FINDING SOMETHING TO SAY: RECONSIDERING THE RHETORICAL

PRACTICE OF INVENTION IN HOMILETICS

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Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty of the

Graduate School of Vanderbilt University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Religion

May, 2011

Nashville, Tennessee

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

Composition theorist Linda Brodkey reflects, "When I picture writing, I often see a solitary writer alone in a cold garret working into the small hours of the morning by the thin light of a candle."[1] Brodkey admits to struggling with this "immutable picture of the author" that has become a popular romantic representation of what "serious" writing should look like.[2] Although she argues that this is not "her scene," its theoretical and pedagogical power have dominated modern images of writing.[3] Such an image "immortalizes and immobilizes the solitary author" who "arrested in the moment of transcription" becomes the subject of student admiration and angst.[4] This picture of the scene of composition has become an artifact uncritically passed down from generation to generation that casts its hegemonic shadow over students.[5]

The theoretical and pedagogical literature of the discipline of homiletics has created its own hegemonic scene of sermon creation. This scene is succinctly encapsulated on the cover of Paul Scott Wilson's book, *The Four Pages of the Sermon*.[6] Pictured on Wilson's cover is an office desk with an open bible, pen, and lined legal pad. Four pages of the pad are covered with writing. Adjacent to the pad is a pair of glasses, a coffee mug and a box of paperclips. This cover artwork is consistent with the focus on

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[1] Linda Brodkey, "Modernism and the Scene(s) of Writing," *College English.* 49 no. 4 (1987), 396.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Sharon Crowley points to the power of such reigning author-centered understandings of invention which highlight the "individual creative mind of a rhetor working in relative isolation." Sharon Crowley, *The Methodical Memory: Invention in Current-Traditional Rhetoric* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990), 32.

[4] Brodkey, 399.

[5] Ibid., 397.

[6] Paul Scott Wilson, *The Four Pages of the Sermon: A Guide to Biblical Preaching.* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999).

the scene of invention often implicit but sometimes quite explicit in contemporary homiletics. The assumed image of the preacher sitting at a desk staring at an unmarked yellow lined notepad, or gazing at a blank computer screen, dominates homiletic assumptions inventing sermons. This dominant image has effectively curtailed critical consideration of the complex theological activity at work in the inventive process. In particular, this understanding of homiletical invention has promoted two unfortunate elements of preaching: disembodiment and isolation.

Throughout undergraduate, seminary and graduate work, I have had the privilege of both being a student and serving as a teacher's assistant in various forms of preaching classes. One common occurrence was that after a sermon was preached in class, there would be at least a few comments or reactions to the ways in which a preacher's hand motions, facial expressions or physical movement added or took away from the message of the sermon. In reflecting back on those classroom experiences, however, I was startled to realize that these discussions of body never were related to the process of sermon creation. That is, there was basically no critical language to address how the preacher's actual body was involved in sermon invention. Questions such as "How did your body help form this sermon?" or "What does your body say about this claim?" never appeared in the post-sermon discussions. Across the various denomination affiliations, theological traditions and homiletic methodologies that contributed to my homiletic and theological education, there was a general silence about the preacher's body during the process of sermon invention.

This dissertation will show that homiletic literature and pedagogy about sermon creation has, since the nineteenth century, largely ignored the body while focusing on a

neck-up image of sermon creation. Such an absence of critical engagement with the body's role in sermon invention, especially within the homiletic classroom, has allowed preachers to retreat into the solipsistic realm of the mind to compose their sermons, while their bodies become disconnected flesh, void of meaning-making or the ability to support or counter the mind's assumptions. Such disconnection can lead sermon invention towards abstraction and away from the actuality of the preacher's being-in-a-material-world. The danger here is that the preacher's disconnected flesh fails to give witness to the incarnated flesh of Jesus Christ in the world. I will argue, however, that preachers are deeply embodied beings and sermon invention can no longer be viewed or taught as an internal journey in the mind.

After I encourage teachers of preaching to reconsider the ways (or lack thereof) in which they teach about the body in sermon creation, I also urge them to reimagine the spatial and relational dynamics of the inventive scene in order to overcome isolation. As a camp director for some years, one of the main elements of my everyday regimen involved interaction with space, and managing relationships within that space. Whether readying space to host groups or dealing with the aftermath of how groups used the space (as poignantly seen in the repainting of all our bunks because of graffiti etched on them by campers), I have had the privilege and responsibility of providing what I hope is sacred space to very different groups that utilize the camp. One particular weekend, I looked at the calendar to find the following three groups slated to share space at Longridge Camp; a mostly African-American non-denominational men's group, a mainline mostly white youth group, and a mainline mostly white and older women's group. In the current governing paradigm of homiletics, in which culturalist and linguistic

models prevail, these three groups would be considered as operating under similar yet distinct interpretive schemes that produce diverging language games. Communication among these groups would thus be limited. One group would regard the language of another group as incommensurable because they spoke a different language than their own, or one group would attempt to subsume another group's language within their own interpretive scheme. In either case, the cultural-linguistic model would inform us that there would be little hope of any group truly encountering and then understanding the difference of another group without immediately subsuming that difference within their own governing scheme.

In reality, however, this did not occur. Throughout the weekend, as spatial boundaries were transgressed, I witnessed and overheard substantial dialogue that took place along the edges of the spaces groups were provided. In the dining hall, where meals were shared together, I heard dialogue leading towards understanding every morning when I monitored and refilled the supply of coffee. People in each of the three groups were interested in the other, and in brief, ad-hoc conversations crossed lines that the cultural-linguistic model would tell us are very difficult or impossible to transgress. In my perspective, these moments were not attempts at solidifying identity through the rehashing and defense of group culture and history, but actually spatial openings where new communicative ground was broken. This was not a romantic process that was named and celebrated, but a subtler and shorter series of openings signified by brief smiles, nods and thoughtful pauses.

This experience was furthered amplified by a recent conversation I had with a good friend who has written more than a few songs that have made the top 40 of country

music.[7] Not only would Lee reiterate to me again and again that he rarely wrote alone, he would always describe the scene of writing as vibrant, diverse and exploratory. When I asked Lee about the challenges of having a "country" writer along with a "pop" writer and a "blues writer," he just didn't understand the question. For him, songwriting identities were not based on an a priori scheme that determined the kind of language/music that would be written. His goal was often to get to something new, to blend together styles and backgrounds instead of reinforcing such identities.

Both of these descriptions of communicative engagement suggest other possibilities for the co-creation or co-invention of theological meaning that run counter to notions that people are isolated in different worlds and cultures that prevent the meaningful invention of new communicative ground. Such notions have prevented preachers from encountering otherness and difference because they have deemed such encounters unnecessary, useless, or impossible. As a result, the kinds of engagement that I witnessed at camp and that my songwriter friend described have rarely been critically considered. Preachers have been taught that sermon composition is more about individually managing ideas and truths already present on stable ground, clearly defined, instead of searching for new ground through encounters with difference in both text and person. I will argue that such an understanding of sermon invention is a failure to realize the eschatological potential of God breaking in and creating new ground that is social in nature.

The importance of this project, however, ranges beyond the latest news headlines and my own personal experience. The failure of most homiletic theory to move beyond nineteenth-century noetic assumptions concerning the creation of sermons has

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[7] http://www.leebrice.com

engendered a pedagogical environment that privileges what is inward, static and abstract. Metaphors such as the sermon seed, in which a mental idea grows into a sermon, the compass that drives sermon creation, or sermon preparation as akin to coffee percolating in the mind, dominate the homiletic landscape. This perspective is in direct opposition to the theological realities of the incarnation and eschaton which urge preachers towards the outward, productive and concrete. The governing theoretical and pedagogical Weltanschauung can be characterized by the term retreat: retreat into the private office, away from the possibility of encountering difference; into the preacher's mind, away from his or her embodied reality; into the act of meditation away from the risk of production; into abstraction away from the Word become flesh; and into the constraints of cultural-linguistic determined ground away from the possible divine inbreaking and creation of new discursive ground. Such a move into introspection within the framework of the conventional paradigm has dire theological consequences for the teaching of preaching in seminary classrooms. Students are asked to preach about a Christ of flesh while denying their own flesh, and encouraged to preach about the hope of a new kingdom without believing that the power of new creation can occur in the very sermon creation process. There are threads in homiletic literature, however, that are beginning to offer alternatives to the reigning view of invention, and I will seek to build upon these alternatives to offer homileticians, teachers of preaching and preachers a more robust theological scene of sermon creation.

Background

The practice of arriving at something to say for a particular situation was classically referred to as the process of invention.[8] The first of the five stages of rhetoric, theories of invention sought to aid speakers in the development of effective and persuasive speech for multiple discursive locations. While authors referenced rhetorical invention frequently in nineteenth-century homiletic works, growing tensions between homiletics and rhetoric in the twentieth century led to the gradual disappearance of such terminology.[9] Further, as Richard Hee-Chun Park pointed out, contemporary "homiletics

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[8] Aristotle considered invention to be one step of "finding the available means of persuasion in a given case" and constructed topoi or places in which types of arguments could be found. See Richard L. Larson, "Discovery through Questioning: A Plan for Teaching Rhetorical Invention," *College English* 30, no. 2 (1968): 126. Quintillian and Cicero wrote extensively about the topoi as a publicly accessible set of strategies that could be utilized in the case of disagreement in community issues. Stasis theory, another classic inventive practice, attempted to locate the place at which two disagreeing parties stood or could agree about the character of the need. See Malcolm Heath, "The Substructure of Stasis-Theory from Hermagoras to Hermogenes," *The Classical Quarterly,* n.s., 44, no. 1 (1994): 114; Greek and Roman understandings of invention were hardly uniform, and debates raged over the epistemic function of invention, the relationship between natural genius and rhetorical arts and the end goal of invention. See Janice M. Lauer, *Invention in Rhetoric and Composition*,. (West Lafayette, Ind: Parlor Press, 2004), 22, 28.

Through the Middle Ages and Renaissance, "the epistemic function of rhetorical invention virtually disappeared, giving way to theology and the emerging scientific method"; Lauer, 38; See also Richard McKeon, "Rhetoric in the Middle Ages," in *The Province of Rhetoric*, ed. Joseph Schwartz and John Rycenga (New York: Ronald Press, 1965), 172-211. Francis Bacon would argue that invention was used not to "discover that we know not" but "out of the knowledge whereof our mind is already possessed, to draw forth or call before us that which may be pertinent," Francis Bacon, "The Advancement of Learning and Novum Organum," in *Great Books of the Western World*, ed. Mortimer Adler (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), II.xiii.6. Invention lost its epistemic status to science in the work of Bacon as invention was like the chase of a deer in a closed park (the chase of that which we already know its name), Ibid., XIII.6. Peter Ramus attempted to evict invention from the canons of rhetoric while focusing only on style and delivery. See Walter Ong, *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue: From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958). Stephen Yarbrough argued that Ramus posits discursive grounds fixed in advance that allow access to truth through reliable methods. See Stephen Yarbrough, *After Rhetoric: The Study of Discourse Beyond Language and Culture* (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University, 1999), 113. O. C. Edwards noted that "the adoption of Ramist theory gave sermons the form of logical demonstrations rather than oral persuasions." See O. C. Edwards, *A History of Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 363. In "renouncing any possibility of invention," Ramus relegates dialogue and conversation to be "by implication mere nuisances" (Ibid., 289). Bacon and Ramus would leave a legacy that "precluded a rhetorical way of reasoning in the realm of probability" and "robbed invention of an epistemic function," (Lauer, 41). The consequences would be severe as speech became only that which mediates the inward, private thought that develops in a separate mental space. This would lead to the later work of the Port Royal school to "purify" language.

[9] Nineteenth-century examples are explored in a following section. Exceptions to contemporary trends include Robert Reid and Lucy Lind-Hogan. See Lucy Lind Hogan and Robert Reid, *Connecting with*

has primarily emphasized sermon form and delivery. Invention has often been viewed as the responsibility of those areas of a seminary focusing on biblical theology and systematic theology."[10] While such attitudes led to the absence of the term "invention" in homiletics, writers, however, almost always gave attention to how the preacher found something to say in the pulpit. These descriptions contain often implicit beliefs about the nature of the scene of invention in which sermon creation occurs. Unfortunately, as the cover of Wilson's book denotes, this scene has been primarily characterized by homiletics as an enclosed site where a preacher mentally organizes thoughts and ideas. Such a characterization has severely limited homiletic engagement with the incarnational aspects of invention, namely the embodied character of the preacher-in-a-material-place. This scene has also constrained the eschatological aspect, the creative inbreaking of the new or opportune (kairotic) elements that impinge on incarnational engagement with the here and now. This theologically impoverished focus, however, is not the only way in which the scene of sermon invention can be described.

An Alternative Way of Believing

　　　　Building on the work of Donald Davidson, Stephen Yarbrough makes the provocative claim that "*what* we believe about how discourse works makes a difference to *how* it works."[11] He makes this claim because he believes language and thus communication does not operate upon a "stable field of play" such as Saussure's

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the Congregation: Rhetoric and the Art of Preaching (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1999). For brief summaries of the homiletics-rhetoric relationship, see Gert Otto, "Preaching," in *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, ed. Erwin Fahlbusch, and Geoffrey William Bromiley (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2005), 4:331-338; Craig A. Loscalzo, "Rhetoric," in *Concise Encyclopedia of Preaching*, ed. William H. Willimon and Richard Lischer (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press), 410.

[10] Richard Hee-Chun Park, *Organic Homiletic Samuel T. Coleridge, Henry G. Davis, and the New Homiletic*. (New York: Lang, 2006), 148.

[11] Yarbrough, *After Rhetoric*, 78.

infamous chessboard.[12] Yarbrough's beliefs, as well as yours and mine, *matter* because beliefs are real things in the world that have real effects upon reality. After all, even "false beliefs have real effects – just not the effects the believers expect."[13] Thus, Yarbrough can conclude that "whatever theory we come to believe can describe how we use words will alter that very use of words."[14]

Sympathetic to the underlying claims of both Donaldson and Yarbrough, I make a similar claim, that "what we believe about how sermons are created affects how sermons are actually created." This is because I do not believe that there is a "one-size-fits-all" general theory of sermon invention or description of the inventive scene that accurately describes a closed field of play with closed conventions and clear boundaries. I have chosen to suspend belief in the dominant homiletic model of invention and ask if there is another way forward that is both incarnational and kairotic/eschatological.[15] I will not attempt to create some truer or more real theory of sermon creation. I will argue that a different belief concerning the character of the scene of sermon invention has the potential to provide new angles of vision on homiletical invention, as well as on issues that already deeply concern the discipline of homiletics such as embodiment, discursive-somatic (mis)alignment, and language/culture.

I do not argue that sermon composition does not involve autonomous preachers in inward mental exegetical and hermeneutical acts. Preachers, of course, do live in a world in which many are taught and believe that sermons begin as mental "ideas" or "seeds."

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[12] Ibid.; "But of all comparisons that might be imagined, the most fruitful is the one that might be drawn between the functioning of language and a game of chess…A game of chess is like an artificial realization of what language offers in a neutral form…It is also true that values depend above all else on an unchangeable convention, the set of rules that exist before a game begins and persists after each move." Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*. (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959), 88.
[13] Ibid., 9.
[14] Ibid., 184.
[15] Ibid., 52.

These beliefs are real, powerful and prevalent (as I will show in a survey of Introduction to Homiletics primary and secondary textbooks in chapter three). I will argue, however, that we *do not need to believe* that sermon construction works this way and that there are significant theological concerns that may prompt us to change these beliefs.

In recent years, the contours of the inventive scene have been critiqued and challenged. Charles Campbell has pushed for practices of dislocated exegesis, in which preachers actually engage the text with others in various locations *outside the church*.[16] Tom Long has helpfully pointed to the relationship that exists between preacher and congregation.[17] Gonzalez and Gonzalez have signaled the death of lone ranger bible study.[18] Lucy Rose and Eunjoo Mary Kim have emphasized the communal and conversational trajectory in homiletics, while Anna Carter Florence, in her history of women's preaching, has described women who had no private office into which to retreat.[19] John McClure has developed an other-wise ethic of preaching in which collaboration, through such practices as midweek roundtable groups, is a valued part of sermon preparation.[20]

As of yet, however, there has not been sustained theological discussion of the complex character of the inventive scene, nor attempts to mine its potential pedagogical implications. Thus, the scene of sermon creation continues to be narrowly construed in

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[16] Charles L. Campbell, *The Word Before the Powers: An Ethic of Preaching*. (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 153.

[17] Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching*. (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005).

[18] Justo L. González and Catherine Gunsalus González. *Liberation Preaching: The Pulpit and the Oppressed*. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1980), 50.

[19] Lucy Atkinson Rose, *Sharing the Word: Preaching in the Roundtable Church*. (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997); Anna Carter Florence. *Preaching As Testimony*. (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007); Eunjoo Mary Kim, "Conversational Learning: A Feminist Pedagogy for Teaching Preaching." *Teaching Theology & Religion* 5, no. 3 (2002): 169-177.

[20] John S. McClure, *The Roundtable Pulpit: Where Leadership and Preaching Meet*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995); *Other-Wise Preaching: A Postmodern Ethic for Homiletics*. (St. Louis, Mo: Chalice Press, 2001).

contemporary homiletic theoretical and pedagogical literature so that the *incarnational* and *eschatological* potential of the compositional process has remained unaddressed. These two theological dimensions inevitably overlap and intersect on the inventive scene for, as Jürgen Moltmann notes, "The ultimate *Shekinah*, the cosmic incarnation of God, is the divine future of the earth."[21]

After charting developments in the works of homileticians, as they begin to question the validity of the accepted scene of invention, I will seek to open up new theoretical space, calling on homiletics to theologically consider the ways in which the reigning scene historically became hegemonic, and to wrestle with how such an ideal has shaped contemporary pedagogical assumptions. In the end, this study is an attempt to *open up* the narrow contours of the inventive scene to critical theological and pedagogical reflection, and in the process to suggest a different way of understanding how preachers "find something to say."

A Look Ahead

In his text on semiotics, Daniel Chandler argues that the camera is never neutral and the images it portrays are always highly coded.[22] In many ways, when homiletic theory and pedagogy has cast its lens upon the scene of invention, it has severely narrowed the focus, kept the camera angle at head height and editing out all that did not fit within an introspective, controlled space. Chapter one will trace this editing historically, starting with the work of nineteenth-century homiletician John Broadus.

[21] Jürgen Moltmann, "Progress and Abyss: Remembrances of the Future of the Modern World," in Miroslav Volf and William H. Katerberg, *The Future of Hope: Christian Tradition amid Modernity and Postmodernity* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. 2004), 26.

[22] Daniel Chandler, *Semiotics the Basics* (London: Routledge, 2002), 165, http://bibvir.uqac.ca/BD/man.php?F=TAYLOR&TD=EBK&LOC=http://www.myilibrary.com?id=6858.

Chapter two will consider how these choices have shaped the pedagogical nature of texts often used in the introductory classroom.

There have been those, however, who have begun to bring new cameras with wider lenses to the scene, who have slowly begun to focus on those moments of creation that have historically been cut out from the picture as mundane, explicit, irrelevant or embarrassing. This work hopes to encourage this reflection by calling for more cameras on the scene to take in the amazing breadth of the inventive process. There are of course impediments to this widening, and chapter three will consider two of these forces, namely the subsumption of invention to hermeneutics, and the belief that shared conventions are needed to communicate. After offering ways to overcome these constraints on the scene of invention, chapters four and five will attempt to describe an emerging perspective on the scene of sermon creation and develop the grounds for a pedagogy in which invention is more deeply incarnational and eschatological.

CHAPTER I

A HOMILETIC HISTORY OF INVENTION

No Archimedean standpoint exists for surveying the history of rhetorical

invention within homiletic theory. This chapter does not tell a different story than the one

generally told, though that would be a useful task, nor does it attempt to offer a counter-

history to the traditional accounts.[1] Instead, the narrative in this chapter accepts the usual

story of homiletics, which begins with John Broadus and proceeds through the new

homiletic, to cultural-linguistic models, and on to postmodernism, in order to emphasize

a plot line that often receives little or no attention in critical discourse. This chapter

addresses the historical narrative in this way because its goal is to understand how this

homiletic schema contributed to the creation and use of pedagogical works in the

Introduction to Preaching classroom. To properly evaluate these works, this chapter

describes the theoretical treatment of invention in the various paradigms of the standard

narrative of mainline homiletic history in North America.

Treatment of sermonic invention will begin with an intellectual history of John

Broadus's classic *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*.[2] Intellectual history "is

concerned with understanding how ideas originate and evolve in specific historical

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[1] Michel de Certeau, and Tom Conley, *The Writing of History* (Columbia University Press, 1992), 287; G. Pullman, "Stepping Yet Again into The Same Current," in *Post-Process Theory: Beyond the Writing-process Paradigm*, ed. T. Kent (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1999), 16.

[2] This treatment is based on the 1898 edition of Broadus's work. First published in 1870, the 1898 edition includes material from Broadus's 1889 Yale lectures. Paul Huber noted the primary differences between the two versions: "The latter is arranged in a more teachable fashion. Chapter subtopics are more precisely stated and a greater number of them are used…The portions of the book that concern purely homiletical considerations are made current…" Paul Huber, *A Study of the Rhetorical Theories of John A Broadus* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1956), 6.

contexts; it is also concerned with tracing their histories within the broader histories of societies and cultures which they have helped to shape, and which also have shaped them."[3] This history illuminates the intellectual influences and assumptions behind Broadus's understanding and treatment of invention in the rhetorical art of sacred oratory. It concerns itself especially with the prevalent rhetorical theories at work in the nineteenth century, and how these theories informed Broadus's understanding of how mind and discourse operated. The analysis focuses primarily on thinkers Broadus specifically named in his primary work.[4]

Following the analysis of Broadus, the remainder of the chapter surveys the progression of contemporary homiletic theory through a number of influential figures, including Grady Davis; advocates of "narrative preaching"; Fred Craddock; the cultural-linguistic work of Charles Campbell; and finally various recent proposals that resist generalization. The chapter gives a brief introduction to each scholar's theory and understanding of preaching, and then focuses on how each dealt with sermonic invention. This is not an exhaustive survey, but it highlights works generally located within the dominant historical understanding of North American mainline homiletic development.

The analysis will show that contemporary homiletic theory has for the most part continued to rely on nineteenth-century rhetorical understandings of invention. These understandings had a distinctly introspective character. The overwhelming majority of homiletic work describes the process of finding something to say as a predominately

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[3] Brian Young, Introduction to *Palgrave Advances in Intellectual History*, ed. Richard Whatmore and Brian Young (Basingstoke, Eng.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 2; for more on intellectual history, see Donald R Kelley, *The Descent of Ideas: The History of Intellectual History* (Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate, 2002).

[4] Thus, treatment of Broadus will take the form of what Brian Cowan terms a "texts as contexts" style. Brian Cowan, "Intellectual, Social and Cultural History: Ideas in Context," in *Palgrave Advances in Intellectual History*, ed. Richard Whatmore and Brian Young (Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 172.

mental act, both in theory and in practice. This introspective focus portrays the preacher as an autonomous being who retreats to the office in order to engage in solitary activities such as freewriting or brainstorming to begin composing a sermon. While there are important exceptions that have sought to consider the bodily and spatial dynamics of finding something to say, the dominant perspective has tended to marginalize sermonic invention. It thus limits the theological potential of a widened inventive scene that critically considers more than the preacher's intellect. In limiting attention to the scene of invention, homiletics has focused on inward, mental activities, a focus that has reigned since the nineteenth century. While many contemporary homileticians might be surprised to find their names connected to the work of Southern Baptist John Broadus, their treatment of invention is often based on the same assumptions he worked with in the 1870s.

John Broadus's Context

John Broadus's *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* was the most influential textbook on Homiletics in the first half of the twentieth century, and it continues to be influential in evangelical circles. First published in 1870, from notes in Broadus's class at Southern Baptist Seminary, the now classic work on preaching was a product of the nineteenth-century rhetorical *Weltanschauung*. The first section of this chapter outlines the intellectual history, the influences and philosophical assumptions, operating in the rhetorical and homiletical "air" when Broadus defined homiletics as a "branch of rhetoric."[5] This outline primarily considers sources of influence that Broadus

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[5] John Albert Broadus, and Edwin Charles Dargan, *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (New York: A.C. Armstrong and Son, 1898), 16; It is interesting to note that in Baptist seminaries

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specifically cited, either in the main text or in the footnotes to his most influential work. It gives special emphasis to how these sources understood rhetorical invention, as well as the underlying assumptions supporting these understandings. After establishing Broadus's intellectual context, I will examine the treatment of the process of invention in *A Treatise* as the basis for the modern development of homiletic theory in the twentieth century.

Classics

As Nan Johnson indicated, we can view nineteenth-century rhetoric as a synthetic amalgam derived from the classics, eighteenth-century belletristic proposals, and eighteenth-century epistemological theory.[6] Broadus noted early in his preface his indebtedness to the first of these strands, specifically Aristotle, Cicero and Quintillian.[7] My concern is to chart how Broadus and other nineteenth-century rhetoricians and homileticians interpreted Aristotle's (and the Roman tradition's) work on invention. James Berlin traced this relationship and argued that while the classical tradition dominated American colleges between 1730 and the American Revolution, it soon fell into disrepute, as the noetic character of American academic culture shifted.[8] According to Berlin, classical rhetoric had been used "to serve the needs of a society in which

at least, homiletics and rhetoric remained a unified subject until 1879. See Conrad Massa, "Toward a Contemporary Theology of Preaching, an Historical Study of the Nature and Purpose of Preaching, with Special Reference to Representative Works of Homiletical Theory" (Th.D. thesis, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1960), 215.

[6] Nan Johnson, *Nineteenth-Century Rhetoric in North America / Nan Johnson* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991), 14-15; James Berlin, *Writing Instruction in Nineteenth-Century American Colleges*. Studies in Writing & Rhetoric (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984), 3.

[7] Broadus, xii; Massa identifies two trajectories of homiletics in the nineteenth century; those which maintain the idea that homiletics is a species of rhetoric, and those which tended to emphasize the interpretive function of preaching. Almost all of the preachers Broadus cites as influences fall under the first trajectory (215-216).

[8] Berlin, 13.

wealth and power were concentrated in the hands of a ruling class", and the curriculum that supported a classical education was intentionally made difficult to access.[9] Further, science and empiricism began taking the place of Aristotle's dialectical logic and deductive reasoning.[10] Berlin argued that the American emphasis on democracy and the self-made man led to valuing the "practical and scientific, not the literary in education."[11] Evidence for this shift in noetic values includes the surprising lack of influence of John Quincy Adams' *Lectures on Rhetoric and Oratory*, published in 1810. Adams, holder of the Boylston Chair of Rhetoric at Harvard, followed the classicists in subject and style, but, as Berlin argued, "it was no longer suited to the age."[12] Thus, while Broadus signaled his debt to the classicists, as any good nineteenth-century rhetorician did, his training at the University of Virginia took place in an intellectual climate dominated not by Aristotle, but by George Campbell and the New Rhetoricians.

Augustine

Before addressing the New Rhetoricians' influence, it is essential to note a significant post-classical influence on Broadus.[13] Through the writings of Augustine, rhetoric became a partner discipline for preachers, and in the process Augustine adapted rhetorical invention "to the goal of interpreting the Bible."[14] Of the four books of *On Christian Doctrine*, the first three dealt with invention, which for Augustine involved

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[9] Ibid., 18

[10] Ibid., 17

[11] Ibid

[12] Ibid.

[13] David S. Dockery, Roger D. Duke, and Michael A. G. Haykin, *John A. Broadus: A Living Legacy*. Studies in Baptist Life and Thought (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2008), 72; Broadus, 5, 10; Broadus also greatly respected Augustine as a preacher. See his treatment in John Albert Broadus, *Lectures on the History of Preaching* (New York: Sheldon, 1876), 82-84.

[14] Olmsted, *Rhetoric*, 34; John H. Patton, "Wisdom and Eloquence: The Alliance of Exegesis and Rhetoric in Augustine," *Central States Speech Journal* 28 (1977): 96-105, esp. 98.

primarily the exegesis and discovery of truth in Scripture. Augustine discussed the art of Homiletics proper and applied the rhetorical arts of arrangement, style, delivery and memory to preaching only in the final book. According to George Pullman, this structure "suggests that discovery (invention) belongs to hermeneutics, and thus all that remains of rhetoric is merely a collection of rules or strategies for preaching the Truths that hermeneutics has discovered."[15] In this way, invention became "an art of exegesis that guided the discovery of meaning in the Scriptures."[16] This important move shaped the evolution of homiletics' understanding of invention in relation to texts.[17] As Rita Copeland noted, "in Augustine, finding something to say can only be extracted from a field of textual coherences, for it is in Scripture that one discovers—invents or comes upon—the doctrine that one will expound in preaching."[18] George Pullman argued that Augustine's legacy privileged reading (hermeneutics) over writing (rhetoric), so writing became "nonepistemic, it is actually ancillary to any epistemic activity."[19] In other words, the preacher exegetically approached the text in order to discern the meaning and only then turned to rhetoric in order to communicate that meaning to listeners. This attribution of *inventio* only to written discourse was a distinct move away from the *topoi* of the classical tradition. The text of Scripture itself became the *topos* for all that was to be said,

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[15] George Pullman, "Rhetoric and Hermeneutics: Composition, Invention, and Literature," *JAC* 14, no. 2, Fall 1994, http://www.jacweb.org/Archived_volumes/Text_articles/V14_I2_Pullman.htm.

[16] Wendy Olmsted, "Invention, Emotion, and Conversion in Augustine's Confessions," in *Rhetorical Invention and Religious Inquiry: New Perspectives*, ed. Walter Jost, and Wendy Olmsted (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 30.

[17] Richard Penticoff, "Augustine, Saint, Bishop of Hippo," in *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric and Composition*, ed. Theresa Enos (New York: Taylor & Francis, 1996), 50.

[18] Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages: Academic Traditions and Vernacular Texts*. Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature x (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 156.

[19] Pullman.

and Augustine turned the "modus inveniendi into the modus interpretandi."[20] Thus

Broadus received from Augustine an understanding of invention as an exegetical or

hermeneutic practice bound to the exploration of the single, coherent text of Scripture.

Established principles or doctrine governed what could be discovered there, which further

bound the practice of rhetorical invention.

Richard Whately

In the nineteenth century, rhetoric and homiletics (or sacred oratory) were deeply

interdependent. Authors such as Witherspoon, Adams and Porter composed works on

both subjects.[21] Often writers defined Homiletics as a special branch of rhetoric, so

rhetorical theory heavily influenced and supported treatises on preaching. Broadus

acknowledged the writing of Richard Whately as a major rhetorical influence on his now

classic work.[22] Whately, a British philosopher, theologian and later archbishop, was one

of a chorus of voices who responded to the perceived problem of a weak English pulpit.[23]

This chorus included representatives of three main trajectories of thought: the rhetoric of

belles lettres, the elocutionary movement, and psychological-epistemological rhetoric.[24]

Hugh Blair, the most influential voice advocating belles lettres, attempted "to remove the

distinction between rhetoric and belles lettres in order to unify the language arts."[25] The

ideal was to unify rhetoric and literary theory as equal disciplines. In practice, however,

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[20] Copeland, 156.
[21] John P. Hosher, "American Contributions to Rhetorical Theory and Homiletics," in *History of Speech Education in America: Background Studies*, ed. Karl R. Wallace (New York: Apple-Century-Crofts, 1954), 144.
[22] Broadus, xii.
[23] Douglas Ehringer, Preface to *Elements of. Rhetoric*, by Richard Whately, ed. Douglas Ehringer (Carbondale IL:,. Southern Illinois University. Press,. 1963), xxiv.
[24] Ibid.
[25] James Berlin, "Richard Whately and Current-Traditional Rhetoric," *College English* 42 (1980): 12.

this move privileged the literary and relegated rhetoric to a science more concerned with criticism "than with production."[26] As Thomas Miller describes it, this process also turned pedagogical attention toward belletristic essays from the *Spectator*, an apolitical journal dealing with self-improvement that was only one of a popular genre.[27] Douglas Ehringer notes that Whately rejected the belles letters approach, focusing instead on the classical oral form of discourse.

Scholars in the elocutionary movement interested themselves in systematizing the process of delivery.[28] According to Ehringer, many attempts went to an extreme "attempting to prescribe the precise tone, gesture, and posture suited to every sort of idea and feeling."[29] Delivery became a "mechanical" system that attempted to apply science to various physical aspects of public discourse, including tone, gesture and posture.[30] Whately also rejected this movement, choosing instead to focus on "naturalism" as opposed to a mechanical science of delivery.

It was the third movement that Whately followed to "its logical completion."[31] The psychological-epistemological approach reached its apex in the work of the Scottish Presbyterian George Campbell. In order to understand Campbell and later writers he influenced, it is important to realize the significant impact of faculty psychology on rhetorical theory in the nineteenth century.[32] Faculty psychology, then advocated by such

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[26] Ehringer, *Elements of. Rhetoric*, xxiv.
[27] Thomas P. Miller, "The Rhetoric of Belles Lettres: The Political Context of the Eighteenth-Century Transition from Classical to Modern Cultural Studies." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 23 (1993): 3.
[28] One homiletic work that emphasized elocution was William Russell, *Pulpit Elocution* (Andover, MA: Allen, Morrill and Wardwell, 1846).
[29] Ehringer, *Elements of. Rhetoric*, xxv.
[30] James L. Golden, *The Rhetoric of Western Thought: From the Mediteranean World to the Global Setting*, 8th , rev. ed. (Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt, 2003), 22.
[31] Ehringer, *Elements of. Rhetoric*, xxviii.
[32] Robert Connors, *Composition-Rhetoric: Backgrounds, Theory, and Pedagogy* (Pittsburgh, PA.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997), 214.

thinkers as David Hume and Thomas Reid, holds that there is an "essential relationship" between the "rhetorical process and the mind."[33] Thus, "particular faculties activate discrete intellectual and emotional responses" and "particular rhetorical forms and techniques facilitate these functions."[34] For Campbell, every discourse first targeted the faculty of understanding, and the rhetorical forms that best accomplished this were the explanatory and the controversial.[35] This understanding of faculties and forms resulted in the ascendancy of "multimodal" rhetorics, in which authors prescribed various forms such as explanation, conviction and persuasion to influence certain faculties in the mind. Ehringer explains that this focus on human faculties of understanding led to a reversal of the classical order of treatment concerning the search for *topoi* and then the communication of those *topoi*.[36] Thus Campbell's theory of invention took on a more scientific, as opposed to classical, appearance, one that focused on the individual recalling the content of discourse through memory, instead of searching for content via *topoi* and commonplaces.[37] Rhetors used their intentions to guide them through the process of investigation and then committed that process to memory (a memory that could then be transferred to text).[38] Sharon Crowley notes that the "stuff of invention— subjects, ideas, knowledge, discoveries, and thoughts, as well as aims or intentions" thus

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[33] Johnson, 21; Note also that in this division of the mind, reason and emotion are contrasted with "convincing", considered to be rational, and "persuading", which was irrational, F. H. van Eemeren, R. Grootendorst, and Francisca Snoeck Henkemans, *Fundamentals of Argumentation Theory: A Handbook of Historical Backgrounds and Contemporary Developments* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1996), 189.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Connors, 214.

[36] Ehringer, *Elements of. Rhetoric*, xxvi.

[37] Golden, 175; see McClure, *Otherwise*, 72.

[38] Sharon Crowley, *The Methodical Memory: Invention in Current-Traditional Rhetoric* (Carbondale, IL.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990), 15.

existed before discourse and became landmarks on the introspective journey.[39] Campbell dramatically turned away from classical rhetoric by advocating that the rhetor begin not with investigations of what other people thought but "with an introspective review of their own thought processes."[40] This introspective turn rested on faith in the reliability of our memories to retain an accurate record of their manipulation of ideas.[41] Invention became dependent on the rhetor trusting "that the skill or originality with which she made connections between ideas is accurately reflected by her memory…she must trust she fundamentally remembers her sensory impressions…[and] trust further that any discourse that results is itself an accurate representation of all these processes."[42] Under the influence of contemporary psychology, the growing impact of the scientific method and "a growing Romantic distrust of the status and topics," invention shifted to the realm of logic or other sciences. Invention became more managerial (rather than a discovery) in character in focusing on the introspective workings of the mind.[43]

In 1828, Richard Whately's *Elements of Rhetoric* carried on the "managerial" focus that Campbell assigned to invention by focusing on how to argue non-rhetorically established propositions.[44] Ehringer considers Whately's "chief purpose" to be the "justification and propaganda of a priori truth" that the preacher can then use to convey right doctrine to a mostly "unlettered" congregation.[45] Whately described rhetoric as "the" art of persuasion, and imaged it as a "codified body of inevitable laws" to which all

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[39] Ibid., 16.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Crowley noted that "faith in the accounts given us by our memories was a first principle for Campbell" (21).
[42] Ibid., 22.
[43] Ehringer, *Elements of. Rhetoric*, xxvii; Berlin, 13.
[44] Berlin, 13.
[45] Ehringer, xi.

successful persuasion "must conform."[46] Therefore, the orator approached the "process of rhetorical invention not as an investigator but as a communicator."[47] Whately's rhetoric was void of any epistemic function, and focused "on principles rather than persons" in its attempts to prove arguments developed in other fields.[48] Ray McKerrow describes Whately's rhetoric as an "impersonal, sterile system for making decisions" in which an interlocutor "is vulnerable to the charge of neglecting 'persons' in the pursuit of principles."[49] This description fits with Whately's categorizing rhetoric as an "off-shoot" of logic, so that the "proper province of Rhetoric" was "finding of suitable arguments to prove a given point, and the skillful arrangement of them."[50] Crowley argued that the result was "the notion of evidence…usurped the place of topical invention" and that this evidence depended "primarily on a rhetorician's private and internal mental experiences."[51] Thus, Broadus inherited from Whately and his "new rhetoric" forbearers a managerial understanding of invention that focused on the styling and arranging of arguments to support already defined propositions.[52]

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[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid., xxix.

[48] Ray McKerrow, "The Ethical Implications of a Whatelian Rhetoric," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 17, no.3 (1987): 324.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Whately, 39; Berlin, *Elements of Rhetoric*, 14.

[51] Crowley, 29.

[52] David Buttrick notes that Whately's influence lasted well into the twentieth century, "At mid-century…The textbooks seemed to reflect a homiletic theory that derived from an odd mix of nineteenth-century-Pietism, orthodox homiletic practice, and sometimes the rhetoric of Richard Whately." Buttrick, *Homiletic*, 483.

Alexandre Vinet

Broadus also acknowledged the influence of Swiss theologian and critic

Alexandre Vinet.[53] Vinet was a prolific author, but his 1854 *Homiletics* had the most

direct influence on Broadus's homiletic. Vinet devoted over two hundred pages to the

subject of invention before turning to disposition and elocution. He regarded invention as

"an active spring, an energy of the mind."[54] It was a "mystery" that appeared to be a kind

of "divining-rod." Vinet always emphasized invention's location in the mind. He argued

that "an inventive mind may become more so by the use of certain means which are not

talent," while others in which invention was "feeble" might develop this "power in

itself."[55] Vinet prescribed four means to enhance the inventive talent: knowledge,

meditation, analysis and exercise.[56] One assumes that these mental acts are pieces of what

Vinet described as "the most reliable means of invention," a "truly philosophical

culture."[57] These "instruments of invention" were continually sharpened by constant use

and effort.[58] From Vinet, Broadus received a notion of invention as an internal, mental

act that was in some way an innate talent (genius), to be developed through certain

practices including a life of constant study of "philosophical culture."

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[53] Broadus notes Vinet as an influence (xii) and draws on Vinet throughout *On the Preparation* (i.e., 23, 54, 76, 147, 183). Vinet notably appears as a subject of Barth's critique in Karl Barth, *Homiletics* (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991).

[54] Alexandre Rodolphe Vinet, and Thomas H. Skinner, *Homiletics: Or, The Theory of Preaching* (New York: Ivison & Phinney, 1854), 50.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid., 51-53.

[57] Ibid, 53.

[58] Ibid., 255.

G.T. Shedd

Broadus included Shedd, Hoppin and Day as additional influences on his homiletic work.[59] G.T. Shedd, a prominent nineteenth-century Presbyterian homiletician, was used as a main example in Russel Hirst's attempt to posit a sixth canon of rhetoric (inspiration) in nineteenth-century homiletics.[60] Shedd observed that "that part of Rhetoric which is termed Invention,—that part which treats of the supply of thought,—has been greatly neglected in modern treatises, so that the whole art has been converted into a collection of rules relating to style, or elocution, merely."[61] Hirst noted that Shedd urged preachers to live a life of constant study in the three fields of Theology, Poetry and Philosophy. Scripture, Augustine, Anselm, Calvin, Shakespeare, Bacon and Locke, among others, were ideal sources of inspiration as they had "discovered seminal ideas in the mind of God."[62] A life of engagement with these ideas was the fountain of inspired discourse, and Shedd argued that the schooling best suited to such a life was a classical education. Based on a life of classical study, the preacher could explore Scripture adequately and "perform the task described by Plato: having arrived at an understanding of the truth, he was to make that truth clear to his listeners in a way that would move their souls toward the Good."[63] The preacher, trained in the classics, approached the text in order to spark a springing-up of divine truth within, and then quickly turned to composition in order not to lose the force of that inspiration. Hirst notes that Shedd's metaphor for this process of invention is often a seed growing to maturity in the

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[59] Broadus, xi.

[60] Russel Hirst, "The Sixth Canon of Sacred Rhetoric: Inspiration in Nineteenth-Century Homiletic Theory," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 25 (1995): 69-90; 77. I will draw heavily upon Hirst's work in this section on Shedd.

[61] G.T.Shedd, "The Ethical Theory of Rhetoric and Eloquence," in *Literary Essays*, ed. William Shedd (New York: Scribner, 1878), 104.

[62] Hirst, 79.

[63] Ibid.

"properly prepared mind."[64] The Spirit worked in this process, but it was primarily the individual, whose lifelong mental preparation provided the most conducive conditions to the sermon seed's maturity. According to Karen LeFevre, this metaphor of the "seed" would become an influential image in the modern history of rhetoric.[65] In addition to this metaphor, Broadus received from Shedd "the sixth canon" or "the Great Qualification, the most important part of the framework within which the classical rhetorical doctrines must function when applied to sacred oratory."[66] This canon of inspiration augmented the classical tradition so that the Spirit of God "purifies the materials of invention like fire."[67] Perhaps more importantly, however, Broadus received from Shedd and other nineteenth-century homileticians in the conservative tradition the belief that the best preaching came from inspired minds educated at certain schools using "books of particular kinds."[68]

James Hoppin

In his 1869 *Homiletics*, Yale professor of homiletics James Hoppin, defined invention as "the art of supplying and of methodizing the subject-matter of a discourse."[69] Hoppin outlined the following sources for arriving at that subject-matter: original power of thought, acquired knowledge, and the process of reasoning. Power of thought belonged

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[64] Ibid., 81.

[65] Karen Burke LeFevre, *Invention As a Social Act: Studies in Writing & Rhetoric* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987), 14. LeFevre considers it to be a natural development of what she terms a "Platonic View of Invention" that considers rhetorical invention to be "the solitary act of an atomistic writer who aims to produce a text (15)."

[66] Broadus used this seed metaphor in a section on originality, "The same phases of nature and experiences of life awaken in us the same reflections they have awakened in many others; and seed-thoughts attain in us the same development." Broadus, 128; Hirst, 87.

[67] Hirst, 87.

[68] Ibid.

[69] James Hoppin, *Homiletics* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1883), 673.

"to mind, as mind," but one increased this power through "discipline and culture."[70]

Hoppin quoted Vinet in lauding the value of "philosophical education" for developing inventive genius.[71] A trained, disciplined and thoughtful mind produced accomplished sermon writing for "thought itself is, after all, the main principle and source of good writing."[72] The mind surveyed the world for truth and then stockpiled that truth as a rich source of invention. The preacher then pulled from this stockpile a subject over which the preacher had mastery. The preacher accomplished this through turning to deep meditation in order to make truth "fit for use."[73] The greatest source for meditation was the truth of Scripture, which Hoppin regarded as "common property to all preachers and men."[74] Hoppin then challenged preachers to be like the Puritans who continually dwelt in the Word, and surmised that their preaching "must have seemed…like a direct prophecy, or a speaking of God's spirit through their minds to men."[75] The result of this mental meditation upon Scripture was an "originality of invention."[76] Hoppin concluded his lectures by arguing that the truth invented by the preacher and refined in the fires of meditation, only had a "vital element," an "energy, a beauty, a converting power" when the inspiration of "His eternal Spirit fills our minds."[77] Like other influences on Broadus, Hoppin regarded invention as an internal mental act best cultivated through the philosophical life of "discipline and culture." Through deep exposure to and meditation upon sources of truth in the world, especially Scripture, preachers built up internal mental

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[70] Ibid., 673.
[71] Ibid., 674.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid., 675.
[74] Ibid., 679.
[75] Ibid., 676.
[76] Ibid., 679.
[77] Ibid., 797.

resources. The Spirit then directed the preacher toward the proper resources subsequently

regarded as truth, the subject matter for the sermon.

Henry Day

Henry Day, a Yale-educated scholar who studied homiletics, eloquence and

rhetoric, defined invention as "the art of supplying the requisite thought in kind and form

for discourse."[78] Invention for Day was the "very life of an art of rhetoric," and he argued

for the use of "pure and elevated pleasure" in inventing a subject.[79] The process consisted

of "stating a proposition and analyzing and dividing the proposition into its constituent

parts," so that invention included both creation and thought, and managing

arrangement.[80] Berlin argued that Day was the first American rhetorician to apply the

managerial notions of invention found in Campbell and Whately.[81] Although Day's

rhetorical views represented a "road not taken" in the rhetorical tradition, here I follow

Crowley's focus on Day's "fetish about unity."[82] Day wrote that "as a rational discourse

necessarily implies a unity, this unity must be in the singleness of theme and of the object

of discourse."[83] In even more striking language, Day noted "the unity of a discourse, in

which, indeed, lies its very life, requires that there be but one thought to which every

other shall be subordinate and subservient."[84] It is important here to recall Day's reliance

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[78] Henry Noble Day, *The Art of Discourse: A System of Rhetoric*, Adapted for Use in Colleges and Academies, and Also for Private Study, 2nd ed. (New York: C. Scribner and Company, 1872), 42; Broadus, xii; Broadus also notably referred the reader to Day for more insight into convention and mentions his influential categorization of rhetoric as explanation, confirmation, excitation, and persuasion (Broadus, 153 fn. 1)

[79] Day, 40-41.
[80] Lauer, 43.
[81] Berlin, *Writing*, 39.
[82] Crowley, 124.
[83] Day, 44.
[84] Ibid.

on faculty psychology, and thus his assumption that oral discourse should aim primarily at only one faculty of the mind. Crowley argued thas the emphasis on unity entailed a belief that "single thought units" in the mind would be most "readable" if the linguistic representation was both singular and complete.[85] Selection and method joined this emphasis on unity and completeness in Day's mature *Art of Discourse* so that together they "repeat Descartes' injunction that any investigation be characterized by clarity and distinction."[86] The rhetorical result of this move toward unity and completeness was that "the law of method had to govern invention," and thus one should habitually train one's mind in the "exercise of method."[87] As Crowley points out, this conception of invention and arrangement regarded the listener as "curiously docile."[88] Instead of the classical focus on the rhetorical situation of the audience, Day and others regarded the audience as simply rational and interested. Thus, these writers regarded method as a strategy to ensure that listeners received the most lucid understanding possible.

Conclusion

In summary, Crowley described three characteristics of nineteenth-century renderings of invention. First, these scholars "displaced inventive potential out of communal discourse and relocated it within individual minds."[89] Invention took place through introspective meditation wholly prior to commitment to language. Through a life of classical study, students built up a storehouse of knowledge that produced seeds that

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[85] Crowley, 124-5.
[86] Ibid., 125.
[87] Ibid., 125-126.
[88] Ibid., 122.
[89] Ibid., 68.

developed mentally into mature subjects for discourse.[90] Thus scholars reduced invention to a managerial function, so that the "actual discovery of material" was removed from the composing process.[91] Second, the practice of invention took little account of "any resistance that might be offered by a potentially refractory subject."[92] The preacher could divide subjects and then amplify each part in support of the main subject. Objects in the world, even objects in Scripture, remained inert, waiting for "their transformation into subjects."[93] Finally, invention "glossed over the differences" among discursive situations and audiences.[94] Rhetoric represented the inward mental journey of the orator/writer, and any rational audience could follow the replicated presentation. It rested on the "epistemological principle that argumentative strategies must engage the functions of understanding," to represent this journey.[95] The desired "effect on the audience" determined which "faculty" a prescribed rhetorical form would address.[96] In the nineteenth century, sacred rhetoric (preaching) ultimately functioned to address the emotions and move the will (persuasion). Thus, persuasion, that which best addressed the pathos, became the rhetorical form of sacred oratory.[97]

As Nan Johnson has asserted, nineteenth-century rhetoricians constructed a set of general principles (both for argumentation and persuasion) that functioned as guidelines for oration. She pointed to the presence of such guidelines adapted to preaching in

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[90] Ibid, 59.
[91] Berlin, *Writing*, 64.
[92] Crowley, 68.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Johnson, 121.
[96] Berlin, *Writing*, 65; As noted earlier, faculty psychology divided the mind up into faculties and rhetoricians assigned various rhetorical forms to address each faculty.
[97] Johnson, 157.

homiletic textbooks (and to Broadus specifically) as proof of their "normative status."[98]

Johnson concluded that the "homogeneity" in the treatment of argumentative guidelines

in both homiletic and rhetorical works reflected the dominate understanding of

"argumentative oratory as a relatively straightforward matter of applying fundamental

principles regarding the formation of a plausible proposition and the selection and

management of proofs or evidence."[99]

Rhetorical notions of invention shaped by men such as Whately, Vinet, Shedd,

Hoppin and Day informed homiletic theory in the nineteenth century. Writers understood

composing a sermon as an autonomous, introspective act best based on a life of classical

study and education. Scripture was the field or ground of sermonic discourse, and

homileticians encouraged preachers to engage in such mental practices as meditation and

analysis. This watered the emerging seed or central subject of the sermon. The resulting

growth occurred linearly and systematically, so that a central and unified subject was

divided into supporting propositions that brought completeness to a rhetorical argument.

The sermon's language replicated this mental journey (thought), so that any rational

hearer could receive the resulting truth. Preachers regarded the Spirit as at work in the

growth of the sermon seed, purifying the process, but the preacher was responsible for

living a life of study that made the mental soil fertile, so that sermon seeds could take

root. After the seed matured, the preacher gave the truth to the audience, following

argumentative guidelines that epistemologically ensured reception by rational minds.

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[98] Ibid., 122.
[99] Ibid.

Broadus on Invention

John Broadus, an experienced preacher from Virginia, penned his influential *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* in the rhetorical and homiletic milieu described above.[100] The eventual 1870 text arose from lectures copied by a blind student in a homiletics class immediately following the Civil War, when the Southern Baptist Seminary was in its infancy.[101] Broadus clearly expressed the noetic mood of the American rhetorical scene in his treatment of eloquence in his introduction. He argued that eloquence was more than simply "speaking as to carry your point" but instead required 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."[102] The aim of sacred oratory was to move the will, and "associating" a subject with common notions, or ideas that were available to all, accomplished this goal.[103] The preacher was only "really eloquent" when "he speaks of those vital gospel truths which have necessarily become familiar."[104]

In addition to the previously mentioned faculty psychology that emphasized the various "faculties" of the mind addressed by rhetorical forms (i.e. will addressed via persuasion), the assumptions of "association psychology" also influenced the rhetorical theories of Broadus's time.[105] Association psychology, especially important to the work

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[100] "*A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* was the most comprehensive textbook available for some sixty years," Craig Loscalzo, "The Literature of Preaching," in *Handbook of Contemporary Preaching*, ed. Michael Duduit (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1993). 54.

[101] Thomas J Nettles, "The Enduring Impact and Relevance of *A Treatise on the Preperation and Delivery of Sermons*," in *John A. Broadus: A Living Legacy* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2008), 177.

[102] Broadus, 5.

[103] Ibid, 7.

[104] Ibid.

[105] William F. Woods, "Nineteenth-Century Psychology and the Teaching of Writing," *College Composition and Communication* 36, no. 1 (1985): 20-41; Woods notes that faculty psychology dominated

of George Campbell, regarded minds as divided compartments. Minds "worked according to innate principles of association" so that one recalled an idea when a similar idea or one that had a relationship to a previous idea was experienced.[106] As the mind processed ideas in this way, complex ideas formed, depending on the varying experiences of individual minds. Crowley argues that this Lockean associationism provided the basis for Campbell's rhetoric, a rhetoric built upon confidence in the ability of memory.[107] These same assumptions were at work when Broadus argued that sacred oratory moved the will through "associating" the subject of a sermon with common notions and ideas available to all (commonplaces).[108] Preachers then must assume that audiences correctly remember not only the content of "vital gospel truths", but also can replicate the ways in which persons experienced those truths and the mental processes that connected those experiences.[109]

After discussing selecting a text and a subject, Broadus turned to invention, "a matter of great importance."[110] Broadus admitted that "some minds are more creative than others" but argued that "if a man has no power of invention, he has mistaken his business when he proposes to be a preacher."[111] Aside from piety, invention was the "most important" quality that a preacher possessed.[112] In order to develop the inventive

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the first half of the nineteenth century, while in the 1870s, through the influence of Alexander Bain (whom Broadus cites) and others, associational psychology began to rise to preeminence, 25.

[106] Crowley, 17-18. The influence of association psychology lasted well into the nineteenth century. See Ned Shearer, "Psychology as Foundation to Rhetoric: Alexander Bain and Association Psychology's Relation to Rhetorical Theory," *Western Speech* 35, no. 3 (1971): 162-168.

[107] Crowley, 21.

[108] Broadus, 7.

[109] Ibid.

[110] Ibid., 118.

[111] Ibid., 119.

[112] Ibid.

faculties, the preacher needed these qualities: "acquisition, reflection, exercise."[113]

Broadus then cited the practical suggestions of Daniel Kidder for invention.[114] These

suggestions included the call to invent thoughts not words, to write down any thoughts

that came into one's head, to select a subject early in the week, and to use former studies

to help. These practices prescribed by Broadus were all characteristic of what Crowley

terms introspective invention.

Turning to the acquisition of materials, Broadus noted that most material was not

"invented" at the time of composing, it was rather the result of previous preparation.[115]

Even those ideas that seemed novel were probably only recollections of things previously

forgotten or the "development of something already known."[116] The illustration that

followed about a man who inherited a fortune and spent the principal like it was the

interest reinforced a banking notion of knowledge in which a preacher deposits sensory

information into the mind for later retrieval and rhetorical use. Broadus asserted that

young preachers had a large cache from which to pull sermon ideas, but growing older

they began to exhaust that cache. Preachers might thus find that congregations would not

listen as they did before. According to Broadus, this resulted from the fact that the

preacher "ceased to maintain activity of mind and good store of fresh thought."[117] Thus,

Broadus concluded, "we draw our sermons from what we have wrought out or learned

beforehand."[118]

Broadus specifically emphasized the role of Scripture and Systematic Theology as

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[113] Ibid.
[114] Daniel Kidder, *A Treatise on Homiletics: Designed to Illustrate the True Theory and Practice of Preaching the Gospel* (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1864).
[115] Broadus, 120.
[116] Ibid., 121.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Ibid.

sources to "fund" the mind, so as to provide a rich source for sermon creation. Broadus

rounded out the classic theological encyclopedia with Church History, and he went on to

mention ethical philosophy and the study of sermons. Apart from books, the preacher

pulled knowledge from his experience of the world and human nature, conversations

about religious topics and, of course, previous sermons.[119] Broadus then moved to

specific preparation for the individual sermon, which consisted primarily of the

interpretation of a text and the selection of a subject. He believed that the preacher should

"reflect" on the text, and then, "fixing the mind" on the subject, attempt a complete

"analysis" of the issues involved.[120] In this process, Broadus argued that the "provision of

material for immediate use will often really be very largely a selection from the general

stock of previously acquired knowledge and thought."[121] This, he noted, combined two

things; first, "deliberate choice and selection from the storehouse of memory and

reflection," and secondly, "the spontaneous coming of thoughts by the law of association

of ideas."[122] Again, Broadus drew on the principles of associational psychology in order

to describe the mind as a "storehouse" of general knowledge.[123] Through the laws of

association, experiences during the preparation of particular sermons interacted with

ideas in the storehouse to bring out something "new."[124]

In moving to the subject of originality, Broadus made the distinction between the

"physical world," where the individual constantly ascertained "new facts," and the

"world of ideas" in which it was difficult to be original.[125] This description of two

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[119] Ibid., 127.
[120] Ibid., 128.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid., 129.

separate worlds again highlights Broadus's indebtedness to Lockean notions of a separation between the "external world" and the "world of ideas." Broadus continued that "the same phases of nature and experiences of life awaken in us the same reflection they have awakened in many others," and that "seed-thoughts attain in us the same developments."[126] As noted earlier in the work of G.T. Shedd, this notion of the idea as a seed that grew in the mind was a basic rhetorical principle of the nineteenth century. Through a life of study and acquiring knowledge, the storehouse mind actually became a greenhouse in which "seed-thoughts" grew into complex ideas, and later subjects for sermons.[127]

After acknowledging the possibility of "relative originality," Broadus noted that "the basis of preaching cannot be original, because it must come from Scripture."[128] It was possible for the preacher to have an original view on the meaning of Scripture, however, and Broadus proceeded to highlight the importance of this goal. Independent thought was highly attractive to listeners as it was considered the preacher's "offspring" that awakened "parental affections".[129] The listeners viewed the preacher not as one who simply repeated other's truths, but instead as one that in some way provided part of his own "bounty."[130] Broadus's reasoning for why audiences appreciated originality was telling: "whatever makes his mind glow will warm theirs."[131] Broadus considered minds to work in standard, rational ways; therefore, while experience differed from person to person, mental function (in this case the process of the original formation of ideas) was

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[126] Ibid., 130.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid., 130.
[129] Ibid., 132.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid., 133.

universal. If the process affected the preacher in a certain way (glow of the mind), the preacher knew that the rehearsal of that process of associational formation would affect the audience similarly. This is why Broadus asserted that "in general, no man can interest others, save by that which exceedingly interests himself."[132] Scripture, theology, occasions, individual cases, the age in which a person lived and the person's self were all subjects that when continually studied kept the sermon fresh and the preacher's mind ready to "spring up elastic."[133] Crowley describes this process of invention as depending "primarily on a rhetorician's private and internal mental experiences; proof consisted in his imitating this process in as exact manner as possible, so that the experience could be recreated in the minds of an audience."[134]

It is clear throughout Broadus's treatment that Scripture is the ground for invention. He argued that "the basis of preaching cannot be original, because it must come from Scripture."[135] The preacher should rejoice in taking "the fundamental material of his preaching" from the Word of God.[136] In discussing argumentation Broadus noted that the preacher should hold the claims of the Word of God as decisive and final. The Scriptures were a standard of final appeal, for in the end Scripture was "paramount."[137]

In concluding his treatment of invention, Broadus turned to the "special materials" of explanation, argument and application.[138] These materials were rhetorical principles based on an epistemological understanding of natural laws. Broadus noted early in his work "those fundamental principles which have their basis in human

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[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid., 146-149.
[134] Crowley, 29.
[135] Broadus, 130.
[136] Ibid., 137.
[137] Ibid., 172.
[138] Ibid., 152.

nature."[139] Knowing that human nature worked in a certain way allowed the preacher to utilize specific canons (materials) that through adaptation to particular situations appealed to certain faculties.[140] Others in the nineteenth century generally assigned sacred oratory to the persuasive function, as it sought in some way to move the will. Broadus, however, noted that preaching should not be "merely convincing and persuasive, but eminently instructive."[141] There were times when the preacher needed to understand his main task as telling "the people what to believe, and why they should believe it."[142] Secondly, Broadus considered "argument" to be an important strategy of the preacher. Citing Hoppin, Broadus argued that "the most successful preachers…the most successful revival preachers, are often at first severely argumentative."[143] The preacher should thus study some old works of Logic, and possibly even attend a few debating societies, to prevent himself from misleading the audience.

Turning to Whately, Broadus provided a form or method for argumentation and considered the different varieties of a priori, deduction, induction, analogy, and testimony argument.[144] This was a complex section that dwarfed the other special materials in terms of length and treatment. Broadus then discussed illustration and its sources, before finally turning to application, which was the "main thing to be done."[145] Included in the term "application" which should not be reserved for the end of the sermon but instead function throughout, was "all that we denote by the terms "persuasion" and "exhortation.""[146] The "remarks" of application should "bear down upon the feelings and the will," but Broadus

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[139] Ibid., 16.
[140] Johnson, 229.
[141] Broadus, 153.
[142] Ibid., 155.
[143] Ibid., 169.
[144] See Huber 21-30 for a treatment of Broadus on argumentation.
[145] Broadus, 245.
[146] Ibid., 246.

asserted that the "chief part of what we commonly call application is persuasion."[147] It was not enough to "convince," nor even to "make them see how it applies to themselves," but ultimately preachers should "persuade men."[148] Considering the sermon's ultimate aim as persuasion was in line with Campbell's description of the purpose of sacred oratory as influencing the will.[149]

Near the conclusion of his work, Broadus emphasized the role of imagination, and encouraged preachers to cultivate their imaginations especially through the study of art and literature.[150] Huber notes Broadus's positing of poets as the "chief teachers" of imagination and his encouragement to seek out poetry to "kindle our imagination."[151] In concluding his work, Broadus turned to the "sixth" canon of rhetoric in noting that after the preacher's general and special preparation, there was no guarantee of success. "Real success" came only through dependence on the Spirit of God.[152]

John Broadus's influential work depended upon principles adopted from both the faculty and associational psychology that operated in the broader rhetorical milieu of the nineteenth century. Scholars understood the mind to be a storehouse of knowledge cultivated through lifelong study, primarily of "great" or "classic" works. This storehouse became a greenhouse where a sermon seed would spring up and mature into a sermon subject. The preacher assumed that the audience's mind worked in the same way as his, and also that there was some common storehouse of "vital truths." Through argumentation, preachers convinced and ultimately persuaded the audience by taking

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[147] Broadus, 249.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Crowley, 98.
[150] Broadus, 424-425; Huber, 37.
[151] Huber, 37,
[152] Broadus, 541.

them on the same mental journey that the preacher had performed.[153] Furthermore, the

preacher could feel confident that the audience would reach the same end. Thus inventing

a sermon was an introspective, mental act in which the preacher drew upon a life of

learning to develop a sermon seed or idea he would present methodically through the

principles of sacred oratory.

Grady Davis

Broadus's work embodied the prevailing notion of invention in homiletic

classrooms until the mid-twentieth century. In 1958, Grady Davis began to change things

with his work *Design for Preaching*.[154] Lucy Rose notes that "between 1958 and 1974

the earlier consensus that had looked to Broadus to define the task of preaching…

dissolved and a new consensus… formed around Davis."[155] Davis argued that the sermon

should be "like a tree" that grows with "natural limbs reaching up to into the light."[156]

This organic metaphor served as the central image of his book. Davis abandoned the

language of ideas and propositions in favor of such markers as "generative idea,"

"design" and "organic structure." Perhaps one of Davis's most influential contributions

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[153] This was typical of nineteenth-century sermons. Johnson noted that "when a congregation hears a sermon, the preacher provides Bible lessons (appeals to understanding) and also exhorts the assembly to change their behavior and live a good life (persuasion by moving the will)," (229).

[154] Massa argues that at the beginning of the twentieth-century homiletics turned from rhetoric to psychology for authority. He quotes Parkhurst in the 1913 Yale lectures: "Psychology is as essential as theology to the proper presentation of pulpit truth" (Massa, 242-243).

[155] Rose, 9; see Donald Chatfield, "Textbooks Used by Teachers of Preaching," *Homiletic* 9, no. 2 (1984): 2; Others also point to Davis as the progenitor of a new wave of homiletical thinking, See Charles L. Campbell, *Preaching Jesus: New Directions for Homiletics in Hans Frei's Postliberal Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub, 1997), 117-18; Paul Scott Wilson, *The practice of preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 199-200.

[156] Grady Davis, *Design for Preaching* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958), 15; It is interesting to note that the organic notion of composition had been suggested many years before by Alphonso Newcomer. See Woods, 34-35. Park posits Davis as a "Romantic Organic Homiletician" influenced by the work or tradition of Samuel Coleridge. See Richard Hee-Chun Park, *Organic Homiletic: Samuel T. Coleridge, Henry G. Davis, and the New Homiletic* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006).

was his emphasis on sermon form. He argued that "we cannot have a thought without its form," and that this thought "takes shape" or "is formed" in our minds.[157] He went on to describe "an unformed thought" as only a "vague impression…until given a local habitation and a name."[158] This local habitation "is its embodiment in some image associated with remembered sense experience."[159] Through this "process it is given a recognizable form."[160] This form often invoked responses "deeper than rational thought" that "may never rise to conscious attention" for it began "deep down among the intuitive feelings."[161]

Davis provided three "special reasons" for his emphasis on form. First, since the aim of preaching was to "win from men a response to the gospel," knowledge of form was advantageous because it worked "at deeper levels than logic" and "persuades directly and silently."[162] Secondly, Davis described listeners in terms of a mind/heart split. The listener might "feel himself" deeply moved on an intuitive level, while "his rational mind may be picking God's Word to pieces."[163] Davis noted that "the top of his mind and the bottom of his heart may have little to do with each other" and that this could be remedied only through a "form which strikes directly and silently below all rational defenses."[164] Finally, the gospel was a powerful message that dethroned the self and placed "Another" in its place.[165] Form deeply mattered in proclaiming such a life-changing message from the pulpit. Davis believed a young student should prepare to preach in such a way that he

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[157] Davis, 1.
[158] Ibid, 2.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Ibid,.
[161] Ibid., 3.
[162] Ibid., 5.
[163] Ibid.
[164] Ibid., 6.
[165] Ibid, 6-7.

or she understood and grasped the "right form for each sermon."[166] This became possible through reading good books on writing and speaking, studying the theory of literary criticism and other "serious interpreters," studying the sermons of others, being familiar with rhetoric, and practice.[167]

The image of the seed was key to Davis's ideas about invention, although he never explicitly referred to the concept. There was a thought, an idea that was "productive" in "generating the sermon."[168] For Davis, the "sermon is inherent in this thought…exists in the thought or idea as the plant exists in the germ, the seed."[169] When a preacher recognized this seed, it was then time to design (not construct) the sermon. Design was "seeing and shaping", not working with a "saw and hammer."[170] It was "more like making a plant grow to the form inherent in it."[171] The generative idea arose from Scripture, and as it began to take root and grow in the mind, the preacher needed to "feel" its form.[172] Inherent in the idea itself was "the energy to move the preacher," and later the congregation, through engaging the heart, the imagination and will.[173]

As the preacher felt and recognized the form inherent in a generative idea, "the process of expansion" began.[174] This process was "an action of the mind" that we must "feel taking place before we can begin to see how it takes place."[175] Davis argued that there was a "natural expansion" that the preacher should allow in spite of the temptation

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[166] Ibid., 9.
[167] Ibid., 13-14.
[168] Ibid., 21.
[169] Ibid.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Ibid.
[172] Ibid., 47, 79.
[173] Ibid., 79.
[174] Ibid., 80.
[175] Ibid.

to make an idea into an "artificial shape."[176] In order to stimulate this expansion, Davis

suggested taking a pencil in hand and after searching the passage again, writing down

how the passage contributed to the subject. Then the preacher should "ask himself, What

does the idea mean? Do I, do my hearers believe it?..."[177] After writing down answers to

these questions, "he will soon know whether he has a sermon or not."[178] "The point is,"

Davis continued, "that if attention is kept steadily focused on a subject, the mind will

begin at once either to expand it or to narrow it down to one of its sharper aspects that has

relevance or force."[179] Davis then proceeded to let the reader in on his own process of

seed expansion, and described the resulting sketch as being representative of "the design

of the sermon as it took shape in my mind."[180]

      While Davis certainly shifted homiletic theory in the latter half of the twentieth

century, his work on invention was remarkably similar to that of Broadus. Although he

abandoned the language of outlines, types of argumentation and propositions, Davis

continued using the image of the mental seed. Couching the concept in more organic

language, Davis posited that the preacher plants a seed (the generative idea) when a

vague notion becomes associated with a prior sense experience. Davis expanded this

description, similar in its assumptions to those of associational psychology, by positing

that association as the creation of a local habitation that gave the thought a recognizable

form. The resulting "germinal thought" resided "in the preacher's mind."[181] The preacher

then recognized the inherent form of the seed and cultivated its growth or natural

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[176] Ibid., 81.
[177] Ibid.
[178] Ibid.
[179] Ibid., 84.
[180] Ibid., 89.
[181] Ibid., 139.

expansion. Usually known naturally only on a deeply intuitive level, a type of directed free-writing often stimulated this process.

Invention for Davis became a uniquely creative and personal act that could only be observed by another.[182] Thus, it was difficult to describe and almost impossible to prescribe, but Davis attempted to give his best description of how ideas naturally expanded in his own mind. Inventing a sermon remained the autonomous act of an individual preacher who attempted to pull from Scripture initial ideas that then would connect with sensory experiences in order to take up habitable space in the mind. As with Broadus, the preacher cultivated this seed through study and mediation. Unlike Broadus, however, the preacher attempted to find the inherent form of the idea. Davis's contribution to sermon invention turned the focus toward this natural form of the germinal thought. Invention, therefore, became more a search for form instead of content, with the potential audience rarely in sight. Davis concerned himself mostly with this task of finding the inherent form of an idea, something already present in and inherent to the idea itself.

Fred Craddock

Fred Craddock's *As One Without Authority*, now in its fourth edition, was one of the most significant mainline homiletic texts in the twentieth century. As Stephen Farris noted, "It is quite simply, impossible to truly understand late twentieth-century homiletics without having at least some familiarity with it."[183] Craddock's work "breathed new life

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[182] Lauer, 63; Richard Young, "Paradigms and Problems: Needed Research in Rhetorical Invention," in *Research on Composing*, ed. Charles R. Cooper and Lee Odell (Urbana, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1978), 31.

[183] Stephen Farris, *Homiletic* 27, no.1 (2002): 35.

back into the practice of preaching" and stimulated two generations of preachers to stop throwing the javelin to passive and often bored congregations and instead to offer them the chance of becoming engaged participants.[184]

Craddock argued that we can no longer take language for granted and attempted to develop a theology of speaking.[185] Instead of the model of one-way communication presented by many traditional models of preaching, Craddock argued that both the speaker and listener engaged in true speaking. Craddock believed that spoken words "create and sustain among us a consciousness of one another," and that preaching must rediscover that communal character.[186] Taking the discussion through Wittgenstein and Heidegger, Craddock emphasized the "irreplaceable value of human speech in laying hold of and bringing to expression Life itself."[187] The preacher spoke the Word of God as God revealed God's self in words.[188] This Word of God then drove the church to "achieve at all times maximum communication" through using words in community.[189] Because these words were so important, Craddock suggested we study the common experiences of talking, conversing and listening-speaking.

Craddock revealed the heart of his theology and methodology when he wrote that "Because the particulars of life provide the place of beginning, there is the necessity of a ground of shared experience."[190] The preacher must identify with the listener and the sermon must assume a common experience of asking "the question of their own being

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[184] Campbell, 126.
[185] Fred Craddock, *As One Without Authority*, 2nd ed. (St. Louis, Mo.: Chalice Press, 2001), 23.
[186] Ibid., 25.
[187] Ibid., 31.
[188] Ibid., 35.
[189] Ibid.
[190] Ibid., 49.

and of their relation to Ultimate Reality."[191] In addition to shared questioning, Craddock's method presupposed a common engagement with mundane day-to-day activities. It was through appealing to these concrete experiences that preachers could "activate their [listener's] meaning."[192]

Craddock argued that one of the goals of the preacher was to make it so that "the congregation can hear what she [the preacher] has heard." [193] The preacher, therefore, should "fervently desire to recreate that experience and insight."[194] Craddock described the mind as having "galleries,"…"filled with images" hung there by parents, writers, teachers, and so on.[195] It was only when images changed that people changed. Thus, preachers needed to develop heightened sensitivity to the world around them in what Craddock termed "the pores of one's psychological and mental skin."[196] Preachers lived life in the world, and images of this life became part of their "psyche" and served as the basis for sermon creation. Pastoral participation in the life of a congregation became a major source of these images. Interaction with "the experiences of others" led to the preacher's mind being "flooded by the wide range and multiplicity of human need."[197] The preacher's mind "stretched" in this process of receiving impressions that spanned the range of the "pathways in the human psyche."[198] The preacher then reflected on these experiences in order to "use evocative imagery that will allow the congregation to see and hear what she has seen and heard."[199] Craddock proceeded to offer several guidelines to

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[191] Ibid., 51.
[192] Ibid.
[193] Ibid., 63.
[194] Ibid.
[195] Ibid., 64.
[196] Ibid., 65.
[197] Ibid., 68.
[198] Ibid., 69.
[199] Ibid., 73, 74.

aid the preacher in rhetorical production, such as drawing images from the world around and using words that embodied specific relations.

Inductive preaching, as Craddock called his method, required a life of constant preparation in order to capture and communicate the "one idea" of the sermon.[200] Echoing Davis' language, Craddock termed this the "single germinal idea" that arose out of deep exegetical work with Scripture.[201] Journeying inductively through a text, the preacher attempted to "recapture his own enthusiasm" in the hope that the same excitement of discovery would "register in the hearers' minds."[202] The congregation journeyed along with the preacher in this process, as the specific contexts and needs of the listeners were always in dialogue with the specific claims of the text.

Invention for Craddock also began with a germinal seed, one springing "from a text or from the life situation of the congregation."[203] Living a life of attention in the world with the congregation filled the preacher's mental galleries with images. As the preacher engaged in dialogical exegesis with the text and congregation, these images produced a central idea that began to mature in the psyche. The preacher then began "playing with the idea," allowing other mental faculties such as "thoughts, feelings, memories, former ideas, and so on" to participate in the journey of discovery.[204] That discovery led to mental "clarity."[205] The sermon then became a re-creation of this inward mental process or journey. In essence, deciding what to preach was a matter of deciding what the preacher's imaginative experience of the text was and re-creating that

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[200] Ibid., 81.
[201] Ibid.
[202] Ibid., 99.
[203] Ibid., 127.
[204] Ibid.
[205] Ibid., 128.

experience.

While the particular needs of the congregation were certainly in the preacher's mind during the exegetical process, preachers continued to understand sermon creation as an autonomous act by an individual preacher. The activity of rhetorical production occurred in the mind, and the preacher's role was the re-creation of the excitement of that journey of discovery, so that listeners might join with the preacher to complete the journey themselves. This was a decidedly mental, and again imaginative, journey through the pathways of the psyche, in which evocative images are shifted and replaced, ultimately leading to some type of deep experience or conversion in the listener. Similarly to the views of George Campbell, Craddock's vision of this process emphasized the role of memory, as the preacher must both recall and recreate his or her own experience. Further, the process assumed that mental pathways were universally compatible, and adaptable to inductive logic. In the end, Craddock continued the homiletic tradition of offering a mental (imaginative and memory-informed), inward and autonomous understanding of sermon invention.

Interim Summary

Broadus, Davis and Craddock are seminal figures in homiletic theory who span traditions, denominations and focuses. Southern Baptist John Broadus is perhaps the most influential evangelical homiletician since the Apostle Paul, and is still used in many evangelical seminary classrooms today. Grady Davis became in many ways the twentieth century Broadus for the mainline tradition in terms of his importance and influence. His was a dominant homiletic voice in the mid-twentieth century. Fred Craddock's inductive

preaching inspired a generation of preachers and was instrumental in molding a new generation of homileticians in the late twentieth century. Despite their different backgrounds, theological leanings and times, however, they all treated sermon invention as an introspective act in which the preacher first turned inward to his or her mind. The preacher turned inward to access a storehouse of knowledge or experience, and then analyzed, discovered the form of the idea, or participated in a mental journey of discovery. The scene of invention pictured on the cover of Paul Scott Wilson's *Four Pages of Preaching* works just as well for Broadus as it does for Davis or Craddock. All three would find themselves quite at home in this depiction of invention, in which attention to the actual body of the preacher is absent and treatment of the space that the preacher occupies is nominal.

<div align="center">Narrative Preaching</div>

In the late twentieth century, a proliferation of homiletic theories burst upon the mainline academic scene, beginning with the influential theory of narrative preaching. One of the "organic forms" that Davis had offered for the sermon was "a story told."[206] The rediscovery of narrative and story as categories that could move preaching beyond a seemingly boring and ineffective didacticism reinvigorated homileticians.[207] The turn to narrative sparked new hope that preaching could not only affect people through offering

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[206] Davis, 157.

[207] (Re)discovery is used intentionally as there is an argument that narrative preaching was dominant in the 1st-century church only to be marginalized by the influence of Aristotle. "From the time of Augustine, preachers turned to the Bible for the content of preaching and to Aristotle for the form and style of the sermon, entering into a marriage that was doomed to fail." James W. Thompson, *Preaching Like Paul: Homiletical Wisdom for Today* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 3. See also Don M. Wardlaw, "The Need for New Shape," in *Preaching Biblically,* ed. Don M. Wardlaw (Philadelphia, Westminster, 1983), 11; Thomas Long, "And How Shall They Hear?" in *Listening to the Word: Studies in Honor of Fred B. Craddock*, ed. Gail R. O'Day and Thomas G. Long (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1993), 173.

them an experience with the text, but could also bring excitement back into the preaching itself.

While there were differences among those who espoused narrative preaching, there was a common theme of the importance of narrative form in creating a meaningful experience for the listener. Within this discussion, some argued for following the form of the text, while others emphasized that one should preach all sermons with a plot. Some thought of narrative only as storytelling, while others argued that story was only one manifestation of narrative form. All watered the early seeds of story-telling planted by Grady Davis.[208] As a result, narrative structure/form and story became watchwords of modern homiletical theory.[209]

John McClure delineated four categories of narrative preaching: narrative hermeneutics, narrative semantics, narrative enculturation, and narrative worldview. [210] While continuing to emphasize narrative, Charles Campbell provided a critique of many of the assumptions of narrative preaching that led to new departures in homiletics. The following sections examine representative writers from the narrative preaching tradition

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[208] Charles L. Campbell. *Preaching Jesus*, 118.

[209] For a critique, see Richard Lischer, "The Limits of Story," *Interpretation* 38, no.1: 26-38. See also William Willimon, "Preaching as Entertainment," *Christian Century* 107 (1990): 204-206; Eslinger, "Narrative and Imagery," 69-71; Scott Black Johnston, "Who Listens to Stories? Cautions and Challenges for Narrative Preaching," *Insights* 111 (1996): 4-13; Campbell, *Preaching Jesus*. On the other hand, Tom Long noted of narrative that any time preaching "has run out of steam and gone flat, didactic and dogmatic," narrative has arisen (Long, 9). Long argued that although narrative received criticism from the left, right and center, it would continue to be an important part of the homiletical scene. The center refers to the arguments outline above by Charles Campbell. The right refers to James Thompson who argued that "I am convinced that, to rescue preaching, something more is needed than the rediscovery of narrative form." He went on to give seven points to support this claim including the necessity of a Christian culture, the emphasis on form, the primacy of narrative structure laid upon non-narrative texts, and narrative's inability to speak for concrete changes, The left refers to John McClure's criticism that narrative theorists that "tend to accentuate the imaginative, narrative, parabolic, and literary aspects of homiletics" could become caught up in "abuses of power that accrue from soft hermeneutic approaches." Narrative could lead to the reification of meanings that come through positionality. In other words, preachers could easily universalize their own experience and make that understanding the de facto common experience. See John McClure, *Other-Wise Preaching: A Postmodern Ethic for Homiletics* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2001), 80-81.

[210] See John S. McClure, "Narrative and Preaching: Sorting it all Out," *Journal for Preachers* 15, no. 1: 24-29.

and Campbell's critique in order to analyze how the shift to narrative influenced

understandings of sermon invention.

Tom Long

A good example of narrative hermeneutics is Tom Long's *Preaching and the*

*Literary Forms of the Bibl*e. Long argued that "the literary form and dynamics of a

biblical text can and should be important factors in the preacher's navigation of the

distance between text and sermon."[211] Long therefore attempted to develop "a process of

sermon development" that can "recognize and employ" the different literary forms of

biblical texts.[212] The text for Long was not simply a package containing ideas that one

could open by "squeezing out" ideas and content. Instead, preachers needed to pay close

attention to the form of the text and how the text had a "total impact upon a reader."[213]

Long likened form to a "game," and the dynamics of form to the "rules" of that game.[214]

In order to understand communication fully in this game, we needed to pay careful

attention to "the interplay of words and patterns."[215] The preacher comes to a text and

"attempts to get on common ground" with it by guessing the type of literary "game" it is

intended to play based on clues and previous experience. Long believed that when

successful communication resulted from this encounter, "the text does something to the

reader."[216]

Long then turned to the task of "moving from text to sermon" by highlighting key

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[211] Thomas Long, *Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 11.
[212] Ibid.
[213] Ibid., 12.
[214] Ibid., 14.
[215] Ibid., 15.
[216] Ibid., 21.

questions involved in an "interrogation" of the text that took literary form seriously.[217]

These questions would prompt the preacher to investigate the genre, rhetorical function, literary devices and the overall way the text embodied these attributes. The final question explicitly turned to the homiletic task, "How may the sermon, in a new setting, say and do what the text says and does in its setting?"[218] Long answered that the "sermon's task is to extend a portion of the text's impact into a new communicational situation, that of contemporary hearers listening to the sermon."[219] In order to accomplish this, Long calls on preachers to "regenerate the impact of some portion of the text."[220] Sermons should say and do part of what the text said and did for a particular set of people. Long then proceeds to consider biblical forms such as psalms, narratives and parables.

In Long's description of the composing process, in which he only addresses "one underdeveloped aspect of biblical preaching," the preacher goes to Scripture in search of an understanding of the interplay of its words and patterns.[221] Exegeting the literary forms and dynamics of a text, the preacher attempts to regenerate the text's impact in a contemporary setting. Invention remains an act the autonomous preacher can accomplish alone in the study with Scripture and various exegetical helps. The search for something to say becomes an exegetical exploration of form that in various ways becomes the

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[217] Ibid., 23.

[218] Ibid., 33. David Buttrick also addressed this issue after critiquing the "aged" method of understanding sermons, explication and application, which reduced texts to containers of singular and rational truths. Buttrick offered an alternative approach focused on such things as form, plot or structure, field of concern and logic of movement. Preaching, for Buttrick, should be a speaking of Scripture and not about Scripture, and thus should begin with the question, "What is this passage trying to do?". See David Buttrick, "*Interpretation and Preaching*," *Interpretation* 35, no. 1 (1981): 46-58. In Buttrick's *Homiletic*, he notes that preaching always "involves intending something to do" and offers strategies for achieving those intentions. Some sermons would "intend to work in conscious with immediacy; the plot of the sermon will be designed to shift in congregational consciousness with immediate force." Other sermons produce a "reflective field of meaning" that attempts to structure congregational consciousness. Buttrick, *Homiletic*, 329.

[219] Long, 33.

[220] Ibid.

[221] Ibid., 12.

framework for the arrangement of the sermon. Sermon composition again primarily occurs in the mind, or in the text-mind relationship. With Long, the emphasis shifts from Davis's notion of an organic idea to the form of the biblical text itself. Structuralist emphasis on narrative structure constrains the inventive process to operate within the literary rules and performative intentions of Scripture.

Richard Jensen

Richard Jensen represents the approach of narrative semantics, in which the story becomes a way to take seriously the diversity of ways in which listeners perceive the sermon. Jensen argues that "didactic" and "proclamatory" types of preaching probably "communicate most clearly to those hearers whose dominate mode of perception is controlled by the left hemisphere of the brain."[222] Preachers have a responsibility, however, to also communicate with those listeners who perceive with the right half of the brain, which "controls our intuitive, holistic, imagistic thought processes."[223]

Amos Wilder's idea that "storytelling and gospel-telling are inextricably wrapped up with one another" was important for Jensen.[224] Jensen posits Scripture as the source of the story sermon, and identifies the preacher's task as "imaginative recasting."[225] The preacher should do this recasting, however, with both content and form in mind, in order to be faithful to the biblical text. The preacher no longer aims at persuading the will, but at inviting listeners to participate in the sermon itself. Whately's concern for rational-deductive clarity is left behind. Instead, the preacher leaves story sermons open-ended,

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[222] Richard Jensen, *Telling the Story: Variety and Imagination in Preaching* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1980), 125.
[223] Ibid.
[224] Ibid., 126.
[225] Ibid., 129.

because explanation reduces the possibilities for participation and application to listeners'

lives. The preacher "invites the hearer into the world of imagination" in order that the

listener may experience the gospel "within the context of that world."[226] Listeners should

not only understand an idea but also have an experience.[227]

Jensen rejected criticism from those who wondered if the listener would actually

get the point, or even get the wrong point. He argued that listeners often missed the point

in "conventional sermons."[228] Jensen urged the preacher to go to the local library and get

books on writing and telling stories. Through this process the preacher would learn how

to create stories effectively.[229]

Jensen too adopted many of the nineteenth-century faculty and associational

notions of the workings of the mind. However, instead of explanation, argumentation and

persuasion, Jensen turned to story as the form that best created an experience. The

preacher created this experience by inviting a listener to finish a narrative and apply that

narrative to their own life. While Jensen briefly noted the power of story to affect

emotion, the focus of invention was the mind. But rather than memory acting as the focus

of the psychology of invention, for Jensen it was the imagination. The preacher who

cultivated imaginative power and learned the craft of storytelling went to the text with

careful exegetical attention to content and form. The preacher then developed a clear idea

(although Jensen did not address how exactly this occurred) of the sermon's subject at the

intersection of text and narrative imagination. The preacher then imaginatively recast his

idea for a sermon into a story. While being faithful to Scripture, this story-sermon created

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[226] Ibid., 138.
[227] Ibid., 139.
[228] Ibid., 145.
[229] Ibid., 149.

a new world that listeners mentally (imaginatively) entered. For Jenson, preaching was communication between two imaginations.

Thomas Troeger

Thomas Troeger adopted the narrative enculturation approach, focused on the imaginative nature of invention, in *Imagining a Sermon*. The primary thesis of his work was a call for preachers to be attentive to what is around them and to trust "that common things may be the source of revelation."[230] Troeger suggested that preachers could learn to be more imaginative, and called on them especially to pay more attention to their bodies. When considering logosomatic language, Troeger encouraged preachers to assume a posture and hold it in order to "let your body tell you the words of need."[231] Reflecting on the incarnation, Troeger named one of the goals of preachers as helping listeners know God as one "who identifies not only with our thoughts but also with our breath and our pulse beat, our muscle and our bone."[232] Listening "to the music of speech" encouraged the preacher to arrange the manuscript as a musical score in an attempt to get a sense of "oral speech."[233] These and other imaginative practices helped sustain "creative preaching," in the same way that warm-up exercises on a flute "prepare the way for inspired playing."[234]

Troeger made the significant move of positing the body, in addition to the mind, as a source of rhetorical invention. He attempted to construct a bodily ethos that "will open us to God's revelations" so that preachers might "receive the *ruach*, the spirit of the

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[230] Thomas Troeger, *Imagining a Sermon* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1990), 15.
[231] Ibid., 58.
[232] Ibid., 59.
[233] Ibid., 77.
[234] Ibid., 135.

living God."[235] Throughout his book action scenes are always individual in structure, and his creatively interwoven personal reflections serve as testimony of his own attempts to embody these imaginative principles.[236] As one form of bodily listening, Troeger suggested inventive heuristics, such as posing with characters in Scripture to attune the preacher to the "sighs of the Spirit."[237] Ultimately, Troeger's call for paying close attention to the body remains an individual task that supports the mental act of composing and then writing/preaching a sermon.

Walter Brueggemann

Walter Brueggemann, who adopted the narrative worldview perspective, published the important essay "The Social Nature of the Biblical Text" in *Preaching as a Social Act.* Brueggemann described preaching as "the key hermeneutical event in contemporary interpretation" and attributed an important creative function to this hermeneutical act.[238] Each time the preacher approached the church to preach, she was "intentionally or unintentionally convening a new community."[239] This world-constituting act was a communal practice that occurred in the interactive, ongoing encounter between community and text. Just as the text of Scripture itself was a memory of a particular moment when a community sought to reconstitute itself amid crisis, so the preacher "makes a new text visible and available" when the contemporary community of faith encounters what Brueggemann considers the crisis of modernity.[240] The sermon

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[235] Ibid., 15.
[236] There is a pseudo-conversation with Bach in the final chapter.
[237] Troeger, 139.
[238] Walter Brueggemann, "The Social Nature of the Biblical Text," in *Preaching as a Social Act: Theology & Practice*, ed. Arthur Van Seeters (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1988), 138.
[239] Ibid.
[240] Ibid., 128.

creates a world in which the church can live as it imaginatively mediates reality through

"an act of inventiveness."[241] Offering four typologies of this inventive act, Brueggemann

argues that every text offers a life-world and that the hermeneutical act of preaching

offers a creative interpretation of reality through a faithful act of imagination.

Brueggemann kept Scriptural witness as the central and governing *topos* for

preaching but carefully described this text as a record of historical acts of "social

reconstitution."[242] He subsumed invention within hermeneutics. Invention was the

interpretation of a particular text that brought about creative and indeed new

constructions of reality. The transmission and mediation of these texts to and for

particular listeners in the contemporary world deeply interested Brueggmann. Each text

"proposes a life-world," either of equilibrium or transformation, that continues to offer

such a world to listeners today, through imaginative interpretation.[243]

Brueggemann does not discuss how the actual rhetorical production of the

sermon should occur. While the communal nature of interaction with the text interested

Brueggemann, the preacher remained in many ways an autonomous being responsible for

the "strategies of preaching."[244] Factors such as who the preacher eats with and the

character of the congregation affect hermeneutical decisions, but ultimately the preacher

bears responsibility for mediating a new world.

In *Cadences of Home*, Brueggemann focused on a psychotherapeutic approach to

sermon production.[245] Making clear he had no interest in pscychologizing preaching,

Brueggemann offered a psychotherapeutic analogy that did not focus on self-discovery

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[241] Ibid., 138.
[242] Ibid., 136.
[243] Ibid., 143.
[244] Ibid., 145.
[245] Brueggemann, *Cadences of Home*; see also Brueggemann, *Texts Under Negotiation*, 21-22.

but centered on an active therapist who conducted a conversation with one in need.[246] Through this conversation, the therapist could offer an alternative script that prescribed a new and different narrative through which the one in need could reframe his or her life. The person in need could then adjudicate between the old and new narratives and perhaps discard an old, paralyzing script for one that brought liberation.[247] In the same way, the preacher could offer Scripture's particular alternative script and "show how and in what ways life will be reimagined, redescribed, and relived if this narrative is embraced."[248] Over time, the preaching of counter-scripts could offer listeners the chance to live counter-lives.[249] It was central to Brueggemann's proposal that the text of Scripture was the source of the sermon's counter-script. It was not the text as a whole, however, but small, particular details that provided preachers with scripts that "make a claim against the dominant text" (often identified by Brueggemann as the Enlightenment dream).[250] These particular and local details become the impetus for imaginative moves in which the preacher and congregation attempt through speech to "make a different world" and "give rise to a church of new obedience."[251]

Brueggeman updated the faculty and association psychologies underpinning much of Broadus's work and implicitly informing later homiletics, so that the focus moved from the internal workings of the preacher's mind to a conversational speech encounter between therapist and client. Brueggemann relocated invention from the realigning of ideas in the mind to the imagination-text (the *therapist* is replaced by the *text* in the

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[246] Brueggemmmann, *Cadences of Home*, 35.
[247] Ibid.
[248] Ibid.
[249] Ibid., 36.
[250] Ibid., 32.
[251] Ibid., 33; Brueggemann argues that "we are indeed 'speeched into newness'" (34)

analogy) relationship, with the text acting as a playful, local but still closed topos that produces sermon material. Preaching from this *topos* is an imaginative act, a narrative "world making" retelling that emerges from the preacher's (therapeutic reframing) encounter with the text.[252] Brueggemann was perhaps the first to emphasize the creative possibilities of world-making that sermons possessed (arising from imaginative retelling of Scripture), and described this potential in the hermeneutical interpretation of biblical texts by the preacher. According to Brueggemann, invention almost exclusively concerns itself with text and speech and the relationship between to the two. The body and wider inventive setting remain untreated. The scene of inventive action remains the study desk with Bible and notepad open and ready.

Charles Campbell

Following closely the work of Hans Frei, Charles Campbell offered a post-liberal view of homiletic that sought to move beyond liberal and conservative forms of hermeneutic narrative and return preaching's focus to the Jesus of Nazareth rendered in the narratives of Scripture. Frei argued for a turn from anthropology to Christology and proposed reading Scripture as realistic narrative. Theology should be about description, not explanation, about Jesus, not human experience, and about identity, not answering questions arising from experience.[253] Therefore, Frei chose to focus on the gospel narratives and argued that these narratives functioned to render the identity of Jesus Christ.[254]

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[252] Ibid., 34.
[253] Campbell, 44-46.
[254] Ibid., 55.

Instead of discussing individual religious experiences, Frei proposed that religion was like learning a language through the process of enculturation into a community.[255] Becoming a Christian was a process of learning the rules of grammar that build up the Christian community. The person of Jesus Christ provided this language through Scripture. Becoming a Christian meant getting caught up in the world of the text and then seeing the outside world through the lens of a new identity in Jesus.

Campbell followed Frei, arguing that form was important only insofar as it rendered the person of Jesus Christ. In other words, narrative should interest preachers because of Jesus, not because of its inherent transformative power.[256] After a convincing critique of narrative, Campbell offered an understanding of preaching as moral obedience that builds up the church through constituting a people.[257] Following Frei, Campbell wanted to construe preaching as helping a people learn the distinct language of the Christian community. As in learning any language, there were rules of grammar. Preachers should help the community learn the language and skills of being Christian.[258] By proclaiming the story's rendering of Jesus, the preacher built up the community by articulating and modeling the distinctive language and practices of the Christian faith.

The preacher's source for inventing sermons was the "specific story that renders the identity of a particular person."[259] The sermon began with the language of Scripture that revealed the "identity of Jesus."[260] Scripture became a "universe of discourse" that the rhetorical discourse of the preacher recreated in the sermon.[261] However, only the

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[255] Ibid., 67.
[256] Ibid., 122.
[257] Ibid., 224.
[258] Ibid., 231.
[259] Ibid., 192.
[260] Ibid., 254.
[261] Ibid., 234.

clarifying lens of the ascriptive logic of the gospel narratives rightly interpreted this universe. While preaching was a "communal journey" in which the church was the "middle term" as the pastor moved from text to sermon, Campbell never saw the actual composing process as anything other than individual in nature.[262] More to the point, Campbell hardly referenced the composing process in his attempt to redirect narrative homiletic's focus on form and experience toward the character of Jesus. However, in his later books he emphasized reading the text alongside others, a move which began to connect his emphasis on a linguistically-based community with sermon creation, but while embodied notions of invention are present in such practices, he did not emphasize them.[263]

With Campbell there was a dramatic shift away from notions of mental, internal processes of sermon composition due to radical shifting of meaning to the text of Scripture itself. Preaching became an "interpretive performance" of Scripture as *topos*, and the preacher's task was to make the *topos* a commonplace for the language and practice of the faithful community.[264] This was more than just a retelling of stories but an improvisation of the foundational rules of the governing language game.

One of the central assumptions of Broadus's understanding of invention was the starting point of the "aims of an individual author."[265] It was the preacher's intention to persuade that directed the production of sacred rhetoric. The preacher "was generally considered to have a unified coherent subjectivity and a powerful agency."[266] Charles

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[262] Ibid., 230.
[263] Charles Campbell, *The Word Before the Powers: An Ethic of Preaching* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002).
[264] Campbell, *Preaching Jesus*, 216.
[265] Crowley, 15.
[266] Lauer, 84.

Campbell stripped agency from the preacher and put it back in the text itself. Thus a preacher must live in close relationship to Scripture, the only source of invention, in order to be familiar and proficient in faithful acts of improvisation. It was only out of this relationship between text and preacher, or *bible-habitus*, that sermons, the modeling of the right speech of the community, arose.[267]

Moving Beyond Narrative

The proposals of the narrative movement and the cultural-linguistic model of Charles Campbell in many ways set the course for homiletic's entrance into the twenty-first century. Narrative's imaginative approach to Scripture with close attention to form and story created a new excitement about engaging the world-making character of the biblical text. Building on Craddock, sermons could be interesting, emotional and world changing. Campbell criticized the narrative movement's focus on making sermons interesting. His turn to the person of Jesus re-imagined the text as an identity-forming *topos* from which a people could learn a language and in the process be formed into a Christian community. Once again, however, the theological differences of these authors did little to affect their treatment of the invention of sermons. Like those before them, both homiletic schools were quite comfortable with a neck-up, introspective focus on how the preacher could find something to say. Thomas Troeger began to consider the actual body of the preacher, but his practical advice and examples ignore this area and the mental realm remains dominant. While what happens in the mind – imaginative exegesis, therapeutic world-making, interesting recasting, emotional connection, catechetical cultural-linguistic exposition, etc. varies, the introspective assumptions concerning how

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[267] I am thankful to John McClure for this phrase and insight.

sermons are created remain the same. Later developments, however, as seen here in the

work of Frank Thomas, Lucy Rose, John McClure, and Richard Hee-Chun Park, began to

challenge these assumptions.

Frank Thomas

While narrative preaching and the cultural-linguistic model were dominant voices

into the twenty-first century, no one homiletic school held sway, and multiple and diverse

voices began to break into the dominant historical narrative. Seeking to offer an

alternative to "classical European" dominance in published homiletic theory, Frank

Thomas proposed seeing preaching as helping "people experience the assurance of grace

that is the gospel of Jesus Christ."[268] Drawing on the resources of the African American

tradition, Thomas described the sermon as a celebratory proclamation that facilitates an

experience of assurance and grace in listeners. Thomas argued that celebration was the

most "effective method and vehicle to facilitate" the assurance of God's grace.[269] This

celebration was the "culmination of sermonic design" in which a moment was created

where "the remembrance of a redemptive past and/or the conviction of a liberated future

transforms the events immediately experienced."[270] In a celebratory design, the preacher

focused on the "emotional context rather than the choice of right words" and through

dialogical language appealed to core beliefs, concern for emotive movement, unity of

form and substance and the creative use of reversals. Thus the preacher attempts to

"generate creative and powerful sermonic forms to help people experience the assurance

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[268] Frank Thomas, *They Like to Never Quit Praisin' God: The Role of Celebration in Preaching* (Cleveland, OH: United Church Press, 1997), 1, 3.
[269] Ibid., 31.
[270] Ibid.

of grace."[271]

Thomas called on the preacher to fully engage his or her body, thoughts and emotions in preparing a sermon that sought to identify with the listeners through the use of emotional language and sense appeal. The preacher should prepare so that in the preparation process the preacher also experiences the sermon.[272] This process intentionally begins with the creation of an "emotional context" that is "primary to the celebrative sermon."[273] Through developing a plot of situation-complication-resolution, the preacher's organizing framework directs "the content of the sermon upward to the goal of celebration."[274]

With that emotional framework in mind, Thomas suggested a content preparation process for the creation of a celebratory sermon. This process includes prayer, free association, homiletical exegesis, a preaching worksheet, and written drafts.[275] The preacher invoked the Spirit through prayer at the very beginning of the preparation process. Personal prayer helped the preacher discern what God wanted to occur in the congregation. Seeking to engage "emotive or intuitive" human dynamics, Thomas proposed the practice of freewriting (usually before exegesis) to supply the "vital images and energy that are so critically necessary" to the sermon as experiential encounter.[276] The preacher could start by writing down any thoughts, feelings or images that "comes to mind."[277] The preacher then should move on to "African-American homiletical exegesis", which characteristically asked, "what meaning (assurance) does the gospel shed on the

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[271] Ibid., 7-18.
[272] Ibid., 9.
[273] Ibid., 51.
[274] Ibid., 52.
[275] Ibid., 64.
[276] Ibid., 66.
[277] Ibid.

human condition of suffering through the particular biblical text to be preached?"[278] In

answering this question, the preacher encountered the text at the deepest level, and

through a difficult and often arduous struggle came to an experience of the text. It is only

through this experience that the preacher "can offer an experience of encounter to

hearers."[279] Thomas then proposed a "preaching worksheet" to help the preacher

synthesize the findings gathered in the process.[280] Finally, the preacher moved to writing

the sermon through a process of multiple drafts that allowed clarification and precision.

In terms of invention, Thomas innovatively focused on the creation of a spiritual

and emotional context that provided the organizing structure for celebrative design.

Constructing the sermon as a plot based on emotional logic ultimately led to the

emotional experience of celebration in which the good news is "intensified at the core of

people."[281] Thomas continually emphasized the preacher's cognitive and emotional

involvement in the sermon production process to create an experience. This allowed the

preacher to offer an experience at a level beyond and deeper than cognitive appeals.

When it came to supplying the content for this celebratory design, Thomas's

suggestions almost exclusively consisted of invoking a storehouse of mental images and

ideas within a biblical-hermeneutic framework. These were similar brainstorming

practices common within individualistic models of sermon composition. While Thomas

affirmed that the preacher should be living life fully in the broader world, freewriting,

exegesis and the sermon worksheet did not require social engagement.[282] Further, for a

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[278] Ibid., 67.
[279] Ibid., 71.
[280] Ibid., 75.
[281] Ibid., 88.
[282] Janet Lauer pointed to Peter Elbow's 1973 *Writing Without Teachers* as the first work to introduce freewriting (Lauer, *Invention*, 129); Peter Elbow, *Writing Without Teachers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973). Karen LeFevre characterized freewriting as an introspective act that while helpful

proposal that sought to highlight aspects of the body, especially the emotions, it was

surprising that these practices could for the most part take place at a preacher's desk in a

closed office. Thomas sought to develop a more holistic image of the celebrative sermon

that moved beyond cognitive and rational appeal. In the end, however, when Thomas

moved to the actual practices of sermon invention, they were bound to the dominant

mental model that focused on an autonomous preacher.

Lucy Rose

Another new approach to homiletic theory was offered by Lucy Rose, whose

description of preaching was grounded in a feminist epistemology that reflected her

personal experience of solidarity and connection as well as her conviction of the

limitations of language. The preacher and congregation assembled as equal partners in

order to "gather the community of truth around the Word where the central conversations

of the people are fostered and refocused week after week."[283] The solidarity of the people

of God grounded this conversation and sought to reflect the diverse voices and dialogues

of the community. The preacher still provided the sermon, but responsibility for the

conversation shifted from the preacher to the community. Growing out of real

conversations, the sermon offered "tentative judgments," "wagers," and "proposals" that

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was individualistic in nature and could ignore the larger social issues of invention (LeFevre, 13, 14, 23) She notes, "A doctoral student in engineering comes to his university's writing center for help with his dissertation's conclusions and recommendations. He has ideas about what to say, but his advisor does not want him to write them, since the agency that funded the research may read the report and conclude that the project is essentially complete, in which case they may not renew the grant. No amount of discussion with a tutor about invention as a personal, autonomous act—no talk of freewriting or brainstorming or tagmemics—will solve this invention problem" (79). Later in this current chapter, Richard Hee-Chun Park also advocates freewriting.

[283] Lucy Atkinson Rose, *Sharing the Word: Preaching in the Roundtable Church* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 93.

"convinced" the preacher that they were true.[284] These wagers were always penultimate, however, and always open for critique and eventually change.

Together the community searched for meaning, instead of the truth earlier models required. Testimony became an important image as the preacher used confessional and evocative language (similar to what Craddock suggests) to reflect her experience of the conversation. This testimony drops any pretense of objectivity or speaking for God, and is satisfied with open proposals that seek to invite future conversation.

Rose's description of preaching as tentative judgments, wagers and proposals arose out of a communal conversation with the congregation and the world as well as with the experiences recorded in Scripture.[285] Emphasizing the danger in speaking for others, Rose urged the preacher to come to the sermon construction process with a deeply autobiographical framework, in which his or her own experiences in these ongoing conversations become the content of the judgments, wagers and proposals of the sermon. Drawing on the work of Katherine Patterson, an author of children's stories, Rose offered four images directly related to inventing sermons in her proposal. Writing began with something that "impinges on my own life," "a sound in the heart," "a grain of sand that keeps rubbing at your vitals," or "an uneasy feeling in the pit of your stomach."[286] Further, "the only raw material I have for the stories I tell lies deep within myself."[287] These autobiographical trajectories lead to the formation of "little truths," that are enlarged when placed in the "multiple conversations" of the community.[288] Thus, preaching aimed to "awaken, give voice to, echo, encourage, or validate sounds in both

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[284] Ibid., 100-1.
[285] Ibid., 130-1.
[286] Ibid., 125.
[287] Ibid.
[288] Ibid.

my own heart and the hearts of worshippers."[289] This allowed the preacher to "create space for genuine conversation," which ultimately makes life "bearable and worthwhile."[290]

Rose abandoned persuasion in favor of evocative images "that generate a variety of meanings."[291] These images allowed listeners to "formulate their own meanings beside, ahead of, or over against the sermon's meanings."[292] Thus preachers intentionally chose words to "evoke" a multitude of images, meanings or experiences, instead of to persuade listeners of a pre-determined truth. This testimonial, evocative speech was conveyed primarily either through the forms of story or "recharting of the preacher's journey towards meaning."[293]

Rose was deeply committed to a relational epistemology and a communal ecclesiology that attempted to erase any "gap" between the preacher and congregation.[294] It is clear from her suggestions that the preacher must be involved in the community's central conversations (which would include the conversation with Scripture), so that her experience of these conversations could serve as the foundation for the sermon composition process. However, in spite of Rose's relational and communal emphasis, when it came time actually to create the content of the sermon, her language tended to slant in an individualistic and inductive direction. Preachers were to pull the material from deep within themselves. The material emerges through "a sound in our heart" or "an uneasy feeling in the pit of your stomach."[295] It is reasonable to assume Rose intended the

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[289] Ibid.
[290] Ibid., 107.
[291] Rose, 111.
[292] Ibid.
[293] Ibid., 117.
[294] McClure, *Otherwise*, 59.
[295] Rose, 125.

preacher to be so deeply connected to the community that such sounds or feelings could only be interpreted and filtered through a communal lens. Even with these assumptions in mind, however, Rose offered no inventional heuristics or procedures based on such a relational foundation. While the framework of relational epistemology and communal conversation implicitly formed the parameters of sermon composition, Rose offered very little in terms of the actual process of sermonic invention. Rose used language such as "vitals" in her work, but there was no specific association of the body with rhetorical production.[296] For Rose, preachers should be in actual and continuing conversations with both their listeners, Scriptures and others in the world (the oppressed), but she left unspoken how these conversations might function as *topoi* for the preacher. Rose's adoption of the notion of story and Craddock's view of induction led her, like them, to describe a system of invention that privileges the inner workings of the mind. In fact, the space that Rose sought to open up never became more than space for minds to consider and participate in other conversations through language.[297] A fair evaluation of Rose on invention must conclude that while she provided flashes of wisdom concerning how the preacher should arrive at what to say, she does not provide a sustained discussion to connect her understanding of solidarity and connectedness with actually composing the sermon.

John McClure

In *The Roundtable Pulpit* John McClure set out to develop a collaborative homiletic that intentionally sought to involve members of congregations in the sermon

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[296] Ibid., 125.
[297] See McClure, *Otherwise*, 60.

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preparation process. Instead of the preacher retreating to the office for hours on end to write the sermon for the congregation, McClure desired listeners to find their voice in the pulpit so that the pulpit ceased to be a monopolized monological event. This was not a return to the experimental forms of dialogical preaching, in which multiple preachers actually stood in the pulpit, but a "move closer to a model of single-party preaching that includes the actual language and dynamics of collaborative conversation on biblical texts, theology, and life."[298]

This was not another "how-to" guide for successful preaching or even a "model" to be imitated without adaptation. McClure argued that collaborative homiletics could become part of rethinking congregational leadership as a whole, a move toward renewing an ethos of community that rejected dictatorial manifestations of leadership. In order to begin this shift, McClure believed leadership should become an empowering force within the community, a force manifested through integrative and nutritive power. Integrative power, or "all the ways leaders form alliances of power that will benefit the community" should encourage people to stand with each other, to foster new connections through united commitment and hope.[299] For McClure, this meant rejecting privatized notions of faith that tended to build protective walls around "insiders" through entertainment-driven worship and recreations of "life-style enclaves."[300]

Instead of retreating from the public sphere, preachers should reconnect the public and private by seeking out strange interpretations of the gospel often found at the margins. These extremes reveal that the enclosing walls of safety become obstacles to

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[298] John S. McClure, *The Roundtable Pulpit: Where Leadership and Preaching Meet* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995), 8.
[299] Ibid., 13.
[300] Ibid., 16.

faithful community and pervert the public nature of the gospel. McClure believed in

moving to a collaborative leadership style that deliberately erased the public-private split.

This involved a face-to-face encounter with the other, in which the preacher rejected the

role of lone prophet and wanted the congregation to be part of the sermon process. Thus,

the community would join together, without relinquishing their individuality, to truly

engage each other in interpretation of biblical texts. Through this community-based

dialogue, where the end was not pre-determined, an emergent Word would begin to

develop, deeply embedded within "the actual life situation of both the congregation and

individuals."[301] McClure offered the image of preacher as host, in which the preacher

invited others around the table to a deep dialogue that made use of diverse gifts and

insights. From these engagements, a new ethic of leadership would emerge that took

seriously the community's contributions as well as the actual lives of all people within

the congregation.

McClure provided a vision of collaborative preaching in which the "preacher and

hearer work together to establish and interpret the topics for preaching."[302] The goal was

"to engage and influence the ways that a congregation is talking itself into becoming a

Christian community."[303] The preacher took on the role of host by opening up the pulpit

to the congregation through a roundtable discussion group that collaborated together. The

individuals in this group engaged in a dialogue that respected each participant and valued

each individual as an important voice in the conversation. For McClure, the preacher did

not referee this gathering, but instead was an active participant, continually centering the

conversation on the emerging Word. The end goal of this collaborative process was not

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[301] Ibid., 25.
[302] Ibid., 48.
[303] Ibid., 50.

consensus or uniformity, but a concrete way of bringing the collaboration itself before the congregation. That is, the preacher did not drive the conversation to a desired end because in one respect there was no end.[304]Collaboration was an ongoing process embedded in justice and love, in which the congregation continually wrestled with its relationship with Jesus Christ.[305] Thus, the ongoing deep conversations the community participated in formed a "learning community of deeply engaged strangers."[306]

In terms of invention, sermon content arose from interactive processes in a weekly sermon roundtable. The "give-and-take of an open, ongoing, homiletical conversation" brought forth a "transforming Word."[307] As host of this group, the preacher completed ahead of time a thorough study of the biblical material for the upcoming sermon. He or she participated in the discussion as a full member, not a spectator of the conversation. In conversation that included engagement with the text and with each other, the preacher learned from the group "what to talk about (topic-setting) and one way to talk about it.[308] The preacher then moved to either "describe the dynamic" of the roundtable or "imitate directly one of these dynamics."[309] McClure offered multiple ways to describe or imitate various dynamics that occurred within the actual conversations of the sermon roundtable in the pulpit.

McClure's proposal refigured Augustine's *topos* of the biblical text into the *topoi* of the interactive dynamics of the roundtable, in which a communal process engaged multiple voices from and beyond the congregation in discerning the Word of God for the

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[304] Ibid., 52.
[305] Ibid., 53.
[306] Ibid., 54.
[307] Ibid., 55.
[308] Ibid., 72.
[309] Ibid., 73.

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congregation. The preacher as host ultimately took responsibility for the non-interactive re-presentation of this communal process in the pulpit. The scene of sermon development shifted radically, out of the individual mind and into an ever-shifting, collaboratively constructed discourse. The metaphor of the "roundtable" replaced the seed as an image that emphasized the social nature of sermon construction. McClure rejected the idea that a life of deep study, classical education, or careful attention to images from human experience and social context were requisite for inventing sermons with a communal ethos of leadership that emphasized collaboration. The dominant scene of sermon composition shifted away from the library or office, and the overarching emphasis on meditation fell away. In its place, the roundtable became the space and source of rhetorical production, with an emphasis on the dynamics of the actual conversations involved. Invention became a social act.

McClure, however, still largely imagined this social act as inductive bible study, so Scripture remained the *topos* (but in this model not closed) of invention that grounded (but did not restrict) the dynamics of group conversations. Discussions that potentially allowed for an emergent truth independent of prior doctrinal constructions made possible interaction with Scripture. However, while McClure implicitly emphasized the physical presence of others at this roundtable (seating arrangement and gesture matter greatly), the somatic component of production and the ways in which the somatic and discursive (mis)align remained largely untreated.

McClure's proposal of a collaborative sermon roundtable significantly shifted the spatial location of sermonic invention from the autonomous development of sermon ideas in the mind to a social and communal location in which actual people gathered to

collaboratively discern the Word of God. It also shifted the source of preaching from dependence on the closed field of a unified text (Scripture) toward multiple and dynamic *topoi* that arose in the communal conversation. Each week a ground was constructed through interactive, asymmetrical dialogue around the text. It was the matrix of these conversations, which included but did not limit themselves to the text, that became the source of sermon invention.

Richard Hee-Chun Park

Richard Hee-Chun Park attempted to construct an "organic homiletic" based on the work on Samuel Coleridge and Grady Davis. Most interested in understanding form, Park reframed contemporary homiletic methods as "potential organic fruits that may grow out of a 'process.'"[310] Park believed that focusing on an organic process of sermon preparation "cherishes natural and organic flow" and allowed preachers to "develop their own authentic voice and method of preaching."[311] Park wanted to free preachers from what he termed the "authoritarian control of sermon models" by embracing "the experience of structuring and preaching sermons that flow from their own authentic voice."[312] The most authentic form was "hidden in the preachers' own gardens" so that all the preacher needed to do was "stay home and open their eyes to discover their own homemade form."[313]

As part of this proposal for organic form, Park attempted to reclaim invention as a vital piece of the sermon preparation process. Believing that scholars "turned over to

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[310] Park, 156.
[311] Ibid., 157.
[312] Ibid., 143.
[313] Ibid., 144.

other seminary academies" invention in homiletics, Park argued that invention, arrangement and delivery are interconnected and interdependent.[314] Content was "inseparable" from form, so that intuition always worked to shift, realign, and discover content, form and context in the journey to the pulpit. Through an "unconscious process utilizing intuition," Park argued that "preachers creatively construct bridges among the original audience and message."[315]

This process of construction began with a "discovery of content" that focused on the relation of the preacher to the biblical text.[316] In addition to exegesis, preachers should attend to their inner souls through meditation and reflection on particular Scripture passages. Preachers should use free-writing and *lectio divina* to begin a dialogue with the text that combined the use of intuition and reason.[317] Park offered the library, personal study, retreat center and meditative garden as primary spatial locations for this dialogue.

The second stage of the process, the discovery of context, drew the audience into the dialogue. Either imagined or actual conversations with others provided space for the discovery of context, and Park suggested lectionary discussion groups, internet communities, face to face encounters with parishioners or "for the sake of time and convenience," dialogues with the audience in the preacher's mind.[318] The preacher then would review the findings of these two steps in order to search for the form already inherent in the process.

Park imaged invention as an interdependent, synthetic process that occurred throughout the composition process, even during the delivery itself. This process,

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[314] Ibid., 156.
[315] Ibid., 149.
[316] Ibid., 150.
[317] Ibid.
[318] Ibid., 151-2.

however, building off the work of Coleridge and Davis, remained an inward, mental act. Preachers are recipients of a call to involve their contemporary audiences in dialogue with the text, but this participation—as evidenced by the possibility of imaginary participation in the preacher's mind—served to help water the seed growing in the preacher's mind. Like Davis, the autonomous mind was the greenhouse for sermon preparation, with Park's only addendum being his attempt to emphasize the role of intuition in giving nourishment to the "germinal idea." Thus, the preacher meditated and reflected on the text in spatial locations that offered no interruptions and then took notes on later dialogues, whether real or imagined, with listeners about his or her findings. Despite Park's desire to resist the authoritarian reign of form in homiletic theory, he was unable to move away from an understanding of sermon invention as individualistic, mental and introspective.

Conclusion

This survey of developments in notions of invention in contemporary homiletic theory shows that understandings of how preachers arrive at what they will say remain deeply influenced by nineteenth-century views. While shifts and changes have certainly occurred, homiletics has been unable to escape the introspective view of invention stated by John Broadus. Thus, for example, the contemporary therapeutic proposals of Walter Brueggemann potentially bring what is "inside" "outside" by focusing less on self-understanding and more on interactive engagement.[319] But Brueggemann relegates most of the conversation to the mind of the preacher who creates a sermon alone with the text. The image of the preacher at the study desk with pen and paper in hand worked just as

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[319] For the language of "inside" and "outside," see Crowley, *Methodical*.

well for Brueggemann as it did for Broadus. With notable exceptions, such as Troeger's exegetical practices involving the body and McClure's social focus, homileticians continue to regard invention as primarily an inward, mental activity that occurs within an autonomous preacher. The normative practice of sermon production, what Sharon Crowley termed introspective invention, continued to operate as homiletic attention turned its focus toward form, arrangement and testimonial experience.

Homileticians generally bound homiletic theory to the plant metaphor of sermon development, in which an idea was a seed planted in the mind that matured through practices such as meditation and analysis. The description of the seed shifted from Broadus's rational-deductive ideas, to Davis's organic-romantic conception of generative ideas, to Long's vision of the idea as being inherent in the text itself. Craddock described the seed as the beginning of an inductive journey, while narrative homileticians almost always found the seed to in the form of a plot or narrative. Campbell and Brueggemann identified the seed with the text of Scripture itself that the preacher must catechistically reimagine, while Thomas focused on the seed's maturation in celebration. Internal mental images dominated these descriptions and prompted the critical lens of homiletics to focus almost solely on the introspective. Crowley observed that the seed metaphor assumed a "closed" system of invention where the seed developed into a determined result (an acorn must become an oak and nothing else), and this growth did not affect the environment as a whole (rain does not change in response to the seed's growth.)[320] The notion of a seed, therefore, "does not show how individual and culture are interdependent."[321]

With the exception of McClure, homileticians relegated invention to the

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[320] Crowley, 25.
[321] Ibid.

individual preacher taking to an office or retreat center in order to engage in such practices as freewriting, meditation and inward dialogue. Theorists generally did not regard these practices as epistemic, or even heuristic, but more as a creative organization of exegetical findings. Echoing Augustine, the text of Scripture continued to function as a closed and unified *topos* so that invention became "an art of exegesis that guided the discovery of meaning in the Scriptures."[322] Pullman's observation that Augustine's shift privileged reading (hermeneutics) as epistemic while writing (rhetoric) became more concerned with conveying already discovered truths is applicable to contemporary homiletic theory as well. From narrative preaching's focus on the form of the text to Craddock's call for the preacher to regenerate his or her experience with the text, exegesis, operating under varying hermeneutic understandings, generally subsumed invention. This dynamic is perhaps most clearly present in the cultural-linguistic approach of Charles Campbell, where the text of Scripture becomes the very language that when spoken constitutes a discourse community.

Perhaps, however, the most telling finding concerning contemporary homiletics' treatment of invention is its conspicuous absence, or, when present, its location within the structure of the monographs themselves. Following the work of Broadus, and similar to trends in early to mid-century rhetorical theory, these works either ignore or at best treated implicitly the subject of sermon invention.[323] When homileticians (infrequently) treat sermon invention directly, they most often relegate it to practical sections where authors offered either their own experience or a type of best wisdom for preachers. Thus Craddock could almost single-handedly resurrect interest in preaching through his work

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[322] Ibid., 30.
[323] Lauer, 65.

with induction, while putting the "practical" section in an appendix where he wrote vaguely about invention as "playing with an idea."[324] More common was Brueggemann's view of the preacher moving directly from the results of exegesis to a transcript of the sermon itself. In most cases, the writers treated invention as a linear act that sequentially moved from text to sermon. With the exception of McClure, sermon invention ceased to be a critical topic in contemporary homiletic theory.

Into the twenty-first century, this lack of critical treatment resulted in the continued operation of Broadus's nineteenth-century noetic framework of tacit assumptions about sermon production. While many contemporary authors might reject such assumptions, and even seek to highlight the social and bodily role of rhetorical production, the continuing use of images (such as "seed") and practices (preacher in the study manipulating exegetical notes) in practical and best wisdom sections allow the introspective model of invention to retain power. It is this understanding of that is the predominant basis for the most influential pedagogical works in the field.

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[324] Craddock, 128.

CHAPTER II

A PEDAGOGICAL SURVEY OF INTRODUCTORY TEXTS

This general acceptance of introspective invention has had important ramifications for the place, or lack thereof, of invention in homiletic pedagogy. In order to analyze these pedagogical implications, I will conduct an analysis of the major introductory pedagogical works of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, authored and used by those within the academy. I will engage the work of Fred Craddock, Tom Long, James Cox, Ronald Allen, Lucy Hogan and Paul Scott Wilson. These works are the pedagogical core of Introduction to Homiletics classes in the twentieth and twenty-first century. I will also engage secondary literature often used as supplementary resources in the classroom in addition to the core works. These include Anna Carter Florence, Kirk Byron Jones, Pamela Moeller, Eunjoo Mary Kim and Robert Dykstra.

I will frame this evaluation within five categories, four of which Janice Lauer developed in her influential work *Invention in Rhetoric and Composition*.[1] Arising out of her survey of theories of rhetorical invention dating back to the classical period, Lauer offered a critical framework that helps situate homileticians' intentional and implicit treatment of sermon invention. Lauer's work illumines homiletic's blind spots and highlights implications rarely considered in pedagogical work. Therefore this chapter first considers homiletic pedagogy in relation to Lauer's categories, these being four

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[1] Janice M. Lauer, *Invention in Rhetoric and Composition*, (West Lafayette, IN: Parlor Press and The WAC Clearinghouse, 2004), 121-23. See also M. D. Goggin, "Invention in Rhetoric and Composition, by Janice M. Lauer". *Composition Studies : Freshman English News.* 33, no. 2 (2005): 125-127.

common pedagogical frameworks in the teaching of invention: natural ability pedagogy, imitation pedagogies, practice pedagogies and art pedagogies.

Lauer described natural ability pedagogy as avoiding "teaching strategies or giving direct instruction on invention" and instead offering students "congenial settings" by suggestions and feedback on their work.[2] Using this type of pedagogy, teachers allow students to rely on their natural talent to produce work, and then respond to that work in helpful, contextual ways. Imitation pedagogy provides readings and examples to students in the hope that they will function as "stimuli or models of inventing activity."[3] These models "exemplify processes as well as products," so that students have examples to emulate.[4] Practice pedagogy focuses on constant activity in order to establish productive output as a habit.[5] Finally, art pedagogy teaches students "strategies," often heuristic, and gives them "guidance" throughout the inventive process.[6]

I will then use Lauer's proposed continuum to locate homiletic pedagogies on a range from the almost algorithmic (rule-governed and highly formulaic) to almost aleatory (trial and error), in order to determine if contemporary homiletic pedagogies offer highly structured methods for sermon composition, or if instead they offer open-ended practices that give little guidance to the preacher. Then I will follow Lauer in analyzing the ways in which these pedagogies regard the social nature of invention.[7] This will answer the question of whether sermon production is primarily an individual process, or if it is in some way a social act that involves interaction with others.

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[2] Ibid., 121.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Janice Lauer, "Instructional Practices, Toward an Integration," in *Composition in Four Keys: Inquiring into the Field: Art, Nature, Science, Politics*, ed. Mark Wiley, Barbara Gleason, and Louise Wetherbee Phelps. (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Pub. Co,, 1996), 247.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Lauer, *Invention*, 122.

Next I will consider whether homiletic pedagogy regards invention as interpretive or productive.[8] This issue is concerned with whether "students should be engaged in interpreting texts or investigating questions and subjects."[9] I will ask if homiletic texts treat invention as hermeneutic or heuristic, or in other words, what the primary purpose of sermon invention is. Finally, in addition to her analytical categories but in accord with her treatment of feminist views on invention, I will consider the role of the body in homiletic pedagogies.[10] When I speak of the body, I am most interested in the attention given to the actual physical body on the scene of invention. Some pedagogies may implicitly involve the body in such activities as going to the text to perform exegesis: the eyes are involved in reading, the hands in holding the text and writing. I am more interested in how pedagogical proposals bring these and further bodily dynamics to the forefront of consideration, how they consider, as Marcia Mount Shoop terms it, "listening to bodies themselves."[11] I will examine in what ways the actual body of the preacher is explicitly present or absent in the pedagogical presentation of sermon creation. These five categories will frame the evaluation of contemporary homiletic texts and in the end will help construct the scene of sermon invention dominant in contemporary homiletic pedagogy.

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[8] Ibid., 123.

[9] Ibid.

[10] See Janice M. Lauer, "The Feminization of Rhetoric and Composition Studies?" *Rhetoric Review.* 13.2 (1995): 276-286; and also her survey of the body in *Invention*, 112-114.

[11] Marcia W. Mount Shoop, *Let the bones dance: embodiment and the body of Christ*. (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 5.

Fred Craddock

In his 1985 textbook, *Preaching*, Fred Craddock described the "work of interpretation" as the "heart of arriving at a message."[12] Craddock sought to separate the task of arriving at something to say from the process of determining how to say it. In both tasks, there should be a "Eureka" moment that in the case of content production signals a move "out of the mass of notes and the pre-dawn gray of the mind into sunshine."[13] Craddock implicitly located sermon production at the office desk that "containing blank tablets like empty eyes" can stare up at the minister intimidatingly![14]

Preachers should begin by focusing on the interpretation of two subjects, listeners and the biblical text. According to Craddock, the very real distance between these two focuses could be "negotiated" by the "processes of interpretation, or hermeneutics."[15] These processes helped the preacher bridge the distance between the worlds of text and Scripture. Craddock suggested that preachers need to interpret listeners by viewing them as both audience and congregation. In both respects, he offered practical ways to add "local soil to sermon."[16] In living life with listeners, preachers should pay careful attention to the "currents of a community's life" in an effort to "understand" the people as well as his or her own role in the life of such a community.[17] Key interviews should be done with local leaders in order to gauge a sense of how the community regards itself and with whom and where the community understands power to be. Craddock also suggested

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[12] Fred Craddock, *Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1990), 85.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid., 98.
[17] Ibid., 94-95.

the making of lists, such as an itemized account of "what can be assumed about these listeners," and a worksheet to develop empathetic imagination.[18]

Craddock made suggestions about such steps as selecting a text, reading it, setting it in its contexts, and putting the text in one's own words. He then urged preachers to develop their own method. He believed that this method would become a habit, the "great liberator of the talents and faculties of busy and creative people."[19] After this process of textual engagement, Craddock encouraged taking a break before moving to the hermeneutical negotiation of the distance between these interpretive processes. Craddock described this hermeneutical act as both necessary and difficult, but in the end a vitally important task assisted by the Holy Spirit.

Moving to methods of interpretation, Craddock offered six possible methods that could operate as a "checklist" that the preacher could use to reflect on his or her own methods.[20] Direct transfer, allegory, typology, interpreting the intent of a text, thematic interpretation and interpretation by translation, all offered possible methods to bridge the distance between text and listener. At the conclusion of this chapter, Craddock asserted that "We have now discussed interpreting the listeners, interpreting the text, and negotiating the distance between. It remains now of us to turn to the sermon itself."[21] This "turn to the sermon" was actually a turn to focus on arrangement and specifically "form" in the chapters to follow.[22]

It is important to note Craddock's use of imagery in discussing the sermon production process. According to Craddock, preachers expected to spend "hours alone in

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[18] Ibid., 87, 97.
[19] Ibid., 99.
[20] Ibid., 137.
[21] Ibid., 150.
[22] Ibid.

the study" in which they "sit down to prepare a sermon."[23] He portrayed sermons as that which "grow and mature over a period of time" after they are "planted, watered, and harvested."[24] The "blank paper on the minister's desk" was the centerpiece of the "minister's study."[25] Craddock desired preachers to open up "all faculties of mind and heart" in engaging the text, a process that eventually leads to the preacher "owning the message."[26]

Evaluation

Craddock's treatment of sermon invention in *Preaching* falls within Lauer's pedagogical category of practice. Craddock urged preachers to continually use a method that becomes habitual for them, and while such a method should be held up for criticism, this should occur only from time to time. On the continuum from highly rule-governed to aleatory practices, Craddock's proposal falls right in the middle. He offered multiple methods and guidelines for preachers, with the strong recommendation that no preacher should rigidly use any single method. Craddock noted that "the pedagogical assumption here is that while the preacher, like the artist or actor, needs instruction in fundamental methods, there is further need to assimilate these methods in ways congenial to one's own gifts and talents."[27]

Concerning the social character of rhetorical production, Craddock's imagery primarily focused on the individual nature of sermon composition. He urged the preacher to take ownership of the sermon, and the highlighted spatial location for preparation was

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[23] Ibid., 87.
[24] Ibid., 101, 102.
[25] Ibid., 103, 108.
[26] Ibid., 105, 106.
[27] Ibid., 137.

the empty page on the desk. While interpreting the listeners included possible interviews and informal dialogue with listeners, there was no specific part of the process that called for interaction.

Craddock termed the process of bridging the distance between text and listener a "hermeneutic" one, and while he noted that the canon is not theologically closed, the thrust of his treatment focused on interpretation and not production. In terms of body, Craddock focused primarily on the mind as the site of hermeneutic activity. The body was of no importance. The image of the sermon as a seed growing in the mind by watering and care was the governing metaphor of sermon development. This image gave a clue to the epistemic nature of invention. In Craddock's case the form of the text shapes and affected the "seed," but the growth of the seed has little to no influence on the environment outside.

In the end, Craddock's understanding of sermon invention focused almost exclusively on the interpretive or hermeneutical act. He did not treat rhetoric as production, and he saw the preacher as a "preacher-interpreter."[28] After Craddock completed the bridge between text and listeners, he quickly moved to the issue of form (arrangement). He subsumed invention within the hermeneutical process as the act of an individual preacher attempting to build the bridge in his or her mind.

Craddock's influence on mainline homiletic pedagogy cannot be overstated. Ranging far beyond his writings, Craddock's legacy expanded through his popular

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[28] Ibid., 144.

preaching and well-attended seminars.[29] Countless preachers and teachers of preaching

were shaped by Craddock's introspective view of the inventive scene.

Tom Long

In *The Witness of Preaching*, perhaps one of the most-used texts in contemporary

mainline introduction to preaching classrooms, Tom Long offered the image of witness

for the preacher who "goes [to Scripture] on behalf of the faithful community, and in a

sense, on behalf of the world."[30] According to Long, the preacher should approach the

text "not alone," but with the needs of the church and the world in mind.[31] When "the

claims of God by the Scripture are seen and heard," the preacher turns back and "tells the

truth."[32] This is what Long meant by biblical preaching, the normative act of

proclamation in the church. Scripture should always function as the "leading force in

shaping the content and purpose of the sermon," and so the first stage of the sermon

production process that Long addressed was biblical exegesis.[33]

Long suggested that exegetical practice should become a "habit" so ingrained in a

preacher's ministry that it "becomes second nature."[34] He then went on to offer a "set of

exegetical steps" that should "be tailored to the individual preacher and to the particular

biblical text."[35] These steps included getting the text in view, getting introduced to the

text, and attending to the text. In this third stage, the preacher should begin "the

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[29] http://www.craddocksermons.com/online-catalog.html. *Newsweek* named Craddock one of the twelve best living preachers. See the back cover of Fred B. Craddock, *As One Without Authority*, rev. ed. (St. Louis: *Chalice Press, 2001*).

[30] Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 49.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid., 67.

[34] Ibid., 68.

[35] Ibid., 70.

interrogation of the text by asking every potentially fruitful question that comes to mind."[36] This questioning, with one foot in the text and one in the local circumstances of listeners, was not "to expand the range of our own creativity" but instead "to knock the barnacles off our assumptions about the text so that it can speak to us anew."[37] Long then suggested various creative exegetical practices which could include an actual group in which multiple voices give their reactions to a text. More likely, however, he believed that the preacher "will need to imagine the presence of a diverse group" and should "survey the congregation in the imagination's eye."[38] The individual preacher in his or her study could accomplish the remainder of the suggested exegetical practices, which included looking for conflict in the text and exploring what seemed to be out of place. In the end, however, this exegetical process "cannot do what is most important: tell us what this text wishes to say on this occasion to our congregation."[39]

Long described the preacher's next step as an event in which the preacher should bring the life of the congregation into the text's presence. This, he noted, was the "first cord across the gap between text and sermon."[40] As a witness, the preacher turned from perceiving to testifying, from engaging the Scripture on behalf of the people to moving towards the pulpit to "tell the truth about this claim."[41] Long suggested that this move did not consist of the preacher going to the text in order to get a "main idea" or central proposition that is then to be shared with listeners.[42] Instead, preachers should go to

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[36] Ibid., 81.
[37] Ibid., 84.
[38] Ibid., 87.
[39] Ibid., 97.
[40] Ibid., 97-98.
[41] Ibid., 99-100.
[42] Ibid., 101.

Scripture "expecting something to happen" and then return to testify to that experience.[43] This process functioned "to shape Christian identity."[44] Long described biblical texts as both saying and doing things that work to actively shape the identity of the local community. Thus, it was "in the interplay between saying and doing that we find the key to building the bridge between text and sermon."[45]

In order to make this bridge wide enough for both saying and doing, Long suggested a focus and function statement that gave shape to what the preacher hoped to say and do. These statements should grow directly out of the exegetical process, be clear, unified and relatively simple. Long described these statements as "merely compass settings for the sermon journey" that "guide the preacher in the creation of sermons that possess unity, clarity, and a firm connection to the biblical text."[46] They are indicators of "where a sermon is headed; they are a descriptor of the sermon's overall destination."[47] When these statements are formulated, the preacher can then turn to issues of form and structure, the issues of his following two chapters.

Evaluation

Like Craddock, Long's proposal advocated a type of practice pedagogy in which exegetical procedures and the creation of focus and function statements became habits for the preacher. On the continuum from highly rule-governed to aleatory practices, Long offered the preacher a left of center approach in outlining a series of exegetical steps that the preacher should take in interrogating the text. While these steps offered freedom in

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[43] Ibid., 106.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid., 109.
[47] Ibid., 116.

the actual practices they called for, Long's focus and function statement further inclined his proposal toward the rule-governed.

It is clear that the preacher as witness should go to the text on behalf of the congregation, but when it came to the actual process of producing a sermon, the preacher primarily operated as a sole agent. It was the preacher who filled up the blank page with notes acquired in the exegetical process, and ultimately the preacher alone who worked out the focus and function statement. While the congregational context is always in mind and indeed cannot be separated from these acts, Long suggested no actual social contact as a part of the process.

Whether the focus and function statements were interpretive or heuristic can be found in Long's "compass" image, which gives insight into to their role as pointing to that which already exists and is relatively fixed.[48] Like the metaphor of the seed, the process of the sermon moving where the compass points did not affect the source of that magnetic pull. Thus the focus and function statements operated within a closed epistemic field previously created in the exegetical process. The focus and function statements worked into the realm of managing/organizing based upon an end vision of the sermon (the source of magnetic pull), which was interpreted during exegesis. Finally, Long did not explicitly imagine the body as being involved in this sermon creation process. The preacher worked out the focus and function statement on paper (or in the mind in the case of experienced preachers) with no direct relation to the ways in which the body might participate in sermon invention.

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[48] Ibid., 109.

Lucy Lind Hogan

In *Graceful Speech*, Lucy Lind Hogan, perhaps because of her graduate work in rhetoric and public communication, brought a different perspective to the issue of invention.[49] In discussing how to decide what to say in the sermon, Hogan began with the preacher's interaction with Scripture. After discussing Stephen Toulmin's framework for arguments and describing the preacher's interaction with hermeneutics, Hogan treated the process of exegesis. First, preachers should listen to the text by such practices as reading the text out loud, placing their fingers in their ears while reading the text, and finally by reading in a dislocated setting. Hogan urged preachers to develop an exegetical habit in which sermon production included an exegetical "checklist" completed as part of the creation process.[50] She offered strategies for developing this checklist.[51]

This interaction with Scripture was only the first step, however, in sermon preparation. Hogan offered three further dimensions of invention that consisted of "the creative process, theological reflection for preaching, and finally, how one goes about deciding the theme, purpose, and goal of a sermon."[52] In describing the creative process, Hogan emphasized the work of the Holy Spirit which joined the preacher in taking "steps" into the "scary, dynamic space" where "faith can grow."[53] The first step was preparation, a period of "conscious thought" in which the preacher should gather information and resources. This included brainstorming and engendered a sense of "openness" and "play."[54] In the next stage of incubation, the unconscious mind was at

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[49] Lucy Lind Hogan, *Graceful Speech: An Invitation to Preaching* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 11.
[50] Ibid., 101.
[51] Hogan, 102.
[52] Ibid., 108.
[53] Ibid., 109.
[54] Ibid., 110.

work, sorting and wrestling with the various ways forward that the preacher had found. Hogan used the metaphor of making coffee where the grounds, all the information of research, must be given time to percolate, resulting in the creation of strong coffee or a strong sermon. As time progresses, the preacher should arrive "at a moment of illumination, the 'Aha' moment" when "things fall into place."[55]

Hogan urged preachers to pay attention in the world, to look for "God's footprint" in such places as books, movies, television programs and life.[56] She urged the use of a sketchbook and a camera as items to assist in what should become a life of attending. Finally, Hogan moved to the "so what" stage of development in which the preacher should attempt to make an informed choice about what to say.[57] This process included beginning with silence and prayer, reviewing the information, thinking about the listeners and liturgical considerations.[58] From here, preachers should narrow the subject of the sermon to a sentence, and also identify its purpose and goal. Hogan then turned to issues of form and arrangement in the following chapter.

Evaluation

Hogan, a former art teacher, tended toward what Lauer termed art pedagogy, a form that attempts to give students "practical strategies and rhetorical knowledge" that will guide them over the long term.[59] Hogan combined rhetorical frameworks such as Toulmin's view of the argument and Aristotle's definition of rhetoric with practical strategies that operated as checklists for guiding the preacher in the inventive process. On

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[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid., 112.
[57] Ibid., 116.
[58] Ibid., 117.
[59] Lauer, *Instructional*, 247.

Lauer's continuum, Hogan's proposal tended toward the aleatory. While she suggested checklists, she grounded these suggestions within "Holy Spirit territory" and argued that the unconscious mind was ever at work in the preparation process.[60] Hogan spoke of 'Aha' moments when everything falls into place and resists mechanical formulation. By balancing a sense of mystery with strategies for active participation, this proposal lands a little right of center on Lauer's range.

While the congregation is always in the preacher's mind during sermon construction, Hogan's construal is highly individualist. The concrete suggestions and strategies that Hogan offered the preacher, in both the exegetical and creative processes, do not require direct engagement or interaction with others. Most of the practices, aside from dislocated exegesis, the preacher can do alone in the study. While Hogan did not address the issue directly, there is a sense that Hogan's suggestions of inventive practices serve a mostly managerial function. The focus is on attending to the grace already there, to the many sermons present in Scripture and the world. The preacher then must decide which of these many sermons to preach, a move for which Hogan offered a list of suggestions. She described this move with the image of moving from the left side of an equation, the place of "reading, thinking, questioning, pondering, gathering of materials, and brainstorming" to the right side of the equation, "how the sermon will be constructed and preached."[61] She believed the preacher put aside the range of all possible sermons in this in-between place and settled on the one he or should would preach.[62] The image implied that the preacher narrowed from a range of sermons already present in the world and Scripture. The preacher found these sermons in the process of attending.

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[60] Hogan, 108.
[61] Ibid., 117.
[62] Ibid.

The inventive process occurred almost entirely in the mind. Hogan described the time of preparation as a "period of conscious thought" in which the preacher was "thinking, reading, searching for resources."[63] She used the metaphor of making coffee to describe a period of incubation when the "information we find during our research" would percolate in the mind.[64] She described the next step as "theological mindfulness" and emphasized the visual act of attending to such sources as books and movies.[65] For Hogan, the body's only involvement was as a receptacle for information for the mind.

<div align="center">James Cox</div>

James Cox, professor at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, wrote *Preaching* to help students and pastors "preach well: that is, to preach with solid biblical and theological content; to preach sermons that engage both heart and mind; and to preach interestingly, persuasively, and with integrity."[66] Cox described preaching, which he associated with the tasks of proclaiming, witnessing, teaching and prophesying, as the task of getting "what is in the mind and heart of the preacher into the mind and heart of the hearer."[67] The preacher was to be a "herald," and while listeners have a role in responding to the *kerygma*, preaching "is one-way communication."[68]

In describing the content of the sermon, Cox broke his treatment down into considerations of the text, the emergent truth and the aim. He located truth in the text of Scripture, and the preacher's duty was to make that truth "accessible to as many of our

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[63] Ibid., 109.
[64] Ibid., 110.
[65] Ibid., 111.
[66] James William Cox, *Preaching* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), ix.
[67] Ibid., 51.
[68] Ibid.

hearers as possible."[69] Cox urged preachers to "know the bible" as their "primary textbook," so they might faithfully and contextually "execute the text."[70] Drawing from the work of Gerhard Ebeling, Cox urged the preacher to move beyond exposition toward execution. According to Cox there must be a message from God to the listener, and Cox offered multiple questions to serve as aids in locating this message.

From this interpretive engagement with the text, a "central idea" should emerge that theologically "generates and controls the conceptual development of the sermon."[71] This central idea unifies the sermon as it serves to determine how the sermon will take shape. Moving this central idea of truth toward the pulpit required an "exegesis of the hearers."[72] In relation to the congregation, the preacher should find something "to aim at: a soul to be saved, a text to be explained, a doctrine to be taught, a conscience to be guided, a heart to be comforted, or a worshipper to be met with God."[73]

Moving to the "making" of sermons, Cox differentiated "general" and "specific" preparation.[74] Cox encouraged preachers to read widely and to carefully record their thoughts in a journal or notebook. These notebooks should influence the "subconscious mind" as well as help in the "nurturing of our mind and soul" so that as the preacher sets old notebooks aside for new ones, the older ones have already deeply impacted the preacher's mind.[75] Cox also suggested continuing education and the study of sermons as important preparation for the preacher. Turning to specific preparation, Cox described

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[69] Ibid., 61.
[70] Ibid., 65-68.
[71] Ibid., 77.
[72] Ibid., 89.
[73] Ibid., 90.
[74] Ibid., 119.
[75] Ibid., 121.

some of the practices of "outstanding" preachers.[76] For example, once he acquired a basic idea, Phillip Brooks first made a sketch of the leading idea and after a few days of reflection worked toward a full manuscript. Fosdick began with a notion of what he wanted to accomplish and then located a truth to help him achieve this goal. Using brainstorming and free association, he developed a series of questions to move the process toward the manuscript stage.

Cox also described the interesting method of George Webber, who first studied the lectionary text with his staff members at the East Harlem Protestant parish. During the Wednesday luncheon, the preacher outlined the sermon and received comments from the staff. A lay Bible study group met on Wednesday nights, and the preacher's colleagues directed conversation toward the sermon. They brought their reports back on Thursday morning and Webber considered them before writing the sermon.[77] Cox commented on this method by noting that the preacher should take the questions of the congregation seriously before going "into the study" and being "alone with the Word."[78] Cox later quoted Fulton Sheen who argued that "The material of the sermon is not wholly that which comes from the paper to the brain, but which proceeds from a creative mind to the lips."[79] In the end, Cox urged preachers to find their own method of preparation, which can only be found by "experimentation."[80] Cox then moved to issues of arrangement in the following chapter.

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[76] Ibid., 125.
[77] Ibid., 126.
[78] Ibid., 127.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid., 128.

Evaluation

Although it is not totally clear in Cox's work, his pedagogical approach can best be described as imitation. He offered descriptions and at times specific procedures that "outstanding" preachers used to invent sermons and urged preachers to find their own method by experimentation. In reference to Lauer's continuum, Cox is fairly emphatic that there must be a central idea drawn from the biblical text and moved toward the sermon by exegesis. When describing specific preparation, Cox's advice can fairly be described as trial and error. He encouraged preachers to attempt various methods and to find the ones that worked best for them.

With the exception of Cox's description of Webber, all the examples offered portray the individual practices of an autonomous preacher. Even Cox's reflection on Webber's model moved in this direction as the interaction with colleagues and church members functioned only as a prologue to being alone with the Word in the study. Cox's treatment of the making and content of the sermon falls within an interpretive model of sermon invention. The preacher locates a central idea in Scripture and then seeks to communicate that idea to listeners. Finally, Cox made no mention of the body or the ways in which the body may influence sermon production.

Ron Allen

In *Interpreting the Gospel*, Ron Allen offered a model of preaching as "theological interpretation by conversation."[81] For Allen, conversation was the "mutual exploration of ideas, feelings, and behaviors with the goal of coming to as promising an

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[81] Ronald J. Allen, *Interpreting the Gospel: An Introduction to Preaching* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1998), 65.

understanding as is possible at a given moment."[82] The conversation of preaching

included God, the Bible, Christian history and tradition, congregation, the wider world

and the life of the preacher, who worked to interpret the significance of the gospel for the

life of the church and the world. Allen noted that the character of these conversations

would be context-specific, and pointed to four theological approaches (revisionary,

postliberal, liberation, and evangelical) that significantly shaped the conversation.

Turning to sermon preparation, Allen began by highlighting the role of Scripture

as a partner in the sermon conversation. Allen believed expository preaching "needs to be

the backbone of parish preaching" as the pastor "leads the congregation in a conversation

in which the community explores the meaning(s) of a biblical passage."[83] Whether the

preacher chose a text for lectionary or topical reasons, understanding Scripture as a

leading partner would ensure a theological engagement with gospel claims. In reflecting

on how a preacher would decide on a "starting point" for a sermon, Allen offered a range

of possibilities consisting of "analytical choice, moments of discovery and quiet, slow

gestations."[84] In describing these processes, Allen imaged the preacher sitting down at a

desk (though he acknowledged that sermon preparation could occur in other locations, he

did not name them) and being "stuck before an empty screen."[85] The preacher "may

begin sermon preparation with a specific purpose in mind" only to find that the process

takes on a life of its own.[86] However the preacher might find the starting point, it should

be "theologically appropriate, intelligible, morally plausible, contextually specific,

genuinely helpful to the congregation, and of sufficient size and importance" to matter to

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[82] Ibid., 67.
[83] Ibid., 99-100.
[84] Ibid., 118.
[85] Ibid., 117-18.
[86] Ibid., 118.

a congregation.[87]

Allen offered twenty-seven steps of sermon preparation for a preacher to use after finding a starting point. Following Paul Scott Wilson, Allen spread out his twenty-seven steps, which could be worked on alone or with feed-forward or clergy colleague groups, over five days each week.[88] These steps consisted of exegetical and hermeneutical considerations as well as issues of arrangement and style toward the later stages. For example, the preacher should find a set time and place such as the study, basement or other space at home.[89] The preacher should use this creative space when his mental energies are at their rhythmic "peak."[90] In the following chapter, Allen moved to issues of arrangement and form.

Evaluation

Allen offered a combination of art and imitation pedagogical approaches. The twenty-seven steps offered students "practical strategies" that functioned as "plans up front" for sermon development.[91] At the conclusion of the book, Allen presented models that exposed preachers to "processes as well as products."[92] On Lauer's continuum, I would place Allen's proposal toward the rule-governed. While he admitted his own preference for linear thinking, he acknowledged the need for "associative" thinkers to vary the process.[93] Ultimately, however, the detailing of the steps suggests a rule-centered approach.

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[87] Ibid., 118.
[88] Ibid., 120-21.
[89] Ibid., 119.
[90] Ibid., 120.
[91] Lauer, *Instructional*, 247.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Allen, 119.

Although many of these steps assumed that the preacher lived among the congregation, the overwhelming majority of Allen's twenty-seven steps did not require actual interaction with others as a part of the process. One exception was step sixteen, in which the preacher would engage the congregation's experience of the topic or text.[94] Allen encouraged preachers to utilize priestly listening, feed-forward groups and interviews to get a sense of the congregation's "preassociations" with the sermon subject.[95] This process would also inform the work of step twenty, where the preacher would assess how the congregation actually would react to a certain text.[96] Thus, Allen's central image of preaching as conversation in which the congregation takes part entailed actual contact with potential listeners during the composition process. His process encouraged actual conversations between preacher and potential listeners during sermon preparation. Allen, however, did not explicitly treat the issue of the social relation of the preacher and listener. In other words, one could interpret the feed-forward groups and interviews as acts of autonomous preachers who desired conversational input from other autonomous beings. The image of preparation occurring in the "mind" remained dominant, and Allen presented the preacher's desk as a normative image.[97]

Allen described the preaching conversation as "theological interpretation" in which the "preacher helps the congregation name the world."[98] Preachers would interpret the "significance of the gospel for the life of the ecclesial community and world."[99] He noted that "new possibilities for interpretation" could emerge from the conversation.[100]

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[94] Ibid., 146.
[95] Ibid., 145.
[96] Ibid., 153.
[97] Ibid., 118.
[98] Ibid., 66.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid., 69.

As a result of this conversation, the preacher would not seek to create a sermon true to the biblical text, but instead one true to the gospel.[101] While Allen emphasized interpretation and not production, there was a sense in which the conversational dynamics of the preaching process could lead to the creation of new knowledge. In terms of body, Allen described the place of embodiment in the delivery of the sermon, but he did not discuss the body in the sections on sermon preparation. He argued that the "pastor needs to get the sermon from the paper (or mind) into the heart and body," a statement that assumed the mental location of the sermon.[102]

Paul Scott Wilson

Moving beyond the narrative paradigm, Paul Scott Wilson offered the image of "movie making" in his *The Four Pages of the Sermon* as a necessary correction to the governing understanding of sermon composition as essay writing.[103] Noting that movies have scripts and scripts have pages, Wilson offered the image of a "page," more specifically four pages, to "address the need for theology to shape the sermon and describe how best this can be accomplished."[104] These four metaphorical pages were the four moves of the sermon that Wilson assigned to the days of the week, beginning with Tuesday, leading to the Sunday sermon. The four pages came from the types of material that could be included: "(1) sin and brokenness in the biblical world, (2) sin and brokenness in our world (3) grace in the biblical world, and (4) grace in our world."[105]

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[101] Ibid., 67.
[102] Ibid., 234.
[103] Paul Scott Wilson, *The Four Pages of the Sermon: A Guide to Biblical Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999), 11.
[104] Ibid., 12.
[105] Ibid., 13.

Wilson argued that this move to four pages was a theological shift that took seriously the ways in which form affected sermon theology. Unlike the two-part move from exposition to application, Wilson argued his proposal "keeps the sermon securely headed toward a theology of grace."[106] As a result, Wilson hoped that listeners would "view the content of our sermons as movies that they are seeing in their minds" as preachers spoke.[107] The problems with the movies preachers created in the past, according to Wilson, included a lack of engagement with a full range of senses and an apparent absence of God. The four pages, or four moments, were Wilson's attempt to correct these problems by establishing a consistent deep theological structure in the sermon. While the surface forms of these structures could vary (letter, lecture, drama, etc), these depth structures "foster hope," so a congregation would encounter good news that sounded like good news.[108]

Preachers should get into a habit of spending at least two hours a day on sermon preparation that involves "regular study, prayer, meditation, writing, and dedication."[109] On the first day, Wilson suggested that preachers should be at the "study desk with a blank sheet of paper, an open Bible, a cup of coffee, newspapers, and a stack of books and journals, many open at marked pages."[110] During this initial day of preparation the preacher would encounter six signs that would ensure unity of the upcoming sermon. Preachers should identify one text from Scripture, one theme sentence from that text, one doctrine from the theme sentence, one need in the congregation, one image to be wed to

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[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid., 14.
[108] Ibid., 26.
[109] Ibid., 34.
[110] Ibid., 33.

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the theme sentence and one mission.[111] Wilson imaged the sermon preparation process as being like a highway, which ultimately would lead to the destination of a completed sermon. These initial six steps were "signs" that the preacher could stop at after pulling "out of the local neighborhood."[112] The tasks for Monday concluded with the preacher following six strategies in penning an introduction.

The preacher would compose page one of the sermon on Tuesday. This page would consist of finding the trouble in a particular scriptural passage. Preachers should select a pericope and identify its presentation of sin and brokenness. Then, preachers as movie-makers would focus in on the details of the text, a move that forced preachers to make interpretive decisions about such aspects as clothing and geography.[113] Wilson warned preachers to stay out of the minds of the characters (a move which leads to inward narrative), and instead "focus on the acts and speech of the characters."[114] Moving to reviews of sermons, Wilson urged preachers to choose one doctrine and image from a text, employ the senses, create the geographical setting, film from a fresh perspective, create the event instead of reporting it and film in contemporary idiom.

There is no need here to rehearse Wilson's descriptions of the following three pages of the sermon: trouble in the world today, grace in the biblical world and grace in our world. The four pages as a whole attempt to organize and arrange sermon content so that "if an item is biblical, it belongs either on Page One (if it represents human brokenness, sin, or suffering) or Page Three (if it represents God's grace)."[115] At the end of each chapter Wilson gave examples of each move, in which he suggested questions for

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[111] Ibid., 36.
[112] Ibid., 57.
[113] Ibid., 87.
[114] Ibid., 88.
[115] Ibid., 27.

the preacher to consider. Examples of these questions include: "Do I develop trouble in the text?; Is this page mainly a move?; Have I found ways to speak about God on this page?"[116]

Evaluation

Wilson's pedagogical approach focused on practicing this four page model so that it became habitual, and thus I place his work within the imitation model. He offered strategies for preachers in the composition process, but ultimately it was the examples that Wilson gave from actual sermons that served as stimuli for sermon creation. In terms of Lauer's range of options, Wilson concluded his work by offering alternative ways for arranging the four pages. The actual content of these pages, however, Wilson understood to remain the same. Further, Wilson argued that "I am convinced that beginning students do best to concentrate on one primary method that is theological and adaptable to many forms, rather than to learn many diverse methods of varying strengths, and learn none adequately."[117] Thus, Wilson falls on the rule-based side of the spectrum in offering a model of four pages to guide the preacher through the composition process.

As perhaps best portrayed in the questions for reflection at the conclusion of his treatment of each page, the invention process is individual in nature. While Wilson assumed the preacher to be living in the world alongside the congregation, and to have a real sense of the particularities of their lives, the composition process required no actual contact with others. Wilson's questions emphasized that this process occurred in the study, and primarily in the mind. The cover of his work, which Wilson may or may not

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[116] Ibid., 104.
[117] Ibid., 14.

have chosen, also interpreted his proposal in this way through the image of four pages, a bible, pen, glasses and a box of paper clips on a desk.

Wilson based the four pages on the theological belief that "God speaks by the reading and appropriate interpretation of Scripture."[118] Wilson placed trouble in the Bible on page one to emphasize "the sermon God's word, not merely a human word."[119] The four pages were a managerial strategy for content exegetically found within Scripture, rather than a heuristic tool that generated new truth or meaning. While acknowledging that translation or exegesis altered texts, Wilson asserted that the goal was to "minimize distortion of a text as much as possible."[120] In terms of body, there was little or no explicit treatment of how the sermon invention process involved the body itself.

<center>Interim Summary</center>

In the survey of pedagogical resources often used in the introductory homiletic classroom, there is diversity in terms of Lauer's types of inventional framework (natural ability, imitation, practice, art) and variation on Lauer's continuum from rule-governed to aleatory. However, the authors are consistent in their emphasis on interpretation rather than production, on the individual rather than social nature of the process, and in the lack of discussion of the body of the preacher. The similarities of position in these last three categories work to create a dominant understanding of the inventive scene spans denominations and traditions. The preacher goes alone to the text, which is a space of managing ideas and truths by diverse exegetical methods, retreats to the office for sermon composition in a process often imagined as the move from mind to paper, and then

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[118] Ibid., 36.
[119] Ibid., 73.
[120] Ibid., 84.

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preaches the sermon. Very few proposed practices urge the preacher to encounter others on the scene of invention, and there is thus far no discussion of the role of the preacher's body. In the following survey of resources often used as supplementary readings in the introductory classroom, we will begin to find authors who challenge this dominant view.

Kirk Byron-Jones

In *The Jazz of Preaching*, Kirk Byron-Jones argued that the "music of jazz and gospel preaching share some of the same essential ingredients."[121] Noting that jazz was at least in part born in the church, Byron-Jones explored the resources of jazz tradition to help preachers tell the story of the gospel.[122] In imaging preaching as storytelling, Byron-Jones argued that the first principle of sermon creation is listening.[123] Like jazz, the calling of the preacher pushed him or her to hear the surrounding world, to listen to the Spirit's call of affection, to the life at the center of gospel preaching and to the distinct sounds of the heartbeat of the gospel.

Byron-Jones focused on the need for preachers to develop a life of creativity that would inform and shape sermon preparation. He noted that jazz musicians "accept the call to create at face value. They would not question their right to be co-creators with God. They would embrace and live out of a deliberate, creative disposition."[124] This disposition required an ethic of curiosity that led the preacher to the spaces in-between, the spaces of risk in which the preacher willingly spoke because God has something to say.

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[121] Kirk Byron Jones, *The Jazz of Preaching: How to Preach with Great Freedom and Joy* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 27.
[122] Ibid., 36.
[123] Ibid., 53,
[124] Ibid., 66.

Byron-Jones drew especially from the practice of improvisation among jazz artists. These improvisers "draw from wells of notes, phrases, songs and performances that they have played over and over again," a practice called "shedding or wood-shedding."[125] After years of practice and continuous creative exploration, these musicians created "an ever-expanding well of musical options" as they discovered new possibilities. The key to this type of exploration in the pulpit was for the preacher to be a "sponge in life."[126] Preachers should soak up sermon material from anywhere possible, "constantly taking in" so that your "well" would be full. It was from this "mental" well that "items more easily surface to mind" in the moment of preaching. Byron-Jones urged preachers to keep reviewing the material in his or her "folder" so that it might soak into the "unconscious mind" and possibly so the preacher might work it into the sermon.[127] Then preachers should "mentally abandon all preparation" before the moment of preaching so as to create space for improvisation to occur.[128] This emptying is a "surrender," a sign of hospitality that "sends a welcome to the spirit of improvisation."[129]

Evaluation

Byron-Jones employed an art pedagogy, which gave preachers "practical strategies and rhetorical knowledge to guide them during their writing."[130] There also were elements of practice pedagogy, as continual practice would eventually lead to the goal of the preacher, like a jazz artist, having mastery over the material. Byron-Jones

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[125] Ibid., 85.
[126] Ibid., 89.
[127] Ibid., 90.
[128] Ibid., 91.
[129] Ibid., 92.
[130] Lauer, *Instructional*, 247.

pointed to the dedicated practice of jazz greats that enabled them to become adept at the art of improvisation. He noted that "practice breeds familiarity with the instrument, its ability and its potential" so that ultimately practice breeds "mastery."[131]

On Lauer's continuum, Byron-Jones's proposal falls more toward the aleatory side. While the preacher must master particular notes and scales, the creativity that would occur within the actual performances would have an improvisational character that rules or strict rubrics could not teach. Instead, there was a sense in which the preacher must let go of his or her preparation to create space, even in the manuscript itself, for these creative moments.[132]

Byron-Jones pointed to the deeply dialogical nature of jazz in which musicians and even different parts of one musician (two hands, hands and feet) participate in an ongoing dialogue during performance. He further argued that beneath this practice was a "dialogical understanding of life."[133] This communal sense of self had roots in the West African notion of "personhood" as "rightly manifested in group relationships." Byron-Jones pointed to the call and response tradition as a manifestation of this social understanding. The practices that Byron-Jones offered at the conclusion of each chapter presumed this social understanding. Byron-Jones called preachers to work together with others on particular texts, talk to complete strangers about the text, enhance dialogical opportunities with the congregation, and work on sermons together with other preachers in the vicinity.[134]

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[131] Jones, 86.
[132] Ibid., 96.
[133] Ibid., 100.
[134] Ibid., 75, 76, 109.

The improvisational nature of the jazz metaphor led to an understanding of preaching as a productive act. Byron-Jones argued that "Jazz is sound-making on purpose. Its reason for being is to make, celebrate, and discover new sounds."[135] The theme of discovery was prevalent in Byron-Jones's work for even "mistakes become invitations for new discovery in jazz."[136] In fact, "perhaps there are no wrong notes at all," a claim that would free preachers to "play with trusting openness, to go wherever the music wants to go in the moment."[137] While the playing of jazz, blues and swing required constant bodily engagement, Byron-Jones did not explicitly explore the role of body in the creative process. The focus was more on the "mental well" filled by living life as a sponge, filling up notebooks along the way and practicing a life of creativity.[138]

Pamela Moeller

In her book *A Kinesthetic Homiletic*, Pamela Moeller reflected that she often had trouble "making the transition from hearing a sermon on Sunday morning to living gospel all the rest of the week" because words were not enough for her.[139] She needed "God embodied," and it was experience of such moments that led Moeller to focus her work on kinesthesia, the "sensory experience and memory that result from movement and…generate new movement."[140] This emphasis on physicality led her to wonder what it might look like to rethink preaching as more than just conveying messages between

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[135] Ibid., 30.
[136] Ibid., 107.
[137] Ibid., 80.
[138] Ibid., 89.
[139] Pamela Ann Moeller, *A Kinesthetic Homiletic: Embodying Gospel in Preaching* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 2.
[140] Ibid., 3.

minds. Instead, she asked if a sermon was thought of as "doing gospel body to body."[141]

Moeller began to answer this question by reflecting on her own discovery through dance that her "body was a voice, a voice without words, but one capable of expression quite beyond the abilities of my mind and mouth."[142] Before the preacher uttered a word, before the listener heard a sermon phrase, there was a "necessity for human muscles…to move."[143] Preaching, therefore, should grow out of more than just a disciplined imagination or life of mental creativity, understandings that restrict sermons to head-to-head events. Preaching should grow from the embodied self, and indeed it could be "generated in the body by those who permit spirit, gospel, and self to integrate."[144] Thus, in sermon preparation, preachers should "always begin…with movement as well as reason."[145] Instead of exegesis and analysis, Moeller encouraged the preacher to allow the text to choreograph the body in an effort to "turn the body on."[146]

Moeller made it clear that embodiment should not be reserved for treatments of delivery and gesture. Although all sermon preparation is in some ways embodied as electrons move in the brain and the preacher used muscles to type on a keyboard, Moeller argued that these were not yet embodied acts. Instead, she pushed for an intentional understanding that gospel and body deeply related to each other and even wanted to "dance" together.[147] This understanding would lead to disciplined acts and choreographies in which the body opened up parts of texts that the mind might never

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[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid., 5.
[143] Ibid.
[144] Ibid., 10.
[145] Ibid., 11.
[146] Ibid., 13.
[147] Ibid.

discover.[148] These practices of bodily interpretation should be put into dialogue with traditional methods, including exegesis and commentary work. This critical interaction allowed both practices to be strengthened and even redesigned.

The resulting sermon probably would be in the mold of the traditional aural/oral event according to Moeller, but "the whole sermon will be different from one conceived in the head."[149] The preacher would bring something different to the sermon, something more than just words on a page, because he or she had bodied it and allowed the text to choreograph him or her. When preachers learned and used actual movements of what Moeller terms "modern dance" it heightened this process of discovery.[150] In this type of dance, "there are no correct movements" and "body types and shapes are largely irrelevant."[151] There would be no "externally determined form," so preachers could begin to find freedom to holistically experience the gospel kinesthetically in sermon preparation.[152]

In her second chapter, Moeller turned to the social nature of this embodiment. She argued that "as long as sermons are created in pastors' heads and without the active involvement of members of the congregation, the church will be only half as effective in the world as it could be."[153] She urged the preacher to leave the "closet" and join the congregation in the work of sermon creation, for the homiletical process was a "group process."[154] She believed this was a risky endeavor, for society taught us to be ashamed of our body, to control and restrain its desires, especially for preachers trained in

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[148] Ibid., 16.
[149] Ibid., 17.
[150] Ibid., 18.
[151] Ibid.
[152] Ibid.
[153] Ibid., 20.
[154] Ibid.

cerebrally-focused homiletic systems. Moeller reminded preachers, however, that there could be no wrong movements and that even our supposed failures would be powerful ways of embodying a gospel full of grace.

The first step was to get into a comfortable position away from distractions, to close one's eyes, and allow the body to relax with deep breathing. The preacher slowly would become aware of the center of his or her being and of the presence of God always present there. The preacher then would move back to the text, and while sitting read it aloud together with others.[155] After corporately reflecting on that reading, the preacher and others should stand and read it aloud again together. The body would use different muscles, and alternative "body hungers" move with the passage. The group then would perform various types of readings, including antiphonal practices and individual participants reading in front of others. Moeller admitted this seemed "simple and obvious," but argued it was all too tragic when the pastor, in beginning sermon preparation, pulled out a Bible and read it silently, so as to never feel the gospel in the body.[156]

In a following session, preachers should move to dramatizing the text. Moeller encouraged them to close their eyes and envision the text as it was read. This was not enough, however, for a kinesthetic homiletic pushed the preacher to wrap the text around the body. Texts were more than words or passages from which central ideas should be gleaned. Texts were actually "kinesthesia" for Moeller, and when the preacher experienced Scripture in this way, sermons could not help but be more than just mind-to-mind communication.

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[155] Ibid., 26.
[156] Ibid., 27.

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Evaluation

Moeller offered an art pedagogy in which she presented preachers with strategies and practices of sermon preparation within an embodied process. As Lauer noted, art pedagogy offers plans that help engender confidence, a move that Moeller made in suggesting simple ways into the process before detailing the complex moves of modern dance. Lauer also noted that one best did art pedagogy collaboratively, and Moeller continually insisted on the cooperate nature of her proposals.[157] Therefore, on the range of options, Moeller's proposal falls closer to the aleatory side of the continuum. According to her, there would be no wrong movements, and she encouraged preachers to explore embodiment without necessarily following any particular scheme.[158] Moeller noted that "such preaching is quite likely to be scandalous and rarely, if ever, defined primarily by rules."[159]

The communal nature of sermon preparation was central to Moeller's proposal. She argued that if preachers remained faithful to the gospel they could never come up with sermons on their own.[160] The congregation was not "made up of mental constructs but of flesh-and-blood bodies," and so a kinesthetic homiletic would not only invite them into the sermon creation process but also attempt to "choreograph the congregation."[161] Sermon invention was an inherently social act that attempted to bring to light the communal nature of our very bodies.

In her desire to think of preaching as "communal dance," Moeller emphasized the

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[157] Lauer, *Instructional*, 247.
[158] Ibid., 81.
[159] Ibid., 10.
[160] Ibid., 82.
[161] Ibid., 93.

creative character of the process.[162] She argued that a kinesthetic approach to preaching "creates new space and time for the work of the spirit" and "opens doors."[163] Scripture was at the center of this approach, and Moeller's goal was for the text to move the preacher, "interpreting itself" through the preacher who engaged it in a holistic, embodied way.[164] She argued that this engagement brought about the potential to "generate new movement."[165] There is thus a sense in which this kinesthetic homiletic is generative and productive.

Finally, Moeller's work stands out as the most complete and intentional treatment of the body in the sermon invention process. Lamenting the ways in which homiletics has ignored or restrained the body, she called for a sea change in the ways programs taught and preachers practiced sermon preparation. A "disembodied gospel simply will not do" for Moeller, and so she called for homiletics to move past a mind/body split that traditionally imagined the gospel as only ideas.[166] According to her, the preacher must involve the whole body in the homiletic undertaking. For Moeller, a sermon was "doing gospel body to body," and sermon invention became the process in which the body itself generated new meaning and knowledge.[167]

Robert Dykstra

In *Discovering a Sermon*, Robert Dykstra offered an image of parabolic preaching that urged preaches to connect biblical texts with specific experiences in their own lives.

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[162] Ibid., 25.
[163] Ibid., 83.
[164] Ibid., 87.
[165] Ibid., 2.
[166] Ibid., 8, 24.
[167] Ibid., 3.

Dysktra argued that the preacher must have space in which she can make the text her own.[168] Dysktra believed that when sitting in the "lap" of tradition and the church, the preacher would look across the table at God, hesitate, and then he or she "spontaneously discovers, desires, grapples with, manipulates…and in effect 'creates' the very biblical text provided by others."[169] This would lead both to the creation and locating of truth. Therefore, Dykstra urged preachers to view their office as more of an artist's studio, a place where the preacher would feel the "illusion of omnipotence" over the "transitional object" of the text.[170] The preacher approached the text alone, creatively and without censorship, scribbling thoughts and questions in "spontaneous play."[171]

Dykstra's greatest fear was that preachers might become boring because of the pressures exerted by the external world to comply. Traditionally the preacher approached the text feeling the pressure to engage it in compliance with expectations, to limit the possibility of surprise or eruptions of emotion. Dykstra argued that there must be a vulnerability to the text, a willingness to keep authorities that demand compliance at bay (even God and Christ), so that play with or re-creation of the text could ensue. It was this "playing alone with the text, finding and creating truth" that was the "first and foremost task…in effective pastoral preaching."[172]

Dykstra then moved on to consider the "exegesis of life" by discussing the issue of curiosity and in particular how the "lack of loss of appetite for life is…learned."[173] Culture and civilization sought to tame the "deranged" hope and anticipation of the child

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[168] Robert C. Dykstra, *Discovering a Sermon: Personal Pastoral Preaching* (St. Louis, Mo: Chalice Press, 2001), 16.
[169] Ibid.
[170] Ibid., 21.
[171] Ibid., 26.
[172] Ibid., 28.
[173] Ibid., 46.

by bringing her into line with accepted standards and boundaries.[174] Dykstra argued that

preaching needed to reclaim a "therapeutic childlike curiosity and passion" that is

limited, at least in part, by education and congregational expectations.[175] Preachers must

subversively resist these tendencies by finding again "the capacity to waste time." [176]

Instead of plugging in a story or illustration, Dykstra urged preachers to focus on a deep

and particular passionate concern. The preacher must not only involve his or her own

curiosity and passion in sermon preparation but also understand them as an essential

quality of every sermon. This would free preachers to attend to the world in which they

live, to explore the depths of their own curiosity, which functions as a "route back to

bodies."[177] Moving beyond words to the "passions of their preverbal depths," would

allow the preacher to "kill" the canon, to pursue the truth of the Word in a way that

makes it one's own.[178] In this process of engagement, the preacher might find himself or

herself in tears, with sweaty palms or even "sexually aroused," and "only then might a

story win its way into the sermon itself."[179]

  After these introspective processes that sought to "make space for new relations,"

Dykstra turned to "playing with strangers."[180] The initial step of becoming a stranger to

one's self formed the foundation for creating a sermon "hospitable to strangers

without."[181] These strangers, real and imagined, included commentaries and scholarly

works, as well as potential listeners. Such encounters, which evoked awe and wonder as

well as resistance, urged the preacher to refuse the temptation toward the perversion that

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[174] Ibid.
[175] Ibid., 48.
[176] Ibid., 49-50.
[177] Ibid., 54.
[178] Ibid.
[179] Ibid., 57.
[180] Ibid., 84.
[181] Ibid.

would occur "whenever we think we know beforehand exactly what we desire."[182]

Dykstra called on preachers, therefore, to invent heretical sermons that resisted the orthodox demand for predictable conclusions and the refusal of strangeness. This temptation to deny individual difference refused to acknowledge God as the one who makes things new.[183] Thus, Dykstra called on the preacher to engage with, through imagination and actual encounter the "intrigue and terror of the strange" found in the other.[184]

Finally, Dykstra pushed the preacher toward the creative act of actually penning a sermon. Calling for a sermon shaped like a parabola, he argued that the edges, where Scripture and the preacher's passions would meet (though on the surface they might seem utterly unrelated), formed the "point of tangency between creativity and abomination…between, as the familiar hymn puts it, the old, old story and the new, new song."[185] This was the location where the preacher would be "written by a sermon," a process that opened up previously unknown paths for the sermon to take.[186]

Evaluation

Dykstra's pedagogical approach mostly consisted of an imitational strategy. The inclusion of his own sermons as models of his four moves, combined with reflections on how he created those sermons, offered preachers examples of products and processes to draw upon. Dykstra's proposal falls toward the aleatory side of Lauer's range because it encouraged, as a part of the initial step of introspection, a practice of free-writing based

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[182] Ibid., 87.
[183] Ibid., 89.
[184] Ibid., 90.
[185] Ibid., 109.
[186] Ibid., 110.

on the psychoanalytic practice of free association. While he suggested drawing a circle divided into four sections as a way to begin pulling the sermon together, he presented no rules or strict guidelines for the preacher to follow.[187]

The first two moves of Dykstra's inventional process were intentionally introspective in nature. He argued that these moves worked to make space for the third step of "playing with strangers."[188] Throughout the process his practical suggestions focused on the preacher interacting with a yellow legal pad, and he provided no explicit social emphasis. Dykstra's parabolic proposal urged the preacher to make the text his or her own, and in doing so both to find and to create truth. This process would lead to a heretical sermon that refused to mask or deny individual difference by moving toward predictable conclusions. Thus, it provided a generative and productive model of preaching that focused on the creative potential of the preacher to find or make new truth at the edges where the biblical text and contemporary life met.

There was an important element in Dykstra's work that aimed to get beneath or beyond words through contemporary stories that embodied or incarnated the gospel "by challenging and even destroying biblical claims for God's own passion in Jesus Christ."[189] These stories would "embody the honest truth," and thus preachers "in the privacy of their studies" must be willing to pursue a story (interest, passion) until they are at a loss for words.[190] The words of sermon stories were "somehow tied back to the yearnings of the physical body," and so Dykstra demanded that preachers should engage these passions in such a way that words (whether in their mind or spoken) rejoined to

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[187] Ibid., 111.
[188] Ibid., 75.
[189] Ibid., 57.
[190] Ibid.

bodies.[191] He imaged these bodies as the "preverbal depths" from which the words of our

sermons arise.[192]

Eunjoo Mary Kim

Eunjoo Mary Kim responded to what she considered "the imperialism of Western

homiletics" by offering a proposal for preaching contextually embedded in the Asian-

American tradition.[193] Kim proposed "spiritual preaching" as a model based on

"Christian eschatological spirituality."[194] Emphasizing the active role of the Holy Spirit,

she believed spiritual preaching "functions as a fragmentary foretaste of the messianic

feast" by seeking to form an "alternative community" where the corporate people of God

participate in an ethical and political life envisioned in the promise of God.[195] In this

homiletic vision, Kim imagined the preacher as a director or mediator who, as one called

by God and the congregation, offered visionary direction for the people of God on their

shared journey.[196]

Kim suggested the analogy of cooking to describe the sermon preparation process.

The preacher provided the community of faith with a "spiritual meal" in the same way a

"traditional Asian mother" cooked according to the family's taste and needs.[197]

Beginning with love for the family, the mother and preacher would create a plan for the

preparation process. Fresh ingredients, the new meaning arising out of the engagement

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[191] Ibid., 54.
[192] Ibid.
[193] Eunjoo Mary Kim, *Preaching the Presence of God: A Homiletic from an Asian American Perspective* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1999), 5.
[194] Ibid., 68.
[195] Ibid., 69.
[196] Ibid., 71-2.
[197] Ibid., 72.

between text and the world, would make the food "savory and nutritious."[198] The cook (preacher) would provide a varied meal in the appropriate container (right delivery of the sermon) by using varying cooking methods and sauces (various forms of the sermon). Finally, this container should complement the other elements of the meal (the liturgical setting) on the table.

By beginning to cook this meal, the preacher hermeneutically engaged the Scriptures re-described by Kim as the community's "manual of spirituality."[199] Rejecting *lectio divina*, despite its similar character to Zen Meditation, as being too individualistic for the Asian-American church, Kim offered a vision of interpretation as "meditation."[200] Kim then offered a seven-step process for engaging the text that included prayerful preparation, text selection, attentive reading, dynamic interaction and theological reflection.[201] While Kim followed Craddock in suggesting that the preacher interview community leaders, and also argued that the preacher should live a life within the community that informs interpretation, the steps did not require interaction with others. The "main ingredient" is the biblical text, and the congregation's cultural elements function as the "tasty sauce."[202]

Kim then turned to issues of form/arrangement by offering a "spiral-form sermon" based on the principles of intuition, consensus-oriented conversation and indirect communication.[203] In her final chapter, titled "From Theory to Practice," Kim offered an example of her own sermon, as well as a reflection about how it embodied her

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[198] Ibid., 72.
[199] Ibid., 96.
[200] Ibid., 97.
[201] Ibid., 97-101.
[202] Ibid., 151.
[203] Ibid., 123.

proposed of an Asian-American homiletic.[204] She considered how the text (Deut 26:1-11)

functioned as the "listeners' communal story," and how the structure of the text "suggests

the form of the sermon."[205] There was no description of how actual encounters with

others affected this process, or how the body was at work in the sermon production

process. The text itself functioned as the governing *topos* for the content and form of the

sermon as seen in Kim's description of its function as a "lens" for reflection.[206]

Evaluation

Kim's work operated mostly within an "imitation" pedagogy in which a specific

model is offered: spiral preaching. She then gave examples for imitation that utilized this

model. On Lauer's continuum, Kim's emphasis on the mysterious work of the Holy Spirit

as well as on the role of intuition in the preparation process tend toward the aleatory side.

The five moves of the spiral sermon, however, give a more rule-based slant to the

preparation process. Ultimately, Kim's emphasis on the role of meditation as deeply

related to unsystematic intuitive dynamics locates the pedagogical implications of her

work on the "trial and error" end of the spectrum.

In terms of the social nature of her proposal, Kim emphasized the corporate nature

of the Asian American congregation and criticized the practice of *lectio divina* for its

individualistic character.[207] However when it came to the actual process of invention,

which Kim outlined in her hermeneutical engagement with Scripture, this social character

was not explicitly present. She gave a sense that the preacher as director, or the one

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[204] Ibid., 151.
[205] Ibid., 153.
[206] Ibid.
[207] Ibid., 13, 96.

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responsible for spiritual meals, shared life with the community of faith, but when Kim moved to actual practices she emphasized the individual nature of the "cooking" process.

Kim argued that spiritual preaching "generates new meaning" for the congregation by meditative spiritual hermeneutics.[208] Building on the philosophical work of Paul Ricoeur and the homiletic work of Fred Craddock, Kim argued for a dialectical encounter that also took seriously liberation theology and the Asian American emphasis on meditation.[209] New meaning would arise out of this encounter, as outlined in Kim's seven steps of interpretation.[210] Thus, the hermeneutic enterprise, which she described as an interpretive process, became the creator of this new meaning. It is important to note that for Kim, this process continually involved the Holy Spirit.

The body was noticeably absent from Kim's work. She imagined notions of intuition and meditation as primarily functioning within the preacher's mind. While the metaphor of cooking was a bodily activity, this aspect of her metaphor failed to carry through to her proposal. In the description and reflection on her sermon in the final chapter, she did not address the body.

Anna Carter Florence

Anna Carter Florence explored the historical tradition of women preachers, and in the process attempted to set free the practice of preaching as testimony by using the metaphor of opening up the homiletic courtroom to include long-neglected voices. Testifying (preaching) could happen anywhere, especially in places in which the tradition least expected. Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, testimony arose from the

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[208] Ibid., 151.
[209] Ibid., 93-94.
[210] Ibid., 101.

experience of those the church had long considered unworthy or unqualified to speak. The witness stand became public, without needing sanction from the "courtroom" (church), and thus the women Florence traced thwarted any drive toward some form of consistent cultural-linguistic grammar.[211] Florence went on to appropriate the work of Mary McClintock Fulkerson and Rebecca Chopp so that these women preachers could be understood not only as freeing the Word from closed courtrooms, but also as encountering the Word as it became a "perfectly open sign."[212] This new Word was a word of liberation, "hidden and imprisoned (and crucified) because of its openness to different ways of speaking and being."[213] As an open sign, words (and the Word) were always open to various interpretations and always sliding open to "new signification and meaning."[214] Florence led up to her dramatic conclusion, that "This Word is always open to new meaning; it is a perfectly open sign; it is God."[215] Of course this Word always delayed and deferred meaning, always slipped out of our attempted significations, so its elusive presence signaled the power and work of continual liberation from various acts of closure.

Florence related her own journey of descending to the depths of the Princeton library in search of what she was sure would be sparse offerings of texts about women preaching. Instead, she was astonished to find many volumes describing the lives of

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[211] William H. Willimon and Stanley Hauerwas, *Preaching to Strangers: Evangelism in Today's World* (Louisville, KY.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992); Charles L. Campbell. *Preaching Jesus: New Directions for Homiletics in Hans Frei's Postliberal Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1997).

[212] Mary McClintock-Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2001); Rebecca Chopp, *The Power to Speak* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2002).

[213] Anna Carter Florence, *Preaching as Testimony* (Louisville, KY.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 95.

[214] Ibid., 95.

[215] Ibid.

preaching women who had been left out of the "official" homiletic canon.[216] Florence

wanted to recover this history as a way of providing "a historical, biblical, theological,

and homiletical memory of women's preaching" that would urge us to "rethink our

assumptions about what it is to preach and what it takes to become a preacher."[217] In the

end, she took up the particular histories of Anne Hutchinson, Sarah Osborn and Jarena

Lee. These three women preachers served as a starting place for reconstructing

homiletical memory in an often unexpected (they did not always fit the "feminist" roles

Florence wished) and provocative manner.

In Florence's refigured courtroom, there remained an ad hoc jury (listeners), and a

judge (the God who suffered and died for openness) still presided, but the standard rules

and formulas were not in play. Proclamation happened, and would continue to happen

and never quite finish or conclude, but it always would be "sketchy, always in

progress."[218] Because it arose from particular, historical experience and did not seek to

create conceptual schemes or dogmas, proclamation always looked forward to being

"outlived or outgrown" by those who would come and testify in the future.[219]

Proclamation would happen wherever people need liberation, and people need liberation

wherever oppressive closures threaten.

In Florence's concluding chapter she outlined the three processes of attending,

describing and testifying as her proposal for the stages leading from text to sermon. The

first move of attending was a "way of being, seeing, and living in the text and in the

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[216] Ibid., xix.
[217] Ibid., xxvi.
[218] Ibid., 98.
[219] Ibid.

world, and its primary task is to receive in openness."[220] This was a call to "pay attention," especially to the ways in which changes in "interpretive space" affected "what you see."[221] Attending involved attention to physical sensations, emotions and feelings in addition to other faculties that when taken together meant living in an "alternative way."[222] This way of living consisted of habits that often made the preacher appear "foolish" because these practices constituted a truly alternative lifestyle.[223] Florence urged preachers to "start with a biblical text," and then to develop such habits as writing it out, keeping it in one's pocket, memorizing it, underlining it, reading it at social events, reading it in dislocated spaces, embodying it, creating the text in art, and reading with those who are "Other."[224]

The preacher then should move to find the words "to express what we have seen in our attending."[225] God "burned on our lips and sealed in our hearts" the Word, and engagement with the text "leaves it own marks."[226] The preacher would seek to describe what he or she really believed about the text in that particular moment. Florence suggested that the most helpful practice in making this move was the development of a "discipline of writing."[227] She urged the preacher to get a large sketchbook and then image, rewrite, slang, character-sketch, monologue, dialogue, text-jam, letter, dream, journal, change and if-only the text. Finally, the third move of testifying, or "finally saying what we have seen and believed" was the "most dangerous part of the sermon

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[220] Ibid., 135.
[221] Ibid.
[222] Ibid., 136.
[223] Ibid., 137.
[224] Ibid., 139-143.
[225] Ibid., 143.
[226] Ibid., 144.
[227] Ibid., 145.

preparation process."[228] Florence argued that the very center of this process must be the preacher's love for the listeners. This love would push the preacher away from merely correcting to testifying to the truth he or she saw and experienced in the sermon process.

Florence attempted to re-imagine the exegetical process, so that instead of going to the text in search of what to say, the preacher lived in the text in order to have a "direct experience of the text itself."[229] The sermon became "the aftermath of that encounter" as the preacher told of what he or she saw and heard in the text and what he or she believed.[230] The sermon itself did not attempt to recreate an experience or highlight a central conversation but instead was a persuasive discourse that ultimately led to conversion. While the search for the *topos* of this discourse began in Scripture, it was the preacher's experience while living in the text that became the primary source of sermon content. This experience included encounters with others in both regular and dislocated settings around the text, but it was in the end the preacher's own encounter that shaped rhetorical production.

Florence's proposal suggested exegetical practices with social and bodily components that over time would shape a way of paying attention both to the text and the world. This way of life created an ethos that fostered honest encounters with the Word in the midst of life with the text. Attending to and describing such encounters would become the exegetical foundations that would underlay the testifying narrative. In discussing this testimony, however, Florence gave little direction about how the preacher should develop the actual sermon. When it came time for the preacher to move from the notebook to actual sermon production, Florence assumed that testimonial retelling was

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[228] Ibid., 150.
[229] Ibid., 133.
[230] Ibid.

sermon invention. The preacher had already accomplished in the refigured exegetical practice the deep epistemic work, and so the preacher then turned to relate those experiences to the congregation in the sermon.

Evaluation

Florence's proposal falls under Lauer's art pedagogy that offered preachers "strategies" and gave "guidance" throughout the inventive process. She suggested a number of creative exegetical suggestions but gave no strict order or timeline. These suggestions served more as heuristic practices that I would locate toward the aleatory point on Lauer's spectrum. While Florence encouraged social interaction, especially displaced and dislocated encounters, during the sermon preparation process, she did not explicitly refer to the social dynamics of the process.

Florence emphasized the productive potential of sermon composition. The move to locate the *topos* in the experience of the text itself opened up the potential for grafting epistemic discoveries onto present knowledge. Florence encouraged the body to be active in the inventive process. She encouraged preachers who were kinesthetic learners to "body" the text. Acting it out by blocking the action was another practice that involved the somatic dynamic in the creative process.

Conclusion

This survey of primary and secondary homiletic literature indicates that in recent textbooks there is a standard view of the individual rather than social, managerial rather than productive nature of the sermon creation process as well as about the role of the

body on the scene of sermon creation. The few exceptions (Kim, Florence) that urge the preacher outside the walls of the church office confirm the central role of the study in which the preacher sits at her desk with paper and pen (or computer) ready. Craddock and Wilson's romantic image of the office desk, where the preacher allows the sermon to percolate (Hogan) after filling the mental well (Byron-Jones), depicts the dominant image of the scene of sermon invention. While Dykstra's refiguring of the office as an artist's studio, and Kim's suggestion of the kitchen, expand the imaginary boundaries of this accepted site, the yellow legal pad (Dykstra) waiting on the desk continues to dominate.

Linda Brodkey argued that "the scene of writing is a text many of us find ourselves reading when we think about writing or, worse, when we are in the very act of writing."[231] Brodkey wrote about the "modern scene" of writing in which the "solitary writer" was "arrested in the moment of transcription." This privileged picture of the writer in the garret was "hegemonic" for Brodkey in that it deeply influenced and shaped the ways in which writers constructed their own scenes of writing.[232] She wondered:

> Do we not refer to Antonio Gramsci's "Prison Notebooks" as if the fact that they were written in prison somehow guarantees their importance? One would not expect to command either the same kind or degree of respect for essays written in a kitchen. It is hard to imagine, in any event, "The Kitchen Journals" as a cultural shorthand for the serious or truthful…[233]

There is therefore a privileged scene of writing, according to Brodkey, that carried what could become the "tyranny of the image we carry with us to that scene."[234]

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[231] Linda Brodkey, "Modernism and the Scene(s) of Writing," *College English* 49, no. 4 (1987): 396.
[232] Ibid., 397.
[233] Ibid., 399.
[234] Kristie Fleckenstein, "Writing Bodies: Somatic Mind in Composition Studies," *College English* 60, no. 3 (1999): 299.

It is worthwhile to ask if such a hegemonic scene exists for preachers as well. The seemingly nameless and "placeless" office study referred to again and again by these pedagogical texts gives introductory students a dominating image of what serious sermon preparation looks like and where it should occur. Even these refigured and reimagined proposals occurred in an office in which a preacher sits at a desk where the blinking cursor of the computer monitor beckons (Allen). Unfortunately, in a homiletic *kairos* where diversity, particularity and social location are of increasing importance, the predominant image of the scene of sermon creation continues to stand as a generalized ideological bulwark against change.

This image reminds the emerging preacher that he or she must be in control of the scene at all costs.[235] The preacher is the cook (Kim) or the coffee maker (Hogan), and must harvest the seed (Craddock) and fill up the empty notebooks (Cox, Wilson). As the preacher lives life "outside," engages others in conversation (possibly even about the sermon), this scene of invention always awaits. The preacher returns to this space in order to get serious about filling up the blank pages on the desk. Lauer's categories make clear that this scene is imagined primarily as a space of interpretation within a closed system. The image of the seed (Craddock), as noted in the last chapter, points to a closed system in which only the seed changes as outside forces influence it. The seed's growth, on the other hand, produces no impact on those outside forces (rain, sun, etc).[236] The focus and function statements that Long ties to the image of the compass leave this closed system intact. One may follow or even resist the magnetic pull of a compass; it in no way affects the magnetic poles themselves. The focus and function statement interprets something

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[235] Ibid., 300.
[236] Karen Burke LeFevre, *Invention As a Social Act*. Studies in Writing & Rhetoric (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987), 26.

which is already there and stable. This closed scene of interpretation cannot be separated from the safe walls of the preacher's study.

The seed grew in the mental realm. Both Craddock and Hogan's metaphor of coffee referred to mental percolation. Meditation was key for Kim and Wilson, who encouraged preachers to journey down a mental highway toward sermon completion. Each primarily figured the action as occurring in the mental muscle, and then eventually between the fingers and keyboard or pencil. It is this hegemonic scene that student preachers encounter in the introductory classroom, and it becomes a potential ideological straightjacket they carry with them throughout their career.

There is, however, a thread of this pedagogical literature searching for an alternative. Pamela Moeller's focus on the body resists the dominant scene of invention by shedding light on the role of the body during the inventive process. Dykstra's parabolic proposal urged preachers to involve the body in the preparation process, even bodily functions such as sexual arousal that have been taboo in homiletics. Kim's cooking metaphor and Cox's desire for conversation present promising images that widen the scene, and Florence's urging the preacher to talk to others threatened the privacy and safety of the privileged inventive space. Jones's proposal of open-ended improvisation in the pulpit imagined the environment itself as a deeply influential agent during the sermon.

These are early signs of resistance to the dominant scene of sermon invention. Those resistant to its closure have pointed in preliminary ways to the possibility of other, if not open, space(s) that could be created for the inventive act. Moeller used the language of no wrong movements, of creating space, and spoke of generating new

movement. Dykstra was also interested in productive generation, while Byron-Jones built on the imagery of jazz. These writers questioned the integrity of the inventive scene and the solidity of the walls that have given it a neck-up, individual character. The reigning image has curtailed the theological potential of the scene of sermon invention. The next chapter will critically consider two of the major causes of this closure, and by following the prompting of those resistant strands outlined above, will offer alternative ways of imagining the scene of sermon invention.

CHAPTER III

CONSTRAINTS ON SERMON INVENTION: HERMENEUTICS, LANGUAGE

Through an analysis of the history of homiletic theory and a survey of contemporary pedagogical works, a dominant image of the scene of sermon invention has emerged. This scene is neck-up, focused almost exclusively on the mind as the preacher introspectively composes a sermon. This composition usually arises from an individual exegesis of the biblical text. The preacher then uses a variety of methods to bring the text's message to the people in the congregation. This activity most often occurs in a study or office in which the preacher takes what has grown in the mental greenhouse and puts it down on a piece of paper or computer file.

Much of this scene has been constructed not from explicit discussion by homileticians, but from the assumptions underlying their metaphors and their practice sections, or from an almost total lack of treatment. Some homileticians, however, have begun to question the reigning consensus concerning the inventive scene, and have attempted to create new images for homiletic and pedagogical discourse that dramatically enlarge the theological possibilities of sermon invention.

Before these attempts to widen the scene of invention can be discussed, there are two constraining homiletic walls or boundaries that I must critically consider. These walls help preserve the status quo by relegating the scene of sermon invention to a managerial stop on the way from text to sermon. From such a perspective, there is little theological impetus to expand the camera's view from the picture on the front of Paul

Scott Wilson's *Four Pages*. In order to open up the scene of sermon production as a space of meaningful theological production that requires theoretical and pedagogical reformulation, these boundaries must be questioned.

The privileging of hermeneutics over sermon composition, and belief in the necessity of a shared language and culture to communicate, limit the focus of the scene of sermon production to the introspective and the interpretive. As Yarbrough argued, "when we believe in such theories, we cease to attempt to accomplish what the theories will not allow us to imagine we can do."[1] This chapter attempts to address these boundaries and to offer alternative perspectives that can open the sermon scene to fuller incarnational and eschatological possibilities.

The Problem of Conventionalism

The central problematic of this chapter is most succinctly expressed by Reed Dasenbrock's term "conventionalism."[2] This position, as most notably expressed by thinkers such as Stanley Fish and Thomas Kuhn, holds that "human identity is 'socially constructed'…and the crucial 'constructor' is the community or group who shares a set of beliefs."[3] For example, Fish described an "interpretive community" that structured and determined the ways in which readers read texts. These texts were powerless to resist interpretation, for "every sentence and word are given meaning exclusively by the

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[1] Stephen R. Yarbrough, *Inventive Intercourse: From Rhetorical Conflict to the Ethical Creation of Novel Truth* (Carbondale IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2006), 24.

[2] Reed Way Dasenbrock, *Truth and Consequences: Intentions, Conventions, and the New Thematics*, (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 5. See also Thomas Kent, "On the Very Idea of a Discourse Community," *College Composition and Communication* 42, no. 4 (1991): 425-45.

[3] Dasenbrock, 16; see Stanley Eugene Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class?: The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1980) and Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3rd edition (Chicago University Press, 1997).

interpretive scheme held by the interpreter."[4] This conventionalist paradigm is based on

the belief that people need a shared language and culture for successful communication.[5]

Culture and language "preside over our discourse like a judge over a court, issuing

general instructions, ruling out the illicit comment, ordering us to forget whatever the

judge deems outside the established procedures."[6] This belief is deeply rooted in

Western culture.

A Brief Genealogy

There are many stories one could tell about the history and evolution of views

about the nature of language. The particular narrative of concern here formed the

foundation of what has since the mid-twentieth century become the field of Homiletics.[7]

The narrative begins, as many narratives have, with Plato.[8] Gary Madison argued that

before Plato (especially in Homer), "words functioned in all sorts of undefinable and

uncontrollable sorts of ways" but that the rationalist ambitions of Plato led to the creation

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[4] Dasenbrock, 14. See also Fish, 43.

[5] Stephen Yarbrough offers an illustration of the implications of such a claim. "Imagine for a minute stepping out onto your deck and startling the squirrel eating from your bird feeder. He will scamper off, stop, flip his tail vigorously, and chatter at you. You will rightly think this is a communication directed at you. You will probably not, however, consider whether the squirrel is lying to you, or that he is in error about the state of affairs, or that his behavior is insane or an act with subversive intent or speech with ironic undertones. And if you were really interested in what this squirrel had to say, you probably wouldn't try to look up his chatter patterns in a squirrel translation manual…squirrels don't have culture or language. When we judge an animal's behavior, we don't measure it against a standard we assume should be guiding that behavior. We assume the discrepancy between what we expect the animal to do and what the animal actually does is to be accounted for by conditions or forces of which we are currently unaware. If we want to understand the behavior, we look for those conditions; we don't look for an *a priori* code." *After Rhetoric: The Study of Discourse Beyond Language and Culture* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1999), 86.

[6] Ibid, 84.

[7] This history deeply relies on the work of Stephen Yarbrough who noted he was "not so much interested in historical correctness…, in the sense of an exposition of cause and effect" as he was "in exposing the consistency of an assumption about the requirements of meaningful discourse…" Yarbrough, *After Rhetoric*, 109.

[8] Yarbrough, *After Rhetoric*, 108; Thomas Kent, *Paralogic Rhetoric: A Theory of Communicative Interaction* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1993), 36.

of the "semiotic theory of language."[9] This theory considered words to be signs judged

on their basis of relations to things in the world.[10] Madison noted that "Plato insisted that

the meaning of words is (or ought to be) determined by reality itself and that when a new

word is coined it should be made to fit the concept it is intended to express and should

conform to the precise nature of the thing talked about."[11] Language could represent

reality, whether that reality was in the realm of ideal forms or in the empirical world.

Aristotle followed suit, and the classical tradition or as Madison put it, "orthodoxy," set

the grounds of discourse, the *topoi* or *chora* out of which understandings of language

would then proceed.[12] It was possible for language to mirror reality, and the only question

concerned the right reality for it to mirror.

    After the rise of Christianity in the West, the Bible strongly informed this reality,

promoting a particular set of *topoi* for discourse.[13] For many, Scripture formed a closed

system of writings that "could not" contradict each other and served as a coherent

authority. For nearly a thousand years, the Bible would be the standard of truth and

beauty, the ultimate arbitrator and example of what it meant for language and reality to

"match."[14] This consensus would generally hold, according to Yarbrough, until the

Renaissance and the return of rhetoric. As the world began to struggle with political and

social turmoil, some people found the certitude and totality that Scripture had offered for

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[9] Gary Madison, "Being and Speaking," in *Beyond the Symbol Model*, ed. John Stewart (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996.), 72.
[10] Ibid., 73.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid., 74-76; Crowley noted, "In *Cratylus* such otherness is already perceptible in Socrates' references to geographic, historical, social and gender-related variation which needs to be suppressed, by way of the *etumos logos*, in order to recover the divine language of truth." Tony Crowley, "Bakhtin and the History of Language," in *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory*, ed. Ken Hirschkop and David Shepherd (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 180.
[13] Yarbrough, *After Rhetoric*, 110.
[14] Ibid.

so long ineffective and unsatisfying, and the grounds of discourse once again opened for debate.

Erasmus and Peter Ramus stepped into the opening and debated whether the grounds of discourse were negotiable (Erasmus) or indeed created and instituted logically by God (Ramus).[15] Ramus's experiential epistemology, based upon the belief that the universe was completely logical, proved to have the most influence into the modern period. As the Enlightenment dawned, the general understanding of how language worked stayed the same. The focus shifted to how to clarify and purify the use of language in order to lead to the most precise truth. Language should be "correct." Thinkers like Locke and Bacon began to suggest ways to purify and standardize language, and in the end empirical knowledge replaced Scripture as the underlying ground of knowledge.[16]

Saussure continued this drive toward standardization by making a distinction between *langue* and *parole*.[17] Yarbrough noted that "this distinction allows Saussure to establish language [*langue*] as an isolated, homogenous object for a science distinct from those appropriate to studying speech [*parole*]."[18] Language became an arbitrary system in which signs connected within a linguistic system on a closed field of play. This closed field was, according to Saussure, like a chessboard, so that position within the field determined value.[19] Governed by pre-existing rules, language became "an invariable set of conventions" and only gained meaning when speakers played linguistic games with

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[15] Ibid., 111.

[16] Ibid., 115. See, Rafey Habib, *A History of Literary Criticism: From Plato to the Present* (Malden, Mass: Blackwell Pub, 2005), 276.

[17] Ferdinand de Saussure, *Writings in General Linguistics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). See also Roy Harris, *Reading Saussure: A Critical Commentary on the Cours De Linguistique Générale* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1987), 93-95.

[18] Yarbrough, *After Rhetoric*, 129.

[19] Ibid., 127, 130.

it.[20] Calvin Schrag argued that in Saussure's form of structuralism (and thus many of those who subsequently based their understanding of language on Saussure's work), the evaluator is only concerned with the linguistic play of signifier and signified.[21]

Saussure's work was a key step in what Yarbrough called *linguistification*, the move towards "more emphasis upon language as a medium of force between 'mind' and 'reality,' one of greater and lesser transparency, but always toward more formality, abstraction, and disconnection from historical process and individuals' situations and their desires."[22] Yarbrough argued that this move toward coherence was almost always the goal of linguistic discourse. As language became more formalized, there emerged a greater drive toward "standardization or purification."[23] Tony Crowley described this trajectory in late-nineteenth-century Britain, where the linguistic historians of the time involved themselves in "establishing cultural hegemony" by advocating a "standard language."[24] Historians attempted to formulate a monoglot language with its own history in order to build strong communal ties. This, as Crowley noted, is an "eradication of linguistic difference…[that] takes the form of a banishment of historical alterity in favour of a unified and radically synchronic system."[25] These historians suppressed changes by opposing them to a "cultural unity enshrined in language."[26] As was often characteristic of conventionalism, this push toward standardization meant the "recognition of the other

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[20] Ibid., 131.

[21] Calvin Schrag, *Communicative Praxis and the Space of Subjectivity* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2003), 124; Leonard Jackson defined structuralism as "an attempt to find a model for both the structure and functioning of societies, minds, etc. in the structuralist model of language, developed in linguistics in the early twentieth century." Leonard Jackson, *The Poverty of Structuralism: Literature and Structuralist Theory*. (London: Longman, 1991), 20.

[22] Yarbrough, *After Rhetoric*, 132.

[23] Ibid., 133; see also Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 271-79.

[24] Crowley, 184.

[25] Ibid., 186.

[26] Ibid.

has depended upon first subordinating the other's discourse to some authoritative standard…"[27]

Scholars often term the results of this process of standardization culturalism and multi-culturalism. Culturalism holds that there is a single, stable ground that can be represented by language, while multi-culturalism posits multiple, incommensurable grounds across which communication is impossible.[28] In one case, the temptation was always toward imperialism, or the imposition of the "right" interpretation of that solid ground upon all. In the other, there was always a tendency toward isolation, unwillingness to even attempt communication with those outside a specific cultural system.[29]

Traditional semiotic understandings of language and rhetoric posited a closed field, a preset "chess board" (in Saussure's language).[30] When there was disagreement, one either attempted to persuade the other whose view was most accurate, *or* assumed the sameness of the other and then struggled for position within that closed field. Whether one assumed the universality of one field or posited multiple incommensurable fields, there was little hope that agreement or true dialogue could occur unless one converted to another's viewpoint. In mainline homiletics, it was this latter belief in the existence of multiple fields of discourse, often referred to as interpretive or discourse communities, which won the day.

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[27] Ibid.

[28] See Kuhn, *Structure of Scientific Revolutions,* 112: "Therefore, at times of revolution, when the normal-scientific tradition changes, the scientist's perception of his environment must be re-educated – in some familiar situations he must learn to see a new gestalt. After he has done so the world of his research will seem, here and there, incommensurable with the one he had inhabited before."

[29] Yarbrough, *After Rhetoric*, 5.

[30] Ibid., 52.

For John Broadus, there were reliable, universally accessible "commonplace[s]" that would be "familiar" to listeners.[31] As John McClure pointed out, Broadus argued that preachers could draw on *a priori* "general truths which have in some way been established" or "necessary principles" that "is believed to hold true in all cases."[32] The individual should interpret these principles through the lens of systematic theology and finally judge by Scripture, but the availability to all of a common discursive ground meant that "whatever makes his [the preacher's] mind glow will warm theirs."[33] In *As One Without Authority*, Fred Craddock also posited the need for a shared discursive ground that enabled communication. As Craddock wrote, "Because the particulars of life provide the place of beginning, there is the necessity of a ground of shared experience."[34] The preacher had to identify with the listener and the sermon assumed a common experience of asking "the question of their own being and of their relation to Ultimate Reality."[35] John McClure notes that "In order for this to work, both preachers and their hearers must at least tacitly agree that there is symmetry of knowledge and experience between one another."[36] Broadus and Craddock were lynchpins of their respective traditions, and while radically different, both assumed the existence of an underlying stable field of discourse that shaped either reason (Broadus) or experience (Craddock) in such a way to ensure the possibility of communication.

Later in the twentieth century, homileticians began to move away from these notions based on shared common core principles or shared experience, and began

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[31] Broadus, 7.
[32] McClure, *Other-wise,* 72; Broadus, 182, 186.
[33] Broadus, 127, 172, 133; see McClure, *Other-wise*, 73.
[34] Craddock, *As One Without Authority,* 49.
[35] Ibid., 51
[36] McClure, *Other-wise*, 51.

focusing on the differences between preacher and listener.[37] This emphasis pushed

homiletics to begin to focusing on the social nature of the preaching event and to the

character of actual communities in which preachers operated. It brought to light the

problems of Broadus's and Craddock's assumptions while welcoming into the discussion

a diverse range of new homileticians. Preachers could no longer assume or pretend that

their audiences were homogenous and homileticians argued this should affect the ways in

which sermons were created. Contexts began to deeply matter for sermon design and

critical discussions about those contexts exposed the vast array of actual differences that

previous generations of homiletic thinkers had failed to take into account. The problem,

however, was that these homileticians treated these differences as obstacles to transcend

or overcome. Whereas the former views assumed a common, stable field of discourse,

this later move posited multiple, isolated fields of discourse. James Cox warned that "the

difference between the preacher and the members of the congregation" could cause

difficulty in communication.[38] The preacher and hearer might speak a different language

(English and Korean). The preacher might be so immersed in the "language of the

academic world or the technical language of theology" that his or her speech would

become "virtually a foreign tongue" to hearers in the pew.[39] Preachers who lived in a

"world of literature, art, music, theology" might appear out of touch with the daily lives

of hearers.[40] Cox identified one of the "strongest forces" preventing communication as

"the pressure of the group to which we belong" so that we tended to hear ideas as

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[37] McClure, 53-57.
[38] Cox, 53.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.

"Smiths or Joneses, Protestants or Catholics, fundamentalists or liberals…"[41] In light of this, Cox argued there needed to be a "common ground" of meeting he characterized as "some prior claim of truth in the Bible."[42] Beginning here prompted an attitude of mutual respect in which the preacher and hearer could begin communication. This respect opened space for questioning and possibly changing one's own theological system. Conventional elements clearly resided in Cox's claim that speaking of different "languages" arising from membership in different "groups" prevented communication. Unlike Fish and others, however, Cox argued for a common ground (prior belief in the truth of the Bible), a place where communicators "transcend[ed]" differences and met in "creative understanding."[43] Ronald Allen used the same language in his desire for the preacher and sermon to "transcend listener peculiarities."[44]

Lucy Lind Hogan pointed to the problem of "cultural noise" that potentially interrupted or derailed communication.[45] She noted that "ecclesial culture both shapes our expectations and consequently creates noise when we are not in that culture."[46] Quoting the work of Leonora Tubs Tisdale, who argued that preaching was often cross-cultural communication, Hogan described the "pastor and people" as being "from very different worlds."[47] Allen also drew on the work of Tisdale, asserting that congregational analysis "helps the preacher discover why people are the way they are."[48] Then the preacher could

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[41] Ibid., 54.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid., 57.
[44] Allen, 41.
[45] Hogan, 75.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid. See also Tisdale, *Preaching as Local Theology.*
[48] Allen, 34.

speak a language "that is indigenous to the people" of that "local congregational culture."[49]

Hogan went on to describe listeners as "fish" (drawing from Matt 13:37) who came to the preaching moment from different cultures. These cultures were "like a pair of glasses by which you see the world" and shaped the ways in which communication occurred.[50] Hogan called on preachers to form the habit of listening to others. While there are traces of conventionalism in Hogan's (quoting Tisdale) description of "different worlds" and her emphasis on culture shaping communication, Hogan's portrayal of cultural differences as that which the preacher must overcome is more prominent. Hogan noted that "what makes preaching challenging is that different 'fish' listen differently" and described these differences as creating "cultural noise."[51]

Other homileticians began to emphasize Scripture as a linguistic and cultural force that formed and shaped the interpretive community of the church, and focused on sermon language as possessing peculiar potential to carry this formative power. Walter Brueggemann framed his homiletic proposals by arguing that everyone lived according to a script.[52] He argued that "human transformation (the way people change) does not happen by didacticism or by excessive certitude, but by the playful entertainment of another scripting of reality that may subvert the old given text and its interpretation and lead to the embrace of an alternative text and its redescription of reality."[53] Brueggemann argued that the "biblical text" was the alternative script to the dominant Enlightenment narrative, and that by preaching, preachers were "conducting an adjudication between

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[49] Ibid.
[50] Hogan, 81.
[51] Ibid., 80.
[52] Brueggemann, *Cadences*, 26.
[53] Ibid, 29.

these two competing texts."[54] The view that, as Brueggemann noted in quoting Amos Wilder, "narrative is indeed 'world making,'" and that by "rhetorical operation…we are indeed 'speeched into newness'" offered an alternative space.[55] The special place given to language, to the extent that some critics deemed it a "magical" view, was a central characteristic of the conventionalist paradigm.[56]

Tom Long drew from the cultural-linguistic work of David Kelsey to describe Scripture as that which "functions to shape persons' identities so decisively as to transform them…when it is used in the context of the common life of Christian community."[57] Biblical texts "function to shape Christian identity" by "actively shaping self and communal understanding."[58] This view understood Scripture as "a closed system reflecting the cosmic totality, a unity of form and content, and therefore the standard of truth and beauty…the grounds of a discursive tradition."[59] Like Saussure's chessboard, Long's description of this discursive ground was complex and multifaceted. There was room for play, as texts had the potential for many claims in many different congregational settings, and the preacher was even free to reject the claims of the text.[60] It would be the work of Charles Campbell, addressed later, which would take the

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[54] Ibid., 30.

[55] Ibid., 34.

[56] Yarbrough, *After Rhetoric*, 84. Thinkers such as Stephen Yarbrough challenged this view: "That is, discourse is not of a different ontological order from the rest of the world. It does not, in the form of culture, language, theory or anything else, stand as a medium, transparent or otherwise, between ourselves and the world. It is to be understood and dealt with like anything else in the world, not as a "representation of reality" or an "expression" of ideas operating according to its own special laws." (*After Rhetoric*, 88). Brueggemann notes that this emphasis on speech arises out of his metaphor of the church in exile. One of the few resources available to the church is "the ministry of language." He notes that "it is in, with, and from such speech that there come 'all things new.'" See Brueggemann, *Cadences*, 23.

[57] Quoted in Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, 106.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Yarbrough, *After Rhetoric*, 110.

[60] Long, 111.

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assumption that language and culture in some way shape and determine reality to its most extreme, but perhaps most logical, conclusions.

The assumptions of the conventionalist paradigm constrained the scene of sermon invention in contemporary homiletics in at least two important ways. First, when one assumed language to be a product of interpretive communities that share a common conceptual scheme, any possibility of difference was either rejected as incommensurable or immediately subsumed within the local governing scheme. As Kent asserted, "the voice of the other may be heard only on our terms; the dissident or alien voice possesses only the power that we give it."[61] The inventive scene then had little ability to recognize and understand that which was other. Secondly, in suggesting the need for the mediating existence of a pre-existing system to produce meaningful language, homiletic theories built on conventionalist assumptions privileged the hermeneutic act of interpretation (reading) over the rhetorical act of production (writing/speech). This imbalance shaped the inventive scene as a "managerial" space, where one styled and arranged the epistemic work of interpretation for delivery. Thus, the potential for making ground, for incarnational newness and eschatological difference was absent from the process of sermon composition.

Language and Homiletics

As John McClure pointed out, the conventionalist model has profoundly shaped homiletic theory's understanding of language and culture in recent years.[62] In *Preaching Jesus*, perhaps the most conventionalist text in contemporary homiletic theory, Charles

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[61] Kent, *Parologic*, 123.
[62] McClure pointed to the influence of postliberalism on the Academy of Homiletics. McClure, *What I Think Now* 4-5.

Campbell followed Hans Frei in offering a homiletic in which the interpretive community

(a term he borrowed from Stanley Fish) of the church formed the "context of the rules

and conventions" in which an interpreter engaged the text (Scripture).[63] It was these rules

of the Christian community that enabled "Christians to read faithfully so that the text may

exert its pressure."[64] Based on Hans Frei's "communal hermeneutic," Campbell noted

that it was the community of the church, centered on the worship of Jesus Christ, that

approached Scripture in order to learn how "to use these rules of interpretation in reading

and performing Scripture."[65] It was the common language and rules of the distinctive

Christian community that allowed the church to understand the text of Scripture, and this

understanding renewed and strengthened the language and rules.[66] This was the

conventionalist hermeneutic circle as it homiletically came to us in the work of Campbell,

a circle reminiscent of the work of Stanley Fish.[67]

Fish argued that beliefs shaped interpretations and that these beliefs come from

the community in which we live. There was little debate here. The problem came, as

Dasenbrock noted, when Fish made the rigidity of this claim apparent. For Fish "we are

never at a loss, never have doubts about our interpretation, are never faced with

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[63] Charles L. Campbell, *Preaching Jesus: New Directions for Homiletics in Hans Frei's Postliberal Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub, 1997), 84. On his indebtedness to Fish for the term, see 83n.2; For further critique of Fish, see Kent, *Paralogic*, 77-81.

[64] Campbell, *Preaching*, 86n. 7

[65] Ibid., 112.

[66] As Kent puts it, "a newcomer to a community will not understand the language users in that community until the newcomer learns the conventional sign systems employed in the community. In other words, outsiders—before they can communicate at all- need to acquire a conceptual framework that supplies the necessary competence to communicate within a specific interpretive community." Kent, *Paralogic Rhetoric*, 78-79.

[67] Richard Hays found the link between the work of Frei and Fish in postliberal Stanley Hauerwas, with whom Campbell studied at Duke. William Placher also noted that Fish and the deconstructionists in the 1980s influenced the transition in Frei's work away from formalism. See William Placher, "Introduction," in *Theology and Narrative: Selected Essays*, ed. George Hunsinger, and William C. Placher (New York : Oxford University Press, 1993),18l; 25, fn. 59; Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), 254

inadequate interpretation."[68] Our interpretations overwhelm the text for "nowhere does

his [Fish's] system allow us to assign any otherness to the text itself because it is always

something we possess and have written according to our own beliefs."[69] We are never

able to acknowledge the difference of a text, the ways in which a text might challenge our

prior theories, because it is these theories that determined the terms of our approach. As

Fish asserted:

> Theories always work and they will always produce exactly the results they predict, results that will be immediately compelling to those for whom the theory's assumptions and enabling principles are self-evident. Indeed, the trick would be to find a theory that didn't work.[70]

There is no chance of encountering difference, for that difference would find itself

immediately subsumed within the cultural-linguistic paradigm of church, community,

subculture or group. Dasenbrock rightly argued that "[Fish's] inconsistency trivializes the

study of literature by denying us any productive encounter with difference."[71] Thomas

Kent added that with Fish, "All we can ever know is the conceptual framework that holds

together the community in which we happen to exist, a conceptual framework that

separates us from others and from the world."[72] The impossibility of a productive

encounter with difference left sermon invention without the possibility of making new

ground. This leaves us with the question of whether Campbell, with the help of Hans

Frei, was able to avoid this path of closure.

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[68] Dasenbrock, 204.

[69] Ibid., 208.

[70] Fish, 68.

[71] Dasenbrock, 208; Dasenbrock also put it, "The model of interpretive communities assumes, because we can be understand only on our own terms, that the text cannot be understood and at the same time understood to be different from us." Dasenbrock, "Do We Write the Text We Read," *College English* 53 (1991), 17.

[72] Kent, *Paralogic*, 40.

Campbell argued that the mature Frei "does not view Scripture as an autonomous text, but approaches it within the context of the rules and conventions of the community within which it functions as the sacred text."[73] Christians learned to interpret this text not by general hermeneutics but "by being trained to apply the informal rules and conventions for the use of Scripture" located in the language and practices of the church.[74] These informal rules arose out of a communal and traditional *sensus literalis* reading of Scripture, a literal reading embedded in the dynamic life of a growing community of faith. This approach led Frei to outline a central "rough rule" that led the Christian community's approach to Scripture; the narrative of Scripture was about "the unique, unsubstitutable person, Jesus of Nazareth."[75]

In Campbell's appropriation of Frei, there was one actor and one object on the scene of interpretation.[76] The preacher as a member of the community of faith approached the sacred text of Scripture to find the "appropriate Christian speech" that he or she would then model to the community.[77] After encountering Scripture and then moving "from text to sermon," the church should be "the middle term."[78] Thus, the preacher must be one "who preeminently knows the language of faith and is able to 'go on' with it."[79] Over time this modeling of right language built up the community of faith "within the language game of the worship of the baptized on the Lord's Day."[80] Campbell illustrated this notion of a game in which participants learned the rules by

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[73] Campbell, *Preaching*, 84.

[74] Ibid; The church becomes the discourse community that creates its own language arising from the scriptural witness. Davidson, on the other hand, argued that "language creates our sense of an interpretive community." (Kent, *Parologic*, 82)

[75] Ibid., 92.

[76] The Spirit is also a part of this scene for Campbell.

[77] Campbell, *Preaching*, 236.

[78] Ibid., 230.

[79] Ibid., 236.

[80] Ibid.

relating a story about teaching his young son baseball. After a pitch to his son, Campbell

said, "Good! You didn't hit it, but you timed your swing just right."[81] After the next

pitch, even though Campbell argued that his "son could not possibly have known my

abstract, grammatical rules for using the word "timing," he commented after he swung: "I

had the timing right on that one"—which in fact he did."[82] Campbell argued that his son

learned how to use the word "timing" not by abstract rules but "simply by learning the

game—by learning to use a certain language rightly within the "form of life" of hitting a

baseball."[83] I argue later that there are better ways to understand how Campbell's son and

he came to use the word "timing" in the same way, but this illustration reveals

Campbell's emphasis on the preacher's role as the one who models right use of language.

We must further determine if in Campbell's scene of interpretation Scripture has

the ability to resist the interpretive prejudices of the preacher's approach. That is, since

the text can only be rightly understood by those who know the grammar/rules of the

community well, we must determine if the text can truly stand as an other. If it can, we

must ask if we can understand it; for as we already saw, a principal problem with

conventional approaches is that they make it impossible for those within a discourse

community to understand the language of a different community. We must determine if

the meaning of Scripture can stand outside the interpreter's language-game.

Campbell attempted to carve out some room for this resistance by noting Frei's

insistence on the possibility of varieties of interpretation, a principle built into the very

structure of Scripture with its inclusion of four gospels.[84] Wanting to leave room for

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[81] Ibid., 95.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid., 96.
[84] Ibid., 105.

eschatological mystery, Campbell resisted certainty in interpretation by leaving room for a mystery embodied in the "decentered" Jesus who resisted human claims to "correct interpretation."[85] Thus, Campbell called for the possibility of "polyphonic interpretation" and argued that the church could not "simply read its will into Scripture."[86] Scripture had force, but this force was only at "its most profound" when read "within the framework of faithful communal practices."[87] It was then that Scripture was "most profound—and at times disruptive" to the church.[88]

However, Campbell weakened this attempt to give Scripture the force to resist the weight of the preacher's communal interpretive lens when he made such claims as "one implication of Frei's later work is that readers must be trained within the interpretive community to read Scripture rightly."[89] Despite the polyphonic voices in the interpretive community, such claims rested on a belief in what Campbell already termed the "language-game."[90] The preacher and text operated in the same "game" with its informal rules that while flexible, were essential for understanding.

As Dasenbrock noted, however, not all communication, especially perhaps the communicative claims of Scripture, "respects conventions."[91] If Scripture was not always the cohesive narrative about the story of the unsubstitutable Jesus that Campbell claimed, if there were even perhaps different language-games at work in Scripture itself, the

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[85] Ibid., 109-10.
[86] Ibid., 111, 246.
[87] Ibid., 246.
[88] Ibid., 247.
[89] Ibid., 243.
[90] Ibid., 236.
[91] Dasenbrock, 61. As Gearld Gradd succinctly pointed out, "Fish's argument ultimately hinges on our ability to know where one "system of intelligibility," "situation," or "interpretive community" ends and another begins, without messy overlap." Gearld Gradd, Introduction to "Is there a Text in This Class?" in *The Stanley Fish Reader*, ed. Stanley Eugene Fish and H. Aram Veeser. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 39. As Dasenbrock and others noted, such separation is impossible.

preacher was suddenly unprepared in Campbell's model. Mastery of right usage was one of the primary roles of the preacher trained in the conventions of the discourse community. When the preacher encountered something foreign to the language of that discourse community, he or she seemed to have only two choices in this model. The preacher could ignore it as gibberish since, after all, it was in the language of another community. More likely, however, was that this otherness of the text would be subsumed into the community's linguistic paradigm.[92] Despite Campbell's attempts to assign Scripture the ability to resist, the force of the communal rules and grammar stood as the more powerful and formative text. Ultimately, Campbell left us with a "hermeneutics of identity" that assumed, as Dasenbrock noted, that "the text cannot be understood and at the same time be understood to be different from us."[93]

Here we are in very real danger of interpretations of the text being "self-confirming so that we can never learn anything from the actual act of interpretation, except to learn once more that the shoe fits."[94] The problem comes when, as Dasenbrock concluded of Fish's work, "nothing unexpected can happen" and so the only thing we can learn in the interpretive act is "to become members of the community."[95] Thus, the very eschatological mystery that Campbell sought to leave room for was in danger of being immediately subsumed within the self-confirming language-system of the community itself.

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[92] McClure also critiqued this move to read the bible catechectically. He called instead for a centripetal view of Scripture, "the utter opposite of what Ludwig Wittgenstein calls a 'language game' or what philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn calls a 'paradigm.'" John S. McClure, *Other-Wise*, 21.

[93] Dasenbrock, "Do We Write," 32.

[94] Ibid., 20.

[95] Ibid.

Hermeneutics Subsumes Invention[96]

The second wall arising from the influence of conventionalism that has limited the scene of sermon invention is the privileging of interpretation over production within discourse communities. Yarbrough described the further implications of Fish's position, "if we take what we presume to be a shared language as the norm by which to gauge interpretation…whatever our interlocutor says, we will take her to mean whatever we would have meant had we said it, so that the other's discourse will always turn out to be a construct of our own fashioning."[97] When this was the case for Scripture, theoretical and pedagogical emphasis tended towards a hermeneutics of exegetical mediation, effectively banning notions of sermon composition as the production of truth.

George Pullman pointed to the existence of a central struggle in college English departments.[98] He argued that a deep split existed between rhetoric and hermeneutics, a divide based on a theory/practice dichotomy that led to the separation of "literature" and "composition." Since Schleiermacher posited hermeneutics and rhetoric as two sides of the same coin, scholars have associated hermeneutics with the search for "abstract thoughts," while they viewed rhetoric as concerned only with "the presentation of

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[96] In this section, I briefly explore a specific component in the complex relationship between rhetoric and hermeneutics. As Arabella Lyon noted, "connecting rhetoric and hermeneutics is a complex task" and our language often "slips." Arabella Lyon, "Rhetoric and Hermeneutics," in *Perspectives on Rhetorical Invention*, ed. Janet Atwill and Janice M. Lauer, (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2002), 46. I do not intend to explore the broad relationship here fully but only to suggest a leveling of the hierarchy within the discipline of homiletics, a leveling that will hopefully open the way to further exploration of this relationship.

[97] Yarbrough, *Inventive*, 20.

[98] George Pullman, 'Rhetoric and Hermeneutics: Composition, Invention, and Literature." *Journal of Advanced Composition* 14, no. 2 (1994): 367-88, <"http://www.jacweb.org/Archived_volumes/Text_articles/V14_I2_Pullman.htm">. See also Linda S. Bergmann., and Edith M. Baker. *Composition and/or Literature: The End(s) of Education*. (Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 2006).

concrete signs that momentarily stand in for abstract thoughts."[99] Abstract thinking was

the domain of hermeneutics, and rhetoric the place of "the physical, at most managerial,

act of writing."[100] Further, Pullman argued that the privileging of the production of

knowledge (thinking) over the dissemination of knowledge (writing) in the academy

subordinated "rhetoric to hermeneutics and composition to literary studies."[101]

Pullman traced this privileging to the Platonic split of dialectic and rhetoric in

which one "glimpsed by introspection" divine ideas, and then represented them by speech

in an inferior way.[102] Augustine cemented this split by making, as I have previously

noted, invention into a function of hermeneutics and "presenting rhetoric as merely a

collection of strategies for effective preaching."[103] Writing, for Augustine, became a

nonepistemic act entirely separate from the invention process. Pullman concluded that

"Augustine believed, just as Plato before him and Schleiermacher did after him, that

rhetoric was epistemologically insignificant."[104]

The split continued in contemporary English departments with advocates of both

literature studies and composition defending their related but separate turfs. Where

reconciliation was attempted, Pullman argued, a clear hierarchy remained in place,

"Composition is used to communicate what interpretation discovered."[105] This view

reduced writing to simply the "expression of thought," while "theoretical activities are

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[99] Friedrich Schleiermacher, "General Theory and Art of Interpretation," in *The Hermeneutics Reader: Texts of the German Tradition from the Enlightenment to the Present*, ed. Kurt Mueller-Vollmer (New York: Continuum, 1985), 74; Lyon, 44.
[100] Pullman.
[101] Ibid.
[102] For an in-depth history, see Kathy Eden, *Hermeneutics and the Rhetorical Tradition: Chapters in the Ancient Legacy & Its Humanist Reception*. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997).
[103] Pullman.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid.

and have been associated with knowledge production."[106] I illustrated the effects of this

attitude in chapters two and three, in which I examined scholars who (aside from a few

notable exceptions) privileged the interpretive and meditative characteristics of sermon

creation. These writers most often associated the epistemic process of sermon creation

with exegesis, an element of the hermeneutical process. The real thought and discovery

occurred before the preacher turned to "cross the bridge" to rhetorical presentation of his

or her discoveries.[107] Pullman's argument was apt: "Interpretation produces knowledge

and [sermon] composition expresses that knowledge."[108]

Homiletics and Hermeneutics

Homiletics has had a close relationship to the discipline of hermeneutics, and

much as in the case of rhetoric in general, scholars of homiletics have collapsed invention

into the hermeneutical enterprise.[109] As Pullman noted and the pedagogical survey in

chapter three confirmed, since Augustine, homileticians have emphasized the interpretive

act of mediation, while they have devalued the rhetorical notion of production.[110] In the

influential textbook *Preaching*, for example, Craddock asserted that there were two

focuses of the "study" that equipped preachers with something to say in the pulpit. The

preacher negotiated these two poles, the biblical text and the listeners "by the processes

of interpretation, or hermeneutics," a process directly leading to sermon content.[111] From

hermeneutics, Craddock launched straight into discussion concerning arrangement and

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[106] Ibid.
[107] For a critique of the bridge paradigm from a different perspective, see Edward Farley, "Preaching the bible and Preaching the Gospel," *Theology Today* 51 (1994), 90-103.
[108] Pullman.
[109] Lyon, 38.
[110] Janice M. Lauer, *Invention in Rhetoric and Composition.* (West Lafayette, IN: Parlor Press, 2004), 92; Lyon, 49.
[111] Fred Craddock, *Preaching*, 85.

delivery, so that apart from what he termed the "life of study," he gave no attention to invention at all. Tom Long proposed a form and function statement expressly concerned with mediation of the text or "building the bridge" between text and sermon, and not rhetorical production.[112] Lucy Lind-Hogan wrote about the left side of an equation, the place of "reading, thinking, questioning, pondering, gathering of materials, and brainstorming" and the right side, "how the sermon will be constructed and preached."[113]

Homiletics texts in general, and especially texts designed for teaching introductory courses, tended to locate the sermon creation process within a text-to-sermon hermeneutical enterprise and then retrieved its content in order shape it according to various understandings of arrangement (form), style and delivery. Pullman noted, "it is, however, the canon of invention that gives rhetoric its substance; without it, rhetoric merely arranges, clothes, and dispatches the arguments and observations other disciplines have discovered."[114] Pullman attempted to level the hierarchy that privileged hermeneutics over rhetoric by rejecting the two sides of the same coin metaphor, an image with much in common with the "bridge" metaphor at work behind many influential homiletic texts. Such dualistic metaphors allowed the association of "one side" with theory and the other with practice. Pullman leveled the hierarchy by recognizing "the rhetorical nature of interpretive processes as a topical form of invention" so that "literary interpretation is simply a special instance of a general practice of invention."[115] Thus, he connected literature and composition "at the site of invention rather than

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[112] Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching*. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 106.

[113] Lucy Lind Hogan, *Graceful Speech: An Invitation to Preaching*. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 117.

[114] Pullman.

[115] Ibid.

expression," where theory and practice are united.[116] This connection allows space for sermon composition classes (usually Introduction to Preaching) to consider epistemic processes and dynamics often left on the other side of the bridge. Theoretical work heavily focused on the text side of the bridge could then begin to shift to support the "best wisdom" practical work often located on the composition side. Sermon composition could move from simply being "a strategic approach to reading texts" into "praxis."[117]

Pullman's diagnosis struck at the heart of a widespread problem in introductory to preaching classrooms and texts. It gave insight into the narrowed, placeless scene of sermon invention. If the epistemic work occurs in the theoretical realm dominated by exegesis, the spotlight naturally focuses on what is pictured as the central scene of that work, the private study in which preachers access commentaries. This introspective, mental task becomes the foundation for the dominant scene of sermon invention. In such a case there is no reason to expand the scene, for the creative work occurs in that interchange between book, mind and computer keyboard. In order to widen the scene, homiletics could perhaps follow Pullman's lead by rejecting those metaphors of interpretation/composition that either place theory and practice on opposite sides or privilege one over the other. Sermon composition (writing) might then become much more than "managing" the truths found in exegesis (reading). It might instead become a location of epistemic productivity not constrained by a closed field of play (interpretive community). This would free homiletics to consider the many possible dynamics at work in this activity.

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[116] Ibid.

[117] Lyon, 36; Dale Andrews argued, "We need to develop our pedagogies to weave hermeneutics, sermon composition, invention, and rhetorical strategies into the experience of sermon preparation and the preaching event." "Teaching Black Preaching: Homiletic Instruction as 'Pre-Encounter,'" *The African American Pulpit* (2006-07): 22-26.

Beyond Conventionalism: Paralogic Rhetoric

Conventionalism has constrained the scene of sermon invention by removing from it any possibility of encountering difference. The belief that shared language and culture is a pre-requisite for communication has meant, in Yarbrough's terms, that "being fully human meant being isolated form or in conflict with other humans who did not share with you the same foundational cultural and linguistic assumptions."[118] If there is no potential for theological production, why should homiletics consider the scene of invention? Instead, it has privileged the hermeneutic enterprise within a discourse community, while the presence of difference or other cultural assumptions that impinge upon that enterprise tend to be regarded as problematic or obstacles to be overcome.

Choosing to reject conventionalism means rejecting the view that a shared language and culture is necessary for communication. Production can then no longer be understood as managing the *topoi* of a certain discourse community. The spotlight of homiletic theory and pedagogy can then begin turning away from the mediation of hermeneutics in certain communities to images of production in which encounters with difference are not problematic, but necessary. As Yarbrough argues, "we *all* are alien, always."[119] The process of interpretation is then "domestic as well as foreign: it surfaces for speakers of the same language as well as foreign…"[120] In other words, choosing not to believe in the need for a shared language or culture for communication gets homiletic's attention away from language and culture, away from cultural-linguistic notions of discourse communities. Such beliefs limited the scene of invention to what we have

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[118] Yarbrough, *After Rhetoric*, 3.
[119] Ibid., 7. (emphasis in original)
[120] Ibid.

traced in the first two chapters. Critical attention then turns to the scene of sermon production, in which there is now open space for the encounter with difference, both textual and social, that is necessary for sermon creation. One helpful proposal to help turn the spotlight is Thomas Kent's proposal of a paralogic rhetoric.

Kent suggested an alternate genealogy to the reigning "Platonic-Aristototelian rhetorical tradition" so "steeped in the reductive idea that writing and reading may be described as a systematic processes of one kind or another."[121] Building on the long-neglected Sophists, Kent crafted a "parologic rhetoric, a rhetoric that treats the production and the analysis of discourse as open-ended hermeneutic activities and not a codifiable system."[122] Kent's work offers a way forward for homiletics by describing an interpenetrating relationship between hermeneutics and rhetoric that levels the hierarchy Pullman described, and which provides a way of envisioning the inventive scene without the need for a shared language and culture.

Kent accomplished these tasks by describing both discourse production and rhetorical analysis as hermeneutic acts. Like Yarbrough, Kent followed Davidson in holding that there was no conventional link between "the sign and its effect in the world."[123] Thus, no general theory or code existed that could connect sentences and meaning. The lack of such a code means that in every instance of discourse production, we must "first interpret the other's code before we can attempt to match our code to

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[121] Kent, *Parologic*, 36; Kent noted three broad approaches to discourse production, 1) A Kantian approach that assumes discourse production to be a formal system of logical categories or modes, 2) A Neo-Positivist approach that assumes an empirical system built on scientific models and 3) A social-semiotic approach that assumes a conventional link among members of discourse communities (34). It is this third category that dominated contemporary homiletic theory.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid., 37.

it."[124] Communicative language requires interpretation of the various strategies another might use to interpret what we are saying. According to Kent, in many instances of communication with those who share many of our conditions and circumstances, it is likely that we will guess accurately what strategies they might employ. Therefore one might observe that two or more language users generally share a similar "common hermeneutic strategy" proven useful in successful communication.[125]

This is much different, however, from positing conventions that communities share that enable them to communicate.[126] These conventions did not exist for Kent, and so in order to produce discourse (composition, writing), "we must first interpret the codes of other language users before we can make a decision about the words and sentences appropriate to them."[127] This hermeneutic guess concerning what interpretive strategy the other(s) may employ was for Kent "the most fundamental activity of discourse production."[128] The receiver or reader also engaged in the act of hermeneutic guessing by interpreting the ways in which a speaker or text engaged in language-use. Kent used the example of the phrase "My love is a rose."[129] He asked if this was poetic language expressing love for another, or if this was a phrase scientific in nature signifying a formal relationship. One could find the answer only by interpretation.

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[124] Ibid.

[125] The presence of another language user was essential for Kent. He noted that in his notion of paralogic rhetoric, "collaboration…goes all the way down," so "Without collaboration or, stated a bit differently, without interaction with other language users, no triangulation and, therefore, no communicative interaction is possible." The upshot of this was that "collaboration is not something we do in some writing and reading situations but not in others. If we are communicating, we are collaborating." Kent, *Parologic*, 160-61. These notions fit well with the recent emphasis on collaboration in sermon composition. See McClure, *Roundtable Pulpit*.

[126] Ibid.

[127] Ibid.

[128] Ibid.

[129] Ibid., 38.

However, not only was all discourse production and analysis hermeneutic in character, it was also "unsystematic and parologic in nature."[130] There could never be a formal logic that would allow successful hermeneutic guessing to occur, nor could an overarching theory ever be constructed to codify the guessing process itself. Kent noted that "we cannot expect to create a systematic, logical model that will formalize all the considerations that enable us to adjust our individual hermeneutic strategies to other hermeneutical strategies."[131] Thus, in the very midst of communication we need "the ability to shift ground appropriately," to continually augment and adjust our own hermeneutic strategies based upon the cues of another.[132] Kent summarized: "When we produce or analyze discourse, then, we engage the other in a dialogic way; we move back and forth, shifting ground, in an attempt to align our hermeneutic strategy with the other's and in so doing, we continually create tenuous resolutions to this dialogic interaction."[133]

Kent's proposal offers homiletics the ability to envision the scene of sermon invention without the presence of formalized *a priori* codes (conventions) that allow communication to occur. These formal codes, such as Campbell's proposed conceptual scheme, constrained the inventive scene by making the recognition of difference virtually impossible. Further, such codes located meaning in those pre-existing systems and severely inhibited the possibility of productive work. With Kent's framework, however, producing meaning is an ongoing, interactive event in which ground continually shifts in an attempt to reach understanding. This does not require shared language, culture, codes

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[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid., 40.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid., 43.

or conventions to succeed. What is required is the constant paralogical shifting of ground and re-alignment of assumptions.

Triangulation

This process of shifting ground occurs in the presence of an(other).[134] Charles Campbell took an important step away from the conventionalist model of preaching in *The Word Before the Powers*, broadening the scene of interpretation by urging preachers to follow Jesus in going outside the gates of the city, "out of the places of security and comfort into those "unclean" places where Jesus suffers."[135] This push outward toward those on the "periphery" radically transforms the interpretive ground by including a third presence.[136] By meeting another outside the gates of the community, Campbell constructed a scene that resists the conventional construal of the world by an interpretive community. This was a scene in which preachers could learn from difference by being challenged by others whom they can understand. Meanwhile, John McClure was also calling for a move outside interpretive communities and a loosening of "the hegemony of the center" by moving interpretation to the boundaries of the congregation, outside the sanctuary door.[137] McClure called for preachers to begin hearing from "strangers," both inside and outside of the congregation, in collaborative moments that informed and led to

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[134] Yarbrough noted: "Although Davidson himself seems unaware of it, his philosophy places invention in a new light, one that allows us to understand that the invention process is not merely a supplement to discourse, useful only for professional speakers and writers, but intrinsic to all intercourse, and that the topics are not merely formal but pragmatic relations that develop from the processes of our interactions with others and with objects of our common concern in a world we can come to share. Stephen Yarbrough, "Passing Theories By Topical Heuristics: Donald Davidson, Aristotle, and the Conditions of Discursive Competence," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 37, no. 1 (2004): 72.

[135] Charles L. Campbell, *The Word Before the Powers: An Ethic of Preaching*. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 153.

[136] Campbell has also noted the importance of this in his and Saunders' *The Word on the Street*, esp. 86-93.

[137] John S. McClure, "*Collaborative Preaching from the Margins*." *Journal for Preachers* 19, no.4 (1996): 37.

the event of proclamation.[138] McClure wanted the lifeworld of preachers to intersect with

the lifeworld of those on the edges and in the margins. This language of lifeworld,

however, was not a descriptor of separate discourse communities, but instead a pragmatic

term describing actual daily interactions in the world. As Davidson asserted, when we

encounter another we do not encounter a different world but simply a part of the world

we have not yet engaged. McClure's work, and to a degree Campbell's later work in

which a third presence was necessary for interpretation, offer a promising way forward

that opens up the scene of sermon invention, a way forward that can be critically

informed by the work of Donald Davidson.

In his theory of triangulation, Donald Davidson offered a social theory of

communication and interpretation that avoided the problems of the conventionalist model

by dropping the need for shared conventions and a shared language.[139] Davidson argued

that "thoughts and mental states derive from the external world of communicative

interaction and not from an internal realm of *a priori* mental processes."[140] This view,

often referred to as externalism, posits that we could not know the world without the

other because we could not separate the knowledge of our own mind from the knowledge

of other minds and knowledge of the world without the other.[141] Davidson created a

theory of communication in which one must involve an other, along with an object or text

to be interpreted, in the hermeneutic process. Davidson called this "triangulation":

> First, if someone is the speaker of a language, there must be another
> sentient being whose innate similarity responses are sufficiently like

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[138] Ibid.

[139] Donald Davidson, "A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs," in *Truth, Language and History: Philosophical Essays*, ed. Ernest LePore. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005).

[140] Thomas Kent, "Externalism and the Production of Discourse," in *Composition Theory for the Postmodern Classroom*, ed. Gary A. Olson, and Sidney I. Dobrin (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), 303.

[141] Ibid.

his own to provide an answer to the question, what is the stimulus
to which the speaker is responding? And second, if the speaker's
responses are linguistic, they must be knowingly and intentionally
responses to specific stimuli. The speaker must have the concept
of the stimulus—of the bell, or of tables. Since the bell or a table
is identified only by the intersection of two (or more) sets of
similarity responses (lines of thought, we might almost say), to have
the concept of a table or a bell is to recognize the existence of a
triangle, one apex of which is oneself, another a creature similar to
oneself, and the third an object (table or bell) located in a space
thus made common. The only way of knowing that the second apex
of the triangle—the second creature or person—is reacting to the
same object as oneself is to know that the other person has the same
object in mind. But then the second person must also know that the
first person constitutes an apex of the same triangle another apex
of which the second person occupies. For two people to know of each
other that they are so related, that their thoughts are so related, requires
that they be in communication. Each of them must speak to the other
and be understood by the other. They don't . . . have to mean the same
thing by the same words, but they must each be an interpreter of
the other.[142]

Yarbrough helpfully unpacked this concept by describing it as "the response and counter-

response of two creatures to a third object that both creatures can identify as the

'common cause' of their respective responses."[143] For example, one would respond to a

desk as he or she responded to other desks, and another would also refer to the same desk

in the way he or she responded to another desk. Each would note the response of the

other, and the two "converge" upon a "common cause."[144] Each partner in the

conversation would react to the interactions of the other and adjust accordingly, and this

could occur only if each believed they were in one shared world (not multiple worlds of

incommensurability), and that the other partner was for the most part truthful in the

expression of their beliefs (principle of charity). If this was the case, the partners could

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[142] Donald Davidson, *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001),
121.

[143] Yarbrough, *Inventive*, 22.

[144] Ibid.

begin to triangulate, to at least initially "treat disagreements as mere differences of locution" and come to find out what the other meant before deciding to agree or disagree.[145] According to Kent, if we consider "writing and reading as triangulation, we no longer need to talk about these acts as something we do primarily in our heads or in incommensurable discourse communities."[146]

Davidson described this process from the viewpoint of the interlocutors using the concept of "prior" and "passing" theories. Davidson described a prior theory as how the speaker "expresses how he is prepared in advance to interpret an utterance of the speaker."[147] It was the "guess" that each participant made about how to interpret the language uttered by the other. This prior theory can be seen as the assumptions or presuppositions that those who use a cultural-linguistic framework think of as the framework of an interpretive community.[148] As Dasenbrock noted, everyone entered a communicative situation with a "prior theory," but this theory "never works perfectly" both within an interpretive community and between them.[149] This seeming failure does not necessarily lead to an inability to understand, but could instead prompt the development of what Davidson called a "passing theory," a fluid and ongoing adjustment of the prior theory. In a dynamic, heteroglossic world, Davidson argued that "every communicative situation…provokes in the interpreter a new passing theory, a provisional

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[145] Ibid., 25.

[146] Kent, *Parologic*, 109.

[147] Davidson, "Nice Derangement," 102; also see Ernest Lepore and Kirk Ludwig, *Meaning, Truth, Language, and Reality,* ed., Donald Davidson (New Yok: Clarendon Press, 2005), 272; Dasenbrock noted that for Fish the prior theory, which in Fish's view arises out of accordance with community norms, is simply reified in discourse, Dasenbrock, "Do We Write the Text we Read," *in Literary Theory After Davidson*, ed. Reed Way Dasenbrock (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), 27.

[148] I am thankful to John McClure for pointing out this connection.

[149] Dasenbrock, 73.

understanding of what the speaker or writer means by his or her words."[150] There were no

rules for arriving at passing theories that could be learned in advance. They were

"invented on the fly."[151]

Thus, when an "anomaly" that does not fit our prior theory occurs (a possibility

that gave room for the otherness of Scripture and the utterances of others), "we adjust that

theory, incorporating what we learn from encountering that anomaly into a new passing

theory."[152] John McClure has described such a process in his proposal of a collaborative

homiletic in *The Roundtable Pulpit*, in which the emphasis is on differences that "start

the conversation and what keep the conversation going."[153] McClure suggests that in the

midst of give-and-take conversation, the "Word arrives in various forms" and "remains

very much 'in process.'"[154] As the conversation partners react and interact with this

inbreaking of the Word (which could be described as Davidson's "anomaly" that fits no

prior theory or interpretive scheme), "a new Word becomes possible."[155] As situations

change, the community adjusts, and creates a new passing theory. McClure offered one of

the few homiletic images of the inventive scenes that displayed the constantly shifting

reality of communicative encounter. For McClure, encountering difference that does not

fit with a prior theory should not only be expected but sought out and intentionally

welcomed onto the scene of sermon creation.[156] McClure's work stands as an influential

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[150] Ibid.,74.
[151] Ibid., 34; Also see Kent, *Parologic*, 87; It is this process that is the "decisive difference" between Davidson and Fish. In Davidson's proposal, the interpreter not only can change but continually changes as passing theories evolve.
[152] Dasenbrock, 75.
[153] McClure, *Roundtable*, 53.
[154] Ibid., 55.
[155] Ibid.
[156] McClure, "*Collaborative Preaching.*"

call for a sermon inventive scene that views "anomalies" as potential openings for a new Word to break through.

In Charles Campbell's later work there is also a move towards understanding encounters with anomalous utterances that do not cohere with our prior theories as encounters with another part of the one world in which we all live, instead language-games, discourse communities or conventions.[157] As McClure pointed out, these (perhaps eschatological) anomalies, these differences, became the attraction, not the obstacle, to communication. They become productive rather than frustrating differences that begin the process of passing theory adjustment.[158] After all, an anomaly, difference or disagreement is not "a sign that there are other worlds" but "a symptom of our not understanding part of our own world."[159] Yarbrough noted the implications, "It's a difference between believing you are in a situation in which no matter what others say, you cannot learn from them because what you hear must conform to what you already believe [conventionalism], and a situation in which everything you hear from others will change something of what you believe."[160]

With Davidson's proposal on the table, it is helpful to revisit Campbell's description of linguistic interaction with his son. Campbell described his son as learning to use the word "timing" as if he was learning to play a game. Campbell's son at some level understood that his father used "timing" in a certain way within a linguistic community to signify a certain meaning. He learned this by hearing his father use the word in this way. I would argue that Campbell's description of this event as joining a

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[157] Kent, *On the Very Idea*, 436-37.
[158] Dasenbrock, 75.
[159] Yarbrough, *After Rhetoric,* 233.
[160] Ibid., 230. In Fish's view for example, "the situation is constrained by your 'language' prior to your actual discourse" (231).

language-game is unsatisfactory or unnecessary.

What if Campbell had slipped up and used a different word when he intended to say "timing" (malapropism)? Campbell noted that his son couldn't possibly understand the grammatical rules of the word "timing," so if Campbell misspoke and uttered a different word, would the results be the same? I believe the son would understand, but this presents a difficulty for the notion of the language-game that Campbell described. The conventions of the community could not account for communication that occurred outside or even in spite of the communicative rules of that community. Davidson was especially interested in malapropisms and in the ability of communicative partners to seemingly effortlessly understand each other despite the supposed violation of convention.[161]

Davidson might redescribe Campbell's encounter with his son as converging towards shared passing theories concerning the word "timing." Campbell and his son triangulated, in pretty quick fashion, toward a word that sufficiently described the son's actions. They succeeded in communicating not because his son successfully joined a language-game or conventional community, but instead because both parties, especially Campbell's son, willingly adjusted his prior theory about what timing meant (however unformulated that theory may have been at the time) toward what he believed his father intended by the use of the word. As Yarbrough puts it, Campbell's son did not communicate by decoding signs but by "a process of teaching and learning things in the world—including the words in the world."[162]

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[161] Davidson, "Nice Derangement."
[162] Yarbrough, *After Rhetoric*, 182.

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The difference in these two descriptions is striking. In the first, there were multiple closed worlds of interpretations that despite the play within those games, believed themselves to be operating on Saussure's chessboard. In Davidson's description, there was only one world in which open space existed for communicative and interpretive interaction.[163] As Yarbrough noted, "the communicative process is one of interlocutors coming together toward a single way of talking about a single world."[164] Thus, interlocutors might be "words apart" but certainly not "worlds apart."[165]

Kent went on to point helpfully towards the literary implications of Davidson's proposal. He noted that "in order to interpret a text, we require a reader, other readers, and a text."[166] As a reader approaches a text, she does so with a prior theory of what the text means.[167] As this reader continues engaging the text and interacting with other readers, that theory becomes fluid (passing) with respect to the particular situation at hand. Of course, two reader's passing theories would never exactly match but "they nonetheless allow us to interpret well enough the meaning in a text."[168] This did not, as Kent noted, mean that any interpretation is acceptable because interpretations must have be able to be triangulated with other passing theories.

This led to a key difference between Davidson's proposal and the common conventionalist paradigm. Conventionalists hold that communication only occurs "from within an already received socially constructed situation where there exists something

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[163] There is no pretension here that this space is empty or in many instances level.

[164] Ibid., 183.

[165] Ibid.

[166] Kent, *Parologic*, 93. When we consider discourse production (sermon creation) in this way, Kent argued "we no longer need to talk about it as something we primarily do in our heads or in incommensurable discourse communities." (*Composition Theory in Classroom*, 305).

[167] Donald Davidson, "A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs," in *The Essential Davidson* (New York; Oxford University Press, 2006), 260-262.

[168] Kent, *Parologic*, 94.

called linguistic competence."[169] It was this competence that actually identified the members of the community, a shared pre-requisite for successful communication. Davidson argued that such competence did not exist because, as he famously put it, "there is no such thing as language, not if a language is anything like what many philosophers and linguists have supposed."[170]

Davidson's proposal explains how we can understand interpretations that are different from the ones we arrive at. The key is that "no outsiders exist" in the sense that someone we encounter might be "in" or "out" of some discourse community. Instead, "in a sense, we are all outsiders."[171] Every other, every object, in the shared world is an other with the ability to resist our interpretations.[172] Thus, "triangulation does require that language users continually generate tenuous passing theories in order to communicate with one another because knowledge of another's mind and the world requires communicative interaction and communicative interaction, in turn, requires triangulation."[173] Interaction with another without the existence of interpretive communities and conventions in an open space of interpretation is the process of what Yarbrough termed "making ground."[174] For Yarbrough, this "making ground is the process of discourse," the continuing creation of language in the interaction between passing theories.[175]

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[169] Ibid., 87.
[170] Davidson, *Nice Derangement*, 265.
[171] Kent, *Parologic*, 95.
[172] See Dasenbrook for a comparison of Gadamer and Davidson on the issue of recognizing difference (209-213).
[173] Kent, *Parologic*, 95.
[174] Yarbrough, *After Rhetoric*, 78.
[175] Ibid.

The Homiletic Scene of Invention

With Pullman's leveling of the hierarchy privileging interpretation over composition, the site of sermon invention gains the potential for productive discovery and theory formation. Re-evaluating the inventive scene as more than simply a managerial stop on the bridge from text to sermon opens the way for theoretical and pedagogical engagement with the processes involved in sermon "writing." As we will see in the next chapter, sermon invention involves dynamic somatic-discursive (mis)alignments with the environment in which they occur. Critical theological interaction grounded in the ultimate expression of such alignment, found in the Incarnation, is only possible when the inventive scene is no longer underprivileged.

Yarbrough argued that the way in which people believe language works influences the way it actually does work. In an understanding of reality in which only one world existed, language itself is a part of that world and becomes an important part of shaping the actual character of reality. Thus, "everything in discourse depends upon what we believe others believe about discourse" so that "once discourse is believed to work by a conceptual scheme, or language, the results are the same as if they would be if it actually did work that way."[176] Yarbrough thought that these constructs of language and culture based on ontologically different systems would not exist if they were not believed to exist, and by daring to believe differently he began to construct an emerging understanding of discourse based on living language in the actual world.[177]

If what we believe about how discourse works affects how discourse (and interpretation) actually works, choosing not to believe in the existence of communities of

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[176] Ibid, 8.
[177] Davidson, "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme" in *The Essential Davidson*, 196-208.

conventions has the potential of radically opening up the scene of invention to the existence of difference. Yarbrough challenged the wall that prevented meaningful interaction with this difference (the need for common language/culture), by admitting the claims of difference through passing theories. This opens the way for the inbreaking of eschatological difference, of the potentially strange and radical that will not be dismissed as incommensurable or subsumed within the already familiar.

As we noted last chapter, an emerging homiletic literature is beginning to widen the boundaries of the traditional inventive scene. This chapter has exposed those boundaries as unnecessary and, in the end, theologically unproductive. Thus, the mist around the traditionally imagined scene of invention begins to dissipate, and we begin to see a complex interplay of social and bodily interactions that is already taking place. Previously scholars assigned the power of epistemic activity to interpretation, and the potential for communicative interaction was ceded to conventions of various sorts. But all the while, socially-embodied heteroglossic activities danced beyond the circle of the narrow camera focus. These activities, often ignored as mundane or irrelevant, find their way back into focus as we question the textbooks' dominant depiction of the scene of invention.

CHAPTER IV

ON THE SCENE: INCARNATIONAL COMPLEXITY

The cover of Paul Scott Wilson's book *The Four Pages of the Sermon,* picturing the preacher at the desk with an open bible, pen and legal pad, captures homiletic's reigning image of the scene of sermon invention. This image encapsulates an introspective understanding of how a preacher arrives at something to say, and promotes an ideology that has had profound influence on how homiletics has treated invention and how preaching has been taught in the classroom. In the next two chapters I will use the theological frameworks of the incarnation and eschaton to critically consider this powerful homiletic image. I will argue that the *incarnational* and *eschatological* potential of the sermon composition process has remained largely unaddressed. Through conversations with other disciplinary fields, I will suggest that the inventive scene needs to be rehabilitated both in academic discourse and in the homiletic classroom.

In this chapter, I will, through the lens of incarnation, describe the theological consequences of the introspective paradigm's failure to critically consider the potential of complex embodied processes on the inventive scene. I will then seek to provisionally describe an emerging view of the scene of invention based on the work of Kristie Fleckenstein that is beginning to widen what has been a very narrow focus, and which offers a strategy of somatic-discursive alignment emerging from the work of sociologist

Dimitri Shalin. Finally, I will offer a pedagogical strategy and practical suggestions that can begin to bring this scene into focus within the introductory classroom.[1]

On the Scene: Incarnational Complexity

Homiletic theory and pedagogy have generally neglected to consider the activity of the body on the scene of sermon invention. With the prevailing image of the preacher at her desk with pen in hand, the body has remained untreated while the focus has primarily been placed on the mind. This failure to critically consider the role of the body in the composition process is far from theologically neutral.[2] As James Nelson notes, "incarnation proclaims that the most basic and decisive experience of God comes not in abstract doctrine or mystical otherworldly experiences, but *in flesh*."[3] Following Nelson, I am interested in how homiletics can re-envision the scene of invention so that it "takes our body experiences seriously as occasions of revelation."[4] The specific occasions of revelation that occur in and through the body at the scene of sermon invention point back to the ultimate embodied revelation of Jesus in the hay of the stable, the heat of the desert, and the wood of the cross. These occasions are incarnational moments in which fundamental binaries such as the mind/body split are powerfully transgressed and

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[1] Lisa S. Ede, *Situating Composition: Composition Studies and the Politics of Location*. (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2004), 187.

[2] "No one can assume a position toward the I and the other that is neutral. The abstract cognitive standpoint lacks any axiological approach, since the axiological attitude requires that one should occupy a unique place in the unitary event of Being - that one should be embodied. Any valuation is an act of assuming an individual position in being; even God had to incarnate himself in order to bestow mercy, to suffer and to forgive - had to descend, as it were, from the abstract standpoint of justice." See M.M. Bakhtin, 'Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity', in *Art and Answerability*, ed. and trans. Michal Holquist and Vladimir Liapuno (Austin, RX: University of Texas Press, 1990), 129

[3] James B. Nelson, *Body Theology*. (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1992), 31.

[4] Ibid., 9.

destabilized.[5] While such occasions have been out of view in homiletic representations of the inventive scene, there are promising efforts to focus critical attention on the embodied character of the preacher.

Clyde Fant pointed to the importance of incarnational preaching in his 1975 *Preaching for Today*.[6] Fant argued that preaching must strike a balance between becoming "all human" and "all divine."[7] The incarnation, "God's ultimate act of communication," models for preachers a route of avoiding "deadening legalism, homiletical Docetism, and cultural ghettoism."[8] Fant admonishes both legalism and neoorthdoxy for fearing the human factor and believing there is a "touch of magic" that makes the preacher less subjective in the pulpit.[9] He terms this an "extreme objectivism" that manifests itself in "pathetic efforts to insure that nothing but the divine occurs in preaching, no matter how human the body of proclamation might appear to be."[10] The passion of Fant's call to preachers to take seriously the incarnation of Christ is unmistakable. Although there are few direct references to the body itself, there is a general call away from abstraction towards concreteness, from knowing less about the streets of ancient Jerusalem and more about the streets of the preacher's own town. Fant worries that "the reality of the incarnation" is denied when preachers deny the particular humanity and culture of the preaching moment. Fant's call served as groundwork for later homileticians' emphasis on the specific particularities of the body.

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[5] Miroslav Volf and Michael Welker, *God's life in Trinity*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 140.

[6] Clyde Fant, *Preaching for Today*. (New York: Harper & Row, 1975).

[7] Ibid., 29.

[8] Ibid., 29, 31.

[9] Ibid., 33.

[10] Ibid., 35.

Christine Smith has called for a more critical awareness of the body in the preaching task through addressing the problem of ageism in the pulpit. She observed that the Christian tradition has had at best an ambiguous record on addressing the body. At times it has emphasized that humanity is fully created by a loving God and that our bodies are gifts from the Creator.[11] At other times, however, the tradition has focused almost exclusively on the spiritual aspect of created humanity, so that the physical element has been relegated to the realm of fallen humanity and even evil. The result of this split, according to Smith, is a "disembodied way of relating to all the material realities of our world."[12] Bodies become "disposable" and are transformed from a gift of the Creator to an object of "hate."[13] Smith argues strongly that too strong a focus on introspection feeds this hate by suggesting that the body must be more and more rejected and transcended for spiritual growth.[14] This can "overspiritualize" daily life and contribute to the loss of "embodied wholeness."[15] Such a loss leads Smith to conclude, "when human beings lose their embodied selves they lose their capacities to connect and relate to the larger world."[16]

Raewynne Whiteley has argued that "the uniqueness of our spiritual tradition is that we follow a God who became flesh and lived among us."[17] She goes on to suggest that the incarnation "becomes the model for our life of faith - not some disembodied spirituality, but a gritty engagement with an embodied world in and through which God

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[11] Christine M. Smith, *Preaching as Weeping, Confession, and Resistance: Radical Responses to Radical Evil* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 54.

[12] Ibid., 55.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid., 56.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Raewynne J. Whiteley, Woo me Sister! Move me Brother!": What does Pop Culture Have to Do With Preaching", in *Get Up Off Your Knees: Preaching the U2 Catalog*, ed. Raewynne J., Whiteley and Beth Maynard (Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 2003), 161.

speaks."[18] Thus, Whiteley concludes that preachers cannot preach "without skin,"

without an "incarnational praxis" that fosters deep engagement with body and world.[19]

While Smith's and Whiteley's theological-ethical call to consider the body does not

extend back to the scene of sermon invention, it gives us a starting point to begin

exploring how homiletics, aided by other disciplines, can begin to resist the continuing

power of an introspective focus in sermon composition. First, however, I turn to the work

of Russian literary theorist and sometime theologian Mikhail Bakhtin for a theological

grounding of this call to embodiment.

Bakhtin and Incarnation

> …Bakhtin reverses the traditional idea underlying the wonder of
> resurrection. He stresses the inseparability of body and soul not because
> the body has a soul but because souls must have bodies; his is a religion
> not so much of the resurrection but of the incarnation.[20]

From the beginning of his academic work, Mikhail Bakhtin tried to develop a

literary theory/philosophy grounded in the reality of what he termed the "once-occurrent"

particularity of "Being."[21] Two people cannot occupy the same place at the same time.

Bakhtin writes, "I occupy a place in once-occurrent Being that is unique and never-

repeatable, a place that cannot be taken by anyone else."[22] The temptation, however, is to

generalize this uniqueness, to universalize and abstract it by theorizing that everyone

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[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson, *Rethinking Bakhtin: Extensions and Challenges*. (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1989), 158.

[21] M. M. Bakhtin, Michael Holquist, and Vadim Liapunov. *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1993), 40; Liapunov points to a later clarification of the term "Being" in Bakhtin's *Art and Answerability*, "The event of being is a phenomenological concept, for being presents itself to a living consciousness as an [ongoing] event, and a living conciousness actively orients itself and lives in it as in an [ongoing] event." Quoted in Liapunov, "Notes" in Bakhtin, *Towards*, 78.

[22] Ibid., 40.

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occupies a once-occurrent place. When I think of uniqueness as "shared in common by *all* Being, I have already stepped outside my once-occurrent uniqueness, I have assumed a position outside its bounds, and think Being theoretically…"[23] Bakhtin goes on to argue that "the closer one moves to theoretical unity (constancy in respect of content or recurrent identicalness), the poorer and more universal is the actual uniqueness…"[24] Bakhtin warns that if one follows this temptation towards abstraction, he or she loses their uniqueness of Being, becomes a "disembodied spirit" and loses his or her "compellent, ought-to-be-relationship to the world…[and] the actuality of the world."[25]

Ruth Coates has described this loss of the "ought-to-be-relationship" as parallel to the Christian narrative of the fall of humanity. This claim is made in her argument that the "existential drama" narrated by Bakhtin can be read through a Christian lens.[26] The world has suffered a split, fissure, gulf or schism because "it is possible to be a pretender. It is possible to deny one's *obligation-imposing uniqueness*."[27] Because of the pretenders who nurture such a denial, the world (as after the expulsion from Eden) is broken, fallen and the struggle for life begins. This world "as object of theoretical cognition seeks to pass itself off as the whole world."[28] In what is described as a world of "givenness," the pretender chooses what "is" instead of what "ought."[29] He or she desires to be independent, cut off from the "event of being," or "living in the world moment to

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[23] Ibid., 41.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid., 47; Oughtness is another important aspect of Bakhtin's thought that stressed the non-theoretical "response to a singular event." See Deborah J. Haynes, *Bakhtin and the Visual Arts*. Cambridge studies in new art history and criticism. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 57.
[26] Ruth Coates, *Christianity in Bakhtin: God and the Exiled Author*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 29.
[27] Quoted in Coates, 29.
[28] Bakthin, *Towards*, 7.
[29] Coates, 31.

moment" and declining responsibility for his or her own uniqueness.[30] Coates notes that

Bakhtin's early work presents "a picture of the world and of human experience as broken

and internally divided, with a proneness to retreating into an illusion of autonomy that is

at the same time the symptom of this division and its cause."[31]

If the problem for Bakhtin is the move towards theorization and abstraction away

from uniqueness, Coates observes that "the Incarnation in his work is the antidote…"[32]

Coates notes the term that can be translated "incarnation," "embodiment" or

"incorporation" is used by Bakhtin to "denote the incorporation of the abstract realm of

truth into the 'concrete event of Being' by the responsible human agent."[33] Bakhtin called

for theoretical truth to be "incorporated into spatiotemporal reality" so that "living truth is

an embodied truth, a word made flesh."[34] The incarnation of Christ rejects the way of the

pretender, the broken life of the unincarnated believer who, according to Bakhtin, "falls

away into impersonal, rootless being."[35] In the flesh of Christ, humanity becomes able to

acknowledge the uniqueness of their participation in Being, the concreteness of their

once-occurrence and the possibility that what "can be done by men [sic] can never be

done by anyone else."[36] As Coates summarizes, "redemption is conditional upon the

existence of embodied subjects, and it also consists in the embodiment of abstract

concepts, just as Christ embodied the abstract concept of God."[37]

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[30] Haynes, 53.
[31] Coates, "The First and Second Adam in Bakhtin's Early Thought," in *Bakhtin and Religion: A Feeling for Faith*, ed. Susan M. Felch and Paul J. Contino (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2001), 68.
[32] Coates, *Christianity in Bakhtin,* 33.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid., 35.
[35] Quoted in Coates, *Christianity in Bakhtin*, 35.
[36] Bakhtin, *Towards*, 40.
[37] Coates, "The First and the Second Adam in Bakhtin's Early Thought," 70.

As Charles Lock argues, the realization "of one's 'singular irreplaceable involvement in being' is to be achieved through the body, through the opposite of what Bakhtin attacks as 'non-incarnated thought, non-incarnated action, non-incarnated accidental life'"[38] This move from abstraction to the concrete is inseparable from the reality of situated bodied beings. The antidote of the Incarnation reveals that the lives of non-pretenders are not "rough drafts" or an "unsigned document that does not obligate anyone to anything."[39] Living in the possibility of actual once-occurrent being can only be achieved through an incarnational life in which "everything in me-every movement, gesture, lived-experience, thought, feeling-everything must be such an act or deed."[40] It is only "on this condition that I actually live." This life is made possible by Christ, the "great symbol of self-activity," who after departing in death leaves a "very different world" behind.[41]

Bakhtin's call for an active, embodied life in a world "indeterminable…in theoretical categories" theologically urges homiletics towards a refigured scene of sermon invention that brings into view "the uniqueness of my place in being."[42] The incarnation of Christ urges homiletics away from static, abstract idealizations of the inventive scene. There is a real danger that when teachers of preaching offer preachers neck-up, introspective images of sermon composition they are offering them a vision of preparing sermons as what Bakhtin terms pretenders. They are allowing preachers an escape from accepting responsibility for their behavior, a way of detachment from their

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[38] Charles Lock, "Carnival and Incarnation," 77.
[39] Bakthin, *Towards*, 44.
[40] Ibid., 44.
[41] Ibid., 16; Alan Jacobs argues that Bakhtin has in mind here "the passage from Philippians: the descent of the eternal Word from heaven to earth, its enfleshment." Alan Jacobs, "Bakhtin and the Hermeneutics of Love," in *Bakhtin and Religion,* 38.
[42] Ibid.

"unique emotional-volitional center."[43] Bakhtin calls this living an "alibi," a way of being relieved of "answerability" for an act by "claiming to be elsewhere."[44] The possibility of living this alibi tempts preachers towards taking on the role of disembodied spirits during invention, in reality a sinful rejection of the word made flesh. When preachers claim they prepare sermons without the involvement of their bodies, they effectively are theologically denying God's incarnation.

Without the materiality of the incarnation, preachers succumb to the potentially dangerous mythology that their sermons are prepared from a singular conventional place and become what Bakhtin termed "disembodied spirits."[45] The resulting articulations of invention disregard the preacher's body and suggest a theological disregard for the (actual) body of Christ as a site of meaning making.[46] Sermon invention based on a theological understanding of the Word incarnate, however, is a deeply embodied act that rejects notions of disembodied, placeless scenes of invention. One significant voice that can help homiletics begin to understand the implications for sermon invention of Bakhtin's call to incarnation is Kristie Fleckenstein.

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[43] Ibid., 44.

[44] Vadim Lianpunov, "Notes" in Bahktin, Towards, 95; Erdinast-Vulcan notes the "meaning of alibi is 'no-elsewhere,'" showing a "link between the subject's singularity and his or her ethical responsibility." Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan, "Between the Face and the Voice: Bakhtin Meets Levinas". *Continental Philosophy Review*. 41, no. 1 (2008):49

[45] Bahktin, *Towards,* 47

[46] In Docetism, "Jesus' humanity and suffering were not real, they were only phantasms." Donald K. McKim, *Theological turning points: major issues in Christian thought*. (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1998), 26.

Somatic Mind

Interest in the "bodily sense of space and time in the world," is rapidly and provocatively expanding in many fields.[47] The feminist rhetorical theorists Lisa Ede, Cheryl Glenn, and Andrea Lunsford help us understand the rhetorical implications of a view that suggests that the body itself may become a site of invention.[48] Thomas Rickert infers from the work of such diverse fields as computing, biology and cognitive science that academia is in the midst of a sea-change in its understandings of mind and body. The mind "is increasingly seen as something implicated in and dispersed throughout complex social and technological systems."[49] Instead of fully separate from the body, the location of discrete processes, the mind is becoming imagined as "leaky, commingling with the body and the ambient environs, and as emotional as it is rational."[50] This redescription of the mind-body relationship forms the impetus for a "new spatial paradigm" in which "minds are both embodied, and hence grounded in emotion and sensation, and dispersed into the environment itself, and hence no longer autonomous."[51] As Andy Clark notes, "The mind is just less and less in the head."[52] This new paradigm offers an alternative to concepts of invention focused on linear logical systems that have often "delimited

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[47] Nelson., 42.

[48] Lisa Ede, Cheryl Glenn, and Andrea Lunsford. "Border Crossings: Intersections of Rhetoric and Feminism". *Rhetoric*a. 13, no. 4 (1995): 401; see also Adrianne Rich, "Notes toward a Politics of Location," in Adrianne Rich, *Blood, Bread, and Poetry: Selected Prose 1979-1985* (London: Virago, 1987), 210-32.

[49] Thomas Rickert, "Towards the Chōra: Kristeva, Derrida, and Ulmer on Emplaced Invention." Philosophy and Rhetoric 40.3 (2007): 251.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Clark, Andy. *Natural-Born Cyborgs: Minds, Technologies, and the Future of Human Intelligence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 4.

rhetorical space as grounded in discursive, print-based notions of representation and rationality."[53]

Kristie Fleckenstein has specifically addressed the absence of the body in the field of composition studies.[54] She argues that "we all live and write in the gaps, a product of constantly evolving relationships between professional and private, between writing figure and writing, between body and text."[55] She further asserts that "In sacrificing bodies to some illusion of either transcendent truth or culturally constituted textuality [post-structuralism], we cut ourselves adrift from any organic anchoring in the material reality of flesh."[56] Calling for an embodied discourse, Fleckenstein develops the notion of a "somatic mind – mind and body as a permeable, intertextual territory that is continually made and remade."[57] This push towards repossessing bodies is consistent with an incarnational theology that rejects the reigning homiletic scene of invention. Fleckenstein's proposal offers potential to fuse "materiality and discourse without totalizing or essentializing identity and meaning," a move that would expand the narrow "neck up" focus of sermon invention.[58]

The first quality of the somatic mind is its "permeable materiality," the particular context in which an "organism's identity is (re)formed reciprocally with that of a physical position."[59] There is an inseparable relationship between *being* and *space,* so that one can only be defined in reference to the other. A being in *this* place is different from a being in *that* place. Citing cultural anthropologist Gregory Bateson's proposal that in evolution it

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[53] Rickert, 252.
[54] Ibid., 281.
[55] Kristie Fleckenstein, "Writing Bodies: Somatic Mind in Composition Studies," *College English* 60, no. 3 (1999): 303.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid., 286.
[59] Ibid.

is actually the *context* that evolves, not the organism or environment, Fleckenstein posits that the somatic mind "emphasizes the immanence and dialecticism of place and being."[60] The materiality of the somatic mind possesses a permeable quality that resists tendencies to define spaces as static, permanent locations. Place actually "results from a contingency of relationships established by the creation and exchange of information throughout the various transacting levels composing that eco-organism."[61] The many activities and interactions at work in such relationships cannot be separated from the body itself. Fleckenstein argues that we cannot determine where flesh begins and ends, for there is an ongoing and ever-increasing blurring of flesh and technology. She asks, "Is a blind man's cane part of him when he walks?"[62] What about a wheelchair? Or a pulpit? Or a microphone?

Fleckenstein considers Nancy Mairs who, because of multiple sclerosis, uses a wheelchair. In the "perspective of somatic mind, the delimitation of Mairs's being-in-a-material-place includes the person, the wheelchair, and the doorway she struggles to enter."[63] This whole system of interaction is all of a piece, and it is inseparable from Mairs' identity. As her particular environment shifts, her being-in-a-material-place also becomes constituted by different "pathways of information exchange."[64] Pointing again to the work of Bateson, Fleckenstein notes how some in the field of biosemiotics have followed work in biochemistry to question the linear nature of DNA. Instead of a top-down, sender of information, these thinkers suggest that DNA actually functions as a biosemiotic process. Information exists only in the "mixing" that occurs within the cell

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[60] Ibid., 287.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid., 288.
[64] Ibid.

between such things as DNA, RNA, proteins, etc.[65] The point here is that there is no "master code" through which to establish identity, for physical identity is "constructed contextually – biologically and semiotically."[66]

Building further Bateson's work, Fleckenstein argues that there is no essential biological body. There is instead only "the nexus between physical and symbolic bodies."[67] Discursive textuality lacks meaning apart from the corporeal. According to Fleckenstein, discursive textuality functions according to an "as if" logic (like a simile) that enables abstract judgments.[68] Categorizations such as "Jews are like…" operate on this discursive level, that "is essentially fragmented, uncertain, and unanchored except to itself."[69] Corporeal texts, on the other hand, "are the means by which we carry our bodies in our minds."[70] These texts usually operate through gestural and iconic markers that "stabilize discursive codes."[71] Thus, they operate with a metaphorical logic that is not interpreted but instead "merely are."[72]

These two texts, corporeal and discursive, are in constant interaction, forming the boundaries of the being-in-a-material-place. Discursive texts cannot exist without corporeal coding and so "there can be no textuality without materiality."[73] As Susan Griffin puts it, "Without the body, it is impossible to conceive of thought existing. Yet the central trope of our intellectual heritage is of a transcendent, disembodied mind."[74]

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[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid., 289.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid., 290.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid., 291.
[73] Ibid., 292.
[74] Susan Griffin, "Red Shoes," in *The Eros of Everyday Life: Essays on Ecology, Gender and Society*, ed. Susan Griffin (New York: Anchor Books, 1995),164.

Discourse, however, can never be fully separated from what Fleckenstein terms the "bone house."[75] In this relationship, "the *as if* and *is* logic merge into one, collapsing message and metaphor, prose and poetry."[76] It is the intersection of these texts in such a place that allows the possibility of change, for each text can disrupt as well as support the other. Fleckenstein notes that "Being-in-a-material-place exists as a temporal circuit or system; therefore, corporeality can disorder and transform prose space."[77]

Homiletic invention has traditionally tended to privilege the discursive text, the "seed-thoughts" growing in the storehouse of the mind, and relegated consideration of materiality to sections on delivery or presentation.[78] Contemporary works, such as Pamela Moeller's *Kinesthetic Homiletic*, have sought to shift the balance by highlighting the role of the body. Since its publication in 1993, however, Moeller's work has had little lasting impact.[79] Overall, homiletic literature has described sermon creation as primarily a mental act that is not, as Fleckenstein argues, dependent on materiality. The materiality of the preacher's body in a physical space has remained largely untreated as that which can disrupt, resist, and even redirect discursive texts at work in the preacher's mind. Yet the incarnation, the quintessential stabilizing of God's discursive code in a living body, witnesses again and again throughout the life of Jesus recorded in the text of the gospels to the ways in which the corporeal gives meaning to the discursive.[80]

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[75] Fleckenstein, 292.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid.

[78] John Albert Broadus and Edwin Charles Dargan. *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*. (New York: A.C. Armstrong and Son, 1898), 130; Grady Davis, *Design for Preaching* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958), 21.

[79] Pamela Ann Moeller, *A Kinesthetic Homiletic: Embodying Gospel in Preaching*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).

[80] One example of this dynamic is Jesus' invitation to his disciples to take and eat for this is his body (Matthew 26:26). This final invitation to fellowship was the ultimate event in what Oliver Davies describes as a life of opening "the fellowship of the kingdom." Davies notes that "Jesus' meal-fellowship

Fleckenstein's insights into the somatic mind offer an alternative construction of identity in which the corporeal textuality that blends into and leaks over the boundaries in a physical location cannot be separated from often-privileged discursive texts. The scene of sermon invention must become one that is "placed," that is critically aware of the interactive corporeal texts that are in play at any given moment. The uniqueness of these interactions has been lost in the accepted generalizations that have ignored the somatic intertexts involved in sacred production. It is, after all, the intertext of family-in-stable and baby-through-legs-of-woman, of growing and maturing, touching and healing, suffering and dying that forms the incarnational event of invention, of God "deciding what to say" in Christ, at the center of the Christian faith. As Bakhtin put it, "Even God had to be enfleshed in order to pardon, to suffer, and to forgive."[81]

The contours of spaces for inventing sermons, in which the body itself becomes an inventive site, have been out of view in contemporary homiletic theory. What is favored is an introspective focus on the preacher throughout the writing process. This introspective focus is a denial of vulnerable incarnate flesh that "evokes and anchors discursive textuality by providing the somatic complement necessary for meaning."[82] Bakhtin would argue that it is this somatic complement that makes possible living into the once-occurrence of Being. The theological failure of homiletics in glossing over the somatic has led to ideological assumptions which privilege static and "placeless" locations of sermon composition. Without corporeal texts, the inventive scene becomes a disembodied ideal, a scene of pretending that fails to take seriously the role of the

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with his disciples was for them an embodiment of his message." See Robert W. Jenson, *Systematic theology. Vol. II, The Works of God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 2:185.

[81] Quoted in Morson, *Rethinking Bakthin*, 157.

[82] Fleckenstein, 291.

vulnerable human body as the locus of God's "speaking." The privileging of a disembodied scene is, according to Fleckenstein, "the privileging of discourses that cannot talk in any effective way about genocide, sexual violence, and racism."[83] She argues that discourses "must have a material effect on the way we live" and disembodied discourses (or sermons) can have only partial effect on these actual lives.[84] In short, a disembodied scene of sermon invention is a site where incarnational speech is impossible. This is a powerful reason for homiletics to widen the reigning scene of sermon composition to include somatic and hence incarnational activities. One possible step forward in heeding that call is the work of Dimitri Shalin.

Rehabilitating the Scene: The Incarnational Alignment of Somatic-Discursive Textualities

Dimitri Shalin identifies an emerging model of interpretation that seeks to move beyond the logocentric nature of much Western philosophy by reconnecting the *sign* with the *flesh*. This model is very suggestive for an attempt to include bodily dynamics on the scene of sermon invention. Shalin notes that the reigning logocentric perspective

> …persisted well into the twentieth century, as evident in Frege's identification of meaning with "logical sense" and Husserl's differentiation between "noema" and "noesis", through de Saussure's distinction between "linguistic structure and speech" and Levi-Strauss's application of the binary linguistic codes to myth, and all the way to Gadamer's conflation of meaning with "what is fixed in writing…"[85]

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[83] Ibid., 301.

[84] Ibid.

[85] Dmitri N. Shalin, "Signing in the Flesh: Notes on Pragmatist Hermeneutics". *Sociological Theory.* 25, no. 3 (2007):195; see also George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1999). Kevin Mills notes that "poststructuralist thought has done little to allow the more unpleasant aspects of the author's personal history to be subjected to scrutiny, effectively ignoring the way in which texts affect and are affected by lives." Kevin Mills, *Justifying Language: Paul and Contemporary Literary Theory* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 140.

Thus, Shalin argues, there has been an impassioned attempt to "ban" the body, to separate the discursive and linguistic signifiers from any relationship to their location in the bodies of their creators.[86] This drive of the rationalist's, however, is complicated by the intense experience of affection in their own lives. Shalin points to Immanuel Kant, who while championing human dignity spoke of "the disgrace of an illegitimate child [whose] destruction can be ignored," and railed against masturbation and homosexuality.[87] Karl Marx's commitment to "universal brotherhood" is challenged by his refusal to acknowledge paternity of a child he fathered and his use of racial slurs.[88]

For Shalin, such examples begin to "illuminate rationalism's blind spots" and leads to re-describing hermeneutics as a "fully embodied practice."[89] Building on the work of the pragmatist Charles Peirce, Shalin argues that in order to fully interpret potential meaning, linguistic signification through the play of discursive signs must be augmented with iconic, indexical and symbolic signs. The interplay between these "embodied signifiers" and "linguistic symbols" is a tension-filled matrix of the "logical-symbolic, bodily-emotional, and behavioral-performative."[90] Meaning is deeply connected to corporeality, to the complex ways in which "the flesh of a sign interpolates its meaning."[91]

Shalin offers three types of signifying media of use to pragmatist hermeneutics. Each describes a distinct relationship between sign and object. "Symbolic-discursive" media include direct speech, written communication and fictional writing – "all markers

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[86] Shalin, 195.
[87] Quoted in Ibid.
[88] Ibid., 196.
[89] Ibid., 196, 197.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid.

that signify by virtue of a convention a designated code."[92] "Somatic-affective" media includes emotional and facial indicators, hormonal outlays and dreams. These indexes carry a certain compulsion or force towards their object, i.e., smoke and fire or the thermometer and temperature. "Behavioral-performative" media refers to acts or habits that constitute "a role performance."[93] Shalin describes these signs as "related to their objects through the agent's will that redeems a self-claim pragmatically through a string of actions that vouch for the person's social qualities or underscore their absence."[94] He notes that volunteering for a tour of duty signals patriotism while refusing to return stolen money suggests dishonesty. These three types of media intersect in daily life. It is in these intersections that "inconsistencies" and "contradictions" create an important piece of emergent meaning.[95]

The search for and analysis of gaps or breaks in the "word-body-action nexus" forms the basis for what Shalin terms biocritique.[96] This offshoot of pragmatist hermeneutics turns our focus toward historical authors' *lives* and compares those lives to their symbolic textual work. Thus, "Affective ambivalence and behavioral non sequiturs are as central to biocritical inquiry as discursive contradictions and grammatical inconsistencies."[97] The critical key for Shalin's work is its basis in the ontological reality of pragmatic-discursive (mis)alignment. There will always be moments or seasons in which linguistic signs either fail to be confirmed by the somatic or when embodied practice *overdelivers* on the discursive. The goal is to "track the flesh of a sign" and then

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[92] Ibid., 198.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid., 199.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid.

to explore the inevitable (mis)alignments and unfulfilled signifiers in order to fully understand the meaning of an author's work.[98]

Verbal tokens are for Shalin always waiting to be redeemed in the flesh, always ready to be fulfilled in somatic markers.[99] If verbal tokens fail to fulfill this need, breaking the "semiotic chain" that is an inherent part of the human condition, they raise suspicion about the validity of the verbal token.[100] Shalin points to the emotional outpourings of Jimmy Swaggart, who pioneered the televangelist trail with messages (symbolic) against pornography and prostitution. Swaggart's emotional pleas (indices) and "fleshed-out image" (icon) supported his discursive plea against all forms of evil.[101] Upon further inspection, however, there was a critical gap in Swaggart's semiotic chain. The preacher's use of prostitutes created a profound misalignment, a severe inconsistency that for many shattered the televangelist's chain of meaning. When the flesh of Swaggart's sign was tracked, there was no redemption.

Shalin goes on to give other examples such as Ted Haggard's exposure as a participant in unconventional sexual acts after his leadership role against gay marriage, and Professor Gunter Grass's late acknowledgement of his role in Hitler's army, after he had encouraged many of his students to question their own parents' role in the war.[102] While it is certainly possible to divorce discursive claims from the "pragmatically rendered self," this "glossing over the pragmatic short circuits the interpretive process and impoverishes the hermeneutical resources available to us in everyday life."[103] Taking

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[98] Ibid., 200.
[99] Ibid., 201.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid., 202.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid., 203.

into full consideration the multiple gaps and (in)consistencies in behavioral performances offers a meaning that "encompasses the semiotic life of the entire body."[104] Shalin is clear that his pragmatist proposal is not yet another example of a "hermeneutic of suspicion" that searches for hidden meanings embedded in disguised realities.[105] Instead, this "surface hermeneutic" seeks only to widen the hermeneutical circle to include the "agent's bodily affects" *without* "assigning a higher dignity to any one signifying media."[106]

Applying Shalin's pragmatic hermeneutics to sermon invention is perhaps less dramatic than Swaggart's fall or Shalin's later descriptions of the lives of leading postmodernist thinkers. It is, however, an important interpretive means that can influence both the theoretical and pedagogical widening of the reigning scene of invention. In a reversal of Shalin's emphasis, homileticians might begin integrating the somatic and discursive on the inventive scene. This would involve completing the semiotic chain of meaning by aligning the complexities of embodied action in sermon composition with the linguistic markers utilized to critically reflect upon as well as prescribe future action. Instead of relying on the traditional ideological construction of the inventive scene, preachers could engage in symbolic reflection on their indexical and iconic activities that *are already ongoing*.

This is to say that, if Shalin is correct, the usual discursive presentation of this inventive scene, the desk and the legal pad, is likely to be severely *misaligned* with the actual bodied experience of preachers. As I mentioned in chapter one, the belief that sermons are formed introspectively certainly affects the ways sermons are composed. If

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[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid., 210.
[106] Ibid.

Shalin is right, this belief can leave preachers with only a partial connection to the actual reality of the world in which preachers live. As Shalin notes, "every sign has a body" and many discursive (both theoretical and pedagogical) treatments of the inventive scene have a body that is being symbolically denied.[107] Meaning is thus constricted, located "outside space and time," on a distanced, stable ground that is remarkably disconnected from actual experience.[108]

This large gap between the sign and body prevents critical reflection on the profound ways in which discursive-performative alignment bears witness to the incarnation. It has led to an impoverished inventive scene that has furthered a docetic ideal that has effectively banned the body from view. Homiletic work on invention, therefore, needs an adjusted alignment between sign and body, theologically rooted in God's completion of the semiotic chain in the incarnation.[109] As Clyde Fant notes of Bonhoeffer's theology of preaching, "it was only through the incarnation that revelation could reach its height and that God could unite himself with man at the deepest level of communication."[110] The Word becoming flesh, the symbolic redeemed in the indices and icons of a Jew from Nazareth, is essential to a hermeneutical horizon in search of meaningful hope and salvation. In order for homiletics and preaching to participate in this theological redemption of the symbolic-discursive, homileticians and preachers must begin to nurture and expand the inventive scene to include somatic activity.

This expansion incorporates the inclusion of biographical experience and

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[107] Ibid., 203.

[108] Ibid., 213.

[109] See Kristine Fleckenstein, "Incarnate Word: Verbal Image, Body Image, and the Rhetorical Authority of Saint Catherine of Siena," *Enculturation* 6, no, 2 (2009): http://enculturation.gmu.edu/6.2/fleckenstein. Fleckenstein discusses how Catherine "literally lived her words, becoming, like the Christ she worships, "incarnate Word.""

[110] Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Clyde E. Fant, *Bonhoeffer: Worldly Preaching.* (Nashville, TN: T. Nelson, 1975), 110.

reflection on the ground-breaking and at times embarrassing pragmatic performances of invention. Such reflections emphasize the possibility of misalignments or gaps between discourse and performance, while also offering opportunity for reflection on the many ways in which those gaps are redeemed. This critical consideration would begin to deconstruct the ideology perpetuating the reigning scene as abstracted from actual practice. Notions of a linear journey down a one-way road of composition, abstract images of a mental seed growing without affecting the world around it, and camera angles that focus on the neck-up are likely to be exposed as logocentric reductions of the messy, muddled inventive scene. Reflection on the actual occasion of invention in its corporeal form opens the way forward for a profound shift in symbolic presentation of the inventive process.

There are *already* traces of such work spilling over the edges of the reigning scene. Anna Carter Florence writes about the peace that comes after truthfully uttering testimony that can be seen "in a preacher when she sits down after a sermon."[111] Florence continues, "You can read it in her eyes…You can see it in her body…"[112] The somatic confirms the discursive, the sign is redeemed in her flesh. Barbara Lundblad reflects on asking "What does my body want to do? When does my body stop or jump or dance or fall down?" in her sermon preparation (in the study).[113] Charles Campbell implores preachers to encounter the bodies of others outside the "gates of the city" and John McClure emphasizes the importance of proxemic bodies in developing of a sermon.[114] Pamella Moeller advocates engaging Scripture in embodied dialogue in an attempt to

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[111] Florence, 156.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Barbara Lundblad, "Chapter Eight" in *Birthing the Sermon: Women Preachers on the Creative Process,* ed. Jana Childers (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2001), 123.
[114] Campbell, *Word Against the Powers*, 153; McClure, *Otherwise*, 59.

overcome the mind/body split.[115] These efforts to critically consider the intertexts of the symbolic and corporeal need to be deepened, *and* located at the scene of invention itself.

A powerful example of attention to the performative in literary activity is Prior and Shipka's study of academic writers and their processes of invention. By inviting these writers to imagine and discuss their composing scenes, the authors are able to consider "the dispersed, fluid chains of places, times, people, and artifacts that come to be tied together in trajectories of literate action along with the ways multiple activity footings are held and managed."[116] One of the writers studied, an associate professor at Illinois, chronicled her arrangement of furniture and other objects to help create a mood in the writing space. She told of walking during the process, as well as a friend who reviewed and made key comments on her work.[117] A graduate student describes her dual keyboard system in which one keyboard is placed at her feet in order to save wear and tear on her wrists. She chronicles how trips to bars and conversations with her fiancé motivated and influenced her writing process.[118] Prior and Shipka conclude by questioning what are the best methods to "trace the dispersed, chronotopically laminated nature of the acts of writing."[119] There is always a "heterogeneity" of activity that makes up what the authors term the "chains of invention," leading eventually to a finished

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[115] Moeller, 91.
[116] Paul Prior and Jody Shipka,"Chronotopic Lamination: Tracing the Contours of Literate Activity, in *Writing Selves, Writing Societies: Research from Activity Perspectives,* ed. Charles Bazerman and David Russell (Fort Collins, CO: The WAC Clearinghouse and Mind, Culture, and Activity, 2003), 180.
[117] Ibid, 201.
[118] Ibid., 199.
[119] Ibid., 206.

project.[120] These chains are described as "often ambiguous and fuzzy; that may be tied or untied, and retied; and that stretch across official cultural boundaries."[121]

Such a description resonates with the implications of Shalin's and Fleckenstein's proposals. The preacher's very identity lies at the intersections of *discursive* and *corporeal* textualities, and it is the interplay of these relationships that forms the substance of the scene of sermon invention. Preachers do not come to a desk to encode mental processes or experiences into symbolic discourse. In other words, the preacher doesn't simply *compose the sermon*. The constant interaction of discursive and corporeal texts engaged in the various activities of sermon-making *also work to compose the preacher*. The "preacher-in-a-material-place" cannot, therefore, continue to be imagined as simply appearing ready-made and neck-up at the writing desk.[122] This disembodied, unflappable preacher can only produce texts unconnected to the body, to the flesh that holds (or perhaps even holds back) his or her mind. The corporeal can never confirm/disrupt the textual, and so Emerson's criticism, that preachers will preach what they haven't lived, is borne out.[123]

A scene of invention that has no room for discursive-corporeal interactions becomes an ideological impetus towards the creation of symbolic codes that are profoundly misaligned with somatic markers. Swaggart and Haggard are simply public examples of this misalignment, for which homiletics cannot be absolved of all responsibility. Offer an image of sermon composition without critical consideration of

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[120] Ibid. Yarbrough notes in his discussion of Bakhtin, "Within heteroglossia, there is no hierarchy of 'correctness,' and certainly no incommensurability." *After Rhetoric*, 151.
[121] Ibid., 208.
[122] As Hawk puts it, "A text or action is the product not simply of foregrounded thought but of complex developments in the ambient background." Byron Hawk, *A Counter-History of Composition: Toward Methodologies of Complexity*, (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2007), 178.
[123] Ralph Waldo Emerson, < http://www.emersoncentral.com/divaddr.htm>

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alignments and gaps between sign and flesh, and preachers, while certainly not

constrained by the work of homiletics, will be encouraged to leave the body out of the

actual inventive process. The theological failure of a fleshless scene of invention leaves

the preacher *and* God without a body. In order to retrieve the potential of the incarnation,

homiletics must offer reflection, often biographical and messy, on the ways in which

corporeal textuality is continually working to complete/challenge the discursive. Only in

the light of such reflection and awareness can preachers begin to join God's incarnational

speech, the culminating event of discursive redemption.

A Pedagogy of Surplus

> There always remains an unrealized surplus of humanness; there always remains a need for the future, and a place for this future to be found. All existing clothes are always too tight, and thus comical on a man...[124]

> When I contemplate a whole human being who is situated outside and over against me, our concrete, actually experienced horizons do not coincide . . . I shall always see and know something that he, from his place outside and over against me, cannot see himself: parts of his body that are inaccessible to his own gaze (his head, his face and its expression), the world behind his back, and a whole series of object and relations, which in any of our mutual relations are accessible to me but not to him.[125]

One implication for the preaching classroom of this attempt to widen the

inventive scene through critical reflection on somatic-discursive relations is what I will

call, following another of Bakhtin's provocative ideas, a pedagogy of surplus. Bakhtin's

literary-social notion of the "surplus of vision" refers to the reality that one person can

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[124] Bakhtin, "Epic and Novel" in *Dialogic*, 37.

[125] M. M. Bakhtin, Michael Holquist, and Vadim Liapunov. "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity,"in *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1990), 22-23.

see another cannot; one can see the back of another's head or the objects behind them.[126]

As Deborah Haynes puts it, "Two persons looking at each other do not have the same

horizon…The excess of seeing is a function of my uniqueness in space and time."[127] We

are all physically situated in bodies in a unique place from which we each have a distinct

and particular perspective that is unavailable to anyone else.[128] Yet there is always in this

spatial-temporal location more going on that we can recognize, a continual surplus of

vision, meaning and humanness.

Fleckenstein and Shalin have taught us that continuing to ignore these dispersed

activities is hermeneutically and ethically devastating, and Bakhtin has shown is that it is

theologically devastating as well. Therefore, it is essential we consider how the

introduction to preaching classroom can become a place in which this *surplus* is a central

part of pedagogical focus. Two examples of students in the homiletic classroom will help

frame this attempt. Imagine that in a relatively small class (12-15) at a relatively small

seminary, a student preached a sermon centered on how to treat one another in a loving

way. However, it was publicly known that the words of his message were in deep

contradiction with the way in which he was acting in his own relationships. In such a

case, there would be a distinct sense among those in the class that the preacher was not

"practicing what he was preaching." Gaps would become evident in his semiotic chain as

listeners tracked the flesh of his verbal tokens. Comments such as "Do you think the

professor knows of this disparity?" "Should we tell the professor?" "How do we bring

this up?" could easily be imagined as students reflected on the sermon outside the

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[126] Morson and Emerson, 24.

[127] Deborah J Haynes, *Bakhtin and the Visual Arts,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 76.

[128] Tina S. Kazan, "Dancing Bodies in the Classroom: Moving toward an Embodied Pedagogy". *Pedagogy* 5, no. 3 (2005): 385.

classroom.

The problem in this instance would be there was no space in the homiletic classroom for critical consideration of the ways in which discursive and somatic codes were deeply misaligned in the sermon. There was no language to speak about how his signs had a particular body and how his somatic dynamics were resisting his discursive claims. Such discussion was off the table *because* the inventive scene was narrowly focused on practical incorporation of theory, form and proper exegesis. The pedagogical lens was on a fixed tripod that left anything not in the traditional scene (neck up at the desk) out-of-bounds to consideration. Thus, students would be left without evaluative language as they gathered to offer feedback on their colleague's sermon. The sign, they might believe, was not redeemed in the flesh. *But worse* would be the discursive failure to open up this gap for discussion (and thus a different sort of redemption) during the feedback time. In the classroom, at least, students could only be theologically mute at this point.

Another potential experience might involve the process of actual sermon composition in introductory and later homiletic classrooms. Imagine a student who after the process of exegesis, of both the standard and creative sorts, would not write anything down on paper. Picture a student who would instead seek to pace the sermon out. Walking back and forth between aisles, this student would alinearly work on producing a sermon and report feeling the most bodily response or in Fleckenstein's language, the somatic both resisting and supporting the emerging symbolic code. In no particular systematic way, various nodes (such as gestures and even speed of heartbeats) of these moments of somatic-discursive (mis)alignment would consciously and subconsciously

remain as markers that would organize and guide the symbolic logic. These markers would be constantly present throughout the inventive process, both in and out of the auditorium. As this student's somatic-discursive textualities were shifting through encounters with others, situated environs and objects, the markers were also dynamically realigning. Thus, when he or she returned to walk through the sermon again, these nodes would became ever-shifting relations that needed to be tweaked and adjusted to achieve discursive-corporeal alignment.

Imagine a student whose heart was broken from a failed relationship. The symbolic-discursive that had developed up to that point was *deeply* contradicted by a corporeal presence that dramatically refused to follow. In this case, the indices and icons of the suffering body chart an alternative path to redemption, while refusing to allow the symbolic to guide the student deeper into the "gap" of misalignment. The reverse, of course, also happens. An overstretched and under-rested body could be resisted by a well-prepared symbolic code. The distinctions between the somatic and discursive here remain too clear-cut but the point is that the often messy intersections of textualities that yield a body-in-a-material-place were, while integral to the creation experience, rarely if ever in the critical lens of the classroom. Perhaps some colleagues would have known of some of the dynamics, but homiletics itself offered no language, no tools that could be used to describe and then reflect on the ways in which these dynamics were involved in sermon creation.

A pedagogy of surplus strategically creates space in the homiletic classroom for critical consideration of the dispersed and multiple activities at work in invention. As Bakhtin's concept implies, invention is a deeply social endeavor that includes but is not

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limited to dialogical and collaborative interaction. Such a proposal will meet resistance

for, as Kazan notes, interaction in the classroom is composed of habits that are not easily

altered.[129] The homiletic classroom has a certain archeological character, layered with

memories of the inventive scene dating back to the nineteenth century, that works to keep

wider consideration out of bounds.[130]

The pedagogical incorporation of critical consideration of the wider somatic-

discursive processes in the inventive scene is itself, however, a corporeal redeeming of

the theological-symbolic discourse on the incarnation. Classroom moments in which the

role of student's bodies in particular inventive environments are considered become

faithful attempts to consider the implications of God's word made flesh for our own

words and bodies as preachers. A pedagogy of surplus highlights, like the incarnation, the

messy and unsystematizable relationship of the discursive and corporeal. It explodes the

reigning scene of invention by uncovering the surplus activity continually *leaking over*

all edges. It begins to offer students and professors alike the permission and space to

develop reflective language and tools to theologically and homiletically engage such

activity.

Thus, a pedagogy of surplus offers a critical viewpoint from which to address

issues of ethos in the preaching classroom. I consider ethos here in interactional terms as

"the set of social relations we project upon a situation that determines how we interact

with things."[131] Ethos does refer to some "determining essence" or even to a system of

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[129] Kazaan, 400.

[130] Rolf Norgaard, "An Archeology of the Classroom."in *Classroom Spaces and Writing/Instruction*. ed. Carol Rutz and Ed Nagelhout, (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton, 2004), http://spot.colorado.edu/~norgaard/research/classroom.archeology.091500.htm

[131] Yarbrough, *Inventive*, 170.

beliefs.[132] Instead, the idea is more of the "familiarity with how things relate to one another with respect to a particular purpose in a particular place."[133] This familiarity is influenced but not determined by social groups and local discourses so that change from one set of social relations to another set is possible and at many times desirable. Appeals to ethos in the preaching classroom, therefore, are not in reference to those qualities that a person naturally possesses or that a specific culture has given them. Instead, appeals to ethos arising out of the work of Fleckenstein and Shalin are concerned with the specific concerns and problems in the particular preaching processes in particular classrooms. Somatic realities are not put into conversation with culturally standardized cultural codes but with the discursive relations of the particular preacher and his or her own familiarities. The reverse is also true so that discursive codes are not stabilized or destabilized by somatic codes inherent to the preacher's essence or given to them by outside forces but instead in the somatic realities that preacher "projects upon a situation."[134] The following practices attempt to address the ethos of the preacher in the classroom in this particular sense.

Pedagogical Practice: Socially Mapping the Scene of Invention

The work of Fleckenstein and Shalin pushes homiletics to reconsider the inventive scene by widening narrow theoretical lenses and critically considering the many activities that have escaped an introspective focus. Building on a pedagogy of surplus, I will now seek to articulate a practice for the preaching classroom that begins to bring into view the incarnational character and potential of the scene of invention. I

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[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid.

suggest a pedagogical practice of deep "mapping" (in much the same way that Prior and Shipka mapped writers) that will equip emerging preachers with a critical sense of its complexities. Robert Brooke and Jason Mcintosh describe deep mapping as the "drawing of psychological locations (both literal and abstract) created by writers to represent their relationship to place."[135] Used in composition classrooms at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, mapping helped students become accustomed to seeing themselves as placed writers and then to begin to explore their relationships to these places.[136]

I propose that homiletic instructors encourage their students to deeply map the ambient space of invention in their actual sermon constructions. One possible form of this practice would be a self-mapping in which the student-preacher traced out their own activity on the inventive scene leading to the sermon. Bakhtin was clear, however, about the limitations of self-representation. As Haynes notes, "We lack any approach to ourselves from outside the self."[137] I am unable to distinguish the "line that delineates my body in space" and thus can never "see the line that separates me from and within the world."[138] The preacher is unable to see, unable to observe certain complex activities in the broader environment in which she exists.[139] According to Bakhtin, however, the other has a "window into a world in which I never live."[140] The other has the potential of observing what we cannot, the entirety of ourselves at any given moment in time.

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[135] Robert Brooke and Jason Mcintosh, "Deep Maps," in *The Locations of Composition,* ed Christopher J Keller,and Christian R. Weissee, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2007), 131.

[136] Ibid., 132.

[137] Haynes, 77.

[138] Ibid., 82.

[139] Haynes notes the difference between Bakhtin's use of the terms "horizon" and "environment." Horizon is "the world as it appears from inside a person's consciousness" while environment "is the world as seen by another from outside the self." Thus, our use of the term environment here is intentional. Haynes, 83-84. See Bakhtin, "Author and Hero," 97.

[140] Bakhtin, "Author and Hero," 34.

In the face of a western philosophical tradition that privileged "inward" over "outward knowledge…depth over surface, profundity over superficiality, essence over appearance," Bakhtin proposes an ethical position that focused on the external.[141] This outside position is a nonbinary "borderland" in which separation and connection are not mutually exclusive. When one encounters the threshold of connection/separation, "the other side cannot be understood reciprocally as a symmetrical form of what is on this side." [142] The logic of identity based on an interior understanding of essence is jettisoned in favor of transposing "value from the inward to the outward…from the mind to the body."[143] Thus, as Charles Lock concludes, "outsideness is the trope of incarnation…"[144]

In light of the need for outsideness, I reject a practice of self-mapping that tends to locate knowledge through inward representation in favor of a more social activity in which one student observes and traces another's sermon creation process.[145] This Bakhtinian position provides an ethical foundation for a methodology of shadowing.[146] As Barbara Czarniawska notes, shadowing offers a perspective of outsideness that recognizes our "real exterior can be seen and understood only by other people."[147] This emphasis searches for and respects differences instead of attempting to find empathy

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[141] Lock, "Bakhtin and Tropes of Orthodoxy," in *Bakhtin and Religion*, 106.

[142] Ibid.

[143] Ibid., 108.

[144] Lock, "Bakhtin and the Tropes," 108.

[145] Haynes notes that "nowhere is his [Bakhtin's] focus on the body and bodily experience more vivid than in his discussions of outsideness." Haynes, 71.

[146] Emerson notes, "It is worth noting that Bakthin's vision of outsideness is wonderfully nonelitist, nonjudgmental, and open to all, whatever our gifts or inclination. He does not stipulate that we do the other party any positive good, on that we assume an outside position toward that part. Even the laziest and most passive outsider can always help me out by letting me know what is happening behind my head; in my laziest, most passive, most testy and unengaged moods." Caryl Emerson, *The First Hundred Years of Mikhail Bakhtin*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 210.

[147] Quoted in Barbara Czarniawska, *Shadowing: And Other Techniques for Doing Fieldwork in Modern Societies*. (Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School press, 2007), 21. For a history see Czarniawska, 20-58.

through similarities. The student-observer is able to get a brief yet potentially robust

glimpse into the local activities that are continuously at play on the inventive scene.

Through a representative mapping of what is observed through shadowing,

students trace the ways in which fellow students shaped and were shaped by the inventive

environment, paying close attention to somatic-discursive (mis)alignments. The

observing student will have the ability to map the surplus of invention, the processes that

the preacher is unaware of, such as bodily movements or even the hard to express ways in

which a room or setting itself changes when the preacher enters or exits. Bakhtin

illustrates this in the example of one who is suffering,

> He does not see the agonizing tension of his own muscles, does not see the entire, plastically consummated posture of his own body, or the expression of suffering on his own face. He does not see the clear blue sky against the background of which his suffering outward image is delineated for me.[148]

Through attention to such surplus, the observer will have attained access to the preacher's

semiotic chain and can offer the preacher an outside viewpoint from which to access

(mis)alignments in that chain.

In another of Bakhtin's early essays titled "Author and Hero in Aesthetic

Activity," he offers a sense of how this practice of shadowing could become a productive,

love-based gift for the preacher.[149] The literary lens of "author" and "hero" serve for

Bakhtin as a metaphor for life. As Ann Jefferson notes, "the self is always 'authored' or

created by the Other/author."[150] Bakhtin explains, "My own exterior (that is, all of the

expressive features of my body, without exception) is experienced by me from within

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[148] Bakhtin, "Author and Hero," 25.

[149] Clark and Holquist note "Bakhtin's dictum that the self is an act of grace, a gift of the other." Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist, *Mikhail Bakhtin*. (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1984), 68.

[150] Ann Jefferson, "Bodymatters: Self and Other in Bakhtin, Sartre and Barthes" in *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory*, ed. Ken Hirschkop and David Shepherd (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 203.

myself. It is only in the form of scattered fragments, scraps, dangling on the string of my inner sensation of myself, that my own exterior enters the field of my outer senses…"[151] In remaining outside, the other/author, however, has clearer vision not only of the bodily parts that escape the self's vision, but also of how all of these "scraps" work together.[152] Thus, as Jefferson notes, "authoring is the act of *gathering*. The author gathers together all the parts of the body that escape the subject's own visual field, and then places the resultant entity in the world where for the author the body appears as an object among other objects."[153] In this process, the author *produces* something; a whole is bestowed on the other, not revealed.[154] The author gives the hero/other the gift of outside vision, of producing an unfinished whole that the self is unable to see. This is a somatic-discursive whole that escapes the introspective grasp of a hero/preacher. Bakhtin argues it is "not an expression or utterance *of* my own life, but an utterance *about* my own life through the lips of another is indispensable from producing an artistic whole…"[155] The hero/other, therefore, does not need identification with but an outside response to his or her pain, love, joy or sorrow.[156] Bakhtin problematically portrays the self in this relationship as "passive," a position that he revises in a later work *Rabelais and His World*. As Michael Holquist observes, however, the whole of Bakhtin's work demands a balance: "some way must be found to perceive wholeness…[but] no whole should homogenize the variety of

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[151] Bakhtin, "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity," 28.

[152] "The author knows and sees more not only in the direction in which the hero is looking and seeing, but also in a different direction, in a direction which is in principle inaccessible to the hero himself…" Bakhtin, "Author and Hero," 13.

[153] Jefferson, 204.

[154] Ibid., Jefferson notes this production as an act of love.

[155] Bakhtin, "Author and Hero," 86. As Jefferson argues, this may not always be the "happy" experience that Bakhtin in this essay portrays. Later in her essay, she points to Bakhtin's treatment of the body in *Rabelais* as a counter-view that emphasizes the body's resistance to wholeness.

[156] Emerson, *The First Hundred Years*, 224. "The healthy self is highly vulnerable and wholly involved in others, she hastens to explain, only it does not pretend to duplicate their particular space or time; it enters into another's worldview and then, with a memory of that other horizon, returns to its own place. It must return, because only by that act does it regain its distinctive excess." Emerson, 209.

its parts – it should not, in other words, reduce their heteroglossia to the level of a monologue."[157] This is a difficult balancing act for the observer/author and it is always being adjusted on the fly to compensate for leaning too far in one direction. It is a constant both/and, or as Holquist puts it, "the complex form of simultaneity" demanded by Bakhtin's argument.[158]

Bakhtin's proposal offers a re-description of the observer as an author who actively gathers and produces a whole unavailable to the preacher internally. He explains that this position enables the author:

> (1) to collect and concentrate *all* of the hero, who, from within himself, is diffused and dispersed in the projected world of cognition and in the open event of ethical action; (2) to collect the hero and his life to complete him to the point where he forms a *whole* by supplying all those moments which are inaccessible to the hero himself from within himself (such as a full outward image, an exterior, a background behind his back, his relation to the event of death and the absolute future, etc.) and (3) to justify and to consummate the hero independently of the meaning, the achievements, the outcome and success of the hero's own forward-directed life.[159]

This practice, based on love, opens the inventive scene to critical attention to the *surplus* that is disregarded in a neck-up view of invention, and reframes the practice of shadowing as not only an assignment, but also a gift to the preacher.

The wider dynamics of the institution in which such a practice would occur significantly affects its potential implementation. Thinking back to the seminary I attended, I will suggest one possible way it might be realized. The seminary was a stand-

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[157] Michael Holquist, "Introduction," in Bakhtin, *Art and Answerability*, xxxi-xxxii.

[158] Ibid., xxxii. Bakhtin notes that "the artist's struggle to achieve a determinate and stable image of the hero is to a considerable extent a struggle with himself." Bakhtin, "Author and Hero," 6. While Bakhtin fails to critically consider "conflict and power relations in self/other dealings" as well as "questions of class and gender distinctions," the observer/author/artist's struggle to balance the particular/whole in the portrayal of the preacher opens the way for deeper attention to these dynamics in the preaching classroom. See also *Rehtinking Bakhtin*, 59 in which Morson and Emerson discuss Bakhtin's understanding of the fragile nature of dialogue.

[159] Bakhtin, "Author and Hero," 14.

alone, relatively small institution in which the majority of students lived on-campus. In

such an environment, a student could shadow another student-preacher for one to two

hours per day during the week the student was to preach without much difficulty (at

institutions that are very different from the one described, changes would need to be

made to this proposal). The time limit of one to two hours per day during the week

leading to the sermon would ensure adequate time was spent observing, but also function

as a safeguard (though certainly more might be needed depending on context) against a

type of homiletic voyeurism. The assignment would urge students to use half the allotted

time shadowing the student-preacher when he or she was in "specific" sermon

preparation, consciously working to prepare the sermon. The other half of the time

allotted would be spent shadowing the student-preacher in "regular" daily activities.

Student-observers would graphically depict the scenes and processes of the student-

preacher and make notes that might be helpful in supplementing the graphic depiction.

The student-observer would then be responsible for writing a one or two page

summary of her shadowing experience. I would offer a flexible rubric, with leading

questions that might help to spark thick descriptions of the process and help bring to light

the role of the body and environment in invention. This summary would be given to both

the professor and the student-preacher after the sermon. This student-observer would be

especially critically prepared to engage the sermon itself and offer critical reflection

arising out of their observation of the surplus on the student-preacher's inventive scene.

Through such a practice, the inventive scene is no longer regarded as static but

instead as a dynamic matrix of "context, ecology, assemblage, and emergence" in which

the preacher operates.[160] Mapping the environment from which the preacher is inseparable encourages sustained attention to how discursive and somatic textualities yield a preacher-in-a-material-place. It urges preachers to begin critically considering the reality of their somatic and discursive textualities, and how the way they may or may not intersect contributes to their once-occurrence in Being. Hopefully, such a practice would encourage students to explore the incarnational potential of the inventive scene, a necessary corrective to the governing introspective focus in both Homiletics and the preaching classroom.

Pedagogical Practice: Gesture Criticism

A further practice that would draw critical attention to the incarnational potential of the inventive scene is consideration of the "bodily action" with which humans "continuously inform one another about their intentions, interests, feelings and ideas."[161] In the creation of sermons, analysis of interaction with others on the inventive scene is usually limited to purely discursive evaluation, or at best discursive evaluation followed by a secondary consideration of the conversation partner's gestures. As part of a project in graduate school, for example, I assisted a colleague in an experimental form of collaborative preaching, in which I videotaped his interactions with undergraduate students in a common meeting area. After two hours, my colleague then edited the threads of those conversations into a sermon he preached in another student's dorm room.

In our discussions of the initial student comments on the text and in his compilation of those remarks, we privileged the discursive to the point of almost total

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[160] Hawk, 255.
[161] Adam Kendon, *Gesture: Visible Action as Utterance*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2004), 1.

denial of bodily communication. The somatic realm was not in our field of vision, not a factor in the surplus of meaning making that was occurring, and so none of that meaning was brought over into the sermon itself. Our attention when watching the videos of the encounters was almost exclusively focused on the discursive. The ways in which their flesh signified in discussions about the text my colleague provided them with was ignored, and so we as preachers that night failed to see the Word becoming flesh.

In light of that failure, I suggest a practice of videotaping at least two conversations as part of the sermon invention process. With the use of video editing equipment if possible, or with the use of the mute button on a remote control, the initial viewing of those conversations should be without the sound of the preacher's conversation partner. I am attempting to offer a way to reverse the discursive privilege by first evaluating bodily reactions throughout the conversation. This would give primary attention to meanings unavailable to linguistic or purely verbal rhetorical analysis. Students would be encouraged to respond to the questions, "How is the other's body responding to this text? How might their language be supporting or belying what their body is communicating?" Such a practice would also begin to train students to attend to the meaning-making of their own flesh on the inventive scene, and in the process dramatically extend the neck-up image of sermon creation currently dominant.

CHAPTER V

ON THE SCENE: ESCHATOLOGICAL SPACE

That which is last…seems to throw light (or shadow) on everything that comes before it.
- Christoph Schwobel[1]

The scene of sermon creation that privileges the introspective also fails to

consider the eschatological potential of the inventive process. As chapter three showed,

the belief in the need for a shared language to communicate and the privileging of

hermeneutics over composition has tended to limit encounters with difference on the

inventive scene. Christian eschatology, however, is concerned with the inbreaking of

hopeful difference, the temporal and teleological "last things" by which God will bring

ultimate redemption.[2] The work of Mikhail Bakhtin grounds much of the work in

chapters four and five of this project. On the point of redemption, however, we find that

Bakhtin does not carry us quite far enough. I quote Ruth Coates at length:

> it is…striking that he [Bakhtin] never offers us a vision of the triumph of good. I
> believe it is also true to say that, for all Bakhtin's devotion, it is not the Byzantine
> "harrowing of hell" which inspires him in Christ, but the more quintessentially
> Russian kenotic self-humiliation and self-giving love. As I argue, the redemption
> of the world is always in process (and in jeopardy) for Bakhtin: he never once
> mentions the Crucifixion as the defeat of death once and for all.[3]

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[1] Christoph Schwöbel, "Church as a Cultural Space: Eschatology and Ecclesiology," in J. C. Polkinghorne and Michael Welker, *The End of the World and the Ends of God: Science and Theology on Eschatology* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000), 109.

[2] Jerry L. Walls, *The Oxford Handbook of Eschatology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 6.

[3] Ruth Coates, "The First and Second Adam in Bakhtin's Early Thought." In *Bakhtin and Religion: A Feeling for Faith*, ed. Susan M. Felch and Paul J. Contino, (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2001), 77 (n.1).

Thus, we turn to one who brings many of Bakhtin's proposals into a theological context by offering a more concrete vision of the triumph of good, in an eschatological vision that stresses the social nature of ultimate redemption. Theologian Miroslav Volf suggests that eschatology is not only about what happens to individuals or about creation, but also what happens *between* them. He goes on to argue,

> If Cain and Abel were to meet again in the world to come, what will need to have happened between them for Cain not to keep avoiding Abel's look and for Abel not to want to get out of Cain's way? … If the world to come is to be a world of love, then the eschatological transition from the present world to that world, which God will accomplish, must have an inter-human side; the work of the Spirit in the consummation includes not only the resurrection of the dead and the last judgment but also the final social reconciliation. [4]

These inter-human encounters that "participate in the eternal movement of divine love" never "close the *movement of all* into a grand circle."[5] Instead, it is, in Volf's language, "the *open* play of difference in plenitude, innocence and love that would make the world to come a joyous 'world without end.'"[6] In this way, Christian eschatology is irreducibly social in its promise of a reconciliation that occurs not in spite of difference, or when difference has been transcended, but instead in the embodied process of hopefully encountering that difference.

Is this social-eschatological character of the Christian God creatively and productively engaged in the process of sermon invention? By the unsystematized, inbreaking activities of an active God, can space be created that cannot simply be

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[4] Miroslav Volf, 'The Final Reconciliation: Reflections on a Social Dimension of the Eschatological Transition', *Modern Theology* 16, no. 1 (2000), 94. See also Volf, "Enter into Joy!: Sin, Death, and the Life of the World to Come," in *The End of the World*, ed. J. C. Polkinghorne and Michael Welker. 268.
[5] Volf, "Enter into Joy," 276.
[6] Ibid.

subsumed within the conceptual schemes and systems already "in the air?" If so, the power of these hopeful spaces might shatter the static subjectivity of a preacher-in-control-behind-a-locked-office-door, and instead offer an encounter with difference that creates an open ground leading towards redemption and reconciliation.

In order to fully engage the potential of this eschatological activity, homiletics needs a theologically thick description of this space of encounter with difference. In beginning to articulate such a description, I will first frame the chapter within Donald Davidson's theory of communication, and then turn to the ancient rhetorical concept of *kairos*. After developing this notion of kairos from the perspective of Paul Tillich, I will turn to Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of *unfinalizability* as a bridge to developing the pedagogical implications for incorporating eschatological potential into the sermon invention process. Following a proposal for a pedagogy of charity, I will suggest a specific practice for the homiletic classroom that can widen the reigning inventive scene and engage its eschatological possibilities.

Turning Outward: Davidson's Prior and Passing Theories

As I proposed in chapter four, Donald Davidson offers a fluid model of communicative interaction that does not require an *a priori* shared language or culture. In the place of such conventions, Davidson offers a model of prior and passing theories,

> For the hearer, the prior theory expresses how he is prepared in advance to interpret an utterance of the speaker, while the passing theory is how he *does* interpret the utterance. For the speaker, the prior theory is what he *believes* the interpreter's prior theory to be, while his passing theory is the theory he intends the interpreter to use.[7]

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[7] Donald Davidson, "A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs." In *The Essential Davidson*. (New York; Oxford University Press, 2006), 260-261. Donaldson goes on to note, "The passing theory cannot in

Davidson's proposal frames the implications of this chapter's focus on the social

component of an eschatological reality by turning attention from the introspective

workings of the mind to the difference embodied in an(other). Any other who comes onto

the communicative scene, whether they speak the same language or share the same

culture, is for Davidson "an other." This *other* holds the potential of *difference,* and by

encounter with that difference the possibility of making ground *in the one shared world*

in which both live. As I encounter another, I do so with a general assumption or

hermeneutical guess about how they will speak. This guess becomes my prior theory and

as the conversation begins, I begin to alter that theory based upon the actual utterances of

another. If my partner in conversation is doing the same, our passing theories begin to

converge. In this process, there "are no rules for arriving at passing theories, no rules in

any strict sense, as opposed to rough maxims and methodological generalities."[8] In that

moment(s) when passing theories adjust to enable understanding, "something" is *shared*.[9]

This something, in the case of the construction of Christian proclamation on the scene of

invention, is the creation of new discursive ground.

New ground may be made in the process of discourse, but this ground is certainly

not empty or uncontested. While Davidson does not give sustained attention to the issue,

general correspond to an interpreter's linguistic competence. A passing theory is not a theory of what anyone (except perhaps a philosopher) would call an actual language. "Mastery" of such a language would be useless, since knowing a passing theory is only knowing how to interpret a particular utterance on a particular occasion." (261); Hawhee gets at this in describing Scott Consigny's relation of *kairos* to *agon*, "From the point of view of the *agon*, then, complete creative control or sheer accommodation is rendered impossible. What the *agon* foregrounds instead is the way rhetoric operates as an immanent art, one in which shifting conditions or countermoves cannot be known in advance." Debra Hawhee, *Bodily arts: rhetoric and athletics in ancient Greece*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004), 70.

[8] Davidson, "A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs," 265.

[9] Yarbrough, *After Rhetoric*, 174. I believe Bakhtin would describe this moments as "once-occurrent and inconvertible events that bring forth something new." See Mihail Bahtin, Michael Holquist, and Vadim Liapunov, "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity," in *Art and answerability: early philosophical essays*. (Austin: University of Texas, 1990), 87.

issues of power, gender and race are not absent from prior and passing theories.[10] Sydney Dobrin notes the possibility for "particular prior theories to dominate multiple moments of communicative interaction and, in turn, influence long-term discursive interactions that form structures of power and give substance to issues of culture, race, gender, class, and so on."[11] Dobrin argues, however, that a hermeneutic theory based on Davidson's proposals asks us to "observe power at its most local moment."[12] This opens up the possibility for understanding "oppressive structures not as codifiable systems but as conceptual schemes that occur at the moment of communicative interaction and that take on the appearance of an identifiable structure over a period of time."[13] On a pedagogical level, this focus encourages a move beyond examining structures to "a critique of how individual moments of communicative interaction create the illusion of those structures."[14] It is possible for the communicative moment to be "a moment of seduction, a moment of calculated manipulation" but prior theories that are resistant to this can be created. This ability, according to Dobrin, gives speakers agency "in a more direct manner than many liberatory and radical pedagogies" that focus on structures.[15]

The encounter with another on the inventive scene, therefore, is not devoid of issues of power, race, gender, class and so forth. These dynamics, however, are not understood as pre-existing structures that fundamentally prevent successful communication (the aligning of passing theories). They are realities in the world like other realities that must be understood so that one's prior theory can be properly adjusted.

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[10] Sydney I. Dobrin, "Parologic Hermeneutic Theories," in *Post-Process Theory: Beyond the Writing-Process Paradigm*, ed. Thomas Kent (Carbondale IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1999), 138-47.

[11] Ibid., 144.

[12] Ibid., 145.

[13] Ibid., 146.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

Over time, preachers will become more adept at beginning with prior theories that are resistant to moments of "seduction" and with forming passing theories that resist the manipulative advances of others. Davidson's theories are theories of practice. They are proposals that demand realization in the everyday mess of communicative realities. They do not offer preachers a previously-determined method of avoiding power, race, gender and class. Instead, they offer a beginning point that moves attention away from "structures" towards moments of actual interaction. In and through actual attempts to communicate with another on the inventive scene, preachers get out on what Yarbrough terms the field of play, and learn on the fly.[16]

While Dobrin points to how Davidson's proposal of prior and passing theories offers an alternative method of navigating issues of difference, Davidson ultimately leaves us with little hope if the communicative act itself fails. If languages do not converge by the aligning of passing theories, there is little recourse except to simply try again. Of course, there may not be opportunity to try again in the same or even similar communicative moments when inventing a sermon.

<center>Bahktin's Superaddressee</center>

Late in life, Bakhtin realized and attempted to address the possibility of communicative failure that he described as an "absolute lack of being heard."[17] In fact, he

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[16] Stephen R Yarbrough, "Passing Theories by Topical Heuristics: Donald Davidson, Aristotle, and the Conditions of Discursive Competence," *Philosophy and Rhetoric.* 37, no. 1 (2004): 75.

[17] M. M. Bakhtin, Michael Holquist and Caryl Emerson, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays.* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 126; Erdinast-Vulcan offers context, "We should note that this new turn comes about at a time of relative relaxation in state censorship in the Soviet Union, when Bakhtin himself was finally, at the end of his life, going by a phase of rehabilitation and recognition. It may well be the case that Bakhtin felt he could now introduce this new factor which would act as a centripetal ballast and counter the centrifugal, potentially relativistic pull of his earlier work." D. Erdinast-Vulcan, "Between the face and the voice: Bakhtin meets Levinas," *Continental Philosophy Review,* 41 (1) (2008): 50n.13.

argues "there is nothing more terrible than a lack of response."[18] Addressing this, to his

mind, horrific possibility, Bakhtin offers the concept of the superaddressee.

> But in addition to this addressee (the second party), the author of the utterance, with a greater or lesser awareness, always presupposes a higher superaddressee (third), whose absolutely just responsive understanding is presumed, either in some metaphysical distance or in distant historical time (the loophole addressee). In various ages and with various understandings of the world, the superaddressee and his ideally true responsive understanding assume various ideological expressions (God, absolute truth, the court of dispassionate human consciousness, the people, the court of history, science, and so forth).[19]

The notion of a superaddressee offers hope for the author of an utterance that while their

speech may not be heard immediately, there exists in the distance "some higher

instancing of responsive understanding."[20] Frank Farmer notes that the superaddressee

provides "speakers with a 'loophole' by which they can flee the oppressions of

immediacy."[21] It is not being misunderstood that Bakhtin is seeking to address, but being

"misunderstood *utterly* and *forever*."[22] The preacher cannot "turn over his whole self and

his speech work to the complete and *final* will of addressees who are on hand or

nearby."[23] Bakhtin is quick to note that the superaddressee is not a "mystical or

metaphysical being" but instead "a constitutive aspect of the whole utterance, who, under

deeper analysis, can be revealed in it."[24] The superaddressee does, however, "always

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[18] Ibid., 127.
[19] Ibid., 126.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Farmer, Frank, "Dialogue and Critique: Bakhtin and the Cultural Studies Writing Classroom". *College Composition and Communication.* 49, no. 2 (1998): 199; Michael Holquist notes, "poets who feel misunderstood in their lifetimes, martyrs for lost possible political causes, quite ordinary people lost in quiet lives of desperation-all have been correct to hope that outside the tyranny of the present there is a possible addressee who will understand them." Holquist, *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his world* (London: Routledge, 1990), 38.
[22] Frank Farmer, "'Not Theory…but a Sense of Theory': The Superaddressee and the Contexts of Eden," in Caryl Emerson, *Critical essays on Mikhail Bakhtin*.(New York: G.K. Hall, 1999), 386.
[23] Bakhtin, *Speech Genres*, 126-7.
[24] Ibid., 126-127.

requires something from me," always engenders a "measure of commitment" that works to shape the immediate communicative encounter.[25]

> Farmer interestingly points to the spatial emphasis of Bakhtin's proposal:

> What seems to intrigue Bakhtin is not so much the possible divinity of a superaddressee but rather what he refers to elsewhere as "the problem of distant contexts," those invoked places and moments where the superaddressee listens from. Understood this way, Bakhtin seems primarily interested in how "distant contexts" may be discovered within immediate ones-or, more precisely, how normative possibilities are always, already present in the very act of utterance.[26]

Morson and Emerson have noted that the "superaddressee embodies a principle of hope" and this hope arises from the promise of a future in which one will be really heard.[27] Even if there is an immediate failure of communication with another, there remains an encounter with difference that goes beyond that moment. From a distant context, an eschatological coming reality, one's utterance is heard and understood – a prior theory becomes a working passing theory. This does not, however, diminish the need for immediate encounters. As Erdinast-Vulcan argues, "For the superaddressee to exist there has to be a conversation–an address, an addresser, and an addressee. There has, above all, to be some commonality which would enable the address and some potential convergence of the interlocutors' appeal to the superaddressee."[28] The superaddressee is "defined in terms of discourse" and thus it is only by encounter with another that the eschatological potential of the distant superaddressee is realized.[29]

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[25] Farmer, "Not Theory," 387.

[26] Farmer, "Dialogue and Critique," 201.

[27] Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson. *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 135.

[28] Erdinast-Vulcan, 56.

[29] Ibid. This point pushes Erdinast-Vulcan to favor Bakhtin over Levinas. "As we have seen, both Bakhtin and Levinas develop a non-essentialist conception of subjectivity, and a non-systematic conception of ethics, predicated in both their cases on the non-coincidence of the subject with itself and its radical openness to the other. But it is Bakhtin's insistence on the discursive formation of subjectivity

These "distant contexts" could be posited as the eschatological reality of reconciliation that Volf has suggested.[30] Moreover, these distant contexts could be identified in Volf's language as the location of final judgment. At first glance, final judgment would seem to counter the unfinalizability that Bakthin passionately proposes. However, as Volf argues, the final judgment becomes the context in which one is truly heard, the embodied reality of the principle of hope Bakthin posits in the superaddresee. Volf notes, "the purpose of judgment is not the deadly calm of the final closure, but an eternal dance of differences that give themselves to each other in peaceful embrace."[31] This description of eschatological judgment, however, cannot be separated from the reality of the cross.

As homiletician Charles Campbell argues, the cross was a moment of radical difference in which Christ "resists the spirit of domination at the deepest level."[32] Christ defeats the powers and principalities so that he could seek forgiveness for and reconciliation with the very enemies who participate in his crucifixion."[33] This resistance of domination and powers was to "set people free from their captivity to and complicity with the powers" and to expose "the lies and pretensions of the powers."[34] In this project, these powers and principalities can be in part identified with the forces of isolationism

which allows him to translate these conception of ethics into an affirmation of agency, and a recognition of commonality and reciprocity which is not in evidence in Levinas's ethical postulate." (56)

[30] Note also that Farmer points to the superaddressee as a way to further critical pedagogy, "The superaddressee, in other words, may signify Bakhtin's tacit recognition of the very thing he is often charged with ignoring: namely, the asymmetric relationships of power that shape the manner and direction in which any given dialogue is to proceed. When our utterances are constrained, silenced, misunderstood, interrupted, or otherwise unacknowledged, we quite understand- ably invoke a better context for their hearing than the one in which we speak. And for this reason, the superaddressee may prove to be useful in our approaches to critical pedagogy." ("Dialogue and Critique," 201-202)

[31] Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 300.

[32] Campbell, *Word Against Powers*, 61.

[33] Ibid., 62.

[34] Ibid.

and totalitarianism that Yarbrough identifies as the logical outcomes of the belief that a shared language and culture are needed to communicate.[35] Yarbrough argues that "in societies that function culturally (or multiculturally) the primary rhetorical motive is to gain and retain 'power'…one's ability to exert coercive force over others."[36] He goes on, "If one believes that others believe that the source of truth, meaning, value and power resides in the possession or control of an *a priori* conceptual scheme, then it becomes extremely difficult to argue outside that scheme, since, as one knows, whatever one says will be heard or read in terms of the scheme."[37] As Campbell notes, on the cross Jesus refused to respond to powers on their own violent terms, refused to take the way of domination.[38] Instead, Jesus forgives and in that moment rejects the way of cultural-linguistic domination that seeks "victory over others."[39] The other is no longer "something you must change in order to satisfy needs you already have," someone to gain victory over through subsuming them into an already existing system but "someone you need in order to change yourself- in order to alter your discursive habits to accommodate those conditions which, without the others' difference from yourself, you would not know were, or could be, affecting your life."[40] Campbell argues that the purpose of Jesus's resistance is to "set people free from their captivity and complicity with the powers," and on the cross those powers are "disarmed."[41] The cross then is the space in which the results of beliefs in conventionalism are exposed as leading only to an end of violence. The cross offers that such systems can be "finished" and that in their

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[35] Yarbrough, *After Rhetoric*, 5.
[36] Ibid., 70.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Campbell, 59.
[39] Ibid., 61.
[40] Yarbourgh, *After*, 77.
[41] Campbell, 62, 63.

place new beliefs about how encounter with difference occur holds the potential for the eschatological inbreaking of new ground that is disallowed in closed fields of conventionalist schemes.

The violence of being not heard in the immediate moment, therefore, is not "the last word in human history" because God makes "an end to deception, injustice, and violence" and offers hope for a new space.[42] In the image of apocalypse found in Revelation, the throne, a symbol of power and potential closure is present but on the throne is the "sacrificed Lamb" who "took violence upon himself in order to conquer the enmity and embrace the enemy."[43] This image of the superaddressee is not a context of a "nice God" who is a "figment of liberal imagination, a projection onto the sky of the inability to give up cherished illusions about goodness, freedom, and the rationality of social actors."[44] It is a context in which God makes space, at times through violence against those who have become "beasts and false prophets," for communication, in the sense Davidson describes, to occur.[45] The making of this space is an eschatological act of God alone for as Volf notes, "Christians are not to take up their swords and gather under the banner of the Rider on the white horse, but to take up their crosses and follow the crucified Messiah."[46] Volf's description offers a more active "principle of hope" arising out of the work of a judging God. This judgment and clearing of reified prior theories offers hope that in the encounter with another on the inventive scene, there is potential for the inbreaking of this eschatological context of judgment to create space for passing theories to align, for understanding to occur. Bakhtin's proposal of a distant context in

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[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid., 300.
[44] Ibid., 298.
[45] Ibid., 297.
[46] Ibid., 302.

light of Volf's description of an eschatological future offers preachers hope that their attempts at communicative encounters on the inventive scene will not ultimately lack response.

Davidson's emphasis on the ability of communicative encounters to occur without a priori schemes and Yarbrough's interpretation of Davidson's work as the making of new discursive ground serves to focus homiletic's interpretive lens on the social and spatial dynamics of the inventive scene. Bakhtin's superaddressee read through the lens of Volf offers homiletics a distant eschatological hope that even if communicative encounters on the scene of sermon invention immediately fail, there is a space in which preachers have been truly heard. This spatial focus takes on an eschatological character with Volf's image of creation moving towards an open play of difference that is never constricted within a closed circle. With this foundation, we now turn to a theologically robust term to carry these concepts towards ultimately a pedagogical implementation in the preaching classroom: *kairos*.

Kairos

In 1987, James Kinnevey noted that the term *kairos*, a concept dominant in sophistic thought, had dropped out of contemporary rhetorical discussion.[47] Tracing the term back to the seventh century B.C.E., Kinnevey noted its historical development by such thinkers as Pythagoras and Antiphon. The sophist Gorgias based his entire epistemological system on the concept, which Kinnevey argues prompted Plato's attempt

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[47] James L. Kinneavy, "Kairos: A Neglected Concept in Classical Rhetoric," in Jean Dietz Moss, *Rhetoric and Praxis: The Contribution of Classical Rhetoric to Practical Reasoning* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1986), 80.

at a more "stable" understanding of the world.[48] Since antiquity, however, the concept of

kairos has been little more than a rhetorical footnote, due in large part to Aristotle's

dominance in the tradition. Kinnevey not only revived interest in the classical notion of

kairos but also began to acknowledge, as would be done more and more by scholars

responding to his work, its complex dimensions and meanings. Since Kinnevey's call for

renewed interest in what he called a "neglected" concept, there has been an upswing in

rhetorical work done on *kairos*, a term that "resists formalization and mastery."[49] In a

later interview, Kinnevey would note, "It's a term that has no single translation in any

major modern language. That's how I would define it."[50] Kinnevey describes the two

basic meanings of kairos as "the principle of right timing and the principle of a proper

measure."[51] Often regarded as "good timing" or "right measure," *kairos* has a

significantly broader array of meanings that range into the spatial, ethical and somatic.[52]

New approaches move beyond Kinnevey's "accommodation model" of *kairos*,

which focused on how a rhetor adapts to the situation at hand. According to Debra

Hawhee, emerging theories reject a definition "grounded primarily in rationality and

reasoned principles wherein the rhetor/subject analyzes or produces rhetoric as

situation/object."[53] These theories challenge traditional understandings of agency in the

rhetorical process.

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[48] Ibid, 81.

[49] Thomas Rickert, "Invention in the Wild: Locating Kairos in Space-Time," in *The Locations of Composition*, ed.. Chris Keller and Christian Weisser (Albany, NY: State 'University of New York Press, 2007), 71.

[50] R. Thompson, "Kairos Revisited: An Interview with James Kinneavy," *Rhetoric Review* 19 (2000): 76.

[51] Ibid., 85.

[52] Debra Hawhee, *Bodily Arts: Rhetoric and Athletics in Ancient Greece* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004), 66; Charles Eric White, *Kaironomia: On the Will-to-Invent* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 13.

[53] Hawhee, 68.

Hawhee reenvisions *kairos* in an attempt to get beyond what she identifies as two traditional models of invention that either emphasize the process of discovery (objective) or the process of creation (subjective).[54] Building on the work of postmodern theories that have questioned subjectivity, Hawhee offers a concept of invention in the *middle voice*. This "invention-in-the-middle" falls "between the active and the passive" in imagining the subject as that which comes *out of* a rhetorical situation.[55] Thus, invention-in-the-middle becomes "I invent and am invented by myself and others."[56] *Kairos*, then, marks what Hawhee terms a space-time in which a "pro-visional subject" arises to work on and be worked on by the situation. There is a continual movement, a flow of discursive moments by which subjects are formed and reformed in the in-between.

Thomas Rickert builds on Hawhee's attempt at a "posthuman" understanding by redefining *kairos* from a spatial perspective.[57] Rickert argues that *kairos* "is a concept integral for understanding posthuman subjectivity as radically dispersed, suggesting further that invention itself is an emergent process extending far beyond the bounds of an autonomous, willing subject."[58] Rickert argues that this spatial meaning of *kairos* was

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[54] Debra Hawhee "Kairotic encounters" in Janet Atwill and Janice M. Lauer. *Perspectives on Rhetorical Invention* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2002), 16.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid., 17.

[57] For more on posthuman, see *JAC* 20, no. 4 (2000); Muckleberry and Hawhee consider "posthumanism as an attempt to engage humans as distributed processes rather than as discrete entities. In doing so, we follow Judith Halberstam and Ira Livingston, who write that posthumanism "emerge[s] at nodes where bodies, bodies of discourse, and discourses of bodies intersect to foreclose any easy distinction between actor and stage, between sender/receiver, channel, code, message, context". (768) See "Posthuman Rhetorics: 'It's the Future, Pikul,'" *JAC* 20 (2000), 767-774. See also Katherine N. Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999). Hayles notes, "No longer is human will seen as the source from which emanates mastery necessary to dominate and control the environment. Rather, the distributed cognition of the emergent human correlates with- in Bateson's phrase, becomes a metaphor for- the distributed cognitive system as a whole, in which 'thinking' is done by both human and nonhuman actors." (290). See also Brent Waters, *From Human to Posthuman: Christian Theology and Technology in a Postmodern World* (Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2006); Michael W. Delashmutt, "Perspectives on Techno-science and Human Nature," *Zygon* 41, no. 2 (2006): 267-287.

[58] Rickert, "Invention," 72.

prior to the now standard temporal signification by pointing to its translation as "the

deadliest spot" that an arrow can find on the body in the *Iliad*.[59] This notion of a

particular place has also been described by Onians as "a penetrable opening, an

aperture…" that Greek archers would aim for in targeting practice.[60] Hawhee emphasizes

that kairos as opening may not "lie out there in circulating discourses or on the body of a

foe."[61] Instead, the rhetor opens *herself* up to an "exchange," an understanding that

nuances *kairos* as "immanent, embodied and nonrational."[62] Combining this ancient

conception of kairotic *space* with the work of contemporary scholars (Untersteiner,

Miller, Vitanza), Rickert is able to arrive at a sense of *kairos* as that which does

something *to us*.[63] Understanding *kairos* without the autonomous subject "suggests a kind

of invention less attuned to advantage or success *over* an audience than working with

what an audience brings forth."[64] This moves away from the traditional notion that

invention is something a subject does to an understanding of complex "situational

environs" that themselves become agents.[65]

     This understanding of *kairos* focuses on the dispersed spatial elements at work in

the inventive process. It emphasizes openings and the potential for new ground. In this

view of the inventive scene, beginning (temporal) and beginnings (ontological) become

inseparable (both/and instead of either/or) elements. Space becomes the habitat for both

the temporal and ontological. Thus, the concept of *kairos* begins to give preachers the

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[59] See also White, 13.
[60] Rickert, "Invention," 73.
[61] Hawhee, *Bodily Arts*, 71.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Rickert, "Invention" 81; see Mario Untersteiner, *The Sophists*, tr. Kathleen Freeman (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1954); Bernard Miller, "Heidegger and the Georgian *Kairos*," in *Visions of Rhetoric*, ed. Charles W. Kneupper (Arlington, TX: RSA, 1987); Victor Vitanza, *Negation, Subjectivity, and the History of Rhetoric* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997).
[64] Rickert, "Invention," 82.
[65] Ibid., 84.

critical language necessary to explore the dispersed agency at work in their particular scenes of sermon invention. The question turns from "When did the sermon begin?" to "In what space did the sermon find its opening?" Such an inquiry offers the potential to consider God's eschatological activity on the scene.

Rehabilitating the Scene: Eschatological Unfinalizability[66]

Tillich and Kairos

Paul Tillich, one of the scholars Kinnevay credits with revitalizing *kairos* in contemporary scholarship, used this New Testament term to describe the inbreaking of the central manifestation of the Kingdom of God.[67] The "great *kairos*," the moment that became the center of history in the coming of Christ to this world, is "again and again re-experienced by relative "kairoi," in which the kingdom of God manifests itself in a particular breakthrough…"[68] Tillich elsewhere describes these *kairoi* as experiences of

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[66] Unfinalizability also serves as a link back to incarnation and embodiment. Haynes notes, "one of the primary values of Bakhtin's notion of unfinalizability lies in his assertion that a person is fully creative only in art. For Bakhtin, this meant that only the embodied human being – a person who breathes, moves, sees, hears, remembers, loves, and understands – could create." Haynes, 123.

[67] For Tillich, *kairos* plays a significant role in his broader work, a role outlined in "Kairos and Logos." In this work, Tillich identifies *logos* thinking as that which emphasizes timelessness and stasis. *Kairos* thinking instead focused on the "actual situation," the realities of change and movement. *Kairos* is also an important term in what Richard Grigg terms Tillich's "Ontologized Eschatology." (Richard Grigg, "Tillich's "Ontologized Eschatology"" in Gert Hummel, ed., *New Creation or Eternal Now*). Developing a systematic eschatology is out of the scope of this project but it is important to note that here we are rather liberally borrowing Tillich's emphasis on kairotic moments and lifting it out of the context of Tillich's understanding of historical consciousness. For more see Jean Richard, "The Roots of Tillich's Eschatology," in Hummel, ed., *New Creation*, 34ff. Dale Sullivan traces the use of *kairos* in the New Testament to mean "an opportune time for something to occur, that there are special times determined by God, shown by God, and filled with God." Sullivan, "Kairos and the Rhetoric of Belief." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 8 (1992), 321. These moments of divine inbreaking, which operate beyond Aristotle's classification of *kairos* as a *techne*, point to moments of divine ripeness. Note the call in 2 Timothy 4:2 to be prepared in *eukairos*. For more see Phillip Sipiora, "*Kairos*: The Rhetoric of Time and Timing in the New Testament" in Phillip Sipiora, James S. Baumlin *Rhetoric and Kairos: Essays in History, Theory, and Praxis* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2002), 114-127.

[68] Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 3:370.

"fulfilled time, the moment of time which is invaded by eternity."[69] These moments when eternity and time intersect have occurred again and again throughout history, while always standing "under the criterion and the relation of the source of power to that which is nourished by the same power."[70]

Tillich notes that awareness of this inbreaking is a matter of "vision," not analysis or calculation. Engagement and participation with this "coming of the eternal within time" is not a passive, disinterested reception but instead requires "involved experience," active anticipation of inbreaking "disturbance."[71] Living with a sense of kairos for Tillich "means to wait upon the invasion of the eternal and to act accordingly, not to wait and act as though the eternal were a fixed quantity which could be introduced into time."[72] Rejecting historical narratives of progress as well as utopian idealism, Tillich argues that God and humanity meet in a *kairos* in which humanity can "grasp hold of what God makes possible."[73] Sauter argues that this encounter with kairos "brings something into being that is not the result of previous happenings."[74] God breaks into history and brings a meaning that shapes and orders time itself, an event that "by the power of the Kingdom of God" changes history.[75]

Volf's claim that eschatological hope has a social component shapes our understanding of Tillich's kairotic moments as having a social character. Volf describes a key aspect of the eschatological transition as "a social event between human beings, more

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[69] Tillich, *The Religious Situation*, http://www.religion-online.org/showchapter.asp?title=376&C=44

[70] Ibid.

[71] Sauter, "What Dare We Hope?" 93; John Jesse Carey, *Kairos and Logos: Studies in the Roots and Implications of Tillich's Theology* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984), 218; also see Tillich, *Systematic* 3:371.

[72] Tillich, *Religious Situation*

[73] Sauter, 94.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Tillich, *Systematic*, 3:371.

precisely, a divine act toward human beings which is also a social event between them."[76] Thus, the theological notion of waiting upon, expecting, pursuing the kairos of God encourages an active, embodied encounter with another, an encounter with *difference.*

Continually struggling against systems (notably Saussure) that strip the possibility of difference from the world, Bakhtin was also interested in the prospect of "freedom, openness, real innovation, and creativity."[77] Alan Jacobs has argued that Bakthin's notion of *unfinalizability*, the "conviction that the world is…an open place," means that "any attempt to understand them [people] in light of a prefabricated category -even one so broad as "humanity"- sets limits to their potential development."[78] In Bakhtin's thought, an(other) cannot be subsumed within an *a priori* category, nor can a text have no opportunity to reshape the genre in which it exists. As Nikulin puts it, "each time a person enters into communication with other voices she is capable of revealing herself anew" so that "there can be no rigid pre-established system of relations or thoughts which fully determine or represent that person."[79] A person resists *full comprehension*, refuses to be reduced to any particular utterance. This reimagining of the scene of sermon invention as a site of *unfinalizibility* on its way toward the eschatological hope of an "*open* play of difference in plenitude, innocence and love" opens up the potential for sacred kairotic moments of making new ground. Located in the possibility of *difference* is

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[76] Miroslav Volf, "The Final Reconciliation: Reflections on a Social Dimension of the Eschatological Transition," *Modern Theology* 16, no. 1 (2000): 93.

[77] Alan Jacobs, "Bakthin and the Hermenuetics of Love," in Susan M. Felch and Paul J. Contino. *Bakhtin and Religion: A Feeling for Faith* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2001), 38.

[78] Ibid., 25-46; Morson and Emerson, 36; As Volf reminds us, this judgment does not always fit the vision of a safe, equal exchange. Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), 296, 279. As Yarbrough puts it, "The consequences of their believing falsely despite all contrary evidence may alter the situation to the extent that we may need to use actual force to demonstrate to them that their beliefs are false or to prevent them from acting upon their false beliefs." Yarbrough, *After Rhetoric*, 33; see also Gary Saul Morson, "Strange Synchronies and Surplus Possibilities: Bakhtin on Time," *Slavic Review* 52, no. 3 (Autumn, 1993): 482.

[79] D. V. Nikulin, *On dialogue* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006), 58.

the potential for sacred inbreaking, for God to make space for *production*. Michel de Certeau could be speaking of such kairotic moments when he speaks of "a new dimension or 'spaces' open to our enunciation and practice: an unveiling which relates to our situation; a discovering which opens a future; an experience made possible by an event, but never identical with a past, with a doctrine or with a law."[80]

In *unfinalizable* space unconstrained by the constraints of language and hermeneutics addressed in chapter three, eschatological inbreaking can occur, which creates *new* space that in turn radically reshapes and reorients the environment itself (which is also actively participating in the process). According to theologian Clark Pinnock, "God has real relationships with humans and lets them share in shaping the open future" so that "we face possibilities, not just forgone conclusions."[81]

In summary, I am proposing an image of the inventive scene as a kairotic space in which dispersed agencies are at work giving rise to the pro-visional subject of the preacher. This pro-visional subject remains an active agent, who instead of creating the kairotic space-time, becomes one who enters and is entered by it. In Christian proclamation, this active space can be described as the work of God eschatologically leading the preacher towards encounters with unfinalizable difference. These far from random encounters, judged under the unfinalizable act of the incarnation leading to the cross and realized in the resurrection, create the potential for new space, for new ground to be made. After such a transformative encounter, the preacher stands as one agent among many in the chains of invention, but as the particular agent who speaks out of

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[80] Michel de Certeau, "How is Christianity Thinkable Today?" in Graham Ward, *The Postmodern God: A Theological Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 147.

[81] Clark H. Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover: A Theology of God's Openness*. (Carlisle, Cumbria, UK: Paternoster Press, 2001), 154-5.

new, open (but not empty or uncontested) space. This is far from a neck-up image of the inventive scene, as it requires the preacher to critically consider and engage the multiple agencies at work in the kairotic space-time (environment, Scripture, other bodies, the very scene itself) while in the process being changed (converted) by such encounters.

A Pedagogy of Charity

If such a re-description of the scene of invention is accepted, what pedagogical implications might it have for the homiletic classroom? I will specifically focus on the possibility of an eschatological encounter with hopeful difference as the encounter with an(other) human being.[82]

> Only love can see and represent the inner freedom of an object …. The absolute unconsumability of the object is revealed only to love; love leaves it whole and situated outside of itself and side-by-side with itself (or behind). Love fondles and caresses borders; borders take on a new significance. Love does not speak about an object in its absence, but speaks about it with the object itself.[83]

> I do think that the rejection of certain kinds of relativism does make a difference about how we deal with people from different cultures, backgrounds, and periods. Instead of thinking of these things as sort of blocks that are fixed one way or another, we might think of them as just variance which we understand in terms of what we share and see ourselves as sharing. Understanding other cultures is no different from understanding our next door neighbor, except in degree. It's not a difference of kind. In both cases—understanding a different culture or understanding a neighbor—the principle of charity is essential to yielding the best interpretation.[84]

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[82] Other possibilities include pedagogies that seek to treat encounters with scriptural difference or environmental difference.

[83] A translation of an excerpt from Bakhtin's "From Draft Exercise Notebooks" yet to be fully published in English. This translation is found in Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan, "Between the Face and the Voice: Bakhtin Meets Levinas," *Continental Philosophy Review* 41, no. 1 (2008): 46; Erdinast-Vulcan compares Bahktin's concern for alterity with that of Emmanuel Levinas: "Bakhtin, like Levinas, offers a concept of love which retains the alterity of the beloved, and does not seek to assimilate it or to contain its openness into the future." (46).

[84] Thomas Kent, "Language Philosophy, Writing, and Reading: A Conversation with Donald Davidson," *Journal of Advanced Composition.* 13, no. 1 (1993): 1-20. http://www.jacweb.org/Archived_volumes/Text_articles/V13_I1_Kent_Davidson.htm | Feb 16 2010

In the homiletic classroom, one possible implication of the eschatological character of the inventive scene is a "pedagogy of charity."[85] Kevin Porter coined this phrase in attempting to apply the work of Donald Davidson to composition pedagogy. For Porter, a pedagogy of charity stands in stark opposition to the normative pedagogical impetus to shut down dialogic possibilities by "assigning labels and making corrections."[86] This all too common "pedagogy of severity" focuses on grammar, mechanics, improper word usage and misuse of symbols.[87] Mainly focused on "faults and problems," this kind of teaching generally stifles feedback by bringing student work under the governance of a rigid scheme.[88] For example, a visiting instructor recently evaluated a sermon in class by emphatically stating the rule that "a sermon cannot have two endings." There was no possibility that this rule could be affected by the actual discourse of the sermon. Instead, it was etched on a chalkboard somewhere as a model of how "sermons work."[89]

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[85] Kevin J. Porter, "A Pedagogy of Charity: Donald Davidson and the Student-Negotiated Composition Classroom," *College Composition and Communication.* 52, no. 4 (2001). Davidson says in an interview with Thomas Kent, "So again, the word *charity* is a misnomer because it's not a matter of being kind to people; it's the condition for understanding them at all. Thus, charity has two features: one is that you can't understand people if you don't see them as sharing a world with you; the other is that you can't understand people if you don't see them as logical in the way that you are—up to a point, of course." Kent, "Language, Philosophy"

[86] Porter, 576; Davidson writes "Charity is forced on us, whether we like it or not, if we want to understand others, we must count them right in most matters." "On the Very Idea of Conceptual Scheme," in *Inquires into Truth*, 197.

[87] Porter, 574.

[88] Porter's pedagogy of severity resembles what Kay Halasek terms a pedagogy of proficiency. Without a concurrent emphasis on productivity, Halasek argues that proficiency is "domesticating" and leads students to complacency. See Kay Halasek, *A Pedagogy of Possibility: Bakhtinian Perspectives on Composition Studies* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1999), 184.

[89] In this example, the situation was constrained by "language prior to…actual discourse." Yarbrough, *After Rhetoric*, 231; Bakhtin was also wary of these type of pre-construed rules, "one cannot speak of any kind of moral, ethical norms, of any ought with a determinate content. The ought does not have any determinate content; it does not have a specifically theoretical content…no theoretical proposition contains in its content the moment of the ought, nor is grounded by the ought." Bakhtin, "Towards a Philosophy of the Act", 5.

Such pedagogy assumes that there is a preexisting *a priori* scheme to which sermons should conform. The visiting professor did not ask the preacher why he had chosen to have two endings, or what he thought it contributed to the sermon. There was no room for continuing the dialogue. Even worse, pedagogies of severity can subsume students themselves under interpretive schemes based upon cultural identity. When this occurs, conversations about student sermons come to a screeching halt, for how can a "conservative evangelical" speak in a language that a "process theologian" would understand? Their languages are seen as incommensurable, a belief that reduces the "inner infinity" of another and allows an alibi to escape what Bakhtin terms answerability.[90]

Pedagogies of severity assume that the ground of discourse already exists, and that while there may be substantial potential for play and creativity on this ground, there is no hope to escape from it. In introductory preaching classes, these pedagogies come armed and ready to subsume students within familiar – deductive, inductive, conservative, liberal, revivalist, meditative, emerging, etc. language games. These are supposed to be well-established fields that quickly subsume difference by holding students to the various rules of those fields, i.e. a sermon can't have two endings. Stay within those rules and receive an A, resist those rules and still receive a high grade. Resistance often shows acknowledgement of the field's power.[91] Do not at all costs, however, attempt to discard the rules of the fields. Such pedagogies lack, in Porter's language, charity.

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[90] Erdinast-Vulcan, 47.
[91] John McClure, "From Resistance to Jubilee: Prophetic Preaching and the Testimony of Love," available at "http://www.yale.edu/ism/colloq_journal/vol2/mcclure1.html"

Charity, for Donald Davidson, is a pre-condition to communication.[92] It is the assumption that both parties must share about the other party – that he or she is a rational being with mostly true beliefs. Such an approach to another does not mean that one has to accept everything the other says as true or correct. Instead, it simply means that you believe that *most* of their beliefs are true *and* that the only way to find out *which ones* of theirs (and of yours) are true is by further communication. A pedagogy built on such a notion, according to Porter, does not eradicate the difference between teachers and students, but instead acknowledges that teachers *can* learn things and can of course be wrong.[93] It acknowledges that all participants in the classroom are *others* who cannot be categorized *in toto* under one or a set of conceptual schemes.[94]

This way of regarding others holds open the possibility of students encountering true *difference* that will no longer be the obstacle preventing, *but instead* the motivator that encourages further encounters. When the instructor encountered two endings to this

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[92] Kevin Mills has made a similar claim, "Charity is the foundation of interpretation, the condition of its possibility. (172)" Mills derives his claim from Bakhtin and grounds it in the work of the Apostle Paul, "Language, for Paul, is encounter with the other; locution is interlocution. Charity is the foundation of interpretation, the condition of possibility." It is love which "turns language away from structure." (6) See Kevin Mills *Justifying Language: Paul and Contemporary Literary Theory* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 172.

[93] Porter, 588; As Kent puts it, "the instructor would treat the student's writing with the same regard as she would treat a colleague's writing; that is, she would collaborate with the student in order to help the student create a more persuasive discourse within the disciplinary conversation where both instructor and student work." (*Paralogic*, 50); Ede notes her recognition that "students' resistance to various readings and assignments-and, sometimes, to the general project of theory itself- is an opportunity for *my* learning, and that I can use this resistance in productive ways in my teaching if my students and I can develop a classroom culture where students feel that they can safely articulate it." Ede, *Situating*, 210.

[94] In such an ethic, we cannot, as Yarbrough has reminded us, teach as if cultural-linguistic communities do not exist. Beliefs have real effects in the world and beliefs that professors and students have about the existence of and their place in such communities have a real effect on the preaching classroom. Those beliefs and effects serve as continual restraints on the inventive scene. We can, however, offer the potential of believing in a different way, of engaging others in the classroom; Luca D'Isanto also arrives at this conclusion from a alternative tradition in her introduction to Vattimo's *Belief*, "if charity is understood in the light of kenosis, the self-exhaustion of God, then it constitutes the most sublime act of abandonment for the sake of the other. To participate in the hermeneutic experience, then, might mean to welcome the other in the name of the dialogical principle of charity, that is, by listening to the non-violent reasons of the other." Luca D'Isanto, Introduction in Gianni Vattimo, *Belief /Gianni Vattimo*. (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1999), 14.

particular sermon, a pedagogy of charity would have urged her to explore the conditions

and circumstances that contributed to this preacher using two endings. She would be

interested to first understand *why* the preacher used two endings in his or her sermon and

what the preacher expected two endings to accomplish.[95] This doesn't necessarily mean

giving up her view that two endings is damaging (though it does mean giving up the

belief that not having two endings is an *a priori* rule of homiletics) to the logical flow of

a sermon, but simply holding off on disagreeing with the preacher's efforts until she

understood what (and why) the preacher was attempting. During this interchange, she

would have found her prior theory shifting, *even if she ended up holding a similar version

of it,* because her discursive ground would have grown as she became affected by the

conditions and circumstances the preacher shared.[96] She could have encountered a part of

this one shared world she had not yet experienced, and this would have had the potential

of leading to a new passing theory that the teacher and preacher could have shared, if

only for that teaching moment. She may have found that answers to questions she had

thought closed were re-opened in dramatic ways, or that such questions were closed for

very good reasons.

This pedagogy nurtures a sense of Bakhtin's *unfinalizibility*, the openness and

potential of *newness*, the internal infinity of another. Erdinast-Vulcan explains that

Bakhtin (in what Erdinast-Vulcan called a prefiguration of Levinas) distinguished

between the image and the face. An image "closes off the subject and denies it the gift of

the future," for an image, a product of "definition from without" is that which is finalized

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[95] Bakthin, *Towards*, 13.
[96] "Others may very well be wrong about some of the things they say, but unless we believe them initially, we will never know what it is about the way things are that prevented us from predicting their errors." Yarbrough, *After Rhetoric*, 7.

and ready-made.[97] Bakhtin instead proposes that it is the face which speaks. Erdinast-Vulcan argues that "it is the speaking face of the other rather than his or her reified image which elicits the ethical response and calls for the 'answerability' of the subject."[98] A pedagogy of charity refuses to reduce the face to an image, rejects any system that finalizes another, and instead recognizes the gift of an open future found in the speaking face.

When these critical moments of engaging the speaking face of another are understood as *the making of new ground*, the pedagogical scene radically shifts. As Yarbrough notes:

> The motive to invent now differs from both the traditional heuristic motive of seeking a previously determined, socially common ground from which to manipulate the other toward an end you have previously determined, and from the postmodern, heuretic motive to randomly shake up the common ground in order to produce new ground which, if luck is with you, might enable you to articulate some news you would not otherwise be able to. In the traditional view, the other is something you must change in order to satisfy the needs you already have. In the postmodern view, the other is just a resistance to your altering the linguistic prison that traps you.[99]

In the view I have prescribed, following Davidson and others, however, an(other) is *needed* for communication to occur. Pedagogically interactive moments in the classroom are not the chance for students to align their theories and practices of preaching with the models (or deconstruct such models) that already exist in a closed field. These critical moments should become opportunities for kairotic encounters that *make new ground*. Such moments, as Yarbrough notes, are "not something added from time to time to an otherwise stable field of play."[100] Instead, "making ground *is* the process of discourse"

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[97] Erdinast-Vulcan, 47.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid., 77.
[100] Ibid, 78.

itself.[101]

Pedagogies of charity are inevitably pedagogies of risk. They allow the exploration of sacred moments, nurture theological descriptions and critique of experiences *and* allow the outcome of those reflections to reshape the pedagogy itself. They intentionally remain *unfinaliziable* by recognizing the potential for divine inbreaking, and refuse acceptance to conventions that subsume the possibility of difference. Notions such as "you couldn't preach this in a [insert placemarker here, i.e, Baptist, reformed, charismatic] church" shift to "what will you say to these people in this room who you believe to be rational people with mostly true although different beliefs?" Charitable pedagogy demands the replacement of "placeless" and abstract pictures of the scene of invention with concrete, agential and social scenes in which the critically reflective cameras are panning *outwards*. I will now attempt to articulate a particular practice for the preaching classroom based on a pedagogy of charity.

Setting the Pedagogical Ethos: Teacher as Midwife

While there has no been lack of robust metaphors suggested to describe the preacher in homiletic literature, there has been a relative dearth of images prescribed for the teacher of preaching. Such metaphors could offer a particular but flexible *worldview* that helps inform and guide the teacher of preaching as she engages students on the issues of sermon invention. I suggest that the practice I will describe below will help students of preaching critically engage the unfinalizability of the invention process in the classroom, and that it would most effectively function in a pedagogical environment of charity in which the teacher understands his or her role in a certain way. Thus, I first turn to the

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[101] Ibid.

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metaphor of midwife as a potential governing image to assist teachers of preaching in rethinking their own role. This image offers the potential to open up classrooms to practices that recognize and engage eschatological unfinalizability.

Ryder, Abordonado, Heifferon and Roen offer the metaphor of midwife for the writing teacher in an attempt to bridge dichotomies in the field of rhetoric, especially the divide between the scholar of rhetoric who develops theories and the composition teacher who focuses on "practical" questions.[102] In a striking move, Ryder et al. compare this relationship with the divide between the midwife and medical doctor that arose in the seventeenth century. In that era, only men were allowed to enroll in "speculative" medical training while midwives acquired knowledge mainly by apprenticeship. Women's knowledge, therefore, was assumed to remain "at the level of craft" while the advanced theoretical training of male doctors was viewed as more prestigious.[103] Ryder et al argue that this hierarchy still continues today.

Obstetricians claim to be better trained for high-risk pregnancies due to their long years of formal education. Midwives, however, "distrust how obstetricians' training may lead them to pathologize 'normal' births."[104] For example, the authors point to a 1985 edition of *Williams' Obstetrics* in which only twenty of eleven hundred pages refer to a normal birth, whereas the remainder deals with abnormalities. Such a focus has made doctors (much needed) experts at abnormal births, but midwives claim it has blinded these doctors to normal, healthy deliveries. The authors quote Sullivan and Weitz: "The midwife sees the passage of the baby by the birth canal as a healthy, positive experience

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[102] Phyllis Mentzell Ryder, et alii, "Multivocal Midwife: The Writing Teacher as Rhetor," in Laura Gray-Rosendale and Sibylle Gruber, *Alternative Rhetorics: Challenges to the Rhetorical Tradition* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2001), 35.
[103] Ibid., 36.
[104] Ibid.

that is good for both the mother and the baby…The physician sees…a dangerous passage…full of pitfalls."[105]

Midwives see doctors as attempting to "dominate" birth as "experts," a move that robs the mother of agency in the process of labor. Instead, midwives use alternative language to understand birth. Women are not referred to as "patients," and they do not "deliver babies." Instead midwives see themselves as "'catching' a baby that the *woman* has 'delivered.'"[106] Ryder, et al conclude that the midwife metaphor positions teachers of writing as "facilitators" rather than as those who control the process of writing.[107] The teacher "trusts" the student and in a position similar to that of Porter's pedagogy of charity, considers knowledge to be co-constructed in a "dialogic relationship with the teacher and with other students."[108]

Students of preaching certainly need teachers with homiletic expertise in order to deal with "abnormal" processes of invention that could potentially do violence to listeners. When such expertise, however, leads a teacher towards viewing every inventive process as a potentially "dangerous passage" that is "full of pitfalls," the teacher is in danger of succumbing to the temptation to "dominate." Either by pre-determined rules or procedures that the student must follow to compose a sermon, or by cultural determinations that constrict the student's inventive scene, the teacher can limit the potential of the inventive act.

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[105] quotes in Ibid., 36.

[106] Ibid., 42.

[107] The midwife metaphor has striking similarities to Pinnock's description of God, "The open view of God stresses qualities of generosity, sensitivity and vulnerability more than power and control. It allows us to think about God as taking risks." Pinnock, "Systematic," 125. also note Psalm 22:9-10, "You drew me out of the womb; you entrusted me to my mother's breasts; placed me on your lap from my birth, from my mother's womb you have been my God." also Isaiah 66:9, "Shall I open the womb and not deliver? says the Lord; shall I, the one who delivers, shut the womb? says your God." (NSRV)

[108] Ryder, et al, 45.

By contrast, Ryder et al describe the midwife as one who does not take on the role of expert but "collaborates with the pregnant woman and the power of nature."[109] They do not seek to "manage" but to "nourish" a birth, remaining in "awe of the power of creation."[110] The midwife listens to the woman giving birth who listens to her own body in choosing the right position for delivery. This description offers teachers of preaching a metaphor that respects the unfinalizibility in students and in the classroom itself. It allows teachers to drop the burden of domination and critically stand in awe of sermon creation. Teachers can use their knowledge to guide and nourish, instead of to control and delineate. The inventive process becomes one of possibility and potential instead of an opportunity laden with risk for "abnormal" failure. While failure will occur from time to time and teachers must use their skill and knowledge to address it, such occurrences become the exception instead of the rule. When such a metaphor becomes a force in the creation of the pedagogical environment, it can open up the classroom to practices based in charity that recognize the unfinalizibility of the inventive scene.

One such practice would be an intentionally aleatory strategy of sermon invention that would operate alongside more standard methods. As traced in chapter three, there have been prominent views about the location of production and the role of language/culture that have served as finalizing forces that *removed possibility* from the temporal moment. Time is robbed of the potential of forging newness, of locating *unfinalizibility* in the "very prose of everyday life."[111] Victor Vitanza has described this closing of potentials as a desire for stability or stasis. Beginning with the dualism of the ideal (Plato) and the actual (Aristotle), Western thought has tended to exclude what he

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[109] Ibid., 42.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Quoted in Morson and Emerson, 40.

calls the "third term." More and more, however, stasis is moving to what he (following Baudrillard) terms "metastasis," so that "not only are the conditions of rhetorical invention changing, but the very foundations of invention - stasis theory - are being changed and, if not imploded, then dispersed."[112] This destabilization opens the way towards a thirdpsace or space of chance that Vitanza names "the writing of the accident."[113] Chance means "unaccountable hazard, not accountable probability," an "accidental" way towards breaking down "binary differences."[114]

Vitanza points to one possible realization of this thirdspace in what he terms "anagrammatic writing."[115] He begins, "I have discovered a wonderful Invention-Discovery (Difference) Machine on the Web. It is Internet Anagram Server/I, Rearrangement Servant."[116] Such a machine keeps the grammatical (which Vitanza describes as dangerous) at bay by stripping the speaking subject of control over language. Language becomes "our mad cow dis-ease (alogoi), turning itself into a crystal, growing in crystal form, and making an indiscriminate sponge of our gray matter and its memories. A sponge that would soak up everything in its violation of Platonic-Aristotelian rules of reasoning."[117] Vitanza relates typing his name into this machine and is amazed by what he encountered. It became a "crash in accidents," a giving over of thought and an entry into what has been forbidden.[118]

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[112] Victor Vitanza, "From Heuristic to Aleatory Procedures; or, Towards 'Writing the Accident'," in *Inventing a Discipline: Rhetoric Scholarship in Honor of Richard E. Young*, ed. Maureen Daly Goggin. (Urbana, IL: NCTE, 2000), 188.

[113] Ibid.

[114] Ibid. 187.

[115] Ibid., 199.

[116] Ibid. 201.

[117] Ibid, 200.

[118] Ibid., 202.

Perhaps such an aleatory practice could begin to loosen up the inventive scene by disrupting the subject, exiting binaries and entering a "general economy of excess."[119] This could widen the inventive scene by highlighting its unfinalizable potential, its continuing slipping out of drives towards stasis. There are, however, significant problems with aleatory practices such as Vitanza and Gregory Ulmer describe. Yarbrough argues that Ulmer's method (or antimethod) is "insufficient, for it reduces thought to a solipsistic activity and reduces persuasion to pure chance."[120] He continues, "Ulmer and Derrida retain the view that language *constitutes* objects of discourse, in the sense of 'setting up' or 'establishing' them, as we think of a law establishing an institution."[121] When language is further considered unable to "ultimately 'represent' reality," the result is that "we can produce novelty only when we randomly shake up the linguistic system, like so many shaman's bones, and hope that what falls out somehow fits with us."[122] In later work, Yarbrough notes the irony of Ulmer's claim that a participant in this random invention needs a further machine, a "sorting device" to help the novice learner understand what is relevant after the aleatory practice.[123]

Yarbrough admits that the pedagogical implications of Vitanza's proposals that offer "counter-games" to the reigning systems of knowledge and logic in an attempt to resist totality could perhaps "come in handy."[124] Ultimately, however, Vitanza's proposal of "drifting" among language games, especially those which are "disallowed," depend on

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[119] Ibid., 189.
[120] Yarbrough, *After Rhetoric*, 76.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Yarbrough, *Inventive*, 88.
[124] Yarbrough, *After Rhetoric*, 226; see Vitanza, "Three Countertheses: A Critical In(ter)vention into Composition Theories and Pedagogies," in *Contending With Words: Composition and Rhetoric in a Postmodern Era*, ed. J. Schilb and P. Harkin (New York: Modern Language Association, 1991).

an understanding of language which Yarbrough, following Davidson, rejects.[125]

Language games "do not constitute situations" but simply "organize them."[126] Randomly

drifting among language games in an attempt to find thirdspaces that undercut binaries

may be helpful at times, but in the end it does little to get us anywhere different.

Yarbrough concludes:

> Life, in the conception of discourse I am promoting here, is always on the go, but it is on the go *toward* understanding and coherence, *not* merely on the go *away from* the fear that understanding and coherence…will have been illegitimately claimed to be already achieved."[127]

As our governing metaphor of the midwife suggests, there is another alternative in

resisting expertise leading to domination that doesn't require resorting to random acts of

chance that later require their own "sorting device[s]" to determine if the results could be

relevant to preachers. A midwife doesn't leave birth to pure chance and neither should

the teacher of preaching leave the creation of sermons to aleatory practices. After all,

birth is not only on the way from the containment of the womb, but on the way towards

life that is "dynamic and oriented toward fulfillment in the coming kingdom."[128]

This encapsulates the major problem with Vitanza and Ulmer's proposals for the

homiletic classroom: their lack of eschatological focus. Such a focus, as Volf reminds us,

is not only about what happens to individuals (the focus of Vitanza and Ulmer), or about

creation, *but* also what happens *between* them. Therefore, I theologically develop

Yarbrough's claim that life is heading towards "understanding and coherence" through

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[125] Ibid., 224.
[126] Ibid., 226.
[127] Ibid., 228.
[128] Pinnock, "Systematic," 110; Michael Pasquarello notes that an incarnated life is not just about fleeing domination, manipulation or imposition by violence but also on its way towards "service." Michael Pasquarello, *We Speak Because We Have First Been Spoken: A Grammar of the Preaching Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing. Co., 2009).

the eschatological claim that it is also on the move towards reconciliation and redemption. That is, in light of eschatological hope, it is not theologically sufficient for preachers to understand life and the world as moving toward understanding between people. Christian eschatology, in the way I have understood it here, promises that understanding leading to reconciliation in, as Volf argues, "the *open* play of difference in plenitude" is a future God is actively involved in creating and breaking into this world.

In light of such a reformulation, I return to Yarbrough to describe an alternative practice that could both widen the inventive scene towards possibility while deepening its eschatological potential. Yarbrough suggests that

> The aim of our courses, then…should be to offer to our students whatever they need to be able to engage in effective discourse with others- to be affected by the causes affecting others' discourse and to affect others' discourse with their own; to encounter as problems the problems encountered by others and to initiate questions when others' answers don't solve their own problems.[129]

He makes this claim because he believes that "we cannot separate words from the world" and thus "we can alter the grounds of our discourse simply by acknowledging the reality of other's discourse."[130] We do not need to randomly shake up our linguistic games so that "if luck" is with us, we might be able to "articulate some needs" that otherwise we would not be able too.[131] Instead, when we believe that encountering the differences of another changes the situation (grounds) from which we speak and vice versa, we are actually "making ground" when we encounter another in discourse.[132] I argue that this is an eschatological reality in which God is participating in kairotic moments leading creation towards reconciliation. This process of understanding requires intentional

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[129] Yarbrough, *After Rhetoric,* 228.
[130] Ibid., 77.
[131] Ibid.
[132] Ibid., 78.

encounter with others, and by such exchanges inventive ground is made. The other is never exhausted, and so the boundaries and possibility of production can never be finalized, but this possibility is also not random. It is theologically on the way towards social redemption as a piece of God's eschatological future.

Practices of Exploring Spaces

If Sullivan is right and kairotic moments are instances of "loaded time" that "open for a brief period and then closes or passes away," practices are needed that encourage preachers to seek out such brief but loaded moments by encounters with difference.[133] Tillich argued that living with a sense of kairos "means to wait upon the invasion of the eternal and to act accordingly, not to wait and act as though the eternal were a fixed quantity which could be introduced into time."[134] Bakhtin urged readers to reject the life of a pretender, the living of an alibi, and instead live a life of active answerability in the unique place of being that each one occupies. Sullivan, Tillich and Bakhtin urge us toward an active pursuit of opening spaces in which God is inbreaking into the world leading to what Volf calls "the *open* play of difference in plenitude, innocence and love that would make the world to come a joyous 'world without end.'"[135] I therefore propose three practices in three distinct spaces that can widen the inventive scene with an eschatological focus by encounters with others.

(1) Interhuman Space[136]

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[133] Sullivan, "Kairos and the Rhetoric of Belief," 322.
[134] Tillich, *Religious Situation*.
[135] Ibid.
[136] For more on the term "interhuman," see Edward Farley, *Good and Evil*, 33-46.

Homileticians have already pointed out the importance of involving others in sermon preparation. Proposals for feed-forward groups, roundtable discussions and taking the text to the streets all emphasize the necessity of encountering different perspectives (usually on a text) from an other. During such encounters with potential difference, the grounds of the scene of sermon invention shift and expand. Based on Donald Davidson's theory of communication, I here suggest a specific practice to encourage face-to-face encounters on the inventive scene.

This practice would encourage student-preachers to reflect upon the ways in which the contours of their inventive scene shift in encounters with others during the sermon itself. Instead of describing how an interaction succeeded or failed to match some *a priori* scheme, this practice would seek to embody an ethos of charity in which the interlocutor's actual words were not immediately subsumed or finalized. As Bakhtin puts it:

> An individual cannot be completely incarnated into the flesh of existing sociohistorical categories. There is no mere form that would be able to incarnate once and forever all of his human possibilities and needs, no form in which he could exhaust himself down to the last word...no form that he could fill to the very brim, and yet at the same time not splash over the brim. There always remains an unrealized surplus of humanness; there always remains a need for the future, and a place for this future must be found.[137]

The listener's focus would be on how his or her own grounds shifted in the conversation, influenced by the conditions and circumstances of the conversation partner. This new ground made during the encounter becomes a different place from which to prepare the sermon.

I propose, therefore, that students be required to encounter three other persons

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[137] Bakhtin, "Epic and Novel" in *Dialogic*, 37.

who are unrelated to each other and vary in socio-economic, ethnic, religious and gender proximity to the preacher. These encounters would be efforts to discuss issues, questions and visions relevant to the student's upcoming sermon in the classroom. Before a student encounters another, the student would articulate what Davidson terms their prior theory expressing how "he [or she] is prepared in advance to interpret an utterance of the speaker."[138] That is, the preacher attempts to "anticipate how their [the speaker's] utterances are conditioned, what caused them, recognizing that among those causes are their beliefs about how discourse should work and their beliefs about how *we* believe discourse should work."[139] Student-preachers would be responsible for articulating what they expect another to say about their forthcoming sermon. What do you know (or not know) about another that would lead you to expect such a response? What conditions and circumstances are you aware of that would prompt you to expect what you have described?[140] These questions begin to reveal the preacher's prior theory, the ways in which the preacher expects the interlocutor to proceed. At the conclusion of the communicative encounter, the preacher should then answer a different set of questions – How did the other's reactions differ from your expectations? How did these differences require you to listen in a different way? What have you learned from this encounter that will affect your expectations of what this or another conversation partner might say in the future? Such questions begin to reveal a preacher's passing theories or the ways in which they have adjusted their interpretive strategies in the midst of the conversation itself –

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[138] Davidson, "A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs," 260.

[139] Yarbrough, *After Rhetoric*, 77.

[140] Davidson notes, that the formation of a passing theory is a "mysterious process by which a speaker or hearer uses what he knows in advance plus present data to produce a passing theory." Davidson, "Language" in *Truth, Language and History*, 106.

"how he [or she] *does* interpret the utterance [conversation]."[141] As Yarbrough notes, "no matter how complete and specific our prior theories may be, any general framework, for the very reasons it is general" will not be sufficient for interpretation.[142] Prior theories will always be lacking, for "what must be shared, is the *passing* theory, which cannot be learned in advance but is *invented* on the fly."[143] Thus there will always be a shift or conversion, no matter how small, between the preacher's prior and passing theories.

This new theory of interpretation is a representation of an emerging spatial reality for the preacher. He or she has potentially entered new eschatological ground as a result of the encounter with another on the inventive scene. This encounter with difference potentially leads to a new reality (that may or may not be comfortable, just or agreeable) to which the preacher then responds. Articulating this process of shifting theories, of moving to new ground, becomes an opportunity for listeners to testify to the presence of God kairotically opening up sacred space. Such a practice emphasizes that others cannot be reduced, or in Bakhtin's language, finalized (the prior theory must not stay the prior theory).

Such communicative sermon encounters do not of course always end in reconciliation or new understanding. Some prior theories are difficult to change, and at times conversation partners, based on their own prior theories, offer little hope for new discursive ground. The goal of this exercise is not success but practice, a term Yarbrough employs to denote moving away from the chalkboard of theory onto the field of play. Through such practice, an ethos begins to form not only in the classroom but also in the preachers themselves. The other whom I meet is not an image but a face, not ready-made

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[141] Davidson, "A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs," 260.
[142] Yarbrough, *Inventive*, 34.
[143] Ibid.

but open to the future, not reducible to systems of culture but unfinalizable. This kairotic

ethos opens up an eschatological expectation for the meeting of another on the scene of

invention in preparation for one's own sermon. Such a practice will help student-

preachers learn that "no matter what they say or how they say it, their discourse [and the

discourse of those they encounter] *is always already* changing the way things are- just not

necessarily the way they want it too."[144] In and through their discourse and in and

through the reactions of their listeners, complex shifts and adjustments in theories of

interpretation are being made. In the midst of these adjustments, of these willing and

hopeful acts to understand and encounter, God is breaking in to create spaces of hope and

reconciliation. This exercise will enhance student-preachers' readiness and willingness to

enter into kairotic moments when they are made available.

(2) Virtual Space

Another space in which student-preachers can encounter difference is the world of

social networking. Danah Boyd defines social network sites as "web-based services that

allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded

system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3)

view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the

system."[145] Examples of such social network sites are currently Myspace, Facebook and

Twitter. Barry Wellman has argued that the world is moving toward the centrality of

"person to person" relational roles in which "the person has become the portal," as well

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[144] Yarbrough, *After Rhetoric*, 228.
[145] Danah Boyd and Nicole Ellison, "Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship," *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication,* 13 no. 1 (2007), article 11, http://www.danah.org/papers/JCMCIntro.pdf," 2.

as towards specialized relationships within these roles in which ties are based on specific roles instead of the engagement of the whole person.[146] These specialized role relationships demand less energy and can blur the lines between the physical and virtual. When many members intentionally enter specialized role relationships, a specialized community is formed in which information can be discussed, shared and criticized around a particular topic or subject without the time constraints of full engagement.

This may at first seem like a strange dynamic for a profession that emphasizes deep relationships, personal involvement in a local community, and the intentional practice of vulnerability and openness. While these are valued characteristics in particular locations, there must also be a place for the development of relationships and the practice of communication outside this paradigm. Mark Granovetter has argued for the importance of "weak ties" within a social network.[147] Weak ties refer to the often casual relationships among acquaintances that tie two distinct closely-knit social structures together. Granovetter argues that individuals with few weak ties "will be deprived of information from distant parts of the social system and will be confined to the provincial news and views of their close friends."[148]

Granovetter proposed the application of weak ties to often-troubled biracial school settings in the United States. Instead of attempting to encourage strong biracial friendships, Granovetter argues that racial integration is better achieved by producing weak contacts between black and white cliques.[149] Similar proposals have been observed

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[146] Barry Wellman, "Physical Place and Cyber Place: The Rise of Personalized Networking," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 25 (2001).

[147] Mark Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties: A Network Theory Revisited," *Sociological Theory* 1 (1983), 201.

[148] Ibid., 202.

[149] Ibid., 221.

to work in hospitals, urban renewal movements and social protests. Weak ties are

essential to *bridging* (an essential function of the weak tie) various groups and to resisting

the formation of insular, homogenous communities. Shiv Singh has taken Granovetter's

work and considered its relation to the upsurge in such virtual social networks as

MySpace and Facebook.[150] These networks value weak ties and so encourage role-based

connections with others who may only be tangentially related.[151]

Weak ties in the virtual space of social network sites offer preachers an often

quick and low-investment strategy by which to encounter difference on the inventive

scene. Through Facebook status updates or twitter postings, preachers can quickly gage

the instant reactions of others to their scriptural texts or to potential claims in a

forthcoming sermon, and search for diverse perspectives through which to view issues.

Danah Boyd, an expert on social networking and virtual communities, reflects on her

own experiences with difference through the weak ties of what she calls "internet

randomness:"

> Strangers helped me become who I was. Strangers taught me about a different
> world than what I knew in my small town. Strangers allowed me to see from a
> different perspective. Strangers introduced me to academia, gender theory, Ivy
> League colleges, the politics of war, etc. So I hate how we vilify all strangers as
> inherently bad. Did I meet some sketchballs on the Internet when I was a teen?
> DEFINITELY. They were weird; I moved on.[152]

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[150] Shiv Singh, "Social Networks and Group Formation," <http://www.boxesandarrows.com/view/social-networks>.
   [151] The problem, however, is that networks such as Facebook are not adequate to clearly distinguish between weak ties and absent ties, those people who "exist in your life but with whom you have no connection whatsoever." In these communities, all ties whether strong, weak or absent can equally be counted as friends. This has led to confusion over who exactly is a friend and what exactly these virtual friendships entail. Danah Boyd, "Friends, Friendsters, and MySpace Top 8: Writing Community Into Being on Social Network Sites," *First Monday* 11, no. 12 (2006). http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue11_12/boyd/index.html
   [152] Danah Boyd, "ChatRoulette, from my perspective," 21 Feb. 2010, http://www.zephoria.org/thoughts/archives/2010/02/21/chatroulette-from-my-perspective.html

Boyd reminds us that virtual communities have "an informational and spatial politics," and we would be naïve to buy into any utopian visions of virtual communities in which such politics are absent.[153] Construction of identities and the need for boundaries are important issues in social networking but, as Boyd hints, there is a potential for encountering difference in the space that virtual communities and social networking offer.

I propose, therefore, intentionally creating and engaging weak ties by participating on social networking sites during sermon invention. In the preaching classroom, students would be encouraged to engage two social networking sites in preparation for their upcoming in-class sermon. The results of their encounters on these sites could either be printed by a screenshot capture, or copied and pasted into a word-processing document. In the majority of instances, students should be urged to keep these interactions concise and productive. Students should also be urged to pursue interactions with those outside of the class through these social networking sites. The goal is not to build deep relationships, though that may happen, but to simply engage the potential of difference in virtual space – an active effort to find and engage kairotic, eschatological opening spaces.

(4) Space in the Sermon Event

The possibility of kairotic inbreaking is not limited to the scene of invention before the sermon event. Invention carries over, continues into and throughout the actual

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[153] Ryan Bigge, "The Cost of (anti-)Social Networks: Identity, Agency and Neo-Luddites," *First Monday* 11, no. 12 (2006), http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue11_12/bigge/index.html. See also Danah Boyd, "The Not-So-Hidden Politics of Class Online," *Personal Democracy Forum*, June 30, 2009, http://www.danah.org/papers/talks/PDF2009.html.

sermon itself.[154] Kirk Byron-Jones's move of relating preaching to jazz lifts up this reality. Bryon-Jones argued that preaching is full of productive improvisation in which even "mistakes become invitations for discovery."[155] In the midst of interaction with the audience and the preacher's own body, preachers are free to go wherever "the music wants to go in the moment."[156] The openness to improvisation is an openness to the new discursive space that can begin to open out of the actual realigning of passing theories during the sermon itself. Improvisation signals a willingness to allow prior theories to be reformulated or even dropped as the preacher and audience dialogue together. I read Byron-Jones to be advocating an intentional search for eschatological space during the sermon by intentionally preparing for and living into improvised performance arising out of the actual conversations in which preachers and audience are engaged.

I thus propose that in the preaching classroom students engage in a practice of sermon improvisation in which invention is intentionally continued during the sermon performance. Students would be required in their final sermon of the term to in some way engage in conversation in the sermon that attempts to search for kairotic inbreaking of new space. That is, through interaction with the audience, preachers would attempt to look for openings in which their sermons could enter a new space God is opening up in that particular moment. This is a risky move and it is possible that the preacher may not find such an opening where he or she expects or that he or she is ready to enter in the moment. The audience is also searching for this opening, urging or discouraging the preacher to enter through various signals that make up the sermon conversation. Reflection following the sermon, another space in which invention does not need to

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[154] I am thankful to Professor Dale Andrews for this insight.
[155] Jones, 107.
[156] Ibid., 80.

cease, would focus on the openings that the preacher may or may not have realized or

entered.

(4) Space in the Shadows

The image of the traditional inventive scene is often depicted as "symmetrical"

and linear, so that the preacher's process of finding something to say builds step-by-step

into a preachable message. As Gary Morson explains, however, "in life…time is

asymmetrical."[157] Preachers take partial steps, find roadblocks, circumvent pitfalls, return

to prior lines of reasoning, find clues in strange places in the inventive process. This

exploration often requires steps forward and steps back, and I want to emphasize in this

practice steps *sideways*.

Morson has developed a concept of sideshadowing that "conveys the sense that

actual events might just as well not have happened."[158] Something else could have

happened, something else is possible and sideshadowing is used to cast the shadow of

that something else on the present. As Morson explains:

> In sideshadowing, two or more alternative presents, the actual and the possible,
> are made simultaneously visible. This is not a simultaneity in time but of times;
> we do not see contradictory actualities, but one possibility that was actualized and
> another that could have been but was not. Time itself acquires a double and, often,
> many doubles. A haze of possibilities surrounds each actuality.[159]

The concept of sideshadowing challenges the temptation to trace linear lines of causality

by asking such questions as "If only that chance incident had not happened, if only a

different choice had been made, if only a favorable sequence of events had not been

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[157] Morson, 600.
[158] Ibid., 601.
[159] Ibid., 602.

interrupted, or had been interrupted a moment later? What would have happened then?"[160] These questions direct attention to those spaces lurking to the sides of our actualities, sketched in pencil on the margins of our present.

Nancy Welch applies Morson's proposals to the writing classroom in an attempt to "multiply the stories we would tell about a draft, what its reality is, what its future might be…"[161] Welch laments the pedagogical use of foreshadowing that "seeks to direct the writer toward a particular future for the text" in teachers' comments on students' drafts.[162] Such a narrative, when it operates alone, can close off the future, reduce possibility and constrict openness. As Morson puts it:

> Foreshadowing therefore robs a present moment of its presentnesss. It lifts the veil on a future that has already been determined and inscribed. When foreshadowing is used, the sense of many possible futures, which in life we experience at every present moment, is revealed as an illusion.[163]

This potential for many possible futures is what theologian Clark Pinnock attempts to express when he asserts that "God…is happy to accept the future as open, not closed, and a relationship with the world that is dynamic, not static…We see the universe as a context in which there are real choices, alternatives and surprises."[164] In such a universe, sideshadowing attempts to restore the "possibility of possibility" by "catching a glimpse" of other possibilities that remain unrealized.[165]

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[160] Ibid.
[161] Welch, 377.
[162] Ibid., 379.
[163] Morson, 601.
[164] Clark Pinnock, "Systematic Theology" in *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 104.
[165] Morson, 602.

In Bakhtin's language, Welch worries about draining the moment of eventness by such pedagogical strategies as "scratching out," "marking out," and "slashing."[166] These marks of foreclosure find their way into responses such as *"What I hear you saying…What I hear you almost saying…Something I felt as I read…What you might consider now…"*[167] For Welch, these comments bring foreclosure by a desire for coherence, and in the process "shuts out other possible shapes and coherencies, other futures for a draft that give our reading eventness…"[168] Instead, Welch urges teachers to resist the allure of foreshadowing by rejecting the presumption that the next version of the draft is already written. Attention should focus on the surplus possibilities of the moment at hand, the various possibilities and open roads that may be taken. As Morson notes, the "most fundamental lesson [of sideshadowing] is: To understand a moment is to grasp not only what did happen but also what else might have happened."[169] Sideshadowing does not require preachers to give up a view of the future or sideline eschatological beliefs and concerns. Instead, as Welch argues, it "creates interaction and interference among possible readings and possible futures."[170]

In the preaching classroom, sideshadowing can provide an opportunity for students, through interaction with each other, to encounter the *other possible* directions and paths that their sermon might have taken. Beth Carroll notes that sideshadowing "focuses attention onto the shadows of the present moment, asking what else might be lurking at the edges of a text, what is almost but not quite being said."[171] She urges her

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[166] Welch, 380.
[167] Ibid., 382.
[168] Ibid.
[169] Morson, 602.
[170] Welch, 383.
[171] Beth Carroll, "http://www.uncg.edu/cac/WAC/FResources/ideas/revision.html"

students to pay close attention to that which hovers in the margin at each moment of another student's draft. Students explore the surplus of possibilities by writing in their own margins on their papers. Such exploration, according to Carroll, helps students generate new ideas for their forthcoming drafts.

Building on Carroll's proposal, I suggest that in the preaching classroom, one day be dedicated to a social practice of sideshadowing in which students prepare a one page summary (in any format- drawing, graph, etc) of their sermon-in-progress and then invite other students to comment on the surplus of possibilities they find in those summaries. Students would be directed to increase the margins on their papers to two inches in order to give more space for others to comment. Students would then place their papers on a central table or stand and others would randomly choose a summary, make comments, initial their comments and return the paper to the stack.

In such a practice, it would be essential for the teacher to introduce the concepts of foreshadowing and sideshadowing, and urge students towards the latter practice of searching out the possibilities the preacher did not choose to explore rather than attempting to forecast the path of the sermon. Such comments will help the preacher examine his or her own image of how the sermon is taking place, as well as trace out the a/symmetrical contours of causality that led him or her to the current location. In this process, the student may find through the encounter with difference in the margins of her paper that God is opening an eschatological space, inviting the preacher into a kairotic moment *in the very side shadows* of their current path. By a practice of sideshadowing, preachers actively, through encounter with others, search the shadows of their current "eventness" for the possibility that God may be opening up an eschatological space

leading to the open circle of love. Sideshadowing widens the inventive scene by urging engagement with difference to identify the roads not taken in the inventive process.

Conclusion

This project began with the claim "what we believe about how sermons are created affects how sermons are actually created." Through an analysis of homiletic theory and a survey of homiletic pedagogy, I have shown that here has been a largely consistent view of the scene of sermon invention that has remained relatively unaltered since the late nineteenth century. Despite important and widespread changes in homiletic thought, there has been little variation in how homileticians imagine the inventive scene. This has led to a hegemonic ideal that regards invention as an introspective act, an ideal almost perfectly depicted on the cover of Paul Scott Wilson's *The Four Pages of the Sermon.*

I have argued, however, that there is a different way to view the scene of sermon invention that rehabilitates the inventive scene for both homiletic theory and pedagogy by turning a critical lens on the incarnational and eschatological potential of the inventive process. When the lens is lowered to take the actual body of the preacher into perspective, and is widened so that the preacher's encounters with difference are understood as potential moments of divine inbreaking, images such as the sermon as seed that grows in the storehouse of the mind begin to be dropped in favor of other views of how sermons are formed. These new beliefs are already beginning to be articulated in the homiletic literature, and it is my hope that by rejecting the constraining walls of conventionalism, critical work articulating new beliefs will proliferate.

If there are theological reasons to image the inventive scene in a way that critically considers the role of the body and the space of encountering difference, impetus quickly follows to teach preaching, especially the introductory class, in a way that gives sufficient attention to the fullness of sermon creation. I have attempted to articulate practices that could serve as starting points toward that goal. In the end, I hope that the reigning scene of introspective invention will be thoroughly examined, so that as a new generation of theory and practice emerges, students of preaching will encounter multiple and diverse scenes of invention that include embodied processes and kairotic encounters with difference.

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