Perhaps the ancient suspicions of rhetoric as seductress simply emerge too strongly when a female body occupies the speaking space. A masculine body, coded as reasonable, could better tamp down these suspicions of oratory as make-up. Further, Buchanan describes the public rhetorical performances as a moment during which "cultural values are enacted and, sometimes, are resisted and revised" (160). In my research, I focus particularly on the long tradition of Western Christian preaching and explore the ways the sermon enacts, resists, and revises the values of a religious discourse community.

Much of this recent work on delivery emphasizes the body, not only as an instrument of delivery, but as a politicized entity that can reify or challenge cultural norms. Chapter four addresses these issues in more detail. But for now, I will say that I hope my work can contribute to this relatively new focus, allowing the study of the fifth canon to open doors for discussing gender, race, and dialect. All these factors emerge in delivery, especially in the live, face-to-face contexts such as preaching.

CONCLUSIONS

Quintilian's treatment of delivery reveals the connections between this canon and the character of the speaker (exuding modesty through demeanor, wardrobe, etc.), the body (his menu of gestures), and the feelings experienced by both speaker and audience. All these factors contribute to rhetorical action (J. Porter "Recovering" 4). To restate and expand this point using the content of this chapter, I find strong intersections between delivery and the following rhetorical elements:

1. The physical body. The orator must decide how her appearance, specific movements, vocal tones, and expressions will act in the minds of the listeners. The cultural values

that have shaped discourse communities act upon the speaker and determine the level of access she may or may not possess in a given rhetorical situation.

2. *Pathos*. Delivery works both to project the emotions of the speaker, and inspire feelings in the audience.
3. *Ethos*. The speaker must display the perceived necessities such virtue and knowledge in order to establish a trustworthy character. Issues of class, race, disability, and gender all contribute to this perceived character and the extent of identification between speaker and listener.
4. *Logos*. The above elements combine as rhetorical action, making an argument in themselves.

No wonder Demosthenes is alleged to have said that delivery *is* rhetoric. And no wonder the fifth canon has proven so difficult to classify and analyze cleanly. However, the delivery-*ethos* connection in the above efforts to reclaim the fifth canon is particularly compelling, and will serve as a launching point for my own efforts to work toward a revised theory of delivery.

Chapter Two: Preaching and Rhetorical Theory

INTRODUCTION

In the year 374 CE Jerome was living in the city of Antioch, studying Greek and theology. During an illness, he had a frightful vision of standing before the Judgment seat. Upon being asked his identity, Jerome replied, "I am a Christian." "You lie," said the Judge, "You are a Ciceronian" (Gonzalez 201). Already a strict ascetic, the brilliant scholar vowed to focus his full attention not on the pagan speeches and literature he so admired for their beauty, but upon the sacred scriptures.[10] Jerome's experience represents the complicated, often anguish-laden, relationship between the early Christian church and the pagan arts such as rhetoric and philosophy, as well as the literature that provided vast illustrative material for these fields of learning. During the first four centuries of Christianity, many church leaders and apologists expressed suspicion, if not outright rejection, of all pagan education. However, many of these church fathers had been teachers of rhetoric, and surviving sermon manuscripts indicate that although the majority of preachers avoided the most obvious outward markings of pagan oratory (arrangement of parts, literary allusions, use of classical *topoi*), they still displayed an impressive rhetorical flourish and keen awareness of text and audience.

In this chapter, I offer not a history of preaching, but rather a history of the preaching-rhetoric relationship, exploring key points of tension as these two fields defined, informed, and even avoided each other. I assert that in any age, despite many attempts to separate the fields of preaching and rhetoric, preaching stands as a living oral genre of persuasion, a rhetorical art that can act as a productive site for the development of rhetorical theory. Of course, the courtroom, classroom, and political podium remain important spaces of oratory, but as I mentioned in the introduction, with the pulpit, millions of people in this country alone gather at least once per

[10] This experience spurred Jerome to face an issue that had probably festered for some time—the contrast between the beauty of pagan rhetoric and literature and the simplicity, even vulgarity, of the ancient scriptures. Jerome's contemporary Augustine experienced the same dissonance, trying to reconcile the high ideas of Christian doctrine with the often-vulgar narratives and rough style of the scriptures. Their respective educations had trained these men to appreciate and wield the elevated style of secular literature, philosophy, and rhetoric; yet, they rested their faith upon texts that did not always meet this standard, at least stylistically. Augustine addressed the problem in Book Four of *de Doctrina Christiana*, analyzing multiple passages from scripture and asserting their eloquence. Jerome took a similar approach, devoting his later years to translating Hebrew and Greek texts and to writing commentaries on Origen's sermons and on the scriptures themselves.

week to witness, and take part in, the delivery of an original sermon.[11] The ancient art of preaching continues to shape belief and identity for countless religious communities, as preachers utilize its full array of rhetorical functions—deliberative, judicial, and epideictic. Homiletics, the study of the art of preaching, offers fruitful opportunities to explore the nature of live, face-to-face rhetorical events. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to establish preaching as a viable and valuable means of studying rhetorical concepts. In this project, preaching becomes the lens through which I explore the fifth rhetorical canon of delivery. Further, in this chapter, though I primarily outline the preaching-rhetoric relationship, my overarching goal is to move toward a redefinition of delivery as a rhetorical concept.

I begin by examining key writings by influential Christian teachers and apologists *about* rhetoric and pagan education from the birth of Christianity to the death of Augustine in 430. This religious discourse[12] reveals a painful struggle to define the relationship between the church and the dominant culture. Which influences and cultural forces should the church reject as corrupt, and which should it embrace, or at least take up for its own purposes? Persecution and the rhetorical strategies of enemies of the church would influence these critical decisions during the rapid growth of the first four centuries. I conclude this section by describing the dissimilarities between Christian sermons and classical orations during this formative time period. The differing contexts of the speech events, along with the perception of contrary goals for preaching and rhetoric, account for the walls of separation between the two arenas of communication.

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[11] Of course, print and online resources allow weary preachers an abundant supply of sermon outlines and manuscripts. See sermoncentral.com or desperatepreacher.com. However, the practice of using others' sermons, while popular during the Medieval period, meets strong opposition from seminaries, church authorities, and parishioners today. Most preachers could not imagine delivering a "canned" sermon because of the living nature of the scriptures, which offer various interpretations for different audiences, as well as the living nature of the sermon, so reliant on the individual congregation's context.

[12] By "religious discourse," I refer to preaching, to defending the faith against direct written and spoken attacks (apologetics), and to written and spoken attacks on the part of Christian theologians against heretical doctrines and their proponents. I will focus primarily upon preaching; however, many of the sermons of great preachers such as Augustine and John Chrysostom directly condemn heresy and defend orthodox doctrine. These inevitable overlaps only demonstrate more clearly the complex relationships between the early church and the dominant culture.

Next, I survey the dominant forms of preaching, starting with the synagogue homily and the teachings of Jesus himself, to further explore the preaching-rhetoric relationship. The primacy of the homily during the first 1200 years of Christianity shows the church's resistance to a full embrace of classical rhetorical strategies, but alterations to this sermon form, even as early as the third century, as well as the eventual emergence of alternate sermon forms, demonstrate a slow gravitation in preaching toward classical rhetoric. This evolution took shape in the thirteenth-century boom in *artes praedicandi*, preaching manuals focused on the thematic (or university) sermon. By the eighteenth century, the merging of preaching and rhetoric seemed complete, as Ciceronian preachers developed the rhetorical theories that would inform both sacred and secular education for centuries.

Throughout this discussion, I offer brief excerpts from the sermons of influential preachers to illustrate the rhetorical nature of their sermons. While I cannot devote sufficient space in this project to fuller rhetorical analyses of sermons, these excerpts from the works of great leaders such as John Chrysostom ("The Golden Mouth") and Augustine, both a part of an extraordinary generation of preachers in the fourth century,[13] show the keen rhetorical awareness of text and audience required for successful preaching. This analysis will establish preaching as the foundation of my revised theory of delivery, and will lead to a closer look at the evolving issues of *ethos* and pulpit authority in chapter three.

A Word about Resistance to Preaching Theory

Even today, many preachers and their listeners would describe preaching simply as the communication of divine truth. To highlight the speaker's efforts in inventing, shaping, and delivering a sermon would be to detract from the sacred ideas of scripture and from the intermingling of God and humans in the worship event. This anti-theory stance immediately impedes both a rhetorical approach to preaching and a rhetorical lens when surveying the history of preaching. In addition, some simpler sermon forms such as the homily (see below) allow the passage of scripture to shape the ideas, vocabulary, and structure of a sermon, thus reflecting, and perhaps enabling, a non-theoretical stance in the field of preaching. These attitudes would

[13] Augustine lived well into the fifth century, but much of his preaching and writing against heresies occurred in the fourth century. Most historians mark the year of his death (430) as the end of a vibrant era during which preaching flourished and the church solidified key orthodox doctrines.

certainly account for the lack of known homiletic theory during the first four centuries of Christianity. James J. Murphy supposes that at any given time in Christian history,

> there was probably always a sizable group of nontheorists and antitheorists, actually engaged in preaching, who as a matter of principle rejected the idea of systematic theory. By its very nature it is the kind of thinking that leaves few records. In the time of Saint Jerome and Saint Augustine the visible enemy of formalized preaching was the pagan Second Sophistic, and surely some of the Christian response was sheer overreaction to sophistic excess. But all the evidence seems to point to the conclusion that a purposeful choice of nontheory was regarded by many churchmen, over many centuries, as a viable way to respond to Christ's preaching mandate. (*Rhetoric* 300)

In other words, because Jesus asked all his followers to spread his teachings, many of those followers believed that a rhetorical education was not essential to successful proclamation of their message. Further, secular rhetors' excesses made the use of rhetoric that much more unpalatable.

Murphy concludes that because of this variety of factors, "the Church did not produce during its first dozen centuries any coherent body of precepts that might be called a rhetoric of preaching. Augustine made the only major attempt [*de Doctrina Christiana*], which was not to bear fruit for almost eight hundred years" (*Rhetoric* 300). All this to say that during times when apologists and theologians were actively engaged in defining the church's relationship with the dominant culture, the activity of preaching often seems to be immune from the subject, separated from the fray. Apart from those depicted in scripture, few sermons from the first and second centuries survive. I believe this absence reflects the fact that while Christianity was spreading rapidly during this early period, its defenders and theologians hard at work to process the teachings of Jesus and Paul, actual church gatherings remained small and informal, meeting in homes and learning the scriptures from any number of respected leaders, and not necessarily from formally trained priests and pastors. Whether the result of some sort of aloofness or this casual, personalized focus within churches, the lack of sermon manuscripts and texts about preaching impedes efforts to create a systematic history of preaching theory. However, the ancient preachers whose sermons are still circulating today, men such as Origen (185-254 CE) and John Chrysostom (347-407 CE), broke the silence and demonstrated the potential for

preaching to move beyond simple exhortations to obedience and to define Christian identity in the face of opposition.

PART ONE: ATTITUDES OF EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITERS TOWARD THE PAGAN ARTS

In the earliest days of Christianity, before Roman or even many Jewish authorities began distinguishing the new sect from other forms of Judaism, Paul spearheaded the effort to take the gospel of Jesus to all parts of the Roman world, frequently preaching in local synagogues or other public spaces. The letters of Paul and the other early apostles (Greek *apostolos*, literally "sent ones") were meant to be read aloud to groups and circulated among the churches they established. Some of these gospel accounts and letters would themselves be canonized to the level of the Old Testament scriptures they cited, and created a structure of teaching that could survive the destruction of the Jerusalem temple, a center of worship for both Jews and Christians, in 70 CE. In his writings, Paul appears to have an ambivalent attitude toward rhetoric. His first letter to the Corinthian church seems to reject the practice of eloquent speechmaking, if not the entire use of rhetorical strategies. He states,

> I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in much fear and trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. (1 Cor. 2: 1-5)

Here, Paul reflects the attitude that Christian preaching[14] relied upon the power of the message itself and more specifically upon the presence of God to act through the proclamation. The success of the message did not rely on rhetorical skill, the ability to compose and deliver sophisticated speeches. In fact, Paul eschewed the confident, eloquent style of typical orators as a sign that he was relying solely upon divine intervention to make his preaching successful. This attitude sounds similar to Plato's argument that truth itself is persuasive, and that it should not matter how the orator delivers that truth. However, because the Christian message incorporates

[14] This passage from 1 Corinthians points to the close relationship between Paul's writings and his preaching. In *The Art of Preaching*, Alan of Lille (d. 1202) categorizes as preaching the preacher's spoken words, written words, and deeds (20).

an involved deity acting upon the proclamation, it differs significantly from the teachings of Plato (Murphy *Rhetoric* 282).

Rather, it seems more likely that Paul was following the example set by Jesus. When Jesus sent out seventy-two followers into scattered towns to prepare the way for his arrival in the region of Judea, he told them, "The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects the one who sent me" (Luke 10:16). Therefore, a negative response to the message was a rejection of God, and was an indication of the listeners' spiritual condition rather than a reflection on the rhetorical skill, or lack thereof, of the preacher. In fact, the proclamation itself was seen as simple enough that any "sent one" could deliver it sufficiently.

However, the context of 1 Corinthians complicates Paul's apparent renunciation of rhetoric. He viewed the Christian residents of Corinth as easily dazzled by "showy" spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues. In fact, Paul wrote the famous "love chapter" in 1 Corinthians 13, so often read at weddings, to scold the church for privileging the gift of tongues over more modest gifts, such as service or hospitality. Thus, Paul's original audience was showing a lack of the most important gift, namely love, in their actions. This church also seemed to divide easily, shifting allegiances to various apostles or itinerant preachers based on that speaker's style of teaching. Paul had heard about divisions centering around the claims, "'I follow Paul,' or 'I follow Apollos,' or 'I follow Cephas [Peter]…" (1 Cor. 1: 10-17). Therefore, in this letter Paul was attempting to unite the church around the core teachings they originally heard and not around oratorical skills of sometimes-competing teachers.

In other contexts, Paul uses classical rhetorical strategies quite adeptly. The letter to the Galatians shows all the signs of classical arrangement and argumentation, with an exordium, narration, proposition, proof, and conclusion. The brief letter to Philemon and his church also follows a tidy classical form. Paul first establishes rapport (*ethos*) with his audience, complimenting their reputation of faithfulness (Phm 1-7). He moves on to make a logical appeal (*logos*) that the audience forgive and accept as a brother a former runaway slave, Onesimus. He uses his own experience as proof that the young man was now a committed brother (8-16). He concludes the letter with an impassioned plea (*pathos*), asking them to "Refresh my heart" by generously receiving as an equal the converted and reformed fugitive (17-22). Further, Paul offers clever word play to add flourish to the plea. The Greek name Onesimus means "useful,"

and Paul states, "Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me" (11). Therefore, although Paul was first and foremost a brilliant Jewish scholar, his Roman citizenship seems to have contributed significantly to his communicative ability.[15]

Paul's speech in the Athenian Areopagus, narrated by Luke in Acts 17, represents a fascinating meeting of Greek and Christian perspectives and further suggests Paul's openness to classical rhetoric. Paul, standing in the epicenter of Greek thought, delivers a speech that sounds much like a classical oration. He uses a diplomatic style, beginning his address with, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with the inscription, 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you" (Acts 17:22-23). Paul even quotes two Epicurean poets to create common ground with his audience, affirming the Greek doctrine of an eternal creative deity. However, in the very last lines of this speech, Paul takes a Judeo-Christian sermonic turn and proclaims the bodily resurrection of Christ. This claim shocks his listeners, jolting them out of familiar-sounding speech about religion and asserting a perplexing doctrine, one that violated Greek beliefs about the corruption of matter and the separation of the body and the immortal soul.

This perplexity toward doctrine that affirms the body presages centuries of conflict between the church and the Greek-influenced Roman culture (see below). Further, Paul's commitment to speak simply, coupled with these examples of rhetorical speech and writing, formed mixed messages regarding the preacher's use of rhetoric, philosophy, and literature. The resulting confusion would lead to centuries of struggle within the church as leaders attempted to gauge appropriate levels of identification with pagan listeners. On the one hand, the church believed that God's spirit would direct their words and determine listener response. On the other hand, Paul's writings and his speech in Athens demonstrate a rhetorical approach to preaching that allows evangelists and preachers inroads into their listeners' cultures.

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[15] Born in the city of Tarsus (in southern Asia Minor), Saul, later Paul, was a Roman citizen who completed his education as a Pharisee under the Rabbi Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). In *The Life and Work of St. Paul*. London: Cassell and Co, 1892, Frederic Farrar finds "upwards of fifty specimens of upwards of thirty Greek rhetorical figures" in Paul's writings, leading him to conclude that in addition to his education in the Hebrew scriptures and traditions, he received at least a cursory early education in Greek rhetoric (696).

In the face of this conflict regarding the Christian preacher's use of rhetoric, philosophy, and literature, Justin Martyr (103-165 CE), an early apologist, took up Paul's tactic of drawing out the similarities between Christianity and Greek belief. Attempting to curb hostility toward Christians, Justin's apologies point out that both pagan philosophers and Christians espoused the existence of a supreme being and of a life beyond this world. Justin asks,

> …why are we unjustly hated more than all others? For while we say that all things have been produced and arranged into a world by God, we shall seem to utter the doctrine of Plato; and while we say that there will be a burning up of all, we shall seem to utter the doctrine of the Stoics: and while we affirm that the souls of the wicked, being endowed with sensation even after death, are punished, and that those of the good being delivered from punishment spend a blessed existence, we shall seem to say the same things as the poets and philosophers. (9)

While Justin did not hesitate to attack pagan practices such as the fashioning of idols, his apologies tended to emphasize that Christian belief was non-threatening to the safety of the empire. For example, Justin countered accusations of sedition by clearly stating apostolic teachings on obeying civil authorities. His worldview about the relationship between Christians and pagans, along with the eloquence of his writing, seem to argue for a blending of Christian and pagan styles of communication.

Justin's pupil Tatian (120-180 CE) took the opposite tack, boldly attacking Greek culture in defense of Christians. In his *Address to the Greeks*, Tatian staves off accusations that Christianity was a "barbarian" religion by mocking the claim that the great arts were of Greek origin. He reminds his audience, "To the Babylonians you owe astronomy; to the Persians, magic; to the Egyptians, geometry; to the Phoenicians, instruction by alphabetic writing. Cease, then, to miscall these imitations inventions of your own" (Tatian 3). Then, in another scathing accusation against Greek culture, so proud of its language and accomplishments, Tatian states, "You have, too, contrived the art of rhetoric to serve injustice and slander, selling the free power of your speech for hire, and often representing the same thing at one time as right, at another time as not good" (4). Here, Tatian echoes Plato's accusations that rhetoric consists of little more than the twisting of language for one's own profit. Therefore, even among a second-generation Christian apologist and his student, I see polar opposite tactics of positioning the church in relation to the dominant culture.

Tertullian (160-220 ce) refrained from heaping such abuse upon rhetoricians specifically (Ellspermann 41), but his contempt for pagan philosophy spilled over into most areas of secular education. He described the entire dialectic process, which typically informs rhetoric, as "far fetched in its conjectures… embarrassing even to itself, retracting everything, and really treating of nothing" (qtd. in Ellspermann 40). Tertullian saw the methods of Greek philosophy as empty, unable to contribute to Christian doctrine. He demonstrated a typical hostility toward pagan learning when he asked, "What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church? What between heretics and Christians?" (qtd. in Murphy *Rhetoric* 49). Such questions tend to resurface among church leaders in the first three centuries, often involving light and dark imagery to describe the stark contrast between the church and the pagan world.

Reasons for Hostility toward Rhetoric

I see multiple factors that contribute to this outward opposition to rhetoric and pagan learning, as well as to apparent mixed messages in regard to the Christian speaker's use of rhetorical strategies. First, competing definitions of rhetoric highly complicate any study of attitudes toward the art. On the one hand, if rhetoric consists of finding the available means of persuasion (Aristotle's definition), then Tatian's *Address to the Greeks* is paradoxically rhetorical in its attack on rhetoric. The available means Tatian found consist of pointing out hypocrisies in Greek thought, punctuated with parallel structure, reversals of logic, and clever turns of phrase. However, if rhetoric is merely a knack for flattery (see Plato's *Gorgias*) or an empty exercise for arguing both sides of an argument (see Plato's *Phaedrus*), then the term is pejorative, and only school declamations and select public orations could be called rhetorical.

Contemporary American politics continues to reflect this seeming impasse in defining the nature of rhetoric. A politician may deliver a Ciceronian-style speech, carefully inventing and arranging points to create an introduction, narration of the issue, assertion of an argument, refutation of opponents, and conclusion. He might consider the stylistic elements, commit key sections to memory, and work to deliver the speech effectively. However, this same speaker will label an opponent's attacks "rhetoric," meaning "void of substance" and "meant to incite."

When speakers and writers, ancient or in the twenty-first century, produce highly rhetorical and persuasive texts while at the same time blasting the art of rhetoric as corrupt, how can scholars account for this paradox and accurately analyze their work? I have already

described above the mixed messages in Paul's life and writings. Perhaps, despite his seeming acceptance of rhetorical strategies in his ministry, his label of "lofty speech" refers to rhetorical tactics geared more toward flattery and profit than to substance. In his extensive travels Paul certainly could have encountered some itinerant orators and preachers who used their skills solely for monetary gain or fame. In this case, manipulative rhetorical strategies of one's enemies can elicit responses that sound like sweeping accusations against the entire art of rhetoric. Therefore, threats from without could have highly influenced church leaders' views, resulting in these oscillating characterizations of the art. Such contradictory definitions of rhetoric may also account for conflicting characterizations of historical figures' views. For example, Dargan describes Origen (185-254 CE) as a Neoplatic theologian who "cared little for heathen rhetoric and art in speech" (51), while Ellspermann claims that in regard to preaching, Origen "found that he could not do without the pagan sciences, in particular rhetoric" (12).

Another cause for avoidance of or hostility toward the pagan arts within the church is the level of persecution inflicted by pagan society on the new faith. Simply put, the harsher the persecution against Christians, whether those attacks were empire-wide or local, written or spoken, the higher the metaphorical walls Christian leaders erected between their flocks and the dominant culture. Tatian may have written his *Address to the Greeks* as early as 155 CE, but he also could have written or revised the work after his teacher Justin was martyred under the emperor Marcus Aurelius, who came to power in 161 CE. Certainly his anger and grief, along with threats to his own safety, could have influenced the level of venom in his attacks on Greek culture. Later, Tertullian's question, "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" emerged from the violent persecutions the church was enduring at the turn of the third century, during the reign of Septimius Severus. In the course of this same breakout of persecution starting in 202 CE, the father of great theologian and preacher Origen suffered martyrdom, executed for his attempts to win new converts to Christianity (Gonzales 83).[16]

[16] This persecution focused on Jews and Christians and disallowed conversions to either faith. Therefore, teachers and converts became primary targets. Upon learning of his father's death, the teenage Origen was consumed with grief and zeal and was ready to rush to martyrdom himself. However, his mother literally hid his clothes, rendering him unable to go out in public. Instead, Origen channeled this zeal by writing a treatise on martyrdom, addressed to his father (Gonzalez 78). Origen himself died shortly after enduring torture during a two-year "systematic and universal" persecution under emperor Decius (249-251 CE) (87).

Rome's standard policy of non-interference with local beliefs and institutions proved feeble for Judaism and its offshoot faith of Christianity (Dargan 31). Jews could maintain their institutions of worship and religious education during Roman occupation, but any actions deemed disloyal to Rome met swift military retribution. As for the new "superstition" of Christianity, patience with all new and/or monotheistic religions ebbed and flowed. The most frequent social shaming of Christians such as physical assault, slander, imprisonment, and seizure of property occurred on the local level, as communities attempted to sway converts back to their former beliefs. After all, to forsake the worship of the city's gods, including the emperor, often equaled a traitorous abandonment of loyalty to the community itself. Sanctioned empire-wide persecution[17] was usually the most violent, involving torture and death if the Christian did not renounce her faith. This kind of persecution ultimately may have helped to spread the faith throughout and beyond the empire as Christians fled and sympathetic witnesses converted. But oppression also inspired strong views of the evil of the dominant culture. The book of Revelation acts as a powerful example of this attitude. Probably writing during Domitian's reign (95 CE)[18] which was marked by empire-wide persecution of Christians, John portrays Rome itself as a servant of Satan, bent on destroying the people of God. In this climate, church leaders were more likely to express outright rejection of all things pagan, including literature, philosophy, and rhetoric.

Preaching and Rhetoric: What's the Difference?

Aside from the above reasons behind hostilities felt toward the pagan arts, differences between the goals and contexts of preaching and oratory also may have contributed to the tenuous connections between the two fields of communication in early Christian history. In

[17] Jews and Christians were often accused of atheism due to their refusal to worship multiple gods. The pagan population viewed these gods, as well as the divine emperor, as patrons of their city who needed to be worshiped and appeased for the sake of the city's safety. Jews and Christians, therefore, were easy targets for corrective shaming. Christians also met accusations of cannibalism due to misconceptions about the Eucharist. From the reigns of Nero (54-68 ce) to Diocletian (284-305 ce), organized governmental persecution was sporadic, violent, and at the whim of the emperor. Accounts of boiling oil, heated metal chairs, and flaying accompany the more commonly known stories of wild animals or burning at the stake.

[18] Some scholars point to an earlier date, perhaps during the Neronian persecution (68 CE), during which both Peter and Paul are believed to have been martyred.

Roman education, the orator's goal was to persuade by creating probability (Murphy *Rhetoric* 276), using a wide variety of logical proofs. In Christian rhetoric, scripture is the source of truth, a kind of ultimate proof. The words and deeds of Christ, along with many epistles of his first followers, gained equal status with the Old Testament scriptures during the second and third centuries, and therefore became equally worthy sources of proof (277). Further, the end goal of Christian rhetoric is not as simple as persuading through probability. There is a strong element of proclamation, a heralding, to those who had never heard the message or who have rejected it in the past. Within the church, this proclamatory function remained, but preachers also could encounter multiple needs, requiring a variety of rhetorical goals. Listeners may need encouragement during persecution, exhortation to persevere and continue in their faith, warning against damaging behavior (such as gossip or infidelity), or persuasion to act (such as feeding the needy).

Augustine captures this complexity of the role of preaching in *de Doctrina Christiana*. Once the preacher performs his primary duty of discovering the truths found in scripture (4.1), he must wield those truths in multiple ways. The preacher's task is to "teach what is right, and to correct what is wrong, and in this function of discourse, to conciliate the hostile, to arouse the careless, and to inform those ignorant of the matter at hand, what they ought to expect" (4.6). Therefore, preaching has didactic, hortatory, proclamatory, and prophetic functions. But do these functions exclude the art of rhetoric?

I see in preaching an almost inseparable blend of the judicial, epideictic, and deliberative goals of rhetoric. Orations usually fell rather cleanly into one of these categories, depending on the context of the speech. Judges and juries knew they would hear judicial orations about past events and the nature of disputes. At a funeral or award ceremony for a successful military leader, audiences could expect an epideictic speech praising virtue. Citizens making public decisions could count on listening to deliberative orations about the most prudent course of action. Sermons, however, can move smoothly between these rhetorical functions. In one line of thought, a preacher may delve into the meaning of past events such as scriptural narratives, praise a biblical character's faith, and exhort listeners to show a similar faith by providing for imprisoned Christians' families. Overall, I believe that this blending of rhetorical functions supports my view that preaching is a highly rhetorical art. However, the places and contexts of

classical rhetoric (the courtroom, the podium, the civic ceremony) may have made rhetoric seem ill fitting for intimate church gatherings in members' homes.

Further, Roman education often cast the success of the orator as an important goal of rhetoric. School declamations, in which students argued assigned positions in a hypothetical debate, usually ended with the declaration of a winner who presented the better speech. Critics of rhetoric could easily label this process as devoid of truth, rewarding the eloquent liar over the sincere speaker. However, even giving the rhetorical process the benefit of the doubt, most Christian communicators would argue that the real end goal of Christian preacher is the spiritual welfare of listeners (Murphy *Rhetoric* 282), an even more amorphous goal to measure than the eloquence of the oration. Therefore, the very aims of rhetoric, based on probability and geared toward the speaker's success and honor, were at worst utterly corrupt, and at best political (as opposed to spiritual). In other words, the objective of public expediency did not merge well with preaching's hortatory aims, which focused on personal and communal holiness within small church gatherings. To make matters worse, the literary examples used to illustrate the great speeches often seemed immoral and offensive to Christians (Murphy *Rhetoric* 286), who could not overlook behavior such as "adultery, incest, and infanticide" in the writings about the gods and heroes (Gonzalez 54).

Kennedy sums up the point nicely:

> The classical orator had a free field in choice of a proposition and the topics for proving it. He used and invented arguments from many sources, and the only check upon his arguments was their inherent probability, defined as what was acceptable to an average audience. The primary function of the Christian orator, in contrast, was to interpret and bring into practice the holy word. Homiletic preaching was basically 'a projection of the eloquence of Scripture,' and not an achievement of the eloquence of the preacher (*Classical* 137).

As the section about preaching forms (below) will clarify, before Christianity emerged from persecution in the fourth century, before the great basilica, the casual homily, exhorting listeners to live by the scripture passage just read, fit smaller groups better than a classical oration (Murphy *Rhetoric* 298). Closeness to scripture was more important than the organization or style of a discourse (299).

Therefore, given all these factors that separate preaching from rhetoric, I understand the torment these church leaders, many of them former rhetoricians, experienced. On the one hand, classical rhetoric offers concrete advice to a speaker addressing a group of listeners, and can equip preachers to better communicate and illustrate scriptural truth. However, during times when Christianity was under attack, the art of rhetoric appeared as Plato depicted it—corrupt and useful only for manipulation.

Jerome: Wrestling with the Conflict

Saint Jerome (348-420 CE) demonstrated perhaps the most extreme shifts between a genuine approval of rhetoric and cautious reproof for Christians who would enjoy or employ the pagan arts. More than any other early figure in the Christian church, he used his writing to wrestle with the conflict between Christianity and rhetoric. Jerome, best known for his scriptural commentaries and his translation of the Old and New Testaments into Latin (the Vulgate), was steeped in secular learning and literature in his boyhood, and his devotion to scholarship led him to the great libraries of Antioch, Constantinople, and Rome (Gonzalez 202). Ellspermann's translations of Jerome's epistles reveal his love of rhetoric. In one letter, Jerome makes a transition by eagerly offering, "Let me now fulfill the promise I made a little while ago and with all the skill of a rhetorician sing the praises of water and of baptism" (qtd. in Ellspermann 129). In another letter, he rails against a corrupt monk, saying, "Oh, for the sea of Tully's [Cicero's] eloquence! Oh, for the impetuous current of the invective of Demosthenes!" (131). At this point, rhetoric was for Jerome a valuable means of defending the faith and developing its theology.

However, his love of classical learning eventually became a source of overwhelming guilt, as evidenced by his terrifying judgment dream described in the introduction to this chapter. In one letter, Jerome echoes Tertullian's accusations of pagan learning, asking, "What has Horace to do with the Psalms, Virgil with the gospels, Cicero with the Apostle?" (qtd. in Kennedy 147). What could possibly trigger such drastic shifts in attitude regarding the Christian's use of rhetorical strategies? Again, the climate of the Second Sophistic[19] and the

[19] Coined by Philostratus, the phrase "Second Sophistic" refers to a "literary-rhetorical movement" which began as the Roman republic started to crumble and ending around the sixth century (Kelly 59). Teachers of rhetoric and traveling orators demonstrated their speaking skills before officials and at private and public celebrations. Because of this element of entertainment the entire movement is often maligned as mere extravagance and display. Certainly, if the secular orations accompanied ruling-class revelry,

resulting strategies of enemies of the church may be the primary cause. For example, Jerome sees in some texts and debates heretical attempts to cover theological error with an affected style and extravagant turns of phrase. He asserts that "A poor ecclesiastic is overcome by the verboseness and tricks of heretics…" (qtd. in Ellspermann 140). For him, to gild false words with elegant speech is tantamount to the fashioning of idols and only serves to mislead (140). In this case, Jerome refuses to call upon the eloquence of Demosthenes, but rather favors the simpler style of scripture.

In another letter, Jerome describes the "songs of the poets, secular wisdom," and "the pomp of rhetorical words" thus:

> These delight by all their soothing quality; and whilst they catch our ears with verses that flow on with sweet modulation, they also pierce our soul, and overcome the interior of our breast. But when they have been studied with the greatest zeal and labor, they contribute nought else to their readers, but empty sound, a noisy speech. No fullness of truth, no refreshing justice is found there" (qtd. in Ellspermann 159).

Jerome recognized and certainly experienced the power of poetry, philosophy, and rhetoric. However, he saw this power as empty or even dangerous when divorced from the truths found in scripture. Therefore, Jerome readily cited these texts, wielding every available means of persuasion, when expounding upon Christian doctrine, but he railed against them when they were an ends in themselves. Perhaps Jerome was working through a solution to the confusion caused by competing conceptions of rhetoric. When the intent of the speaker is virtuous, his goal being the spiritual welfare of the listeners, then he may soar to any height of eloquence. But when the intent is deception, fame, or profit, then any eloquence amounts to only empty noise. This attitude seems to line up with Paul's stance on the use of rhetoric, and echoes Quintilian's requirement of the virtuous orator (see chapter one).

I agree with Ellspermann that Jerome saw the arts, such as rhetoric, philosophy, geometry, and medicine, as gifts from God (143). However, he found it absolutely essential to

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Christian leaders probably saw little value in the practice. However, it is important to remember that as the empire fell, so did opportunities to shape public policy through discourse. Kelly points out that during this period, rhetoric remained a key component of education, meant to "prepare students for public life" (61). Further, public declamations of the Second Sophistic conveyed "the ideas and values of the rulers" (61), thus serving an important unifying function.

place those arts in the service of scriptural truth. If these gifts did not point to that truth, they were corrupt and doomed for judgment. Therefore, despite his struggles and strong statements against eloquence, I consider Jerome a champion of rhetoric, in the tradition of Quintilian, within the church. He showed that pagan arts can inform Christian scholarship and communication. It also seems that ultimately, even after his dramatic visions and vows, Jerome was not able to give up Cicero.[20] Late in his life, Jerome founded a monastery and developed the educational curriculum for the monks who would serve there. The works of Cicero were an important part of that curriculum (Bizzell and Herzberg 433).

Augustine: Opening the Way

Augustine (354-430 CE) saw some pagan arts, such as astrology and the use of augurs and amulets, as corrupt superstition (*Doctrina* 2.20). Other non-superstitious, human-made institutions, however, offer a degree of utility. Customs of dress, currency, and alphabetic writing, as agreed-upon systems, are essential to human communication (2.25). Medicine, history, and agriculture are also highly useful arts, helping us to read (and act in) the world. Further, Augustine discusses reasoning and mathematics as higher arts which point to a higher being (2.30-31). Overall, Augustine advises any who would study a field of learning to "soberly and carefully discriminate" all knowledge, always on the lookout for that which may be

[20] Jerome's sermons were mainly allegorical homilies that provided simply-stated interpretations of a passage of scripture. Therefore, in the case of his preaching, he did seem able to uphold his vow to focus on scripture and resist turning sermons into Ciceronian orations. Earlier in this chapter, I referred to preaching as somehow above the fray in many leaders' struggles with the pagan arts. However, his preaching was not fully immune to rhetorical strategies. In the following sermon on Mark chapter one, Jerome expounds on the baptism of Jesus, during which the Holy Spirit descended "as a dove" and a voice from heaven declared Jesus to be the Son of God. The passage supports orthodox Trinitarian doctrine; God manifests in three distinct, yet equal, persons, one of which being in the person of Jesus. Jerome takes this opportunity to attack heretics who taught that God could not occupy a human body, but that Christ somehow laid aside his physical body and only appeared to be a man. (Notice the influence of Greek belief in the corruption of matter. The same distaste for a blending of the divine with a human body that perplexed the Athenians in Acts 17 plagued the church through various heresies for hundreds of years). Jerome states, "It is the practice of the Manichaeans, Marcionites, and other heretics to quarrel with us over this text and say: If Christ is in a body and the same flesh that he assumed has not been laid aside, nor has He laid it aside, the Holy Spirit that descended, therefore, is in the dove. Do you hear the hissing of the ancient serpent? Do you recognize that snake that drove man from the Garden of Paradise and is eager to hurl us from the paradise of faith?" (Jerome, Homily 75, 130). Although this homily was delivered at least twenty years after Jerome's frightful vision of the judgment, note his use of rhetorical questions as he counters heretical teaching.

superfluous and allowing that knowledge to lead their minds back to the Giver of truth (2.39). He compares pagan arts to the silver and gold in ancient Egypt, which was to be handed over to the fleeing Hebrews. The pagans have incorporated superstition, even demon worship, into these good arts, but the people of God can and should take them and turn them to sacred use, pointing out the inherent truth, "liberal instruction," and "most excellent precepts of morality" (2.40).

Building on this description and categorization of all human learning in Book Two of *de Doctrina Christiana*, Augustine gives the church what would become its official permission to use the pagan art of rhetoric to express its divine truths. Kneidel refers to this text, completed 427 CE, as "the first and most important Christian rhetorical treatise because it adapts, some say distorts, Ciceronian rhetorical principles for homiletic purposes." Like Jerome, Augustine recognized that as an end in itself, rhetoric offered little reward. But he encouraged his readers to incorporate its principles into the communication of Christian doctrine. He makes what I believe to be a monumental statement when he says, "While the faculty of eloquence, which is of great value in urging either evil or justice, is in itself indifferent, why should it not be obtained for the uses of the good in the service of truth if the evil usurp it for the winning of perverse and vain causes in defense of iniquity and error?" (4.3). Here, Augustine accounts for abuses of rhetoric, whether by heretics, false teachers, or secular orators by depicting rhetoric as a neutral art. He therefore agrees with Cicero, who stated in *de Inventione* that although some certainly misuse rhetoric, students ought to study the art "in order that evil men may not obtain great power to the detriment of good citizens and the common disaster of the community" (1.5). Rhetoric is only corrupt when the speaker's motives are corrupt, but is a boon to the virtuous speaker who would strive for just action.

Kennedy points out that this move "made it possible for Christians to appreciate and teach eloquence without associating it with paganism" (*Classical* 159). In essence, in Book Four of *de Doctrina Christiana*, Augustine baptizes the work of Cicero and Quintilian, not only defending Ciceronian rhetoric, but ushering it into the basilica. He applies Cicero's three goals of rhetoric (teach, delight, move) to preaching, and even agrees to the corresponding styles (plain, middle, and grand) to achieve these goals.[21] Augustine cites scripture to exemplify the three

[21] In *de Oratore*, Cicero, speaking through Crassus, describes these rhetorical goals and the three styles (fuller, plainer, and middling) that achieve them (3.55).

styles, thus creating an almost seamless mode of application between the church and Roman rhetorical education (Murphy *Rhetoric* 286).

But like Jerome, Augustine places rhetoric in the service of higher truth, tying the art closely with moral objectives. His rhetoric seeks only the spiritual welfare of the hearer and is only successful when God directly imparts grace and understanding to the learner. Augustine teaches that "those who speak eloquently are listened to with pleasure; those who speak with wisdom are heard with profit" (*Doctrina* 4.8). Ideally, the two go hand-in-hand. In fact, just as Plato described rhetoric as the handmaid of dialectic, so Augustine depicts eloquence as the "inseparable handmaid" of wisdom (4.10). However, this wisdom does not emerge from Plato's dialectic process, but from a direct impartation from God, through scripture. This distinction allows Augustine to elevate divine revelation above rhetoric, while upholding the value of rhetoric itself. In other words, he does not need to denigrate rhetoric, because the wisdom comes not from another human activity (dialectic), but from God.

The Christian communicator, then, should allow grand, middle, and plain styles of speaking to intermingle, so that the sermon is at once "understood, enjoyed, and persuasive" (4.31). However, Augustine adds that "in so far as it is possible," the preacher should achieve these goals "more through the piety of his prayers than through his orator's skills" (4.32). Augustine has total faith that an earnest preacher will receive divine assistance, and this intervention acts as a safeguard against sermons sinking into mere oratorical display. But again, Augustine refuses to malign rhetoric itself. The scriptures contain "many kinds of expressions of great beauty" and boast all of the points taught by grammarians and rhetoricians (4.41). The preacher simply must take care to communicate these "divine utterances" faithfully and not allow the eloquence, or lack thereof, in any passage of scripture to become the primary focus of sermons (4.41). Therefore, like Jerome, Augustine follows Quintilian's lead in asserting the necessity of the speaker's virtue. As important as it is for preachers to be understood, enjoyed, and persuasive, Augustine points out that "the life of the speaker has greater force to make him persuasive than the grandeur of his eloquence, however great that may be" (4.59). With this safeguard in place, preachers can wholeheartedly take up the (formerly) pagan art of rhetoric, trusting that any eloquence will serve a divine purpose—amplifying scriptural truth and moving audiences toward greater faith.

PART 2: SERMON FORMS AND THE EVENTUAL PREACHING/RHETORIC UNION

Augustine's *de Doctrina Christiana*, given its scope, its largely positive view of rhetoric, and the enormous reputation of its author, should have taken the already-impressive preaching of the fourth century and opened the floodgates for new ways of organizing sermons. I would expect to find a fifth-century boom of texts on preaching theory, as writers took Augustine's cue and experimented with ways to creatively blend the ancient traditions of preaching and rhetoric. Instead, for the next eight hundred years, preachers stuck with the homily, often delivering sermons composed centuries earlier by great preachers such as Gregory or John Chrysostom. In this section I define homiletics, outline the characteristics of the preaching form known as the homily, and explore its dominance during the first twelve centuries of Christianity. Then, I will describe the rhetorical forms that emerged starting in the twelfth century. Overall, these shifts in sermon forms indicate an eventual, if painfully slow, merging of rhetoric and preaching.

Homiletics and the Homily as a Preaching Form

Simply defined, homiletics is the study of the art of preaching. George Kennedy, who seems to hold to Plato's epistemological rhetoric-dialectic split, states, "Exegesis, or hermeneutics [biblical interpretation], explores and seeks knowledge of a text; homiletics seeks to discover the available means of presenting that exegesis persuasively. Thus what dialectic is to rhetoric in the Aristotelian system, hermeneutics is to homiletics in Christian rhetoric" (Kennedy *Classical* 138). While I do not hold to such clean separations between finding and expressing knowledge, this parallel does illustrate the dominant attitude toward preaching throughout most of Christian history.

Similar to the rhetorical triangle (*logos/pathos/ethos*, or text/audience/speaker), homiletics has its own triad consisting of text/audience/preacher. Each part of the triangle "depends on distinct yet recurring beliefs about human nature, the intelligibility of scripture, the function of the institutional church, and the accessibility of God and divine truths" (Kneidel). For example, as beliefs about the authority of the preacher or centrality of scriptures evolve, sermon form and content shift accordingly. Also, the "text" in the homiletic triad most often consists of a passage of scripture, about which the speaker comments. This practice originated in the synagogue, with rabbinical homilies.[22] Synagogue worship consisted of oral prayers, an oral

[22] To clarify terms, a homily is a specific, informal type of preaching, described here. The term "homiletics" describes the broad study of the rhetorical art of preaching.

reading of a scriptural text, and at least one oral exposition of the text from a respected adult male member of the community (Murphy *Rhetoric* 272). The exposition was typically a homily, a sort of running commentary that offers interpretation of the text, including past interpretations from respected teachers, and giving practical illustrations and applications for the listeners. In other words, the text itself provides the arrangement, with the homily acting as a "spoken gloss" on the text (Murphy *Rhetoric* 299). This pairing of reading and preaching, probably based on a triennial cycle of readings from the Torah and prophets, provided "continuous and sustained adult education in Judaism year in and year out" (Mann 3).

The Greek term *homilia*, which means "conversation" (Latin *sermo*), captures the informal and personal nature of this form of preaching. Indeed, the homily "stands in contradistinction to a *logos* (*oratio* in Latin), which denotes a more self-consciously rhetorical composition modeled on secular forms such as the encomium, invective, and apology" (Kneidel). When compared to the classical oration, the homily is less structured and the tone more conversational. As previously stated, this form of preaching highlights the eloquence of the scriptural passage and limits the speaker's leeway in adding her own flourish. Therefore, it lends itself to non-theory and anti-theory approaches to preaching and, as mentioned above, to the smaller house-church gatherings of the first three centuries of Christianity. After I examine some of the key preaching through the third and fourth centuries, I will address the question of why church leaders considered this simple form of preaching so much more appropriate for their congregations even after Constantine, when massive basilicas overflowed with congregants.

The Preaching of Jesus and the Apostles

Christian preaching begins, of course, in the teachings of Jesus, who was deeply rooted in the oral traditions of Judaism, particularly the first-century synagogue. Although Herod's temple in Jerusalem continued to be the religious center of first-century Judaism, synagogue worship preserved teaching and maintained cultural identity for Jews and proselytes across the Roman Empire. In his teaching, Jesus continued the accepted methodology of plumbing the scriptures for deeper principles, which his followers would continue to do as they taught his sayings. Like the Jewish teachers before him, Jesus used scripture as proof (Murphy *Rhetoric* 276). For example, in Matthew 9:10-13, religious leaders questioned why Jesus was dining with societal outcasts—"tax collectors and sinners." Jesus' reply consisted of a teaching using a physician metaphor, followed by a quote from the prophet Hosea (6:6): "Those who are well have no need

of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."[23] Because Jesus seemed to be violating Jewish purity codes by eating with sinners, he needed to override that tradition with a direct reference to scripture. The Hosea quote serves his purpose well, directing attention away from strict moral codes and toward a more flexible, compassion-based interpretation of the law.

Along with the use of scriptural authority, Jesus also illustrated divine truths using everyday imagery and examples. To describe his method of bringing the kingdom of God slowly and subtly, into individuals' hearts, Jesus told this short parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened" (Matt. 13:33). The simple comparison illustrates that he did not come to enact a massive political overthrow of the occupying Romans. Although this "kingdom" was unseen and spiritual in nature, it would permeate the world, like a small amount of yeast in a large amount of flour, and cause pervasive change from within. This everyday domestic image presents a relatively new idea to Jesus' listeners. Mann asserts that in first-century Palestine, the earthly Messianic kingdom was a dominant theme in homilies (xxxi). The culture interpreted the prophets such that they expected that political kingdom. Therefore, this parable of the leavening, although a traditional-looking homiletic tactic, allows Jesus to temporarily distance the very idea of the Kingdom of God from those expectations, giving him the space to reinterpret traditional views of kingdom and messiah.

However, Jesus' preaching reveals an even more drastic departure from the synagogue teaching of his day. Luke (5:16-30) narrates an early preaching moment in Jesus' ministry. Having entered the synagogue in his hometown of Nazareth, as was his custom, Jesus stood up to read a passage of scripture. The synagogue attendant handed him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, and he located and read the following passage: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me/ because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor./ He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives/ and recovering sight to the blind,/ to set at liberty those who are oppressed,/ to proclaim

[23] Restricting textual proof to only the accepted scriptures seems a great disadvantage compared to classical rhetoric's massive store of *topoi* and Greek literature's vast supply of examples. However, Jesus' and his followers' use of everyday items as illustrative material does open more possibilities for communication. Like Jesus' parables about sewing seed and tending vineyards, Paul's repeated use of the church-as-human-body metaphor served him well in forming and sustaining Christian communities.

the year of the Lord's favor" (Lk. 5:18-19). At this point, Jesus rolled up the scroll, handed it to the attendant, and sat down, and "the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him" (5:20). The congregants were awaiting a message, probably a homily expounding on the text. Jesus would indeed interpret the text, but in quite unexpected ways. Luke reports, "He began to say to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing'" (5:22).

Later in the chapter, Luke reiterates that Jesus' listeners were "astonished at his teaching, for his word possessed authority" (5:32). I believe Jesus astounded his hearers because he dared not only to transport the ancient text directly into the lived experience of his times, but he also dared to make forceful interpretations. He did not defer to the great experts of the law. Rather, as the Sermon on the Mount indicates, he offered an immediate rereading of the law. For example, Jesus preached, "You have heard it said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy' [Leviticus 19:18]. But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you…" (Matthew 6:43-44). The interpretation is not just "fresh" to the ears of listeners; the boldness to frame the interpretation with "I say to you" asserts a personal authority not often heard in homilies and commentaries.

Although I cannot tarry too long over this groundbreaking sermon, I will make a few key points. First, the Sermon on the Mount does seem to blend ancient literary and rhetorical elements. The Beatitudes ("Blessed are the poor…") are set in verse and ring of ancient wisdom literature. I also find fascinating the following exhortation, as well as Jesus' use of repetition and hyperbole to illustrate it: "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. Why do you see the speck in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?" (Matthew 7:1-3). I find that Jesus offers such authoritative and creative reinterpretations of Hebrew law in order to assert a new ethic. He used his sermons, in synagogues, in people's homes, and outdoors, to build the groundwork for his ministry. By doing so, he gave his eventual followers new authoritative material they could employ in their own proclamations.

The Missionary Sermon

Murphy asserts that what set Jesus' teachings apart from the synagogue scriptural interpretation of his time was his audacity to charge all his followers to take his teachings to the world, an "enormous, continuing oratorical effort" (*Rhetoric* 274) to "make disciples" (Matthew 28:20). Due to this unique charge, the early apostles' sermons took on a more prophetic and

proclamatory tone. Kennedy refers to the resulting form as a "missionary sermon" (129) because most listeners at the time were either Jews or Gentiles who had not considered Jesus to be the Messiah, if they had heard of him at all. In addition to this contextual difference with the homily, the missionary sermon centers around a proclamation, using various scripture passages as proof, which often leads to a warning or exhortation. In other words, the gospel message, not a singular scripture passage, anchors the sermon, and scripture, although still used as a primary source of proof, supplements the proclamation. In the case of the first apostles, their own eyewitness testimony regarding the words and deeds of Jesus also acted as an important source of proof.

Peter

Peter's sermon in Acts 2:14-36 serves as an example of this early apostolic preaching. In this short message, the former fisherman proclaims Jesus, recently executed in Jerusalem, to be the Christ. After calling the crowd's attention, he explains the events of Pentecost by quoting the prophet Joel: "And in the last days, it shall be, God declares/ that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,/ and your sons and daughters will prophesy/ and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams…" This quote applies ancient prophecy directly to the budding church's immediate experience of speaking in tongues.

Peter then narrates the recent death and resurrection of Jesus, citing the writings of David (Psalm 16) alongside eyewitness testimony, thus providing both prophecy and proof of God's hand in the events: "For you will not abandon my soul to Hades/ or let your Holy One see corruption [decay]." He follows the quote by proclaiming that David, long dead,

> foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God and having received from the father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. (Acts 2:31-33)

Peter uses Old Testament scripture as proof that Jesus' life and death were fulfillments of prophecy, lining up with God's ultimate salvation plan. He then pairs this direct application of Old Testament scripture with new proclamation, to exhort his listeners to repent and be baptized as followers of Christ.

In time, evangelists like Paul continued to deliver missionary sermons. But as churches formed in the Roman world, the homily reemerged as the chosen form for encouraging Christians to persevere. These groups of believers did not need to hear repeated missionary sermons because they had already assented to the proclamation; they needed to learn scripture and find encouragement as a community. The homily fit these needs, and could even be tailored toward evangelism as needed.

Post-Apostolic Preaching and the Dominance of the Homily

After the apostles, the first preacher whose sermons have been preserved in any number is Origen (185-254 CE). This theologian and preacher stayed faithful to the tradition of keeping scripture central in his homilies, always moving toward impassioned exhortation and eschewing the rhetorical style and forms he learned in his youth. However, Origen added layers of interpretation and the flourish of language and imagery, and thus expanded the rhetorical scope of the homily. More specifically, Origen incorporated non-literal levels of interpretation into his homilies (Kneidel), using a system of three "senses." The grammatical sense communicates the literal meaning of scripture; the moral sense interprets that meaning which leads to exhortation to virtuous action (similar to an epideictic approach to the scriptures, which might praise the obedience of Christ, for example); finally, the spiritual sense is an allegorical interpretation, which Origen viewed as the highest of the three senses (Dargan 51).

In the following sermon excerpt, Origen reinterprets the story of the Good Samaritan. In the narrative, from Luke chapter ten, a man going from Jerusalem to Jericho fell among thieves, who robbed him, beat him, and left him almost dead. A priest and a Levite (religious leaders) passed by, fearing that if he were dead, they would defile themselves and be unfit for their religious service. But an enemy Samaritan took pity, cleaning and binding the wounds, placing the man on the Samaritan's donkey, and taking the man to safe place. Jesus told the story to illustrate the meaning of the command to love one's neighbor, but Origen expands the meaning. He claims that the priest and Levite represent the Law and the prophets, who are unable to truly save people on their life journey, who are voyaging from Jerusalem (paradise) to Jericho (the world) (Origen 139). Origen goes on to describe the Samaritan as a figure of Christ.

> He had oil. Scripture says of it, 'to gladden one's face with oil' (Ps. 104:15)—without a doubt, it means the face of him who was healed. He cleans the wound with oil, to reduce the swelling of the wounds, but also with wine, adding in something that stings. And the

> man who had been wounded 'he placed on his own beast,' that is, on his own body, since he deigned to assume a man. This Samaritan 'bears our sins' (Matt. 8:17) and grieves for us. He carries the half-dead man, and brings him to the *pandochium*—that is, the Church, which accepts everyone and denies its help to no one. Jesus calls everyone to the Church when he says 'Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I shall refresh you' (Matt. 11:28). (Origen 140)

Notice the frequent references to other biblical passages, the most common means of support and illustration in a homily. But Origen adds layers of allegorical meaning, labeling the man's wounds as sin (138) and combining the Samaritan and his animal into a sin-bearing Christ-figure. Even the inn and stable (*pandochium*) to which the Samaritan took the injured man receives significant attention as symbolic of the church.

This allegorical level of interpretation became an integral element of preaching, moving easily to later preaching forms (see below) and finding only sporadic opposition among preachers until the fifteenth century.[24] Origen's contribution expanded the material preachers could present to audiences. And while he "soared to no oratorical heights" (Dargan 52) as far as arrangement and style are concerned, his sermons show a simple poignancy in his use of scripture to call his audiences to a "pure and lofty morality" (60). The allegorical homily allowed Origen and later preachers to assess audience need and shape the sermon accordingly. The preacher could decide whether the homily would be evangelistic for non-believers, didactic for new converts, or liturgical and hortatory for established congregations. The homily's structure and the openness of allegory allowed for this flexibility to develop doctrine and give practical advice for living out that belief. Origen and his contemporaries used these sermons to sustain church communities through the most intense times of persecution in the history of Christianity.

Constantine and the End of Sanctioned Persecution

[24] Writers such as Francois Fénelon recognized that even though Paul used allegory in Galatians 4:21-31, too many preachers departed drastically from the actual meaning of scripture. Both allegory and the divisions of the university sermon of his day allowed preachers to take single words or phrases completely out of context. Fénelon called for a return to a hermeneutic that sought original authorial intent.

When Constantine decreed Christianity to be the religion of the empire in the early fourth century, he sewed the seeds of a state-church system. Within one generation, the church moved from being persecuted by a largely secular government to being granted sovereignty, ingrained within the state. Just as temples formerly dedicated to gods and idols were converted to churches dedicated to Christ and the saints, hordes of citizens converted to the new religion of the empire. Christians began meeting in larger groups, and like the buildings in which they were delivered, sermons too became more ornate, elaborate, and structured (Dargan 65). The "dangerous gift of political and social prestige" (63) made church attendance a social function and filled churches with citizens who possessed "the general taste of the age for oratorical display" (64).

This cultural transformation and the challenges that accompanied it made the fourth century a culminating time for preaching. Some have even called it a golden age for the art. The ancient form of the homily held fast as most preachers maintained the practice of allowing the scriptural passage to determine the overall arrangement of the sermon. However, Origen's work at expanding the rhetorical potential of the homily came to fruition during the fourth century. All six of the most influential preachers of the generation following Constantine's decrees (in the East: Basil, his brother Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus, and John Chrysostom; and in the West: Ambrose of Milan and Augustine of Hippo) received the best rhetorical education the culture offered (Dargan 65). These preachers began to gravitate toward the more formal *style* of oratory, but continued to set aside the *forms* of the pagan rhetoricians. This modified rhetorical approach to preaching showed itself in the assessment of audience need, the weaving of powerful narrative descriptions, and the use of creative figures of speech.

John Chrysostom: The Golden Mouth

John Chrysostom (347-407 CE) composed poignant expository homilies, exploring the grammatical and historical elements of scripture, a hermeneutical practice not unlike that of the most respected preachers today. In Antioch, capital of Syria, Chrysostom built an "unrivaled reputation," his audience becoming "amazingly addicted to sermons" (Kelly 57). However, here and at his later bishopric in Constantinople, John had to struggle with the contrast between "the imperial church and the apostolic church" (Pelikan 7). The imperial establishment had made Christianity the in-vogue belief system, causing "the incursion of hordes of uncommitted new members into the church and the catastrophic breakdown in church discipline that this presaged" (7). In addition to addressing audiences who were more interested in entertainment than spiritual

growth, John had to fight persistent heresies. He "defended the essential goodness of the body" and of the natural world against Manichean and Gnostics who espoused the Hellenistic belief in the utter corruption of all matter (11). Therefore, this gifted preacher faced a complex and challenging ministry.

Chrysostom was part of the Antioch school, which greatly preferred historical exegesis to allegorical interpretation (Pelikan 13).[25] He paired a strong dedication to study with remarkable rhetorical skill. Along with his friends Gregory of Nazianzus and Basil, who also became great preachers, John studied under the teaching of the pagan rhetorician Libanius. The famous teacher lamented that so many of his pupils had abandoned the Greek gods, but he was quick to boast in their abilities (Dargan 86). I agree with Pelikan that, "It is impossible to read the homilies of Chrysostom without being constantly reminded that he was not only a Christian priest but also a Greek orator" (19) in the tradition of Demosthenes and Isocrates (28). Chrysostom's first official sermon (386 CE) as bishop of Antioch, his ordination sermon, consisted in part of an encomium dedicated to his mentor, Flavian. Kelly claims that the massive crowd gathered that day certainly "savoured with relish the carefully arranged periods and contrived repetitions, the recherché vocabulary and the skillful use of commonplaces (*topoi*) dear to practised orators" (56). Whether he was railing against the vices and violence of the city, praising the virtue of a saint on a festival day, or offering comfort in times of political instability, John's preaching showed a keen awareness of the art of rhetoric and its usefulness in addressing audience need.

For example, in one early series on the Sermon on the Mount, John points out the use of hyperbole and "parallelism of members" in the words of Jesus, thus effectively offering rhetorical analysis of Christ's preaching while interpreting and applying the text for his listeners (Pelikan 27). Chrysostom examines a section of the Sermon on the Mount in which Jesus states,

[25] The most vocal proponents of historical exegesis throughout history claim that excessive allegory in sermons amounts to "exegetical alchemy" which treats the historical message of scripture as the lead which the preacher must attempt to distort into gold (Pelikan 14). Augustine and Jerome represent a middle ground between Origen and Chrysostom (who rarely used allegory). Both Augustine and Jerome generated occasional allegorical interpretations, but more often borrowed them from preachers such as Origen. After the Antioch school, the most vocal critics of allegorical exegesis emerged during the Protestant Reformation. Below, I discuss the ease at which allegory blended into the divisions of the thematic or university sermon in the later middle ages.

"Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison" (Matt. 5:23-24). The bishop first anticipates his listeners' thoughts through rhetorical questions, saying, "That is, that thou mayest not say, 'What then if I am injured'; 'what if I am plundered, and dragged to before the tribunal?' even this occasion and excuse he hath taken away: for he commands us not even so to be at enmity" (qtd. in Pelikan 91). After he explains in greater detail the benefit of humbly settling matters outside the courtroom, Chrysostom analyzes Jesus' rhetorical strategy of heightening urgency for his audience:

> And see here also how he hastens him; for having said 'Agree with thine adversary,' he added 'quickly'; and he was not satisfied with this, but even of this quickness he hath required a further increase, saying, 'Whilst thou art in the way with him'; pressing and hastening him hereby with great earnestness. For nothing doth so much turn our life upside down, as delay and procrastination in the performance of our (91) good works. (92)

This short passage illustrates John's ability to weave together narrative, interpretation, and application, all in beautiful language. The only tension he may have felt between the arts of rhetoric and preaching lay in the danger of applause and adulation. In *Six Books on the Priesthood,* Chrysostom insists that a "contempt of praise" must accompany the preacher's "force of eloquence" if he is to fulfill his priestly duties (128). I find that due to this caution, the primary way John avoided this singular pitfall of rhetorical sermons was to eschew rhetorical form. Most of John's sermons are homilies, commenting on scripture, and not orations. However, these homilies show rhetorical flourish in their style and use of the tools of the orator, such as analogy, hyperbole, and as the above quote ("What then if I am injured") suggests, prolepsis, the anticipation of objections.

Despite his hesitation to use rhetorical forms due to the danger of preaching-as-entertainment, John defended the preacher's use of rhetorical skill. Answering the question of Paul's "humble speech" from 1 Corinthians, John refers to the apostle as "the man who won everyone's admiration above all by his disputations and public speeches" (122) and cites multiple epistles as further evidence of Paul's rhetorical skill (123). According to Chrysostom, not only is the art of rhetoric an appropriate arena for the preacher; in fact, the art finds its fulfillment in the pulpit. He boldly asserts, "The power of eloquence…is more requisite in a

church than when professors of rhetoric are made to contend against each other!" (127). This attitude certainly manifests in John's powerful homilies as he fully relies on scriptural authority to eloquently instruct his congregation.

Augustine

I return to Augustine to give one sermon excerpt that exemplifies the type of preaching he espoused in *de Doctrina Christiana*. One of his homilies focused on 1 Thessalonians 4:13, "But we do not want you to be uninformed about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope." Here, Paul is addressing misconceptions within the Thessalonian church regarding the state of Christians who die before Christ's return. After a short explication of the verse, Augustine offers the following conclusion:

> And so it is perfectly in order for loving hearts to grieve at the death of their dear ones, but with a sorrow that will let itself be assuaged; and to shed the tears that suit our mortal condition, but that are also prepared to be consoled. These should be quickly dried by the joy of the faith with which we believe that when the faithful die, they depart from us for only a little while, and pass on to better things. Let mourners also be comforted by the good offices of their fellow Christians, whether these consist of helping with the funeral arrangements or comforting the bereaved; or else there would be just cause for people to complain, 'I waited for someone to share my grief, and there was none; for people to console me, and I could not find any' (Ps. 69:20). (Augustine *Sermons* 252).

As the homily revolves around the 1 Thessalonians passage, Augustine adds a quote from the Psalms to illustrate the need for Christians to console those who mourn. This blending of parallel structure, clear imagery, scriptural support, and practical advice for daily living captures the nature of the fourth-century homily.

Augustine's homilies brings me back to the question of why, even after Christianity became the official religion of empire in the early fourth century, and after Augustine's baptism of rhetoric, did preachers continue using the homily for several centuries? Why was there not a surge in texts developing preaching theory, with a further stretching of the homily as a sermon form? One factor that probably contributed to this lack of homiletic theory and innovation was the political instability as the empire crumbled in the fourth century. The political climate did not lend itself to increased rhetorical activity and did not invite deliberation or persuasive speaking and writing, at least in Europe and the Mediterranean (Murphy *Three* xxiii).

Augustine's own example and advice suggest several additional reasons for the lack of development in the early medieval period. In *de Doctrina Christiana*, Augustine's reliance upon Cicero may have rendered further homiletic theory unnecessary. Augustine modeled his theory of preaching directly upon the work of Cicero, thus establishing that work as sufficient for rhetorical education. If Augustine effectively justified the preacher's use of Cicero, why would preachers need to develop any further those justifications? Nor would they need to rewrite preaching theory through a Ciceronian lens; early education in rhetoric, accompanied by religious instruction, would suffice (Murphy *Three* xviii). Further, Augustine also said that for aspiring preachers, it was better to study good preachers than to study books about effective communication (*Doctrina* 4.8). Later generations may have taken this advice all too seriously; for hundreds of years, preachers often delivered centuries-old sermons from Augustine, John Chrysostom, and others from the golden age.

Well into his old age, Augustine continued to preach homilies that, upon analysis, do display the plain, middle, and grand styles of rhetoric as established by Cicero. However, the overall impact of Augustine's language strikes the hearer as simple and clear, as in the above excerpt. In the same way, preachers such as Gregory of Nazianzus and John Chrysostom, though incorporating passionate narrative and taking advantage of the beauty of the Greek language, still rang of hortatory sermons and retained a central focus upon scripture. To squeeze that scripture into the form of a public oration probably seems unnatural and unnecessary as these preachers urged their listeners to greater obedience. But more than this, to speak relatively plainly, as opposed to the elevated style of the second sophistic, was an act of humility. Van Oort states that Augustine's straightforward style, called *sermo humilis*, indicated an act of identification with Christ, who also humbled himself during his life and especially in his death (6). Preachers followed this example and strove "to be as clear as possible, even at the expense of (classical) language purity," especially if some members of the church were uneducated (Van Oort 6). I believe that this key difference in persona between rhetor and preacher to be an impasse in the preaching-rhetoric relationship. The two arts could not fully merge if rhetoric represented an attempt to impress and build the reputation of the speaker. However, both sermon form and conceptions of rhetoric began to change in the later middle ages and beyond, and more homileticians composed European rhetorical theory. These shifts allowed for a much smoother merging of the fields of preaching and rhetoric.

Preaching's Static Period

From the years after Augustine's death through the twelfth century, preaching retained a strong presence in multiple contexts throughout Europe and the Mediterranean world. Of course, lay people heard liturgical sermons in worship services. Missionaries continued to take their message into new lands, and abbots and itinerant preachers delivered daily homilies in monasteries and convents. Certainly many talented preachers effectively educated, challenged, and edified their listeners.[26] However, two factors contribute to the era being known as a dark or static age for preaching. First, relatively few sermons survive. For example, despite St. Patrick's obviously effective missionary preaching in the British Isles, we have no sermons to study. Second, the sermons that were passed down reveal little or no innovation in form or content. In the Eastern church, preachers routinely read or imitated "homilies and panegyric discourses by Chrystom, Gregory of Nazianzus (c. 330-389 CE), and other Greek Fathers" (Kneidel). In the Western church, collections (*homilaria*) of printed sermons by famous preachers spread, giving preachers texts to read from the pulpit (Kneidel). Therefore, both the sermons and the rhetorical strategies of the third- and early fourth-century fathers seem to have been codified, if not canonized. Murphy points out that "Despite the collapse of education during the barbarian invasions in Europe, despite the frequent avowals that study is necessary to the preacher, despite the consistent acceptance of preaching responsibility in council after council, no second Augustine appeared to propose a rhetoric of preaching" (*Rhetoric* 297). Preachers did not produce and therefore did not possess the resources necessary for innovations in preaching form or renewals in the preaching-rhetoric relationship.

I see multiple causes for this decline in preaching. During the 3rd and 4th centuries, most of the urgent church controversies and heresies were settled. In this age of councils and creeds, preachers and theologians effectively worked out the doctrine they considered orthodox. In addition, the church's political power consolidated, resulting in many corrupt political appointments (Dargan 109). George Kennedy adds that under the later emperors public discourse was not possible and public education waned (*Classical* 189), and even with the establishment of universities later in the medieval period, dialectic had a much higher place than rhetoric (189). Overall, it seems that the distance between priest and congregation increased.

[26] See Dargan for short biographical sketches of preachers such as Germanus (634-734 CE), bishop of Constantinople (151), and Christopher (d. 836 CE), patriarch of Alexandria (159).

Instead of the people's representatives or God's prophets, priests became dispensers of the sacraments, and the spoken word declined in importance. The Catholic mass developed into the primary focus of worship. Sermons became shorter, preachers less practiced in the art (Dargan 157).

Transitions and Hints of Change

Murphy offers Rabanus Maurus (776-856) as a milestone in preaching and rhetoric, connecting the work of Augustine with the forthcoming "homiletic revolution" of the thirteenth century (*Rhetoric* 130). Rabanus' work, *De institutione clericorum*, gleans from Cicero, Augustine, the dialectic process, and personal experience to give advice to preachers. This practical approach to the art of preaching utilizes only the useful portions of entire rhetorical systems and thus amounts to an "assimilation of classical rhetoric into Christian methodology" (82). However, no defined system or form for preaching emerged from this work, no "rhetoric of preaching."

By the twelfth century, the church in Europe was showing signs of a renewal in preaching. Reform movements, once sporadic, began to arise in greater frequency, crying out against corruption and demanding moral reform among the clergy. The crusades, along with new (and potentially heretical) philosophical movements, provided numerous enemy "others" for preachers and theologians (Dargan 183). And just as in secular contexts, even a phantom enemy can inject new life into religious rhetorics. The situation demands successful popular address based on religious and moral appeals. Finally, as nation states formed, some preachers began to deliver liturgical sermons in the language of the people (Dargan 184), which in my opinion both reflected and inspired lay interest in the quality of preaching.

Probably the most influential writer during this twelfth-century lead-up was Alan of Lille (1128–1202). In *The Art of Preaching*, Alan echoes Cicero's description of rhetoric, saying, "There should be some weight in the thought of a good sermon, so that it may move the spirits of its listeners, stir up the mind, and encourage repentance. Let the sermon rain down doctrines, thunder forth admonitions, soothe with praises, and so in every way work for the good of our neighbors" (19-20). To achieve these goals, Alan asserts an approach that, while concerned with form, does not yet show the commitment to a rhetorical development of form that would emerge one generation later. He advises that sermons revolve around a "proper foundation from a theological authority," (20) that is, a scriptural text. The preacher must introduce this central

idea, then proceed to win audience favor by showing humility, love for listeners, and the "profitableness" of the subject (21). Scripture acts as the primary authority to support the subject, but the preacher can also cite "pagan writers" (22). Alan also encourages preachers to utilize "moving words" to inspire emotion (22).

I find it significant that Alan continues the ancient tradition of giving scripture the central authoritative role in the sermon. This singular focus on the biblical passage would wane in the years to come, but always voices of reformers would call preachers back to the Bible as their theological and homiletic anchor. Alan's brief description, summarized above, does contain the rhetorical elements of thesis, establishing *ethos*, offering proofs, and inspiring emotion (*pathos*) through carefully chosen words. Alan cautions against an overly ornamented style that uses rhythm and meter, calling this type of preaching "theatrical and full of buffoonery" (18). He makes no mention of a firm method of arrangement, nor does he address memory. However, most of *The Art of Preaching* consists of demonstrative mini-sermons, in which Alan shows how preachers might assemble sermons based on scriptural topics such as the seven deadly sins and virtues such as patience, mercy, and justice. The last sermons offer ways to preach to different audiences, such as soldiers, cloistered religious, judges, widows, etc. In some of these sermons, Alan demonstrates the practice of dividing the subject, usually in threes. The fact that he does not address the practice in his introduction may indicate how deeply ingrained the process of division was in Medieval European thought.

Alan's sermon on despising the world shows this array of strategies. First, he offers the central idea from Ecclesiastes 1:2—"Vanity of vanities! All is vanity!" (Alan 23). He then offers a three-part division of vanity: "vanity of what passes away, the vanity of worldly care, and the vanity of deceitfulness" (23). To support the first type of vanity, Alan offers both a quote from Paul and a quote from secular literature (Persius), "How great a folly are the cares of mankind over their affairs!" After illustrating each of the three points accordingly, he offers both positive and negative exhortation which preachers might use, urging listeners to despise the world for an eternal reward and for the avoidance of slavery to temporal things (25). His model sermon ends with advice to use examples from scripture and church tradition about saints who followed this course and found their reward.

Again, this type of division does not occur in all the sermons in *The Art of Preaching*, but would become the backbone of the thematic sermon. In other words, the very interest in

expounding on rhetorical form, the "how" of sermon composition, was not yet fully developed. However, the work of Alan of Lille demonstrates the evolution toward this type of thinking. I also see here a loosening of the anti-form of the homily. The scripture passage remains the central focus of the sermon, but no longer does it dictate the arrangement of the sermon.

The Thirteenth-Century Boom

During the late Medieval period, preaching theory experienced a long-awaited boom, with hundreds of treatises (*ars praedicandi*, plural *artes praedicandi*), which theorized the strategies of the thematic or university sermon.[27] Preachers using this form usually took a short scripture passage, often only one verse or phrase, and developed it as a theme through "a complex process of division and amplification" (Murphy *Three* xviii). The typical thematic sermon consisted of six parts: Theme (scripture), protheme (introduction followed by prayer), antetheme (explanation of purpose of the sermon), division of theme (in threes or multiples of three), subdivision, amplification of divisions and subdivisions (xix). Divisions often centered around a key word or phrase in the scripture passage, and for proofs and amplifications, the preacher quoted other scriptures, cited secular literature or fables, or narrated events from the lives of saints. In this new form, innovative invention and arrangement became a central concern, thus reflecting the Medieval "respect for order and for plan" (vii) through "acute and minute reasoning" (Dargan 231).

[27] Many scholars ascribe the renewal of preaching theory to the universities because the emphasis on form and division reflects scholastic thought, and because several *artes praedicandi* seem to assume an educated audience for sermons. Indeed, the universities did embrace thematic preaching. In *The Form of Preaching* (see below), Robert of Basevorn carefully distinguishes between the preaching styles at Oxford and Paris. Theology was a key component of a university education, and students had to demonstrate the ability to preach in order to receive a degree (Murphy *Rhetoric* 311). However, while the universities embraced and influenced the thematic preaching movement, I hesitate to assert that they were the source of the thematic form. These sermons continued to rely on scripture for their primary source of themes, divisions, and proofs, making only occasional use of the dialectic process. Some manuals also considered a wide range of audience types, including the uneducated. Finally, most sermons continued to boldly name the vices of society, making concrete applications to the listeners' lives. These sermons did not stay for long in the scholastic realm of theological inquiry. For these reasons, I believe that the thematic sermon, though influenced by scholasticism, developed slowly within the cathedrals and monasteries. Therefore, I will use the term "thematic sermon" because it best captures the emphasis on form and because it does not ascribe sole credit for the movement to rise of the university.

The fields of preaching and rhetoric, having experienced strong overlaps since the fourth century, at long last seemed to be merging at the levels of form and arrangement. The homily had given way to a more rhetorical form based on classical division. However, this rhetorical approach to preaching occurred during a time of denigration of rhetoric, as the Platonic elevation of philosophy remained triumphant. Rhetoric, though still a part of early education, was widely depicted as mere ornament, its ability to produce knowledge or even probability undercut. The thematic sermon's clever divisions and prioritization of a pleasing style reflect this cultural trend. Dargan points out that although the thirteenth century was a time of renewal, with strong preachers,[28] some preaching still demonstrated "Wild allegorizing, puerile fancies, forced meanings and applications, gross misunderstanding, and sometimes positive irreverence" in how it interpreted scripture (230). The continued acceptance of allegorical interpretation certainly contributes to Dargan's characterization of this vibrant age. However, as I will explore below, reforms in the sixteenth century would address these concerns. Despite some problematic hermeneutic practice, Dargan concludes that the sermons of this age were also "popular in the best sense—they found the people, held them, helped them. Vivid allegory and picturing appealed to the imagination, lively dialogue and share home-thrust kept the attention, and warm and tender appeals to the better feelings of men were not without effect" (Dargan 245).

Alexander of Ashby, writing in the year 1200, made the important step away from considering only the material for sermons (the primary concern of Alan of Lille) and asserting the importance of a standard sermon form. He relies on the arrangement suggested by Cicero in *de Inventione* and pseudo-Cicero in *Rhetorica ad Herennium* in which an introduction is followed by partition (an explanation of the different points the speaker will make), which leads to proofs. The thematic sermon has an introduction, and (usually) three main divisions. Each division can also be subdivided (again, into threes), and each subdivision has its own proof from

[28] The rise of the monastic preaching orders, the Dominicans and Franciscans, is one reason for this renewal. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) sought to preach a gospel of love and hope to the needy, instituting a policy of poverty among his followers. Saint Dominic (1170-1221) began his order primarily as a means of fighting heresy. Dominicans, knows for their scholarship and teaching, would send their preachers to rural areas to educate the people, essentially beating heretical groups at their own game. Like most reform movements, these orders would experience eventual corruption and decline, but their emergence in the thirteenth century contributed to a climate of renewed interest in theology and preaching.

examples, scriptural authority, reason, narrative, etc. (Murphy *Rhetoric* 315). The only difference I detect between this form and a classical oration is that in many orations, proofs have their own separate section, whereas here, the preacher provides proofs immediately after an assertion. This strategy only makes sense for preaching, since from ancient times, preachers have scattered scriptural proof throughout their sermons.

Thomas of Salisbury, also called Thomas Chabham (or Chobham, b. 1160), adds to this reliance upon classical form explicit comparisons between preaching, rhetoric, and classical poetry. In his work, *Summa de Arte Praedicandi*, Thomas slightly alters the form of the thematic sermon into *thema* (the scripture passage)*, antethema* (introductory explanation of the purpose of the sermon)*, and divisio*, which is identical to Alexander's divisions and subdivisions (Murphy *Rhetoric* 317). Murphy translates Thomas' work and explains,[29]

> 'Rhetoric,' he states, 'is the art of speaking for the sake of persuading.' Therefore the whole intention of the preacher ought to be that he persuade men to good conduct and dissuade them from bad conduct; thus the end of the orator and the end of the preacher are the same. 'Therefore the doctrine of the orator is absolutely necessary to carry out the office of the preacher' (322).

This statement may be the first since Augustine to make such a strong connection between the arts of preaching and rhetoric. What I find remarkable about Thomas is that he could make such a bold statement while upholding the fact that sermons tapped into an authority source, the scriptures, which the ancient rhetoricians did not possess; yet, this fact need not discourage the preacher from taking up the full scope of rhetoric. Sermons, though rhetorical, simply draw from a different well for their themes, divisions, and proofs.

Forma Praedicandi, or *The Form of Preaching*, by Robert of Basevorn (1322) stands as the quintessential example of the *artes praedicandi*, assembling the most popular and effective innovations from the thirteenth-century boom. Having considered the differences between the preaching in Paris and in Oxford, Robert offers no fewer than twenty-two "ornaments" which the preacher can use to invent thematic sermons. Some ornaments should occur at a specific place in the sermon. For example, to begin the sermon, the preacher should assert the theme, capture audience attention with a vivid introduction, and state the divisions of theme. Other ornaments

[29] No English translation of *Summa de Arte Praedicandi* exists.

can occur at any point or throughout the sermon, such as humor, allusion, modulation of voice, and a limited use of gesture.

Robert begins his treatise by considering who may preach. He concludes that purity of life (123), knowledge of scripture, and authority (granted by the church) qualify one to preach (124). He briefly discusses the preaching of Jesus, Paul, Augustine, and other admired figures. It is in this section that Robert reveals his reliance upon classical rhetoric. He praises Bernard, the great twelfth-century Cistercian preacher, for his ability to divide, support, and conclude powerful sermons, "using every rhetorical color, so that the whole work shines with a double glow, earthly and heavenly" (131). He considers it "reprehensible" that some would attempt to ban "verbal embellishments" from sermons, because this rhetorical embellishment, when paired with Godly wisdom, is truly beautiful and persuasive (131). Robert thus agrees with Augustine that although eloquence is not an end in itself, it joins naturally with scriptural wisdom in the preaching moment.

Robert gives considerable attention to dividing a theme and stating that division clearly for the audience. For example, using as a theme the single phrase "the intelligent minister is acceptable to the king," he derives three virtues: intellectual perfection (based on the word "intelligent"), ministerial humility (based on the word "minister"), and fraternal acceptance (or brotherly kindness, based on the phrase "acceptable to the king") (160). The preacher can then subdivide and amplify each of the three divisions. He relies on Aristotle's *Rhetoric* to enumerate strategies of amplification such as definition, opposites, deductive and inductive reasoning, metaphor, causation, etc. (180-184). Also, the preacher can support these divisions with virtually any combination of fables, maxims, scriptural narrative, stories of the lives of the saints, literature, and examples from daily life. As long as the goal of the sermon is the edification of the listener, the whole world is open to the preacher for proof and illustration. The effective preacher will divide and subdivide not only for the purpose of memory, but to achieve Cicero's and Augustine's goals to "teach, please, and move" the audience (132). Finally, the sophisticated preacher will then strive for correspondence between various subdivisions, creating internal parallels within the sermon (188).

Obviously, this form of preaching allows for creativity and subtlety on the part of the preacher. Although Robert warns against excessive shortening of passages for a theme, and against taking the passage out of context (what he calls "too violent a transfer from its proper

meaning") (137), the very process of division and amplification lends itself to highlighting this creativity, sometimes at the expense of the original meaning of the passage. I find this danger of straying from scriptural truth to lie beneath many of the revisions to and departures from the thematic sermon, starting in the fifteenth century. To conclude this chapter, I will paint in broad strokes some of these revisions and departures from the fifteenth to twentieth centuries, demonstrating preaching's continued reliance upon classical rhetoric as it developed as a rhetorical art.

Reform and Return to Text

From the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries, Cicero remained popular in Europe. Interest in Latin oratory accompanied the Renaissance interest in classical literature, and reemerged as "a major force in education and cultural life" (Kennedy *Classical* 195). Caplan points out that the rise of scholasticism and renewal of preaching in the later Medieval period caused a steep decline in the "distrust for rhetoric as a profane art" (79). However, he adds, "the Middle Ages never achieved that complete synthesis of homiletics and classical rhetoric that we begin to find in the Renaissance. It is only in that period and later that manuscripts appear in which the classical authors are fully searched and carefully excerpted for the specific use of preachers" (95). Texts such as Chytraeus' *Praecepta rhetorica* studied the works of Cicero and Demosthenes alongside that of Christian writers Paul and Basil, comfortably merging rhetoric and preaching. Further, I have suggested above that preaching often contains elements of all three modes of rhetoric—deliberative, judicial, and epideictic. Caplan shows that because of this lack of ease in categorizing preaching within these modes, Philip Melanchthon (German theologian and friend of Martin Luther) leaned heavily upon classical rhetorical concepts and added preaching as a fourth type of oratory. He divided the art into didactic (teaching theology), epitreptic (inducing belief), and paraenetic (persuading to a course of conduct) (Caplan 95).

With the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation, scriptures were translated into other languages, and church leaders debated issues such as adult baptism, apostolic succession, communion, indulgences, icons, and many other controversial topics. Obviously, the pulpit acted as an important site of persuasion, and many preachers looked for ways to tailor sermon form to better meet their rhetorical goals. This energized political climate helps to explain the "complete synthesis" of rhetoric and homiletics described above. However, I do not want to oversimplify the state of preaching at the time. O'Malley reports that in the mid-sixteenth

century, Diego de Estellas was encouraging preachers to return to the allegorical homily (248). The looser structure probably appealed to those who were tiring of endless divisions in sermons, and the central place of the text allowed for closer examination of the scripture itself.[30]

To counter reformers' accusations of corruption in the Catholic Church, Desiderius Erasmus' treatise, *Ecclesiastes* (1535), written to would-be preachers, focuses on the necessity of morality in the priesthood. Erasmus sees great value in studying Aristotle and Cicero as resources for shaping sermons, thus indicating that the comfort with classical rhetoric in preaching did not only abide with the radical reformers.[31] In his discussion of sermon composition, Erasmus holds to Cicero's five-part division of rhetoric: Invention, Arrangement, Style (expression), Memory, and Delivery (performance) (631). Instead of giving preaching its own oratorical category, as Melanchthon did, Erasmus writes entire chapters that apply preaching to all three modes of rhetoric. Preaching is deliberative (or sausorial) because it urges audiences toward that which is right, honorable, safe, and necessary (637). Preaching is also epideictic when the preacher extols the faithfulness, kindness, and creative work of God (639). Finally, Erasmus outlines classical elements of status theory to show the judicial (or forensic) element in preaching (641). However, he critiques the practice of piling on multiple divisions through "a mass of propositions" (633). Excessive division "does not suit the pulpit" because it often obscures the subject instead of explaining it (633). Again, a desire for clarity in communicating the biblical message led to a critique of the thematic form. However, throughout these reforms, preachers continued to rely on classical rhetorical concepts to shape their sermons.

Puritan William Perkins popularized a slightly different sermon form in *The Arte of Prophesying* (1592). Perkins divided the sermon into three parts: explication of a scriptural passage, doctrinal points, and applications to the behavior of the audience (Kneidel). Like the thematic sermon, each of these three elements was subdivided, with proofs and amplifications. This form (text-doctrine-application) remained popular for centuries and was later referred to as

[30] This return to the homily was certainly not widespread, but indicates the complexity of religious rhetoric across Europe.

[31] The content of sermons within Protestant groups tended to focus on the religious hot button issues of the time, such as indulgences and believer baptism. However, the work of Melanchthon (a Protestant) and Erasmus (a Catholic) demonstrate the same calls to reform in preaching and the same reliance upon classical rhetoric in both Catholic and Protestant homiletic texts.

the Puritan plain style, a stripped-down rhetorical form with little rhetorical flourish that appealed to Puritan sensibilities. The simple structure of these sermons provided preachers the means to speak from an outline, and not be tied to a manuscript or rely on extemporaneous preaching. But more than this element of convenience, the text-doctrine-application sermon displays a desire among preachers for more accurate hermeneutic practice.

In his 1679 work *Dialogues on Eloquence*, Francois Fénelon not only supports expository (as opposed to thematic) sermons; he writes what many consider to be the first modern rhetoric, which uses preaching as its central focus. Taking up the form of a dialogue and modeling its opening scene after Plato's *Phaedrus,* Fénelon begins with critique of a thematic sermon that takes its theme completely out of biblical context. The young character, "B" comes to the wise "A" having just heard a delightful thematic sermon. B praises the "refinement of expression" (Fénelon 57), but A is suspicious. The preacher took a Psalm that happened to mention ashes and composed a carefully-subdivided Ash Wednesday sermon. "A" sees the twin perils of the thematic sermon: "false application of scripture" and "vain affectation of wit" (59). The sermon was more ornamental than educational. The three characters, A, B, and C then delve into a dialogue about truth and rhetoric, using preaching as the primary source of material. They agree with Cicero that rhetoric is a neutral art, able to be used for good or ill (65), and that speakers must possess a wide range of knowledge in order to be effective in the pulpit. Like Quintilian, they insist upon the virtue of the speaker (75). Only pure intentions for the edification of the audience will harness the preacher's vast knowledge and produce effective sermons.

Further, A refers to the very practice of division as a "modern invention which comes to us from scholastic philosophy" (112). He believes that thematic sermons are composed of torn-off pieces of texts, keeping Christians ignorant of their own faith, as preachers "twist their subject matter little by little in order to adjust the text to the sermon that they have need to spout" (149). These statements certainly do not herald the end of the practice of dividing sermons. However, the seventeenth century does mark a steep decline in thematic preaching, ushering in other rhetorical sermon forms.

Rhetorical Preaching: Form and Flexibility

By the nineteenth century, preaching had developed a rhetorical flexibility that has continued to expand. Austin Phelps' influential 1887 manual, *The Theory of Preaching*, captures this flexibility and its continued reliance upon classical form and concepts. He advises preachers

to use a classical format consisting of an introduction, proposition, division, development, and conclusion. The introduction serves to win the goodwill the audience and inspire their interest in the subject (Phelps 46). The proposition, or thesis, emerges from the biblical texts and guides the structure of the entire sermon. Divisions emerge from the proposition, but Phelps strongly cautions against dividing a sermon for the sake of divisions. He encourages variety; preachers should examine the text and divide the sermon based on what they see, such as chronology, causal relationships, classification such as genus or species, or hierarchical relationships such as good, better, and best (89). Phelps' idea of development emerges from amplification of points. Again sensitive to audience boredom with the same sermon structures and tactics week in and week out, he advises preachers to use their "mental dexterity" to generate a variety of anecdotes, narratives, metaphors, and other illustrations to bring the main points to life (95). Phelps prefers to save life application for the conclusion, encouraging his readers to maintain the clarity of the proposition while making earnest and urgent calls to action (116). Phelps' understanding of preaching seems thoroughly Ciceronian; he urges preachers to appeal the audience emotion (104) and claims that the overall goal of preaching is persuasion of the audience, calling listeners not just to deeper belief, but to action (11).

I believe that Phelps' greatest contribution to nineteenth- and twentieth-century preaching, however, is not his classical focus, but his flexible approach to the art. For the sake of time and space, I will use an outline to demonstrate the variety Phelps encourages. He classifies sermons in all the following ways:

1. By mode of delivery
    a. Manuscript
    b. Memory
    c. Extemporaneous
2. By subject
    a. Doctrinal
    b. Practical
    c. Historical
    d. Ethical
    e. Philosophical
3. By approach to scriptures

a. Topical (The subject is taken from the text but is discussed independently of the text)
b. Textual (The text is the theme, and the parts of the text are the divisions)
c. Expository (The text is the theme, and the discussion is an explanation of the text)
d. Inferential (The text is the theme, the discussion is a series of inferences from the text) (14)

4. By the mode of treating the subject of discourse
    a. Explanatory (explains a text, doctrine, or duty)
    b. Illustrative (intensifies a truth)
    c. Argumentative (centers around proof of a point, aimed at the intellect)
    d. Persuasive (urges present action) (17)

Number three in the above outline is especially important. Phelps shows how different approaches to the scriptural text influence the chosen form of the sermon. Homilies, thematic sermons, text-doctrine-application sermons, and expository sermons simply reflect different approaches to scripture, and according to Phelps, all are open to the modern preacher. All these forms, so long in competition with each other and sometimes in competition with the art of rhetoric, can help the preacher to meet the rhetorical goal of persuasion to righteous action.

Twentieth- and twenty-first-century preaching has seen great diversity, including the emergence of conversational and narrative styles.[32] Homileticians continue to debate modes of preaching (extemporaneous, manuscript, or outline) and rhetorical forms (divisions or more organic arrangements). However, amid the myriad choices and manuals available to today's preacher, I find two threads that indicate the priorities of homiletic study. First, there is widespread agreement that most preaching should be expository. Most preachers-in-training in seminaries today learn to start with the biblical text and explore it in the original language with its original social and historical context in mind. Through this close exegesis, a thesis arises, a single idea for the preacher to communicate. Many preachers still rely upon two to four divisions to express the main ideas in support of this thesis. Some expository sermons are homilies in which preachers move through the passage methodically. Others mimic the genre of

[32] An exploration of forms ranging from Billy Graham's evangelistic preaching to Martin Luther King's sermons on social justice is beyond the scope of this project.

the biblical text, using narration to communicate biblical narrative and direct address when working with an epistle. Many preachers continue to work within a five-part rhetorical structure, espoused by great preachers such as Ebenezer Porter (1772-1834) and Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892), which includes an introduction, exposition, narration, division, and conclusion (Nelson 179). Expository preaching can work within this variety of structures and approaches while fulfilling the call to stay true to the biblical context.

Second, despite the wide range of options for the preacher, I find that most homiletic texts acknowledge the value of classical rhetoric, or at least weave some classical rhetorical concepts into their preaching instruction. Fred Craddock's influential manual, *Preaching* (1985), still in use in seminaries across the country, demonstrates this reliance. Craddock refers to the late twentieth century as a time of renewal and experimentation in preaching (13), and offers his book as a textbook that embraces the new without abandoning the vast traditions. He asks, "Who would say, after all these centuries, that reading Aristotle's *Rhetoric* or *Poetics* or Augustine's instructions on preaching is no longer of benefit to the preacher?" (Craddock 14). Overall, I find that contemporary preaching instruction casts the hermeneutic process of approaching scripture as a process of invention. Further, preaching is not only a proclamation, but persuasion, an art with an eye to influence everyday thought and behavior. Therefore, I assert that most discomfort with rhetoric as a pagan art has long passed, the only resistance to a rhetorical approach to preaching coming from non-theorists and anti-theorists who espouse inspiration at the moment of extemporaneous preaching. Most homileticians, however, stress inspiration through study as preachers invent and compose expository sermons after extensive exegesis of scripture. For them, the classical rhetoricians set out timeless advice, easily incorporated into Christian sermons (Hirst "Sixth" 75).

Rhetorical Theory and Preaching

As the above section demonstrates, starting with the thirteenth-century thematic sermon and moving through the shifts in sermon form over the next several centuries, preaching has proven to be a rhetorical art. This merging of preaching and rhetoric is not only evident in sermons; rhetorical theory also shows a union between the fields of communication. Clergymen Hugh Blair (1718-1800) and Richard Whately (1787-1863) produced some of the most dominant rhetorical theory of the modern era. In addition to publishing several volumes of his own sermons, Hugh Blair penned the highly influential *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*

(1783). This practical resource for student writing enjoyed well over one hundred editions during a century of use in schools. Blair weaves together classical and modern concepts of language to assert three primary areas of rhetorical consideration: the public assembly, the bar, and the pulpit (255). Of the three, preaching holds advantages such as the dignity of subjects, the interest of rich and poor, and the potential for embellishment and soaring rhetoric (280). According to Blair, "True eloquence is the art of placing truth in the most advantageous light for conviction and persuasion" (281), and the fields of rhetoric and preaching inform each other to accomplish these persuasive goals.

Gilbert Austin (1783-1837) also views preaching as a sort of rhetorical art with privileges. In *Chironomia,* he states, "in the discharge of the duty of the preacher, a field of oratory is opened more splendid, and more interesting, than any in which either Demosthenes or Cicero ever expatiated" (146). Because preaching deals with such issues as liberty, life, and hope, "These subjects the preacher, in all their connections, and in all their divisions, form such themes for eloquence as never can be exhausted, and as can never fail to meet an audience deeply interested in the discussion, wherever mankind are to be found" (226). In other words, the subjects available to the preacher immediately arouse interest, and these audiences will benefit from the preacher who works to interpret scripture and portray its message eloquently. Although Blair focuses on writing and Austin on speaking, both present important rhetorical theory that blends seamlessly with the art of preaching.

Kneidel offers a concise summary of the preaching-rhetoric relationship over this long period of time. He states,

> Desiderius Erasmus, Philip Melanchthon, and numerous Catholic rhetoricians in the sixteenth century, by Bartholomew Keckermann, Gerardus Vossius, and Franois Fénelon in the seventeenth, Hugh Blair, George Campbell, and Richard Whately in the eighteenth, and Charles Broadus in the nineteenth all modified the standards of contemporaneous rhetorical theory to include sermons, in structure and style if not in substance and with strictures of varying severity for sticking to the scriptural text at hand. Homiletics increasingly became a species of rhetoric, preaching became pulpit oratory, and sermons became moral discourses. (Kneidel).

The innovations and modifications in preaching form and in rhetorical theory, therefore, continued to rely upon Aristotelian and Ciceronian concepts of oratory.

James Kinneavy's *Greek Rhetorical Origins of Christian Faith* (1987) demonstrates that in the long struggle between preaching and rhetoric, the connections between rhetorical persuasion and Christianity were present all along. The Greek word *pistis* translates as "proof" or "persuasion" in the rhetorical realm, but as "faith" in the Greek New Testament. Kinneavy shows that *pistis* as a rhetorical term referred both to the technique of persuading and also to the "mental state of conviction" (33) once the listener is persuaded. *Pistis* as Christian faith contains elements of this mental state, including assent, trust, and knowledge. Therefore, the term "can be read with a rhetorical interpretation" (4). As Kinneavy suggests and as the next chapter will show, the *ethos* of both the scriptures and the preacher as authority plays a major role in this faith-persuasion.

CONCLUSION

Like the classical encomium, preaching offers listeners a picture of themselves only better, themselves with the virtue and commitment of the ones they admire. Like the ancient and modern courtroom, preaching involves "the management of doubt" (Kneidel), as preachers make a case for the power of the unseen. And like the ancient public oration, preaching attempts to prove that one course of action is superior to another. As a living rhetorical art, preaching is fruitful ground for the development of rhetorical theory, for the study of persuasion, and for closer examination of the speaker-audience relationship.

Chapter Three: The Relevance Imperative: *Ethos* and the Speaker-Audience Relationship

INTRODUCTION

In his 1989 book *Reading the Popular,* John Fiske counters the view that consumers are powerless drones, at the mercy of producers who tell them what to consume. Citing the fact that eighty to ninety percent of new products fail in the marketplace (14), Fiske portrays pop culture as a constant struggle for power and pleasure against "white, patriarchal capitalism" (1). Because "relevance can be produced only by the people" (6), it is the responsibility of the producers to chase that relevance and offer products that the people will find a place for in their lives. This is where Fiske locates the subversive power of the subordinate (but consuming) "masses," who ultimately dictate the producers' actions.

Fiske investigates this relationship with the metaphor: "Shopping malls are cathedrals of consumption" (13), involving rituals of exchange and worship of commodities. The author shows how this metaphor, though in some ways appropriate in pop culture, falls short on several counts. Fiske states that unlike the shopper,

> The religious congregation is powerless, led like sheep through the rituals and meanings, forced to 'buy' the truth on offer, all the truth, not selective bits of it. Where the interests of the Authority on High differ from those of the Congregation down Low, the congregation has no power to negotiate, to discriminate: all accommodations are made by the powerless, subjugated to the great truth. (13-14)

This view of organized religion certainly has no shortage of historical evidence. Especially after the church emerged from persecution and gained political authority in the early middle ages, it often wielded that power, even the power of heaven and hell, over those in attendance. However, my own experience in American Protestant churches could not be more different. As a seminary student, then as a pastor of a small church, everything I learned about preaching taught me that the sermon is not a bestowing upon docile, powerless listeners. Rather, preaching is an engagement of the mind and heart, an audience-centered argument that would be quickly forgotten if that audience did not find it relevant or rewarding in some way. I found that the preacher is often the one making accommodations, feeling both the pressure to maintain accurate doctrine and the pressure to make that doctrine appealing and relevant to listeners. After all, from the years 2000 to 2005 alone, mainline Protestant denominations (such as Presbyterian, United Methodist, Episcopal, and United Church of Christ) in the U.S. saw a drop in attendance

from 9.5 million to 8.8 million (Olson 54). And while evangelical non-denominational churches show numeric attendance growth,[33] when those figures are held up against the rise in population, a sharp decline becomes quite apparent.

I see Fiske's rather cynical view as a stereotype that does not hold up in today's Protestant American churches. In fact, switching the tenor and the vehicle of Fiske's metaphor seems much more accurate. The cathedral, in this case a church, has become a shopping mall, where congregants come to consume. The culture of consumerism, and the power it gives to the people, has indeed infiltrated sacred walls, and heavily influences the ways church leaders do their jobs.

The sermon in particular can act as a barometer for this shift in power. This unique ritual is a space in which the preacher can assert the truths and values desired for the group, thus the view that it would be a vehicle of domination. Yet, most every successful contemporary book about preaching carries the burden of helping preachers to deliver *relevant* sermons that will connect to the lives of the people. If the purpose of the sermon is to be heard, then the preacher must shape that message in such a way that the audience will listen and accept. Therefore, the sermon also acts as a site of power for the congregation.

In this chapter, I explore the complex authority issues inherent in the preaching act. Metaphors of preaching, such as "preaching-as-medicine" and "preacher as shepherd" provide insight into shifting views of speaker, listener, and institution. I cite influential homiletics texts—preaching manuals and articles in collections on homiletics—to highlight the recent focus on relevance in preaching. Preachers must deliver sermons that audiences perceive as meaningful and immediately applicable to their lives, and they must rely upon twin sources of preacher *ethos* and scriptural authority in the process. Further, I find that in most homiletic texts, invention has maintained a dominant position as means for achieving relevance, as pastors interpret scripture and generate effective illustrations to apply doctrine to the lives of listeners. However, I assert that sermon delivery, the realm of *ethos* and the moment of speaker-audience contact and identification, proves to be equally important in achieving relevance.

[33] For example, between 2000 and 2005 church attendance grew in the Western United States. However, the population itself expanded by at least 25 percent, revealing that church attendance growth "did not come close to keeping up with population growth" (Olson 78).

AUTHORITY IN PREACHING

Elevated Role of Priest and Pastor

Beliefs in inspiration, incarnation (the divine moving through the material), and calling immediately lend authority to the role of priest or pastor. Recurring metaphors that arise in scripture and in homiletics texts reify this authority, but also demonstrate shifts in power within the church. Speaking of the priest's administration of the sacraments, John Chrysostom (347-407 CE) asks,

> When you see the Lord sacrificed and lying before you, and the High Priest standing over the sacrifice and praying, and all who partake being tinctured with that precious blood, can you think that you are still among men and standing on earth? Are you not at once transported to heaven, and having driven out of your soul every carnal thought, do you not with soul naked and mind pure look round upon heavenly things? Oh, the wonder of it! (70)

Of course, as the above quote suggests, this responsibility requires virtue on the part of the priest, who must "be as pure as if he were standing in heaven itself" (70), with frightful, eternal repercussions for duplicity and vainglory. However, such characterizations of the priest elevate all priestly duties, including preaching, to the level of mediator between humans and the divine.

Eventually, church law reflected this authority, and the art of preaching upheld the hierarchical power structure of the Roman Catholic Church. Robert of Basevorn, in his 1322 manual *Forma Praedicandi*, endorses official canon law when he states, "No lay person or Religious, unless permitted by a Bishop or the Pope, and no woman, no matter how learned or saintly, ought to preach. Nor is it enough for one to say that he was commissioned by God, unless he clearly proves this, for the heretics are wont to make this claim" (124). These laws, mainly intended to avoid error and limit the rhetorical activity of any unsanctioned speaker, set apart those permitted to preach from their listeners.

This is not to say that preaching was void of audience consideration. On the contrary, Robert makes a significant effort in *Forma Praedicandi* to expound upon the need to win over the audience. "We must insist upon eloquence," he states, because it works alongside wisdom to win over the hearts of hearers (132). In fact, Robert's twenty-two ornaments used to compose a thematic sermon center around the goal of reaching and even pleasing listeners. In this sense, the audience has power; preachers must learn how best to keep their attention and influence their

thought and behavior. However, this agency was quite limited, given the harsh consequences for church members who challenged or sought to reform Canon Law.

Throughout most of church history before (and for that matter after) the Reformation, many preachers' greatest concern was "moral pathology," (Murphy *Rhetoric* 297) the listeners' sinful condition and the role of preaching to offer a cure. This sin-as-illness analogy also elevates the role of mediator between the sinner and the Great Physician, God. In *Six Books on the Priesthood* John Chrysostom points out that when dealing with the sick, physicians have at their disposal drugs, medical instruments, rest, diet, and even climate to aid in the healing of their patients. However, if the church is the patient,

> there is only one means and only one method of treatment available, and that is teaching by word of mouth. That is the best instrument, the best diet, and the best climate. It takes the place of medicine and cautery and surgery… By it we rouse the soul's lethargy or reduce its inflammation, we remove excrescences and supply defects, and, in short, we do everything which contributes to its health. (Chrysostom 115)

Countless others have utilized this "cure of souls" (Kneidel) metaphor to communicate the role of preaching within the church. Although most would insist that the preacher must first experience healing, and that God is the ultimate source of the medicine, the analogy still positions the audience as weak and the preacher as the authority who administers the God-given cure.

The congregation-as-flock analogy also carries complex authority issues. As David's 23rd Psalm ("The Lord is my shepherd…") suggests, the analogy ultimately highlights God's provision for and protection of his people. However, the nature of sheep, unable to protect themselves and prone to straying into danger, portrays those people in a somewhat less-than-flattering light. Other Old Testament writers expanded the metaphor, casting Israel's priests and political leaders as shepherds of God's people. Prophets such as Ezekiel pronounced judgment upon Israel due to these shepherds' acts of injustice: "You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep. The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought" (Ez. 34: 3-4). As a result, the sheep, Israel,

were scattered, captive among the nations[34]. Here, God the chief shepherd brings a case against his hired shepherds who failed in the task of tending the flock.

New Testament writers continued to utilize the congregation-as-flock analogy, positioning church leaders as having additional God-given responsibilities to tend a somewhat needy, sometimes unruly, flock. Jesus himself had commissioned Peter to "feed my lambs" and "tend my sheep" (John 21:15-17). Years later, Peter in turn charged church elders, the primary leaders and preachers in the first-century church, to "shepherd the flock of God that is among you," acting as examples to that flock (1 Peter 5:1-4). Therefore, leaders of the Christian faith have an abundance of preacher-as-shepherd comparisons that highlight the profound responsibility of the *pastor* (Latin for "shepherd"), and which carry a realistic, if not pessimistic, view of the spiritual state of congregations. Even Augustine, so optimistic about the life-changing effects of good preaching, balances his three positive rhetorical goals—to teach, to delight, and to move—with other negative goals, "to conciliate the hostile, to arouse the careless, and to inform those ignorant of the matter at hand, what they ought to expect" (*Doctrina* 4.6).

Again, I assert that preaching and preaching instruction have nearly always demonstrated an awareness of audience and a concern for how best to reach the listener's mind and heart. However, reflecting the political realities within the church, these dominant metaphors of the preacher-congregation relationship place the people in a subordinate role and position the preacher as a mediator, God's representative. In many ways, "the role of the minister as a preacher of sermons is in itself the manifestation of an authority that differentiates him from the hearers of sermons" (Charles Smith 16). In other words, the very act of preaching, with its accompanying visual symbols such as robes and the pulpit, coupled with the act of interpreting sacred texts, creates distance between preacher and congregation. Therefore, rhetorical awareness of the need to win over and appeal to the audience can be overshadowed by the church's hierarchical power structure and its sheer institutional authority.

Shift in power

Nineteenth-century preaching manuals continued to elevate the role of preacher as an authority figure, in both the larger culture and within individual churches. However, many

[34] At the time Ezekiel wrote these words, the Northern kingdom of Israel had long been decimated and scattered by the Assyrians (723-722 BCE), and the Babylonian empire had taken the Southern Kingdom of Judah into exile, destroying its capital, Jerusalem (586 BCE).

writers began to temper their portrayals of the preacher, encouraging church leaders to build more personal connections with their flock. Henry Ward Beecher's *Yale Lectures on Preaching* (1872) made great strides in undercutting any aloofness or airs of separateness on the part of preachers. As both an artist and a teacher, the preacher "digests the truth and makes it personal," the end goal being the changing of people's hearts (Beecher 4), to "move men by speech…from a lower to a higher life" (29). Beecher maintains that the sermon can exert "direct power on men's minds and hearts" and to broaden people's knowledge (18). But to properly exercise this authority, the preacher must genuinely care about the people. Beecher walks a fine line of upholding nineteenth-century gender roles while redefining the preacher as deeply involved in the lives of congregants. He states, "A true minister is a man whose manhood itself is a strong and influential argument with his people. He lives in such relations with God, and in such genuine sympathy with man, that it is a pleasure to be under the unconscious influence of such a mind" (29-30)[35]. Beecher has no patience for a separate "ministerial self" that takes on airs in the pulpit (43). Rather, this manly preacher is among the people.

Beecher expounds upon this contact by taking up a key metaphor of preaching: "You are like physicians who attend the inmates of a hospital; it matters not to them from what cause the patients are lying hurt and wounded there. Sick men belong to the physician's care, and he must take care of them" (66). Beecher therefore upholds the authority of the office of preacher. However, he portrays this power through the lens of sacrifice; the preacher must seek out the neediest and sickest, must hold personal desires in check and do "things that are repugnant to your taste" in order to truly serve the sick (66). In other words, a deep sacrificial love makes preacher authority seem not-so-burdensome to the people. In his final lecture of the series, Beecher claims,

> There is only one pass-key that will open every door, and that is the golden key of love. You can touch every side of the human heart and its every want, that is, if you can touch it at all; and if you have the power to bestow anything, love gives facility of access, the power of drawing near to men, the power of enriching thought, of weakening their hungry desires and appetites, the power to thaw out the winter of their souls and to prepare the soil for the seed of growth and the better life. (242)

[35] Chapter Four goes into more detail on the gendered nature of preaching, and the pulpit as a highly masculinized space.

I see in Beecher's work an acknowledgement that making personal connections with people is key to exercising true authority from the pulpit. To use an anachronistic metaphor, the preacher should be in the trenches with the people, not aloof and not occupying some mystical middle ground between heaven and earth.

Preacher and homiletician Phillips Brooks, taking a similar approach to his depiction of the preacher, laid the groundwork for the twentieth-century boom in preaching manuals, texts that would address the issues of authority and relevance in preaching. Brooks delivered the Yale Lecture series in 1877, later published as *The Joy of Preaching*. Here, he offered a revolutionary definition of the craft: "Preaching is the communication of truth by man to men" (25)[36]. He clarifies, "Preaching is bringing the truth through personality" (26). For Brooks, no number of books could surpass the ability of the human voice in communicating truth (29), and preaching is a symbiotic blend of study and the presence of God (truth), along with relationships and the human body (personality).

Beecher's and in Brooks' lectures demonstrate an attempt to lend a new kind of relational authority to preaching, beyond the institution of the church. Brooks' very definition of preaching highlights its relational element, its dependence upon a connection between speaker and hearer. Like many before him, he emphasized study of truth, but he asserts that the preacher's relationships with the people and the physical act of delivering sermons were equally important in communicating this truth. Although Beecher and Brooks did not emphasize relevance as aggressively as twentieth-century homileticians would, they linked the effectiveness of preaching with the state of the preacher-congregation relationship. Brooks in particular cast sermon delivery as an embodied rhetorical art, emphasizing the preacher's relational *ethos* as a means of fostering identification and persuasion. I see Brooks' influence weaving throughout later manuals that would prioritize relevance as a means of regaining authority in preaching.

[36] In the mid-to-late nineteenth century, mainline denominations continued to disallow women from preaching. However, Quakers continued their steady tradition of equality within the church, and revivalist groups periodically supported women evangelists. See Brekus for a robust discussion of the ebb and flow of women's preaching in the United States during this period. Further, Brooks' life predates many efforts at inclusive language. He refers to the congregation as "a company of men," (140) but also calls the congregation "the best representative assembly of humanity that you can find in the world. Men, women, and children are all there together. No age, no sex must monopolize its privileges" (153).

By the mid twentieth century, institutional authority was proving utterly inadequate to maintain the church's cultural influence, at least in the Protestant tradition. Preaching manuals began reflecting even greater attention to audience needs. For example, breakthroughs in psychotherapy especially influenced preachers toward this heightened audience awareness. In previous centuries, resources for preachers simply listed and gave brief advice about preaching to young and old, rich and poor, married and unmarried, etc. However, with the approach of the postmodern era in Western culture, manuals appeared with entire chapters devoted to addiction, anger, guilt, and loneliness, giving preachers resources to address their audience's psychological pain[37]. This trend reflects a perceived need for relevance in preaching; by better understanding the people's struggles, the preacher can better deliver sermons that are relevant and applicable.

I believe this need for relevance stems from a shift in power within the church, as the larger culture developed a greater mistrust of institutional authority. Charles W. F. Smith's 1960 book *Biblical Authority for Modern Preaching* captures well the twentieth-century preacher's concerns about irrelevance and waning influence. Smith identifies several cultural factors that would suggest that preaching as a form of communication has passed its usefulness. First, the development of group dynamics in industry makes preaching look like an "outmoded method" of communication (Charles Smith 11). One person speaking while a large group listens simply does not hold the attention, and does not seem to accomplish measurable goals. Second, the scientific method tends to demythologize the gospel message. Smith asks, "Can a religion that developed its traditions in an age of mythological thinking still make its voice heard in an age when all modes of thought are dominated by scientific realism?" (12). Third, the American *ethos*, characterized by industrial expansion into third world countries, runs counter to the message of Jesus (12). How can the preacher make distinctions between the church and the world when narratives of salvation and material success seem to blend together (13)? Finally, the loss of an audience suggests that preaching is outdated and irrelevant. This "loss" does not refer to only decreased attendance in local churches; the term also sums up the "unreality" of the church, its lack of relevance to daily life (13). Even as people continue to attend, they can be lost in the sense that the church has little bearing on their daily thought and behavior. The events of the scriptures seem too distant, the values asserted too unrealistic.

[37] For one example of such a preaching manual, see Jackson, Edgar N. *How to Preach to People's Needs*. New York: Abingdon Press, 1956. Print.

Smith points out the ease by which a preacher can lose touch with listeners in this climate. The preacher speaks without interruption and need not receive feedback. In fact, "No check is made, as a rule, upon his selection of a subject or upon the effectiveness with which he performs what appears to be expected of him beyond the freedom of the people (in Protestant churches) to absent themselves. This they do in large numbers" (13). With the mobility of our culture, along with a significant number of denominations from which to choose, Protestant churchgoers can and do exercise this ability to leave when they either do not like or do not perceive as relevant what they hear within church walls. In his article, "The Church, Why Bother?" Tim Stafford points out that with over twenty thousand (and counting) denominations worldwide, people have a menu of groups from which to choose as well as an established tradition of splinter groups, so "when they become dissatisfied, they move on" (3). In other words, those who are not content with a church for any reason can simply find, or found, a group that suits their needs.

Writing forty years after Smith's enumerated concerns with preaching, Haddon Robinson explains,

> The average preacher today is not going to make it on the basis of the dignity of his position. A century ago, the pastor was looked to as the person of wisdom and integrity in the community. Authority lay in the office of pastor. The minister was the parson, often the best-educated person in town, and the one to whom people looked for help in interpreting the outside world.

He continues,

> But today the average citizen takes a different view of pastors and preachers. Perhaps we're not lumped with scam artists or manipulative fund raisers, but we face an Olympic challenge to earn respect, credibility, and authority. In the face of society's scorn—or being relegated to a box labeled 'private' and 'spiritual'—many preachers struggle with the issue of authority. Why should anyone pay attention to us? (Robinson "What Authority" 213)

In the quotes and analysis above, the issues of relevance and authority seem inseparable. Whereas is past ages authority was a given and relevance a goal of preaching, I find that today authority lies within relevance. Listeners will lend authority to the preacher, granting assent and putting into practice the content of sermons when they find those sermons persuasive and

applicable to their lives. Therefore, sermons must be relevant and easy to listen to. The length of sermons seems to be a common location for this give-and-take between audience and speaker. Traditionally, a sermon could last for hours, but over the course of the twentieth century, sermon length has shortened drastically. Twenty years ago, the average sermon in mainstream Protestant churches was 22 to 30 minutes, but "today, it runs 12 to 18 minutes" (Marquand 1). Of course, individual churches vary greatly, but overall, "congregations press ministers for shorter, more entertaining services" (1). Marquand's use of the term "press" as a figure of speech is intriguing. How do polite and often silent Christian congregants apply pressure to their preachers? One preacher narrates, "I know what it's like to be a preacher desperate for some point of contact with an otherwise inert congregation. You can't stand the thought of another Sunday facing the same blank faces, the distracted fidgeting, and the outright snoozing" (Byassee 22). Craddock vividly adds that "time drags the sermon like a dead body toward the noon hour" (167) for listeners who do not find the sermon immediately meaningful.

Consumer Culture and the Church

Along with a decline in institutional authority, the rise of consumerism[38] in the church, as mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, makes the need for relevance in preaching that much more pressing. "The cult of the individual and the curse of consumerism" require that the speaker's words apply clearly to the lives of the people (Callen 9). Expository preaching cannot be pedantic or a mere oral commentary because "listeners demand evidence" (Willhite 97) and their "attention must be sought and maintained" (238). Vincent Miller's book, *Consuming Religion*, is an ambitious exploration of the ways that religion functions in a consumer culture. Miller asserts that commodification, the abstraction of the sources of the items and ideas we consume, has a heavy influence upon American religion. Because of commodification that separates elements from their sources and traditions, "religious beliefs and practices are in danger of being extracted from the complex cultures, institutions, and relationships that enable them to inform and shape daily life" (105). In other words, consumer culture divorces doctrine

[38] Church-as-entertainment is certainly not a new concept. John Chrysostom frequently chided attendees for their applause and admiration, which he believed was unaccompanied by changes in action. The major differences between Chrysostom's fourth-century Constantinople audience and churchgoers today are the vast range of choices and the ease of mobility, which allow for people to sample various church groups.

from its original communal settings, making it that much more difficult for churchgoers to translate teaching into practice.

Further, our culture's "desire for self-fulfillment" results in a "therapeutic self" that pursues and consumes "goods most consonant with its own particular life*style*. In this culture, religion, like other commodities, serves to fill in the identity of the consumer" (88). Miller refuses to label consumers as "mindless, passive dupes" (146). Rather, he explores the ways we are conditioned to pursue and acquire the new, and how this conditioning may result in healthy curiosity about other faiths and traditions. However, the downside of this conditioning is that advertisers have taught us "to choose and to purchase but not to keep and to use. Likewise, spiritually we are trained to seek, search, choose but not to follow through and to commit" (142). Therefore, in this climate churches may have many "seekers" who attend, listen, enjoy, but then move on without engaging in the community. And preachers, desiring a committed and involved congregation that functions in close relationship, strive through their preaching to make that relevance connection that might anchor seekers within the church.

Fred Craddock of Emory University poetically captures the shifts in the preacher-audience dynamic when he states that listeners

> expect to hear the old but in a new way, not simply to make it interesting but to help them look upon old landscapes with a new eye. Words can be strung together into sentences and piled into paragraphs, words that are religious, biblical, and true, and yet do nothing. They do not raise a window, open a door, build a fire, or offer a chair. They are said, they collect below the pulpit, and are swept out on Monday morning. (89)

Therefore, if preachers want to elicit an actual response, they must compose and deliver sermons to which "yes and no must be real options" for listeners (Craddock 89). In this way, preaching addresses not just audience need, but audience interest, and reflects an altered pastor-congregation relationship. This desire for a response motivates preachers to present sermons that will engage the congregation, sermons that will accomplish a social function. The homileticians quoted above uphold the Reformation notion that the Bible belongs to the people; it is "their book" (Craddock 86). In fact, the sermon itself is "the people's message, articulated by the preacher" (44) and therefore the preacher's first consideration should be to the audience (Pannell 17). The preacher owns a deep responsibility to, in the most relevant way possible, "give the listener something to think, feel, decide, and do" (Craddock 25).

With such a broad and difficult task before the preacher, it quickly becomes apparent that speaker virtue and applicable sermon content cannot stand as discreet sources of relevance. In a somewhat gray area between scriptural authority and speaker *ethos*, identification contributes to listener perception of a preacher's understanding of (and focus on) the needs of the congregation. Richard Hoeffler (1978) explains that authenticity in the pulpit goes far beyond the preacher's ability to come across as an honest person. Rather, the speaker must communicate the fact that he "is genuinely interested in and concerned about the views, needs, and interests of the listeners. The congregation needs to be assured that the preacher knows what he is talking about, but even more they need to be certain that the preacher knows he is speaking to them" (19-20). I see immediate application here to Cicero's twin criteria for a good speaker: knowledge and virtue (see chapter one). However, the virtue Hoeffler describes goes beyond personal morality and into a clearly communicated concern for audience needs. Therefore, the very idea of preacher *ethos* has shifted in the last century to become more audience-focused; an ability to foster identification through relational audience consideration contributes directly to audience perception of that speaker.

The Bridge

John Stott's influential 1982 preaching manual, *Between Two Worlds*, identifies this shift in power and adjusts the focus of preaching accordingly. Stott asserts that on a global scale, "All accepted authorities (family, school, university, State, Church, Bible, Pope, God) are being challenged. Anything which savours of 'establishment', that is, of entrenched privilege or unassailable power, is being scrutinized and opposed" (51). Stott is quick to concede that anti-authority actions are right and necessary to fight "dehumanization," social injustice, and oppression (51). However, the preacher may find that this mood quickly spreads to challenge Christianity's standards and claims to truth (52).

In the face of this cultural trend, Stott portrays preaching as bridge-building between the biblical world and the contemporary world. Preachers who dwell only on the biblical bank of this river risk irrelevance (140), while preachers who dwell only on the contemporary bank lose their theoretical and theological foundation (143). Rather, preachers must bridge the two sides, making strong connections between biblical principles and the ethical and social dilemmas of our day (162). Further, Stott adjusts the congregation-as-flock metaphor to better prepare preachers to address audiences in a postmodern age. Building upon the theory of Paulo Freire, Stott claims

that unlike goats, sheep are "discriminating in what they eat" (177). In fact, the shepherd does not feed the sheep at all; he only "leads them to good grazing pasture where they feed themselves" (177). The preacher cannot provide mere pat answers for listeners; she must develop a framework of principles to help them to think "Christianly," so they can make up their own minds about difficult issues (170). Stott therefore has altered the meanings of the sheep-shepherd metaphor, thus granting more agency to congregations, and perhaps reflecting the agency those communities already possessed.

SOURCES OF AUTHORITY AND RELEVANCE

As I survey the prominent homiletic texts from the past century, I find that most writers turn toward two reliable, even ancient, sources of authority in their efforts to restore relevance to the art of preaching.

Preacher Ethos

After the Reformation, the constant splitting of Protestant denominations called into question the actual sources of a preacher's authority. No longer was training and appointment by the established church the only standard. Congregational election, ability, and personal calling also became increasingly important factors contributing to one's right to preach. Kneidel points out that "In order to mediate between possible disparities between a preacher's ecclesiastical and spiritual authority, Christian rhetoricians adopted the classical principle that only the moved speaker is able to move an audience." Quintilian's assertion that only a good man could even be called a rhetor seemed a perfect fit. Just as Quintilian's definition of rhetoric as a "good man speaking well" safeguarded the art from accusations of ornamented manipulation (see chapter one), so the spirit-led *ethos* of the preacher provided a standard for choosing leaders in Protestant groups.

The field of preaching always embraced Quintilian's "good man" principle. Here, I offer only a few examples from across Christian history to demonstrate this constant reliance upon *ethos* as a precondition for preaching. Augustine (430 CE) claimed that the truly good preacher not only uses Cicero's subdued, moderate, and grand styles of oratory; his life is also "beyond reproach" (4.61). By "fearing God and caring for man," the preacher becomes truly persuasive, because he lives out the sermons he preaches. Desiderius Erasmus (1535) also believed that "nothing is more profitable when it proceeds from a found and good heart; nothing more pernicious, when it flows from the fountain of a depraved and corrupted mind" (14). With pure

motives, the preacher's words truly edify the flock, but even beautiful sermons coming from a corrupt preacher will only damage the church.

In 1667, Margaret Fell utilized a similar argument when making the case for women's right to preach. Fell interpreted Paul's pronouncements that women should remain silent in the church as being directed toward specific women who were disrupting worship. Certainly Paul would not silence Deborah, Esther, or other virtuous women who did God's work. Fell advises, "you ought to make a distinction what sort of Women are forbidden to speak, such as were under the Law, who were not come to Christ, or to the Spirit of Prophesie" (757). Non-virtuous women and gossipers are "in Transgression" and "ignorant of the Scriptures" and should indeed not speak in the church. However, women who "labour in the Gospel" and "Daughters who prophesie" (Acts 2:17) should not be hindered in preaching (760) because they meet the requirement of the virtuous speaker.

Francois Fénelon (1679) does not address the issue of women preaching; he assumes that since only men can be priests in the Catholic Church, and that priests perform the preaching duties, that only men will preach. However, those men must live their lives beyond reproach. Fénelon states, "Thus the speaker, to be worthy of persuading people, ought to be an incorruptible man. Without that, his talent and his art become a deadly poison in the republic itself. Hence it comes about, according to Cicero, that the first and essential attribute of the speaker is virtue" (76). This firm stance carried easily into the modern period. In *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1783), Hugh Blair states of the preacher, "In the first place, what stands highest in the order of means, is personal character and disposition. In order to be a truly eloquent or persuasive speaker, nothing is more necessary than to be a virtuous man" (338). Austin Phelps (1881) stated simply, "The first demand of the preacher is that he be an eminently holy man" (103). In fact, Phelps believes "Nowhere is a moral counterfeit so sure to be detected as in the pulpit" (104). I believe Phelps' statement and others like them find widespread acceptance because of the high stakes involved. A corrupt politician can destroy public trust through theft; he can even contribute to starting wars that cost thousands of lives. But many believe that a corrupt preacher can be equally destructive, not only for lives, but for souls. Further, church doctrine teaches that the fraudulent minister will himself face eternal judgment for mishandling the noble task of preaching.

In any and every age, it seems, the personal *ethos* of the preacher has remained a central theme in texts about preaching. Especially when that *ethos* refers primarily to the speaker's virtue and holiness, it protects the church community from counterfeits. Further, the speaker who has been genuinely moved by the Spirit of God can better move listeners to the same experience. *Ethos* results in eloquence that is unfeigned and therefore more effective and persuasive. Also, the preacher's character preserves the dignity of the office, demonstrating the loftiness of shepherding the flock with the word of God. Therefore, throughout church history, the preacher's virtuous *ethos* protects the preacher, the congregation, and the institution of the church.

I find that in the Postmodern era, the preacher's credibility becomes less focused on the dignity of the institutional office and even more audience-centered. Virtue is not just obedience—living the life one teaches others to live. Today, an effective preacher *ethos* consists of transparent authenticity. The minister, no longer "above" the congregation in status, must align with the audience, casting herself as one of them. As Haddon Robinson states, "For church leaders, perhaps no factor contributes more to legitimate authority and credibility than authentic Christian character" ("What Authority" 215). Notice the linking of authority with credibility. I see in contemporary homiletic texts a recurring concession that authority to preach comes not only from calling and ordination, but from the hearers that show up each week. They must see the preacher as credible in order to ascribe authority to that preacher's words. Because the age is suspicious of theatricality, preachers must give a "real" message that intersects with those people's lives (Arthurs 187). Hypocrisy in the preacher will not just damage the church; it will drive away the audience from religion entirely. Robertson McQuilkin explains, "if we come across as authoritarian, that's perceived as arrogant and the ultimate in nonauthenticity. Our presentation of truth must be humble—the presentation of ourselves in a vulnerable way" (174). This vulnerability is key to today's pastoral authority.

I want to make the distinction here between simple virtue and this vulnerability, with both elements contributing to the preacher's relational *ethos*. Simple holiness, obedience without hypocrisy, is admirable, but not necessarily relatable or relevant. Audiences may grow suspicious of a leader who does not seem to struggle, as they do, to maintain this standard. This is where Robinson's use of the word "authentic" comes in. The pastor's authentic character does not just remain patient when raising energetic children; he also shares how that patience was

greatly tested when those children wrote on the walls with permanent marker. In other words, a vulnerable preacher *ethos* not only involves overcoming temptation but also sharing the struggle to do so, and even sometimes sharing the stories of failure.

In her book *Weaving the Sermon: Preaching in a Feminist Perspective*, Christine Smith states that "the preacher's understanding of authority becomes the loom on which she or he weaves the preaching experience" (44). The prevailing paradigm in Jewish and Christian authority is one of domination (46). The traditional sources of authority such as education, calling, and institutional support (such as ordination) foster a "flavor of separateness" between preacher and congregation (47). Because these traditional means of authority have so often failed female speakers, feminist homiletics casts authority not as a special right, but rather as a "quality of presence, mutuality, and integrity" (48). In other words, feminist preaching emphasizes solidarity within the faith community; preacher and listener together find transformation through mutual, willing faith and action. Rather than influence based on status, true preaching authority today comes from "radical selfhood, radical realness, and radical oneness *with* the hearer" (Christine Smith 50)[39]. If Smith is correct, then it seems many contemporary preachers have adopted (wittingly or not) a more feminist approach to preaching by calling for a more audience-centered and vulnerable preacher *ethos*.

Ethos *and Burkean Identification*

This brand of *ethos*, at the same time virtuous and broken, leads to relevance in the minds of listeners because they identify more readily with the speaker. They see themselves, or perhaps they see what they would like themselves to be, in her. Audiences lend authority to the preacher and perceive relevance based on the preacher's authenticity. Kenneth Burke (1950) presents identification as a process in which the speaker works for both division and unification, aligning interests and highlighting difference in order to persuade (20). When interests join, or are at the least perceived to join, speaker and audience, though still distinct, become

[39] In her 2003 work, *A Community Text Arises: A Literate Text and a Literacy Tradition in African-American Churches*, Beverly Moss explores three preachers' strategies for positioning themselves as one of the congregation. The ministers in her study used "we" to refer to the congregation, African Americans at large, the Christian church, and society at large (71). The perspectives of congregation and minister merge, blurring boundaries of authority (76). This phenomenon works to make sermons, church bulletins, and other texts communal within these groups (64).

"substantially one" or "consubstatial" (21). Groups therefore form and function based on this perception of being either at odds with or united with others.

Augustine's call to influence others to "hate what you censure, embrace what you comment" resonates with Burke (50), who believes that a certain level of ingratiation and delight is just as rhetorically powerful as more agonistic approaches to persuasion. In fact, he points out that the very word "persuasion" contains the same root that gives us terms such as "sweet," "assuage," and "suave" (52). Therefore, some amount of cajoling need not remain secondary to agonistic defeating of rhetorical rivals. I believe that this mutuality, bound tightly in *ethos* and grounded in identification, prompts listeners to ascribe greater authority to the speaker. Thus, during the process of sermon composition, "The listener must be given a seat in the pastor's study and be allowed to participate in sermon design" (Cahill 68). Through identification and relationships the preacher can create and deliver the relevance that earns authority, and listeners will only grant this authority when they believe in the authenticity of the speaker's character.

The Authority of Scripture

In previous ages, allegorical and thematic sermons, described in chapter two, used a biblical passage as a starting point. The same principle applies to expository preaching. However, over the past century, homiletic instruction has reflected a stronger insistence upon understanding the social and historical contexts of scripture. The preacher can better draw out relevant principles after studying the backgrounds of the passage. Francois Fénelon was ahead of his time when he criticized thematic preaching's tendency to take scripture out of context. He states that too many preachers "twist their subject matter little by little in order to adjust the text to the sermon that they have need to spout" (Fénelon 149). Later preachers would agree, leading to a twentieth-century commitment to expository preaching.

Working in tandem with the altered form of preacher *ethos*, described above, the Bible, as communicated through expository preaching, becomes a second source of authority for preaching in an anti-authority age. Traditionally, scripture acted as another manifestation of the church's institutional authority. It was the sacred text of the church, and the institution's doctrine of inspiration rendered it unassailable from serious questioning. In his 1870 preaching manual, *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, John Broadus states, "Argument in preaching has one peculiarity. There is a great authority, the Word of God, whose plain utterances upon any question must be held by the preacher as decisive and final. This is

proof without arguing in the narrow sense" (171). However, like the authority of the preacher, scriptural authority has also needed to find renewal through relevance to churchgoers.

Certainly, beliefs about the inerrancy of scripture remain strong. Mainstream Protestantism today continues to proclaim God's inspiration of the Bible. Some groups take a fundamentalist view, attempting to interpret and apply every passage literally, while others ascribe to the historical grammatical approach, upholding the inerrancy of scripture while appreciating the literary elements that would preclude some literal interpretations. Regardless of the level of literalism, though, these approaches all hold the Bible as the church's principal resource for direction. Therefore, scripture remains a primary source of authority in the Protestant church. However, preachers today cannot count on listeners granting assent based solely upon the proof that "the Bible says so." Even if preachers follow Broadus' advice and believe in the ultimate authority of scripture as "decisive and final," audiences today may not view the Bible's content as "plain," something they "must" accept unconditionally and without question. In other words, homileticians no longer locate biblical authority solely in the assumption of its divine inspiration, but also in its applicability to Christians' lives. Even Austin Phelps, considered a traditional preacher in the late nineteenth century, recognized the approaching trend. He upheld scripture as the foundation of authority for preachers, but conceded, "The pulpit must modernize and Americanize texts, and thus fit them to a modern American audience" (40).

Today, preachers must draw audiences to relate their lived experience to the ancient scriptures, making the Bible relevant, and thus authoritative. Because in its pages the preacher finds joy, theft, birth, death, rape, secrets, and virtually everything else in the human experience, the Bible is the key to connecting the lives of postmodern individuals with ancient doctrines of the church (Gibson 218-219). In his essay, "Who's Listening out there?" (2004) Hansen points out that listeners today generally are not as Bible literate as previous generations. They may not know who Moses or David were, for instance (129). But the Bible has not lost its relevance to them. Joseph's sibling rivalries, Abraham and Sarah's complicated marriage, David's challenges of raising children, and Paul's physical ailments can all spark interest and identification for today's hearers. Previous generations may have "cleansed the stories in accordance with their censored world" but not so today (130). In this way, the Bible becomes not just the church's book, but its stories become the people's stories (Achtemeier 18).

John Stott (1982) perceives and addresses this shift away from unquestioned acceptance of scripture and toward the need for establishing its relevance. He describes it as a gap of time and culture between ancient scripture and contemporary Christians. His resulting bridge metaphor calls for preachers to construct Christianity's contemporary relevance for today. However, they cannot fulfill this task without first performing accurate hermeneutic practices with the ancient text. Other writers also identify this two-part (interpretation and application) means of developing sermons. Donald Sunukjian (2004) offers a simple outline for forming sermons once the preacher has encountered the text in its historical, cultural, and literary contexts. First, the preacher must determine the biblical author's "flow of thought," (114) retaining in the sermon the order of ideas, allowing that flow of thought to shape the form of the sermon. Sanukjian therefore advises preachers to resist the urge to rearrange the material into arbitrary lists, the dominant practice in preaching for centuries. Next, the preacher should express the author's thought in a single statement, a thesis that offers a memorable "take-home truth" for listeners (116). Finally, to bridge this interpretation with the contemporary audience, the preacher should list "relevant points of contact" (117) weaving doctrine into the lived experience of listeners.

Sanukjian offers an example, using Acts 6:1-7. In this passage, the budding church in Jerusalem faced controversy. Church members had begun selling their possessions in order to provide for the needy, thus having "all things in common" (Acts 2:44). However, the Hellenists (Greek speaking Jews) in the church complained that their widows were being neglected in food distribution compared to Hebrew widows. The twelve apostles decided that to arbitrate in such matters would detract from their preaching, so they charged the church to appoint seven respected leaders to oversee distribution.[40] Sanukjian identifies the flow the thought as: growth, problem, solution (116) and outlines the sermon accordingly. He boils the passage down to a single statement: "The way for the church to solve problems of growth is through designated lay leaders" (117). Then, he finds relevant points of contact in the several areas in which growth might lead to conflict: nursery space, parking space, generational conflicts, and opposition from neighbors (118), offering lay leaders as the appropriate arbiters for these challenges. Sanukjian's model for sermon construction thus makes the scriptural passage absolutely central to the form

[40] As it turned out, most of the seven chosen had Greek names, a sign of support for Hellenistic Christians.

and flow of any sermon. Thus, the original text itself directly contributes to relevance and appropriateness in preaching.

In his homiletics instruction, Haddon Robinson suggests the following process of sermon composition: Get the idea of the sermon from the idea of the text; Honor the development of the passage; Reflect the purpose of the passage; Grapple with the complexity of the text, refusing to give pat answers; Determine and preserve the mood of the text (Robinson "Relevance" 83-93). This hermeneutic, an expanded form of Sanukjian's ideas, is fully Bible-centered, requiring the minister to encounter the text on multiple levels, in its original language, and in its historical and literary contexts. Again, the scripture itself drives the sermon and lends its own authority to the preacher.

Scott Gibson (2004) too exhorts his readers to rely on accurate hermeneutic practice and let the Bible, not the preacher, act as authority in the sermon. He instructs:

> Teach people to think critically. Show them what the passage has to say…The way in which you preach may change, especially in light of the culture's collapse of authority. Yet, the message you preach is grounded in the authority of the Word. Plant the sermon in the Bible and connect it to men and women—and get out of its way. (Gibson 221)

This quote reflects the pressures to rely upon the authority of scripture, but also to engage the mind, adjust to shifts in culture, and connect biblical principles directly to the audience's experience.

Preacher Ethos *and Scriptural Authority: Conclusions*

This respect of scriptural authority does not necessarily compete with the preacher's own *ethos* as a source of credibility. On the contrary, I see the two working together to fill the void left by the decline in institutional authority. The preacher builds personal credibility through knowledge and study of scripture. Haddon Robinson explains,

> Preaching with authority means you've done your homework. You know your people's struggles and hurts. But you also know the Bible and theology. You can explain the Bible clearly. We help our credibility when we practice biblical preaching… An authoritative tone without genuine biblical authority is sound and fury signifying nothing. (Robinson "What Authority" 215)

Therefore, in an age when moral absolutes are suspect and when relevance reigns, homileticians present the Bible itself as the anchor, the standard that will preclude a loss of the core message of

Christianity. Scripture prevents the preacher's personality from dominating the church, tethering *ethos* to ancient doctrine. For many Protestant preachers, the refrain *sola scriptura* (scripture alone) from the Protestant Reformation rings true. Study of the Bible is a primary foundation of credibility, its content their primary source of sermon material, and its principles a site of relevance.

THE RHETORICAL CANONS AND RELEVANCE

Given these sources of authority, especially the strong emphasis on scripture as a source of relevance, how does the preacher compose sermons that audiences perceive as relevant? Late twentieth and twenty-first century preaching manuals tend to privilege invention as the site for the establishment of connection with the congregation. Further, the continued struggle to develop effective sermon forms elevates arrangement as a means of reaching an audience.

Homiletics and Relevance: Invention is King

Through accurate interpretive practice, preachers investigate the original intent of the ancient text, and can proceed to composing sermons that connect those concepts with the lives of hearers. Study produces insight into the literary, social, and historical contexts, which contemporary homiletics instructors identify as crucial to the communication and application of biblical principles. Above, I listed the hermeneutic practices, methods for sermon development, espoused by Donald Sanukjian and Haddon Robinson. Both homeliticians advise their students to anchor relevance firmly within their study and interpretation of the scriptural passage. In other words, the invention process, during which the preacher determines the passage's central message, flow of thought, and applicable socio-cultural considerations, becomes the source of relevance. It is here, during the invention of the sermon, that the preacher produces the connections between the people and their scripture.

In his 2004 book *Preaching and Homiletical Theory,* Paul Scott Wilson points out that contemporary homiletics texts have returned to detailed outlining of interpretive procedures in sermon development. The commentaries of earlier Bible scholars as well as works in historical criticism usually do not help preachers to address the needs of their congregations, often questioning the historicity of the biblical accounts to the point that one wonders why they chose to study the Bible in the first place (29). Wilson shows that in response to the need to locate relevance in the scriptures, the lines are now beginning to blur between the previously divided steps in the sermon-making process. "Exegesis" connotes an historical approach in interpreting a

text. As stated above, the preacher studies the social, literary, and historical contexts of the passage in search of the author's intent for the original audience. "Hermeneutics" connotes interpretation with an eye to contemporary recipients, bringing the meaning to today.[41] "Homiletics," as stated in chapter two, literally means a conversation with a crowd (33). Wilson states that today's ministers can no longer view the original text as a "discreet objective entity to be scientifically studied" in the exegetical process. Rather, from the start, this process is relational; the interpreter acknowledges the possibility for multiple interpretations (39) and maintains audience awareness and an open eye to application throughout the entire interpretive process.

Many of the most influential preaching manuals of the last forty years demonstrate this emphasis on the relational, audience-centered nature of hermeneutics, thus locating relevance and identification in the process of invention. Fred Craddock teaches his students to free-write for fifteen minutes using the "What is it like" exercise. The preacher asks herself, based on what she knows about the congregation, what it is like to be facing surgery, living alone, suddenly wealthy, rejected by a sorority, arrested for burglary, going into the military, fired, graduating, unable to read, extremely poor, fourteen years old, etc. (97). Craddock has thus anchored identification in the invention process. Similarly, Elizabeth Achtemeier sees identification as part of the early interpretive process of sermon composition. She grounds all speaker authority in scripture (18) and posits that identification results from a hermeneutic of creative interpretation in which the preacher struggles with the Word "on behalf of the people" (60) and makes Bible stories the stories of the people. Therefore, study itself acts as the site for this struggle, as preachers encounter texts, gather the principles and images therein, and invent the rhetorical and narrative moves of the sermon.

John Stott's bridge metaphor, meant to communicate the means of composing relevant yet biblically grounded sermons, relies heavily on invention as the primary bridge-builder. Stott is convinced of scriptural authority, boldly proclaiming, "all true Christian preaching is expository preaching" (125). However, Stott refuses to take a fundamentalist stance, defining "expository" broadly as revealing the meaning of a text and speaking it plainly and clearly (126). Thus, the preacher bridges the biblical world with the modern world. Stott explains that

[41] George Kennedy uses the terms "exegesis" and "hermeneutics" interchangeably, describing the process of interpretation (138).

conservatives take root on the biblical side, and risk irrelevance (140), while liberals start on the contemporary side, but risk having no biblical foundation (143). Therefore, Stott's approach places a heavy burden on the inventional work of the preacher, who must "be equally earthed in both" banks (10).

Stott's advice for generating sermons involves first choosing and meditating over a passage, with two questions in mind: What does it mean? (The author's intent on the biblical horizon); and What does it say? (Contemporary application to listeners today). The preacher must isolate the dominant thought, paring it down to a single-statement proposition (226) which becomes the thesis of the sermon. This exegetical and hermeneutic method does most of the heavy lifting in Stott's bridge-building. Gathering and generating illustrations, arguably a repeat of the invention process on the contemporary horizon, rounds out the content of the sermon. In fact, Stott, like so many other late twentieth century homileticians, advises his students to allow the order of thought in the passage to dictate the order of thought in the sermon, thus in a way placing the canon of arrangement under the purview of invention. In other words, the discovery process of exegeting the passage, which is inventional, determines the sermon's form and arrangement. This practice of course strengthens the role of invention even more. Through this process, the preacher bridges ancient and contemporary, holding to church doctrine while reaching listeners where they are.

Even recent homiletic texts that focus primarily upon other canons such as arrangement and delivery privilege invention as the primary means of preaching effectively. Dennis Cahill's 2007 text, *The Shape of Preaching: Theory and Practice in Sermon Design* outlines several traditional forms, such as deductive (propositional) thematic sermons and contemporary narrative sermons, and concludes that preachers should strive for variety above all else when it comes to designing sermon structures. Therefore, the reader would think that the canon of arrangement functions as Cahill's primary focus. However, the heart of this text, while keeping the sermon's form in its scope, focuses primarily on exegesis and hermeneutics—invention. Cahill offers advice much like that of his predecessors Fred Craddock and John Stott, teaching his readers to identify the central focus of the biblical text, its literary genre and flow (82), and its cultural relevance for listeners today (83). Cahill devotes an entire chapter to inventing the sermon focus through interaction between the exegetical idea (the author's original intent and message) and the homiletical idea (the text's message to the immediate contemporary audience).

Another chapter takes the central focus of the sermon and gives further instruction on invention: structural analysis of the passage (109), audience analysis, a task list of main points and applications (110), and the overall flow of thought (*e.g.* Inductive vs. deductive) (112). This inventional work, according to Cahill, eventually leads to variety of forms,

Similarly, Richard Hoefler's manual *Creative Preaching and Oral Writing* focuses on another rhetorical canon, delivery, yet highly emphasizes invention. A manuscript preacher, Hoefler asserts that writing is the true source of eloquence; extemporaneous speakers eventually succumb to repetitiveness, ambiguity, and frequent, distracting tangents (91). Therefore, preachers should compose full manuscripts, but in an oral style (93)-- a style conducive to a seemingly-extemporaneous delivery. Hoefler urges his readers to use indentation, capitalization, punctuation, symbols, colors, and arrows to create word groups on the page, all the while speaking as one writes (106). This method produces a rather long manuscript, but allows the speaker to utilize visual layout of the invented text as an aid to delivery.

I appreciate Hoefler's efforts to unite all canons of rhetoric in this manual. He prompts his readers, even in the invention process, to have in mind the flow of thought and style of sentence that will have greatest impact when spoken. However, most of this preaching manual focuses on the writing itself. The title of his final chapter, "Body Speech: Some Brief Notes on Delivery" is telling. After so much attention to writing with an eye to delivery, the fifth canon actually receives only twelve pages of content, consisting of a purely physical approach to its theorization. Hoefler advises speakers to use gestures to supplement spoken content (159), warns against rocking and pacing (160), and devotes the final pages to vocal projection.

I see overarching agreement that in the postmodern era that because scripture offers a timeless authority, the invention process, not delivery, is given the highest priority in homiletic theory. Through study, interpretation, and the generation of arguments and illustrations, preachers bring the Bible to life and apply its narratives and concepts to the lives of hearers; they must bridge an ancient culture with today (Stott). These manuals indicate that invention, not delivery, acts as the primary location for identifying with an audience. Therefore, the invention process, during which the preacher exegetes the biblical passage and generates arguments, illustrations and applications, is the seat of relevance. I assert that relevance and identification cannot rest solely in the solitary process of study and preparation, and that the act of delivery acts

as much more than a reflection of the effectiveness of a speaker's invention process. It can also be its own site of relevance.

Delivery, Identification, and Relevance

A more complex theorizing of delivery takes up the notion of speaker-audience identification and makes a significant contribution to the speaker's goal of achieving relevance. As stated above, many homileticians see the value of identification in the preaching act. Listeners must perceive that they are hearing "their stories" (Achtemeier) from a relatable person. Indeed, delivery is the site of identification, and a key to relevance. In this moment of contact, the speaker presents herself in an attempt toward relational identification. Elizabeth Achemeier explains that pastors simply must be involved in the lives and struggles of their parishioners, sharing a "loving identification" (58) that stems from knowing that pastors themselves are "just as helpless and needy as they are" when it comes to suffering and dependence upon God's love (59). Fred Craddock asserts that good sermons reflect this common human condition with such accuracy that hearers respond, "Yes, that is really the way it is. I did not know anyone else really understood" (163). Further, the act of delivery allows the preacher to experience anew the impact of scripture in such a way that fosters identification in the preaching moment. Notice the close ties between delivery and identification in Craddock's words:

> As much as possible, the sermon material is re-experienced as it is related. In other words, the speaker functions from within the sermon, the result being that the hearer tends to do the same…At times, experiencing the sermon as it is preached can be emotionally demanding and each preacher has to determine and respect emotional thresholds. However, the great advantage of this mode of moving through the material is that emotions are always congenial to the content; there are no manufactured feelings. To this genuineness, whether joy, anger, sorrow, disgust, or indignation, listeners naturally respond, and usually with some degree of identification. (165)

Of course, this relationship with the audience depends heavily upon "doctrinal agreement between listener and preacher" (Gibson 238). When some agreement already exists, the sermon takes on an epideictic function, one of reminding and reinforcing already-existing beliefs about God and humanity. Add in the relational nature of identification in preaching, and this type of epideictic rhetoric does not just offer a theoretical ideal of virtue; it also connects that

consciousness with a model of these traits. In other words, it "bridges the self with the virtuous other" (Johnstone and Mifsud 76), tying together belief and community.

Richard Hoefler, a strong proponent of concise manuscript preaching, asserts, "Listeners to sharply focused sermons have an amazing capacity to perceive that the sermon was prepared with them specifically in mind" (156). He thus establishes further connections between sermon content and identification. In the preaching moment, the parishioners "must recognize in the sermon their own confession of sin and repentance, their own affirmation of faith, their own vision and hope, their own burst of praise" (160). But of course, the content alone cannot carry these confessions, affirmations, visions, and bursts of praise. Delivery itself carries significant weight in this task. Using the acting term "portray' to address one key element of rhetorical delivery in preaching, Francois Fénelon (1718) explains, "To portray is not only to describe things but to represent their surrounding features in so lively and so concrete a way that the listener imagines himself almost seeing them" (92). This portrayal amounts to "carrying objects over into the imaginations of men" (93). Obviously, delivery plays an important role not only in the communication of thought and the inspiration of emotion. The fifth canon acts as an integral site for the formation of identification between speaker and listener, especially in the context of preaching, in which the pastor also acts as counselor, interpreter of scripture, and friend. Further, this relational identification, so often established in the preacher's engagement with sacred texts on behalf of the congregation, contributes to audience perception of relevance.

CONCLUSION

I do not want to give the impression that delivery has been completely neglected during this rise of the relevance imperative in contemporary Protestant churches. However, typically the treatment of the fifth canon in preaching manuals remains somewhat traditional, oscillating between physical, noetic, and pathetic views outlined in chapter one. But it is precisely here, in the delivery of sermons, that the preacher presents the self and offers listeners the vulnerable persona and an applicable interpretation of scripture, with which listeners can identify.

It may seem late to do so, but at this point I would like to assemble a definition of "relevance" in the context of preaching and based on the concepts found in the twentieth century preaching manuals I cited in this chapter. I believe relevance is a blanket term comprised of several cognitive and emotive processes. A primary contributor to a perception of relevance is recognition, as expressed in the above quotes from Heofler and Craddock. The preacher wants

listeners to think, "Yes, that is how things are. That is my life." Therefore, narration and diagnosis of the human experience that seems true and familiar will contribute the relevance. Also, desire plays an important role, as listeners not only recognize what they are in the sermon, but what they want to be. This idea goes back to the Johnstone and Mifsud quote, above, about using the delivered text to bridge the self with the "virtuous other." In sermons, preachers have the opportunity to perform faulty and virtuous character traits, influencing the audience to reject one and ascribe to the other. Audience desire to improve themselves (to be better parents or spouses, to be slower to anger, etc.) can attach to these enactments (explored in detail in chapters four and five), resulting in the perception of a relevant idea. Intertwined with recognition and desire is identification, that sense of consubstantiality that aligns speaker and audience. When these factors fall into place, audiences ascribe trust to both speaker and to the ideas she presents. And in an age of declining institutional authority, with this trust in place audiences lend authority to the preacher. Relevance thus becomes an audience-centered source of persuasive power. Therefore, because relevance, identification, and trust seem to move together to comprise persuasion, rhetors must foster those relational connections when delivering orations.

In the next chapter, I delve further into *ethos*, not focusing as much on the concept as a source of authority (as I did in this chapter), but complicating it as both situated and contingent in the moment of delivery. *Ethos* as character presentation is a collaborative projection from both speaker and audience, leading to the valuable relational identification described in this chapter. But the politics of delivery and the spaces of oratory create tensions in the establishment of *ethos* and complicate the available means of persuasion for preachers. I examine the role of delivery in fostering identification, in hopes of providing a clearer path for studying persuasion in action in face-to-face rhetorical events.

Chapter Four: *Ethos* and the Politics of Delivery

INTRODUCTION

Given the face-to-face nature of preaching, coupled with the relationships that exist among a congregation and its pastor, how does identification take shape, and how does persuasion function in American Protestant communities? In this chapter, I make the case for an *ethos*-based theory of delivery, exploring the politicized nature of the sermon and the ways character presentation during delivery greatly impacts audience adherence. In *de Oratore*, Cicero demonstrates the power of *ethos*, the artistic proof of character presentation, saying, "[*Ethos*] contributes much to success in speaking, that the morals, principles, conduct, and lives of those who plead causes, and of those for whom they plead, should be such as to merit esteem" (2.43). These efforts on the part of the speaker give the audience a "favorable feeling" when they perceive modesty, honesty, and humility within the speech event (2.43). As stated in chapter one, "delivery is the realm of *ethos*" (Connors 66) in that it acts as a moment of contact, when the audience takes in the speaker's persona as intertwined with the content of the speech. Here, listeners make key judgments about the speaker's values, priorities, intelligence, and countless other factors. These judgments obviously contribute greatly to levels of identification and assent, which are crucial to persuasion.

The art of preaching provides fertile ground to study this complex dynamic. Jana Childers claims that in the preaching act, the self is the instrument for carrying out one's intentions (48). She explains, "All the preacher's physical, mental, and spiritual skills are brought to bear in the task of interpreting and embodying the text" (52). She thus unites intention, content, and the body, describing the preaching moment as a "giving-over" to the biblical text, to the sermon text, and to the delivery itself (52).

To study the webs of relationships and cultural forces within a religious discourse community, I link *ethos* and delivery through a three-part framework—the speaker's presentation of self *through* a text, self *and* a text, and self *as* a text. In one sense, when the speaker delivers an oration, she presents herself *through* a text, which reflects the Greek idea of *ethos* as forming during delivery. Aristotle seemed reluctant to include prior reputation in his explanations of *ethos,* limiting the proof to the moment the orator delivers the speech. But the speaker also presents herself *and* a text. This Isocratean and Ciceronian conception of *ethos* brings in reputation and past intersections between the speaker, audience, and topic. Finally, a more

complicated view of *ethos*, one that highlights the role of delivery, is that the speaker presents herself *as* a text. To explore this expanded view of delivery, I incorporate recent work about the politics of the body and the politics of rhetorical spaces. The pulpit already carries so much meaning, and the speaker projects belief as she and the audience work through the complicated authority issues (between preacher and congregation) described in chapter three.

With this third perspective on the relationship between *ethos* and delivery, I assert that not all agency in *ethos*-building belongs to the speaker. The audience certainly has a more active role in the speech event. Therefore, the writer/speaker is herself a text, a conception of the fifth canon that begins to broaden and take into account the other two views of *ethos*. Factors such as gender, race, and even past interactions or reputations communicate within the discourse community as the speaker acts as a "screen" onto which audiences project their assumptions and beliefs (Brekus 205). But at the same time, this speaker projects values to the audience, using a "performative repertoire" (Fredal 257) of various enacted cultural ideologies. Thus, the speaker persuades the audience to identify with some values, and to reject others. This process of delivery, then, is crucial to achieving identification and relevance.

Understanding "Self"

Although I cannot linger too long in identity politics, I do not want to offer a simplistic definition of "self" in this chapter, one that depicts the individual as having a stable, self-invented and self-defined identity. Nor do I wish to ascribe Cartesian or post-Romantic notions of the individual to classical thinkers (Swearingen 115). Marshall Alcorn, Jr. offers a clear contrast between classical and poststructuralist views of the self and *ethos*. Classical *ethos* involves ethical habits, the roles speakers "habitually play" in their lives (Alcorn 4). Therefore, the self consists of "an effect of learning, a coherent behavioral role acquired through repeated performance" (5). Notice the total agency the person maintains over this role. Newer literary theorists, on the other hand, tend to describe the self as a "literary accident," shaped by language and culturally-bound language use. Rather than a stable, discreet inner core that dictates all behavior, identity consists of "multifarious and multi-form subject-positions" that take shape through rhetoric (5).

I agree with Alcorn that both these views fail to capture the complex nature of rhetorical interaction, either oversimplifying the nature of the self or depicting identity as so randomly formed that the individual seems helpless in the face of the cultural forces that would shape

identity. The "self-structures" (6) at work in rhetorical events are indeed influenced by social interaction and cultural values, but they can resist those forces and remain somewhat stable over time. Making a strong tie between the speaker's self, audiences, and culture, Alcorn reinvents the rhetorical triangle, stating,

> In seeking to understand ethos, we should examine more closely the relationship among three things: the structure of the argument, the self-structure of the speaker, and the self-structure of the addressee. What we can most easily see and talk about in this triangular relationship will always be determined by culture, history, and personal projection. (21)

I view the context of preaching as particularly energizing for Alcorn's approach to theorizing the nature of *ethos*. Ancient doctrines and sacred scripture have long created a strong current that shapes Christian identity. The act of preaching joins that current but also may guide it in unexpected directions when applied to contemporary issues. Further, the liveliness of the face-to-face preaching moment allows close contact between the self-structures of the preacher and that of the listeners. Therefore, with this tension between individual agency and cultural force, I will attempt to weave through varying views of *ethos* and its relationship to the fifth canon.

A Word about "Audience"

In the same way "self" is not a stable concept, so "audience" has proved to be a contested idea in composition and rhetoric. In many ways, this term proves even more troubling than simple notions of "self" because "audience" suggests that an other, usually the rhetor, is ascribing identity or certain characteristics to an entire group of people, as opposed to a person ascribing identity to herself. Walter Ong cites McCluhan and Fiore's *The Medium is the Message* to critique a simplistic view of communication and audience he calls the "medium model" (*Orality* 176). In this view of communication, a speaker sends a message to a listener, and if the listener responds, the two figures metaphorically change seats, audience becoming speaker and vice versa. However, Ong states, "Human communication is never one-way. Always, it not only calls for response, but is shaped in its very form and content by anticipated response" (176). He continues,

> I have to be able to conjecture a possible range of responses at least in some vague way. I have to be somehow inside the mind of the other in advance in order to enter with my message, and he or she must be inside my mind. To formulate anything I must have

another person or other persons already 'in mind'. This is the paradox of communication. Communication is intersubjective. The media model is not. (177)

Here, Ong complicates simplistic notions of audiences as empty receivers who soak in knowledge from a speaker. I appreciate the respect he calls speakers to ascribe to audiences. However, the notion of entering another's mind remains troubling. May not speakers continue to oversimplify the identities of their listeners, failing to account for the shifting identity issues and complexities in the minds of the audience?

James E. Porter identifies this danger of audiences becoming "an imaginative construct of the writer" (*Audience* 4). These attempts at "real reader" analysis, as the above Ong quote suggests, occur before a listening audience has actually convened, and for the writer, will never physically convene (5). So even when writers and speakers cast the listener as more than a silent, unintelligent, "passive receptor of the meaning discovered by the rhetor" (15), the onus remains on that speaker to "somehow" (as Ong states) come to an understanding of the workings of the minds of audience members. Instead, Porter advocates for a Sophistic view of audience, one in which knowledge takes shape not only in the mind of the speaker as expert, but collaboratively, in the rhetorical moment, with the audience (114). He sees the audience "as collaborative writer, as a force that shapes and influences the writer and hence the inscribed text" (114). This dynamic calls for Burkean identification, in which the writer/speaker "does not 'analyze' an audience so much as become one with the audience; a writer must not simply 'analyze' the emotions but must share the emotions, be of one mind and heart with the audience" (115).

Preaching affords this very opportunity for identification and collaboration. Pastors and their congregations can develop close bonds through frequent contact, meals shared, weddings, funerals, hospital visits, Bible studies, etc. As I mentioned in the introduction to this dissertation, as I became friends with the members of the church I pastored, I understood on deeper levels their passions, temperaments, fears, political views, knowledge of history and scripture, and countless other factors. When preparing a sermon, I pictured the faces of the fifty-something butcher, the 12-year-old boy scout, and the retired teacher. I could remember conversations in which members told me what resonated with them in a previous sermon, and it influenced the ways I shaped these messages. But it was not only in the preparation process that I felt I was entering the hearts of the audience, as they had entered mine. In the midst of delivering sermons

I also appreciated audience presence on several levels. Of course body language like nodding, or nodding off, nudged the way I worked from my manuscript, elaborating on some points or adjusting my voice. But also, a time of sharing prayer requests and communal prayer usually preceded the sermon. On many occasions I found that the needs the congregants expressed during that part of the worship service stayed with me during the sermon, causing me to add, delete, highlight, or tone down certain phrases or points as I delivered the message. Therefore, with preaching, the very idea of "audience," especially in smaller churches, resists abstraction. Real relationships tend to push out mere imagined constructs. Certainly, the danger remains that even preachers who know their congregations well might stereotype their listeners, oversimplifying beliefs and tendencies of behavior. Any claim that begins with "The people at my church…" should call for pause. However, I believe that in the preacher-congregation relationship, ideas of speaker *ethos* and audience collaboration in the rhetorical moment offer compelling opportunities to study delivery and audience perception of the delivered text.

PRESENTING THE SELF *THROUGH* A TEXT: *ETHOS* IS INVENTED

Aristotle described *ethos* as forming within the text, as an invented artistic proof that takes shape as the orator speaks. He explains, "we believe fair-minded people to a greater extent and more quickly [than we do others] on all subjects in general and completely so in cases where there is not exact knowledge but room for doubt" (1.2.4). However, he is quick to add, "And this should result from the speech, and not from a previous opinion that the speaker is a certain kind of person." This impression of fair-minded character is "almost, so to speak, the controlling factor in persuasion." Aristotle obviously sees the high value of establishing a credible *ethos*, but why does he seem to discount prior reputation as a factor?[42] Perhaps because all citizens were expected to have the ability to speak should they go to court (in other words, during the days of speech writers but before the days of professional lawyers), few might have had the opportunity to develop an orator's reputation. Or perhaps Aristotle is trying to preserve the idea of an "artistic" proof. After all, he links delivery with skill in acting (3.1.5), attributing performance

[42] In *Nichomachean Ethics*, Aristotle seems to soften this view, claiming that habitual practice of just deeds does in fact make one a better person, to whom others will listen. He states, "For the things which we have to learn before we can do them we learn by doing: men become builders by building houses, and harpists by playing the harp. Similarly, we become just by the practice of just actions, self-controlled by exercising self-control, and courageous by performing acts of courage" (2.1.3) Aristotle. *Ethics*. Trans. John Warrington. London: Dent, 1963. Print.

skill to imitation and talent on the part of the speaker. Reputation from previous speeches often lies outside the immediate control of the orator, at least during the speech at hand, and therefore what art could that orator actually exercise? In the latter case, it seems that Aristotle's love for categorization, in this case the category being "the artistic," may prevent him from considering a fuller view of *ethos*, at least in this section of *On Rhetoric*.

Certainly, invention plays an important role in portraying oneself as fair-minded. The speaker must consider early how to compliment and/or establish a common ground with the audience. Indeed a great number of classical orations contain in the introduction (*prooemium*) a statement of goodwill and admiration directed at listeners. The invention process, during which the speaker identifies qualities of the audience, would often produce the content of this establishment of *ethos*. However, the connections between this Aristotelian view of *ethos* and delivery seem quite obvious. The speaker not only needs to say the right words to foster trust and goodwill with the audience; she must say them in such a way that she seems genuine in that goodwill. As the great preacher John Broadus reminds, "A speech, in the strict sense of the term, exists only in the act of speaking…it is yet exceedingly important not to think of the speech and the delivery as things existing apart" (qtd. in Mountford 66)

Aristotle explains the most important impressions a speaker must portray when delivering a speech. For him, *ethos* consists of the speaker constructing

> a view of himself as a certain kind of person and to prepare the judge; for it makes much difference in regard to persuasion…that the speaker seem to be a certain kind of person and that his hearers suppose him to be disposed toward them in a certain way and in addition if they, too, happen to be disposed in a certain way [favorably or unfavorably to him]. (2.1.2-3)

Therefore, in the midst of the speech event, speakers must take advantage of the fact that impressions matter in persuasion. Aristotle offers three specific elements of *ethos*, three reasons for persuasiveness, "three things we trust other than logical demonstrations. These are practical wisdom [*phronesis*] and virtue [*arête*] and good will [*eunoia*]" (2.1.5). Aristotle concludes rather plainly, "a person seeming to have all these qualities is necessarily persuasive to the hearers" (2.1.6). He places responsibility for giving these impressions upon the speaker in the moment of the speech's delivery. Thus, it is *through* the text of the speech that the speaker

presents herself as well informed, steady in character, and concerned for the community. The text acts as an opportunity for this self to take shape before the eyes of the audience.

SELF *AND* TEXT: *ETHOS* IS CULTURALLY CONSTRUCTED

The notion of the speaker presenting the self *and* a text signifies any perceived distinction between the speaker and the speech as two separate entities. This slight separation can manifest in two ways. First, a "self *and* text" view of the speech event could indicate a somewhat simplistic view of delivery, in that a speaker presents the self *along with* a text, by standing before the group and delivering a prepared speech. Whether read from a manuscript, improvised, memorized, or presented with the help of outlines or notes, the speech as a discreet text can carry its own meaning apart from the speaker.

However, the speaker/text relationship is not necessarily that well delineated, because the text itself contributes to the writer/speaker's image in the minds of the reader/listener (Connors). I believe that especially in the live sermon event, a relational text often punctuated by personal illustrations, it is quite difficult to parse speaker and text. Certainly, if sermons are published, to be read by literary audiences who have no acquaintance with the speaker, this distinction can materialize more fully. I prefer, however, to define "self and text" as an Isocratean and Ciceronian concept of *ethos* as reputation.

The Greek rhetorician Isocrates asserted a constructed *ethos*, based on prior action. He explained that any who wished to become a persuasive orator

> will not be negligent as to the matter of character; no, on the contrary, he will apply himself above all to establish a most honorable name among his fellow citizens; for who does not know that words carry greater conviction when spoken by men of good repute than when spoken by men who live under a cloud, and that the argument which is made by a man's life is of or weight than that which is furnished by words? Therefore, the stronger a man's desire to persuade his hearers, the more zealously will he strive to be honorable and to have the esteem of his fellow-citizens. (*Antidosis* 278)

Isocrates takes this point even further, claiming that due to the high importance of a credible reputation, this pursuit of success in oratory may even lead to moral improvement in students of rhetoric. This reasoning certainly defends well against any accusation that rhetoric is a corrupt or corrupting art. But the more important point, in my view, is that audience perceptions of the speaker's character can and do precede the speech event. In other words, the listeners can have

fairly well established notions of the speaker's self before they ever hear a word on the text. Thus, the "and" in "self and text" signals the potential for one's *ethos* to take shape apart from (before) the immediate speech. However, this possible separation between the speaker and the content of a speech or sermon need not undercut the strong connections I am trying to make between *ethos* and delivery. This "self and text" concept still applies well to the speech event itself, as the reputation of the speaker carries into the oration and contributes to levels of assent and identification that occur. Even if reputation becomes a factor, the speaker can still build an *ethos*, solidifying or challenging any preconceived notions.

Cicero agreed with Isocrates' constructed *ethos*, claiming that credible character consists heavily of the orator's prior reputation for knowledge, virtue, and skill. In other words, one's actions in life create the most powerful impression upon listeners. Further, Cicero hints at ways rhetorical delivery remains central to this view of *ethos*. In Book Two of *de Oratore*, the character Antonius proclaims,

> It contributes much to success is speaking that the morals, principles, conduct, and lives of those who plead causes, and of those for whom they plead, should be such as to merit esteem, and that those of their adversaries should be such as to deserve censure; and also that the minds of those before whom the cause is pleaded should be moved as much as possible to a favorable feeling, as well toward the speaker as toward him for whom he speaks. The feelings of the hearers are conciliated by a person's dignity, by his actions, by the character of his life; particulars of which can more easily be adorned by eloquence if they really exist, than be invented if they have no existence. (2.43)

This passage demonstrates that reputation does not replace Aristotle's invented *ethos*, but takes a more prominent role, even enabling the speaker to establish credibility within the speech. Eloquence in the moment of delivery, then, can highlight and adorn and already-established reputation, thus preserving delivery as the realm of *ethos*.

Invented and Constructed Ethos*: Conclusions about "self through text" and "self and text"*

As chapter one explains, Quintilian took up Cicero's view of constructed *ethos*, solidifying a virtuous reputation not only as a means of establishing a credible character, but also as a precondition for being an orator at all. His "good man speaking well" requirement for oratory guarded against Platonic accusations that rhetoric was an empty knack for flattery. But it also paved the way for the rise of Christianity and centuries of insistence upon virtue for any

who would speak in the church. Augustine in particular elevated the virtuous life above all other rhetorical skills, asserting, "the life of the speaker has greater force to make him persuasive than the grandeur of his eloquence, however great that may be" (*Doctrina* 4.59). Despite the fact that the ancients tended to lean toward either an invented or a constructed *ethos*, I see both constructions of character presentation as valid for rhetorical arts in any age. Especially within the church, listeners are more likely to grant authority and assent to a speaker with an honorable reputation. Yet, that speaker also must demonstrate virtue, concern, and goodwill in the preaching moment, further solidifying that reputation and fostering identification.

However, even working in tandem, these views of *ethos* seem insufficient to create a space for a re-theorization of the fifth canon. Chapter one identified physical, noetic, and pathetic conceptions of delivery and demonstrated how these views contributed to delivery's denigration in rhetorical history. Delivery often became a long but simple list of physical gestures, facial expressions, and vocal tones. Or, it materialized as a means of conveying ideas, the arrow from speaker to listener on the most rudimentary diagrams of communication. Or, using overlapping ideas from these views, delivery became the means of projecting and inspiring emotion in audiences, thus making it subject to the most heated accusations of manipulation and artifice. Again, the fifth canon does take in all these elements, making it difficult to theorize and placing it at the margins. I assert that more complex understanding of the *ethos*-delivery relationship can open pathways for rethinking the role of the fifth canon in persuasion.

SELF *AS* A TEXT: *ETHOS* IS POLITICAL

The first two conceptions of *ethos*, outlined above, place most agency in the hands of the speaker to construct the desired character presentation. Presenting the self through a text, the speaker partakes in a continual process of self-presentation with every opportunity to deliver. But she must also build a respectable reputation through action and demeanor, which contributes to that larger reputation that might follow the rhetor into the rhetorical space. These two constructs of *ethos* can assume "a strong audience homogeneity in rhetorical situations" (J. Porter 26), also placing onto the speaker the ability to easily assess the nature of the audience. A third notion, that of the speaker presenting the self *as* a text, shifts at least part of this agency to the audience and to the larger cultural context surrounding delivery. The bodies of speakers, the spaces of oral discourse, and enacted strategies of delivery all impact speaker *ethos*, carry cultural meaning, and contribute to the effect of the oration.

Speaker as Screen

In her 1998 book *Strangers and Pilgrims* Catherine Brekus describes the various obstacles and opportunities for women preachers in America from 1740 to 1845. Too radical for evangelicalism and too conservative for feminism (Brekus 7), many women preachers cast themselves as reluctant prophets, both shocked by and helpless in the face of their God-given calling to preach. Brekus boldly asserts, "All female preachers, whether white or black, described their calls to preach as immediate, irrefutable, and most of all, beyond their control. Even more than men, they declared that they never would have dared to speak publicly if not for the immediate revelation of the Holy Spirit" (185). They had good reason for such justifications. Typically, preaching women met accusations of being masculine, or at least wanting to be men. Sexual lust (including prostitution) and lust for fame were also common allegations directed at women who attempted to speak publicly.

Lindal Buchanan characterizes some of these charges and stereotypes as the vixen, the desperate virgin (spinster), and the virago (a she-male) (110). Such accusations arose because public speaking itself was culturally coded as masculine (14). Buchanan explains,

> women's delivery was never simply assessed for the effective use of voice, gesture, and expression, the standard elements of the traditional fifth canon. Instead, when maternal rhetors entered public spaces, society's feminine ideal accompanied them like a shadow self, and they were evaluated as well for their fit with or divergence from the chimerical true woman. (120)

Nineteenth century gender roles relied heavily upon female virtue in raising children well. However, the home space was the expected site of this virtue. Should a woman's moral compass draw her to speak publicly about issues such as slavery, it amounted to a violation of her home duties. A mother, or even a potential mother, would have a full plate of domestic concerns and should not enter the raucous world of debate.

Brekus describes this same idea of cultural expectation somewhat differently. Often, female preachers in eighteenth and nineteenth century America dressed so simply that were mistaken for Quakers. Their dress was an attempt to avoid the polar opposite accusations of being a temptress and being a man (Brekus 197). Brekus states, "Because of their public visibility, they became a screen on which people projected their anxieties about the meaning of womanhood" (205). I find this idea of the screen particularly compelling because it

demonstrates the cultural and political nature of *ethos* and casts new light on delivery, the realm of *ethos* and moment of contact in which these cultural expectations surface.

I wish to juxtapose this projection, directed from audience to speaker, with Kenneth Burke's concept of identification, an effort by the speaker to align with the audience. Burke himself makes a convincing connection between persuasion-through-identification and delivery, stating, "You persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, identifying your ways with his" (55). The very delivery of a spoken text is ripe with opportunities to use both spoken and visual audience languages and align the self, one's interests, values, and even mannerisms, with the audience. Therefore, I assert that if the speaker is a screen, then the screen works two ways. Yes, the audience projects their own cultural expectations and beliefs onto the speaker. But in delivery, the speaker projects recognizable attitudes and beliefs, and the whole process shapes *ethos* and attempts to influence belief through identification. I believe that preaching especially highlights this two-way dynamic. The pulpit, as a highly politicized space, carries age-old expectations, beliefs that audiences may project onto the speaker-screen (the person presenting the self as a text). But because religious discourse is so tightly bound with identity and shared belief (in scripture, with its ancient narrative and revered teaching), the speaker has abundant opportunity to perform recognizable attitudes, projecting beliefs to the audience.

Therefore, the speaker is also a text in that her delivery communicates meanings of its own. In other words, the speaker presents herself *as* a text, one that reflects and projects cultural meaning and knowledge. I will begin by describing the politicized nature of the body and the spaces of preaching, then I proceed to outline the role of commonplaces within the church, and the way preachers can access and perform shared belief during sermon delivery.

The Politics of the Body

Especially in the field of preaching, the politics of the body usually center around the issue of gender. Most Protestant denominations do ordain women[43], but the issue remains a

[43] Ordination of women and the question of women elders has been one cause for division within some denominations. For example, the Presbyterian Church in America does not ordain women; this issue is central to the reason this group distinguishes itself from the mainstream Presbyterians Church and other larger Reform groups. In recent years, even some Southern Baptist churches, known for conservatism and fundamentalist doctrine, have ordained women.

contentious point within individual congregations and within broader denominations. While considering issues of disability, race, sexuality, and even weight are beyond the scope of this study, gender acts as an effective template to examine cultural expectations of bodies in rhetorical spaces. Lindal Buchanan, discussing the removal of rhetorical training in women's education in the nineteenth century, explains,

> The feminine virtues of purity, piety, submissiveness, and domesticity were fundamentally incompatible with the masculine demands of public speaking, which required extroversion, assertiveness, intelligence, and passion. Therefore, as domestic ideology took firm root in the culture, women's delivery increasingly looked like outright gender subversion. (55)

I hear an echo of Brekus' idea of the screen in Buchanan's assertion that the rhetorical performance, whether it be a school debate or a sermon, is a moment in which "cultural values are enacted and, sometimes, are resisted and revised" (160). This scholarship establishes the close relationship between public discourse and cultural expectation. When any form of public speaking is culturally coded as masculine, women's bodies simply do not fit the rhetorical moment, and women find themselves utterly disregarded from and/or firmly opposed in their participation.

The fifth canon of delivery then becomes a sort of proving ground on which bodies meet participants' expectations. Roxanne Mountford explains, "delivery involves, first and foremost, the presentation of the self in a form that will be acceptable to the audience" (69). Unfortunately, for centuries, the only form acceptable in a context of public religious discourse, was a male body. Fundamentalist interpretations of two New Testament passages precluding women from speaking in the church[44] became proof-texts many groups cited to prevent women from delivering sermons.

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[44] In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul tells women to be silent, not interrupting services to ask their husbands about points of doctrine. The context of the passage involves the chaotic worship services in the first-century Corinthian church. Just three chapters earlier in the same letter, Paul takes for granted that women will speak, advising about proper attire *when* women pray and prophesy. In 1Timothy 2, Paul commands that women not "exercise authority" over a man. Many groups apply this statement to church leadership. However, this passage seems to be addressing marital issues; Paul is probably speaking to women who, having found a measure of equality with their husbands in the new Christian religion (Galatians 3:28 states, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for

Therefore, the female body carries specific cultural expectations, resulting in strong beliefs about a woman speaker's *ethos*. Public speech was so heavily coded as masculine in the nineteenth century that many believed women had neither the physical nor mental capacity for persuasion (Johnson 23). Elocution manuals depicted men giving serious speeches, and women giving costumed performances, usually about family and feelings (43). In other words, "Women were encouraged to involve themselves in acquiring rhetorical skills for the kinds of performances that ranked the lowest on a scale of rhetorics of power" (45). Nineteenth-century rhetorical manuals reflected "a well-established link between rhetorical performance and gender" (Johnson 27), portraying public performances such as debate and preaching as male activities, and other activities, such as parlor performance and letter writing, as female.

Johnson demonstrates that these cultural gender codes have been slow to change, and continue to haunt women who would speak publicly. Here, I see a contact point between my concepts of "self *and* text" and "self *as* text." Because "self and text" views of *ethos* take into account an audience's understanding of the speaker's reputation, they may have preexisting beliefs about the speaker before she ever takes the podium or pulpit. I find it impossible to cleanly separate reputation based on past orations and reputation based on cultural expectation. Both follow the speaker into the rhetorical space and influence how audiences might grant authority and assent. In this way, "self as text" begins to absorb "self and text," as it accounts for a larger understanding of reputation as socially and culturally constructed. Further, the spaces of oratory greatly contribute to these social codes and play a significant role in *ethos* and the delivery of sermons.

The Pulpit as a Politicized Space

Based on several statements (above) about women's bodies and spaces such as the podium or pulpit, I also find it difficult to detach *ethos*, rhetorical bodies, and the politicized spaces they occupy. Mountford seems to sense this strong connection as well, stating, "character presentation is necessarily bounded by cultural discourses of the body as well as by material space" (70). Johnson, laying some of the groundwork for Mountford's study, asserts, "public space was so deeply inscribed as masculine that women who ventured into it were perceived as having forfeited their femininity" (50). Terms such as "inscribed" and "coded" reflect social

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all are one in Christ Jesus.") used the opportunity to domineer (an alternate translation to "exercise authority over") their husbands.

nature of rhetoric and the ways it shapes culture. Values and language move together to create societal expectations for both bodies and spaces.

The pulpit in particular remains what I would call a super-charged space, rhetorically and politically. Preaching has literally had millennia to shape and to be shaped by culture. As a gendered space, the pulpit acts as a "symbol of men's exclusive authority to interpret Scripture" (Brekus 201). But even beyond the embedded gender codes of the pulpit, listeners have varied expectations for how preachers will dress, interact with scripture, show emotion, share narratives, and countless other factors and actions. Even the placement of the sermon within a worship service carries expectation and meaning. All these factors connect deeply with speaker *ethos* and the delivery of sermons. Again, because the speaker is presenting the self as a text, the levels to which preachers uphold or resist expectation have a direct impact on mutual identification and audience willingness to grant rhetorical authority in the preaching moment.

Commonplaces and Streams of Utterances in the Church

To further explore the culture surrounding sermon delivery, as well as the means preachers use to foster identification, I consider the idea of the commonplace. David Bartholomae offers a concise definition: "a 'commonplace,' then, is a culturally or institutionally authorized concept or statement that carries with it its own necessary elaboration. We all use commonplaces to orient ourselves in the world; they provide a point of reference and a set of 'prearticulated' explanations that are readily available to organize and interpret experience" (514). These language bundles allow for faster communication, carrying assumptions and beliefs in just a few words. But they also create a familiar echo, an ideological tie among group members. I include in this definition of commonplaces popular wisdom, such as maxims, which cultures accept, repeat, rarely question, and use to firm up group identity. For example, the terms "hard work" and "determination" (with the occasional added word such as "grit") often cluster together to communicate American dream ideology. Within Protestant churches, a single term such as "redemption" does not only mean a rescuing or an emergence from past mistakes; it maintains some of its original monetary connotation and links with Jesus' sacrificial death, which purchases fallen souls.

Walter Ong refers to commonplaces as "oral residue," reminders of how oral culture might have functioned (*Presence* 79). He states, "The doctrine of the commonplaces picks up and codifies the drives in oral cultures to group knowledge of all sorts around human behavior

and particularly around virtue and vice" (80). The use of commonplaces, then, combines the tendency to express oneself in formulas and the tendency to group material for the sake of easier memory and recall (84). I see a definite link here with the idea of *nomos*,[45] or habitual group practice surrounding normalized codes. Susan Jarrett asserts that *nomos* is the realm of rhetoric, particularly the realm the *ethos*, as speakers use language and behavior to strengthen group ties and work out belief. She explains, "*Nomos* in its most comprehensive meaning stands for order, valid and binding on those who fall under its jurisdiction; thus it is always a social construct with ethical dimensions" (Jarratt 60). And because this habitual practice is a social construct, it remains open to reinterpretation through discourse.

Given Ong's mentioning of virtue and vice as a typical subject of commonplaces, added with Jarratt's assertions about group habitual practice, preaching becomes a valuable field for studying rhetoric in action. Preaching not only offers an immediate point of contact, in which values and beliefs take shape, but it also possesses a long history of such activity, which continues to act upon present discourse. In *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, Mikhail Bakhtin states, "The immediate social situation and the broader social milieu wholly determine—and determine from within, so to speak—the structure of an utterance" (1215). He describes an immediate social situation (participants in the discourse) and a deeper social setting that spans time, its ideas and words echoing in the minds of speaker and listener alike. In other words, whether spoken or written, our language use is a participation that "responds to something, objects to something, affirms something, anticipates possible responses and objections, seeks support, and so on" (1221). Therefore, a community involved in discourse moves along in a "stream of verbal intercourse," (1222) hearing multiple voices and lining those thoughts up with beliefs and values. And again, the sheer regularity of utterances afforded by the context of preaching makes this stream more like a large river, as scriptural utterances echo through the Bible itself, devotional literature, age-old and years-old sermons, the message from only one week prior, and the live sermon event.

[45] Jarratt employs the concept of *nomos* to counter a false binary between *mythos* (oral cultures' uncritical acceptance of social codes) and *logos* (literate cultures' commitment to public deliberation) (31-36). Traditional (patriarchal) histories narrate a triumph of logos over mythos, but sophistic rhetoric can and did establish and challenge traditional codes throughout Western culture's shift from orality to literacy.

Enacted Commonplaces

But what does this habitual practice and the echoes of utterances past look like in the preaching moment? And how does delivery contribute? An important element in the persuasive power of delivery rests in what I call enacted commonplaces—familiar attitudes and stances (sometimes literal stances) performed in delivery. James Fredal places much rhetorical artistry in delivery as a "nonlinguistic bodily skill of character presentation" (252). Delivery is not just a supplement to the spoken word; it becomes its own nonlinguistic language. Indeed, if humans are symbol-making beings, not all symbols are reducible to language, which while flexible in making new combinations of thoughts, is limited because of its rules of word order, syntax, etc. Visual forms of symbols also express meanings (254). Fredal focuses on one speech written by the great Greek orator Demosthenes, *Against Meidias*. Demosthenes, having committed himself to Democratic ideals, met fierce opposition from the aristocrat Meidias, who often resorted to threats, bribery, and violence to get his way. Meidias even punched Demosthenes in the face during a performance at a Dionysian festival. But only after further slander did Demosthenes bring a legal suit against his enemy (Fredal 259).

Fredal outlines Demosthenes' complex rhetorical situation; he had to embody Democratic ideals, including submission to the will of the people, without seeming weak. He also had to highlight the oligarchic character of Meidias as being a threat to those ideals. Therefore, by "enacting his own submissive democratic ethos and opposing it to the hubris of Meidias," Demosthenes could turn opinion against his enemy (259). Fredal acknowledges that this speech may never have been delivered, but nonetheless demonstrates, through assumptions based on the text of the speech, how Demosthenes' delivery would have been central to achieving his rhetorical goals. For example[46], in the speech, Demosthenes states that Meidias was so full of insolence that he tried to bribe and intimidate festival officials and participants. Meidias "shouted, he threatened, he stood beside the judges while they were taking the oath, he blocked and nailed up the side-scenes…" (Demosthenes 17). Fredal assumes that Demosthenes would use his own gestural and tonal vocabulary to physically depict Meidias' "belligerent, shameless, and insolent…contempt for democratic rule of law" (Fredal 260).

[46] Fredal is more fond of summarizing than quoting; therefore, I will quote some of the passages he refers to. However, I could not find the 1935 translation Fredal cited. The following quotes come from Douglas M. McDowell's 1990 translation.

Later in the speech, Demosthenes personates Meidias directly. In the following example, it is easy to picture the great orator moving from a "mild, humane, prudent, and discreet" democratic *ethos* (Fredal 260), to a loud, arrogant persona. Demosthenes observes that any other citizen facing such serious charges would have

> kept a low profile and conducting himself modestly…But not Meidias; from that day on he speaks, he reviles, he shouts. An election is being held: Meidias of Anagyrous has been proposed! He's the representative of Ploutarkhos, he knows all the confidential information, the city isn't big enough to hold him! And he does all these things, obviously, just to demonstrate that "The adverse vote hasn't done me any harm! I'm not frightened or afraid of the coming trail! (Demosthenes 200)

Again, readers of a speech can only guess at the actual delivery style, but Fredal's point stands—delivery can act as its own language, communicating without (or beyond) words the orator's values.

In *Rhetoric* (2.12-17), Aristotle outlined several character types that functioned as topoi orators could use in attempt to adapt their speeches to given audiences. One of these types was "character as affected by wealth." Aristotle states, "The kinds of character that flow from wealth are plain for all to see; for [the wealthy] are insolent and arrogant, being affected somehow by the possession of wealth" (2.16.1). It seems Demosthenes took advantage of the culture's prior understanding of personality types and used, or planned to use, the delivery of his speech to enact this arrogant, bullying oligarch, contrasting that character with the patient democrat. Therefore, "Demosthenes' ability to imagine styles of self-presentation inform the very substance of his speech" because he always calls attention to the differences between his and his opponent's self-presentation (Fredal 256). Fredal asks the crucial question, "To what degree…was discursive skill itself determined by an orator's ability to imagine and embody an appealing character, to think 'through the body'?" (256). Demosthenes obviously tapped into his society's stereotypes about character, weaving these types into his own performance in an attempt to sway audience adherence, persuading them to reject the mythic ideal of the oligarch who always presses to get his way, and accept a more moderate democratic ideal that submits to the laws for the good of the people.

Demosthenes thus developed a "performative repertoire out of which citizens stylized their own versions of just, virtuous behavior" (Fredal 257). On one level, Demosthenes is

practicing *ethopoeia*, the practice of a lawyer personating his client before the jury. Speaking on behalf of the client, the lawyer enacts the client's victimization, humility, or other character traits. Ebenezer Porter's 1827 manual on rhetorical delivery analyzes similar performative strategies. He claims that beyond simple third-person narration of events, public speakers can and should practice "representation," in which the orator "can ask questions, and answer them; can personate an accuser and a respondent; can suppose himself accused or interrogated, and give his replies. He can call up the absent or the dead, and make them speak through his lips" (E. Porter 132). He even suggests alternating between two characters (for example, both members of an interrogation), calling it "rhetorical dialogue" (132). Such enactments not only engage the interest and emotion of the audience; they also offer that audience familiar stereotypes, such as the fearful detainee and the aggressive interrogator.

I believe Fredal is saying that all delivery revolves around these cultural stereotypes and the socially constructed behaviors that typify that character. Therefore, I posit that these enacted types are a form of commonplace. Certain performative actions work the same way in human consciousness, as recognizable characters or attitudes, carrying meaning that need not be explained in detail. Enacted commonplaces are firmly rooted in both *ethos* and delivery. Physical considerations of voice and gesture, as well as pathetic appeals, are still an important factor, but not to the exclusion of *ethos*, identity, and the speaker-audience relationship. This conception of delivery, of self-as-text and character presentation, is highly contextual. Different groups will hold to different beliefs about what is just and virtuous. Speakers and writers, therefore, must be savvy diagnosticians of both broad and localized cultural values if they wish to perform such values and foster identification.

In chapter five, I offer examples of enacted commonplaces from a participant observation case study I conducted at one local Protestant church. But for now, I will describe one example to clarify this point. One preacher I recently observed was delivering a sermon about social justice and its connection to the teachings of Jesus. He explained that many liberal church groups in the twentieth century took up social justice causes, but because those same groups denied the viability of core Christian doctrines, such as the divinity of Christ and the resurrection, more conservative groups pulled away. However, in the process conservatives also rejected the practices of the "social gospel," focusing on individual spiritual salvation, to the detriment of meeting people's physical needs. This speaker was treading on a rhetorical

minefield, needing to preserve evangelical doctrines while espousing some of the actions of perceived enemies of evangelicalism. To navigate this touchy subject, he anticipated and enacted the doubt of some of the conservative viewers in the room. Crossing his arms and shifting his weight to one side, he furrowed his brow and said with a slow and suspicious tone, "You may be thinking, 'Wait a minute. Isn't eternity a little more important than this temporary life?'" He performed a doubtful, resistant attitude that may have been arising in some of his listeners. By showing them their own belief, he allowed himself the opportunity to hold their attention long enough to counter it. This speaker quickly moved out of the doubtful persona and read James 2:15-16, "If a brother or a sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that?"

Thus, this speaker, using the physical cultural cues that combine to communicate doubt and suspicion, was able to assert his point that Christians should reject the false binary between social justice and spiritual well being. He could assert his thesis that the "Gospel" (good news) is big enough and good enough to address both physical and spiritual needs. This example shows that delivery helps a speaker to embody the attitude she wishes her audience to live out; but even more, enacted commonplaces during delivery also perform the attitudes or stereotypes the orator ultimately wants the audience to reject. I see this practice as the intersection between delivery and Burke's identification, with the orator trying to establish "consubstantiality" with audience members. But again, identification is reciprocal, with speaker and audience participating in the oration by projecting meaning and belief.

Further, delivery gives the speaker an opportunity to perform an inner struggle that eventually leads to better action. As a bodily art, preaching, like ancient rhetoric and athletics, allows "identity and value [to] circulate through particular bodies as they practice and perform various arts" (Hawhee 4). In other words, knowledge production "occurs on the level of the body" (9) as audiences gather to participate in the event. Hawhee expands upon the Greek term *agon*, or struggle, to depict the cultural value in ancient Greece of the struggle-filled-quest, whether athletic or rhetorical (23). She explains that both athlete and rhetor depended on "stylized movements" for the formation of their identity (21). This "*phusiopoietic* production," the result of training, reconfigures the body in such a way as to create a person's nature, allowing him to be what he wants (93).

I assert that preaching also values *agon* as the preacher struggles, not necessarily with the audience as adversary, but with interpretation of biblical texts, the living out of its principles, and the communication of those principles to contemporary audiences. Enacted commonplaces allow audiences to see this struggle, often to see their own struggle, in the rhetorical performance. The preacher I described above admitted in the sermon he delivered that he was raised in conservative churches that rejected social gospel. Therefore, his performance of a doubtful stance enacted his own experience of struggling with scripture, such as the passage he quoted in the book of James, to come to a new understanding of faith. His delivery in turn invited listeners to experience that same doubt, but also that same realization that social justice is a product of, and not the enemy of, their own beliefs about Jesus' teachings. Therefore, through this enacted commonplace, the speaker presented himself *as* a text. Through this delivery, he projected meaning, the struggle between seemingly opposed viewpoints. In addition to viewing this struggle in the sermon delivery, the audience could also project onto the speaker, reading their own struggle with this same issue. I assert that these mutual projections from and onto the speaker as a text constitute identification and directly contribute to trust and assent in the rhetorical moment.

Articulation and Trust

The preacher I described above fostered emotional participation in his sermon delivery by enacting the commonplace of the doubtful conservative. He afforded the audience the opportunity to see their own struggle between conservative, liberal, and scriptural ideologies in his performance. I believe this participation is key to persuasion. Sharon Crowley and Susan Miller provide more insight into the role of emotion in the shaping of belief and identity. Crowley explains that Cicero, for one, understood that emotion plays a major role in persuasion, that "rhetorical effect is achieved by means of affect" (58). She employs the term "articulation" to assert that beliefs are never isolated; they work in clusters and webs (64). These articulated webs compose systems (ideologies) that establish hierarchies and depict reality (65), thus allowing adherents to subscribe to common definitions, value judgments, and stances. Further, beliefs are retained in the habitus, the realm of daily practice and behavior, thus forming identity (72). Therefore, when beliefs come under threat from opponents that espouse different ideologies, the result is an emotional response, often visceral. To alter one core belief is to

undercut and rendering unstable the others within the ideology, thus making the act of changing a person's belief that much more difficult.

This framework establishes the social nature of belief, and the important role of commonplaces in the formation of belief. Crowley uses "support our troops" and "freedom of speech" as commonplaces (70) that carry meaning and firm up identities. Of course, these meanings, being socially constructed, can shift and find uneven application. For instance, supporters of the 2003 actions that began a war with Iraq relied on the commonplace "support our troops" as a means of silencing opposition. In that context, the firm belief in "freedom of speech" shifted away from the act of questioning government action (72). Commonplaces, therefore, firm up identities and may also smooth over difference. When discourses line up with ideology, the articulation of belief results in a certain "resonance," a gut response of affirmation (79).

Susan Miller explains that this deep, sometimes subconscious, emotional response is integral to rhetoric and persuasion. Many post-Renaissance rhetoricians privileged logic and attempted to rein in emotion. Nonetheless, they had to address the fact that persuasion goes beyond logical argument, casting (emotion-based, in my opinion) elements like faith, taste, imagination, and conviction as forces with which speakers must reckon (S. Miller 16). Miller claims that emotion is not as individualized as many have thought, but that it functions as a "community expectation" or a "cultural scene of interaction in which groups are bonded and thus found mutually acceptable or not against a standard that is enforced in recurring lessons and remembrance of them" (x). Miller's rather complicated argument takes into account the shifting roles of texts in eliciting trust and thus becoming "trusted cultural resources" within groups (9).

This emphasis on emotion certainly expands the idea of "self *as* a text," to the point that this conception of *ethos* begins to consume the other two views outlined above. The "self *and* a text" emphasis on reputation, already entering the "self *as* a text" realm due to the politics of space and body, intersects nicely with Crowley's view of articulation. Before a preacher even rises to speak, audiences may have tightly articulated beliefs about that person's authority and qualifications. A beloved preacher, who is also a friend and has delivered many sermons deemed "good" by listeners, already carries their trust.

But even more interesting is how the idea of commonplaces, as compact ready-made meanings, complicates the notion of presenting self *through* a text, the invented *ethos* that forms

during delivery. Enacted commonplaces echo familiar attitudes and personae—the exasperated mother, the stubborn cynic, the intolerant Pharisee, the confident college student, the devastated mourner, and on and on—and when wielded adeptly, act to build a positive attitude toward the speaker. But *ethos* involves so much more than garnering respect. In the moment of delivery, enacted commonplaces act as a character presentation that audiences recognize as a part of their own experience. Thus, through these commonplaces preachers access existing articulated beliefs about the world. Preacher's character presentation during delivery goes beyond "the presentation of the self in a form that will be acceptable to the audience" (Mountford 69), and fosters identification through recognition, which results in trust and assent.

Conclusions

Ultimately, I believe the ideas of enacted commonplaces and emotional assent can fall into the larger category of *ethos* as presenting the self *as* a text. Therefore, I see this self-as-text conception as a fuller means for theorizing the relationships between *ethos*, delivery, and persuasion. At this point, it may seem that I am juggling several different theories: identification, emotional assent and resonance, articulation of belief, relevance, and group identity-formation. But really, these terms revolve around the same process, the same phenomenon of speakers and audiences working together, mutually projecting belief, and granting mental assent when the delivered text "rings true." Even the concept of relevance, discussed in chapter three, relates to this process of granting assent and persuasion-through-mutual-identification. When speakers allow their delivered text to resonate with utterances and enacted attitudes from the stream of discourse with which audiences identify, the response becomes, "Yes, that is my life and story'" (Achetmeier 105).

Examining face-to-face rhetorical interaction, then, delves into, and can begin to untangle, the complicated roles of emotion and identification. Consider the following exchange in Francois Fénelon's *Dialogues on Eloquence*, as the characters "A" and "B" discuss the nature of rhetoric:

> B: I see clearly that eloquence is by no means a frivolous contrivance for dazzling men with brilliant discourses—it is a very substantial art and very useful to morality.
>
> A: From such an estimate comes Cicero's remark that he had seen plenty of fluent talkers, that is to say, men who spoke with charm and elegance; but that one almost never

> sees the true speaker—the man who knows how to *enter the hearts of others to win them over*. (90, emphases mine)

Preachers have unique opportunities to enter the hearts of listeners by telling and retelling familiar and beloved narratives, by joining a rich tradition of utterances from the pulpit, and by performing for audiences the attitudes and beliefs that have likely inhabited. Then again, certain risks arise when speaking in discourse communities that possess such a long tradition of accepted utterances. As discussed above, when women's bodies are outside the norms behind the pulpit, women preachers can face heated opposition. But any preacher who offers a more controversial interpretation of scripture, or who surfaces issues considered taboo inside church walls (sex, politics, etc.) risks that "gut reaction" going against her.

Maurice Charland captures well not only the social nature of knowledge production in discourse communities, but also the reasons why it takes much time and effort to shift or change belief. He states,

> the creativity and productivity of rhetoric lies in its reshaping of [social] knowledge by articulating the tensions and contradictions within the formation experienced by individual social subjects. Thus, rhetoric produces new social knowledge as it offers public interpretations of social experiences and proceeds to make normative claims. In this, then, rhetoric forms prescriptives and fosters ethical judgment, not in terms of what is, but in terms of what should be. (466)

The audience, then, functions as a "mediating ground" for discourse (466). The self-as-text understanding of *ethos* takes into account the politics of spaces and bodies and preserves the social nature of agreement and persuasion within communities. Further, *ethos* expands to more than a mere winning of favor; it becomes a means of manifesting "the virtues most valued by the culture to for which one speaks" (Halloran 60). And in this manifestation, which takes place during delivery, audiences can identify and adhere with speaker and message. Therefore, delivery acts as the realm of *ethos* in that it provides a moment of contact during which speakers present the self as a text, and work with listeners to sort through belief and the ways that belief impacts everyday behavior. In the following chapter, I examine this theory in the context of a local Protestant religious community.

Chapter Five: Delivery and Identification in a Religious Discourse Community

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I cite findings from a case study I performed at Oxford Bible Fellowship (OBF), a Protestant church that sits on the corner of the campus of Miami University in Oxford Ohio. In this study, I investigate *in situ* the complex dynamic of delivery. Through interviews with Pastor Jeremy Carr, videotaped observations of a series of sermons, and focus group discussions with congregants, I explore the authorial power dynamics inherent in delivery and the relational interactions that comprise persuasion-through-identification. Through this study, I sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the speaker's rhetorical goals, and how does sermon delivery communicate these goals to listeners?
2. How do listeners interpret the speaker's delivery: use of voice, gesture, and presentation of self?
3. In what ways do listeners identify with the oration? With the speaker?
4. How do listeners interpret the power relations involved in the preaching moment?

Therefore, this chapter will explore the complex intersections of meaning, belief, and relationship within one local religious community.

About Oxford Bible Fellowship and The Evangelical Free Church of America

Oxford Bible Fellowship is affiliated with Evangelical Free Churches of America (EFCA), an organization consisting of about 1500 congregations.[47] Individual churches are

[47] At the core of Christianity is the belief that Jesus, one person of a tripartite God, accomplished an atoning sacrifice through his death. Through identification with Christ, humans find forgiveness of sin (a state of rebellion against a holy God) and eternal life. Doctrinal statements from EFCA and OBF, as well as the interviews, sermons, and focus group discussions cited here all reflect this belief. My purpose in this project is to study the nature of persuasion through delivery within a particular community. Thus, my hope is that those reading this project who do no ascribe to a Christian world view can set aside differences, which can be considerable, and examine the rhetorical dynamics in the preaching moment with the empathic feminist practice required of most ethnographic and case study research. Although in my opinion Sharon Crowley (2006) failed to find common rhetorical ground between liberal and evangelical stances, Wayne Booth (2004) offers a simpler approach, asserting that even between creationists and evolutionists, there can be some agreement that the world, as it is, is not as it should be (161), that there are right and wrong actions (162), and that there is something greater than ourselves, whether that thing is a theory, a standard of goodness, or God (164). Relating to this final point, when I hear personifications of "life" or "the universe" as giving to or taking away from humans, or when I read a kind message about someone "sending good vibes" (as opposed to praying) during a difficult time, I see

autonomous, following congregational (as opposed to hierarchical) governance. District and national leadership in EFCA offers resources for local churches (*e.g.* programs that focus on racial reconciliation or support people with critical illnesses), but does not get involved in hiring church staff, mediating disputes, or overseeing financial issues unless expressly requested by a local church.

Oxford Bible Fellowship is an elder-led congregation, with the lead pastor, Jeremy Carr, serving as one of six elders who share various administrative and leadership duties. The church itself began in 1969 with a group of university professors and their spouses who wished to provide biblical teaching for Miami University students. When the church outgrew its meeting place in the city municipal building, it moved to an auditorium on campus. Its current building, constructed in the early 1980s, sits on the same street as several residence halls. An existing three-bedroom house continues to serve as church offices and meeting rooms, but the newer, attached portion contains the sanctuary, with high vaulted ceilings, and classroom space on the basement level. The newer part of the building has a contemporary look, with a tiled foyer with coffee bar, and in the sanctuary, chairs (as opposed to pews) and a relatively large stage area for a worship band and video screen. The stage sits only three short stair steps higher than the level of the congregation. Since Jeremy Carr became OBF's pastor in September of 2007, the church has grown substantially, especially in the number of university students attending. With a sanctuary that seats about 250 people, the church now offers three worship services every Sunday. Expansions to the foyer and parking lot have proved necessary but insufficient, and the church is currently looking for ways to accommodate its members and guests.

While a core group of townspeople provide the base financial structure of the church, college students get involved, running after-school programs for local children and providing child care on the church's lower level during all three services. Therefore, I would call OBF an energetic, thriving church that attracts people of all ages. Although as a town Oxford does not offer great racial diversity, OBF does attract undergraduate and graduate students from around the world. Recently, the church honored Miami students who would soon graduate. On this one Sunday, eighty-seven people, including about a dozen from East Asia, stood to talk about their

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significant common ground, similar ways of thinking. Perhaps this basic grounding or an acknowledgment of the value of spirituality can help scholars in composition and rhetoric better understand the varied beliefs we encounter in scholarship and in the classroom.

future plans and to receive a gift. As the interview data below indicates, many at OBF attribute its growth to relevant biblical preaching. "Pastor Jeremy" is by no means a flamboyant preacher, neither whispering nor shouting, keeping gestures subtle, and typically remaining behind the pulpit. I would call Jeremy's preaching style as somewhat subdued, but warm, conversational, and engaging. He will address virtually any theological point, preferring to deliver expository sermons,[48] in series, based on books of the Bible. But he also delivers topical series, and tries to make frequent applications of theological points through personal illustrations. The pulpit he uses each week is more of a contemporary lectern, light and portable, with a thin wood composite platform atop stainless steel legs. Therefore, Jeremy can place it center stage during a worship service, but will move it aside should there be a play, a performance by a children's choir, or a dance performance. A large screen lowers from the ceiling and a ceiling-mounted projector displays song lyrics during worship. Jeremy also uses the screen for PowerPoint supplementation of his sermons. Sometimes these accompaniments involve images and video, but usually they consist of Jeremy's main points, in outline form, to aid those taking notes on the sermon.

My husband and I have been attending Oxford Bible Fellowship since the Fall of 2001. Although I am probably one of the more left-leaning members of the church, I have always been intrigued by the blend of university professors and administrators, young families, children, students, elderly, and ethnic groups represented in the congregation. OBF seems to walk that fine line of being evangelical without dwelling week after week on the "bedroom issues" (abortion, homosexuality, etc.) that can dominate evangelical churches. Rather, this church in my opinion has a healthy outward focus, its members donating time and resources to help the needy in the church and throughout the area. Pastor Jeremy, and the now-retired pastors who

[48] By expository preaching, I refer to the practice of expounding upon meanings in a biblical text, in a systematic way. Expository preachers work through larger texts, almost always a book of the Bible, in order to stay faithful to the context. Those who are committed to expository preaching often find it uncomfortable to preach topically, because the topic, not the scripture, takes center stage, and worse, scripture is chosen topically, which makes it easier to take that scripture out of context. In the spring of 2009, Carr preached a topical series titled "Life Together," in which he addressed dating, marriage, child-rearing, church unity, etc. The series was so popular that the church reached its highest attendance in its forty-year history. However, Jeremy was anxious to return to expository preaching, turning to the book of Ephesians for this nearly year-long series.

preceded him, emphasize Jesus' teachings and instead of "evangelism programs," they teach that the lives of church members should make OBF attractive to visitors.

At this church, I have had several opportunities to preach, on Sunday mornings as well as special holiday services and women's retreats. I also taught a series of classes that included Old Testament and New Testament surveys, theology, and church history. Therefore, I have established relationships with many people in this congregation. Although Jeremy Carr had not been serving at OBF for very long when I asked him to take part in this project (and despite the fact that we do not always agree on some doctrines), I now consider him a close friend. As for the ten focus group participants, I had never met four of them before, three I would call friendly acquaintances, and three were good friends. All this to say that I already had a presence, even a lay leadership role, at OBF long before this study began. This fact raised significant ethical issues, which I will address in the following section.

Methods

My research spanned four weeks in the Fall of 2009, and covered three Sundays. Pastor Jeremy Carr would be traveling later that season to visit family and officiate weddings for friends at a church in Indiana, where he served as an assistant pastor before coming to OBF. Guest speakers would be filling in sporadically throughout the Fall and Winter. Therefore, this month-long span proved to be the only uninterrupted "stretch" of sermons by Carr for months. He was just beginning a series, which would last the entire school year, on the New Testament book of Ephesians (written by Paul). All three sermons during my study addressed different sections of Ephesians chapter one. I knew this content would have its benefits and drawbacks for my study. On one hand, Ephesians is incredibly thick and challenging theologically. The language is highly embellished, with multiple in-depth theological terms occurring in every sentence of the first chapter. I remember translating Ephesians from the original Greek while I was earning my Master if Divinity (M.Div); the entire first paragraph consists of a single, impossibly long sentence (a device more common in Greek than in English), full of rich terms that challenged word-for-word English translations. Further, the first chapter alone deals with such controversial doctrines as predestination and assurance of salvation. I knew that Jeremy would be expounding upon some difficult, even unpopular teachings. Therefore, I feared his sermons would be so full of explanations of doctrinal controversies that they might lack the warmth and humor that typify his preaching.

On the other hand, I saw this deep theological content as an opportunity to study persuasion. By taking on Ephesians, Carr was entering debates that have challenged and divided Protestant Christianity for centuries. And frankly, OBF members are all over the map when it comes to educational levels, church backgrounds, and political leanings. How would Jeremy establish doctrinal footholds amidst such controversial topics as the Calvinism-Arminianism debate?[49]

To begin my study, I conducted one prolonged interview with Jeremy Carr to learn about his views on the role of the sermon in this discourse community. I inquired into his educational background and his process for composing and delivering sermons. This data reveals the participant's goals for achieving relevance through identification with his congregation. In addition to this interview, each week of this three-part series-within-a-series (chapter one acted as its own discreet unit in a way, amidst the larger year-long study of Ephesians), Jeremy provided me with a manuscript for the upcoming sermons and a handout outlining his rhetorical goals and main points.

With this data in hand, I videotaped all three sermons and took field notes on Carr's strategies for delivery. Then, immediately after each worship service, I conducted a focus group discussion in a classroom in the church's lower level. I recruited participants with a flier and an in-person announcement after receiving review board approval of the project. Interested participants could contact me in person or via telephone or email. Ten people volunteered. Three of those ten participated in all three focus group discussions; four people participated in two out of three, and three others took part in one of the three discussions. I provide an age range and the number of years having attended OBF for each participant; all have been assigned pseudonyms. Because Jeremy probably knew all these people, I wanted to do everything I could to protect their anonymity, as they would be commenting on his preaching skills and on the

[49] In summary, John Calvin (1509-1564), a pastor and prolific theologian during the Reformation, based his entire systematic theology upon the sovereignty of God. He argued that sin was so pervasive in the human experience that people literally could not choose a righteous path; it is only by God's irresistible calling in sinners' lives that they could recognize their depravity and repent. Arminius (1560-1609), on the other hand, argued for more human agency and free will, stating that with some aid from the Holy Spirit, humans did possess the capacity to resist sin. Calvin's view led him to teach total assurance—because God did all the work of salvation, the individual could not fall from grace. Arminius granted that a loss of salvation, though unlikely, was possible. Both views have ample "proof-texts" available in scripture, thus creating not only paradox, but also heated controversy.

overall effect (or possibly lack thereof) of the sermons in this series. As I anticipated, very little criticism arose in our discussions. For the most part the participants appreciate and admire Jeremy's preaching. But I wanted participants to feel free to openly share their impressions about points with which they identified, and about ideas they did not understand or with which they did not agree. Aiding in this anonymity was the schedule of services; while this focus group met downstairs, Pastor Jeremy would be leading the morning's second worship service upstairs. He could theoretically narrow down participants by their attendance in the first service, after which focus groups took place, but that service usually hosted one hundred fifty to two hundred people.

A confidentiality clause was a part of the recruitment letter and sign-up form for focus group participants. They agreed to keep confidential anything said during our discussions. This safeguard, again, protected anonymity for the focus group and also served to prevent details from the discussions from getting back to Jeremy. While he certainly will have access to this dissertation, he does not have access to the sound recordings or transcripts from the focus groups. Below, I list focus group participants by age and include the length of time they had attended OBF at the point of this research. In parenthesis, I specify which of the three weeks that participant took part in the discussion:

"Jen" 18-24, 3 years (weeks 1 and 2)

"Mike," 25-34, 15 months (weeks 1 and 3)

"Christina," 25-34, 1 year (weeks 1 and 2)

"Elizabeth," 45-54, 16 years (weeks 1 and 2)

"Samuel," 55-64, 20 years (week 3)

"Donna," 55-64, 8 months (weeks 1, 2, and 3)

"Sharon," 55-64, 18 years (week 2)

"Charles," 55-64, 27 years (weeks 1, 2, and 3)

"Carol," 65-75, 9 years (week 1)

"Robert," 65-74, 20 years (weeks 1, 2, and 3)

Interview Participant: Background and Interview Data

Jeremy Carr, age thirty-two, knew from a young age that he wanted to enter pastoral ministry. Starting at age sixteen, through the efforts and encouragement of his youth pastor, he delivered sermons occasionally at his church's Sunday evening services. Jeremy attended

Moody Bible Institute in Chicago and Faith Baptist Bible College (Ankeny, Iowa) for his undergraduate work. Faith also has a seminary, which allowed him to complete one year of a Master of Divinity while still an undergraduate. Also, a nearby network of small Baptist churches afforded him the opportunity to preach regularly during college, filling the pulpit at churches that did not have a full-time pastor. So by the time Jeremy was twenty-one years old, he had already delivered over fifty sermons. Carr completed his M.Div at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia, and is currently working on a Doctor of Ministry (D.Min) degree at Trinity Theological Seminary in Newburgh, Indiana.

Carr's reflections on his educational experience are indicative of his current approach to leading a church, and to preaching. He stated in interview, "Now that I am here [in Oxford, Ohio, on the campus of Miami University], I wish I had gone to a secular university for a while and had that experience." The "Introduction to Homiletics" course he took at Faith transferred for seminary credit, but was not a helpful class. Trying to put it delicately, Carr stated that the course tended to attract people who aspired to preach at rural Iowa churches, and who did not necessarily have the gift of teaching or of public speaking. The course remained on the rudimentary level of building skills, not refining skill.

The Bible colleges he attended now seem insular to Carr, and he openly critiques Liberty for the low quality of education he received there. However, his experience at Trinity, a more mainstream evangelical institution, has been nothing but positive. He has taken two homiletics courses at Trinity, and found them richly rewarding. But until these recent courses, most of Carr's education in preaching came through other means. He stated,

> You learn by doing it, the more you do it. So I think I got my foot in the door by doing it, then later on, listening to good models and reading books, trying to refine that. And for me the biggest thing, I think I've always been able to communicate pretty well, you know, class president, chaplain at school, so I think I had that. But for me it was more learning to—a couple of key things like, 'the main point of the text should be the main point of your message,' and 'let the Bible speak,' and expository preaching. And grace as the means to motivate people to do what the text calls them to do. Those elements were huge for me and I had to learn them later on because when I first started preaching I was the [laughs] fire and brimstone, yelling, telling everyone how sinful they are, and my youth pastor was like, "You need to [laughs] grow up a little bit here."

His conservative, even hardline upbringing has softened substantially, mainly, I believe, because of what he has learned about expository preaching. When I asked Carr about how his education connected hermeneutics (biblical interpretation) and homiletics (the study of preaching), he stated,

> I think Moody did pretty well. You had to take a Bible study class and a hermeneutics class. They did more of teaching you how to study the Bible as opposed to "You're going to take fifteen classes, one on Matthew and Romans and Luke." They did some of that, but they did more teaching on how to study the Bible. My other school, Faith, did more of, "We're going to tell you what to believe about the book of Matthew, so you're going to take that class" instead of teaching you how to study the Bible, and I think that was a weakness of their curriculum. But I didn't really see a strong connection in my undergrad between hermeneutics and homiletics. I don't feel like they did a very good job of connecting those two together. But Trinity, the class with [Professor Brian] Chapel—much better.

After Carr received his M.Div, he served as an assistant pastor at a large church in Indiana, under a gifted expository preacher. He learned even more the strong connections between study and effective preaching. He shared his primary communicative burdens while preaching, saying,

> I think it's inseparable for me, even going back to that "What did the author intend? Why did God put this in the scriptures for us? What does he want us to know? What currently in our culture, setting, and situation, would God speak to us from this text." So those kinds of questions are key to me and the way I approach my study…And I think for young people learning how to preach, there's not many more important things to teach them than to study the Bible. I think that's where we get a lot of the weakness of preaching—poor preaching is because people haven't learned how to study the Bible. But they download sermons from other people or get outlines from somewhere else. But you have to study it yourself. It has to impact you as well. So both the intellectual side and the heart, in challenging and impacting you, then it makes more of an impact, I think.

The questions Jeremy asks himself in the above quote indicate the necessity of relevance in preaching, which I explored in chapter three. Jeremy obviously relies heavily upon the authority of scripture and sees the ancient text as the primary source of relevance as well. However, the preacher's duty is to study, determining those critical interpretations for himself, perhaps with

some help from a trusted commentary, but not relying on "canned" sermons or spoon-fed interpretations that can become dogma in some religious groups.

To describe his process of composing sermons, I will let Jeremy speak for himself. In interview, he revealed,

> My preparation will probably look like this. I start with the text, reading it and meditating on it, praying over it, to derive an outline from it, a rough outline. And the outline is really coming out of my saying, "What's the main point of the text? And how does the argument logically flow? So what's most important here?" And often the main point is readily evident, not always; sometimes you've really got to work on it. The harder part is framing that into a statement, you know, getting your big idea basically, how you're going to communicate it effectively…I'm looking more at a larger chunk to get a big idea and a more comprehensive thought.
>
> *Interviewer*: Because there's a flow of thought there you don't want to lose?
>
> *Carr*: Yes, that kind of thing. So starting with a text, meditating, studying, getting an outline, with a big idea and a point I really want to try to get across. What's the supporting things that are there? Then I'll get into the commentaries and read.

After some discussion of types of commentaries used, Carr continues,

> So at that point, once I get to the commentaries, it becomes very fluid as I'm going back and forth between what I'm doing and what they're giving me…And then from there when I get done with the commentaries I'm doing the refining work of putting it all together, and I manuscript. As time's gone on, I do a little bit less of writing everything out. But usually the more heavy a message is, like [last] Sunday, the more I write that out, and tend to stick more closely to it, because I don't want to lose my train of thought. And that subject, from Sunday, about the sovereignty of God and human freedom, I just studied that and thought about it a ton, so I was more comfortable. But if I were approaching that topic for the first time, first or second time, I would just be on the notes like crazy, what I'd written.

Carr's interview, to me, revealed how deeply he values biblical authority in preaching, a topic I address in detail in chapter three. Whether his sermon is part of a book series or a topical series, he devotes considerable time to study, so as not to tear a passage from its literary and historical context. Further, Carr does not strictly compartmentalize his sermon-writing process. At every

stage, he keeps in mind practical application of the concepts he encounters. As the focus data (below) reveal, Carr's listeners are keenly aware of his strategies for tailoring biblical principles to his audience, and this awareness impacts their willingness to lend authority and assent.

As I begin to analyze the role of sermon delivery at Oxford Bible Fellowship, I want to move fluidly through all prongs of my research plan—focus group data, interview data, field notes, and actual video of Jeremy's sermons. My initial plan was to offer in this chapter multiple sections, each drawing from all sources of data, about the preacher's relational *ethos*, his delivery methods, identification, and persuasion. However, the data simply does not allow me to treat these ideas as separate entities. All research participants moved through these concepts fluidly, linking together the relationships inherent in the preaching act with the persuasive nature of the sermons. And especially in the focus groups, discussion of identifying with the speaker overlapped with their perceptions of his pulpit persona. In my opinion, these overlaps only confirm the power of Burkean identification in rhetoric. Therefore, in this chapter I offer one prolonged section that takes in all of these highly-related topics. However, I follow this groundwork with a section on enacted commonplaces, which allows me to pay particular attention to delivery's performative role in communication, often through nonlinguistic means. Finally, a section about resistance to theorizing delivery leads toward my conclusion and the obstacles and opportunities for the role of the fifth canon in rhetorical theory.

PREACHER *ETHOS*, COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS, IDENTIFICATION, AND PERSUASION

In interview, Jeremy Carr revealed that on Saturday night and/or Sunday morning he will go over his sermon a few more times, growing comfortable with the order of ideas and making final decisions about the most effective word choice and means of presenting illustrations. During this final preparation before actually stepping behind the pulpit, Carr also commits to memory the basic outline of the sermon as well as some key phrases, as he rehearses (in his own way) the delivery. Saying the words under his breath, what he calls "a mumbling kind of thing," is as close as he comes to a rehearsal of delivery. Although never practicing behind the pulpit "at full volume," Carr adds bold print or italics to his manuscript to signal changes in vocal tones, and thinks through his delivery as he writes and reads. Notice the overlapping the rhetorical canons in this final preparation. While most of his invention is completed, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery all inform one another in this lead-up to the moment of contact with the congregation.

But every once in a while, a crisis will prevent Carr from this productive step in his composition process. When this happens, he says, "People probably don't see it, but I get nervous, and that makes me stick on the notes more. And I don't like that because I don't feel connection with the audience at that point." That desire to connect often drives Carr to refrain from writing out in full his illustrations in the sermon manuscript. Rather, he leaves himself a single phrase in his manuscript, "because I want to be a little bit more engaging, and be able to get away from the pulpit, and move closer to the audience." This literal and figurative closeness is essential to persuasion for Carr. He explains that early in his life, he was a legalist, preferring to lay down rules that established the listener's guilt as a motivation for changed behavior. However, he quickly learned that this method for bringing about change was not only ineffective, but also unbiblical. Today, he stresses grace as the means of empowerment for Christians. He explains, "legalism, guilt, rules, they just don't bring about lasting change…I want people to apply what's being said, and I know the way they're going to do that is through grace, and through hope and help. And so I try to be sensitive as well in connecting with them, identifying with them, not putting myself above them, applying it even to myself, sharing personally at times." Therefore, honesty and humility lead to this connection with others. Carr is fully aware of the change in power relations that has taken place in American Protestant churches. I had not even mentioned to Carr the topic of my third chapter, about relevance and authority issues, when he asserted, "I just think people want you to identify with them. Maybe in the past the pastor as perfect holy guy was a model that worked or a model people were used to, but not now. People have real struggles and they want to know that their pastor, their preacher, is with them and feels their pain and has the same kinds of struggles." Carr therefore makes it a point to clearly communicate that he is a "normal person living a normal life," who mows his lawn and sometimes loses patience with his children, and who needs forgiveness.

His sermons reflect this desire to foster identification and relevance. When composing a sermon, he asks himself,

> "Have I identified with various groups of people from the church?" So I try to think through, college students, older people, middle-aged people, for instance. *Often, there are very specific people I'm thinking about.* Does this sermon connect with them? Have I applied it to their situation? …I mean we've got a really broad audience here, so I try to put in applications that would hit people at different levels.

I emphasize Carr's statement about having specific people in mind to stress the highly relational nature of the preaching act. On one level, he considers characteristics of certain groups, Aristotle's method for assessing audiences; but Jeremy also uses his knowledge about the life experiences of specific students, parents, widows, and job-seekers to create sermons he believes will speak to them. Further, he has countless opportunities to interact with these listeners after the preaching event and is able to receive feedback and address questions. Audience presence, therefore, couples with the constant pressure for relevance to fulfill Dennis Cahill's imperative that "the listener must be given a seat in the pastor's study and be allowed to participate in sermon design" (68). And of course, in-the-moment feedback, whether it be nodding, saying "Amen," dozing off, or whispering with a friend, gives listeners that much more of a participatory role.

The focus group discussions revealed that as audience members, these research participants are just as aware of the relational nature of persuasion in preaching. Their comments about the effectiveness of a sermon often emerged from their relationship with Jeremy Carr and their understanding of his personal commitment to them as their pastor. The resulting trust and assent flowed from this closeness. Interestingly, the first fifteen minutes of the first focus group session yielded the only significant criticism of Carr's preaching. However, "Mike's" critique resulted in a fruitful discussion about the relational nature of preaching and the means Jeremy uses to foster identification.

Jeremy Carr began the week one sermon with a question, "If you could be anyone, who would you be?" a question leading up to issues of Christian identity found in Ephesians chapter one. He went on to talk about superheroes Superman and Batman. As a basketball fan, he also mentioned that being LeBron James would be a dream, not only because of his talent and success, but because he simply gets to play a fun game for a living. A few minutes later, Jeremy mentioned Miley Cyrus and Oprah Winfrey, women who also seem to lead charmed lives. However, he took the most time to talk about superheroes and sports stars. In focus group, Carol observed, "He started out with something that anybody could answer: Who would you like to be? If you could be somebody else, who would you like to be? But then that led him into the deeper question of 'Are you in Christ?' You know, he went from that casual thing, and just through that analogy, he was able to bring in that deeper question to pull us into the thrust of the sermon." Then, Mike added,

> I think, and I've noticed this through a lot of his other sermons, when he asks someone, "Oh, what superhero would you be?" or "What person would you be?" that he makes assumptions that everyone would choose from the larger pop culture. Because when I would start thinking about it, I didn't necessarily think of that, but he made assumptions that most people are going to choose things off of wealth and fame, prosperity. And I also noticed that he mentions examples that were only male figures as well, and I would assume that a lot of women would not—but more men would choose famous, rich, than necessarily a woman.

Mike wondered if women could relate to such analogies when Jeremy "talks from a masculine perspective," but his questions also touched on the idea of desire: Should Christians even want to be famous or have such excessive material success? A little later, Mike reiterated his point about the masculine perspective, wondering if Jeremy, a self-proclaimed Chicago White Sox fan, should ever make jokes about the Chicago Cubs or their fans because such humor "comes across as being condescending toward the other." Christina addressed Mike's concerns, stating that she believed Jeremy was,

> making a connection to a certain part of the audience. Those specific examples seem to be maybe with college students in mind. But I also think he's being one hundred percent Jeremy… He always gives examples of his life, not always putting himself in the best light, which is doing something else, too. But he wants you to know—it seems he uses these kinds of things, like LeBron James, or yelling at his kids or whatever, to show you that he is just like you and me. But, "This is me; I'm Jeremy. I'm not pretending to be more holy than I am."

Jen, a college student, immediately added,

> And that's something I really appreciate about him, too, because my pastor back home, he's very intellectual, he puts on a bold face, and he's a very good man. But not very often do you see him vulnerable and talking about struggles in his own life, or connecting sermons to things he's personally gone through or something like that. So just the fact that Jeremy is open and willing to share and relates it on—[pause]-- even if it's not something we would think about ourselves, on a lower, more popular level, that people could relate to potentially, then it just gives much more of an opportunity for people to go there with him, then have him bring them further, deeper into what scripture says.

Here, Jen strongly identified with a move Carr made during the sermon. Making the point that God's sovereignty is not oppressive but liberating, he confessed that he accidentally put his home phone number as the church phone on OBF's website, and was terribly confused by some of the calls he was getting. As the audience laughed, he explained, "I can't keep things straight a lot of the time, so you know what? I need a God who is in control." A few minutes later, he confided, "I yelled at my kids in the parking lot this week, and I think there were some students in cars who saw it. So of course I tried to play it off like it never happened [more laughter]. I did! I'm not holy, and I need help with this." It seems that for Jen, this honesty about struggles overcame any gender exclusions in other sermon illustrations. She granted assent based on Jeremy's authenticity as one who also struggles to be a better person.

I found it fascinating that two women were the first to respond to Mike. They saw Jeremy's illustrations, even those from a masculine perspective, as a form of self-revelation that ultimately fostered identification. No one in the group showed outright disagreement with Mike; those who spoke seemed to acknowledge that at times Jeremy does poke fun. However, they tried to address the reasons behind this type of illustration and ultimately felt that Jeremy was being transparent and accessible.

Charles, also trying to get at the reasons behind the occasional joking at others' expense from behind the pulpit, opened the door for Christina to share her thoughts about the performance of sermons and personae speakers may take on for rhetorical purposes. Charles asked Mike, "Do you think maybe [Jeremy] is playing to a stereotype? Not the humor so much, but just the maintaining a connection with the audience, rather than what he really feels?" Mike replied, "To me it comes across as college, chummy, 'ha ha, we're all making jokes.' But that's not something that necessarily appeals to me, and I don't think that should be played off?" Christina then stated,

> I agree, but I do think that he's using—there's kind of two tones of voice that I notice that he really takes when he's preaching. There's one where he's telling a story, or he's making jokes, side notes, and I notice in those that his gestures are bigger, that his voice is a little louder. And I saw that he becomes quite big. But when he starts talking about scripture, it's like watching a camera kind of focus in on him or something. He tightens his gestures. (I used to be a theater person, so I notice these things) [laughter]. He tightens his gestures. He lowers his volume. So I think that there's something—I mean I

> don't know how clear it is if you're not watching for it, but I think there might be an attempt to signify two different modes: "This is what you take really seriously. This is the scripture part. This is when I lower my voice. We're serious now." Very little jokes made during the times when he's *preaching* preaching, right? Or talking about the scripture. But then, he's in fun mode. So maybe he changes so much because he's consciously making a decision that he wants the audience to make a distinction. "This is where you take me really seriously. This is where you can take what I say in stride; it's okay."

Here, Christina's background in theater provided her with an awareness of performed personae and the rhetorical effect of altering one's delivery. But more importantly, she establishes a connection between that delivery and relational *ethos* of preaching. The performance itself is ripe with non-linguistic cues that communicate to listeners the level of seriousness or importance of a section of the oration. But layered throughout these performative concerns is relationship. The speaker builds upon past interactions and adds anecdotes and self-deprecation to maintain audience interest and assert a relatable *ethos*.

Carol in particular interpreted Jeremy's personal illustrations as relational in nature. Referring to a moment when Jeremy stepped out from behind the pulpit to the front of the stage when giving an illustration, she observed,

> He wanted us to know that "I'm talking to you as a friend. I'm reaching out to you, this is as close as I can get, without falling off the stage of course." But he opens up his arms. He's not—I've seen preachers where they're like this [stiff—arms-at-sides motion], or the podium is solid and it's tall, and you can see the top of their head maybe. I've seen pastors where you just don't feel like their personality shows through. They're just closed and tight and so forth. And your mind starts wandering. But [Jeremy] has ways of gesturing that—you're just kind of watching like, "Oh" [wide-eyed, fascinated expression]. But he's very open in his gestures. Sort of like…
>
> *Donna*: Engaging you
>
> *Carol*: Yeah, he kind of likes us. That's the impression I get.

Notice that Carol herself was putting on personae, acting out the stiff, motionless preacher and then the fully engaged listener. As I took notes during this session, I found myself needing to

take notes on group members' delivery in the same manner that I did when taping Jeremy's sermon.

This prolonged exchange, starting with Mike's critique of "chummy" male jokester invited reflection upon Jeremy's delivery. Although Carol and Christina were aware of the direction I am taking in my research, at this point, I had not asked a single question about Jeremy's delivery. At the very end of the session, I asked if anyone had anything to add about the ways Jeremy presents material, and Jen confirmed the earlier discussion, saying, "With his voice, and his different gestures and demeanor, it's very clear that that's what he wants to get across. And it's not all serious, because then he lightens the mood, but it's very obvious when it is. It's helpful to know, "This is what we should remember."

Carr shared with me some of the cognitive goals he wished to achieve during this first sermon. He hoped that all present, himself included, would grow in their understanding of the concept of "union with Christ," an idea reflected by the repetition of the phrase "in Christ" in Ephesians chapter one. He wanted to expand this understanding through two other concepts in the passage: choosing and adoption. As I mentioned earlier, the idea of predestination remains a controversial topic in Protestant Christianity, but Jeremy hoped to expand the idea beyond a philosophical debate on free will and instead expound upon the attitude of God, who desires relationship and thus freely offers forgiveness (grace), adopting as children even those who had rebelled through selfishness and sin. Throughout the focus group, I realized that participants certainly had taken in this concept. They were already attempting to integrate it into their experience. When I began this first focus group session with the simple question of what people were taking from this sermon, Donna replied, "For me, it's being accepted. If no one else accepts me, if everyone else slams me, or whatever, that acceptance is very important, by God through Christ." Robert added that his understanding of tough concepts like predestination had grown "tremendously." Carol and Jen, respectively, focused on the fact that this acceptance is freely given, appreciating that "it's not our deeds; it's not what we do" and that our role is only "accepting his grace."

Over the following two weeks, Jeremy Carr used a wide variety of illustrations, prompting the group to return to Mike's concerns about Carr's preaching "from a masculine perspective." To illustrate the need for an outside deliverer, Christ, Jeremy stated that even the richest people on the Titanic could not save themselves. He moved on to the (then) recent

release of journalists Euna Lee and Laura Ling, who needed outside diplomatic help to gain freedom from a North Korean work camp. He illustrated the idea of the Holy Spirit as a seal of a promise by describing an engagement ring. In week two's focus group session, Jen pointed out that "a lot of the illustrations he used today were a lot more universal." Charles agreed, stating, "today the more universal ideas were very effective. I fell right in right away." I believe that Mike may have brought up an issue that many in the group had not considered before, which provoked group members toward a sharper awareness of both the subjects of sermon illustrations and the personae Jeremy took up to deliver them. Further, I believe a fondness for Jeremy himself prompted this intentional return to the topic. Unless a focus group member broke protocol and spoke to Jeremy about the conversation the previous week,[50] it was coincidental that his illustrations in week two were much more broad and applicable to men and women, young and old alike. In this case, any emotional trust (Miller) toward Carr is articulated (Crowley) with the content and delivery of his sermons, which highly impacts the levels to which people will grant assent to (and be persuaded by) the sermon.

Also during this second focus group session, Elizabeth pointed out that it was parents' weekend at Miami, a week when the church hosts many visitors. She believed that Jeremy

> made a point to connect with an audience. So the sermons change week-to-week based on who is in the audience. And I think that's important. As a parent coming here, first of all you're coming to a church to see if your child is in the right place. So you have an ulterior motive for coming to church [laughter]. So I thought, not that his purpose was to reassure those parents, but he pays attention to the audience, and he used an illustration that they could get, because I did see one mom going "Mmm" [nodding and smiling]. I thought that was effective.

Therefore, in the community space that week, Elizabeth was aware of the many visitors around her, people she had never met before. And she perceived in the sermon an effort on Carr's part to meet slightly altered rhetorical goals given the change in audience.

Indeed, during week two, Carr's rhetorical goals reflected this dual effort. He shared that he desired for audience members to "embrace God's forgiveness," referring to both a first-time identification with Christ and to a new appreciation on the part of those who already considered

[50] Given that I was in frequent communication with Carr at the time, I believe he would have told me if a focus group member had approached him.

themselves Christian. His second main goal was for people to "find freedom from guilt." While this goal could also find that double audience, he focused particularly on Christians who felt guilty for not being better parents, spouses, students, etc. Christina, like Elizabeth, perceived this dynamic and touched on a rhetorical dilemma many pastors of larger churches face: to what extent should the sermon address Christians, and to what extent should it reach out to "seekers," people who have not made the conscious decision to identify as Christian?[51] Christina observed, "I saw that he was kind of speaking to two groups of people at the same time. He seemed to be really trying to draw people to Christ for the first time. There was kind of an evangelical (sic), salvation thing, but he also seemed to be addressing believers who have guilt." Just like week one, Carr's rhetorical goals, as shared with me in outline form, echoed throughout the focus group discussion. Participants spoke about the danger of legalistic belief, the thought that "you can buy your own salvation just by coming to church" (Christina) and that "guilt, when we let it control us," indicates this type of self-focus (Jen).

Similarly, in week three, Jeremy wanted to maintain the focus on union with Christ. But he moved on to other theological points—security and inheritance—to do so. And group members remained attentive. When I began the week three discussion, asking about the concepts group members would take with them from the sermon, Samuel replied simply, "We're secure" and Charles added, "That God is able to see it through." I could give an overwhelming amount of data in support of this point, but suffice it to say that the focus group discussions showed a remarkable match to Carr's rhetorical goals. Not only did he establish clear outcomes, but his sermons clearly communicated these points. Although group members would apply and supplement Carr's main ideas in slightly different ways, they never seemed to disagree about what they perceived as the main points of the sermon. I attribute some of this cohesiveness to Carr's use of Power Point to break his sermons down into workable outlines. These on-screen texts usually boiled down what could be a fifteen-minute-long explication of a complex concept into memorable key word or phrase. And of course, the focus group met immediately after the

[51] I never attended a church that performed weekly altar calls, but this practice of calling forth listeners to declare their commitment to Christ each week always perplexed me. Could there really be that many non-committed but willing audience members out there? And if week after the week the sermon tried to initiate this one-time commitment, what were established members actually gaining from the message? Here, the cliché of "preaching to the choir" comes into play.

conclusion of a worship service, during which the sermon was the last significant portion. Therefore the material was fresh, and group members seemed eager to speak together about Carr's most vivid illustrations and main points.

Although this content-based discussion remained central in the focus group sessions, participants continued to tie the persuasive elements of the sermon content to Jeremy's delivery, which they also tied closely with his *ethos* and their relationships with him. In week three, Robert observed that he is conscious of,

> just how relaxed Jeremy is with the group, from talking, to looking around, to putting his hand in his pocket. He's very comfortable in front of a group.
>
> *Donna*: He believes what he's preaching.
>
> *Robert*: Yes.
>
> *Donna*: Genuine.

But the exchange that solidified for me the inseparable nature of the sermon, preacher *ethos*, and the relational context of preaching was yet to come. Normally, Carr sits in the front row, ready to take the stage for the sermon. Because I would be videotaping the sermon, I was sitting in the far back, and noticed that he broke his normal routine, staying in the back of the sanctuary for the first part of the service. He needed to speak with a few of the elders, and he also had friends in town who had a new baby. So he sat with them in the back, near the exit in case (I assume) the baby started to cry. When he did take the stage, he placed his materials on the pulpit, smiled, and said slowly, in a low voice, "Good morning OBF." When he got a "good morning" in return, his smile broadened and he said, "All right, not bad." Because it was an 8:30 a.m. service, the energy levels typically were not as high as later services. Jeremy's greeting gave the impression that he expected a somewhat lackluster "Good morning" from the congregation. Mike noted a humorous opening; then Charles observed,

> When he first got up, I got the feeling that he'd been dealing with something kind of heavy before he came in… he did kind of get up and go "Good morning" [subdued, tired tone], like we were supposed to respond like that.
>
> *Samuel*: I think he might be tired, I mean he was away until yesterday.
>
> *Charles*: That's right.
>
> *Mike*: I even noticed that normally, he's sitting in the front row. He could have been in the back, I didn't turn around to look, but he didn't come up until right before the sermon.

Samuel: He was in the back.

Mike: OK, he was in the back.

As group members sorted out the details, Donna looked troubled, and finally chimed in, saying, "And on that, what you just said, I'm going to go the other way. What is our motive if we're wondering where Jeremy is? Do we come to hear the word of God from anybody's mouth, or did we come to follow Jeremy?" Charles clarified, "I wondered if maybe he was sick or something."

Below, I will address in greater detail Donna's belief in the sermon as a word from God, not from a man. But for now, let me clarify that I do not wish to depict Jeremy Carr in any way as a sort of demagogue. He frequently opens the pulpit to guest speakers, myself included, and he continually practices the kind of self-deprecation and humility that resists placing him as the central focus of the church. Even at his young age, he knows to be gracious but cautious when praised for his preaching. However, as I explained in chapter three, this very authenticity and humility seem to win listener loyalty all the same. And the above exchange demonstrates that when studying oral discourse, researches should not and cannot separate content and persuasion from the trust and articulated belief inherent in the rhetorical moment.

I assert that this willingness to take in and put into practice such personal, deeply theological points relies heavily on the relational nature of the preaching act. The participants in the focus group did not only speak about the sermon content from that day; they tapped into their own history of hearing Carr preach. Also, no fewer than three participants referred to other pastors they knew as a means of commenting on Jeremy's preaching. This data supports the Bakhtinian notion of discourse as a "stream of verbal intercourse," (Bakhtin *Marxism* 1222). Further, in "Discourse in the Novel," one of four essays in *The Dialogic Imagination,* Bakhtin distinguishes between authoritative speech (342) and "internally persuasive discourse" (345). The authoritative word, such as religious dogma, established scientific proof, and canonized literature, is a centripetal force, changing little because it ties closely with societal hierarchy (343). But "internally persuasive discourse" acts as a centrifugal force, moving more freely through streams of utterances, getting rehashed and reapplied (345). Bakhtin, wisely in my opinion, notes that both types of utterances can be equally persuasive and authoritative. Everyday speech is peppered with references to others' speech, and whether those utterances and

the ideologies they express act to uphold or to disrupt hierarchical and institutional structures, they gain authority as they move through discourse.

Preaching, in its relational context, captures in dramatic ways this swirling stream of centripetal and centrifugal language forces. Jeremy Carr's short series on Ephesians chapter one illustrated ancient, authoritative concepts such as sin and grace, but did so utilizing contemporary references to LeBron James, historical (and cinematic) icons such as the Titanic, and accepted cultural standards like an engagement ring. Therefore, with an ongoing relationship that fosters trust and assent, the preacher can articulate (Crowley) doctrine, pop culture, and everyday practice, binding these seemingly disparate elements to recast the very idea of faith and what it means to be a person of faith today.

ENACTED COMMONPLACES IN SERMON DELIVERY

Earlier in the chapter, I explained that Jeremy Carr is not a flamboyant preacher and is by no means dramatic in his delivery of sermons. However, his delivery does demonstrate effective performative elements. In this section, I depict a few of these elements, moving toward the enacted commonplaces described in chapter four.

In the first sermon of this series, Jeremy read aloud from Ephesians chapter one, then immediately restated the passage in his own words, personating Paul, the writer: "Paul is saying to us, 'Look, everything you have comes to you in Jesus Christ and through Jesus Christ. He's the means by which we receive every spiritual blessing…" Here, Carr was performing the ancient Greek tactic of ethopoeia, and what Ebenezer Porter (1827) called "representation" (132), in which the speaker personates a character, bringing to life the beliefs that character espouses. This strategy allows the preacher to paraphrase scripture, making it easier to understand. But even more, it brings to life Paul's attitude and passion, as interpreted by that speaker.

Similarly, in sermon two, Jeremy tries to place the audience in the shoes of others, attempting to make listeners feel the fear and uncertainty of reporters Euna Lee and Laura Ling. He stated,

> Imagine these two women. Imagine if that was you, trapped in North Korea. Think of the desperation you would feel, the fear that you would have. All the questions that would be going on in your mind, the things you would be wondering about, "What is

going to come? What is going to happen? We're sentenced to twelve years of hard labor. Is anybody going to come and get us? Will anybody come and rescue us?"

Notice that he not only asks the audience to imagine the situation; he uses "we" and "us" to personate one of these two women, making the empathic move that much more vivid and immediate. In one sense, with this representation the preacher performs the situations of attitudes of known others. The audience, aware of historical figures like Paul and people in the news like Ling and Lee, participates with these characters as enacted by the speaker.

However, I see an even more effective means of garnering audience identification in the enacted commonplaces described in chapter four. I offer here three examples, one from each sermon in my study. Each example demonstrates Carr's ability to perform a recognizable attitude or action, commonplaces that carry socially constructed meaning. When audience members recognize from their own experience this commonplace, they are more likely to grant assent to the speaker, because his performance has touched on their reality. In fact, I assert that enacted commonplaces appear to be performed truths when listeners recognize themselves in the performance.

In sermon one, Carr enacts the mental struggle or effort he hopes listeners themselves perform when faced with a difficult decision. Touching on the idea of free will, he states,

> We have all sorts of freedom in our life choices: the career you choose, the person you marry, the major you choose, the house you buy, where you go on vacation, how many kids you have… We just have to make our overarching thought this: "Will this decision help me become more holy? Or is it distracting me from becoming holy? Is this decision going to push me toward holiness or pull me away from holiness? Is this decision going to push me towards God, or is it going to pull me away from God?"

As he spoke these words, he used gestures to perform that process. When he asked "Will this decision help me become more holy?" Jeremy slowly extended his arms to the side, signifying an awareness of the whole life, one's entire self. He immediately moved into a pushing-forward and pulling-back motion, leaning into the pulpit, palms facing the audience and pushing forward as he asked, "Will this decision help me become more holy?" and stepping back and lowering his arms when asking, "Or is it distracting me from becoming holy?" When he restated the questions, he again performed this motion of drawing closer and pulling away. The use of first-person pronouns placed Carr in the position of everyone listening. Also, the gestural movements

represent a figurative, mental back-and-forth, a struggle (*agon*) to maintain Christian identity in a world with endless choices. I believe that this struggle is recognizable to most Christians, who mentally wrestle with issues not spelled out explicitly in the Bible. They know they celebrate Christmas, but how lavishly should they spend on their children's gifts? College students have a sense of their own interests, but how to decide upon and pursue a career while maintaining a Christian identity? This example brings before the audience that struggle, possibly casting it in a way that will help them with future decisions.

The following week, Jeremy Carr used an illustration of a sand dune, enacting a more literal situation but applying it figuratively to the struggle with guilt. He asserted,

> Guilt can't change us. Guilt buries us. It keeps you worrying, it keeps you fearful…and it is so depressing… It just sucks the joy out of everything. I think guilt is like trying to run up a sand dune as fast as you can. Have you ever seen someone do this or tried it yourself? Try running in thick sand. You start out and you're good to go, then after about ten steps you're like, "What in the world?" It's sucking you down, it's pulling you down, your legs are tired, you can hardly move, and it wears you out so quickly. That is guilt.

In this case, Carr performed this uphill run. He stepped out from behind the pulpit, turned to the side, and took slow, labored steps, pumping his arms just as slowly, with a pained expression on his face. It was a brief enactment, just a few steps. Of course not everyone in attendance that day would have attempted to run up a sand dune. But I believe it safe to say that any experience of climbing a great number of steps, or running, hiking or biking up tall hills would make Carr's performance of the sand dune familiar, calling up memories of physical pain and exhaustion. But as an illustration, this enactment also needed to transfer to the figurative application of feelings of guilt. And so the commonplace or stereotype Carr accessed only begins with "wannabee athlete" trying to scale a hill; ultimately he taps into the familiar persona of the person riddled with guilt. And of course, during this series he had already supplied his own sources of guilt, such as yelling at his children. His own life experience, then, allowed for this performance: being weighed down by guilt, but experiencing freedom from the burden by asking his family and God for forgiveness. Audience members can in turn recognize their own guilt burden and be persuaded to follow a similar path of forgiveness.

I do not have the space to relay all the ways focus group members processed this illustration. However I will say that a full ten minutes of focus group discussion that week revolved around this idea of guilt. The one example I offer is a statement from Jen that occurred about three minutes into this discussion. Like Jeremy, Jen performed the overwhelming burden of guilt. She even used her own enacted commonplaces, performing (and quoting) two personae-- a Christian who does not truly appreciate forgiveness and one who does. She stated,

> A lot of people just say, "Oh," [downtrodden expression] and they dwell in their self-pity, and they have a lot of guilt and shame. And sometimes you can just glace over that and say, "Oh yeah, we're forgiven." But unless we use that like, "This is my identity. This is what I truly believe in"-- If we don't accept that and don't think that God's grace is enough, then it hasn't done anything for us. That [Jeremy's point] is just really poignant.

In the moment I wanted focus group members to just keep talking; I tried to let them form a discussion without too much interference from the researcher. Therefore, I did not ask Jen to comment on Jeremy's sand dune performance. However, at the very least she had processed the struggle he enacted and was already making application to her own experience.

In the final sermon on Ephesians chapter one, Carr wanted the congregation to come to a greater understanding of assurance, and so he used a slightly different form of the enacted commonplace; he performed a somewhat ridiculous character—the quitter God. Carr asserted,

> He is going to finish what he has started in you. You know people who are like that? People who are finishers? When they say they're going to do something, they do something? When they say they are going to show up, they show up. They get the job done. And then there's the rest of us, who fiddle with things. We start eighteen million projects and have a really hard time getting anything done. Who hasn't started to play the guitar at some point in their life but never really came through with it? We start our basement but never finish it. We're finally going start our homework a couple of days before it's due, not the night before, staying up till three in the morning; we're actually going to get it done on time. But we don't. We don't. We tend to not be finishers. In light of that, aren't you glad that God is a finisher? That he doesn't treat us the same way? Philippians 1:6 says this. Paul says, "I'm sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ." … He adopted you

> into his family… He didn't start this whole process to be like, "Oh, I don't know if I can finish it off. I don't know if I'm going to carry it through to the end."

In the last two sentences quoted above, Carr performed this silly image. He used a high, whiny, uncertain tone of voice, with shrugged shoulders and an eyebrows-up helpless expression when he said, "Oh, I don't know if I can finish it off. I don't know if I'm going to carry it through to the end." But immediately, he lowered both the tone and volume of his voice, stood straighter, and asked serious rhetorical questions: "Is he so weak, that he cannot finish what he started? Can he not keep us secure?" Through his delivery, Jeremy performed a wrong concept of God. He enacted human insecurity, and thus aligned with anyone in the audience who experiences that insecurity. But then immediately, his tone changed, the content returned to the scripture he had been discussing, and he undercut that insecurity to assert the more logical avenue—if you say you believe in a big powerful God, then trust that big powerful God.

About forty-five minutes later, after the service was over and our focus group was well into its discussion, Donna spoke up. She had revealed the week before that she grew up in an abusive home situation and had led a difficult life. But her newly-discovered faith had given her a new focus, new peace, and even a new purpose in her job. When I asked the group what they learned from that day's sermons, Donna said,

> God's a finisher. There's so many people that are quitters. But God will finish what he started and I don't have to be afraid…and [Jeremy's] absolutely right. He could have been pointing at me today saying, "You know, life's tough for all of us, but sometimes it's really tough. And you're thinking, 'Where are you [God] in all this?'" And what he said today was just another confirmation for me… that God's not going to leave me out there. He's not human… I'm no surprise to him; none of this is a surprise to him, what's happening. So that in itself keeps helping me to **trust him** again for the next second of my life and minute of my life. So that's what I gathered from it today.

Donna obviously identified with that contrast between human quitters and God the finisher. She felt that Jeremy was speaking directly to her, countering any temptation she may feel to fall into anthropomorphitism, the ascription of faulty human traits to God. In short, Donna came away with Jeremy's overall message, as articulated in his volitional goals for the sermon, to trust in God.

The three enacted commonplace I describe above are quite different from one another. The self-questioner, with the back-and-forth gestures that seem to move closer to and further from God, enacts a mental struggle to make right decisions. The sand dune runner was a physical illustration that transferred to a persona of one overwhelmed by guilt. And the quitter God showed to congregants not their own struggle, but a flawed concept of God they might occasionally entertain. This last commonplace amounted to a mental construct of God himself that Jeremy hoped to discredit and expel. But despite the differences in these literal and figurative stances, in all three cases, the audience would need to recognize something familiar—their own doubt and guilt, but also their own conviction and agency. Jeremy Carr therefore presents himself as a text, projecting linguistic and nonlinguistic meaning. In other words, his delivery in these moments blends together spoken and unspoken cues that elicit recognition of stereotypic character traits familiar to the audience.

At the same time, listeners have the opportunity to project meaning onto the speaker, seeing in her their own struggles and thus identifying with the performance. But of course, this projection to and from speaker has a double edge. Should the preacher perform a persona that audiences do not recognize or find off-putting, she may fail to foster identification. For example, Mike certainly recognized a commonplace in Jeremy's "Boo Cubs, Go White Sox" remark. He labeled it as "college" and "chummy," the man-poking-fun-at-another. But because Jeremy's wife happens to be a Cubs fan, Mike feared that this attitude, performed from the pulpit, might give men in attendance permission to marginalize others, particularly women. In this case, Mike was projecting cultural expectation of appropriate behavior in the context of the church, particularly the politicized space of the pulpit. And the slight discomfort he experienced in that moment early is the sermon is what Mike brought with him to the focus group; his first comments that week addressed this concern. To be clear, Mike clarified that Jeremy rarely had this affect on him; he also offered many positive comments, particularly about the sermon in week three. For example, he expressed appreciation and admiration for Jeremy's study and his habit of giving alternate translations for complex Greek terms. Therefore I do not wish to cast Mike as a constant critic. However, I find his remarks astute and believe they were eye-opening for the rest of the group. Also, Mike's response demonstrates well the importance of carefully assessing community culture in oral discourse. Because preaching carries such a long history of

utterances, representation, and performance, audiences in that context also carry deeply articulated beliefs about appropriate and inappropriate strategies of communication.

RESISTANCE TO THEORIZING DELIVERY

As the data reported above suggest, the focus group discussions did address specifics of Jeremy Carr's strategies for delivering sermons. Robert began taking note of Jeremy's gestures, which he interpreted as communicating a level of comfort behind the pulpit and with the congregation. Carol noted Carr's movement on stage and also concluded that he genuinely likes the church. Christina identified different personae Carr accessed to impact the mood of the sermon, cueing the group about the level of seriousness in the content. I have highlighted virtually every instance when delivery became central to the focus group discussion. However, most of the conversation in that small basement classroom at OBF centered around the sermon content—the main theological points and the illustrations that Carr used to apply and make relevant those points. Again, I expected this outcome. By beginning each discussion with questions such as "What are you taking from today's sermon?" and "What in your opinion was the most important point?" I intentionally avoided pushing the topic of delivery. Rather, I decided to focus on how the sermon functioned persuasively and how that persuasion reflected and emerged from participants' relationship with their pastor.

I introduced chapter one of this project with a telling exchange, which I relay again here. In the third and final focus group, after the group discussed the main points of the sermon and with only about twenty minutes remaining, I asked outright, "Can anyone comment on persona and what Jeremy is doing with voice and body to keep our attention?**"** The following exchange followed:

> *Charles*: Typically when I notice body and voice, it means my attention is drifting. It's like when I notice the music in a movie, then maybe the movie's not so good. So today I didn't notice. It was all, well, it was a great package.
>
> *Samuel*: I think that's my response too. I'd have to actually sit and think a lot because he kind of gets out of the way and lets the…I know he works hard at it. I just don't—
>
> *Charles*: You don't see the work. You don't notice the effort.
>
> *Samuel*: Yeah
>
> [Pause]
>
> *Interviewer*: And Jeremy doesn't do a lot of pacing or other dramatic movements—

Robert: Well those things become the focus if you're not careful, those motions.

Donna: And I never noticed any of that because I was listening to the word until you all brought it up. Now I'm being distracted because I'm looking for it [laughter]. And I have to pray beforehand that I'm not distracted from God's word [laughs]. And I'm like, "OK this is not the way you would want this, so please don't let me pay attention…"

Samuel and Charles make a valuable point, that delivery functions best when it blends and pairs with other rhetorical elements such as invention or the artistic proof of *pathos*. When a speaker's delivery corresponds well with other elements in the speech, delivery tends to become invisible, creating what Charles calls "a great package" that gives the audience a favorable overall impression. And again, had I pushed the point earlier and more often, perhaps it would have produced more direct data about delivery itself. However, I believe that my method allowed for more free-flowing conversation and only delayed the above exchange. Indeed, to consider delivery in isolation can feel distracting, as it may divorce what is being said from how it is said. Rather, following Christina's approach, I find that taking in personae and considering the rhetorical effect of broader methods of self-presentation frees audience members from taking mental note each time a speaker lowers her voice or gestures with the left hand. All this to say that I understand Charles' admission and the slight resistance to taking note of a speaker's delivery.

However, Donna's response opens an entirely new avenue. In chapter one, I asserted that natural talent, that so-called X-factor, rendered delivery difficult to theorize. How does a rhetorician break down or even explain what appears to be a natural aptitude for speaking comfortably and persuasively before groups? But divine inspiration becomes an X-factor on a completely different level. I venture to say that everyone involved in this case study believed that Jeremy Carr possesses a God-given ability to interpret scripture and communicate it clearly. And while that belief may explain the source of his "natural" talent, at the same time it can erect a wall, preventing closer examination. Donna seemed to fear that paying close attention to Carr's abilities and delivery methods would amount to a dissection of the holy, pulling back the curtain on a divine process. Resner explains that many churchgoers fear an over-emphasis on the person the preacher, and are tempted to "bracket the human preacher out of preaching's equation, sometimes almost as a matter of homiletical theodicy—the defense of God's power and

providence to alone provide preaching's efficacy" (3). Particularly in churches in a Postmodern Era, Resner asks,

> what is to prevent the capitalistic, consumer-driven, felt-needs-driven church from desiring and selecting a minister to function partly as buoyant master of ceremonies and entertainer (taking Cicero's and Augustine's states purpose of the orator 'to delight' seriously) and partly as a Wal-Mart-style manager and motivator, with the goal of happier, greater, bigger, and more? (6)

In other words, many church members believe that they will suffer the consequences if they were to fall into a cult of personality, or if they called their leaders based on flawed, shifting standards. Faith in inspiration, anchored by sacred scripture, offers a kind of safeguard, helping congregants retain a godly focus.

I believe Donna often reflected this very attitude. In week one, when the group was discussing the masculine perspective in Jeremy's illustrations, she asserted, "Jeremy is being Spirit-led as far as what I get from him, and the thing is, forget all that. That's not the point. What is he trying to bring us from the Bible? I can overlook a lot of what people say, because what's the real truth he's getting at? And he can only present it how God's being—how he's being led to do it." She went on to explain at some length that it was very important for her to know, even after weeks of preparation and a full manuscript, if Jeremy would be willing to "completely dump" a sermon if the Spirit led him to deliver another message that day.

Two weeks later, in response to Charles' concern that Jeremy seemed troubled coming into the pulpit, she asked, "Do we come to hear the word of God from anybody's mouth, or did we come to follow Jeremy?" Donna's belief in an active God, who wants to communicate with humans on a moment-by-moment basis, led to this strong leaning toward the theological, as opposed to rhetorical, view of the preaching event. Resner explains that on the one hand, preaching is a rhetorical art and preachers cannot avoid rhetorical concerns (70). However, Christian belief is grounded in the idea of incarnation, the divine moving through the human ("The Word [*logos*] became flesh" John 1:14) (71). Resner cites Fant who asserts, "Form, methodology, and delivery are nothing more, and nothing less, than the word of God taking on flesh and dwelling among us" (xiv). However, Fant mitigates this divine emphasis by stating that "The preacher must understand that the historic word and the contemporary situation are not mutually exclusive and that preaching unites the two in the act of communication" (82).

Therefore, this rhetorical/theological conflict may indicate a both/and paradox with which believers must grapple, as their preachers study the inspired word, receive their own inspiration, and shape and deliver their findings with rhetorical acumen.

In fact, Donna seemed to arrive at his paradoxical conclusion herself. Just seconds after she spoke about praying that she would not notice Jeremy's delivery, she concluded, "He's just using the God-given body, to me, so that's how I'm going to get through this. He's expressing it. If he just stood there like this [stiff] I would think, "Hmm" [look of suspicion]. So even though the consideration of delivery can feel distracting (and I do regret that Donna felt she had to "get through" conversations about the topic), research participants did seem to have ideas about what makes effective and ineffective delivery. In particular, Jeremy and the focus group participants seemed to theorize the fifth canon through the negative, imagining or remembering poor delivery and allowing that mental construct to inform a concept of "good delivery." Both Carol and Donna enacted a preacher who stands completely still, with hands stiffly at his side behind the pulpit. They echo Gilbert Austin's 1806 critique of preachers who "stand stock still" in the pulpit (6) for fear of seeming overly theatrical (7).

I include this idea of "theorization through the negative" in this section because I believe it supplements examples of resistance to considering delivery and demonstrates again that especially when treated in isolation from other rhetorical elements, the fifth canon proves rather slippery. In the following exchange from the first focus group session, notice how the participants express what they do *not* want to see in the pulpit:

> *Donna*: I grew up in a household where people screamed and yelled. And [Jeremy] doesn't do that… as soon as somebody starts yelling I shut them off, because I grew up with that, and I don't need that. It's an automatic defense weapon. So for me, I like it [Jeremy's more subdued style] because I listen.
>
> *Robert*: And I look at it from the other extreme also—that preacher that has that monotone that goes on and on and you have no idea what he's saying.
>
> *Donna:* Right.
>
> *Robert*: Pretty soon you're out in never-never land.
>
> *Carol:* I grew up with a pastor who went on and on, than all of a sudden he'd start screaming and yelling, and I'd think, "Oh, good. We've got 5 minutes left" [laughter].

Two weeks later, Donna again brought up the fact that Jeremy does not yell, saying simply that if he did, "I'd be gone. I'd be gone." My point is that understanding delivery through what does not work, through the strategies that cause confusion and even offense, better reveal the socially-constructed nature of "good" delivery. The fifth canon becomes invisible precisely when it lines up with culturally coded expectation, contributing to the perception of seamlessness and effective communication. In this way, anti-theory acts as a functioning theory, and resistance to expounding upon delivery becomes fertile ground for doing just that. These focus group participants, therefore, demonstrated that in their desired church culture, sermon delivery should be conversational and engaging, demonstrating genuineness and excitement for the material on the part of the preacher. This conversational style communicates to them the idea that the speaker cares for them and enjoys communicating with them. My impression, then, is that OBF's community, like many other Protestant communities, desires not a bestowing of knowledge from a superior, but rather an educative exhortation from a friend.

Jeremy Carr bases his approach to sermon delivery on both positive and negative experience, but the type of resistance he showed toward a developed personal theory of delivery takes on a slightly different face compared to that of the focus group participants. Carr admits that when he was in Bible school, he heard some sermons (from classmates) that left much to be desired. And remembering his own preaching as a teenager, he claims, "I'm sure it was terrible," but his mentors continued to encourage him to develop his gifts. He also has witnessed excellent preaching from his mentor in Indiana, and from well-known writers and expository preachers John Piper and Tim Keller (through CDs, podcasts, DVDs, and in person at pastor's conferences). While he does not mimic their delivery, he says that Piper in particular "is very expressive, with his face, with his hand movements," and after demonstrating a few gestures he remembers from Piper's preaching, he said, "I think when I watch him…you realize how that can pull people in." Therefore, Carr certainly seems aware of the importance of delivery to engage with an audience. But when I asked Carr about his own sermon delivery, he stated,

> I don't think that I think very much about that, consciously. But I think that [laughs] unconsciously I think about it a lot, if that makes sense. What I mean by that is, after preaching for a while you sort of know what works, nonverbally and with actions and stuff like that, that connects with people. And you know what doesn't work. And so, I never—I don't think I ever sit down later and say, "Let me think back to all the

> movements I had and what worked and what didn't work." But I think my mind is telling me, "Yeah, that worked or it didn't" and later on I will do what works and not do what didn't work. Does that make sense? It's kind of an unconscious thing.

Carr emphasizes audience response as a primary means of understanding whether or not and idea and its presentation are working. This approach of learning-by-doing supersedes any actual practicing of delivery before the Sunday morning message. Although he will at time speak the words under his breath, Carr states that most of delivery preparation occurs "in my head," prompting him to use italics, bold print, and punctuation as cues for delivery. Here, he makes a strong connection between *pathos* and delivery, stating that these marks in his manuscript "help me recognize the emotional feel that I need to connect with what I'm saying." In other words, the physical and vocal emphases as marked help him to communicate and inspire emotions, based on the content of the sermon.

Carr's remarks make me wonder about a connection between natural talent and theorizing delivery on the "unconscious" level he describes. Does the presence of talent allow a speaker to more fluidly take up and evaluate strategies for delivery, without having to put much mental effort into that work? Or is talent itself, in essence, that ability to comfortably adapt one's self-presentation to the rhetorical moment? Regardless, at this point I question whether Carr's placing his assessment of delivery on the unconscious level even amounts to a type of resistance to theorizing the fifth canon. It appears this move simply emerges from talent and experience, and is not the result of any prejudice against delivery as artifice.

CONCLUSIONS

Therefore, I certainly would not categorize Jeremy Carr as a Platonist, or even one who ascribes all preaching ability to divine sources. He approaches preaching as an inspired rhetorical art, one that requires a listening ear to God, but that also requires effort and a constantly evolving awareness of audience and purpose. This rhetorical-theological binary, described above, has caused great division in American Protestant churches. Russell Hirst, studying religious discourse in nineteenth century America, sees a rift between charismatic groups and the mainstream traditions that dominated Christian seminaries. The charismatic revivalists, typically less educated (which brings into play class issues) critiqued mainline preaching as lifeless. They placed such high emphasis on the Spirit's inspiration that school learning seemed a detriment to effective preaching (70). But Hirst's research revealed that inspiration, rather than being the

primary source of material for mainline preachers, often functioned as the sixth canon of rhetoric. In other words, they saw the divine presence as working throughout the entire process of study, composition, and delivery (71). For the most part, the community at Oxford Bible Fellowship seems to follow this line of thought, acknowledging the holy nature of scripture and preaching, but also appreciating the creativity and relevance of Jeremy Carr's sermons.

I see Carr's relationships within the community as integral to his self-presentation from the pulpit, as he applies biblical principles to contemporary life. The result is a congregation and largely adores their pastor, continually granting assent and processing what they hear from week to week. I do not wish to depict some kind of utopia. As helpful as the sheer frequency of preaching has been to this project, I, like any pastor, know that sometimes people simply do not listen or do not want to listen. However, the very energy level during the focus group discussions demonstrated the living nature of preaching at OBF. The sermon functions as a central means of defining and unifying this community's identity as a Christ-centered church, focused on relationships. Further, Carr's delivery of his sermons fosters that relational interaction as he projects to the audience commonplaces of everyday attitudes. They can see themselves—their doubt, their struggle, their questions, and their triumphs—in their preacher as he expounds their sacred texts and enacts the life of faith.

Conclusion

Rhetoric, Delivery, and the Art of the Struggle

In chapter one, I suggested that delivery, the fifth canon of rhetoric, is a lesser child of a lesser child. Among its fellow canons, delivery has caused consternation among rhetorical theorists, proving resistant to a unified theory for instruction. At the same time, rhetoric itself faces frequent denigration as inferior to dialectic and philosophy. Both become the subject of suspicion to the Platonic mind, posing a danger of manipulating listeners toward unwise action through flattery and artifice. But a more Sophistic view suggests that discourse is not so simple as deciding between a good option and a bad one. Rhetoric operates in the realm of probabilities and acts as a proving ground for weighing values and priorities that, while "good," can come into conflict. In recent years, the ideals of caring for the needy and personal freedom have clashed in the political spotlight. "Fiscal responsibility" and "Investing in the future" have become commonplaces, loaded with meaning and emotion, the fuel for fierce debate.

In this climate, rhetoric—whether defined as the art of persuasion, finding the available means of persuasion, or simply getting things done with words—matters. Speakers need to shape their arguments in such a way that listeners can understand, identify, align, and take action. I assert that delivery takes a central place in this process, and that the medium and communicative strategies employed (how you say it) are inextricably bound to the arguments themselves (what you say). But I do grant that delivery proves difficult to study, with its multiple appendages that seem to branch in every direction. Even with the approach I took in this project, focusing primarily on live speech acts in a particular community setting, it was difficult to get a handle on the fifth canon. The spaces of delivery constantly change, posing question after question about appropriate context and the speaker's authority. An activist's performance at a political rally may prove unfit for the small gathering in the church fellowship hall. And when that speaker rises to deliver, so many factors emerge for consideration: dress, race, gender, accent, eye contact, facial expression, hand gestures, movement in the rhetorical space, vocal tones, and volume, just to begin the list. Further, most of these cultural and physical concerns drift to another level entirely if the speaker enacts another's attitude or performs a stereotype.

Roxanne Mountford summarizes this bigger picture nicely, saying,

> Delivery involves space, the body, and the place of both in the social imaginary. Delivery involves historical concepts of the public and private spheres. As an art, delivery is creative, progressive, active, mobile; it promotes and reflects relationships; it both embodies the word and is the word. Delivery is based in and on cultural norms and the breaking of those norms. (Mountford 152)

Here, I see another parallel between delivery and the larger field of rhetoric. Both involve *agon* (Hawhee), the struggle with an opponent. Certainly debates capture this struggle; however, I see *agon* even more broadly, as a struggle with language for the rhetor as she invents and shapes discourse, and when she delivers her ideas to an audience. In delivery, that struggle takes on performative elements. The rhetor enacts her anger, dismay, gratitude, or any number of emotions and attitudes, as well as those of her opponent or her audience. Further, that opponent may not even be an actual individual, but can be one of those attitudes she wishes to dispel in the audience. In persuasive discourse, delivery puts on display a struggle with language and ideas, and invites listeners into the *agon*.

Technology

Technology expands the very idea of delivery exponentially, but also offers multiple avenues of research. In fact, I need not necessarily depart from the context of preaching to illustrate the impact of technology on the fifth canon. As I mentioned earlier in this project, writing the content of sermons to pass on to others is an age-old practice. But with the rise of print, publication of Bibles and sermon texts boomed in Europe, aiding in Protestant reformers' calls to offer sacred texts in the languages of the people. Robert Connors demonstrates the flexibility of delivery in the context of alphabetic print; instead of only applying to spoken discourse, the fifth canon shifts to take in the manuscript—its appearance, feel, and readability (Connors 76).

Also, I think of the ways microphones, then eventually stadium screens and television broadcasts, have allowed evangelist Billy Graham to reach millions of people. In fact, generations of preachers have taken to radio and television airwaves without having to leave the pulpit of their own church. Not that preaching ever lost its physical component of delivery, but these audio and video technologies inspire an immediate return to delivery's original concerns of voice and (in the case of television) gesture. In other words, the rise of print may have made preaching appear to be an outdated mode of communication at certain times and in some

contexts, but overall preaching has maintained its influence as a frequent oral genre of communication. I chose not to study radio or television preaching in this project because of my interest in the actual relationship between preacher and congregation and how that relationship fosters identification and leads to persuasion. However, future work might focus on production issues in programs featuring popular television preachers like Joel Osteen. Do camera close-ups and excellent sound quality foster the same identification in home viewers that actual attendees experience? Might the intimacy of the camera actually create more of a personal connection, especially considering the massive size of Osteen's auditorium? This kind of study could transfer easily to preachers who routinely release DVD sets of sermon series.

Of course, in many ways television broadcasts and DVDs of sermons, like radio broadcasts and CDs (today marketed primarily to drivers), remediate devotional literature. The goal is not necessarily to create a community that actually interacts, but to make a living for the writer and to share the content of sermons for the personal edification of hearers. Hotline numbers and opportunities for listeners to write or email, however, begin to blur that line and take on the feel of a community. The "I am Second"[52] movement (iamsecond.com), in my opinion, takes these trends online in promising ways. This organization produces web videos, mainly testimonials, from famous athletes and musicians, but also from non-famous people. Usually looking directly into the camera, the speaker gives her or his story of coming to faith through various obstacles such as abuse, addiction, pride, or rebellion. Speakers often quote scripture, but I hesitate to call these videos "sermons" because they better fit the genre of testimony, and the videos always take place on sets or in outdoor settings, apart from the traditional places of preaching. However, the testimonial offers unique opportunities for identification as speakers share personal details and their experience of triumph through faith.

Further, I am Second offers twenty-four hour access through phone, email, or live chat, providing support and counseling. But to me, the most compelling element of this organization is that it allows people to participate in their own communities. Members can donate, volunteer at concerts or planned events, sign up for "expeditions" to serve abroad, or join small groups for support or Bible study. They also can form their own "local expressions" (chapters) and organize their own I am Second events. This movement is less than three years old and only has

[52] The name "I am Second" refers to the decision to serve God and others before serving the self.

offices in a few cities in the U.S. However, this kind of community-formation, emerging from web videos and online interaction, may offer a compelling site for further research that studies the ways online oral discourse aids in forming local support and volunteer groups.

In chapter five, I mentioned that Jeremy Carr utilizes PowerPoint when he delivers sermons. Volunteers operate the computer and projector throughout the worship service at OBF, displaying song lyrics during worship and incrementally adding to an outline on screen during the sermon. Some weeks, only a few main points appear on screen. At other times, Carr subdivides his points, using multiple slides as he moves through the sermon. I can say that I have never seen him look back at the screen; nor does he give verbal cues to proceed to the next slide. Rather, the volunteer at the back of the sanctuary simply listens to the content and displays a new line when it seems Carr has moved on to that point. In fact, anyone listening to the podcast of Carr's sermons, posted weekly on OBF's website, probably would not know that PowerPoint was in use at all. In my opinion, the PowerPoint outlines have replaced a paper outline, thus preserving some element of surprise as Jeremy moves through his points. However, this technology allows for a blending of oral and alphabetic texts, which may partially account for the high level of retention I witnessed in focus group discussions. I am no expert in cognition, but as a teacher I know that when an audience hears, sees, and writes any information, they tend to retain it more effectively than they would with only one of those media. Should a preacher use on-screen text and image in a more interactive way, it might complicate the idea of self-presentation I explore in this project. Such practice may prove distracting or hold audience attention, and I could see it either fostering or deterring the kind of personal connection Jeremy Carr strives for as he preaches. It would all depend upon audience expectation and the meanings they project upon pulpit and preacher.

Technology has always been a concern in the fields of preaching and rhetoric. On one level, the vocal cords themselves are a technology speakers must consider. When crowds became so large that people pressed forward to hear, Jesus himself sat in a boat in the Sea of Galilee while he preached, using voice, space, and acoustics to his advantage. Roman amphitheaters and Byzantine cathedrals also made the most of acoustics, allowing the orator's voice to travel clearly. Like the artistic proofs of *ethos* and *pathos*, technology pairs well with delivery, drawing out the fifth canon's many facets and highlighting its value in any of the rhetorical arts.

Back to the X-Factor

Natural talent remains a perplexity for many fields of study, not just those exploring rhetorical delivery. Why do some speakers seem perfectly at ease when speaking to a group, while others literally fear public speaking more than they fear death? To what extent does a speaker just have "it," an inexplicable ability, and to what extent can it be learned? The ancients asked these same questions. Cicero identified a "peculiar conformation and aspect of the whole countenance and body" that seems inexplicable, but he does admit that "what is good may be made better by education" (1.25). The nature/nurture elements inherent in this issue place a fuller examination of talent beyond the scope of this study. However, these questions pose an opportunity for collaboration between any number of fields such as rhetoric, communication, theater, and psychology.

I, for one, am interested in applying the development of rhetorical skill to the Greek terms Debra Hawhee outlines in *Bodily Arts*. She explains that if *agon* is a struggle for athletic or rhetorical success, then *arête* is the virtuous drive that leads one to participate in that struggle to learn, practice, repeat, and put one's skills on display. She translates *arête* as "virtuosity," an amorphous factor that drew crowds to athletic and rhetorical competitions in ancient Greece (Hawhee 17). Audiences desired to witness *arête*, this noble drive to put hard work into practice. I mentioned above that in my focus group research, Mike in particular appreciated the work Jeremy Carr put into examining scriptural passages in their original language and studying different commentator's interpretations. When Jeremy offered alternate translations for difficult Greek terms, Mike felt energized and wanted to learn more. For him, the sermon itself bore the fruit of the pastor's habitual research practices.

However, for me, the most fascinating possibility for studying talent lies within the enacted commonplace and the speaker's ability to perform struggles with which audiences can identify. I believe that such performance, to be successful, requires the speaker to diagnose accurately the lived experience of at least some of those in attendance. And along with this diagnosis must come identification, the desire to align with that audience, to share their struggles and emotions. In order to foster this alignment, the speaker must also be aware of cultural factors that act upon the spaces of delivery and dictate the physical cues she might enact to create meaning through this performed struggle. Perhaps this accurate diagnosis of culture and audience makes speakers appear "relaxed" and garner them the label of "talented." Certainly,

the repeated calls for speakers' delivery to be "natural" throughout rhetorical history touch on this concept. Only that which lines up with cultural norms can appear "natural" to members of that culture. Future person-based research in religious communities might focus on specific expectations of what "should" happen behind the pulpit and ways preachers participate in or challenge that cultural expectation. Such work may shed more light on what it means to be a gifted speaker.

Women Preachers

In chapter four, I cited Catherine Brekus, Roxanne Mountford, and Lindal Buchanan, using gender as my primary example of cultural expectations within American Protestant churches. Throughout that discussion, I resisted the temptation to perform extensive rhetorical analysis of women preachers' strategies for presenting themselves as legitimate preachers, with the authority to speak. The above authors address that very issue thoroughly. Plus, to analyze the writings and speeches of women who argued for a woman's right to preach, such as Margaret Fell (1667) and Angelina Grimké Weld (1838), is to enter a centuries-old debate, with main arguments centering around competing interpretations of the writings of Paul. I felt that others' scholarship has sufficiently addressed this debate[53] and that to present their work responsibly might require too long a departure from my focus on preacher *ethos* in chapter four. In other words, I did not want to find myself offering multiple interpretations of Paul's directives about head coverings in 1 Corinthians chapter 11, which he ties directly to women's praying and prophesying in the church.

However, for future work, I do wish to make a connection between women's public speaking and the enacted commonplaces I view as central to a renewed study of rhetorical delivery. In two specific speeches from the first half of the nineteenth century, I see women orators taking up prophetic identities, even as they argue for their right to speak. In 1832, Maria Stewart spoke to an audience of men and women at Franklin Hall in Boston. An African American widow and former domestic servant in the house of a white minister, Stewart lamented the plight of the Northern black servant. Maria Stewart's use of scripture, and the identity she shapes for herself as an orator, revolves around Old Testament figures. Early in her speech at Franklin Hall, she narrates a call narrative, saying, "Methinkst I heard a spiritual interrogation—

[53] See especially Payne, Philip B. *Man and Woman, One in Christ*: *An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul's Letters.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009. Print.

'Who shall go forward, and take off the reproach that is cast upon the people of color? Shall it be a woman?' And my heart made this reply—'If it is thy will, be it even so, Lord Jesus.'" This "Whom shall I send" language echoes that of Isaiah chapter six, in which the prophet Isaiah receives his calling to speak out against wickedness and injustice. But notice the way that Stewart's call narrative foregrounds her gender, even as it anchors her right to speak in a calling from God.

The most striking use of scripture in "Lecture at Franklin Hall" is Stewart's identification with the prophet Jeremiah. Her entire speech is a prolonged jeremiad, a lament for the condition of Northern black servants. Stewart echoes a common refrain found in the book of Jeremiah, the weeping prophet. She claims that it is for the sake of black men and women that "I have come forward and made myself a hissing and a reproach among the people" (112). Jeremiah used this or similar phrases (hissing and reproach) several times to depict the destruction that would come upon the land, the cities, and the people of Judah, including himself, after the fall to Babylon, which indeed happened in 586 BCE. Those who passed by them would hiss and shake their heads to amplify the intense shame of total defeat.

Stewart acts as a witness to the degradation of blacks in America, one with inside knowledge based on agonizing experience, one who communicates the realities of injustice to the nation. But more than this, she herself becomes a reproach and represents that shame. Thus, Stewart has taken up a prophetic identity, standing in the gap between her people and the white race, and between her white listeners and God. She represents the consequences of inequality, and makes an urgent appeal for immediate action based on mercy. Her call narrative and her tone depict her as a reluctant prophet, weary from the stubbornness of the people, burdened with the task of speaking an unpopular message.

Like Stewart, Anglina Grimké Weld also witnessed atrocities of racial inequality. In her teens, she listened from another room as her own brother spewed out hatred while he viciously beat a disobedient slave (Lerner 56). She visited one of her Sabbath school students, the daughter of a workhouse master, and saw firsthand unspeakable methods of torture used upon slaves, regardless of age or sex (54). And like Stewart, Grimké Weld used this experience to assert a prophetic identity—one who feels deep pain for the sins of a culture and who must speak a dangerous message in order for that nation to walk in obedience to God.

However, in her speech in Pennsylvania Hall in 1838, Grimké Weld chooses to cite New

Testament passages of scripture, and identifies with New Testament figures, thus constructing a somewhat more confrontational stance in relation to her audience. This trait not only fit her personality; it also fit the immediate rhetorical situation—an angry anti-abolitionist mob just outside the building. Probably suspecting that some in her audience had attended out of mere curiosity, Grimké Weld gives her listeners no middle ground in the struggle to end slavery. She quotes Jesus in Matthew 11:7, asking, "What came ye out for to see? A reed shaken in the wind?" Jesus asked this very question of a crowd regarding their journeys to hear John the Baptist, making the point that John was a prophet who had an important message. Grimké Weld challenges the audience to consider the weight of the issue, and the reason they were in this precarious position. She also begins to build a subtle connection between herself and John the Baptist, the prophet who drew crowds.

Like Stewart, Grimké Weld's prophetic identity is based upon personal experience and a deep, God-given sympathy for those who suffer. She says, [quote] "As a Southerner I feel that it is my duty to stand up here to-night and bear testimony against slavery. I have seen it—I have seen it" (120). Her role is that of a witness, who must testify to the North about the reality that they probably never saw (Browne 146). This role is one of insight and authority based on experience which she uses to reposition her audience. Upon hearing the prophet's words, they could no longer claim ignorance to the atrocities. Nor could they be pacified by the all-too-common narratives of well-treated slaves in comfortable clothing, serving meals, and dancing in their free time.

Accompanying the position of witness is a consuming sympathy for the slave. Grimké Weld admits, "Many times I have wept in the land of my birth, over the system of slavery. I knew of none who sympathized in my feelings—I was unaware that any efforts were made to deliver the oppressed—no voice in the wilderness was heard calling on the people to repent and do works meet for repentance—and my heart sickened within me…" The "voice in the wilderness," absent in Grimké Weld's childhood, refers to Isaiah chapter forty, which the Gospel writers (ex. Matthew 3:3) quoted to show that John the Baptist was the forerunner of the Messiah. Again, I detect a link between Grimké Weld and John the Baptist. She, like John, was the one whom the people came out to see, that messenger who was so much more than a reed swaying in the wind. Here, she acts as a voice calling out in the wilderness, a dangerous wilderness full of enraged voices and rocks breaking through the windows.

I believe that Maria Stewart and Angelina Grimké Weld used this scriptural identification common in sermons for several reasons. First, as lifelong churchgoers, these women had probably listened to thousands of sermons. I believe that as discursive texts, sermons offered a familiarity to the speakers and to their audiences. To cite scripture was to echo words and images that were deeply engrained in the cultural consciousness. And with these words and images came the authority that so many ascribed to the Bible as God's word. As women orators, Stewart and Grimké were violating cultural rules. Borrowing biblical authority and constructing speeches with sermonic qualities could not have given them a free pass to speak. If anything, by using homiletic moves, they were venturing into a new set of taboos against women's rhetorical activity. Or perhaps, by bridging the political and the religious, they found a temporary space of what I will call cultural hesitation, a space in between paradigms.

My point is that in both cases, these women orators took up the language of the prophets. And while we obviously cannot study their delivery, I assert that they were enacting prophetic personalities—pulpit personae audiences would recognize as authoritative. Still, the fact that women were taking up these commonplaces had to confuse, fascinate, and infuriate, but by taking up this prophetic identity, these speakers positioned the audience as being on the brink of divine judgment, a move that would have commanded attention. Like James Fredal, who imagines Demosthenes' delivery based on speech content and cultural knowledge of the Greeks, I believe I can examine women's speeches and sermons, extracting from context the delivered personae they enacted. Roxanne Mountford explains,

> Attention to physicality and space within rhetorical performance enhances textual analysis by bringing the temporal aspects of rhetoric (space, movement, audience) into focus. Such studies offer feminists a way to counter the universalizing tendencies of rhetorical theory, which occlude specific, gendered/raced bodies and their extraordinary oratorical performances. (152)

I believe that to juxtapose this analysis of spoken words with cultural beliefs about women's bodies and their capabilities as speakers would contribute to valuable scholarly efforts of reclaiming women's voices.

In the Writing Classroom

I began teaching first-year writing in 1998, just after I graduated from seminary with a Master of Divinity. The following year, I found myself continuing to teach college composition

while also pastoring a small church. The two career paths informed each other in productive ways, as I hope they still do. I developed work strategies that had me studying for upcoming sermons in the morning, preparing basic writing in-class activities in the afternoon, and grading papers whenever I could. Through the process, the sermon became an energizing force; working on manuscripts seemed to propel me through the week. And I found that even as I stood before my congregation every Sunday, delivering a message, I wanted my students to have a similar experience of oral communication. Therefore, quite early in my teaching career I began working into my writing courses low-stakes opportunities for students to share their writing aloud and to teach their classmates through informal presentations. Students read their writing aloud not only during formal peer response sessions, but also after ten minutes of writing in response to a course reading. On a Thursday, I would ask groups to research the historical context behind that reading, allowing each person to present a portion of their group's findings to the entire class the following Tuesday. Delivery in my classroom continues to involve the appearance of paper and digital manuscripts, whole-class discussions, peer group discussions, one-on-one interaction in individual conferences, informal presentations, collaborate writing exercises, and any number of other activities.

But even in this student-centered atmosphere, in which lecture happens only occasionally, I remain aware of my own performance as a writing instructor. This past Spring semester, I was chatting before class with one of my students, a member of the women's soccer team, about an upcoming Athletes in Action meeting, during which I would deliver a short sermon to a group of Miami athletes. Another student, "John," overheard the conversation and asked about my preaching. When I summed up my background as a pastor, he said, "That makes sense. I can see you being pretty persuasive." John's comment gave me pause. What did he see in my teaching that caused him to think I would be an effective, to use his term "persuasive," preacher? I realized that during this term, the course itself did require me to deliver in more traditional ways. To help my students develop multimodal writing projects, I led a tutorial and workshop using Audacity, a sound-editing program. As a class, we had to visit and revisit a new online e-portfolio program through which students would turn in their work; I led the way, demonstrating how to upload and manage documents. Early in the semester, I sensed that my students were not transferring what they had learned about rhetorical analysis during the previous semester's college composition course, and so I led another discussion, which included

some lecture, about rhetorical concepts. John's comment made me realize that no matter how hard I try to put student voices at the center of my classroom, mine is always present, the first voice to break through the chatter and call the class to order, the voice that immediately sets the agenda for the day, prompts writing, and directs students into groups. And of course, my voice gives them feedback and ascribes a grade to students' writing.

Therefore, even in classes that are by no means "lecture-heavy," I believe the concepts laid out in this dissertation could easily transfer to studying teacher delivery in the classroom. Teaching and preaching can share a similar feel, as the speaker utilizes prepared content, but also needs to think on her feet. Also, the waning institutional authority within Protestant churches, described in chapter three, shows remarkable similarities with teaching in today's universities. Whereas preachers rely on biblical authority as a persuasive element, could it be that teachers rely on institutional structures like grading scales and plagiarism policies and procedures as an underlying source of authority? And how does teacher delivery of course content—writing assignments, lectures, in-class prompts, etc.—reflect the power relations of today's classroom? Further, how does the teacher-student relationship both reflect and shape these authority issues? In the writing classroom, students and teachers constantly take up personae, upholding or challenging cultural expectations to create a teacher-*ethos* and a student-*ethos*. I believe that cultural commonplaces abound in today's classroom—the compliant vs. rebellious student, the all-knowing teacher, the collaborative facilitator. On the part of teachers, what kind of "self" as presented to students will foster trust in the sharing of writing? For students, what kind of *ethos* gives a favorable or unfavorable impression to their instructors? And what are the academic personae they take up in their writing to present themselves as part of a scholarly community? Finally, how does "natural talent" come into play in both student and instructor delivery of content?

Obviously, these questions touch on sensitive issues, and in my opinion it would take a remarkable teacher to open her classroom to such study. But I agree with bell hooks that "no education is politically neutral" (37). To exclude consideration of bodies, race, gender, class, and the emotions (positive and negative between teacher and student) is to uphold hegemonic forces and deny education its ability to foster critical thinking. I believe that careful ethnographic research could explore the ways both students and teachers shape *ethos* through delivery of classroom content in the face of institutional power structures. Again, I see these

negotiations of *ethos*, as fleshed out in the delivery of lectures, papers, free-writes, and other standards of the writing classroom, as *agon*, struggle. Students "wrestle" with language on multiple levels to construct that scholarly persona, and instructors struggle to respond to student writing in productive ways and shape a course that reflects clear goals. Amidst these struggles, the delivery of self, and-, through-, and as- a text upholds or challenges cultural norms that may empower or oppress. By exploring delivery in a relational setting like a classroom, scholars can better identify the inherent dynamics of the space and work toward more democratic practice in the classroom community.

Final Thoughts

The avenues of research outlined in this conclusion—technologies of delivery, talent, women's delivery, and delivery in the classroom—demonstrate the broad scope of an *ethos*-based framework for studying the fifth canon in context. My hope is that a recasting and reclaiming of delivery grants this canon of rhetoric a stronger presence and broader applicability in the field of composition and rhetoric. Also, I hope that our field can more effectively account for and analyze religious discourses, which so often accompany our students into the classroom, impacting the ways they read and interpret others' work and the ways they write and deliver their own. In other words, as writing teachers explore with their students the means of persuasion around them, we should not neglect what could be the most persuasive arguments in their lives—those having to do with faith. Notice the ease of applying the art of preaching to Chaim Perelman's description of the persuasive process: "What an audience accepts forms a body of opinion, convictions, and commitments that is both vast and indeterminate. From this body the orator must select certain elements on which he focuses attention by endowing them, as it were, with a 'presence'" (1395). In other words, the orator foregrounds and backgrounds various beliefs and values in order to gain adherence. And delivery offers a quite literal "presence" in rhetorical practice. The fifth canon, as a moment of contact between speaker and listener, foregrounds the presentation of self and the projection of socially-constructed belief. Speaker and audience, then, participate together in the *agon*, struggling through language to shape belief.

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