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Persuasion in Religious Discourse

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Table of Contents
Vol. 27, issue 1 (2023)

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Introduction.
Persuasion in Religious Discourse

Persuasion is fundamental to contemporary religious discourse, particularly in Western cultures. Whereas religious beliefs and practices may have historically been a fixed category, often tied to one's cultural, social, and national context, recent technological advancements and the ubiquity of mobile phones in daily life around the world have guaranteed that the religious beliefs and practices of others, often people from backgrounds completely dissimilar to one's own are now regularly present in one's life. At the same time, as algorithms and machine-learning influence what content people engage with online, content can become tailored to one's own preferences and interests, with little actual engagement with ideas, beliefs, and practices that fall outside of one's personal preferences.

Persuasion in religious discourse, therefore, exists in a complex space in the first quarter of the twenty-first century, where religious individuals have more reach and potential to spread their beliefs than ever before while at the same time, often speaking to people who already hold the same beliefs that they do. Thus, understanding persuasion in this context requires the wide-ranging toolkit linguistics offers to engage critically with language, identity, context, audience, and other factors in understanding what people are doing when they speak and write about religious beliefs and practice with some consideration of how their words might effect changes in others, either in shifting their beliefs or shoring up the beliefs of those within their religious community.

This special issue, therefore, addresses a range of texts and contexts wherein religious discourse and persuasion can be identified as a part of the interaction between people, either face-to-face or in texts. This introduction will start with a brief background on the notion of religious discourse in contrast to religious 'language' and the importance of context in discourse activity, before clarifying how persuasion can be defined and identified in discursive practices and, finally, providing an introduction to the empirical research in this special issue and how the different authors elaborate on these concepts to better understand what different religious leaders and figures are doing when they speak about their religion to people who may or may not share their own beliefs and practices.

1. Persuasive Language

Given the complex, overlapping, contextually determined, and interactional nature of religious discourse (outlined further in the following section), persuasion as a practice within such discourse can be best understood in broadly rhetorical, pragmatic and stylistic terms. Persuasion, understood linguistically, is not an inherently negative concept, despite the unpleasant connotations that it may evoke – such as 'manipulation' or coercion – rather, it is "a legitimate function of argumentation".[2] Indeed, strategies of persuasion and the power of argumentation to persuade or dissuade the hearer have stimulated linguistic

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[1] Both authors contributed equally to this "Introduction" in terms of the conception, drafting and editing of the work. Aoife Beville wrote sections 1, "Persuasive Language", and 3, "Overview of Issue" while Stephen Pihlaja wrote section 2 "Religious Discourse and Language".

[2] Douglas Walton, *Media Argumentation: Dialectic, Persuasion and Rhetoric* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2007), 46.

thought and given rise to metalinguistic reflections since antiquity.[3] The Sophists, and later Aristotle, provide evidence of humanity's endless fascination with how language can shape our ideas and change our minds. Persuasion, according to Francesca Piazza, is "an anthropological trait, not merely a special case of communication".[4]

Rhetorical theory and argumentation studies have, therefore, long studied persuasion as a part of the functions of language.[5] The new rhetoric – as Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca[6] label their re-theorisation of rhetorical concepts, essentially restores and updates classical notions of argumentation, shifting the focus to the audience. They propose that the principal aim of argumentation is to secure the adherence of the addressees. Therefore, argumentation is entirely relative to the audience intended to be influenced. Indeed, the Aristotelian understanding of rhetoric was already concerned with the orientation of the message towards the addressees; as Piazza argues, classical rhetoric holds that "the speaker-hearers are within, and not without, the discourse, they are its constituent elements rather than its external users"[7]. Furthermore, "speaker and listener may alternate their respective roles, and the speaker is always also a listener (albeit listening to himself)".[8] Aristotle argues that the "function [of rhetoric] is not so much to persuade, as to find out in each case the existing means of persuasion", adding "that which is persuasive is persuasive in reference to someone".[9] Rhetoric, therefore, studies not the abstract art of persuasion in itself but the *attempt* to persuade a particular audience in a particular discourse context.[10] This implies, of course, that not all attempts at persuasion are successful.

Therefore, given the fundamentally interpersonal nature of persuasion – the need to understand how the addressee may interact with, infer meanings from and *be persuaded by* the speaker/author and their message – the matter is squarely within the domain of pragmatics.[11] From a pragmatic perspective, persuasion can be understood as a type of speech act.[12] Austin's *How to Do Things with Words* distinguishes between the illocutionary act (the act of saying), the locutionary act ("the *force* in saying something") and the perlocutionary act, "which is *the achieving of* certain *effects* by saying something.[13] Persuasion, understood within this framework, is the perlocutionary object of arguments which aim to achieve the effect of *convincing* and *persuading* the addressee. Of course, utterances which aim to persuade may not always produce the desired perlocutionary effect – attempts to persuade may result in undesirable perlocutionary sequels, such as persuading the listener in the opposite direction, alarming them or creating an atmosphere of distrust. Such mismatches between, in Austin's terms, the

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[3] For a brief history of the study of rhetoric and persuasion, see: Randy Allen Harris and Jeanne Fahnestock, "Rhetoric, Linguistics, and the Study of Persuasion", in Jeanne Fahnestock and Randy Allen Harris, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Persuasion* (New York: Routledge, 2022), 1-24; Michael J. Hogan, "Persuasion in the Rhetorical Tradition" in James Dillard and Lijiang Shen, eds., *The Sage Handbook of Persuasion* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2013), 2-19.

[4] Francesca Piazza, "L'arte retorica: antenata o sorella della pragmatica?", *Esercizi Filosofici*, 6.1 (2011), 121. All translations, unless otherwise stated, are my own.

[5] J. Michael Hogan, "Persuasion in the Rhetorical Tradition", in James Dillard and Lijiang Shen, eds., *The Sage Handbook of Persuasion: Developments in Theory and Practice* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2013), 2-19.

[6] Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame U.P, 1969).

[7] Piazza, "L'arte retorica", 119.

[8] Ibid., 125.

[9] Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, trans. by J. H. Freese (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1926), 1355b-1356b, www.perseus.tufts.edu/.

[10] Piazza, "L'arte retorica", 120.

[11] For more on pragmatics and rhetoric see Piazza, "L'arte retorica". Essentially, she suggests that a deeper engagement with classical rhetoric can enrich and expand the scope of pragmatics, offering valuable insights into the persuasive functions of human interaction.

[12] Walton, *Dialectic, Persuasion and Rhetoric*, especially the chapter "The Speech Act of Persuasion" (46-90); Piazza, "L'arte retorica", 130.

[13] J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1962), 121.

"perlocutionary object" (the goal) and the "perlocutionary sequel" (the result) are relevant to our understanding of persuasion in religious discourse.[14]

While many scholars have explored the rhetorical aspects of persuasion, relatively little attention has been paid to understanding its relationship with style. A notable exception is Jeanne Fahnestock,[15] whose *Rhetorical Style: The Uses of Language in Persuasion* carefully dissects the persuasive functions of various formal language features (phonetics, semantics, syntax, pragmatics, etc.). Stylistics examines the specific linguistic choices made by speakers/authors to understand how meanings are constructed and conveyed through the text (whether oral or written).[16] The rigorous and replicable study of the linguistic features of a text aims to determine the functional significance of such features. Regarding the persuasive function of such linguistic patterns, "stylistics has evolved a detailed linguistic account of the kinds of persuasive techniques more generally covered by classical rhetoric. The use of stylistics for these purposes enables scholars to approach the explicitly persuasive aspects of style as linguistic phenomena".[17] Thus, in concert with both rhetorical studies and pragmatics, stylistics offers the tools necessary to determine the patterns of language present within religious discourses and to account for their persuasive function within the texts.

2. Religious Discourse and Language

Any discussion of the role of persuasion in religious or sacred language necessarily begins with a discussion of what we mean by religious language. Reviews on the meaning of these terms can be found in various recent and historical studies[18], but for the purposes of this special issue, rather than attempting to establish rules on what should or shouldn't be included, considering the contexts in which we see religion invoked, discussed, or displayed is a helping starting point. On a very basic level, religious practice and belief are often articulated through language is specific to one category of named religion. That way of articulating a specific belief about reality can differentiate people of different religious traditions in the words they use — Muslims in English will often use the Arabic word for God Allah, whereas Christians speaking English normally would not. Language can then be a key part of signalling one's commitment to a particular religious belief and used to maintain that belief as a part of a community of religious believers.

The most overt relationship between religion and language can be observed in religious practices and rituals that occur within the context of religious ceremonies, rituals, and meetings. Religious language includes words and lexico-grammatical structures used in an explicitly religious context for an explicitly religious purpose, including religious and sacred texts. These can include language of persuasion and be part of larger structures like sermons or khutbahs. Religious discourse, by contrast, encompasses all language that may relate to religious belief and practice. This can include parts of conversations where religion or belief becomes relevant, including outside of explicitly religious contexts.

Because religious belief and practice can also profoundly influence how people think and talk about their experiences of the world, understanding how it can be used in persuasion requires understanding

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[14] Ibid., 117.

[15] Jeanne Fahnestock, *Rhetorical Style: The Uses of Language in Persuasion* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 2011).

[16] Lesley Jeffries and Dan McIntyre, *Stylistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2010); Michael Burke, ed., *The Routledge Handbook of Stylistics* (New York: Routledge, 2018).

[17] Jeffries and McIntyre, *Stylistics*, 8.

[18] Valerie Hobbs, *An Introduction to Religious Language: Exploring Theolinguistics in Contemporary Contexts* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020); Paul Chilton and Monika Kopytowska, eds., *Religion, Language, and the Human Mind* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 2018); Stephen Pihlaja, *Talk about Faith: How Conversation Shapes Belief* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2021); Robert Yelle et al., eds., *Language and Religion* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019); David Crystal, *Linguistics, Language, and Religion* (Philadelphia: Hawthorn Books, 1965); Stephen Pihlaja and Helen Ringrow, "Language and Religion", in Stephen Pihlaja and Helen Ringrow, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Religion* (London: Routledge, 2024).

the variety of ways religion and language interact.[19] For example, metaphorical language about the divine, in terms of the language religious believers are comfortable using,[20] can reveal ways that speakers attempt to use analogy to convince others of their understanding of the divine, or how political and spiritual leaders speak and write about the world.[21] Moreover, given differences in religious language across religions, profound differences can also emerge in the way that people think about life and death, with evidence for these differences appearing in ritual and sacred language and in the narrative data about experience.[22] Religious language can also travel from sacred texts through other forms of literature, influencing how fictional worlds are understood and spoken about.[23] In these cases, there might be explicit reference to religious or sacred texts, or implicit reference through analogy or metaphor that draws to mind religious stories or structures.

Persuasion in religious discourse can appear in a variety of different contexts and be present in a range of written and spoken texts, which we will see specifically in this volume. In all the contexts noted in the previous paragraph, the presence of religious language, or discourse about religion, must be addressed to understand both the intentions of the authors and speakers, and how what they say is or is not effective for their audience. In many cases related to religious language, particularly when it occurs in a religious context, isolating and describing the interaction between the speaker and the audience can be done with a relatively narrow analysis of who is speaking to whom and what the shared understanding of belief is in that particular context.

Some specific forms of religious discourse orientate towards their audience, performing complex persuasive perlocutions, such as homiletics or apologetics, which seek the audience's adherence to specific doctrinal beliefs. Other forms may make appeals for almsgiving and financial donations and calls to social action, or may instruct adherents in devotional practices or ethical and political choices. seeking the audience's adoption of some behaviour or concrete action. Religious discourse can also include persuasive structures and narratives that can only be identified 'above the sentence'. This is common in the conversion narrative structure, which often includes a description of a person being persuaded to follow a new or different religion, with key features taken at times from stories of conversion in sacred texts.[24] Preachers can use rhetorical devices to make their own experiences more relatable to their audience, using, for example, personal experiences to draw comparisons with their audience and persuade them through familiarisation.[25]

Religious discourse can be intrinsically persuasive in its aims while not always persuasive in its outcomes. Evangelistic and apologetic discourses can be viewed as prototypical of the speech act of persuasion, as can requests for donations. In other cases, persuasion in religious discourse can be more implicit. Religious persuasion can include nuances that occur between religious belief and context, wherein persuasion might be present in the construction of the sentence but understanding the rhetorical effect requires an understanding of 'language above the sentence'.[26] This can be seen, for example, in

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[19] Pihlaja and Ringrow, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Religion*.
[20] Aletta Dorst and Marry-Loïse Klop, "Not a Holy Father: Dutch Muslim Teenagers' Metaphors for Allah", *Metaphor and the Social World*, 7.1 (2017), 65-85.
[21] Clara Neary, "Truth Is like a Vast Tree", *Metaphor and the Social World*, 7.1 (2017), 103-21.
[22] Peter Richardson, "A Closer Walk: A Study of the Interaction between Metaphors Related to Movement and Proximity and Presuppositions about the Reality of Belief in Christian and Muslim Testimonials", *Metaphor and the Social World*, 2.2 (2012), 233–61; Peter Richardson, Charles Mueller, and Stephen Pihlaja, *Cognitive Linguistics and Religious Language: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2021).
[23] Furzeen Ahmed, "Religion, Literature, and the Secondary Classroom", in Pihlaja and Ringrow, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Religion*, 151-65.
[24] David W Kling, *A History of Christian Conversion* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 2020).
[25] Clint Bryan and Mohammed Albakry, "'To Be Real Honest, I'm Just like You': Analyzing the Discourse of Personalization in Online Sermons", *Text & Talk*, 36.6 (2016), 683-703.
[26] Deborah Cameron and Ivan Panovic, *Working with Written Discourse* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2014), 4.

the construction 'Jesus, Son of Mary' on an Islamic *dawah* (outreach or evangelical teaching) table. In the UK, and indeed in Christian contexts more generally, one might expect a reference to Jesus as the 'Son of God'. By replacing 'God' with 'Mary', the statement is accurate for both Christians and Muslims, and the focus on Jesus appeals to those with a Christian belief or background. Understanding the phrase and its use in this context requires an understanding of the interaction between Christian belief and Islam, and the goals of Muslims doing *dawah* in a predominately Christian context. Both overt and subtle, explicit and implicit forms of persuasion in religious discourse will be analysed throughout the issue.

Persuasion around religion can also occur in discourse about religious believers, for example in representations of religion or religious groups in news media,[27] and, in particular, reporting on and representations of minority religions and religious believers.[28] These studies show how media can influence how religious believers are viewed without explicitly writing about religious beliefs and practices but rather as social categories. For example, categories of 'Muslim' or 'Catholic' can be used to index certain common-sense beliefs about people and persuade readers about the goodness or badness of actors. In these instances, overt references to religious belief and practice can be completely absent, with the religion used to signal a range of other parts of a person or group's character or personality, for example, in the use of antisemitic tropes.[29]

In both explicit and implicit persuasion in religious discourse, and in media discourse about religious believers, linguistic style is an element used to isolate when and where in discourse persuasion is occurring. As stylistic frameworks underpin most of the contributions in this issue, including the hybridization of stylistic methods (pragma-stylistics, rhetorical stylistics, corpus stylistics, cognitive stylistics, etc.), the articles here contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the linguistic phenomenon of persuasion in religious discourse.

3. Overview of Issue

The contributions to this special issue employ a range of methodological approaches (stylistics, pragmatics, historical discourse, and comparative literary criticism) to engage with and understand the forms and functions of persuasion within varied genres of religious discourse (from sermons to autobiographical texts and TED talks), which represent an array of differing historical, cultural and religious contexts and, therefore, an array of audiences whose adherence is being sought. The issue is structured diachronically, integrating empirical and aesthetic perspectives on the forms and functions of persuasion within varieties of religious discourse.

Pasquale Pagano's paper "Persuasive Preaching. The *Books of Homilies* and the Reformation in England" investigates the rhetorical strategies employed in Early Modern English sermon collections. Pagano interprets the sermons' persuasive features by contextualising them within the English Reformation's volatile cultural and historical background. The comparative approach of the study not only reveals the divergent strategies employed by Catholic and Protestant preachers but demonstrates the multiple points of contact between the texts in their attempts to defend particular doctrines and persuade their readers.

Clara Neary's "'So much of Gandhi Stays within You after Finishing, That It Is as if the Book Never Ended'. Empathetic Engagement and Rhetoric in *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*" analyses the

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[27] Gavin Brookes et al., "Representation of Religion in News Media Discourse", in Pihlaja and Ringrow, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Religion*, 180-93.
[28] Tayyiba Bruce, "New Technologies, Continuing Ideologies: Online Reader Comments as a Support for Media Perspectives of Minority Religions", *Discourse, Context & Media*, 24 (August 2018), 53-75.
[29] Daniel Allington and Tanvi Joshi, "'What Others Dare Not Say': An Antisemitic Conspiracy Fantasy and Its YouTube Audience", *Journal of Contemporary Antisemitism*, 3.1 (2020), 35-54.

linguistic means of evoking empathy in readers as a persuasive feature of Gandhi's autobiography. This contribution contextualises Gandhi's complex, multifaced figure as a political, social, religious and cultural phenomenon of the 20th century and investigates the enduring success of his autobiography. Neary posits that "autobiographical texts exhibit greater potential for empathetic engagement" and identifies empirical stylistic features in support of this hypothesis. Her corpus stylistic analysis reveals the persuasive force of empathetical engagement – activated through deictic markers of time, person, and place that blur the temporal, spatial, and psychological boundaries between the author and the reader. The stylistic features which promote identification with the author are thus understood as a powerful means to move, engage, and ultimately persuade the reader.

Aoife Beville presents a pragmastylistic analysis of the persuasive function of irony in C. S. Lewis's *The Screwtape Letters.* The analysis explores the complex discourse architecture of the text – a series of letters from a senior demon to an underling containing instructions on how to distract and torment a new convert to Christianity. The principal feature that emerges from the analysis is the text's distinctive ironic, at times sardonic, tone. The study examines the lexical, syntactic, and pragmatic features that contribute to the text's meaning and the creation of its ironic narrative voice. Beville argues that *The Screwtape Letters* is not only a witty experiment within the genre of epistolary fiction but also an engaging and persuasive work of Christian apologetics. Indeed, the persuasive function of irony is an intrinsic part of the text's aesthetic value.

Polina Shvanyukova adopts a Discourse Historical Approach in her analysis of religious language in Phyllis Schlafly's 1972 anti-feminist manifesto entitled "What's Wrong with 'Equal Rights' for Women". The paper examines the religiously charged rhetoric used by conservative activists in their opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment in the 1970s USA. The analysis shows how Schlafy made use of overt religious expressions and covert intertextual references to present her conservative stance on gender roles as authoritative and to undermine the feminist movement. Shvanyukova's research uncovers how the manifesto leverages religious-infused language to mobilize the anti-feminist cause, demonstrating how religious discourse can be a persuasive political tool, a strategy still in use in contemporary US politics and beyond.

Chiara Ghezzi's contribution employs an approach informed by stylistics and rhetorical studies to understand the practices and patterns of argumentation utilized in three TED Talks given between the late 1990s and the early 2010s. The three talks span a scale of belief from Billy Graham, a renowned evangelical preacher, to Richard Dawkins, an evolutionary scientist and vocal atheist, to Lesley Hazelton, a successful journalist and author who advocates for doubt in faith. The rhetorical-stylistic analysis reveals that religious discourse, while often characterized by strong opinions and opposing viewpoints, can employ persuasive strategies to inspire conviction and trust. These strategies include rhetorical figures, such as the enallage of person and parataxis, to emphasize arguments and create a sense of urgency.

Emma Pasquali's paper examines the communicative strategies that pastor and televangelist Benny Hinn employs to engage his followers and maintain his ministry's financial viability. Pasquali first contextualises the public persona of Benny Hinn and examines the link between televangelism and deliberative rhetoric, then, using a pragmatic framework, she analyses a corpus of telepreaching from Hinn's 2021 "Healing Services". Through both quantitative and qualitative pragmastylistic analysis, this paper demonstrates that the persuasive methods of Hinn's televangelism transcend mere logic and credibility. It explores Hinn's persuasive strategies, especially his use of anecdotes and metaphors, which produce emotionally resonant appeals for financial support. Hinn's prosperity gospel approaches giving in a transactional way, reflected in his use of rhetorical and pragmatic techniques to encourage donations with promises of blessings.

These articles, focusing on different text types and using varied linguistic, stylistic and rhetorical approaches, all aim to account for the forms and functions of persuasion in religious discourse. The

collection as a whole aims to respond to "the perennial need for individuals and groups to be aware of the persuasive practices they use, or that are used upon them to produce or alter their beliefs and actions".[30] This is particularly important in the analysis of religious discourse, where empirical evidence is often lacking, and differences between religious beliefs can rely on how people present and talk about those beliefs. By understanding the strategies and approaches involved in speaking and thinking about religious belief, we can gain valuable insights into the nature of how those beliefs are held, experienced, and spread.

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[30] Fahnestock and Harris, *Language and Persuasion*, 1.

Pasquale Pagano

Persuasive Preaching.
The *Books of Homilies* and the Reformation in England

Abstract: As an act of human speech, religious language has been analysed as an influential means of constructing social relationships through recurrent forms of mutual manipulation; hence, its persuasive nature has often been related to concepts of authority and control. The present paper aims to study the homiletic production offered both in the two Protestant Books of Homilies (1547 and 1563) and in their Catholic counterpart (1555), by locating stylistic analysis within the milieu of the Reformation in England, a context of religious as well as political fragmentation and instability. The study of questions related to genre and style, as well as the insight into linguistic and thematic concerns, will aim to present the rhetorical strength of these texts as an exercise of power in the context of the Reformation in England.

Keywords: *English Reformation*, *power*, *preaching*, *Latin*, *papal primacy*, *the Eucharist*

1. Introduction

In her definition of religious language, Valerie Hobbs highlights its domineering effect when she states that "by it we manipulate and are manipulated".[1] Among the various linguistic expressions of religion, this article intends to focus on preaching, which, according to F. Gerrit Immink's definition, is "an act of human discourse".[2] Thus, the scholar emphasises the multifaceted nature of this peculiar form of speech and poses homiletics within a broader multidisciplinary field. In other words, although the liturgical act of faith remains the milieu in which a homily originates, "theories of language, rhetoric, and communication are ... part of homiletical discipline".[3]

The present study, therefore, aims to consider and scrutinize the liminal nature of homiletics, which, according to Immink, "is precisely the intertwining of theoretical reflection both on the proclamation of the gospel and human discourse".[4] Accordingly, if, on the one hand, this essay agrees to consider rhetoric as "the basic frame of reference for homiletics",[5] it also aims to redefine and understand what persuasiveness came to mean within the historical and religious context of the Reformation in England. The years which witnessed the shift from Catholic tradition to Protestant faith resulted in a prolific time for the production of homilies, which is anything but unexpected if one considers what constituted the Reformation, and the Reformation in England, in particular. In fact, as Bryan Crockett reported, "the number of original sermons increased dramatically during the last half of the sixteenth century",[6] a fact which makes not only the Renaissance an interesting and stimulating age to study from the perspective of preaching but, most importantly, accounts for the centrality of the sermon within the changed theological environment of the Reformation. My aim, therefore, is to examine the revolutionary

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[1] Valerie Hobbs, *An Introduction to Religious Language: Exploring Theolinguistics in Contemporary Contexts* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021), 2.
[2] F. Gerrit Immink, "Homiletics: The Current Debate", *International Journal of Practical Theology*, 8.1 (2004), 90.
[3] Ibid., 90.
[4] Ibid., 91.
[5] Ibid., 91.
[6] Bryan Crockett, *The Play of Paradox: Stage and Sermon in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 17.

complexity of English Reformation through the lens of the homiletic discourse and its persuasive power; as Susan Wabuda put it: "preaching is a useful subject to investigate as we attempt to determine what aspects of religious life changed and which did not".[7]

The present contribution does not seek to provide a thorough analysis of such a vast production but is circumscribed to the publication of the two volumes of the *Book of Homilies* (1547 and 1563),[8] in order to consider the rhetorical strength that these texts possessed in a time of great cultural clash and turmoil. Also, some homilies from the Catholic collection (1559)[9] which is named after Bishop Edward Bonner of London will be taken into consideration with the aim to compare the rhetorical strategies exercised by the counterpart, "who used the pulpits of London on Mary's accession to promote the return to Catholicism".[10]

2. Persuasion and Power in Early Modern England

It is a fact that any attempts to give a unifying definition of the Renaissance would result in oversimplification, due to its complex and heterogeneous nature. It seems more reasonable, instead, to try to interpret such an intricate system of cultural instances – "a critically important period in Western civilization",[11] as James J. Murphy defines it – from multifarious lenses and perspectives.

Rhetoric has often been intended as one of the decoding keys of early modern culture, as maintained by Torrance Kirby and Paul G. Stanwood: "of prime significance is the fact that the transition from a late-medieval to an early-modern religious identity was achieved to a very large extent through persuasion – arguments, textual interpretation, exhortation, reasoned opinion, and moral advice".[12] At the same time, in its intrinsic relationship to the Renaissance, rhetoric is also closely connected to the concept of power, not only because "persuasion is the true measure of the power of language in that it can effect change without recourse to anything but the strength of its own resources",[13] but such a bond proves to be even more evocative when rhetoric is intended as a means to 'gain' and 'exercise' power:

> Rhetoric has also always been intimately linked to the *accumulation* and *assertion* of power and authority and its key concepts intersect and build on one another to make meaning both in the service of, and against the exercise of, political and social power. Rhetoric centres several relationships in its analyses, relationships organised towards persuasion, attempts to get others to align their actions and thoughts with one's own.[14]

If, on the one hand, power is radically embedded in any rhetorical act of communication – according to what Jeanne Fahnestock has defined as "the ancient and enduring sense of the word ... constructed to have an impact on the attitudes, beliefs, and actions of its audiences"[15] – what did persuasive power come to mean in the specific context of the English Reformation?

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[7] Susan Wabuda, "Bishops and the Provision of Homilies, 1520 to 1547", *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 25.3 (1994), 552.

[8] Gerald Bray, ed., *The Books of Homilies: A Critical Edition* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2015).

[9] Ibid.

[10] Rosamund Oates, "Sermons and Sermon-going in Early Modern England", *Reformation*, 17.1 (2012), 209.

[11] James J. Murphy, "One Thousand Neglected Authors: The Scope and Importance of Renaissance Rhetoric", in James J. Murphy, ed., *Renaissance Eloquence: Studies in the Theory and Practice of Renaissance Rhetoric* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), 20.

[12] Torrance Kirby and Paul G. Stanwood, eds., *Paul's Cross and the Culture of Persuasion in England, 1520-1640* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), 3.

[13] David Hann, "Persuasive Language", in Philip Seargeant et al., eds., *The Routledge Handbook of English Language Studies* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 252.

[14] Beau Pihlaja, "Rhetoric", in Stephen Pihlaja, ed., *Analysing Religious Discourse* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2021), 91. Emphasis mine.

[15] Jeanne Fahnestock, *Rhetorical Style: The Uses of Language in Persuasion* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 2011), 4.

Among the many authoritative studies devoted to such a crucial time in English history, Cristopher Haigh's volume *English* Reformations has recognised the necessity to view the shift from Catholicism to Anglicanism, via Protestantism and Calvinism, as a compound process which, more than its European counterparts, remained profoundly marked by the political transformations which England underwent between XVI and XVII century; as Richard Mallette has explained, "all religion historians recognize that the various theological articulations are deeply embedded in political circumstances".[16] More than its German parallel, which mainly originated from Luther's theological stances against Rome, the process of 'reform' in England radically depended on the monarchs' decisions, often dictated by their personal interests and necessities or those of their counsellors and ministers: Henry VIII's urgency to declare his marriage to Catherine of Aragon null, Edward VI's and his regency council's enhancement of reformed teachings and practices, Marian restoration of Catholicism, and the establishment of the Church of England under Elizabeth I represent the undeniable steps of a process of transformation which resulted in a non-linear development, made of "spasmodic fits, uncertain starts, and threats of reversal".[17]

According to Eamon Duffy, conventional scholarship viewed "Reformation movements as the product of a single energy, unwitting agents or heralds of modernity, and so, self-evidently superior to the medieval Catholicism they replaced";[18] the scholar, instead, has highlighted the urgency to reconsider the impervious development of that transformation. More than a level and horizontal path, then, those years need to be reinterpreted in the light of conflicting and diverging instances, also featuring "resilience and social embedding of the late medieval religion so often caricatured or ignored in the older narratives".[19] In other words, according to what Mallette has defined as "revisionist political history",[20] there seems to be a strong and impelling necessity to consider that "even during the second half of the century, committed Protestant ministers encountered great resistance to the evangelical faith".[21]

In addition, Christopher Haigh's analysis accounts for such hybrid responses to the exercise of royal power, which all originated from a diffuse sense of political as well as religious precariousness; hence, according to the scholar, the plural identity of the Reformation is also to be intended as a scarcely coherent process of development: "from a modern perspective, such men may seem hypocrites, *politiques*, and cowards: perhaps in some measure they were. But they lived in confused and dangerous times, when ideas and power structures were unstable".[22] Therefore, the Reformation in England may be seen as a process which sprang from, but also questioned the nature of royal power, exercised or imposed, but also refused or even opposed to, "a contingent series of conflicts and crisis",[23] as revisionist historians have claimed.

As a result, the prominence of Renaissance homiletics must be viewed in such a context of diverse and contrasting forms of persuasive pressure, both as a means to spread reformed teachings as well as to resist them. Accordingly, this essay focuses on the process of communication and spread of power, by means of the persuasive strength of early modern English preaching: to what extent did the homiletic production – at least those homilies gathered in the official collections – contribute to support the monarchs' decisions or dissent from them? What persuasive influence did they try to exercise?

David Hann has given an inspiring definition of persuasion by highlighting the intimate process of interpersonal relationship which is established when one tries to persuade others; such intimacy is

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[16] Richard Mallette, *Spenser and the Discourses of Reformation England* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 9.

[17] Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics and Society under the Tudors* [1993] (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 2012), 169.

[18] Eamon Duffy, *Reformation Divided: Catholics, Protestants and the Conversion of England* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 1.

[19] Ibid., 2.

[20] Mallette, *Spenser,* 9.

[21] Ibid., 10.

[22] Haigh, *English Reformations*, 14.

[23] Mallette, *Spenser,* 10.

granted by one's slipping into the other's beliefs, into their system of personal views and convictions: "the notion of persuasion as a belief system, as when referring to someone's 'political persuasion', hints at an important element in persuasion itself. The process involves tapping into another's beliefs or viewpoints and moving them in some way."[24] Is it not part of the intrinsic nature of a homily to involve personal beliefs and principles in order to mould them into a communal experience of faith? Do sermons not aim, as Immick puts it, to "form the community of faith, to edify the people in their distinctive language of faith"?[25]

Nevertheless, hardly could early modern Christianity be depicted as a communal experience of faith; instead, those were the years when the solid unity and uniformity of Catholicism were challenged as never before, thus initiating an irreversible process of disaggregation and fragmentation. Not united in the profession of faith nor in the celebration of their rites, early modern Christians had to find ways to reshape their new forms of aggregation, their 'churches', precisely by sneaking into individuals' beliefs and stirring them towards new convictions:

> In the Renaissance era, reliance on symbol and image gave way to the privileging of the audible or visible word. While peace remained a fundamental Christian aspiration, ritual and sacrament gave way to persuasion and instruction as the means to achieve it. A newly professional breed of intellectuals and activists – the 'new clerks' – arose, who understood Christianity not as a community sustained by ritual acts, but a teaching enforced by institutional structures.[26]

In other words, the Reformers' protest against Rome, which reverberated throughout Europe in many and various ways, marked the beginning of a process of increasing disaggregation which deconstructed what had been formerly perceived, despite the many internal differences, as united. The abolition of most of the sacraments, the rejection of traditional doctrines like purgatory or indulgences, the abolition of consecrated life, and – as far as England is concerned – the proclamation of the monarch as a religious leader created a sense of radical crisis and fragility, which demanded new ways to rebuild social and religious bonds. Hence, the present contribution shares the conviction that homilies played a decisive role in reshaping the culture of a fragmented and destabilized society through a consistent and widespread catechesis: "with the Mass abrogated and mandatory auricular confession abolished, priests became ministers and ministers were preachers above all else. As a result, preaching came to occupy a central place in English culture, occurring on more occasions than ever before."[27]

As Bryan Crockett has shown, just like the stage, the pulpit played a decisive role in Reformation England so much so that not only did they both function as places in which ideas and beliefs could enjoy a certain freedom of circulation, but they also operated a process of substitution, according to which the persuasive influence of ritual and sacramental actions was replaced by the power of the spoken word.

Several studies about early modern homiletics have underlined the relationship between the pulpit and the stage: according to Alison Shell, for example, the question cannot be debated merely in terms of mutual rejection or, conversely, influence; rather, the scholar argues, preaching was marked by "what could be a profound ambivalence to the theatre, even among preachers who enjoyed drama and borrowed from it".[28] Despite what Shell defines as "considerable overlap between the two" (76), the undoubted discontinuity between the pulpit and the stage must be taken into consideration, especially since these two forms of expression were also granted different degrees of freedom: according to Stephen Greenblatt, "there was no freedom of expression in Shakespeare's England, on the stage or anywhere

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[24] Hann, "Persuasive Language", 253.
[25] Immink, "Homiletics", 95.
[26] Duffy, *Reformation Divided*, 8.
[27] Eric Josef Carlson, "The Boring of the Ear: Shaping the Pastoral Vision of Preaching in England, 1540-1640", in Larissa Taylor, ed., *Preachers and People in the Reformations and Early Modern Period* (Boston, Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2003), 255.
[28] Alison Shell, *Shakespeare and Religion* [2010] (London and New York: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2015), 38.

else".[29] Nevertheless, while Greenblatt rightly associates forms of totalitarian censorship and oppression to drama, which produced "techniques to speak in code" (3), homilies, especially those grouped in the official collections analysed in the present essay, enjoyed a higher degree of freedom and verbal openness: "Preachers, like other religious writers, were both allowed and expected to inhabit the moral high ground, and had more freedom than professional playwrights to tell their audience how they ought to act".[30] As will be discussed later, controversial issues are not presented here with obliqueness or artifice; rather, frank explicitness emerges as a part of their rhetorical power of persuasion.

In a context of deconstructed faith and beliefs, then, when the inconstancy of political power mined the unity of the nation, preaching – and theatrical performances – reinforced "the reformers' impulse to shift the mode of representation from the visual to the aural … just as the impulse to abolish the priest as mediator resulted in a different kind of mediation in the person of the preacher".[31]

Therefore, various and multifaceted though it was, the English Renaissance undoubtedly rested upon the centrality of preaching as a means of circulating and persuasive power, especially because of the fragile and unstable nature of social identity. The homilies at the centre of the present essay, then, are intended as a distinguished trait of that 'culture of persuasion' – as Torrance Kirby and Paul G. Stanwood have put it – which is an expression of early modern England. Their words about St Paul's Cross – "the most influential of all public venues in early-modern England"[32] – seem to be valid also as a general description of Reformed England:

> this pulpit remained continuously at the centre of events which transformed England's religious identities, and through this transformation contributed substantially to the emergence of a public arena of discourse animated above all by a 'culture of persuasion'. … At the end of the reign of Elizabeth, religious identity could no longer be assumed as simply 'given' within the accepted order of the world. Structures which had previously connected a hierarchically-ordered cosmos to a parallel, interconnected religious understanding in late-medieval 'sacramental culture' had given way, even among adherents of Rome, to a 'culture of persuasion.'[33]

3. Persuading from the Pulpit: The *Books of Homilies* and Bishop Bonner's Homilies

The publication of the first *Book of Homilies* in 1547 responded to the precise purpose "to instruct the nation in the doctrinal changes crucial to Protestantism ... a principal question for the early English reformers".[34] As Duffy and others have explained, although Henry VIII's separation from Rome had lacerated the unity of English believers, this did not grant the successful and uniform acceptance of the new creed by his subjects. Only under Edward VI was Protestantism implemented in England, as Henry's last interventions still concealed evidence of his compromising attitude towards Catholicism.[35] Analogously, Christopher Haigh presented the young King's accession as a remarkable turning point in the advancement of the Reformed faith, an event that, according to the scholar, brought about "a second, truly Protestant, Reformation".[36] It is not arduous, therefore, to recognise the first *Book of Homilies* as a "significant example of both confidence and fear of the efficacy of preaching", a powerful instrument

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[29] Stephen Greenblatt, *Tyrant: Shakespeare on Politics* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company), 2.
[30] Shell, *Shakespeare and Religion*, 77.
[31] Crockett, *The Play of Paradox,* 6.
[32] Kirby and Stanwood, *Paul's Cross*, 3.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ronald B. Bond, "Cranmer and the Controversy Surrounding Publication of 'Certayne Sermons or Homilies' (1547)", *Renaissance and Reformation/Renaissance et Réforme*, 12.1 (1976), 28.
[35] See Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars* [1992] (New Haven and London: Yale U.P., 2005), particularly chapters 12 and 13.
[36] Haigh, *English Reformations*, 168.

"to communicate and control the central convictions of the realm, and to define a vision of evangelical faith and life for the transformation of England into a commonwealth under the royal supremacy". [37]

The first collection includes twelve homilies, which were published under the large influence of Thomas Cranmer, to whom some of them are consensually attributed; the Archbishop's influence on the publication is undeniable and testifies how concerns about the importance of carrying out a plan of meticulous and thorough catechesis had preceded the actual issuing of the *Homilies*: "no bishop spent more time devising homilies after the breach from Rome than Archbishop Thomas Cranmer. Starting in 1534, the preparation of homilies was one of his most important concerns".[38]

The *Preface* to the first *Book*, published under the new King's consent and "by the prudent advice of his most dear beloved uncle Edward, duke of Somerset, governor of his majesty's person ... with the rest of his most honourable council", states that the homilies contain "certain wholesome and godly exhortations, to move the people to honour and worship the Almighty God and diligently to serve him, everyone according to their degree, state and vocation".[39]

Fifteen years later, during the reign of Elizabeth I, a new volume was added (1563), but, although it was clear that this was intended to foster the spread of Protestantism, "which heretofore was set forth by her most loving brother, a prince of worthy memory", the two volumes "were regarded as a separate collection, not being printed together until 1623".[40]

If compared, the two prefaces highlight common elements which feature the special place that homiletics held in the years of the Reformation. One first striking characteristic is that some expressions contained in the 1547 Preface are quoted in the successive volume; the two texts, for example, converge on the threatening reasons which made the publication impelling: "the manifold enormities which heretofore have crept into his grace's realm through the false usurped power of the bishop of Rome"[41] (1547) and "the manifold enormities which heretofore by false doctrine have crept into the Church of God" (1563).[42] The two texts also agree that the solution to this "corrupt, vicious and ungodly living, as also erroneous [and poisoned (1563)] doctrine tending to superstition and idolatry"[43] consists in a more accurate and regular reading of the Bible, "which is the principal guide and leader unto all godliness and virtue" (1547 and 1563).[44] Yet, the author of the 1563 Preface seems to be more aware of the fact that an even more urgent reason has imposed the publication of the volume, that is the worrying state of cultural decadence in which contemporary preachers were, illiteracy and incompetence to preach being among the risks which could jeopardize the spread of the reformed creed: "all they which are appointed ministers have not the gift of preaching to instruct the people which is committed unto them, whereof great inconvenience might rise and ignorance be maintained if some honest remedy be not speedily found and provided".[45] Also, the two prefaces regulate how and when the homilies had to be delivered: on Sundays and holidays during the Communion rite, and read in the very same order as prescribed by the *Book*; in case of longer homilies, these were "broken down into several parts so that they could be read over a few Sundays instead of all at once".[46]

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[37] Michael Pasquarello, "Evangelizing England: The Importance of the Book of Homilies for the Popular Preaching of Hugh Latimer & John Wesley", *The Asbury Journal*, 59.1 (2004), 154.
[38] Wabuda, "Bishops", 559.
[39] Bray, *Homilies,* 3-4
[40] Gerald Bray, "Introduction", in Gerald Bray, ed., *The Books of Homilies: A Critical edition* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2015), 16.
[41] Bray, *Homilies*, 3.
[42] Ibid., 5.
[43] Ibid., 3.
[44] Ibid., 3 and 5. The presence of biblical quotations will be discussed further later.
[45] Ibid., 5.
[46] Bray, "Introduction", 10.

Nevertheless, the fate of the *Books of Homilies* adherently followed the tumultuous development of the Reformation in England, which knew a temporary halt with the accession to the throne of Mary Tudor: during the years of Catholic counter-reformation, the Edwardian collection was suppressed, although the Queen "recognized the value of homilies for maintaining orthodoxy".[47] Several attempts, therefore, were made to produce new sets of homilies, whose aim, together with "numerous books of Catholic teaching and devotion", was "to recreate Catholic understanding by printed sermons, homilies, and works of instruction".[48] The figure who led such a process of restoration was Bishop Edmund Bonner, who "supervised the production in 1555 of Catholic teaching" (216).

Bishop Bonner's homilies were not the only ones to be produced in the years of Mary Tudor's reign, nor did they emerge only as an "attempt to restore Catholic worship and piety";[49] the choice to include them in the present study resides, instead, in the fact that they witness the key role played by homiletics in the years of English Reformation as a powerful means of persuasion. Since Bonner's thirteen texts occupy a central position between the publication of the first and the second *Book of Homilies*, they shed light on those issues which were considered problematic and dubious in the shift from one faith to another.[50]

Therefore, if the three sets of homilies underline the urgency of regular catechesis, "recognized by English and continental reformers alike to be a major part of the new service and a primary instrument for popular religious instruction",[51] at the same time, we should also never forget that English Reformation was radically embedded in the political vicissitudes of the monarchy. As a consequence, the political impact of the homilies, and the fact that their authors adhered to the views of their monarchs, augmented the nature of these texts as political acts of persuasion. For this reason, it is of particular interest to consider the definition that Torrance Kirby and Paul G. Stanwood gave of early modern England as "a world where sermons generally counted among the conventional means of adult education, as vital instruments of popular moral and social guidance, not to mention political control".[52]

In other words, if, on the one hand, the homilies responded to the pastoral care of the reformers to reveal "the nature of God's salvific plan and … how that should dictate actions",[53] the political nature of the Reformation in England, as many scholars have discussed, also requires reconsidering them as proper acts of speech, whose rhetorical nature needs to be explored further:

> For it is likely that most of those who lived in Tudor England experienced Reformation as obedience rather than conversion; they obeyed a monarch's new laws rather than swallowed a preacher's new message. Even the preacher's freedom to convert was circumscribed by official policy; underground proselytizing at risk of persecution would be far less effective than public preaching of an official gospel. Religious change was governed by law, and law was the outcome of politics. The Reformations were begun, defined, sustained, slowed, and revitalized by political events. So the core of a study of English Reformations must be a political story.[54]

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[47] Bond, "Cranmer and the Controversy", 34.

[48] Haigh, *English Reformations*, 216.

[49] Bray, "Introduction", 14.

[50] Christopher Haigh examined the wide circulation of homilies also from an alternative stance as he discussed the question in terms of popularity and distribution. According to him, although Bonner's homilies were welcomed with great enthusiasm – "there were ten editions of the homilies alone" (*English Reformations*, 217) – "publications which supported Mary's policies outnumbered critical works by only two to one, and … English Protestants published larger numbers of controversial tracts in secrecy and exile than Catholics managed with the backing of the state. So Marian Catholics lost the battle of the books" (223).

[51] Bond, "Cranmer and the Controversy", 28.

[52] Kirby and Stanwood, *Paul's Cross*, 1.

[53] Mary Morrissey, "Scripture, Style and Persuasion in Seventeenth-century English Theories of Preaching", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 53.4 (2002), 693.

[54] Haigh, *English Reformations,* 21.

4. Preaching during the English Reformation: A Rhetorical Approach

In the following section, I will analyse some of the homilies collected in the two *Books of Homilies* and in Bishop Bonner's collection from the point of view of their rhetorical strength. Of course, a thorough investigation of all the texts included in the collections should not be expected here; instead, I will consider these texts as a whole, highlighting some peculiar aspects when necessary. General questions related to authorship, genre, language, and style will be examined; these elements will finally illuminate some aspects related to the controversial topics of papal authority and the Eucharist.

The *corpus* of the homilies contained in the *First* and *Second Book of Homilies* and in Bishop Bonner's collection consists of forty-six texts, distributed as follows: twelve (Book One), twenty-one (Book Two), and thirteen (Bonner). Each homily has a clear title which states the main theme.

First Book (31 July 1547)	*Bonner's Homilies* (1555)	*Second Book* (1563)
1. Scripture	1. The creation and fall of man	1. The right use of the Church
2. Sin and Fall	2. The misery of man's fallen state and his condemnation to death	2. Against idolatry
3. Salvation (justification by faith)	3. The redemption of man	3. Repairing churches and keeping them clean
4. Faith	4. How Christ's work of redemption is applicable to man	4. Good works, especially fasting
5. Faith and good works	5. Christian love and charity	5. Against gluttony and drunkenness
6. Love	6. How dangerous a break of charity is	6. Against excess of apparel
7. Against swearing and perjuring	7. The nature of the Church	7. Prayer
8. Falling away from God	8. The authority of the Church	8. The place and time of prayer
9. Fear of death	9. Papal supremacy	9. The use of vernacular in common prayer
10. Civil order and obedience	10. Papal supremacy	10. An answer to people who are offended by certain passages of the Scripture
11. Against adultery	11. The real presence of Christ in the sacrament of the altar	11. Alms and acts of mercy
12. Against contention and brawling	12. Transubstantiation	12. Christmas
	13. Answers to objections made against the sacrament	13. Good Friday
		14. Easter
		15. Worthy reception of the Sacrament
		16. Pentecost
		17. Rogation week
		18. Matrimony
		19. Against idleness
		20. Repentance
		21. Against rebellion

Table 1. Topics of the homilies[55]

4.1 *"To be truly and faithfully instructed": Questions about genre and style*

Given that a homily belongs to the category of communicative acts, one essential element to consider is whether it shares characteristics with other forms of speech. In other words, what genre does a homily

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[55] The table synthesises those found in Bray, "Introduction", 13-18.

belong to? To what extent is this essential in order to understand the rhetorical strength of English Reformation homilies? As George A. Kennedy has argued, there is always a mutual dependence between the genre and the efficacy of a text: "It is often useful to consider the dominant rhetorical genre of a work in determining the intent of the author and the effect upon the audience in the original social situation".[56] In John W. O'Malley's opinion, the question of the genre is crucial to the correct analysis of a homily, since "rhetoric has implications … for literary interpretation";[57] it also reinforces a homily's dimension as a communicative act and its persuasive purpose by illuminating the author's intention to use that specific genre.

Kennedy has also given an exhaustive introduction to the question of genres by referring both to Plato's and Aristotle's well-known traditions; according to the latter, in particular, "there are necessarily three genres of rhetoric: sumbouleutikón, or deliberative; dikanikón, or judicial; and ἐpideiktikón, or demonstrative".[58] The widely inclusive nature of the third genre, which results particularly apt to "enhance knowledge, understanding, or belief", also befits the requirements of religious preaching, which, "except when specifically aimed at a future action on the part of the audience such as receiving baptism or at the judgment of some past action as requiring excommunication or anathema of a heretical doctrine by the church, can be viewed as epideictic".[59]

Although Aristotle's traditional distinction has been questioned over the centuries, it has never ceased to be a precise point of reference to discern the nature of speeches. The Renaissance, though, needed to reinterpret them in the light of the new cultural instances of the time, which included the liturgical celebration among the most popular contexts where persuasive discourses were held; as the previous sections have shown, the place occupied by the homily was central in such contexts: "in the Renaissance and early modern period there are often references to the three genres of the senate, the pulpit, and the bar, an adaptation of the classical triad".[60] New spaces as well as new 'rhetoricians' addressed their discourses in order to persuade their listeners; homilies responded to such mutated conditions as long as they partially abandoned the exclusively didactic tone of the thematic sermon, typical of early Christian and medieval centuries. Yet, the fragmentation of Christian faith imposed that the believers be taught and convinced at the same time, persuaded to agree to one faith or another: "whereas the thematic sermon emphasized *docere* at the expense of *movere* and *delectare*, the demonstrative oration more effectively coordinated teaching with persuasional aims".[61] Thus, didactic and persuasion came to characterise early modern preachers, who were preoccupied with instructing their listeners as well as urging them to adhere to the new faith or to reject it.

Protestant homilies in both *Books* seem to agree on the importance of the double nature of the sermon as their arrangement clearly shows; in fact, the first homilies in the two lists offer dogmatic teachings about the nature of the Church or the history of salvation, while later ones are "more 'pastoral' in content".[62] Bonner's texts, instead, appear to be more focused on doctrinal issues, thus exhibiting a more determined insistence on the didactic aim of preaching, to the detriment of pastoral themes: "He probably felt that such issues were of secondary importance in the battle he was fighting for the restoration of Catholicism".[63]

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[56] George A. Kennedy, "The Genres of Rhetoric", in Stanley E. Porter, ed., *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period (330 BC-AD 400)* (Leiden, New York, Köln: Brill, 1997), 45.

[57] John W. O'Malley, "Content and Rhetorical Forms in Sixteenth-Century Treatises on Preaching", in James J. Murphy, ed., *Renaissance Eloquence: Studies in the Theory and Practice of Renaissance Rhetoric* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), 252.

[58] Kennedy, "The Genres of Rhetoric", 44.

[59] Ibid., 45.

[60] Ibid., 50.

[61] O'Malley, "Content and Rhetorical Forms", 240.

[62] Bray, "Introduction", 12.

[63] Ibid., 16.

The choice of the demonstrative genre by early modern preachers is supported also by analysing the titles of the homilies, which give an account of their authors' aims. According to Cristina Pepe, "the construction of the identity of the genres continues with the introduction of a further criterion, the τέλος", which corresponds to "καλόν/αἰσχρόν ('honorable/disgraceful') for the epideictic".[64] In elaborating the main features of the genres, Aristotle established their aims in terms of binary couples; in Pepe's words, the peculiarity of the demonstrative genre resides in the fact that the Greek philosopher made "the traditional notion of ἐπίδειξις coextensive with that of praise (and its counterpart, blame) and hence in assigning to the epideictic genre the lofty moral task of praising and blaming".[65] Accordingly, the *Homilies* – in particular those contained in the two Protestant *Books* – list texts featuring what O'Malley defined as a "'rhetoric of congratulation' applied to God and his works",[66] along with 'against' sermons or "warnings against anti-social behaviour".[67] Adhering, thus, to the demonstrative nature of their genre, the *Homilies* praise, celebrate, and stimulate, on the one hand, but also warn, deprecate, condemn, and denounce, on the other. Even though the authoritative analysis conducted by John W. Blench underlined that the choice of the genre in Renaissance homiletics is far from rigid and exclusive, the affinity of the homilies in question to the *genus demonstrativum* allows us to align them to what Michael Pasquarello stated about the value of sermons during the Reformation in England: "the pulpit was utilized for preaching Christ, teaching new doctrine, introducing new practices, articulating new visions, and moving listeners to adopt them".[68]

As for their style, it is essential to remember that Cranmer's *Homilies*, as well as Bonner's and those contained in the Elizabethan volume, shared the common feature of being supposed to be read during Sunday liturgy. Both the prefaces to the Protestant sermons ask "all parsons, vicars, curates … to read and declare to their parishioners plainly and distinctly in such order as they stand in the book";[69] similarly, Bishop Bonner, writing to "all parsons and curates within his diocese of London", presented his collection as "somewhat to instruct and teach your flock withal, requiring every one of you that diligently … ye read to your flock".[70] Considering repetitive reading among the most preeminent characteristics of these texts, Ronald B. Bond hypothesised that the effect they may have had on the listeners was anything but exciting, "for the homilies are written in a plain style and … this plainness of style, though conducive to ready understanding, must have grown wearisome".[71] Bond's comment is in agreement with general criticism (Blench, 1964; Auksi, 1995), which maintains that "in this period only the plain and the colloquial styles are found; the Reformers in their fiery zeal to change the religion of England until it accords with the simplicity of 'the Gospel' eschew the mannered elaboration of the ornate style".[72]

Peter Auksi has devoted a noteworthy volume to the in-depth analysis of the use of the plain style in Christian homiletic tradition, which – he argued – "has been gradually appropriated as a description for a religious culture which in its written and material expression has chosen to distinguish itself from more worldly and sensuous styles and forms".[73] In their intent to distance themselves from the embellished

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[64] Cristina Pepe, *The Genres of Rhetorical Speeches in Greek and Roman Antiquity* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), 170.

[65] Ibid., 157.

[66] O'Malley, "Content and Rhetorical Forms", 240. The scholar also interpreted this feature as a further sign of discontinuity and innovation, typical of Renaissance preaching: "Much more important was the change in the materials with which the sermons dealt – the *res*. These became focused more clearly on God's deeds and actions – his *beneficia* – and less on the abstract doctrines that were the standard materials for the thematic, that is, the scholastic, sermon of the Middle Ages". (240)

[67] Bray, "Introduction", 13.

[68] Pasquarello, "Evangelizing England", 154.

[69] Bray, *Homilies*, 4.

[70] Ibid., 122.

[71] Bond, "Cranmer and the Controversy", 33.

[72] John W. Blench, *Preaching in England in The Late Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries: A Study of English Sermons 1450–C.1600* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964), 142.

[73] Peter Auksi, *Christian Plain Style: The Evolution of a Spiritual Ideal* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's Press, 1995), 6.

forms of classical rhetoric, then, Renaissance preachers moulded their own style, according to which the preaching of the Gospel, stripped of unnecessary adornments, might display its own strength and beauty. Plainness and simplicity emerge from these texts as a common trait and as an expression of the shared agreement on the "rhetoric of truth, which seeks the removal of devices".[74] Thus, far from being a sign of inelegance or stylistic coarseness, plainness is the means through which those preachers expressed the rhetorical strength of their message, by replacing the insistence of classical rhetoric on *elocutio* with the persuasive authority of their sources: the Bible and the writings of the Fathers. The peculiar characteristic of the plain style of Reformation homiletics, then, does not consist in the absence of rhetorical devices; rather, it features the recurrent intertwining of the preacher's words with the Word, which determines the speaker's credibility and persuasiveness.[75] In this sense, plainness also characterizes Bonner's collection: the eleventh homily, for example, despite its aim to present the much-debated topic of the Eucharist, does not recur to any particular forms of stylistic eloquence; rather, it emphasises "the undoubted authorities of the Scripture, which declare *plainly* unto us what meat it is that we must eat".[76] The adverb is repeated four times and always in reference to the authority of the Bible, which seems to be the only device sustaining the preacher's teaching.

Although such peculiarity has sometimes been judged as a "movement against humanistic eloquence and the deification of Cicero",[77] more appropriately, it must be viewed and interpreted as an expression of the insistence – fostered by the Reformation and shared by Catholicism – on the dogmatic assertion about the centrality of the Scriptures: "There is … a deeper and simpler sense in Reformation preachers that the beauties of pagan rhetoric are not needed in proclaiming Christ".[78]

Of course, as several scholars have taught,[79] English Reformation homiletics cannot be restricted to one single style; also, I do not intend to argue that all the homilies contained in these collections do not present variations or exceptions. The eleventh homily in the first *Book*, for example, is characterized by a more vehement and passionate language, which suits the theme clearly expressed by the title: *A Sermon Against Whoredom and Uncleanness*. The preacher's style here abundantly recurs to metaphorical expressions, which associate the sin of adultery to images derived from the semantic field of water: "the outrageous sea of adultery", "overflowed", "filthy lake, foul puddle and stinking sink", "incommodities which issue and flow out of this stinking puddle"; in order to support his teaching, here the author resorts to a more elaborate style which reinforces the deprecating tone of the homily by means of what Jeanne Fahnestock defines as "extended metaphor".[80]

Plainness and simplicity reverberate in the *Homilies* also through their themes; such is the case of the first three sermons in the Elizabethan collection of 1563. As the titles suggest, the preacher[81] seems

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[74] Ibid., 271.

[75] Despite general agreement on the fact that plainness came to be a peculiar trait of Renaissance sacred rhetoric, the meaning and use of plain style have been investigated from several perspectives. According to Debora K. Shuger, the insistence on "unadorned sanctity" has produced "reductive dichotomies of oratory and the plain style, rhetoric and philosophy, Ciceronianism and 'Atticism,' *verba* and *res*, and so forth" (*Sacred Rhetoric: The Christian Grand Style in the English Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1988), 3). More recently, Chad Schrock has shown that 'plain' "may even demand adornment" ("Plain Styles: Disillusioned Rhetoric in Edward Sexby's Killing Noe Murder", *Modern Language Review*, 105.2 [2010], 332), which suggests that we should not view plainness as a synonym for inelegance. Mary Morrissey, instead, has underlined the theological dimension of the plain style as an expression of God's revelation through the incarnated Word ("Scripture, Style and Persuasion").

[76] Bray, *Homilies*, 179. Emphasis mine. The relationship between biblical authority and the Eucharist will be discussed further later.

[77] Auksi, *Christian Plain Style*, 238.

[78] Ibid., 268.

[79] See Blench, 1964, *Preaching in England*, chapter 3, and Auksi, *Christian Plain Style*, 1995.

[80] Fahnestock, *Rhetorical Style*, 107.

[81] Although there is no further evidence to support the thesis, the common style of these three texts has suggested common authorship. See Bray, "Introduction", 17.

to be particularly interested in the question of respect and decency in churches; unfortunately, he laments,

> the corruption of these latter days, hath brought into the Church infinite multitudes of images, and the same, with other parts of the temple also, have decked with gold and silver, painted with colours, set them with stone and pearl, clothed them with silks and precious vestures, fantasying untruly that to be the chief decking and adorning of the Temple or house of God and that all people should be the more moved to the due reverence.[82]

These homilies, in other words, support the Protestant polemic against the Catholic tradition of having churches richly and splendidly decorated. Basing their theological views on the interpretation of faith as an inner spiritual process, the Reformers generally denounced and rejected the "allegedly excessive display and outward pomp of Catholic buildings",[83] which they regarded as a source of sinful distraction. Therefore, by warning against the sin of idolatry, which the *Homily* intends as connected with the excesses of outer embellishments and superfluous decorations – "making, setting up, painting, gilding, clothing and decking of dumb and dead images which be great puppets and mauments"[84] – these texts highlight "the topos of truth's nakedness",[85] thus creating a strong association between the necessity to adopt a plain and simple style in preaching with the Reformers' option for a barer and unadorned conception of art in general:

> The Renaissance assault on eloquence was also fuelled in part by Cicero's view of style and rhetoric as a covering added to thought. To the religious imagination particularly, this habit of thought suggested and exaggerated other analogies which implied that artful style of any degree was deceptive clothing, coloration, trickery, merely outward adorning, and so on. The Bible's concern with hypocrisy deepened further the moral suspicion of beautiful verbal surfaces among the religious.[86]

4.2 *"Words of everlasting life": The Homilies and Biblical Authority*

The very first homily in the *First Book*, whose title is *A Fruitful Exhortation to the Reading and Knowledge of Holy Scripture*, clarifies that if the aim of the collection was to "move the people to honour and worship Almighty God, and diligently to serve him",[87] the most urgent means to achieve such a goal was the "knowledge of Holy Scripture".[88] The first sermon does not only recommend the faithful to be familiar with the Scripture but establishes a paradigmatic homiletic style which consists in the frequent presence of biblical quotations and references throughout the texts, a trait which drives them away from the hagiographic tendency of medieval preaching: "miracle stories and saints' lives were the stuff of medieval sermons, particularly those based on the most common sermon collections".[89] Also, the Reformers' insistence on faithful reference to the Bible constituted a point of rupture from medieval preaching in the sense that adherence to biblical truth was a preeminent way to free people from 'popish' and, therefore, superstitious expressions of faith. This does not mean, of course, that the previous centuries had disregarded the necessity to embed preaching within a precise and accurate biblical framework, according to St. Jerome's insistence on the importance of knowing the Scriptures as a point of reference in Christian evangelization;[90] nor does it imply that biblical references were absent from

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[82] Bray, *Homilies*, 217.
[83] Auksi, *Christian Plain Style*, 216.
[84] Bray, *Homilies*, 290.
[85] Auksi, *Christian Plain Style*, 234.
[86] Ibid., 242.
[87] Bray, *Homilies*, 4.
[88] Ibid., 7.
[89] Carlson, "The Boring of the Ear", 252.
[90] "Not to know the Scriptures is to be ignorant of Christ" (Jerome, *Prologus ad Isaiam*, quoted in Bray, *Homilies*, 368).

Catholic homilies, as will be discussed later. Rather, the Reformation progressively rejected the traditional insistence on the allegorical interpretation of the Bible, in favour of "a concern for the native and original meaning of biblical expressions depending upon a knowledge of the original languages of the sacred books".[91]

As the main promoter of this innovative way of preaching, Thomas Cranmer himself began to make extensive use of biblical passages in his sermons: "He wished to replace traditional homilies, which often featured pious stories about the saints and their miracles, with new material based upon scripture. This shift to scripturally based homilies was an important innovation".[92] In fact, the Reformation witnessed an inversion of the medieval concept of 'seeing' the contents of faith through the artistic representation of the Bible in order to sustain the faithful's poor literacy. Although the homily had always been part of the rite, what the Reformation proposed, then, was the insistence on the presence of the Scripture as a means to sustain the aural dimension of faith more than the Medieval predilection for the visual one:

> Because the Bible was the chief source for the rhetoric of the homilies, their aim was to imitate the language of Scripture, and in particular, its examples, thus replacing religious images with the image of the Word-*pictura* with *scriptura*. This biblically shaped style renders the sermons more forceful and vivid, while increasing their clarity and immediacy, yet keeping their teaching grounded in the soil of Scripture.[93]

More than highlighting the numerous references to the Bible interwoven in these texts, it seems noteworthy to consider how similarly, or differently, Protestant and Catholic preachers used the sacred texts to bring about "the exhortation of hearers to follow the doctrines presented in a sermon".[94]

The first part of the *Fruitful Exhortation* celebrates the prominence of the Bible in praising terms, yet it is the second part which clarifies the special role assigned to the Scriptures and their use to support the main tenets of the faith. The section lists two possible reasons for disaffection towards the Word of God: some people "dare not read Holy Scripture, lest through their ignorance they should fall into error"; others complain about "the difficulty to understand it and the hardness thereof is so great that it is meet to be read only of clerks and learned men".[95] The first homily, in other words, while stating the importance of the Bible in the life of the faithful, also deals with the very first controversial issue regarding the gulf between the access to the Sacred texts by the clergy and the people. Through the recurrent use of biblical references, the homily witnesses a way of preaching which will be standardized in the next years to the point that, as Barret J. Miller has explained, "it seems clear that the book's publication is a concrete expression of the conviction that the Bible and its teaching should be available to all Christians in the context of some normative teaching and exposition of holy scripture".[96] Furthermore, not only does the text provide an imperative invitation to 'know' the Bible, but it interestingly insists on 'reading' it, a verb which is repeated forty-three times throughout the homily.[97]

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[91] Blench, *Preaching in England*, 40.
[92] Susan Wabuda, "Bishops and the Provision of Homilies", 551. In her more recent study, *Preaching during the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2002), Wabuda has also explained that the popularity of preaching in early modern England should not be viewed as a revolutionary presence itself as opposed to a stagnant disregard of the homiletic genre in late Middle Ages: "A persistent myth has haunted the scholarly and popular mind that sermons were relatively rare before the Reformation" (26). Instead, she argues, "sermons were part of the regular life of English churches long before the breach with Rome" (Ibid.).
[93] Pasquarello, "Evangelizing England", 156.
[94] Morrissey, "Scripture, Style and Persuasion", 694.
[95] Bray, *Homilies*, 10.
[96] Barrett J. Miller, "The First Book of Homilies and the Doctrine of Holy Scripture", *Anglican and Episcopal History*, 66.4 (1997), 444.
[97] Among the many examples: "let us reverently hear and read Holy Scripture" (Bray, *Homilies*, 7); "by diligent hearing and reading thereof" (10); "I shall show you how you may read it without danger of error" (11).

Such insistence results of particular interest, especially if compared to what Susan Wabuda has taught about late-medieval tradition: "only a deacon or a priest, who had taken the most solemn vows at the highest levels of holy orders, could read the Gospel text".[98] The *Exhortation*, therefore, suggests a closer contact of the people with the Scripture by explicitly inviting them to read it, thus creating a bond of proximity not mediated by the ministers.

This intimacy is reinforced in the tenth homily contained in the 1563 *Book*, which is entitled *An Information for Them Which Take Offence at Certain Places of the Holy Scripture*. Although the text is more concerned with giving an exegetical explanation of those passages which cause 'offences', it insists on suggesting access to the Scripture by showing an even more noteworthy recurrence. Here, the invitation to 'read' the Bible is repeatedly connected with hearing; in the text 'reading' is associated with 'hearing' ten times,[99] thus creating a strong invitation to have access to the Scripture by "hearing and reading".[100] If hearing the Bible is among the opportunities provided by the *Homilies* themselves, as they are "to be grounded in holy scripture",[101] this Elizabethan sermon reinforces the idea that 'reading' is supposed to be a more intimate and personal act of proximity to the Bible and warns against those who "pull out with violence the Holy Bibles out of the people's hands".[102] Finally, reading is also intended as an autonomous action to be performed by the faithful even outside the liturgical context, as the second homily in the Elizabethan volume, *An Homily Against Peril of Idolatry and Superfluous Decking of Churches*, unmistakably states: "The which places, as I exhort you often and diligently to read, so are they too long at this present to be rehearsed in an homily".[103]

An opposite position emerges when we approach Henry Pendelton's *An Homily of the Authority of the Church, Declaring What Commodity and Profit We Have Thereby*, the eighth homily in Bonner's Catholic collection. He made immediately clear that his aim was "to declare in what special points this authority doth consist, and that same authority was not only given to the apostles of Christ but also to their successors in the catholic church, ever to endure";[104] then the homily goes on to list what such authority consists of and, interestingly, it begins by referring to the importance of the Bible and the necessity to have its interpretation mediated by the Catholic Church: "First, Almighty God hath given power and authority to the catholic church to have the true sense and understanding of the Holy Scripture, yea and to approve also reprove, all writings as Scripture or no Scripture".[105] Therefore, against Protestant preachers' insistence on direct and proximate access to the Bible by hearing and reading it, the homily warns against any personal interpretation since "if in such case ye will fly from the catholic church and ask counsel of yourselves or of any that doth swerve from the said church, then … you shall fall from ignorance to error and from doubting and disputing to plain heresy, and so from one to another, to the utter confusion of the body and soul".[106]

As the text explicitly states, biblical authority is always intertwined with the authority of the Church, a theme that Catholic preachers developed in a group of three texts in Bonner's collection. A close reading of the eighth, the ninth, and the tenth homily allows us to infer that if the presence of biblical quotations is a common feature both of Protestant and Catholic homilies, in the latter the argument of authority is discussed from a different perspective, while the Scriptures serve the purpose to endorse the Catholic belief in the authority of the Roman See.

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[98] Wabuda, *Preaching during the English Reformation*, 28.
[99] Eleven if one considers the reference to "ears and eyes" (Bray, *Homilies*, 367).
[100] Bray, *Homilies*, 366.
[101] Miller, "The First Book of Homilies", 443.
[102] Bray, *Homilies*, 366.
[103] Ibid., 223.
[104] Ibid., 160.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid., 163.

Interestingly, these homilies all deal with the nature of the church and, in particular, with "the most important theme of controversy ... that of the primacy of the Pope".[107] These texts converge on discussing the topic in terms of power and authority, which, deriving from St. Peter, who had "more authority general than any one of the apostles else",[108] are exercised through "the primacy and supremity of the see of Rome as an authority instituted by Christ".[109] To such authority, the preacher exhorts, the faithful had to adhere as "obedient children in the bosom of our mother".[110] Throughout the three homilies, the term 'authority' is repeated thirty-five times – sometimes associated with the term 'power' – but never is it related to the Bible *per se*; more remarkably, instead, the authors make use of the Scripture to shift the question of authority from the Protestant insistence on *sola Scriptura* to the necessary mediation of the church, "instituted … for the spiritual edifying of the whole body in the faith and for the defence of the whole body, from the poison of heresy".[111] Furthermore, the author of the eighth homily teaches that the origin of the Bible itself depended on the authority of the church, thus establishing the latter as pre-eminent: "for the space of certain years, there was no gospel at all written, but all things concerning the faithful Christians were ruled by the disciples of Christ, being the heads of the church".[112]

Catholic apology of papal primacy is counterbalanced, of course, by Protestant homilies, which also insist on the necessity to show obedience and respect to authorities. However, these are identified with "the king's majesty, supreme head over all, and next, to his honourable council and all to other noblemen, magistrates and officers, which by God's goodness be place and ordered".[113] Nevertheless, although the judgment of Protestant homilies in both collections is explicitly pungent and acute against what is considered 'Roman', from the point of view of their style, they lack "scurrility in preaching against the primacy".[114]

In the analysis of Catholic homilies collected in Bonner's volume, one last example regarding the authority and the presence of biblical quotations is worth mentioning. As the list of titles clearly shows, these preachers were more concerned with doctrinal issues than their Protestant antagonists, whose sermons were "more exclusively theological than those of the first book".[115] The homilies regarding the nature of the Church and Roman primacy are followed by a series of three texts, all dealing with the other most controversial issue dividing early modern Christianity: the Eucharist.[116] The author of the eleventh homily addresses the faithful straightforwardly and aims to teach them their "duties", among which "one of the chief is diligently to prepare themselves to the worthy receiving of the blessed sacrament of the altar".[117] As stated before, the convincing nature of the Bible is acknowledged as the source of faith: "The faith which we must have in our hearts ... is to be builded likewise upon the undoubted authorities of the Scripture",[118] states the preacher. Of course, the author quotes the main passages from the Gospel that refer to the institution of the Eucharist, yet biblical references seem to be recognized here as authoritative *per se*, without the necessity to be interpreted or mediated since their meaning is, according to the preacher, "plain": it is the Scripture that "most *plainly* declareth unto us

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[107] Blench, *Preaching in England,* 253.
[108] Bray, *Homilies*, 172.
[109] Ibid., 178.
[110] Ibid., 166.
[111] Ibid., 168.
[112] Ibid., 162.
[113] Ibid., 87.
[114] Blench, *Preaching in England,* 254.
[115] Bray, "Introduction", 16.
[116] For a more detailed analysis of the Eucharistic discourse and its impact on the Reformation, see Lee Palmer Wandel, *The Eucharist and the Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2006); David Aers and Sarah Beckwith, "The Eucharist", in Brian Cummings and James Simpson, eds., *Cultural Reformations* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 2016), 153-165.
[117] Bray, *Homilies*, 179.
[118] Ibid.

that this sacrament is a marvellous worthy mystery".[119] In particular, when the preacher refers to the very much debated words spoken by Jesus during the Last Supper, he seems to support the idea that the faithful should adhere to the Catholic teaching about the real presence without any "exposition or interpretation of them"; "No evangelist", he continues, "maketh any exposition because the words are *plainly* and simply to be taken as they were spoken".[120]

Nevertheless, if the belief in the institution of the Sacrament could be confessed based on the plain and authoritative firmness of the Bible, the author of the *Homily about Transubstantiation* seems to be more aware of the controversial nature of the argument that came to be the most divisive and scandalous one in the years of the Reformation: "Obsession with transubstantiation, reification of the *corpus verum* and its warranting… sets the framework for teaching Christian about the Eucharist".[121] Therefore, in order to support his position, while quoting from the Bible, he explicitly states the necessity to resort to Catholic tradition: "the general belief of the catholic church (if there was nothing else) ought and may be sufficient ground for every godly man to build up his conscience upon".[122] Once again, then, Catholic preachers, while acknowledging the authoritative nature of the Bible, teach and persuade their listeners to conform their beliefs to the faith of the Church.

Considering all this, it may be possible to conclude that the homilies contained in the *First* and *Second Book*, as well as those belonging to Bonner's collection, adhere to the general characteristic of being firmly rooted in the Scripture: "the art of preaching in the Elizabethan and early Stuart Church ... an act of biblical interpretation whereby the teachings of the Bible were made relevant (or applied) to the circumstances of the sermon and to the hearers' lives".[123] Yet, here the Bible functions also as a cultural border as well as a rhetorical means of persuasion, whose powerful aim is to "carry the weight of proving or authorizing the point or points in question".[124]

4.3 *"In a tounge that is understanded of the hearers"*: Latin as a Means of Persuasion

The faithful gathered on Sunday after 1558 may have felt a sense of bewildering novelty while listening to the very first lines of the *Homily of the Creation and Fall of Man*, which introduces Bishop Bonner's collection. The text starts by quoting a psalm[125] which explicitly states the theme of the sermon: man's creation. Yet, the quotation would sound like this: "*Scitote, quoniam ipse est Dominus, ipse fecit nos, et non ipsi nos*".[126] Later, quoting from Genesis, the same homily reads: "*Vidit Deus omnia quae fecerat et errant valde bona*".[127] Bewilderment, of course – if this was the case – could not be attributed to the biblical references contained in the homily; rather, listeners may have recognized the presence of old-fashioned, outdated sounds belonging to a language which epitomized the restoration of Catholicism during Marian regime.

Undoubtedly, Protestantism may be interpreted as a 'reformation of language', in the sense that the shift from one faith to another can also be viewed from a linguistic perspective: the shift, in other words, from a thoroughly Latin liturgy to the use of translations into national languages. Interestingly, Peter Horsfield has analysed European Reformation in terms of predominance and power achieved through language and media. Luther's written production in Germany as well as the massive circulation of its printed versions – Horsfield maintains – allowed reformed ideas to be spread quickly and easily:

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[119] Ibid., 180. Emphasis mine.
[120] Ibid., 180-181. Emphasis mine.
[121] Aers and Beckwith, "The Eucharist", 158.
[122] Ibid., 183.
[123] Morrissey, "Scripture, Style and Persuasion", 693.
[124] Miller, "The First Book of Homilies", 465.
[125] Psalm 100:3. Biblical references are from *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2007).
[126] Bray, *Homilies*, 123.
[127] Genesis 1:31.

> Building on the cultural changes of the Renaissance and its humanists and in cahoots with the commercial printers, Luther achieved more than just putting into the marketplace new perspectives on Christian beliefs and practices. By shifting religious discourse into the vernacular of German and in a style of German that appealed to a mass/popular audience, he subverted the linguistic monopoly on which the Church's authority and political control had been built.[128]

English Protestantism followed its German counterpart soon after with the publication of a Bible in vernacular (1525), which consecrated the linguistic nature of the Reformation: "The monopoly of the Catholic Church over the language of faith had been broken and Protestant Christianity in the local vernaculars had become politically established in a number of European countries".[129]

The presence of quotations in Latin in Bonner's collection, then, must be intended as a choice which is more than merely aesthetic. They represent an evident rhetorical device whose aim is to assert an ideological shift: the effort to restore a form of supremacy through language, a stylistic feature which epitomises the cultural and religious background of Marian restoration: "language", Tim William Machan has reminded us, "is more than a structured code. For speakers, language is a lived experience, used to accomplish real tasks in real time".[130]

Conversely, the presence of Latin in the first *Book* is exceptional and limited to the eleventh homily, *A Sermon Against Whoredom and Uncleanness*. This single occurrence, though, does not contradict Cranmer's whole project, who "was at work on sermons in the vernacular as early as 1539";[131] rather, it bears witness to a long and uneasy process of adaptation and inculturation which had been preceded by a sort of liturgical bilingualism: "before the Reformation, homilies were often printed in Latin, and could be delivered in that language, or in English".[132] From a linguistic perspective, therefore, homiletics came to function as a mighty signpost of the Reformation. The progression and expansion of Protestant liturgy coexisted with, rather, consisted in a process of translation: the homily "was when the priest, in the intimacy of the parish, best represented Christ in his preaching ministry, and explained in English texts that had just been presented in Latin. In the homily, the pericopes were Englished, then explained and expounded, their relevance to daily life was discussed and the spirit of God in them was revealed to the congregation".[133]

The question of the presence of Latin quotations in the *Homilies* is even more noticeable when we turn to the Elizabethan *Book* and, in particular, the ninth homily, whose title is *Common Prayer and Sacraments Ought to be Ministered in a Tongue that is Understanded of the Hearers*. After stating the aim of the homily, which is to "consider first, what prayer is and what sacrament is, and then how many sorts of prayer there be and how many sacraments",[134] the preacher inquires whether "public or common rite … to be ministered in a tongue unknown or not understand of the minister or people; yea, and whether any person may privately use any vocal prayer in a language that he himself understandeth not".[135] "To this question", the homily authoritatively and decisively declares: "we must answer, No".[136]

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[128] Peter Horsfield, "Power, Control and Religious Language: Latin and Vernacular Contests in the Christian Medieval and Reformation Periods", in Kennet Granholm et al., eds., *Religion, Media, and Social Change* (New York and London: Routledge, 2014), 31.
[129] Ibid., 34.
[130] Tim William Machan, "When English Became Latin", in Brian Cummings and James Simpson, eds., *Cultural Reformations* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 2010), 248.
[131] Bond, "Cranmer and the Controversy", 28.
[132] Wabuda, "Bishops and the Provision of Homilies", 553.
[133] Wabuda, *Preaching during the English Reformation*, 32.
[134] Bray, *Homilies*, 355.
[135] Ibid., 359.
[136] Ibid.

The author goes on to explain the reasons for his denial by structuring his speech in three sections: first, he states, it is necessary to celebrate public rites and the sacraments in a "known language ... to end that the congregation of Christ might from time to time be put in remembrance of their unity".[137] To support his position, he first quotes from the Bible and then from the Fathers of the Church: "thus are we taught by the Scriptures and ancient doctors that in the administration of common prayer and sacraments no tongue unknown to the hearers ought to be used".[138] Yet, one might ask, does the preacher's insistence on the fact that the language to be used during the liturgy must be understandable by the congregation mean that 'any' language may fit the purpose as long as it is comprehensible? Although the homily never mentions Latin plainly, the text openly enters the confessional controversy by associating it with the debated question of the pope's primacy: "As for the time since Christ, till that usurped power of Rome began to spread itself, and to enforce all the nations of Europe to have the Romish language in admiration, it appeareth, by the consent of the most ancient and learned writers, that there was no strange or unknown tongue used in the congregations of Christ".[139] By advocating the use of an understandable language, then, the preacher is not simply suggesting the presence of the vernacular as much as he is distancing himself and his congregation from Latin as a distinguishing feature of Catholic faith.

The homily also provides one more reason by mentioning Emperor Justinian's decree, which demanded that the clergy should celebrate the rite "with a clear or loud voice, which may be heard of the people".[140] As it is evident, the text does not refer to the type of language to be used, but to the volume of the speaker's voice; despite this, Justinian's declaration is interpreted by the preacher in support of the controversy regarding Latin: "This emperor ... favoured the bishop of Rome, yet we see how plain a decree he maketh for the praying and administering of sacraments in a known language, that the devotion of the hearers might be stirred by knowledge, contrary to *them* that would have ignorance to make devotion".[141] Latin, once again, functions as a cultural mark between the two faiths and helps the preacher to distance himself – and his community – from those who use it in the celebrations of the rites; the choice of the pronoun 'them' performs such distance and makes the gulf between the two communities even larger: "unlike the first and second person pronouns, third person pronouns ... isolate their referents from the essential *I/you* of the rhetorical situation".[142] Finally, the homily reinforces its polemical purpose by defining the 'unknown' language as "barbarous words" and "words disordered".[143] When analysed from a rhetorical perspective, then, the homily's preoccupation to use a language which is "understanded by the hearers" acquires a wider meaning, which is not to be identified with merely pastoral care; rather, it serves the purpose to strengthen religious identity, which – as Helen Ringrow has argued – "is constructed *through language....* Any discussion of religious identity should consider, therefore, the role of language in its construction".[144]

As far as Latin quotations are concerned, the homilies in Bonner's collection display one more stimulating feature. Most of their references to the Bible are indeed in Latin, yet the preacher seems to be preoccupied that his listeners may fully understand him; therefore, almost all quotations are followed by the translation into English, preceded by the phrase "that is". In other words, in a text thoroughly written and read in English, and addressed to English speakers, the preacher intentionally quotes from the Latin version of the Bible; at the same time, he uses a double version of the same quotation in

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[137] Ibid.
[138] Ibid., 363.
[139] Ibid., 360.
[140] Ibid., 363.
[141] Ibid. Emphasis mine.
[142] Fahnestock, 279.
[143] Bray, *Homilies*, 365.
[144] Helen Ringrow, "Identity", in Stephen Pihlaja, ed., *Analysing Religious Discourse* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2021), 276.

English. The Latin quotations do not substitute the English ones; rather, the latter are used – we may conjecture – to make the former understandable by the assembly.

Among the many examples, let us consider the second Catholic homily: *The Homily of the Misery of All Mankind, and His Condemnation to Everlasting Death, by His Own Sin*. As this text is present both in the *First Book* and in the Catholic collection, it lends itself to a better comparison. Attributed to John Harpsfield, together with Bonner's homily about love and charity, the second homily is, according to Gerald Bray, "reproduced from the first book, with slight modifications".[145] In both versions, the first quotation is taken from Genesis (3:19) and is used by the author to support his description of human origins from dust. Besides the "slight modifications" – "turned again/returnest"; "ground/earth",[146] among the others – what is worth noting here is the fact that when compiling the Catholic version of the homily, the author kept the same quotation, but had it preceded by its Latin translation, connected by the phrase "that is to say": "'*In sudore vultus tui vesceris pane, donec revertaris in terram de qua sumptus es : quia pulvis es et in pulverem reverteris,*' that is to say 'In the sweat of thy face thou shalt…'".[147] The same occurs two more times in this homily and in almost all Catholic ones.

What might the authors have desired to communicate by shifting so often from one language to another? Recurrent though it is, the use of Latin is exceptional in the sense that it represents a digression from the main language, which is English; in this regard, Catholic homilies seem to respond to what Fahnestock has argued: "quite deliberately, speakers and writers shift into a different language variety. In a single word, phrase, or sentence they suddenly depart from the prevailing dialect, register, or level and switch to another. Such departures draw attention to themselves by violating the surrounding norm, often with persuasive consequences".[148]

If one considers that Catholic homilies were produced after the publication of the *First Book*, and that this particular one was a revised copy of a former edition, the presence of a Latin quotation may be interpreted as a later intentional act of insertion, as if the author was paying attention not just to the contents that he was communicating, but to the linguistic medium through which such a meaning was conveyed. In other words, the "modifications" do not consist of a few changes, nor does the topic possess a different theological perspective, but the shift from one language to another, we may hypothesize, is an intended act of "violation" from a cultural system of beliefs to another, mediated by a precise linguistic choice.

Finally, the number of Latin quotations in the homilies is of particular importance if one considers the themes that they deal with. As stated above, the arrangement of these texts emphasises the editor's concern with some peculiar issues ranging from doctrinal to pastoral ones. If one considers the homilies dealing with very controversial arguments (papal primacy and the Eucharist, for example), the analysis of the number of occurrences results rather interesting especially if one notices that the Catholic preachers who composed the seventh, the eighth, the ninth, and the tenth homily felt the urgency to use Latin more than in the other texts: nineteen times in the eight homily and eleven in the ninth, for example. Here, then, the presence of Latin seems like a rhetorical choice which underlines the gulf between the two faiths.

In conclusion, the stylistic choice of the authors of some of Bonner's homilies to insert biblical quotations in Latin not only marked the historical passage to the Catholic reign of Mary I, but can be viewed as a persuasive and intentional act of inviting their audience to embrace the restored faith through the precise use of language; thus, we may conclude, by speaking "the language of a rejected religion",[149] these preachers may have given their contribution to the confessional controversy of the time.

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[145] Bray, "Introduction", 14.
[146] Bray, *Homilies*, 14 and 128.
[147] Ibid., 128.
[148] Fahnestock, *Rhetorical Style*, 87.
[149] Machan, "When English Became Latin", 257.

5. Conclusions

The analysis conducted in this essay has tried to investigate the manifold complexity of the English early modern age through the lenses of Protestant and Catholic homiletics; in particular, the homilies gathered in the official collections of the time – the Protestant *Books of Homilies* and Bishop Bonner's homilies – have been scrutinized from the perspective of their nature as persuasive acts of communication. What, according to Maura Nolan, is true for poetic style, may be also valid to understand the complex relationship between these texts and their cultural context: "because poets live at certain moments in time, at certain places and in specific communities of people and texts, their styles are also forged by history in a particular way. … It is in the investigation of what is possible at a particular time that a local, or period, or epochal style may be discerned and elaborated".[150]

Such complexity may be decoded through the interest of early modern thinkers in rhetoric, which allows us to view the age as pervaded by a 'culture of persuasion'. Although new and great emphasis was given to classical rhetoric, whose main canons had been established by Aristotle, the Renaissance interpreted them in the light of mutated social and cultural stances and, in particular, the religious transformation which disaggregated Christian Catholic unity into the fragmented reality of Protestantism. Thus, the pulpit came to function as a place from which to exercise the power of persuasion, which consisted both in catechising the faithful about the new creed, but also in convincing them to reject or adhere to one faith or another.

English Protestant rhetoric was especially exercised through the publication of the *Book of Homilies*, a collection of sermons in two volumes (1547/1563). During the years of Mary I's reign, a new collection, which was named after Bishop Edward Bonner of London (1555), tried to counterweigh the spread of Protestant ideas by restoring Catholic beliefs. All these homilies epitomise the concern shared by their authors to foster their respective cause by means of a repetitive and thorough catechesis conducted during Sunday liturgy.

Not only do the homilies share the common trait of belonging to the *genus demonstrativum*, but they are also arranged in a way that features the τέλος of this genre: these texts celebrate and praise, but also warn and deprecate. Thus, they aim to persuade their listeners to share beliefs and ideas, but also to reject and distance themselves from one faith or another. Furthermore, although plainness is a stylistic feature that the homilies present mostly, this is not to be intended as a form of coarseness or inelegance; instead, despite few exceptions, the general scarcity of rhetorical devices is explained by the fact that their rhetorical strength is rooted in the abundance of biblical quotations, which support the preacher's words.

The presence of biblical quotations also functions as the main controversial feature of English official collections of homilies; in fact, while Protestant preachers exhort their listeners to approach the Bible in a direct way by "hearing and reading" it – also outside the liturgical *Sitz im Leben* – Catholic authors insist on the necessity to trust the mediating role of the Church, thus inhibiting any personal interpretation. This is particularly true when Catholic authors deal with the divisive polemic about papal primacy and transubstantiation.

Finally, the analysis of the homilies from a linguistic perspective has shed light on the use of Latin as a cultural and confessional marker: in the years of Marian restoration, homilies feature a renewed use of the language associated with Catholicism and Rome, which is almost thoroughly rejected, instead, by Protestant preachers. When Catholic authors compiled their volume, they inserted Latin quotations, which may be read as a deliberate act of digression, aiming to enhance the persuasive nature of their speech, especially if one considers those texts copied from the former Protestant *Book*. As a

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[150] Maura Nolan, "Style", in Brian Cummings and James Simpson, eds., *Cultural Reformations* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 2010), 396-419.

consequence, the homilies contribute to identifying language as "a major cultural location where social knowledge, identity and power are fought over and negotiated".[151]

In conclusion, these characteristics strongly reinforce the idea of the English Renaissance as an age of fragile and fragmented social identity, where dynamics of assertion of religious and political power were exercised also by means of rhetorical strategies. Of course, the impact and the success of such strategies will probably remain unknown as the definite implementation of Protestantism in England is rooted in more complex and varied factors. Yet, the stylistic analysis of early modern English homiletics allows us to reconsider and appreciate the nature of these homilies as communicative acts, through which their authors tried to persuade and "push England toward religious consensus".[152]

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[151] Horsfield, "Power, Control and Religious Language", 19.
[152] Bond, "Cranmer and the Controversy", 34.

Clara Neary

"So much of Gandhi Stays within You after Finishing, That It Is as if the Book Never Ended". Empathetic Engagement and Rhetoric in *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*

Abstract: With his abiding insistence that humankind learn to identify with one another, regardless of colour, race or creed, Gandhi is perceived by many as the epitome of empathy. His autobiography *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* was written as a moral guide to others, to assist them in their endeavours to tread a lifelong path of truth. Empathy, that ability to feel with others, is one of the central tenets of Gandhi's doctrine and many readers report empathetic engagement with the text. Certain narrative techniques are thought to be particularly effective in the evocation of empathy in readers, and, through the deployment of corpus stylistic analysis, both their presence in the text and their potential rhetorical efficacy will be investigated.

Keywords: *Gandhi*, *autobiography*, *narrative empathy*, *corpus stylistics*, *deixis*, *rhetoric*

1. Introduction

With its emphasis on universalism – the commonality of all mankind – empathy lies at the very heart of Gandhian ideology and was among the chief doctrines he endeavoured to instil in the hearts and minds of his followers. Described in contemporary reviews as "the exposition of the development of his moral and religious beliefs", his autobiography *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* is but the largest single autobiographical work in a total of one hundred volumes of writing penned by the *Mahatma* or 'Great Soul' who became renowned for his struggles against social inequality and promotion of a 'brotherhood of man'. *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* was written when the author was in his late fifties and published in two volumes, in 1927 and 1929 respectively (later united in a single volume in 1940). The autobiography's title exemplifies Gandhi's perception of his life as structured around the undertaking of a series of "experiments with truth", through which he endeavoured to achieve enlightenment and communion with God. By writing his autobiography in "the form of an objective record of his moral experiments in private and public life, narrated with scientific detachment",[1] and entitling it *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, Gandhi tried to avoid associations with the Western genre of autobiography because "the focus on the self which is required by the genre was anathema to orthodox Hindus, eschewing as they did any assertions of selfhood".[2] The resultant autobiography, Parekh notes, is "concerned not with [Gandhi] but with his experiments; not with his psychological feelings and moods but with his spiritual struggles; not with the transient trivia of his life but with the abiding discoveries he had made in the laboratory of life; not with his self but with his soul".[3] This redirection of autobiographical focus from the self to the soul would, Gandhi believed, be most aptly achieved by focusing

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[1] Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi,* vol. 39 (The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1929), v; cited in Clara Neary, *Gandhi's Autobiographical Construction of Selfhood: The Story of His Experiments with Truth* (Switzerland: Springer International, 2023), 43.
[2] Neary, *Autobiographical*, 42.
[3] Bikhu Parekh, *Colonialism, Tradition and Reform: An Analysis of Gandhi's Political Discourse*, Revised Edition (New Delhi and London: Sage, 1999), 284.

exclusively on these spiritual experiments and their surrounding circumstances, supplemented only by those details of his personal history which directly pertained to the experiments themselves.

Though originally written in Gujarati, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* was almost simultaneously published in English, with the translation carried out by his personal secretary and close friend, Mahadev Desai. However, proficient as he was in English, and protective of all material published under his name, Gandhi was heavily involved in this translation, a translation which ensured the text's accessibility to the whole English-speaking world. Regarded as "one of the great autobiographies of modern times",[4] the English translation of Gandhi's autobiography "is the most widely read version both within India and globally".[5] Consideration of the text's various reviews – contemporaneously to its initial publication, at the time of republication as a single volume in 1940, and indeed twenty- and twenty-first century readings – are indicative of the significant emotional and empathetic engagement experienced by its readers, and evidence its concomitant rhetorical effects. As Charteris Black notes, classical rhetoric "is interested in how speakers achieved their desired effects on audiences in particular contexts, and viewed rhetoric as an art capable of influencing civic life and shaping society".[6] The current study aims to investigate the textual and, specifically, linguistic means by which Gandhi potentially influenced readers of his autobiography by encouraging them to identify with his personal and religious ideals.

A one-time monarchist turned agitator for Indian home rule, a champion of civil disobedience, a reluctant but consummate politician, an advocate of moderate Hinduism and, latterly, a guru of what is now recognised as healthy and sustainable living, Gandhi is described as "arguably the most popular figure of the first half of the twentieth century" and "one of the most eminent luminaries of our time".[7] Einstein's famous assertion that "generations to come will scarce believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth" captures "both the hagiographic tradition that has grown up around Gandhi and the concomitant enigma which voluminous writings on him have failed to penetrate".[8] Personifying "a peculiar mixture of the oriental and the occidental, and of the ancient and the modern",[9] Gandhi's personality mystified even those closest to him. Indeed, an insatiable urge to know the man honoured with the titles 'Father of the Nation' and *Mahatma* has caused the inevitable demythologizing which has taken place in recent decades, the most striking example being the 'celibacy tests' with young women salaciously disclosed in books such as Jad Adams' *Gandhi: Naked Ambition* (2010).[10] Yet, notwithstanding, Gandhi's "considerable influence over his countrymen"[11] remains undeniable.[12] As Parekh notes, an 'important dimension' of this influence resides in the fact that:

> [Gandhi's countrymen] *identified with him*, saw him as a concentrated expression of the qualities they admired in themselves, and knew that their self-respect and well-being were his supreme concerns. Even when they

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[4] Barrett J. Mandel, "Full of Life Now", in James Olney, ed., *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1980), 67.

[5] Clara Neary, "'Truth is like a vast tree': Metaphor Use in Gandhi's Autobiographical Narration", *Metaphor and the Social World*, 7.1, (2017), 103-121. See also Neary, *Autobiographical*, 3.

[6] Jonathan Charteris-Black, *Analysing Political Speeches: Rhetoric, Discourse and Metaphor*, Second Edition (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2018), 3.

[7] Nathaniel Samuel Murrell, "Mohandas K. Gandhi: The Making of an Anti-Colonial Satyagraha Prophet", *Journal of Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies*, 15.1 (2008), 144.

[8] Neary, *Autobiographical*, 11-12.

[9] R. K. Sinha, *M.K. Gandhi: Sources, Ideas and Actions* (New Delhi: Ocean, 2008), ix.

[10] Jad Adams, *Gandhi: Naked Ambition* (London: Quercus, 2010).

[11] David Arnold, *Gandhi* (Harlow: Longman, 2001), cited in Bhikhu Parekh, "Rev. of *Gandhi* by David Arnold", *English Historical Review,* 119.428 (2004), 828.

[12] Indeed, Gandhi's political adversaries were all too aware of his ability to "draw the masses like a magnet" (B. R. Nanda, *In Search of Gandhi: Essays and Reflections*, New Delhi: Oxford U.P., 2002, 59). Asserting Gandhi's complicity in the circumstances surrounding the Jallianwalla Bagh shootings of 1919, one British journalist controversially asked: "When a lot of people get killed in a riot, who is most to blame, a clumsy commander like Dyer, or a consummate sorcerer's apprentice like Gandhi?" (Nanda, *In Search of Gandhi*, 34).

disagreed with his ideas and found some of them archaic, *they identified with the man behind them* and deeply respected and loved him. […] This gave him an immense politico-moral authority which he was able to convert into political power.[13]

Gandhi's ability to make himself "identifiable with" lies at the heart of the spiritual and political authority he wielded. Whilst his influence was not simply a textual phenomenon – his personal charisma is well-documented and he enjoyed a huge following by the largely illiterate rural Indian populace – there is little doubt as to his success in employing "the enormous power of the printed word to disseminate information, to stoke reflection, to offer considered criticism, *and to forge durable relationships on a mass scale without the necessity of reader actually meeting author*".[14] Reviews by readers of the English translation of the autobiography suggest that this ability stems from the twin qualities of veracity and simplicity consistently ascribed to the text. Evidence of its perceived veracity abounds: "Alone of men, he keeps debunking himself and exposing his 'Himalayan blunders'";[15] and "[i]t must be reckoned exceptionally frank, even after the torrent of self-revelation by Great War veterans, actresses, and politicians".[16] Indeed, perceptions of Gandhi as unremittingly honest persist and comparatively jaded twenty-first-century readers continue to find his honesty refreshing, commenting upon the "almost complete lack of artifice in his writing"[17] and declaiming how "Gandhi surprised me with his transparency".[18] As noted by one reviewer, "as his self-humiliation mounts, his stature rises in the readers' eyes".[19] These 'durable relationships' Gandhi forged between himself and his reader are especially interesting, and are evidenced in the following reader review of the autobiography, written in 2000:

> I had expected this book to read as if the writer was a wise man, but it reads like the writer is another human. Gandhi maintains that human connection throughout the book, and while it is sad to end the book, so much of Gandhi stays within you after finishing, that it is as if the book never ended.[20]

The fact that *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* has consistently remained in print and is enduringly popular means that almost a century's worth of reviews of the text are available, which provides an opportunity to interrogate a contention by Suzanne Keen – currently among the foremost authorities on narrative empathy – that "[t]he capacity of a particular [text] to invoke reader's empathy may change over time (and some texts may only activate the empathy of their first, immediate audience".[21] Essentially, Keen argues here that the empathetic potential of a text can be temporally determined. These temporal ties equate, at least partially, with the social and political context in which the text is read: for example, an Indian reading Gandhi's autobiography today is the product of a significantly different socio-political background to one who read the text in pre-Independence India, when Gandhi's influence was at its zenith. Reviews of the autobiography, however, largely illustrate that the text was remarkably constant in successfully engaging its readers emotionally, although the precise nature of that emotional response alters over time. The responses of those who read and reviewed the autobiography in the immediacy of its original publication were potentially influenced by their feelings towards Gandhi's socio-

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[13] Parekh, "Rev. of *Gandhi*", 829, emphasis added.
[14] Chandrahas Choudhury, "Still Making Us Work: Gandhi's Autobiography", *Democratiya*, 16 (Spring/Summer 2009), 212, emphasis added.
[15] Mason Olcott, "Review of Gandhi's Autobiography, by M. K. Gandhi", *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 261 (1949), 191.
[16] *The Times*, 23 September 1930.
[17] These reviews have been taken from commentary on Amazon.com and Amazon.co.uk and offer valuable insight into the nature of present-day engagement with the text. This is from Review 5.
[18] Review 3.
[19] Olcott, "Review of Gandhi's Autobiography", 191.
[20] Review 6.
[21] Suzanne Keen, *Empathy and the Novel* (New York: Oxford U.P., 2007), 74, emphasis in original.

political campaign. A. S. Woodburne, for example, remarks of the autobiography: "What was accomplished in South Africa was amazing.... He is doing a fine service in helping to rid Hinduism of some of the accumulated excrescences and to revitalize it with spiritual power".[22] Woodburne also points out that "[w]hatever may be one's views of his political and economic theories, one cannot but admire the moral integrity and courage of the man".[23] This point is borne out by Wheatley's recognition, in an otherwise negative review, that "[i]t must be admitted, however, that Gandhi is both a great and good man".[24] Twentieth-century readers, however, are temporally divorced from the historical context of pre-Independence India; as such, their emotional response to the autobiography appears to originate primarily from the text itself. There is a tendency to focus on the inspirational aspects of Gandhi's legacy, as attested by the following review: "This book will be an inspiration for anyone, who themselves strive to integrate ideals such as contentment, sacrifice and love for all beings in their dayly [sic] life".[25] Indeed, the text's power to inspire is particularly noted by latter-day readers: "The book has also influenced greatly the way I view life. A very spiritually uplifting book, even for non-Hindus".[26]

In his emphasis on universalism, Gandhi encouraged empathetic engagement between peoples as a means of collapsing racial and cultural boundaries and accentuating the humanity shared by all mankind; his success in forging such relationships appears to be grounded in his ability to stimulate empathy in others by foregrounding his common humanity. This is evidenced in another reader's claim that the text is "a must read for everyone, … a study not only of Ghandi [sic], not only of India nor [sic] nonviolence, it is a study of *what it is to be a human being*" (emphasis added).[27] Indeed, the self-purification necessary for Gandhi's observance of Truth – for adherence to Truth was one of the central tenets of his spiritual and political doctrine – was possible only if he strove towards "[i]dentification with everything that lives" (*Exp,* 453).[28] Gandhi did not recognise the boundaries of caste, gender, geography, ethnicity or culture as barriers to human empathy. As he notes in his autobiography: "To see the universal and all-pervading Spirit of Truth face to face one must be able to love the meanest of creation as oneself" (*Exp*, 453). Gandhi's empathetic ideals also stemmed from his religiously tolerant upbringing and an increasingly syncretic approach to religious ideology which saw him embrace Christianity, Islam and Jainism alongside the Hindu traditions of his birth, all of which impressed upon him the "infinite possibilities of universal love" (*Exp*, 156). The blend of cognitive and corpus stylistic methods employed in this article investigates the potential linguistic origins of the empathetic bond that many readers attest is forged between them and the text/author, a bond with significant rhetorical effects.

2. Narrative Empathy

The emotional consequences of artistic engagement have been debated by scholars as far back as Plato and it has long been known that empathy is "a phenomenon common to our experiences both in friendship and in fiction".[29] Indeed, continued awareness of the empathetic potential of fiction has led to the development of theoretical perspectives on empathy induced by narratives which have evolved from

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[22] Woodburne, *"Gandhi of India"*, 269-270.

[23] Ibid., 269.

[24] Elizabeth D. Wheatley, "'Ghandi [sic] and India', Rev. of *Mahatma Gandhi, His Own Story,* by C. F. Andrews; *Prophets of the New India*, by Romain Rolland; *The Case for India*, by Will Durant; *India, the Land of the Black Pagoda*, by Lowell Thomas; *Disillusioned India*, by Dhan Gopal Mukerji", *The Sewanee Review*, 39.1 (1931), 120.

[25] Review 1.

[26] Review 10.

[27] Review 4.

[28] Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, *An Autobiography, or The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (London: Penguin, 2007, [1940]), 453. Henceforth, citations are included in the text as (*Exp*, page number).

[29] James Harold, "Empathy with Fictions," *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 40 (2000), 342.

multi-disciplinary endeavours to move beyond individualised considerations of interpersonal and aes-thetically-evoked empathy. Defined as "a vicarious, spontaneous sharing of affect, [which] can be pro-voked by witnessing another's emotional state, by hearing about another's condition, or even by read-ing",[30] the term 'empathy' was originally applied, not to inter-personal relationships, but rather to our relationship with art, and can be traced back to late-nineteenth-century Germany. Philosopher Robert Vischer, who coined the term *Einfuhlung* – a literal reference to the practice of 'feeling one's way into' art which was translated into the English word 'empathy' in 1909[31] – emphasised the centrality of im-aginative projection to empathetic engagement with art, noting that during artistic engagement, the viewer "unconsciously projects its own bodily form – and with this also the soul – into the form of the object".[32] It is this projection of oneself into a piece of art, this attempted identification with it whilst remaining simultaneously separate from it, that stimulates the emotional engagement characteristic of empathy.

Empathy is believed to have an evolutionary basis, as originally propounded by Darwin,[33] acting as a key social tool which enables humans and animals alike to recognise and respond appropriately to the needs of others. Neuroscientists currently believe that the communication of empathy in humans is con-trolled by a group of neurons, dubbed 'mirror neurons', which automatically reflect or 'mirror' the per-ceived emotions of another individual. As such, empathy can be conceptualised as a two-stage cognitive-affective process, with the mirror neural mechanism activating "an initial spontaneous sharing of feel-ing" which is subsequently overlaid with "[m]ore complex cognitive responses to others' mental states.[34] Mirror neurons, with their ability to "dissolve the barrier between you and someone else",[35] are critical to the process of empathetic engagement in humans; in a gesture reflective of his renown as a practitioner of empathy, neuroscientists have dubbed these neurons 'Gandhi neurons'.[36]

Narrative empathy is empathy provoked by and sought through the reading of literature and is thought to be associated with prosocial and altruistic behaviour.[37] The empathetic potential of literature has influenced both its production and consumption since the rise of the novel in the eighteenth century, and debate over literature's potential humanitarian consequences continues to rage. Research into nar-rative empathy is experiencing something of a resurgence; Suzanne Keen remarks that speculations about the consequences of literary-reading currently

> dovetail with efforts on the part of contemporary virtue ethicists, political philosophers, educators, theologians, librarians, and interested parties such as authors and publishers to connect the experience of empathy, including its literary form, with outcomes of changed attitudes, improved motives, and better care and justice".[38]

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[30] Suzanne Keen, "A Theory of Narrative Empathy", *Narrative*, 14.3 (October 2006), 208.
[31] Experimental psychologist E.B. Titchener is credited with this translation.
[32] Robert Vischer, "Uber das optische Formgefuhl: Ein Beitrag zur Aesthetik (On the Optical Sense of Form: A Contribution to Aesthetics)", translated in H. F. Mallgrave, et al, eds, *Empathy, Form and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873-1893* (Santa Monica: Getty Centre, 1994), 92.
[33] Charles Darwin, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (London: John Murray, 1872). While Darwin does not use the term 'empathy' explicitly in this essay, as Keen notes, it can be considered part of his consideration of sympathy (Keen, *Empathy and the Novel*, 5).
[34] Vittorio Gallese, "The 'Shared Manifold' Hypothesis: From Mirror Neurons to Empathy", *Journal of Consciousness Studies,* 8 (2001), 35-6.
[35] G. Slack, "'I Feel Your Pain': New proof of 'mirror neurons' explains why we experience the grief and joy of others, and maybe why humans are altruistic. But don't call us Gandhi yet", *Salon*, 5 November 2007, www.salon.com/news/feature/2007/11/05/mirror_neurons, n.p.
[36] Vilayanur Subramanian Ramachandran, "Mirror neurons and imitation as the driving force behind 'the great leap forward' in human evolution", *Edge,* 1st June 2000, www.edge.org/3rd_culture/ramachandran. See also Marco Iacoboni, "Imitation, Empathy, and Mirror Neurons", *Annual Review of Psychology*, 60 (January 2009), 653-670.
[37] Keen, *Empathy and the Novel*, 208.
[38] Keen, "A Theory of Narrative Empathy", 207-8.

However, research into narrative empathy continues to focus largely on fiction genres; for example, a recent special issue of *The Journal of Literary Semantics* on narrative empathy (2023)[39] contained six articles, which, while generically diverse, all analysed fiction texts. De Jonge et al. (2022)[40] found that fictionality did not impact empathetic engagement, but, given Hogan's assertion that "personal memories are crucial to our emotional response to literature",[41] it seems more likely that representation of events within the realm of common human experience will be most effective at eliciting a corresponding emotional response. The autobiographical genre might be supposed particularly adept at the provocation of emotional engagement, characterised as it is by a focus on the subject's formative years and a movement from childhood to adulthood which must resonate with most readers. This contention is supported by Orwell's assertion that while Gandhi's autobiography "is not a literary masterpiece ... [it] is the more impressive because of the commonplaceness of much of its material", comprised as it is of the "normal ambitions of a young Indian student".[42] This hypothesis is further confirmed by research undertaken by Steig (1989)[43] on empathetic engagement, in which he found that a group of readers claiming a general inability to empathetically engage with literature admitted the only exception occurred when reading autobiography. Hence the narrative empathy evoked by an autobiographical text is potentially stronger than that elicited by its fictional generic counterpart. The recognition and identification of the author's ideals – integral to textual empathetic engagement – is greatly simplified by the conflation of author with narrator and subject typical of autobiographical writing.

3. Defining Deixis

Deixis is defined by Lyons as "the location and identification of persons, objects, events, processes and activities being talked about, or referred to, in relation to the spatiotemporal context created and sustained by the act of utterance and the participation in it, typically, of a single speaker and at least one addressee".[44] As such, deixis is comprised of those linguistic units that signal not only the existence of, but most importantly the overall whereabouts of, entities referred to in a discourse situation, relative to the speaker and other interlocutors. Typical examples of deictic 'signposts' include the use of demonstratives, personal pronouns, tense, and time and place adverbs, whilst essential to an understanding of deixis is its egocentricity as "a speaker situates referents, both temporally and spatially, in relation to him- or herself, speaking 'here and now'".[45]

Three of the traditional categories of deixis are considered here: time, place and person. Time deixis refers to "the encoding of temporal points and spans *relative* to the time at which an utterance was spoken (or a written message inscribed)",[46] and is typically encoded using adverbs of time and, particularly, grammatical tense. Place deixis relates to the spatial locations of objects, and their relative proximity or distance from the interlocutors, or from objects with which the interlocutors are familiar and/or aware.[47] Finally, person deixis "concerns the encoding of the role of participants in the speech event in

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[39] See *Journal of Literary Semantics*, 52.2 (2023).

[40] Julia de Jonge, Serena Demichelis, Simone Rebora and Massimo Salgaro, "Operationalizing Perpetrator Studies: Focusing Readers' Reactions to *The Kindly Ones* by Jonathan Littell, *Journal of Literary Semantics*, 51.2 (2022), 147-161.

[41] Patrick Colm Hogan, *Cognitive Science, Literature, and the Arts: A Guide for Humanists* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 308-312.

[42] George Orwell, "Reflections on Gandhi," *George Orwell: Essays* (London: Penguin, 2000 [1949]), 461.

[43] Michael Steig, *Stories of Reading: Subjectivity and Literary Understanding* (Baltimore: John Hopkins U.P., 1989).

[44] John Lyons, *Semantics*, vol 1 & 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1977), 636.

[45] Michael Toolan, *The Stylistics of Fiction: A Literary-Linguistic Approach* (London: Routledge, 1990), 127.

[46] Stephen C. Levinson, *Pragmatics* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1983), 62. Emphasis in original.

[47] Also known as space deixis, Levinson notes that there are two types of place deixis: one involves "the encoding of spatial relations *relative* to the location of the participants in the speech event" (*Pragmatics*, 79, emphasis in original), for example 'the house is two miles away'; the second comprises "the specifications of locations relative to anchorage points in the speech event" (*Pragmatics*, 79), such as 'the house is two miles away from the church'.

which the utterance in question is delivered";[48] it is normally encoded through use of pronouns. When these deictic forms of varying categories of time, place or person are used to indicate the level of psychological proximity which exists between speaker, addressee and/or referent in the discourse situation, they can be considered as comprising examples of empathetic deixis.[49]

4. Analytical Methodology

In her seminal work *Empathy and the Novel* (2007), Suzanne Keen decried the lack of investigation into long-held claims that certain narrative techniques are more successful in evincing readers' empathy and put forward several hypotheses of her own in this regard, some of which have been referenced above. More recent work in the field of literary studies has attempted to redress this. Within stylistics, in particular, there have been several attempts to trace the linguistic and textual origins of narrative empathy. As summarised by Fernandez-Quintanilla and Stradling,[50] these include investigations into the empathetic potential of foregrounding and defamiliarisation;[51]); free indirect style and deixis;[52] point of view and deixis[53]); narrative personal deixis;[54] and, finally, Stradling and Pager-McClymont posit the empathetic potential of pathetic fallacy.[55] Stockwell's (2009) identification of textual attractors also has an empathetic orientation.[56]

In his consideration of the nature of reader-immersion in a text, Toolan (2009) pre-empts much of the abovementioned work in his investigation into the possibility that texts contain emotive sites within which the stimulus for literary empathy and engagement is specifically located.[57] Toolan asserts that the attempted "drawing of the reader into empathy or sympathy with a depicted character [is] achieved by furnishing the textual means with which the reader can 'see into' or *see along with* that character's imagined consciousness", a circumstance achieved through authorial depiction of "a credible scene or situation", alongside the provision of readerly access to the character's internal perspective.[58] Such

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[48] Levinson, *Pragmatics*, 62.

[49] Lyons, among others, perceives empathetic deixis as an additional, separate category of deixis, but I believe that time, place, person and social deixis all contain the potential for empathetic deixis. Indeed, Lyons himself asserts that, in a narrative, "[i]t frequently happens that 'this' is selected rather than 'that', 'here' rather than 'there', and 'now' rather than 'then' when the speaker is personally involved with the entity, situation or place to which he is referring or identifying himself with the attitude or viewpoint of the addressee" (Lyons, *Semantics*, 677).

[50] Carolina Fernandez-Quintanilla and Fransina Stradling. "Introduction: stylistic approaches to narrative empathy", *Journal of Literary Semantics*, 52.2 (2023), 103-121, 112-116.

[51] David S. Miall and Don Kuiken, "Foregrounding, Defamiliarization, and Affect: Response to Literary Stories", *Poetics* 22.5 (1994), 389-407; David S. Miall and Don Kuiken, "What is Literariness? Three Components of Literary Reading", *Discourse Processes*, 28 (1999), 121-138; David S. Miall and Don Kuiken, "A Feeling for Fiction: Becoming What We Behold", *Poetics* 30.4 (2002), 221-241; Frank Hakemulder, "Finding Meaning Through Literature", *Anglistik* 31.1 (2020), 91-110.

[52] Sylvia Adamson, "Subjectivity in Narration: Empathy and Echo", in Marina Yaguello, ed., *Subjecthood and Subjectivity: The Status of the Subject in Linguistic Theory*, (London: Ophrys, 1994, 193-208); Sylvia Adamson, "From Empathetic Deixis to Empathetic Narrative: Stylisation and (De-)subjectivisation as Processes of Language Change", *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 92.1 (1994), 55-88.

[53] Alison Gibbons and Andrea Macrae, eds., *Pronouns in Literature: Positions and Perspectives in Language* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); Sandrine Sorlin, "Introduction: Manipulation in Fiction" in Sandrine Sorlin, ed., *Stylistic Manipulation of the Reader in Contemporary Fiction* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), 1-27.

[54] Caspar J. van Lissa, et al., Difficult Empathy: The Effect of Narrative Perspective on Readers' Engagement with a First-Person Narrator", *Diegesis*, 5.1 (2016), 43-62.

[55] Fransina Stradling and Kimberley Pager-McClymont, "The Role of Pathetic Fallacy in Shaping Narrative Empathy", *Journal of Literary Semantics*, 52.2 (2023), 123-143. https://doiorg.queens.ezp1.qub.ac.uk/10.1515/jls-2023-2009.

[56] Peter Stockwell, *Texture: A Cognitive Aesthetics of Reading* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh U.P., 2009).

[57] Michael Toolan, "Textual signalling of immersion and emotion in the reading of stories: can reader responses and corpus methods converge?". Paper presented at Poetics and Linguistics Association (PALA) 2009 Conference, Middelburg (31 July 2009).

[58] Toolan, "Textual signalling", emphasis in original.

access to "what a character, from their particular standpoint, sees, does, and thinks" typically involves effective use of "individual-oriented deixis", language expressing volitive modality and mental process verbs of evaluative reaction.[59] As an appropriate methodology, reader response testing can be first used to locate potentially emotive sites in a text, followed by the application of corpus stylistic tools to investigate the linguistic composition of such sites. As a robust and methodical linguistic tool which facilitates in-depth lexical and semantic analysis of large tracts of text, the use of corpus stylistics to identify potentially emotive sites in a text is still in its relative infancy yet can be highly effective (see for example Karpenko-Seccombe's (2023) investigation into intertextual foregrounding and defamiliarisation using corpus tools).[60]

Decades-worth of reader reviews of Gandhi's autobiography suggest that the whole text is a site of empathic potential. For the purposes of this article, and due to space restrictions, corpus stylistic methods are used here to pinpoint the use of individual-oriented deixis only, omitting analysis of volitive modality and that of mental process verbs of evaluative reaction. This analysis endeavours to specifically consider whether a formal aspect of Gandhi's autobiography could be credibly implicated in the text's proven ability to stimulate empathy in its readership, as well as to contribute towards answering a more general question posited by Toolan, which is "How (by what means, most crucially) does a poem, story, novel or play cause a reader to be moved, empathize, immersed, [or] involved?".[61] The corpus stylistics tool employed here, Wmatrix, statistically analyses an electronic corpus of linguistic data by tagging words both syntactically and semantically and then produces tables of results demonstrating the over- or underuse of each lexical item in the text in comparison to a representative corpus.[62] Statistically, any result indicating a log likelihood (LL) value greater than 6.63 is deemed significant, and comparative over- or underuse is indicated by a plus or minus sign next to this value. Considering Gandhi's English to be closer to standard British English than Indian English, the British National Corpus (BNC Written) is used as the comparative corpus, whilst remaining aware of potential issues arising from this. For example, given the predominance of first-person pronoun use in autobiographies, comparative analysis of first-person pronoun use in the BNC Written is supplemented by a further comparison of Gandhi's autobiography with a second autobiography, also written by an English-educated Indian politician in the early half of the twentieth century, Jawaharlal Nehru.

5. Results

5.1 *Time Deixis*

5.1.1 *Comparison of Verb Forms*

Given the traditional retrogressive focus of autobiography, it is not surprising that the Part of Speech (POS) tagger in the Wmatrix analysis indicates that, when comparing verb forms in Gandhi's *Experiments* to those in the BNC Written, there is a significant predominance of past tense verb forms in the autobiography (as indicated in Table 1). The most significant distinction occurs in the use of the past

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[59] Ibid.
[60] Tatyana Karpenko-Seccombe, "'The unlikeliest twins': The Role of Intertextual Foregrounding and Defamiliarisation in Creating Empathy in *Meursault, Contre-enquête*", *Journal of Literary Semantics*, 52.2 (2023), 191-212. https://doi-org.queens.ezp1.qub.ac.uk/10.1515/jls-2023-2012.
[61] Toolan, "Textual signalling".
[62] As a semantic field tagger, USAS boasts an accuracy rate of 92% while CLAWS, the POS tagger, has a success rate of 96-97% for written texts; see Paul Rayson "Wmatrix: a web-based corpus processing environment", *Computing Department University of Lancaster* (2009), http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/wmatrix/.

tense form of 'to have' i.e. 'had', which was, comparatively, greatly overused in the autobiography (LL+1368.64; see VHD); followed by 'was' (LL+1249.32; see VBDZ); and the past tense of lexical verbs (LL+991.77; see VVD); 'were' (LL+122.18; see VBDR), 'did' (LL+93.05; see VDD) and 'done' (LL+24.52; see VDN) are also significantly overused. This overall finding is supported by the corresponding underuse of present tense verb forms. The –s form of lexical verbs is significantly underused (LL-701.58, see VVZ), as is 'is' (LL-638.28, see VBZ) and its plural counterpart 'are' (LL-525.11, see VBR), while the base form of lexical verbs, most used in the present tense, occurs approximately seven times less frequently in Gandhi's text than in the BNC Written (LL-61.85, see VV0). Similarly, 'does' and the -ing participle of lexical verbs, a progressive form used most frequently to connote the present, are both also considerably underused (LL-26.88 (see VDZ) and LL-25.09, see VVG) respectively). However, it is significant that there is one instance in which the present tense verb form is overused in *Experiments*, and that is for the singular present tense of 'to be' i.e. 'am' (VBM = LL+40.08). Its use in the text is limited to two contexts: direct speech representation, and Gandhi's present tense musings on past tense events, both of which effectively increase the psychological proximity between text and reader. A textual example of this is: "Whilst I am unable to endorse his claim about the effect his treatment had on me, it certainly infused in me a new hope and a new energy ..." (*Exp*, 408). The prevalence of this present tense verb form, given the extreme underuse of present tense verb variables throughout the text, accentuates the degree to which Gandhi both employed direct speech in the text and gave his present opinions on past events. Both narrative devices have a significant and considerable impact on the empathetic potential of the text.

Item	O1	%1	O2	%2		LL
VHD ('HAD')	1897	1.16	3605	0.37	+	1368.6
VBDZ ('WAS')	3131	1.91	8369	0.86	+	1249.32
VVD (PAST OF LEXICAL VERBS)	6189	3.77	22749	2.35	+	991.77
VVZ (-S FORM OF LEXICAL VERBS)	423	0.26	7602	0.79	-	701.58
VBZ ('IS')	851	0.52	11171	1.15	-	638.28
VBR ('ARE')	291	0.18	5435	0.56	-	525.11
VVI (INFINITIVE)	5664	3.45	24649	2.55	+	399.76
VMK (MODAL CATENATIVE)	130	0.08	93	0.01	+	228.33
VHZ ('HAS')	229	0.14	2901	0.30	-	154.55
VBDR ('WERE')	873	0.53	3319	0.34	+	122.18
VHG ('HAVING')	157	0.10	336	0.03	+	94.76
VDD ('DID')	346	0.21	1086	0.11	+	93.05
VDI ('DO', INFINITIVE)	177	0.11	483	0.05	+	67.49
VV0 (BASE FORM OF LEX. VERB)	1513	0.92	11012	1.14	-	61.85
VM (MODAL AUX.)	2830	1.72	14301	1.48	+	54.71
VVNK (PAST PART. CATENATIVE)	27	0.02	19	0.00	+	47.88
VBM ('AM')	196	0.12	673	0.07	+	40.08
VHI ('HAVE', INFINITIVE)	415	0.25	1763	0.18	+	33.81
VDZ ('DOES')	38	0.02	489	0.05	-	26.88
VVG ('-ING' PART. OF LEXICAL VERB)	2045	1.25	13564	1.40	-	25.09
VDN ('DONE')	79	0.05	235	0.02	+	24.52
VVGK ('ING-' PART. CATENATIVE)	9	0.01	186	0.02	-	20.07

| VB0 | ('BE', BASE FORM) | 4 | 0.00 | 119 | 0.01 | - | 17.44 |

Key:
O1 is observed frequency in Gandhi's autobiography.
O2 is observed frequency in BNC Written Sample.
%1 and %2 values show relative frequencies in the texts.
+ indicates overuse in O1 relative to O2.
- indicates underuse in O1 relative to O2.
The table is sorted on log-likelihood (LL) value to show key items at the top. Results that are not statistically significant have been removed.

Table 1. Comparison of verb forms

5.1.2 *Comparison of Semantic Categories of Time*

Analysis carried out by the semantic tagger yields further interesting results (see Table 2). As mentioned above, while the past tense of verb forms is predictably overused in the text, and the present tense is concomitantly underused, the semantic tagger's 'Time' category (T1.1.2; highlighted in bold) which catalogues and categorises those general terms relating to a present period or point in time, indicates a significant *overuse* of such terms in the text, with a log likelihood of +26.31. The most-frequently used examples in the text are *now, today, yet, daily, present, so far, at the same time, meanwhile,* and *current*. As autobiography typically endeavours to relate events from the writer's past, such over-reliance on time adverbials related to the present is worth consideration. Indeed, and in support of this result, it is interesting to note that Gandhi significantly underuses general terms relating to a past period or point in time as indicated in Table 2 by semantic tag category T1.1.1 (LL-17.65), which captures those lexical items relating to a past point in time (such as 'used to', 'already' etc.). For example, investigation of the context in which the time adverbial 'now', the most frequently used in this category, appears in *Experiments* reveals its use in the text for one of five reasons. Firstly, as a means of comparing past beliefs to present beliefs: textual examples include "My shyness was one of the reasons for this aloofness, which I *now* see was wrong" (*Exp*, 30) and "I am *now* of the opinion that...." (*Exp*, 31). Secondly, it is used to denote changes in the state of things over time: for example, of the Rajasthani Court we are told: "It is *now* extinct...." (*Exp*, 19). Thirdly, it is used when Gandhi addresses the reader directly: "One thing, however, I must mention *now*...." (*Exp*, 38). Fourthly, it appears frequently in instances of direct speech, and refers in such cases to the present tense rendering of a past tense event: for example, "Turning to my mother he said: "*Now*, I must leave" (*Exp*, 49). Finally, it is used to confer immediacy to past tense situations, an example being "*Now* I suddenly managed to muster up courage" (*Exp*, 52) and "But I had found my feet *now*" (*Exp*, 59). In its consistent comparison of past with present beliefs, prioritisation of present attitudes and states over those in the past, frequent direct authorial addresses to the reader, rendering of large tracts of conversation into direct speech, and deliberate employment of temporally prox-imising adverbs, the text effectively bridges the gap between past and present, collapsing temporal boundaries so the past becomes, to the reader, the present. As Keen asserts, by emphasising the present, rather than the past tense, Gandhi's text "create[s] effects of immediacy and direct connection",[63] consequently increasing the potential for readers' empathetic engagement.

Further consideration of other semantic categories of time indicates, for example, that this text significantly overuses terms associated with commencement and continuity as indicated in Table 2. The semantic category T2+ denotes lexical items signifying 'Time: Beginning', with the number of 'pluses' signifying a progressively stronger sense of 'beginning' (and concomitantly weaker sense of 'ending'). The significant overuse of lexical items within the semantic categories T2++ (LL+14.33) and T2+++

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[63] Keen, *Empathy and the Novel*, 95.

(LL+11.07) illustrates the relative frequency of words associated with commencement and infrequency of those associated with 'ending', as indeed evidenced by T2- which represents those words associated with 'Time: Ending' (LL-12.02). Examples of T2++ in the text are: *still, remained, remain, going on, ever since, continue(d), go on, went on, gradually, constantly, persisted, constant* and *remaining*; examples of T2+++ are: *permanent, eternal, invariably, perpetual, everlasting, permanently, endless* and *unceasingly.* The autobiography correspondingly underuses terms associated with completion. For example, the temporally-continuous term 'still' is used both to illustrate how Gandhi's memory acts as a link between past and present – he frequently remarks, for example, how past events remain "still so vivid in my mind" (*Exp*, 41) – it is also used to depict more tangible temporal links. For example, of his ongoing practice of walking to work daily, he tells us "I am still reaping the benefits of that practice" (*Exp*, 99). Consistency is further indicated using similar temporally continuous terms, as evidenced by the following statement, regarding a favourite morally-didactic childhood book: "it is my perpetual regret that I was not fortunate enough to hear more good books of this kind read during that period" (*Exp*, 46). Hindu society, with its belief in *samsara*, the karmic cycle of death and rebirth, differs from Western society in its conceptualisation of time, which it perceives not as a continuum but as an endless cycle, so that past, present and future all effectively merge into one.

In summary, the statistically significant overuse of the present tense of 'to be' and present tense adverbs of time cumulatively result in an increase in readerly proximity to the text and, consequently, greater potential for a reader's empathetic engagement. Frequent use of direct speech further facilitates this emotional engagement, effectively bringing the past to life via the rendering of the actual words spoken during a discourse event. Using present tense markers to represent past events narratively reframes them as present-tense events, thereby increasing their potential to evoke emotive engagement.

Item	O1	%1	O2	%2		LL	Semantic Category of Time	
T1.3	815	0.50	8327	0.86	-	260.41	Time:	Period
T3-	248	0.15	3043	0.31	-	151.70	Time:	New and young
T1.1	75	0.05	47	0.00	+	141.80	Time:	General
T3+	63	0.04	961	0.10	-	70.93	Time:	Old; grown-up
T1.1.3	638	0.39	4846	0.50	-	38.39	Time:	Future
T4+	22	0.01	367	0.04	-	30.79	Time:	Early
T1.1.2	632	0.39	2961	0.31	+	26.31	Time:	Present; simultaneous
T3---	17	0.01	266	0.03	-	20.40	Time:	New and young
T3++	21	0.01	295	0.03	-	19.06	Time:	Old; grown-up
T3	76	0.05	722	0.07	-	17.75	Time:	Old, new and young; age
T1.1.1	349	0.21	2598	0.27	-	17.65	Time:	Past
T3--	12	0.01	197	0.02	-	16.17	Time:	New and young
T1.3++	33	0.02	83	0.01	+	14.93	Time	period: long
T2++	448	0.27	2162	0.22	+	14.33	Time:	Beginning
T1	399	0.24	1913	0.20	+	13.57	Time	
T1.2	270	0.16	1251	0.13	+	12.30	Time:	Momentary
T2-	278	0.17	2035	0.21	-	12.02	Time:	Ending
T1.3+	86	0.05	733	0.08	-	11.48	Time	period: long
T2+++	46	0.03	150	0.02	+	11.07	Time:	Beginning
T4-	78	0.05	330	0.03	+	6.50	Time:	Late

Key:
O1 is observed frequency in Gandhi's autobiography.
O2 is observed frequency in BNC Written Sample.
%1 and %2 values show relative frequencies in the texts.
+ indicates overuse in O1 relative to O2.

- indicates underuse in O1 relative to O2.
The table is sorted on log-likelihood (LL) value to show key items at the top. Results that are not statistically significant have been removed.

Table 2. Comparison of semantic categories of time

5.2 Place Deixis

To search for instances of place deixis, the text has been analysed using the semantic domain 'Moving, Location, Travel and Transport' (M) (see Table 3). Within this domain the most relevant statistically significant variance in the frequency of use of lexical items in Experiments and the BNC Written occurs within the sub-domain 'Location and Direction' (M6), which picks out all lexical items connected semantically with the location and direction of objects or places relative to the speaker, addressee or known referent. It seems that, with a log likelihood value of +65.7, Gandhi's autobiography employs significantly more place adverbs, demonstratives and related lexical items indicative of location and/or direction than the BNC Written. Furthermore, of the 140 items tagged as such, the single most frequently employed is 'this' (which occurs 674 times), a demonstrative pronoun extremely effective in suggesting proximity to the item, event or state it modifies. The statistically significant overuse of 'this' indicates textual manipulation which ensures that events and states, both in the past and present, appear spatially and psychologically closer. Interestingly, consideration of the use of spatially deictic verbs, as evidenced in the second most significantly used sub-category 'Moving, Coming and Going' (M1), indicates that, textually, Gandhi was more likely to 'go' than to 'come', as verbs associated with spatial movement away from the speaker (Gandhi) predominate in this text. Of the four most frequently used verbs in this semantic category, 'go' and 'went' occur a total of 204 times, while 'come' and 'came' appear a total of 139 times. This is perhaps illustrative of the text's predominant focus on Gandhi's peripatetic years, concluding as it does a mere five years after Gandhi's permanent return to India signalled an end to his travels.

Item	O1	%1	O2	%2		LL	Sub-categories
M7	442	0.27	5888	0.61	-	345.89	Places
M5	20	0.01	643	0.07	-	99.18	Flying and aircraft
M6	2044	1.25	9859	1.02	+	65.70	Location and direction
M8	182	0.11	610	0.06	+	40.25	Stationary
M3	310	0.19	2171	0.22	-	8.32	Transport on land
M1	1848	1.13	10157	1.05	+	7.72	Moving, coming, going
M2	945	0.58	5347	0.55	+	1.39	Pulling, pushing etc
M4	140	0.09	843	0.09	-	0.05	Sailing, swimming etc

Key:
O1 is observed frequency in Gandhi's autobiography.
O2 is observed frequency in BNC Written Sample.
%1 and %2 values show relative frequencies in the texts.
+ indicates overuse in O1 relative to O2.
- indicates underuse in O1 relative to O2.
The table is sorted on log-likelihood (LL) value to show key items at the top. Results that are not statistically significant have been removed.

Table 3. Semantic domain 'Moving, Location, Travel and Transport' (M)

5.3 Person Deixis

Due to the inevitable preponderance of first-person pronoun use associated with representations of direct speech, for the purposes of an initial consideration of person deixis all instances of direct speech were removed from the text prior to running this analysis. Of the 171, 296 words in *Experiments*, a total of 20,577 words are in direct speech: 7685 of these are spoken by Gandhi, while the remaining 12,892 words are attributed to others. For this analysis of person deixis, all instances of direct speech have been removed to specifically gauge Gandhi's personal pronoun use outside of the direct speech contexts in which it so naturally and often necessarily occurs. Consideration of person deixis – that form of deixis which indicates the relationships between speaker, addressee(s) and referents in a discourse situation – yields similarly illuminating results. Comparison of Gandhi's text to the non-autobiographical BNC Written may appear uninformative in this instance, until the inclusion of life-writing and autobiographies within the BNC Written is remembered; in addition, the staggering size of the disparity between the two texts makes such comparison noteworthy. Given the autobiographical nature of Gandhi's text, the significant overuse of first person singular pronouns is not surprising; however, the immensity of the overuse is: as indicated in Table 4, the first person singular subjective personal pronoun 'I' occurs in the text a total of 5049 times (see PPIS1), with a log likelihood of +6332.75, while the first person singular objective personal pronoun, i.e. 'me' (see PPIO1) has a log likelihood of +3026.32 (1666 occurrences). Comparison with personal pronoun use in Nehru's autobiography, in which 'I' occurs 2642 times (LL+1281.73), and 'me' occurs 725 times (+583.05) effectively illustrates the magnitude of such use by Gandhi.[64]

Application of deictic opposition to the use of personal pronouns effectively distinguishes proximate from non-proximate indicators, and is a fundamental part of any consideration of person deixis; on this basis, Toolan asserts that first person pronoun use stimulates proximity between author and reader, with which Leech and Short, among others, readily agree, positing that "the very exposure ... to a character's point of view – his thoughts, emotions, experience – tends to establish an identification with that character, and an alignment with his value picture".[65] Toolan also argues that second person pronouns promote distance, while third person pronoun use has something of a neutral effect, revealing little about the speaker-referent-addressee relationship.[66] The significant preponderance of *most* first person singular and plural pronouns (see also 'us', PPIO2, LL+31.73; the exception is 'we', LL+1.87), used throughout the text coupled with the statistically significant *underuse* of non-proximal second person pronouns ('you'; log likelihood of -1137.39), and the overuse of *most* neutral third person pronouns (the exception is 'they', LL-.28) thus cumulatively stimulate empathetic engagement with Gandhi's autobiography. The hugely significant overuse of first-person pronouns in *Experiments*, evidence and constant reaffirmation of Gandhi's subjective position throughout the text, similarly cultivates a sense of intimacy between text and reader which in turn increases the perceived veracity of Gandhi's self-portrait.

Furthermore, the fact that first-person subjective pronouns ('I') occur three times as frequently (5049 times) as first-person objective pronouns ('me', 1666 times) suggests that Gandhi places himself in the subject position thrice as often as the object position, his persistent assertion of his textual centrality resulting in a portrayal of himself as the performer rather than recipient of action. Indeed, it is further interesting to note that, before the removal of instances of direct speech, the text exhibits greatest pronoun overuse in the case of first-person pronouns, both singular and plural, with (in decreasing order)

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[64] The two autobiographies are of roughly similar length – Nehru's contains 161,365 words while *Experiments* contains 171,296 words. Interestingly, although there are few incidents of direct speech in Nehru's autobiography, of the 58 times when the first personal singular pronoun 'I' does occur, the majority are found within direct speech quotations from Gandhi in conversation with Nehru!

[65] Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short, *Style in Fiction* (London: Pearson Longman, 1981), 275.

[66] Toolan, *Stylistics*, 129.

'I' (LL7197.58), 'me' (LL3270.35), 'us' (LL85.49) and 'we' (LL47.74) being significantly overused. As we have seen, with the exclusion of direct speech, overuse of first-person plural pronouns substantially decreases, with the log likelihood for 'us' being reduced to 31.73 (from 247 to 172 occurrences), while the overuse of 'we' is in fact no longer significant (LL1.87). This indicates that first person plural pronoun use in *Experiments* occurs predominantly in instances of direct speech, attributable to both Gandhi and to others. As such, the disparity between use of first-person singular and first-person plural referents should be considerably greater and more noticeable when direct speech is excluded: indeed, when direct speech is included, 'I' is used 7.84 times more often than its plural counterpart 'we', while 'me' is used 7.62 times more often than 'us'; when direct speech is excluded, 'I' and 'me' are both used 9.7 times more than their plural counterparts. As such, Gandhi's self-portrait is of a singular figure, psychologically and spiritually self-reliant and self-propelled towards action. Furthermore, while first person *plural* objective personal pronoun 'us' is also significantly overused (LL31.73; see PPIO2), the corresponding first person plural *subjective* personal pronoun, 'we', is neither significantly over- nor underused (LL1.87; see PPIS2), indicating that as part of a group Gandhi is more likely to occupy and indeed share the object position; essentially, it is only on such occasions that he relinquishes the role of actor.

Item		O1	%1	O2	%2		LL
PPIS1	('I)	5049	3.53	6898	0.71	+	6332.75
PPIO1	('ME')	1666	1.17	1373	0.14	+	3026.32
PPY	('YOU')	15	0.01	4640	0.48	-	1137.39
APPGE ('MY', 'YOUR' OUR' etc)		3738	2.61	14933	1.54	+	747.09
PPHO2	('THEM')	573	0.40	1535	0.16	+	306.21
PPHO1	('HIM', 'HER')	607	0.42	1917	0.20	+	232.79
PPX1 ('YOURSELF', 'ITSELF' etc.)		294	0.21	850	0.09	+	136.00
PPH1	('IT')	1530	1.07	8211	0.85	+	66.22
PNQO	('WHOM')	60	0.04	129	0.01	+	45.38
PPIO2	('US')	172	0.12	703	0.07	+	31.73
PN1 ('ANYONE', 'NOBODY' etc.)		437	0.31	2193	0.23	+	30.63
PPHS1	('HE', 'SHE')	1361	0.95	7823	0.81	+	30.04
PN121 ('NO-ONE', 'SOMEONE')		34	0.02	74	0.01	+	25.28
PPX2 ('YOURSELVES' etc.)		75	0.05	252	0.03	+	24.83
PNX1	('ONESELF')	8	0.01	6	0.00	+	15.34
PPGE ('MINE', 'YOURS' etc.)		40	0.03	145	0.01	+	10.82

Key:
O1 is observed frequency in Gandhi's autobiography.
O2 is observed frequency in BNC Written Sample.
%1 and %2 values show relative frequencies in the texts.
+ indicates overuse in O1 relative to O2.
- indicates underuse in O1 relative to O2.
The table is sorted on log-likelihood (LL) value to show key items at the top. Results that are not statistically significant have been removed.

Table 4. Comparison of pronoun use

6. Conclusion

The results of the analysis undertaken in this chapter support the hypothesis that autobiographical texts exhibit greater potential for empathetic engagement. One of the potential reasons for this is that recognition and identification of the author's ideals – integral to textual empathetic engagement – is greatly simplified by the conflation of author with narrator and subject typical of autobiographical writing. This study's results also corroborate the many reports of empathetic engagement which readers of Gandhi's autobiography *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* have reported in the almost one hundred years since its initial publication. Corpus stylistic analysis has facilitated the location of potentially empathetic sites in the text. Deictic markers of time, person and place all function as empathetic narrative devices in their contribution towards the reduction of temporal, spatial and psychological proximity between author/narrator/subject and reader. Temporal boundaries are collapsed so that the past becomes the present; personal pronouns are significantly overused, even in comparison with other autobiographical texts; and proximate spatial adverbs are significantly over-employed, all to facilitate readerly emotional engagement with the author/narrator/subject.

Consideration of individually-orientated deixis in Gandhi's autobiography reveals its potential for encouraging empathetic engagement between reader and text; however, it also raises some questions about the nature of empathetic expenditure. Analysis of person deixis, for example, indicates a hugely significant overuse of first-person pronouns in the text. Yet Gandhi, having denounced the archetypal autobiography as a product of the self-obsessed West, insisted that his would be written in a "morally innocent manner",[67] avoiding charges of egocentricity by focusing on the journey, not of his life, but of his *atman* or soul. Parekh indicates what he believes to be Gandhi's failure in this regard, asserting that, in Gandhi's persistent portrayal of "his moods, fears, feelings, hopes and anxieties", his "instances of egotism" and his tendency to get "carried away" by the text's "momentum", Gandhi's autobiography "was sometimes little different from its Western counterpart".[68]

Yet this potential egocentricity has not detracted from the near-persistent ability of Gandhi's autobiography to elicit empathy from its readers, an ability which also demonstrates the autobiography's success in overcoming the two most effective biases of empathetic engagement: the 'here-and-now' and 'familiarity' biases. The 'here-and-now' bias represents the negative correlation between empathetic engagement and geographical and temporal proximity: the further away in time and space the potential target of one's empathy, the less likely one is to empathise. The 'here-and-now' bias is connected to the 'familiarity' bias, which dictates that we are more inclined towards empathy for those who are similar or familiar to us.[69] The relative consistency with which readers – over a period of almost a century and from all parts of the globe – have empathetically engaged with Gandhi's autobiography suggests the text's success in overcoming these biases. It appears likely that a combination of multiple factors – including the presence of potentially empathetic narrative techniques – is complicit in readers' emotional engagement with the autobiography. In the case of *Experiments*, Gandhi's emphasis on universalism – evinced through empathetic engagement with mankind – may also play a significant role.

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[67] Gandhi, quoted in Parekh, *Colonialism*, 284.

[68] Parekh, *Colonialism*, 290.

[69] The origins of both empathetic biases are most likely evolutionary, as noted by Keen: "Whether it is construed as familiarity, similarity, or 'in-group' bias, the reduction of response to those who seem strange, dissimilar, or outside the tribe has been attributed to human evolution" (*Empathy and the Novel*, 19). According to psychologist Martin Hoffman, these biases are a result of a process of natural selection which prioritises the stimulation of empathy among members of the same gene pool (Martin Hoffman, *Empathy and Moral Development: Implications for Caring and Justice* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge U.P., 2000), 13.

Universalist arguments are especially relevant to considerations of cross-cultural and cross-temporal demonstrations of empathetic engagement. Psychologist Dylan Evans insists upon the universality of emotional experience, while recognising individual differences in cultural patterns of emotional response:

> In all places, and at all times, human beings have shared the same basic emotional repertoire. Different cultures have elaborated on this repertoire, exalting different emotions, downgrading others, and embellishing the common feelings with cultural nuances, but these differences are more like those between two interpretations of the same musical work, rather than those between different compositions.[70]

Yet assertions of the universality of human emotions, particularly empathy, continue to be disputed by, amongst others, feminist and postcolonial scholars who denounce universalist claims as evidencing the egocentric perspective of a patriarchal West. Suzanne Keen asserts that the all-encompassing nature of empathetic feeling amounts to "a cultural imperialism of the emotions"[71] while Ashcroft et al implicate universalism in the colonial process, decrying it as a "crucial feature of imperial hegemony" which, in its "assumption (or assertion) of a common humanity" concomitantly elides cultural difference.[72] Hassan, on the other hand, highlights the potentially negative repercussions of privileging cultural difference over cultural similarity: "It can discourage mutual obligation, cripple empathy … lead to hostility, exclusiveness, less respect for others than solidarity with ourselves".[73]

Gandhi's conceptualisation of universalism was wholly idealist; in a nation defined by difference, Gandhi encouraged his compatriots to derive comfort from the essential commonality of humankind. He believed it was only through recognising and accepting one's shared humanity, by comprehending the universality of human emotion, that mankind could embrace *ahimsa* (non-violence). Far from agreeing that conflation of the myriad cultural manifestations of human emotion equated to gender and ethnic homogenisation, Gandhi maintained that the most effective means of promoting cross-cultural understanding was by recognising and accepting commonalities – rather than differences – across cultures. Indeed, as articulated by Keen in the context of narrative empathy, "[w]hether or not human emotions are universal, the expression of *belief in universality* carries with it an optimistic program for transcending cultural differences".[74] By producing an autobiographical text which has stimulated empathetic responses and emotional engagement in readers both in and beyond India over a period of nearly one hundred years, Gandhi's writing illustrates the power of rhetoric to stimulate empathy with dissimilar, spatially- and temporally-distant others.

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[70] Relating this to narrative empathy Evans remarks that "[w]hen we read poems and novels written by authors from different cultures, we recognize the emotions they describe. If emotions were cultural inventions, changing as swiftly as language, these texts would seem alien and impenetrable" (Dylan Evans, *Emotions: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford and New York: Oxford U.P., 2001), 8.

[71] Keen, *Empathy and the Novel*, 147.

[72] Bill Ashcroft et al., *Key Concepts in Postcolonial Studies* (London: Routledge, 1998), 235.

[73] Ihab Hassan, "Queries for Postcolonial Studies", *Philosophy and Literature*, 22.2 (1998), 335.

[74] Keen, *Empathy and the Novel*, 136.

Aoife Beville[1]

Mocking the Devil.
Persuasive Irony in C. S. Lewis's *Screwtape Letters*

Abstract: This paper presents a stylistic analysis of the language of C. S. Lewis's *Screwtape Letters* (1942), a sardonic work of epistolary fiction consisting of letters from one demon to another. The text exploits irony, neologisms, bureaucratese, and other salient linguistic features to elucidate the spiritual, psychological, and moral mechanisms of temptation. Stylistics, understood here as a linguistically informed approach to the study of literary texts, offers the necessary tools to explore the salient lexical, syntactic, and pragmatic choices made within the text to account for the construction of meaning. Furthermore, recent studies in style which have explored the persuasive and communicative functions of irony and satire (Leech, 2007; Fahnestock, 2011). Through both quantitative and qualitative analysis, this paper aims to account for the persuasive perlocutionary effect of the text's ironic tone, paying particular attention to the formal and functional features of irony as a persuasive practice within Lewis's unique work of apologetic fiction.

Keywords: *Stylistics, irony, persuasion, Screwtape Letters, pragmastylistics, apologetics*

1. Introduction

1.1 *Approaching* The Screwtape Letters

C. S. Lewis, perhaps best known for the children's fantasy series *The Chronicles of Narnia* and his popular works in Christian apologetics (*Mere Christianity*, *Miracles, The Problem of Pain*, etc.), was an eminent Oxbridge literary scholar, professor and public persona. Recent criticism has begun to reevaluate his literary production for its aesthetic values rather than focusing solely on the author and his religious beliefs:

> An encouraging development in Lewis scholarship over the last two decades has been the tendency of critics to pay closer attention to his achievement as a literary artist.... More recent critics have made the case that Lewis' works should be valued for their literary excellence, and that his achievements as a writer are equal to that of other, more critically acclaimed, twentieth-century authors.[2]

The text under examination here is, in some ways, difficult to define as it straddles both of these perspectives. *The Screwtape Letters* (*SL*) is at once an ambitious, unique work of epistolary fiction and an enduring, persuasive apologetic text. The letters, of which Lewis – in keeping with the generic conventions – claims only to be the editor, are those of a senior demon, Undersecretary Screwtape, to his nephew, Junior Tempter Wormwood.

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[1] This contribution, as in the case of Chiara Ghezzi's and Emma Pasquali's papers in the present issue, is part of the output of the Argo Research Centre's ongoing research project "La retorica del dare. Modalità argomentative nel discorso religioso tra Oriente e Occidente" (The Rhetoric of Giving: Argumentative Modes in Religious Discourse between East and West) coordinated by Bianca Del Villano and Chiara Ghidini.

[2] Gary L. Tandy, "The Stylistic Achievement of Mere Christianity", *Sehnsucht: The C. S. Lewis Journal*, 5.6 (2011), 127-152.

The letters originally appeared in *The Guardian*,[3] commencing serially in May 1941. Due to their success in serial form, they were published as a bestselling book in 1942. Lewis himself commented on the critical and commercial success[4] of the work in the preface to the 1961 edition and, in private correspondence, referred to it as his most popular work.[5] Despite its serial publication, the composition itself should not be considered sporadic; Lewis composed all the letters before approaching the editor with his proposal and the work functions well as a unit.[6]

Given the premise of the work, that of a senior devil providing detailed instructions on the art and artifice of temptation, the most immediately salient feature of the text is its irony, which will be explored here in its function as a stylistic and rhetorical device. While *SL* may not strictly be considered a novel, it clearly establishes itself as a piece of epistolary fiction,[7] a literary tradition which stretches from Ovid to Richardson and beyond. Only one side of the exchange is given, although the text provides frequent clues to the content of Wormwood's replies as Screwtape references his nephew's reports of minor successes and major failures in the attempt to secure the eternal damnation of the human patient's soul. There is a narrative thrust to the work, revealed in Screwtape's admonishments of his nephew's work on the patient over thirty-one letters. We know little of the patient himself; his name is never revealed, and his occupation is merely hinted at.[8] He lives, less than peacefully, with his mother (see letters 3, 4, and 17). During the course of the correspondence, he falls in love with a Christian woman (see letters 23, 24 and 25). However, the principal complication to the narrative comes in the second letter, in which it is revealed that the patient has converted to Christianity and begun to attend church. Wormwood's purpose is to distract him from the spiritual realm using various tactics recommended by his "affectionate uncle"; he will even briefly seem to have succeeded. However, the recent convert eventually and definitively slips from the junior tempter's clutches, dying suddenly in a selfless attempt to help others during an air raid. The Second World War ('European war' or 'War' in the text) is the ever-present backdrop and a topic upon which Screwtape pontificates, among others, such as politics, religion, relationships, etc.

1.2 *Research questions and methodology*

The primary research questions of this study are the following: How does *SL* function, both as literature and as apologetic argument? What persuasive strategies are used, and how are they linguistically encoded and decoded? What might the effect of such linguistic choices be on the reader? Why is irony employed in the text and what is the outcome of such a stylistic choice?

My research here draws on the theoretical frameworks of stylistic analysis of prose fiction, pragmatics, corpus linguistics, and rhetoric studies to best answer these questions.

Stylistics is a branch of linguistic inquiry concerned with style, as the name suggests. By "style", we mean the linguistic choices within a text that work together to produce its meaning. Stylistics can be understood as a linguistically informed approach to the study of (often literary) texts. The particular

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[3] An Anglican periodical which went out of print in 1951, not to be confused with the major UK newspaper *The Guardian* which retained the title *The Manchester Guardian* until 1959. See Paul McCusker, "Annotations", in *The Screwtape Letters and Screwtape Proposes a Toast: Annotated Edition* (New York: HarperOne, 2013), xxix.

[4] The first impression quickly sold out, the text was reprinted again eight times that year and released in the US the following year. The reviews were generally enthusiastic; for a summary see McCusker, "Annotations".

[5] Clive Staples Lewis, *Lettere ai bambini. Il magico mondo di Narnia nella corrispondenza con i giovani lettori*, trans. by Carlo M. Bajetta (Milano: San Paolo, 2009), 132.

[6] See McCusker "Annotations", xix-xx; Charles A. Huttar, "The Screwtape Letters as Epistolary Fiction", *Journal of Inklings Studies*, 6.1 (2016), 87-125.

[7] For more on genre and generic conventions adhered to within the text, see Huttar, "The Screwtape Letters as Epistolary Fiction".

[8] "defence work", see Clive Staples Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters and Screwtape Proposes a Toast: Annotated Edition* [1942], ed. by Paul McCusker (New York: HarperOne, 2013), 146.

approach that this research will follow – stylistic analysis of prose fiction – is elucidated by Leech and Short.[9] Stylistics, through applying linguistic methodologies to literary texts, offers the necessary tools to explore the salient lexical, syntactic and pragmatic choices made within a text in order to account for the construction of meaning. Lexis is concerned with word choice, etymology and word formation. Syntax is concerned with the grammatical construction of phrases and sentences. Pragmatics is concerned with the context, the speakers and the interactional nature of meaning-making. A thorough stylistic analysis will look at each of these language levels to understand how a text functions.

A key notion in the field of stylistics is defamiliarization or linguistic foregrounding. Leech defines it as follows, "formally, foregrounding is a deviation, or departure, from what is expected in the linguistic code or the social code expressed through language; functionally, it is a special effect or significance conveyed by that departure".[10] Essentially, this means that foregrounding, caused by something unusual (deviation) or by repetition (parallelism) makes some aspect of the text stand out (salience). Rhyme or alliteration, for example, are phonological parallelism. Foregrounding can occur on any linguistic level – phonological, lexical, syntactical, etc.

Irony is an area of great interest in linguistics. In terms of the stylistic analysis of prose, Leech and Short have outlined that "for fictional purposes irony can be defined as a double significance which arises from the contrast in values associated with two different points of view".[11] Thus, quite simply, there is a clash between the point of view of the author (or the implied author) and that of the narrator. Recent pragmatic research includes more complex and nuanced theories and models of irony, neo-Gricean concepts include opposition and pretence, while post-Griceans favour the notion of echoic mention.[12] Attardo posits "inappropriate relevance" as the litmus test for irony.[13] Bertuccelli argues for a nuanced view of irony as a set of complex attitudes.[14] Dynel notes that irony is a form of *overt* untruthfulness that must be recognised by the interlocutor for successful uptake.[15] Jeffries, who also provides a concise summary of various theories of irony, proposes a model incorporating the intricacies of dramatic, situational and textual irony.[16] Essentially, as put forth by Garmendia, "what unites all cases of irony is that the speaker puts forward content that clashes with what she actually intends to communicate, and she does so overtly – meaning that the speaker intends the hearer to recognize both the clash and the intention to make it recognizable".[17] These notions of opposition (clashing), intentionality and recognition (uptake) will be vital to understanding the aesthetic and pragmatic functions of Lewis's irony in *SL*.

The qualitative, stylistic analysis reported here is supported by the tools of corpus linguistics. Corpus stylistics uses computer tools designed to study large quantities of language data. The quantitative investigation, carried out with the #Lancsbox 6.0 software,[18] orients and guides the subsequent

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[9] Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short, *Style in Fiction: A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional Prose*, Second edition (New York: Pearson Longman, 2007).

[10] Geoffrey Leech, "Pragmatics, Discourse Analysis, Stylistics and 'The Celebrated Letter'", in *Language in Literature: Style and Foregrounding* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2008), 86-103.

[11] Leech and Short, *Style in Fiction*, 223.

[12] For a comprehensive discussion, see: Manuel Jobert and Sandrine Sorlin, *The Pragmatics of Irony and Banter* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2018); Joana Garmendia, *Irony* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2018).

[13] Salvatore Attardo, "Irony as relevant inappropriateness", *Journal of Pragmatics,* 32.6 (2000), 793-826.

[14] Marcella Bertuccelli, "Irony as a Complex Attitude", *Lingue e Linguaggi*, 26 (July 2018), 59-80.

[15] Marta Dynel, *Irony, Deception and Humour: Seeking the Truth about Overt and Covert Untruthfulness* (Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2018).

[16] Jeffries, Lesley, "Irony in a Theory of Textual Meaning", in Manuel Jobert and Sandrine Sorlin, eds., *The Pragmatics of Irony and Banter* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2018), 23-39.

[17] Garmendia, *Irony*, 120.

[18] Vaclav Brezina et al., "#LancsBox [Software]" (2020), www.corpora.lancs.ac.uk/lancsbox.

qualitative analysis of text samples. Using the Harper Collins e-book edition,[19] the text of SL, was loaded into the programme as a small corpus consisting of just over 30,000 tokens. The corpus was organised in 33 files (31 letters, the author's preface to the original 1942 edition and the epigraph). The Lancaster-Oslo-Bergen corpus (LOB) was used as a reference corpus, due to its ready availability within LancsBox. It was compiled in the 1970s as a British counterpart to the earlier Brown corpus, which has a similar structure but is made up of texts produced in North America. The texts used were all produced in 1961 – 20 years after the first publication of SL, the same year as the best-selling 1961 edition. LOB was, therefore, deemed useful for extracting comparative data, such as key words and key n-grams, due to both its availability within the #Lancsbox software and its temporal and geographical proximity to the best-selling 1961 edition of SL.

As Table 1, below, shows, the LOBcorpus is a 1 million-word corpus; it is composed of 15 subsets, ranging from press and reviews to religious discourse and genres of fiction.

Name	Language	Texts	Tokens	Additional information
LOB	English	15	1,007,677	Types: 48,349 Lemmas: 43,920
SL	English	33	30,822	Types: 4,596 Lemmas: 4,083

Table 1. Corpora used within the study

A number of preliminary searches were carried out using the Key Words in Context (KWIC), Whelk, and N-grams tools of the #LancsBox 6.0 software.[20] These tools gather and present quantitative information about patterns within the texts (collocations, most frequent and most meaningful tokens, and distribution of tokens across the corpus). The quantitative and comparative data obtained through these tools aided the selection of salient textual examples for in-depth, manual qualitative analysis.

Furthermore, the analysis draws on studies in pragmatics and rhetoric in order to understand the persuasive illocutionary force and perlocutionary effects of the text.[21] The perlocutionary act is that of bringing about an effect (such as persuasion), it is distinguished from the locutionary act (the act of saying) and the illocutionary act (what is being done by saying).[22]

2. Mocking the Devil: Discourse Architecture and Irony

Epistolary fiction inherently constitutes a multi-layered discourse architecture. In the case of *SL* the preface, for example, is written in the voice of the 'author' and signed by him, yet it is not merely a neutral paratextual element, it participates in the fiction of the 'found manuscript' ("I have no intention of explaining how the correspondence which I now offer to the public fell into my hands").[23] The reader is not expected to believe this premise to the text, but there is a sort of *implied* reader that should.[24] The

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[19] Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*.

[20] Brezina et al., "#LancsBox [Software]".

[21] Jeanne Fahnestock, *Rhetorical Style: The Uses of Language in Persuasion*. (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 2011); Randy Allen Harris and Jean Fahnestock, eds, *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Persuasion* (Oxon: Routledge, 2022); Leech, "Stylistics and 'The Celebrated Letter'".

[22] J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1962).

[23] Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*, IX.

[24] Leech and Short, *Style in Fiction*, 206-18.

letters themselves are written from the perspective of Screwtape and addressed to Wormwood; thus, in its simplest form, not accounting for Screwtape's reports of third-party information, the discourse architecture of the text consists of three main layers, which can be represented as in Fig. 1.
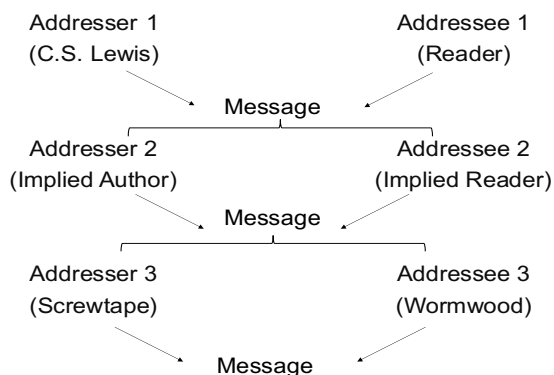

Figure 1. Discourse architecture of *The Screwtape Letters*

Fahnestock, in the context of persuasive discourse, notes the participation framework necessary for the success of irony:

> Narrowly defined, irony makes a claim by saying the opposite, with the further stipulation that the *speaker uses this mode intentionally and expects the hearer to recognise it*. Hence the primary effect of irony is communicating to a hearer that the speaker does not mean what he/she is saying but intends the opposite meaning.[25]

These notions are useful for understanding the function of irony within *SL*. This overtness, or intentionality, is evident within the Preface, in which the author primes the reader for the ensuing ideological clash:

A.   *From* Preface[26]

> Readers are advised to remember that the devil is a liar. Not everything that Screwtape says should be assumed to be true even from his own angle. I have made no attempt to identify any of the human beings mentioned in the letters; but I think it very unlikely that the portraits, say, of Fr Spike or the patient's mother, are wholly just. There is wishful thinking in Hell as well as on Earth.

The premise makes the first-person narrator's unreliability explicit, preparing the reader for the ensuing clash between the author's reputation as a public figure in Christianity and the narrative voice which vehemently argues against Christianity. The preface, therefore, serves to invite the reader to assume an attitude of complicity with the author and reader, an attitude in which the reader recognises the clash between what is said and what is being conveyed and, furthermore, acknowledges that the author intends them to recognise such a clash, circumstances which are essential for successful irony. Of course, being ironic is a risky strategy, there is always the chance that the audience will not understand. Indeed, there are amusing anecdotes of the ironic and satirical functions of the text misfiring; in his preface to the

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[25] Fahnestock, *Rhetorical Style*, 111, emphasis added.
[26] Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*, ix.

1961 edition, Lewis recalls a clergyman who withdrew his subscription to *The Guardian* because he found the letters "not only erroneous but positively diabolical".[27] However, the preferred response by the implied reader, having been duly prepared by the preface and alert to the pervasive textual clues, would be to engage successfully with the ironic discourse.

With the exception of the Preface (and some very brief pseudo-paratextual inserts, see extract C) the narrative and discoursal point of view throughout the text is solely that of Screwtape, an exaggeratedly unreliable narrator. In his letters, Screwtape disapproves of virtues and animatedly praises vices; his infernal perspective is an inversion of standard values. The following violent disapproval of the patient's love interest provides an example:

> B.   From *Letter 22*[28]
>
> I have looked up this girl's dossier and am horrified at what I find. Not only a Christian but such a Christian—a vile, sneaking, simpering, demure, monosyllabic, mouselike, watery, insignificant, virginal, bread-and-butter miss. The little brute. She makes me vomit. She stinks and scalds through the very pages of the dossier. It drives me mad, the way the world has worsened. We'd have had her to the arena in the old days. That's what her sort is made for. Not that she'd do much good there, either. A twofaced little cheat (I know the sort) who looks as if she'd faint at the sight of blood and then dies with a smile. A cheat every way. Looks as if butter wouldn't melt in her mouth and yet has a satirical wit. The sort of creature who'd find ME funny! Filthy insipid little prude—and yet ready to fall into this booby's arms like any other breeding animal.

Examining extract B, it is possible to understand the use of irony within the text. The description of the unnamed woman is immediately recognisable as Screwtape's typically twisted view of virtue. The second sentence contains a striking string of 11 consecutive adjectives. This breathless tirade is starkly contrasted with the following two sentences, of 3 and 4 words, respectively. Thus, defamiliarization is brought about on a syntactic level through the pouncing rhythm of the sentence structure and lexically, through the use of exaggerated, negatively charged language (brute, cheat, filthy, prude, vile, etc.). These stylistic devices effectively convey Screwtape's enraged state. The hyperbolic nature of the invective underscores the contrast between the attitude expressed by the narrator and the implied author's attitude. Garmendia notes the importance of exaggeration as a cue, or clue, for recognising irony:

> The speaker, as she wants the hearer to correctly understand her utterance, wants him to recognise the discordance. One way to make that discordance clear is to exaggerate it; that is, the speaker can exaggerate the clash between what she is apparently saying and what she really intends to communicate. The largest discordance will be that found between two opposite contents. Thus [hyperbole] can be considered a clue in irony, a clue that ironic speakers may and often do use to help hearers recognise the underlying clash.[29]

Thus, through the successful uptake of the discordance, the visceral, emotional response expressed by Screwtape serves to trigger an opposite response in the preferred reader. Furthermore, the incongruity of some statements may heighten this response by emphasising Screwtape's unreliability as a narrator. For instance, the woman's imagined courage in the face of martyrdom ("then dies with a smile") seems incompatible with the notion that she may be a "simpering, demure, monosyllabic, mouselike, watery, insignificant, virginal, bread-and-butter miss." Indeed, Screwtape's exaggerated reaction hardly lends credence to his claim that she is "insignificant". Thus, within the discourse architecture of the text, the implied author is being ironic, and the preferred reader is expected to grasp the significance of such uses

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[27] Lewis, 2013, xxix.
[28] Ibid., 117-18.
[29] Garmendia, *Irony*, 115-116.

of tone and perspective. This "assumed communion between author and reader"[30] and its satirical function is brought into focus in extract B, above. Satire is understood here, according to the linguistic model proposed by Simpson, as a discursive practice activated through irony.[31] As Screwtape fervently deplores the woman, he mentions her "satirical wit". He is aghast to think that she would "find [him] funny" – of course, the kind of people who find the humourless demon funny are the very readers who engage with Lewis's satirical discourse as such. Thus, the readers who are amused by Screwtape's exaggerated outburst and engage with the satirical and ironic tone of the text may find themselves aligned with the attitudinal position of the Christian woman (in finding the demon's rage amusing). Lewis, therefore, through irony and satire, invites readers to assume a positive attitude towards the values and virtues (social justice within the Church, humility, courage and self-sacrifice) which the narrator derides in the character of the Christian woman.

3. Letters from Hell: Epistolary Features

The epistolary aspects of the text are immediately salient upon reading the text. This was confirmed by the preliminary corpus analysis of keywords and n-grams,[32] which demonstrated the recurrence of salient epistolary features. Each letter opens with the customary "My dear Wormwood" and closes dutifully with "Your affectionate uncle Screwtape", creating a predictable and familiar syntactic and graphological[33] pattern (parallelism) within the text. Any deviation from this sustained repetition of the formulaic opening and closing address produces a defamiliarizing effect, as is the case in the following examples:

C.   From *Letter 22*[34]

[Here the MS breaks off and is resumed in a different hand.]
In the heat of composition I find that I have inadvertently allowed myself to assume the form of a large centipede. I am accordingly dictating the rest to my secretary. Now that the transformation is complete I recognise it as a periodical phenomenon.... In my present form I feel even more anxious to see you, to unite you to myself in an indissoluble embrace,
                    (Signed) Toadpipe

            For his Abysmal Sublimity Under Secretary Screwtape, TE, BS, etc.

D.   From *Letter 31*[35]

My dear, my very dear, Wormwood, my poppet, my pigsnie.... Meanwhile, I have you to settle with. Most truly do I sign myself
                Your increasingly and ravenously affectionate uncle
                Screwtape

These two extracts contain three significant departures from the previously established collocation pattern. They occur in the twenty-second and thirty-first (last) letters, by which time the standard co-

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[30] Leech and Short, *Style in Fiction*, 229.
[31] Paul Simpson, *On the Discourse of Satire: Towards a Stylistic Model of Satirical Humour* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2003).
[32] See Table 1A in the Appendix.
[33] The 2013 edition used for this study, and other editions consulted, separate the address and signature from the body of the letter with a line break, reproducing the standard visual cue for 'letter' within the text. I have not been able to consult either the editions released in *The Guardian* or the first editions to explore such graphological stylistic choices further.
[34] Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*, 120-21.
[35] Ibid., 171-75.

occurrence of "My dear Wormwood" (PP$, JJ, NP)[36] and "Your affectionate uncle Screwtape" (PP$, JJ, NN, NP) have formed a rigid, internal textual norm (syntactic parallelism). The first example (C) shows an alternative sign-off, premised by the epistolarian's shapeshifting into a large centipede, as explained in the extract. The use of obscure bureaucratic terminology and officious-sounding titles underscore the text's Kafkaesque view of Hell as a sort of dull, overly complicated ministerial administration, which will be further examined in detail. Notably, the deviation also gives rise to an instance of foreshadowing, Screwtape's ominous salutation, "in my present form I feel even more *anxious* to see you, to *unite you to myself in an indissoluble embrace*", is suggestive of Wormwood's ultimate fate – as fodder for senior demons due to his failure to wrestle his patient's soul to damnation. The junior demon's end is most explicit in Letter 30: "At any rate, you will soon find that the justice of Hell is purely realistic, and concerned only with results. Bring us back food, or be food yourself".[37] This foreboding sentiment serves to modify the meaning of the standard "Your affectionate uncle" until, in the next and final letter (D), the nature of Screwtape's affection is clarified in his gleefully greedy salutation: "Your *increasingly and ravenously affectionate* uncle." The standard form (PP$, JJ, NN, NP), hitherto used in twenty-nine of the preceding thirty letters, is thus altered and expanded (PP$, RB, CC, RB, JJ, NN, NP). The adverbs, inserted into the familiar structure, modify the precise quality of 'affection' that Screwtape has meant all along. The incipit to the final letter (D) is also varied, the standard (PP$, JJ, NP), unaltered in all thirty preceding letters, is changed (PP$, JJ, PP$, RB, JJ, NP, PP$, NN, PP$, NN). The opening line repeats the PP$ "my" four times, echoing the sense of absolute possession which comes with spiritual and physical domination (the subject of a long discourse in Letter 21). The alliterated terms of endearment "poppet" and "pigsnie" can both bear derogatory overtones.[38] Such lexical and syntactical deviations from the established pattern render these excerpts salient and underscore the "ravenous" quality of Screwtape's so-called "affection". Indeed, the sickly, overbearing salutation of the final letter reveals Screwtape's selfish interest in Wormwood, signalling to the reader the full depravity of the narrator despite, or indeed because of, his continued claims of fondness.

4. The Administration of Evil

The Hell of *SL* is not that of medieval and early modern European literature (Dante, Milton, etc). In the place of the traditional sulphur-spewing volcanoes and flesh-eating monsters, there is a clean, orderly, bureaucratic world populated by respectable administrators and instructors. The devils are attributed titles and roles within a complex administrative system. Screwtape's full title ("Abysmal Sublimity Under Secretary Screwtape, TE, BS, etc."; see C above) reveals the complex inner workings of what will be referred to as the "Lowerarchy"[39], an amusing neologism which inverts the purely phonological "high-" element in "hierarchy". Throughout the text, deictic elements orientate Hell as 'below' – Satan's title is "Our Father Below", and Screwtape refers to humans ending up "down here" – in keeping with the traditional Christian imagery of Hell. However, the complex bureaucratic nature of the underworld is striking in the text. There are law enforcement agencies (Infernal Police, Secret Police), institutions of higher education (Training College) and punitive centres for reform (House of Correction). Everything is organised into departments (research department, Intelligence Department) and offices (the record office, the office), complete with complex record-keeping systems (dossier). Thus, the text

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[36] The list of abbreviations used is from Beatrice Santorini, "Part-of-Speech Tagging Guidelines for the Penn Treebank Project", Third Revision (1991), Philadelphia: Department of Computer and Information Science, University of Pennsylvania, 8-9, and has been provided as an appendix. This is the same POS tagging used in LancsBox.

[37] Lewis, *Screwtape Letters*, 165.

[38] For etymology and notes on derogatory overtones, see *Oxford English Dictionary Online* 'Pigsney, n.' and 'Poppet, n.', www.oed.com.

[39] Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*, 206.

makes use of 'bureaucratese' – a particular lexical register which pertains principally to offices and government agencies. Within *SL,* this register shift – the choice to describe 'infernal affairs' with the language more commonly associated with 'internal affairs' – is a salient stylistic device. The pervasive use of officious-sounding, bureaucratic language posits Hell as a cold, calculating administrative machine. This is a chilling perspective considering the text's composition during the cultural climate of the Second World War. Lewis later reflected on this connection with the immediate historical context of *SL* in the preface to the 1961 edition:

> I live in the Managerial Age, in a world of 'Admin'. The greatest evil is not now done in those sordid 'dens of crime' that Dickens loved to paint. It is not even done in concentration camps and labour camps. In those we see its final result. But it is conceived and ordered (moved, seconded, carried, and minuted) in clean, carpeted and well-lighted offices, by quiet men with white collars and cut fingernails and smooth-shaven cheeks who do not need to raise their voice. Hence naturally enough, my symbol for Hell is something like the bureaucracy of a police state or the offices of a thoroughly nasty business concern.[40]

The representation of absolute evil as dull and administrative anticipates the moral and philosophical implications of Hannah Arendt's observation of the "banality of evil" and the ensuing ethical and philosophical discussions which came to the fore in the aftermath of the Second World War.[41] *SL*'s everyday, office-like hell is a frightening commentary on the human and mundane aspects of great evil. Indeed, in this instance Lewis' linguistic choices do not demonise the demons but rather humanise them – a far more chilling perspective.

While the "Lowerarchy" is not immediately recognisable as the fire-and-brimstone setting of popular culture and the Western literary canon, the demon bureaucrats are nonetheless endowed with nasty names to underscore their true, ghastly identity. The text mainly refrains from naming the human characters (the patient, his mother, and his girlfriend remain unnamed, while the local cleric, Fr. Spike, is mentioned briefly by name), yet several demons are named throughout the text: Screwtape and Wormwood are, of course, the most frequently mentioned, being the writer and addressee of the letters. As the following table shows, all but "wormwood" (botanical, *Artemisia Absinthium*) and *"toadpipe" (botanical, obsolete, one of various species of Equisetum)* are coined by Lewis.

	Name	in *SL*	OED
NP1	Wormwood	37	Yes (n, botanical)
NP2	Screwtape	33	No
NP3	Glubose	6	No
NP4	Slubgob	3	No
NP5	Slumtrimpet	2	No
NP6	Scabtree	1	No
NP7	Toadpipe	1	Yes (n, botanical)
NP8	Triptweeze	1	No

Table 2. Names of the demons

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[40] Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters,* xxxvii
[41] Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, Revised and Enlarged Edition (New York: Viking Press, 1964).

Being neologisms, these names are, of course, not present in the LOB reference corpus,[42] and except for the two botanical borrowings, most of them are not even present in the *Oxford English Dictionary,*[43] a helpful reference corpus for lexical studies. These unique occurrences reveal that they are examples of neologism – new words coined by Lewis to name the demons. They are primarily composite forms made of extant morphemes. NP3 is formed: NN + suffix (Glub – n, heap or troop; -ose – suffix, forming adjectives meaning abundant) while the other NPs are formed: NN + NN (Screwtape could also be considered VB + NN). The meanings of each morpheme are overwhelmingly repulsive (scab; slum; toad; tweeze; slub: n, thick sludgy mud; etc.). The sensation of disgust is potentially reinforced by their phonological composition with the repetition of phonemes and consonant clusters such as /w/ (*w*orm*w*ood, trip*tw*eeze), /sk/ (*sc*abtree, *sc*rewtape), /sl/ (*sl*ubgob, *sl*umtrimpet) and /tr/ (slum*tr*impet, scab*tr*ee, *tr*iptweeze). These phonemes and consonant clusters are representative of the core stratum of the English language (Old English and Old Norse). As Fahnestock points out, "persuasive effects of ... word choice based on origins can be subtle".[44] Yet, it would appear that these neologisms exploit the 'baser' phonological and graphological elements of the language, combined with the recognisably ignoble lexical elements, to reinforce negative associations and remind the reader of the malevolence of the characters. Thus, even if the demons are being discussed in apparently favourable terms by the narrator, their unpleasant names foreground the clash between the author's and the narrator's point of view – highlighting the irony underpinning the text. Thus, in coining these unique and evocative names, Lewis displays a playful lexical creativity that is functional to the ironic nature of the text.

5. The Trouble about Argument

The central topic of the letters is, of course, how to divert the patient's attention from God (referred to in the text as "the Enemy") and Christianity in order to eternally obtain his soul. Screwtape offers Wormwood advice on how best to persuade his human 'patient' that Christianity is nonsense. The Keyword comparison tool in #LancsBox shows which words are salient within the text compared to the reference corpus. Excluding the names of characters and epistolary terms of address, three main semantic areas were observed: religion (Christians, church, God, etc.), argumentation (argue, believe, think, etc) and morality (charity, virtue, chastity, etc.). A selection of the key terms regarding religion and persuasion were inputted as search terms using the Whelk tool in #LancsBox,[45] which displays the frequency and distribution of the given search terms. Thus, employing the Whelk tool, the search term "christian*" (i.e. Christianity, Christianised, etc.) appears 55 times in the text, with a relative frequency of 17.84 occurrences per 10,000 tokens.[46] The frequency and relative frequency of the selected search terms pertaining to religion are displayed in Table 3, below. The subset D of the LOB corpus contains "religious" texts and is, unsurprisingly, topically more similar to *SL* than the reference corpus as a whole. For example, within the subset D (religion) of the LOB corpus, there are 30 references to the linguistic variable "christian*" (relative frequency of 8.75 per 10,000 tokens). In contrast, within the entirety of the LOB corpus, the search term appeared only 126 times (relative frequency 1.25).[47] The search term

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[42] With the exception of "wormwood", found in the text grouping "G" (Belles lettres and biography) with a relative frequency of 0.26 per 10,000 words, as a reference to the plant.
[43] Oxford English Dictionary Online, www.oed.com.
[44] Fahnestock, *Rhetorical Style*, 35.
[45] Brezina et al., "#LancsBox [Software]".
[46] Such terms are distributed most heavily in letters 25, 23, 24.
[47] The statistical analysis produced via #LancsBox 6.0 (Brezina et al., "#LancsBox [Software]") is as follows: The t-test (t (32.63) = -2.66, p = 0.012) revealed a statistically significant difference between the corpora with regard to the linguistic variable

"god" revealed a similar relative frequency within both texts. Still, it is important to note that from Screwtape's perspective, the topic "God" is also referred to with the title "the Enemy", which occurs much more frequently in *SL* than the search term "god" in the reference corpus. The results are shown in Table 3 below.

Variable	Occurs in SL	Relative Freq per 10k	Occurs in LOB	Relative Freq per 10k
Christian*	55	17.84	126	1.25 (8.75 in subset D)
Enemy	110	35.69	36	0.36 (0.87 in subset D)
God	7	2.27	296	2.94 (36.19 in subset D)
Church	19	6.16	333	3.30 (40.8 in subset D)
Religion	13	4.22	62	0.62 (5.25 in subset D)

Table 3. Topic of religion across the corpora

Not only is religion as the topic of discussion lexically salient within the text, but I argue here that the metalanguage of argumentation is also foregrounded as part of the overall rhetorical strategy. Linguistic variables relevant to the topic of persuasion occur more frequently within the text than within the reference corpus, as shown in Table 4 below.

Variable	Occurs in SL	Relative Freq per 10k	Occurs in LOB	Relative Freq per 10k
Argu*	11	3.56	221	2.19
Belie*	40	12.97	429	4.26
Convinc*	4	1.298	87	0.86
Encourag*	24	7.79	131	1.30
Induc*	7	2.27	7	0.07
Persua*	11	3.56	56	0.56
Think_VB*	80	25.96	1,181	11.72

Table 4. Topic of persuasion across the corpora

Thus, the semantic field of argumentation is brought into focus through the lexical choices within the text. However, the most significant linguistic constructions concerning the concept of persuasion which emerged in the analysis are the syntactical co-occurrences of key elements such as "make PP VB" (i.e. "make him think" or "make her believe") and "made to VB" (i.e. "made to feel" or "made to think"). Table 5, below, displays how these syntactical structures are much more frequent in *SL*. Not only are they more frequently used in *SL* but they also primarily occur with perceiving and feeling verbs regarding mental processes in general, and specifically, the topic of persuasion. Meanwhile, in LOB, they have a much wider range of use concerning various topics.[48]

Variable	Occurs in SL	Relative Freq per 10k	Occurs in LOB	Relative Freq per 10k
Make PP VB	17	5.55	42	0.42
Made to VB	12	3.89	48	0.48

Table 5. Salient syntactical co-occurrences

The effect of such linguistic patterns can be observed in the following extract.

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christian*. The t-test compares the mean values of the linguistic variable in two corpora and takes into consideration the internal variation in each group expressed as variance.

[48] See tables 2A-5A, provided in the appendix, for a selection of collocates.

E.   From *Letter 1*

> Jargon, not argument, is your best ally in keeping him from the Church. Don't waste time trying to make him think that materialism is true! Make him think it is strong, or stark, or courageous—that it is the philosophy of the future. That's the sort of thing he cares about.
>
> The trouble about argument is that it moves the whole struggle on to the Enemy's own ground. He can argue too; whereas in really practical propaganda of the kind I am suggesting He has been shown for centuries to be greatly the inferior of Our Father Below. By the very act of arguing, you awake the patient's reason; and once it is awake, who can foresee the result? Even if a particular train of thought can be twisted so as to end in our favour, you will find that you have been strengthening in your patient the fatal habit of attending to universal issues and withdrawing his attention from the stream of immediate sense experiences. Your business is to fix his attention on the stream. Teach him to call it 'real life' and don't let him ask what he means by 'real'.

Screwtape's instructions are outlined explicitly in this introductory letter. He employs a series of representative speech acts,[49] which describe the state of affairs, interspersed with directives in which he coaches Wormwood in the tactics he should utilize ("don't waste time", "make him think", "teach him", etc.). The use of negation in the first lines complicates the layered discourse architecture of the text and its ironic positioning ("jargon, *not* argument…", "*don't* waste time trying to make him think that materialism is true"). It may even function here as a cue for the ironic tone of the text; Screwtape's very insistence on *not* using rational, thoughtful argumentation undermines his position. By his own admission, there is a danger in using logical argument because the other side can engage in the debate. The lexicon of argument and persuasion is prevalent in this extract ("jargon", "argument", "true", "philosophy", "propaganda", "reason", etc.). Such topical foregrounding of the language of persuasion highlights Screwtape's evasive strategy and may even trigger that "fatal habit of attending to universal issues" in the reader. By foregrounding the demon's distraction tactics, readers are challenged to consider the daily distractions which allay them and keep them from deeply considering matters of faith and religion. In this way, the reader is made to identify with the patient as the victim of such warped thinking. Extract E shows how the text as a whole aims to subvert the common 20th-century idea of 'religion as irrational' and brings the rational defence of religious faith to the fore ("He can argue too", "By the very act of arguing, you awake the patient's reason; and once it is awake, who can foresee the result").

The common structures shown in Table 5 are part of this overall strategy of subversion within the text. In extract E, above, Screwtape instructs Wormwood to "make [the patient] think" that materialism is "strong, stark or courageous". Such syntactical structures (make him think, make them believe, etc) place the patient (character) in the role of linguistic patient, the 'object' of the process rather than the agent. Thus, the syntactic construction, which occurs throughout the text in this form, highlights the manipulation of the patient's thoughts by rendering the seemingly subtle forms of persuasion explicit. By instructing Wormwood in the art of manipulation, Screwtape reveals the mechanisms of his persuasion to the reader. The processes of persuasion and its effects are foregrounded both lexically and syntactically; thus, the reader is led, paradoxically, to guard themselves against similar thought patterns and to be wary of manipulation.

Furthermore, Screwtape's resistance to "argument" and advice to use "jargon" and "practical propaganda" serve as a satirical tool to subvert the common assumption that religious beliefs are diametrically opposed to rational thinking. Lewis's apologetic works defended Christianity as a rational,

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[49] John R. Searle, *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1975). Searle's classification of speech acts expands on Austin's Speech Act Theory. 'Representatives' describe the state of the world; 'directives" include instructions, commands, requests, etc.

thinking faith. His strategy here is to use irony to undermine the voice of Screwtape and consequently cause the reader to question their assumptions with regard to faith and reason.

6. Conclusions

The analysis of extracts from the text has outlined the primary phonological, syntactical and lexical elements contributing to the production of meaning within the text. *SL* has been shown to utilise the complex, layered, discourse architecture of epistolary fiction as an instrument in the creation and maintenance of its ironic tone. Screwtape's devilish opinions and advice are intended to disgust and distance the reader from his point of view, embracing, instead the author's perspective. The unreliable, and entirely unagreeable, narrator "unwittingly" exposes the weak points of his arguments against Christianity, undermining the atheist, agnostic and apathetic standpoints most common to 20th century intellectuals. Thus, *SL,* constitutes not only a witty experimentation with the genre of epistolary fiction but also an enduring work of Christian apologetics.

The text's principal rhetorical strategy of irony is signalled within the preface and continually underlined through supporting stylistic devices such as neologisms, bureaucratese and the foregrounding of the topics of persuasion and argumentation. The aim of the text is further made explicit in its epigraph, composed of two quotations. The first, attributed to Luther is as follows: "the best way to drive out the devil, if he will not yield to texts of Scripture, is to jeer and flout him, for he cannot bear scorn"; the same sentiment is echoed in the second, "the devil … the prowde spirite …cannot endure to be mocked", from Thomas More.[50] Thus, *SL* immediately posits itself as an attempt to jeer and mock the devil as a strategy of resisting temptation and as an argument against common objections to faith. Over the past 80 years, *SL* has enjoyed a wide and varied readership and almost innumerable reprints and translations. Its winsome, sardonic tone continues to entertain and engage readers from a wide spectrum of beliefs and non-beliefs. While it was beyond the scope of the present paper, I believe an empirical study of reader responses and the perception of the persuasive techniques employed could provide valuable insights into the reader uptake of and engagement with irony in the text.

In terms of rhetoric, *SL* can be understood to appeal to ethos, pathos and logos. The appeal to ethos, understood as the construction of the speaker's character within the text,[51] is engaged through Screwtape's questionable character and convictions throughout the text. The reader's rejection of Screwtape's distorted perspective and manipulative discourse is part of both the humour and the persuasive force of the text, devices which are inextricably linked here. Of course, in rejecting and ridiculing Screwtape, the reader finds themselves aligned with the opinions of the author, the public defender of 20th Century Christianity, C.S. Lewis. The appeal to pathos, or how a text manages the attitudes and emotions of its audience,[52] is also linked to the use of irony. The reader's disgust and indignation are ignited throughout the text, particularly due to the sensation of 'seeing through' Screwtape's vapid, yet profuse, claims of affection to his nephew. The appeal to logos, how the content is selected to serve the rhetor's purpose,[53] engages with the credibility or acceptability of a claim. Here, the subversive nature of the text is most evident. Lewis does not appeal to logos through convincing, intellectually stimulating and provable arguments for faith and Christianity; instead, through the persona of Screwtape, he assumes these as given and presents the possible means of convincing someone otherwise. Thus, through fallacious argumentation and the evident intellectual dishonesty of the speaker

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[50] Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*, 11.
[51] Harris and Fahnestock, *Language and Persuasion*, 11.
[52] Ibid, 12.
[53] Ibid, 13.

(which also appeals to the ethos), the arguments against Christianity and Christian living are cleverly undermined, leading the reader to ridicule the weak, circular arguments as such.

Therefore, the stylistic analysis of *SL* has revealed how the formal aspects of the language of the text are functional to its persuasive perlocutionary effect on the reader. The text uses stylistic and rhetorical devices in order to both entertain and persuade the reader. Overall, the strategic choice to use irony contributes significantly to *SL*'s winsome, witty and persuasive nature – indeed, without it, the text would presumably be merely a dull moral treatise.

In presenting some of the creative, clever, and humorous aspects of a somewhat neglected work of epistolary fiction, I hope to contribute to the critical revaluation of the literary value of Lewis' works.[54] Further linguistic analysis of Lewis's oeuvre is required to understand how *SL* fits into the author's overall style of argumentation.

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[54] See Tandy, 'The Stylistic Achievement of Mere Christianity', 127.

Appendix 1

3 n-grams	Frequency *SL*	Dispersion *SL*	Frequency LOB	Dispersion LOB	Statistic (simple maths)
my dear wormwood	30	0,32	0	0,00	10,75
affectionate uncle screwtape	30	0,32	0	0,00	10,75
your affectionate uncle	29	0,38	0	0,00	10,43
that he is	17	1,20	28	1,31	5,11
dear wormwood i	12	1,33	0	0,00	4,90
in his mind	10	1,93	9	1,65	3,90
that the enemy	9	2,03	1	3,74	3,89
is to keep	9	1,84	2	2,57	3,85
the sort of	11	1,92	27	1,28	3,61
be made to	10	2,09	18	1,37	3,61

Table 1A. Key n-grams in SL (using LOB as a reference corpus)

Table 1A, above, shows the ten most statistically relevant key three-word n-grams in *SL*. The data was extracted using the N-grams tool in #LancsBox 6.0.[55] LOB was used as a reference corpus in order to extract the statistical relevance of the relative frequencies across the corpora.

Tables 2A-5A were randomly extracted using the Wizard tool in #LancsBox 6.0.[56]

Filename	Left	Node	Right
Letter28.txt	them to earth is to	make them believe	that earth can be turned
Letter29.txt	is no good trying to	make him brave.	Our research department has not
Letter9.txt	type your job is to	make him acquiesce	in the present low temperature
Letter15.txt	them think about it we	make them think	of unrealities. In a word,

Table 2A. A random set of concordance lines for "make PP VB" in SL.

The search term "make PP VB" occurs 17 times (5,516 per 10k) in *SL* in 13 out of 33 texts. Table 2A, above, displays a random sample of 5 concordance lines, showing the most immediate contexts in which the search term is used.

Filename	Left	Node	Right
Letter12.txt	Christian he can still be	made to think	of himself as one who
Letter18.txt	the family, humans can be	made to infer	the false belief that the
Letter12.txt	Enemy; but he must be	made to imagine	that all the choices which
Letter26.txt	which the humans can be	made to mistake	for the results of charity.
Letter17.txt	vanity. They ought to be	made to think	themselves very knowing about food,

Table 3A. A random set of concordance lines for "made to VB" in SL.

[55] Brezina et al., "#LancsBox [Software]".
[56] Brezina et al., "#LancsBox [Software]".

The search term "made to VB" occurs 12 times (3,893 per 10k) in *SL* in 8 out of 33 texts. Table 3A, above, displays a random sample of 5 concordance lines, showing the most immediate contexts in which the search term is used

Filename	Left	Node	Right
A_Press_report.txt	at the Dorchester Hotel to	make us drink	Harp on a national scale.
L_Fiction_myst.txt	here is your chance to	make him pay	back!" Madam interrupted. " Now go
C_Press_review.txt	told us" Now I will	make you hear	one bell— just one bell,
H_Misc_non_fict.txt	on to tight jobs to	make them pay.	The workers claimed that this
N_Adventure.txt	with laughter. " I'm going to	make you lick	that card clean," said Durieux.

Table 4A. A random set of concordance lines for "make PP VB" in LOB

The search term "make PP VB" occurs 42 times (0,417 per 10k) in LOB in 13 out of 15 texts. Table 4A, above, displays a random sample of 5 concordance lines, showing the most immediate contexts in which the search term is used.

Filename	Left	Node	Right
H_Misc_non_fict.txt	a site, plans have been	made to build	a Home for thirty children
E_Skills.txt	time ago an effort was	made to sell	more yoghurt in greater Copenhagen,
G_Belle_lett_biogr.txt	and no attempt has been	made to supply	the chorus parts of the
H_Misc_non_fict.txt	fire refers to the arrangements	made to implement	the new provisions of the
J_Acad_writing.txt	3 an attempt has been	made to indicate	the extent of the assumed

Table 5A. A random set of concordance lines for "made to VERB" in LOB

The search term "made to VB" occurs 48 times (0,476 per 10k) in LOB in 12 out of 15 texts. Table 5A displays a random sample of 5 concordance lines, showing the most immediate contexts in which the search term is used.

Appendix 2 - List of tags with corresponding parts of speech

For ease of reference, the present text employs the same tagset as #LancsBox in its automated tagging process. The reference documentation is from Santorini[57] and provides the following list of abbreviations:

1. CC Coordinating conjunction
2. CD Cardinal number
3. DT Determiner
4. EX Existential there
5. FW Foreign word
6. IN Preposition or subordinating conjunction
7. JJ Adjective
8. JJR Adjective, comparative
9. JJS Adjective, superlative
10. LS List item marker
11. MD Modal

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[57] Santorini, 'Part-of-Speech Tagging', 8–9.

12. NN Noun, singular or mass
13. NNS Noun, plural
14. NP Proper noun, singular
15. NPS Proper noun, plural
16. PDT Predeterminer
17. POS Possessive ending
18. PP Personal pronoun
19. PP$ Possessive pronoun
20. RB Adverb
21. RBR Adverb, comparative
22. RBS Adverb, superlative
23. RP Particle
24. SYM Symbol
25. TO to
26. UH Interjection
27. VB Verb, base form
28. VBD Verb, past tense
29. VBG Verb, gerund or present participle
30. VBN Verb, past participle
31. VBP Verb, non-3rd person singular present
32. VBZ Verb, 3rd person singular present
33. WDT Wh-determiner
34. WP Wh-pronoun
35. WP$ Possessive wh-pronoun
36. WRB Wh-adverb

Polina Shvanyukova

"Simply the Way God Made Us".
Religious Language in Phyllis Schlafly's Antifeminist Manifesto

Abstract: This contribution employs the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) to analyze religiously-laden rhetoric in the conservative grassroots campaign that blocked the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in the early 1970s. By adopting a case-study approach, the paper aims to illustrate some of the ways in which religious language has been employed to realize specific political goals. The text under investigation is Phyllis Schlafly's 1972 manifesto entitled "What's Wrong with 'Equal Rights' for Women". A prominent conservative icon, Schlafly can be credited with achieving important victories in her antifeminist crusade that purposefully brought conservative family values into the political limelight.

1. Introduction

In this contribution, I employ the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA)[1] to analyze the use of religious elements for persuasive ends in a 1972 manifesto entitled "What's Wrong with 'Equal Rights' for Women"[2] that launched Phyllis Schlafly's grassroots campaign to stop the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment.[3] As its starting point, the investigation takes up the call "to look at how claims to have a religion (or its denials) are strategic discursive tools used by individuals, groups, institutions and governments in organizing social practices".[4] By analyzing religiously-laden rhetoric used to rally support for an antifeminist cause in a historical conservative manifesto, the paper aims to illustrate some of the ways in which religious language has been employed to realize specific political goals.

But how are we to distinguish between what is religion and what is secular in political communication and how has the use of religious discourse been analyzed in this particular field? Bruce Lincoln's influential definition describes religion as "discourse whose defining characteristic is its desire to speak of things eternal and transcendent with an authority equally transcendent and eternal".[5] The

[1] Martin Reisigl, "The Discourse-Historical Approach", in John Flowerdew and John E. Richardson, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Discourse Studies* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), 44-59; Martin Reisigl and Ruth Wodak, "The Discourse-Historical Approach", in Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer, eds., *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, Second Edition (London: SAGE, 2009), 87-121; Ruth Wodak, "The Discourse-Historical Approach", in Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer, eds., *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (London: SAGE, 2001), 63-93.
[2] The manifesto was originally published in *The Phyllis Schlafly Report*, 5:7 (February 1972). This version can be downloaded from *Eagleforum.org*. The manifesto was reprinted in Ed Martin, ed., *Phyllis Schlafly Speaks*, Volume 5: *Stopping the ERA* (Skelling America, 2019), 17-32.
[3] First drafted in 1923, the text of the Amendment was revised several times before the Congress approved the following version in 1972: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article". The efforts to get the Amendment ratified by 38 States are still ongoing (Alex Cohen and Wilfred U. Codrington III, "The Equal Rights Amendment Explained", *Brennan Center for Justice* (January 23, 2020), *www.brennancenter.org*.
[4] Teemu Taira, "Religion and the Secular", in Ruth Wodak and Bernhard Forchtner, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Politics* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), 591.
[5] Bruce Lincoln, *Gods and Demons, Priests and Scholars: Critical Explorations in the History of Religions* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), 1.

modern distinction between religion and the secular that treats the two as being endowed with different rationalities, associated with two different languages, is attributed mainly to the influence of Jürgen Habermas. For Habermas, religion and its language belong to the private sphere of a particular community, while the supposed universality of the secular language makes it suitable to serve the public and political spheres.[6] More recently, writing about what he calls a new post-secular world, Habermas has called for a re-evaluation of the epistemic break between the two supposedly different languages in politics, arguing that "religion should not be excluded from public discussion, although religion remains subordinated to the rules of public discussion, because religious arguments and utterances should be translated into secular, 'generally accessible language'".[7]

Notwithstanding this recent re-evaluation, in the current scholarly debate about the role of religion in the political sphere the approach championed by thinkers such as Habermas and Tariq Modood[8] continues to represent religion and the secular as "essentially different rationalities and languages".[9] In fact, it has been argued that the modern invention of the 'religious' sphere serves to create "a peripheral space separate from the political sphere", at the same time as it creates a discourse "that naturalizes Euro-American secular rationality".[10]

A different approach to the analysis of the intertwining of religion and politics is represented by the dedicated research area of political theology that investigates the ways in which "theological concepts, ideas and discourses relate to politics".[11] This approach emphasizes the role that religious language plays in political communication by questioning the extent to which contemporary politics can do without theological language. For example, a common contemporary phenomenon is that of appropriating discourse on religion that both minority and majority groups engage in either, in the case of the former, "by making strategic claims to have a religion in order to get recognition" or, in the case of the latter, by trying "to maintain its position in ever-more diverse societies by re-labelling practices and symbols that have been previously considered 'religious' as 'cultural' or part of 'tradition'".[12] The case-study discussed in this paper allows us to examine the historical roots of the second kind of discursive appropriation that has stood the test of time, as conservative political actors continue to leverage religious discourse to legitimate antifeminist ideology in the twenty-first-century United States.[13]

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[6] Taira, "Religion and the Secular", 587-588; Jürgen Habermas, "An Awareness of What Is Missing", in Jürgen Habermas et al., eds., *An Awareness of What Is Missing: Faith and Reason in a Post-secular Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), 15-23.

[7] Jürgen Habermas, "'The Political': The Rational Meaning of a Questionable Inheritance of Political Theology", in Judith Butler et al., eds., *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 15-33, 25. To illustrate how this process of translation might work, Taira uses the example of the biblical idea that humans are created in the image of God used to defend human freedom and autonomy (Taira, "Religion and the Secular", 588).

[8] See, for example, Tariq Modood, "Moderate Secularism: Religion as Identity and Respect for Religion", *Political Quarterly*, 81 (2010), 4-14, and "Rethinking Political Secularism: The Multiculturalist Challenge", *Patterns of Prejudice*, 55.2 (2021), 115-124.

[9] Taira, "Religion and the Secular", 589.

[10] Ibid., 594. The modern myth that presents "politics [as] a sphere of (Euro-modern) rational activity, as distinguished from the 'religious' sphere full of irrational and supernatural ideas" (ibid.) is discussed in an influential contribution by Timothy Fitzgerald, *Religion and Politics in International Relations* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011) who traces the separation of the two spheres to the seventeenth century.

[11] Taira, "Religion and the Secular", 590. See also Carl Schmitt, *Politische Theologie: Vier Kapitel zur Lehre von der Souveränität* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1922).

[12] Taira, "Religion and the Secular", 595.

[13] Conservative Republican women consistently approach women's issues from an antifeminist standpoint of traditional gender roles and religious values as Catherine N. Wineinger has documented in *Gendering the GOP: Intraparty Politics and Republican Women's Representation in Congress* (New York: Oxford U.P., 2022). On the same topic, see also Deana N. Rohlinger, "Mobilizing the Faithful: Conservative and Right-Wing Women's Movements in America", in Holly J. Cammon et al., eds., *The Oxford Handbook of U.S. Women's Social Movement Activism* (New York: Oxford U.P., 2017), 150-171; Melissa Deckman, *Tea Party Women* (New York: New York U.P., 2016); Leslie Dorrough Smith, *Righteous Rhetoric: Sex, Speech, and the Politics of Concerned Women for America* (New York: Oxford U.P, 2014).

2. Religious Language in American Political Discourse

The role that religious language has played and continues to play in American political discourse has been addressed extensively on the level of federal politics. The existing literature on the topic has privileged the analysis of religious elements in the language of leading male politicians (mainly U.S. presidents and presidential candidates). On the contrary, American women politicians' use of religious discourse has been largely neglected.[14] The main strand of research dealing with male politicians' use of religion can be exemplified through the work of Aditi Bhatia. [15] Bhatia's investigation of the use of religious imagery in George W. Bush's speeches identified a new "dichotomizing" discourse that has emerged in the post-9/11 era. This discourse tends to be articulated through a bipolar, largely American-centric narrative "that proceeds to divide the world into two narrowly defined and rigidly allocated parts, 'us' and 'them'".[16] Bhatia reports on a previous study that compared some key call-to-arms historical speeches with those delivered by George W. Bush, in which four generic features characteristic of this political genre were described:

    a.   creation of a legitimate and wholly good authority;
    b.   appeal to the historical values of cultural values and tradition;
    c.   construction of a wholly evil "other"; and
    d.   appeal for unity behind the wholly good.[17]

    As I intend to show in the analysis of Phyllis Schlafly's anti-ERA manifesto, historical antifeminist discourse employed similar discursive strategies. Similarities include, for example, the use of appeals to common Judeo-Christian values, as well as denunciation of the feminist movement as the Evil Other, on a par with the godless communist regime.

    Arnaud Vincent's corpus-based investigation of the religious rhetoric of U.S. Presidents is another important recent study exemplifying the main strand of research on religious language in American politics.[18] Vincent's work is of particular relevance to the present investigation as it offers a dedicated chapter on the Cold War era and its impact on the use of religious discourse in political communication. Using corpus linguistics methodology, Vincent shows how, in the 1950s and 1960s, religious rhetoric in American politics

> drew on several biblical imageries and depicted a Manichean vision of a world torn apart between America – under God, free, shining, the last best hope of human kind – and an evil communist empire – a reincarnation of Biblical Egypt, a tyrannical and materialistic state where enslaved people would live in darkness and fear.[19]

Vincent's research will be discussed in more detail later in this section.

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[14] But see Ruth Wodak, "Gender and Body Politics", in R. Wodak, *The Politics of Fear: What Right-wing Populist Discourses Mean* (London: SAGE, 2015), 151-176.

[15] Aditi Bhatia's work can be cited here, for example, "The Discursive Construction of Terrorism and Violence", in John Flowerdew and John E. Richardson, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Discourse Studies* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), 434-446; "Religious Metaphor in the Discourse of Illusion: George W. Bush and Osama bin Laden", *World Englishes*, 26.4 (2007), 507-524. See also Gordon C. Chang and Hugh B. Mehan, "Discourse in a Religious Mode: The Bush Administration's Discourse in the War on Terrorism and Its Challenges", *Pragmatics*, 16.1 (2006), 1-23.

[16] Bhatia, "The Discursive Construction", 435.

[17] Ibid., referring to the study by Phil Graham, Thomas Keenan and Anne-Maree Dowd, "A Call to Arms at the End of History: A Discourse-Historical Analysis of George W. Bush's Declaration of War on Terror", *Discourse & Society*, 15.2-3 (2004), 199-221.

[18] Arnaud Vincent, *The Religious Rhetoric of U.S. Presidential Candidates: A Corpus Linguistics Approach to the Rhetorical God Gap* (London and New York: Routledge, 2020).

[19] Ibid., 30.

With this case-study, I attempt to redress the balance that has so far tipped the scales in favour of research focusing on leading male politicians' use of religious language. The bias underlying the lack of attention to the prominent role that religious women have played on the level of national politics points to scarce interest in less visible, typically women-led forms of political activity such as grassroots activism.[20] Thus the choice of the prominent conservative personality Phyllis Schlafly, who passed away in September 2016 at the age of 92, a few months after publicly endorsing Donald Trump as the Republican Presidential candidate,[21] is timely. "She loved her country. She loved her family. And she loved her God", recited the then Presidential candidate at Schlafly's funeral.[22] Trump's presence reinforced Schlafly's credentials as the "Conservative Movement's Founding Mother",[23] whose distinguished career as a religious (Roman Catholic) grassroots activist spanned decades, starting in the post-World War II period. Schlafly's prominence is mainly attributed to the decisive role she played in the successful campaign to block the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in the 1970s, which is the focus of the present investigation.[24] However, long before deciding to commit herself to the antifeminist cause, Schlafly had been busy getting "the grassroots to pressure their elected representatives to stand strong" on issues such as anti-Communism (international and domestic), national defense and nuclear warfare.[25] In fact, this is where her main priorities lay in the 1960s, when Schlafly became adamant that the Kennedy-Johnson administration's defense policy "was making the nation unconscionably vulnerable to nuclear attack or blackmail from the Soviet Union".[26] This conviction prompted her to campaign relentlessly, employing her outstanding writing and speaking skills, to protect America from godless Communism.

What made Schlafly special was her ability to engage with her audience in a direct, forceful and effective language that combined carefully distilled legal and technical knowledge with references to her faith that filled her speeches and writing. Her intense political commitment was, in fact, the product of her faith. Her activist mobilization reflected her deeply held religious beliefs about the moral duty of a good Christian woman who had to answer the spiritual call and defend her country from such threats as the Soviet regime or feminism.

It was in the early 1970s, as the ERA ratification was making progress, that feminism, representing a threat to conservative family values, started to influence Schlafly's political vision. To contextualize the use of religious language in Schlafly's 1972 manifesto, we first need to look at the role that religion played in dominant political discourse of the time. As already hinted at above, religion was intensively exploited as a potent rhetorical weapon in American anti-communist propaganda that Schlafly had

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[20] Fortunately, recent linguistic research on present-day online forms of religious women's activities has shed some light on non-elected women activists. See, for example, Mareike Fenja Bauer, "Beauty, Baby and Backlash? Anti-Feminist Influencers on TikTok", *Feminist Media Studies*, 24.5 (2023), 1-19; Helen Ringrow, "'I can feel myself being squeezed and stretched, moulded and grown, and expanded in my capacity to love loudly and profoundly': Metaphor and Religion in Motherhood Blogs", *Discourse, Context & Media*, 37 (2020), 100429; Catherine Tebaldi, "Tradwives and Truth Warriors: Gender and Nationalism in US White Nationalist Women's Blogs", *Gender & Language*, 17.1 (2023), 14-38.

[21] David Weigel and Jose Del Real, "Phyllis Schlafly Endorses Trump in St. Louis", *The Washington Post* (11 March 2016), *www.washingtonpost.com*. In Schlafly's last published work, *The Conservative Case for Trump* (co-authored with Ed Martin and Brett Decker, Washington D.C.: Regenery, 2016), that came out posthumously, she rallied her grassroots followers to support Trump as "an American patriot with policies that will make America great again" (7).

[22] CNN, "Trump Speaks at Phyllis Schlafly's Funeral", 10 September 2016, *youtube.com*.

[23] Donald T. Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Woman's Crusade* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 2015), 270. In a different way, perhaps, Schlafly's credentials were reinforced by Cate Blanchett's portrayal of her in Dahvi Waller's TV mini-series *Mrs. America* (Hulu, 2020).

[24] On the history of the proposed Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and its relationship to the women's movement see Kelsy Kretschmer and Jane Mansbridge, "The Equal Rights Amendment Campaign and Its Opponents", in Cammon et al., eds., *The Oxford Handbook of U.S. Women's Social Movement Activism*, 71-88.

[25] Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly*, 166.

[26] Ibid., 163.

endorsed in a number of popular books.[27] The early Cold-War period, according to the results of Vincent's corpus-based investigation, produced a specific "insistence – in campaign rhetoric – on slavery, atheism and on the terms crusade, soul, souls, spiritual and spirituality".[28] In that period, both Republican and Democratic presidential candidates used religiously tinted language. Another significant finding from Vincent's study points to the increasing frequency of references to Judeo-Christian America. In fact, as Vincent explains,

> a cold-war-related usage of the phrase judeo-christian [served] as an ecumenical and consensual call from both parties to fight against godless communism. Around the 1970s, the story of a Judeo-Christian America became far more partisan and served a new type of fight – now domestic rather than foreign – against a new type of enemy, i.e. 'the liberalism'. This modification in tone was the product of the Republicans' defense of their conservative agenda – which they defined as inspired by the Judeo-Christian tradition – against the liberal agenda.[29]

In other words, this is the moment when a new religious theme emerges in American political discourse. In this theme, a new emphasis is placed on the terms "family" and "family values" that are discursively re-invented to symbolize conservative gender roles associated with the patriarchal family. Vincent's corpus-based findings substantiate previous research that claimed that, for the GOP, "a word like family appears draped with a religious cloak".[30] That "family values" is an expression of twentieth-century Republican coinage is attested by Prothero's Dictionary of Religious Literacy:

> Family values.
> Although this term sounds ancient, it is actually of recent vintage, first used in its current sense in the late 1960s and injected into American cultural politics in the late 1970s. The Republican Party platforms of 1976 and 1980 endorsed 'family values' as an antidote to what conservatives saw as the moral degradation of American society brought on by the sexual revolution, rock'n'roll, and the counterculture.[31]

As the analysis of Schlafly's manifesto will show, the text under investigation appears to exemplify one of the earliest samples of this kind of religiously-laden political rhetoric. The next section will introduce my methodological approach.

3. Methodological Framework

To prepare the ground for the analysis, I will first sketch out the methodological framework and provide an overview of some previous research that has examined historical speeches by American women activists. The main methodological framework adopted in this study is represented by the DHA. The key notions that characterize the DHA as a special strand of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) are critique, ideology and power.[32] Being critical for a DHA analyst means "gaining distance from the data ...

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[27] On Schlafly's role in the anti-communist crusade see David Domke and Kevin Coe, *The God Strategy: How Religion Became a Political Weapon in America* (New York: Oxford U.P., 2008), Chapters 5 and 6; Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly*, Chapters 3 and 7.
[28] Vincent, *The Religious Rhetoric*, 21.
[29] Vincent thus concludes that "the salience of a certain ideological language against Communism is real" (Vincent, *The Religious Rhetoric*, 23).
[30] Ibid., 44. The reference to previous research is to Amy Sullivan, *The Party Faithful: How and Why Democrats Are Closing the God Gap* (New York: Scribner, 2008).
[31] Stephen Prothero, *Religious Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know-And Doesn't* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2007), 222-223. See Seth Dowland, *Family Values: Gender, Authority, and the Rise of the Christian Right* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015) for a discussion on how the new Christian Right leaders were able to frame opposition to abortion, feminism and gay rights as 'defense of family'.
[32] Reisigl and Wodak, "The Discourse-Historical Approach", 87.

embedding the data in the social context, clarifying the political positioning of discourse participants, and having a focus on continuous self-reflection while undertaking research".[33] A flexible definition of ideology in this framework highlights the "(often) one-sided perspective or world view composed of related mental representations, convictions, opinions, attitudes and evaluations, which is shared by members of a specific social group".[34] Finally, the DHA prioritizes the analysis of the ways in which powerful text producers discursively manipulate and control "the social occasion by means of the genre of a text, or by the regulation of access to certain public spheres".[35]

According to Wodak, DHA's main analytical strength lies in its capacity to "[allow] relating the macro- and meso-level of contextualization to the micro-level analyses of texts." The analytical procedure consists of "the so-called 'entry-level analysis' focusing on the thematic dimension of texts", combined with "the 'in-depth analysis' which scrutinizes coherence and cohesion of texts in detail".[36] In the first instance, the analyst focuses on the contents of texts aiming to identify the most important discourse topics. This is done in order to assign specific texts to particular discourses. Secondly, the attention shifts to "the genre, the macro-structure of the text, discursive strategies and argumentation schemes".[37] Of particular importance to the DHA is the four-level model of context articulated into:

- the immediate, language or text-internal co-text and co-discourse;
- the intertextual and interdiscursive relationship between utterances, texts, genres and discourses;
- the extralinguistic social variables and institutional frames of a specific 'context of situation';
- the broader sociopolitical and historical context[38]

The research questions that can be investigated through the DHA include, to give a few examples, the following:

- How are persons, objects, phenomena/events, processes and actions named and referred to linguistically?
- What characteristics, qualities and features are attributed to social actors, objects, phenomena/events and processes?
- What arguments are employed in the discourse in question?[39]

These and other research questions are associated with different types of discursive strategies, that are defined as "a more or less intentional plan of practices (including discursive practices) adopted to achieve a particular social, political, psychological or linguistic goal".[40] The discursive strategies of nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivization/framing/discourse representation and intensification/mitigation can be located at different levels of linguistic organization and complexity.[41]

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[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid., 88. Reisigl and Wodak explain that "[f]or the DHA, language is not powerful on its own – it is a means to gain and maintain power by the use powerful people make of it".
[35] Ibid., 89.
[36] Wodak, *The Politics of Fear*, 50-51.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Reisigl and Wodak, "The Discourse-Historical Approach", 93.
[39] Ibid., 93-94.
[40] Ibid., 94.
[41] The table containing a selection of discursive strategies can be found in Reisigl and Wodak, "The Discourse-Historical Approach", 95.

In addition to the methodological framework of the DHA, another approach needs to be integrated in order to refine the analysis. As a foundational text of the STOP ERA movement,[42] Schlafly's output can be read as a manifesto aiming to share attitudes and ideologies among the members of the anti-ERA, anti-feminist conservative movement and to make its claims known to both the general public and the government.[43] For the analysis of such texts, van Dijk has proposed a categorization schema that has a two-fold purpose. On the one hand, the schema works as a tool to describe a movement as a social phenomenon, and, on the other, it can work as a tool to analyze the global semantic categories for the movement's foundational text(s). The list of such semantic categories includes: Identity; Actions; Time; History; Present: Place: Beneficiary; Opponents; Aims/Vision.[44] In manifestos, as van Dijk shows in the sample analysis of the online manifesto of the Black Lives Matter movement, "the ideology is usually expressed by polarized structures, emphasizing the 'Good things of Us', and the 'Bad things of Them'".[45] The function of such structures is to support a "polarized ideological organization of the global semantics of the manifesto".[46]

While van Dijk's recent work focuses on examples of present-day manifestos,[47] two studies have analyzed historical manifestos authored by American women activists in 1970s, almost contemporaneously with the publication of Phyllis Schlafly's text. Studies by Veronika Koller and Begona Nunez-Perucha thus provide some additional context in terms of the interdiscursive relationships, as conceptualized within the DHA (see above), being products of the same broader sociopolitical and historical context.[48] Differently from the manifesto analyzed in this paper, Koller's and Nunez-Perucha's investigations deal with texts expressing a feminist point of view on the role of women in contemporary American society.[49] Nunez-Perucha is interested in the changing conceptualizations of gender (in)equality. These are investigated by looking at the ways in which the roles attributed to women as a group are expressed semantically and syntactically. Her study applies van Dijk's work on feminist ideology[50] to examine local semantic and syntactic features in four feminist speeches that represent different historical period. More specifically, Nunez-Perucha is interested in "how women are lexically represented and what roles they are attributed in the clause".[51] Koller's study applies the DHA, combined with the socio-cognitive approach, to analyze a foundational text produced by a lesbian feminist collective in 1970, a manifesto that represents a sample of counter-discourse to the text written by Schlafly. Koller offers a detailed explanation of the three interrelated levels (micro-,

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[42] STOP here stands for Stop Taking Our Privileges, an acronym suggested to Schlafly by Kate Hoffman, another antifeminist activist (Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly*, 219).

[43] Cf. Teun A. van Dijk, "Manifestos as Social Movement Discourse", in Carmen Rosa Caldas-Coulthard and Malcolm Coulthard, eds., *Texts and Practices Revisited: Essential Readings in Critical Discourse Analysis*, Second Edition (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2023), 114.

[44] Ibid., 121-122. This schema partially overlaps with the ideology schema that van Dijk introduced in *Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach* (London: SAGE, 1998).

[45] Van Dijk, "Manifestos", 122.

[46] Ibid., 124.

[47] In addition to the BLM manifesto, van Dijk offers sample analyses of the Stop Mare Mortum manifesto and the manifesto of the First Continental Summit of Indigenous Women Puno.

[48] Veronica Koller, "Analyzing Lesbian Identity in Discourse: Combining Discourse-Historical and Socio-Cognitive Approaches", in Christopher Hart, ed., *Critical Discourse Studies in Context and Cognition* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2011), 119-142; Begona Nunez-Perucha, "Critical Discourse Analysis and Cognitive Linguistics as Tools for Ideological Research: A Diachronic Analysis of Feminism", in Hart, ed., *Critical Discourse Studies in Context and Cognition*, 97-117.

[49] Koller's case-study is the first paragraph of the Radicalesbians' 1970 manifesto "The Woman Identified Woman", while one of the four feminist speeches analyzed by Nunez-Perucha is a 1969 speech by Shirley Chisholm, a U.S. Congresswoman, who talked about inequality at work in "Equal Rights for Women".

[50] Teun A. van Dijk, "Ideological Discourse Analysis", *The New Courant*, 4 (1995), 135-161; *Discourse, Racism and Ideology* (La Laguna: RCEI Ed., 1996).

[51] Nunez-Perucha, "Critical Discourse Analysis", 108. The goal here is to identify the lexis of "womanhood" by extrapolating "those terms that refer specifically to the women's group and encode the different roles ascribed to men and women".

meso- and macro-) that guide the linguistic interpretation of the text in the DHA methodology. The levels can be summarized as follows: at the micro-level, close linguistic analysis is conducted, with flexible linguistic parameters; at the meso-level, the focus shifts to the producers of texts (who "may use specific lexis that they assume their audience to share, thus positioning themselves and the recipients as members of the same discourse community"),[52] the distributors and the media; at the macro-level, the analyst examines the wider social formation in order interpret the findings of the textual analysis.[53] Koller's sample of generic research questions that can be supported by the tripartite analytical model includes:

- What images of the community do authors communicate in particular texts in a particular time period? [the macro-level of analysis]
- How can those images, and any changes in them, be traced in concrete texts? [the micro-level of anlaysis]
- Who is involved in the discursive practices around them, and in what role [the meso-level of anlaysis]?
- Why have such changes taken place? [the macro-level of analysis][54]

These research questions will guide the analysis of Phyllis Schlafly's use of religious language to achieve specific political goals presented in the next section.

4. Analysis: Religion in the Ideological Warfare Against Feminism

By zooming in on the use of religious references that make the text accessible and effective for the members of a specific discourse community, the analysis of Phyllis Schlafly's text sets out to identify the key ideological categories of the manifesto (i.e., the goals of the antifeminist movement, the norms and values that the movement supports and promotes), its main polarized structures (i.e., who are the 'Good' we and who are the 'Bad' they?). The investigation starts with a keyword analysis of Schlafly's text, with corpus linguistics techniques employed in order to obtain a systematic entry-level insight into the main discourse topics of the text.[55] Table 1 presents the top 100 keywords in the manifesto, with the first batch of the 25 top keywords in column 1, followed by the second batch in column 3 and so on :[56]

Type	Frequency	Type	Frequency	Type	Frequency	Type	Frequency
women's	35	congressmen	3	speak	5	what's	2
equal	37	chivalry	3	illinois	3	sex	5
rights	41	support	13	enterprise	3	unit	3
libbers	13	thy	3	children	12	dirty	3
amendment	18	men	17	magazine	4	tuesday	3
lib	11	basic	6	ads	3	agitating	2
women	71	special	8	family	14	menial	2

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[52] Koller, "Analyzing Lesbian Identity", 127.
[53] Ibid., 123-129.
[54] Ibid., 129.
[55] The length of the text is 4,057 tokens, with 1237 types and 1156 lemmas. The software used is Lancsbox Version 6 (see Vaclav Brezina, Tony McEnery, and Stephen Wattam, "Collocations in Context: A New Perspective on Collocation Networks", *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, 20.2, (2015), 139-173. The references corpus used to produce the keyword list is *AmE06* (a corpus of American English containing approx. 1 million tokens, that comes pre-loaded with the software).
[56] For reasons of space, the table contains the information on absolute frequencies only.

husband	16	legislation	4	job	9	deprive	2
wife	19	slavery	3	civilization	3	clique	2
motherhood	7	laundry	3	ms.	4	sewing	2
laws	12	privileges	3	contract	3	drudgery	2
liberation	6	wives	3	mother	10	judeo-christian	2
woman's	5	duties	4	enjoy	3	discretion	2
don't	5	dishes	3	law	8	soviet	3
marriage	13	respect	5	russia	3	agitation	2
financial	9	achievement	4	backbreaking	2	boredom	2
baby	10	privilege	3	full-page	2	superficial	2
woman	21	unhappy	3	fanatics	2	means	7
draft	5	permit	3	community-property	2	noisy	2
babies	5	carrying	4	wife's	2	liquor	2
american	26	russian	4	dower	2	husbands	2
customs	4	1971	3	housework	2	positively	2
pay	8	benefits	5	agitators	2	satisfying	2
it's	3	promoting	3	alimony	2	promotes	2
let's	3	assault	3	husband's	2	cries	2

Table 1. Top 100 keywords in "What's Wrong with 'Equal Rights' for Women"

As is shown in the table above, *women's* was identified as the top keyword in the text. The main collocates for *women's* are *libbers* and *rights*. An expanded wildcard search for *wom** (comprising *women's*, *women*, *woman*, *woman's*) has produced a total of 132 occurrences (normalized frequency of 325.36), with *women* yielding 71 hits. It is interesting to note that the list of the top 10 negative keywords, i.e., items that have an unusually low frequency compared to the reference corpus, contains items such as *I*, *me*, *was*.[57] This finding points to the text producer's intention to create a specific collective identity by obscuring her authorial presence as an individual antifeminist woman in the text.

By combining the keyword extraction procedure with the manual inspection of the concordance lines, three major semantic domains have been identified as represented by the different groups of items in the list of the top keywords. These include: the domain of the family, motherhood and womanhood; the domain of law, legal rights and duties; and, finally, the domain referring to the feminist movement who represent the supporters of the ERA. The first domain is represented by the following keywords: *husband, wife, motherhood, marriage, baby, babies, wives, children, family, mother, wife's, husband's, husbands, women's, women, woman's, woman, men*. Additionally, lexical items such as, for example, *laundry, dishes, housework, enjoy, dirty, sewing, drudgery, menial, boredom, positively, satisfying*, etc. can be said to represent the same domain. Within the second domain, we find *equal, rights, amendment, laws, financial, draft, pay, congressmen, support, basic, special, legislation, privileges, duties, achievement, privilege, benefits, promoting, job, contract, law, community-property, dower, alimony, unit, Illinois, discretion, means*. Finally, keywords that belong to the third domain are items such as:

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[57] These three items occupy the top three positions in the list of the top ten negative keywords, followed by *back*, *did*, *down*, *between*, *see*, *know*, *says*.

libbers, lib, assault, magazine, ads, ms., full-page, fanatics, agitators, sex, unhappy, agitating, deprive, clique, agitation, noisy, liquor. These keywords thus accurately capture the main discourse topics of the text that discusses the damaging consequences that the passage of the ERA, promoted by the "noisy" feminist movement, would have for conservative, antifeminist women who endorse the most "satisfying career" of a wife, mother and homemaker.

The keyword list also contains evidence of the use of religious language. *Thy* and *Judeo-Christian* are two prominent examples that show how religious discourse can be recontextualized and intertextually referred to in a political manifesto:

1. Our Judeo-Christian civilization has developed the law and custom that, since women must bear the physical consequences of the sex act, men must be required to bear the *other* consequences and pay in other ways. (italics in original)
2. Our respect for the family as the basic unit of society, which is ingrained in the laws and customs of our Judeo-Christian civilization, is the greatest single achievement in the entire history of women's rights.
3. We are fortunate to have the great legacy of Moses, the Ten Commandments, especially this one: "Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long upon the land."

Two more excerpts containing references to Schlafly's faith can be added to the examples above:

4. If you don't like this fundamental difference, you will have to take up your complaint with God because He created us this way. The fact that women, not men, have babies is not the fault of selfish and domineering men, or of the establishment, or of any clique of conspirators who want to oppress women. It's simply the way God made us.
5. The second reason why American women are a privileged group is that we are the beneficiaries of a tradition of special respect for women which dates from the Christian Age of Chivalry. The honor and respect paid to Mary, the Mother of Christ, resulted in all women, in effect, being put on a pedestal.

These five excerpts are strategically placed in the opening part of the manifesto, unequivocally linking Schlafly's writing to foundational religious texts through overt intertextual relations.[58] The same excerpts help us identify the main polarized structures that support the organization of the manifesto. The strategic use of pronouns and possessive adjectives allows the author to present the 'US' group as the only one that embodies the values of the Judeo-Christian civilization (*our Judeo-Christian civilization*, repeated twice). The values that are referenced here include respect for the heterosexual, patriarchal family (*our respect for the family*), adherence to the legacy of the Ten Commandments (*we are fortunate to have the great legacy of Moses*), and the Christian tradition of special respect for women ([we are] *the beneficiaries of a tradition of special respect for women*). The collective identity that is discursively constructed through these intertextual references is that of a deeply religious, conservative social group whose members share some core ideological beliefs, such as, most importantly, a "gendered behavioral culture [that is] ruled by biology".[59] The defining tenets of this culture, anchored in the concept of sexual complementarity between the two sexes, were set in stone in a number of impactful twentieth-century documents produced by the Catholic Church, such as, for example, *Persona Humana*

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[58] Cf. Ruth Wodak, "Critical Discourse Analysis, Discourse-Historical Approach", in Karen Tracy, Cornelia Ilie and Todd Sandel, eds., *The International Encyclopedia of Language and Social Interaction* (John Wiley & Sons, 2015), 1-14.

[59] Amélie Ribieras, "'I Want to Thank My Husband Fred for Letting Me Come Here", in Emily K. Carian, Alex DiBranco, and Chelsea Ebin, eds., *Male Supremacism in the United States: From Patriarchal Traditionalism to Misogynist Incels and the Alt-Right* (London and New York: Routledge, 2023), 74.

(1975) and the 1985 *Ratzinger Report*.[60] Schlafly thus relies on religion to support her categorical arguments about the proper nature of the relationship between men and women and their respective roles in American society. Her claims are linguistically realized as bare assertions purporting to depict the only truthful version of reality. This version demands that the compliant addressee take for granted what Schlafly calls facts (e.g., that *the family is the basic unit of society*, that *women have babies while men don't*,[61] that there is *a fundamental difference* between women and men).

Example (4) introduces the opponents of the antifeminist worldview, who refuse to accept the ideas of the social group that Schlafly represents. The Bad 'They' are addressed directly using a second-person pronoun: *If you don't like this fundamental difference, you will have to*. Again, Schlafly's formulates her claims in a categorical way (either you like it or you don't), leaving no room for a dialogue between the two parties. At first it may not be clear that the detractors are the feminists campaigning for the ratification of the ERA. However, Schlafly quickly corrects this ambiguity by first somewhat playfully referring to feminists as *youthful agitators,* only to escalate her attack a bit later by re-labelling the same women as *'equal rights' fanatics* (inverted commas in original). The pervasive stereotype of the aggressive, foul-mouthed feminist comes alive in Schlafly's lines:[62]

6. aggressive females on television talk shows yapping about how mistreated American women are, suggesting that marriage has put us in some kind of "slavery," that housework is menial and degrading, and – perish the thought – that women are discriminated against.

Schlafly uses the same categorical language to discredit the efforts of the feminist movement as fraudulent and damaging to women:

7. It's time to set the record straight. The claim that American women are downtrodden and unfairly treated is the fraud of the century. The truth is that American women never had it so good. Why should we lower ourselves to "equal rights" when we already have the status of special privilege?
8. These women's libbers do, indeed, intend to "break the barriers" of the Ten Commandments and the sanctity of the family. It hasn't occurred to them that a woman's best "escape from isolation and boredom" is - not a magazine subscription to boost her "stifled ego" - but a husband and children who love her.

The passage in (8) contains additional examples of explicit references to religious discourse (*the Ten Commandments*, *the sanctity of the family*). But the manifesto also introduces additional religious elements in a covert way. Indeed, Schlafly varies the discursive strategies that promote her conservative agenda. In a dedicated section of the manifesto entitled "Equal Rights in Russia", Schlafly offers an apocalyptic portrayal of women's conditions in the USSR. She starts by comparing the text of the Amendment with a specific article in the Soviet Constitution: "Woman in the U.S.S.R. is accorded equal rights with men in all spheres of economic, state, cultural, public and political life." This juxtaposition

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[60] See Mary Anne Case, "Trans Formations in the Vatican's War on 'Gender Ideology'", *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 44.3 (2019), 639-664. Case explains that feminist claims "in favour of a total equality between man and woman and freedom from biologically determined roles" unequivocally clashed with John Paul II's theological anthropology of sexual complementarity, according to which the equal dignity of man and woman is "premised on and manifest in essential and complementary differences" (648).

[61] Not all women do, can or want to.

[62] The pervasiveness of this stereotype has been confirmed by recent studies of online antifeminist discourse, for example, Kimberly J. Lopez et al., "One Day of #Feminism: Twitter as a Complex Digital Arena for Wielding, Shielding, and Trolling talk on Feminism", *Leisure Sciences*, 41.3 (2019), 203-220; Jessica Aiston, "'Vicious, Vitriolic, Hateful and Hypocritical': The Representation of Feminism within the Manosphere", *Critical Discourse Studies*, 21.6 (2024), 703-720.

serves a double purpose. Firstly, Schlafly makes another contribution to her crusade against godless Communism. Secondly, she establishes a link between the feminist movement and the most un-American kind of society, the communist regime. Thus, Schlafly's antifeminist representation of the ERA supporters merges feminism with godless communism.

The projected collective identity that Schlafly creates for an idealized American woman is characterized by traits such as religious devotion, conservatism and antifeminism. In her worldview, it is this ideal woman, not the *noisy feminist agitator*, who represents the majority of American women. Schlafly's manifesto traces a linear trajectory from some remote Christian Age of Chivalry into the twentieth-century United States for a mythical tradition of special respect that allegedly has always been and continues to be reserved to women who believe in the sanctity of heterosexual marriage and the primacy of motherhood. That the audience Schlafly was addressing was composed of privileged, white, middle-class women only is a question that the manifesto skillfully avoids.

Women libbers, on the other hand, are represented as a tiny minority that has set out to assault the heterosexual family, advocate for abortions instead of babies, degrade the role of wife, mother and homemaker that, as Schlafly claims, the majority of American women aspire to. In Schlafly's words, the ERA supporters aim to destroy the customs, norms and values of the Judeo-Christian civilization, exposing America to the risk of falling prey to the godless communist regime.

5. Conclusion

This paper has attempted to enrich our understanding of some of the ways in which religion, language and politics are intertwined in the American context by examining a case-study that centered on Phyllis Schlafly's contribution to conservative antifeminism. Schlafly fought and achieved important victories in the crusade that brought conservative family values into the political limelight. It is beyond the scope of this investigation to discuss whether Schlafly's role as a woman protagonist in the grassroots conservative movement actually set an example of an ambitious housewife-activist "who liberated herself from patriarchal constraints while maintaining, in appearance, a traditional lifestyle".[63]

What needs to be recognized and researched further is Schlafly's role in the representation of feminists as a threat to *us*, to *our* nation. As a discursive move, the construction of feminists as a threat to a supposedly established order has enjoyed a remarkable continuity in time.[64] This strategic argument has enabled Schlafly to create a new gendered discourse in which

> white middle-class Christian women [are cherished] as *mater familias*, white middle-class heterosexual Christian men as 'normal', and all other individuals (i.e. those who differ in terms of gender, ethnicity/'race', religion, social class and sexual orientation) [are] conceptualized as 'outside' of the family (i.e. as not belonging to the family at all).[65]

This paper has analyzed the ways in which religious discourse can be exploited in order to achieve specific political goals. The use of religious elements through overt and covert intertextual references enabled Phyllis Schlafly to make authoritative claims about her vision of conservative gender role and the dangers associated with the feminist movement that she was able to link to the most un-American system of government represented by the Soviet communist regime. Powerful in her role of a housewife-activist, Schlafly rode on the strength of her religiously-infused mission that sanctioned her access to the public sphere as a defender of conservative values.

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[63] Ribieras, "'I Want to Thank My Husband", 82.
[64] Cf. Wodak, *The Politics of Fear*, 2.
[65] Ibid., 151.

Religion as a factor in the political mobilization of conservative women activists needs to be researched further. Perhaps religion is a simplistic explanation, but, as the analysis of religious language in Schlafly's political manifesto has shown, her writing is permeated with references to her faith. Whether she used these as "strategic discursive tools",[66] or whether she was driven by her faith, Schlafly was able to leverage religious discourse to successfully rally support for the antifeminist cause.

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[66] Taira, "Religion and the Secular", 591.

Chiara Ghezzi[1]

Religion, Science, and Reasonable Doubts.
Persuading into (Un)faith

Abstract: Based on an argumentative and stylistic methodological framework, this article aims to analyse the persuasive strategies employed in religious discourse, especially in new media. On the one hand, it concentrates on the opposing strategies of counter-discourses – such as science – and on the other, it aims to prove how even non-demonstrative, controversial topics can be moulded into believable presentations through the argumentative structures of persuasive public speech. As an example, *TED* (Technology, Entertainment, Design) is a corporation spreading ideas through 'Talks' held by experts in many fields of knowledge. Three samples from *TED Talks* are thus analysed: *On technology and faith*, held by an evangelical preacher; *Militant atheism*, run by an evolutionary scientist; and *The doubt essential to faith*, given by a journalist. The selected speeches are analysed according to the principles of stylistics (Simpson 1993, 2004) and Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's model for understanding rhetoric (1973), focusing on three particular linguistic features: premises, audience, and figures of speech. Such reiterated patterns emphasise the style and strategies used by speakers who – conforming to precise pragmatic purposes – are able to prompt the audience's emotions and solicit a performative effect.

Keywords: *TED Talks*, *persuasion*, *stylistics*, *argumentation*, *religious discourse*

The last proceeding of reason is to recognise that there is an infinity of things which are beyond it.
It is but feeble if it does not see so far as to know this.
Blaise Pascal, *Thoughts*[2]

1. Introduction

Talking about faith today conveys the impression of trying to climb a wall or indulging in scratching an old wound. That wall represents human scepticism, corroborated by increasing distrust towards every obscure controversy and by brand-new technological discoveries; while the scratched wound is the one of present-day believers, weighed down by a widespread secular disbelief. It is not an easy task to find a common dialogue between devotees and atheists, since confronting unshared ideas in a professional and respectful way requires specific knowledge, rhetorical power, and a hint of recommended empathy.

Sensitive topics such as politics and religion are usually hard to place outside of specific cultural circles or official debates since such matters often clash with people's sense of discretion, and their rooted convictions. Therefore, an optimal discourse about thorny topics should create an earnest connection with the audience, to win them over despite their reluctance, because – as TED's president Chris Anderson maintains: "some views are held so deeply that if a speaker seems to be threatening them, people go into a different mode. Instead of listening, they shut down and smolder".[3]

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[1] This contribution, as in the case of Aoife Beville's and Emma Pasquali's papers in the present issue, is part of the output of the Argo Research Centre's ongoing research project "La retorica del dare. Modalità argomentative nel discorso religioso tra Oriente e Occidente" (The Rhetoric of Giving: Argumentative Modes in Religious Discourse between East and West) coordinated by Bianca Del Villano and Chiara Ghidini.
[2] Blaise Pascal, *Thoughts* (New York: Dolphin Books, 1961), 96.
[3] Chris Anderson, *TED Talks: The Official TED Guide to Public Speaking* (London and Boston: Nicholas Brealy Publishing, 2016), 61.

Persuasive discourse – being argumentative in its nature – is the most suitable method to spread an idea and make it alluring to reasonable people. Persuasive strategies in language encourage a change of mind following new assumptions on a certain topic. A speech is considered persuasive when its main aim is to solicit adherence and action, dispelling misgivings and passiveness, and orienting people's interpretation and spirit towards an explanation which is not universally logical, but highly conceivable.[4]

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca maintain that religion is part of those universal values that thrive when relayed through persuasive discourse, since they are among the most unclear notions of our mind which are subject to change with constant rephrasing and additions.

In this paper, religious discourse is interpreted not so much as the language usually extrapolated from sacred texts and catechisms, but as an ordered system of relatively shared beliefs transmitted through the means of rhetoric and embedded in the context of modern technology, thus being far from constituting a logical-demonstrative structure depending on dogmatic theories and established doctrines. Religious discourse is considered in its argumentative possibilities as an unceasing matter of debate, rendering religion a topic of discussion spread with the purpose of convincing someone of its validity or enlightening them about its absurdity[5].

Even though our recent past shows religion as less pliable and more rigorous, modern debates are centred upon the performative power of words, establishing new perspectives towards fundamental human topics, according to the context in which they are uttered. Words are not received passively, since they activate individual reason and ability of interpretation, changing reality through an almost tangible act of speech.[6] A persuasive discourse – being deeply ingrained in the grounding, alluring power of wisely chosen words – depends on the receptive ability of a predisposed audience, who is prone to believe or willing to counteract, either about religion or science.

This paper aims to demonstrate how two opposing discourses about religion may be equally convincing, using the same – sometimes overlapping – persuasive strategies, sharing the same means of communication and equitably prospering in spite of the fluctuating points of view of the contemporary era. The study also seeks to present a compendium of the stylistic and argumentative leitmotivs characterising these discourses.

Although talking about non-demonstrative beliefs and logical linguistic patterns at the same time may seem a contradiction in terms, argumentation is more focused on ethical values than on validating evidence. Hence, a public speech about religion and one about science can share the same amount of persuasive power: they do not address people's true presumptions but their shared cultural values and convictions.

2. Online Discourse and TED Talks

Nowadays, with respect to spreading news and ideas, the Internet is more immediate, immensely faster and more striking than any other qualified medium of transmission. Although online news is more vulnerable to falsification, there are also many digital companies investing in the online industry that try to make a selection among all the available materials to provide multi-perspective knowledge in a modern and engaging way. For instance, TED Talks[7] is a branch of one of the most famous and appreciated corporations spreading information online, one of the first examples of a successful

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[4] See also Manfred Kienpointner, "The Pragmatics of Argumentation", in Marcella Bertuccelli Papi and Jef Verschueren, eds., *The Pragmatic Perspective* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1987), 277-289 and Manfred Kienpointner, "Rhetoric and Argumentation: Relativism and Beyond", *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 24.1 (1991), 43-53.

[5] See also Stephen Pihlaja, ed., *Analysing Religious Discourse* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2021).

[6] See J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1962) and John Searle, "A Classification of Illocutionary Acts", *Language in Society*, 5 (April 1976), 1-23.

[7] For further information about TED Conferences, LLC see *www.ted.com*.

combination between entertainment and learning. TED conferences aim at connecting people with different ideas and backgrounds, sharing with them concepts relating to culture, science, technology, physics, anthropology, religion, and many other disciplines in a clear, inspiring, and captivating way for a miscellaneous audience with little or no professional training.

> TED began as an annual conference, bringing together the fields of technology, entertainment, and design (hence the name). But in recent years it has expanded to cover any topic of public interest. TED speakers seek to make their ideas accessible to those outside their field by delivering short, carefully prepared talks.[8]

TED Talks include videos of twenty minutes or less distributed online for free on the TED official website as well as on YouTube; they accrue thousands of views and impressions, fuelling discussions and comments. Video conferences are public, accessible to a great number of heterogeneous users, whether in-person attendees or online viewers. Speakers are charismatic personalities with multifaceted backgrounds: they include professors, actors, comedians, journalists, scientists, preachers, and so on. A TED public speech is held on stage by professionals arguing about new discoveries, funny facts, amazing secrets, personal experiences. Their main purpose is to spark interest and inspiration, to make people laugh, elaborate, and think about their lives, discovering something new – or even old, but never focused upon – about the surrounding world.

It could be argued that entertainment and conciseness are the main stylistic features in TED Talks, and that the speakers' style and rhetorical manners surpass a real properly analysed significance. However, while the display of oversimplified solutions may constitute just a glimpse of a wisely crafted 'right opinion', this readily available communication is highly appreciated by people in need of brevity.

3. Methodology

As noted above, the most suitable method to share, spread and make an idea or a theory understandable and agreeable even when seeming unintelligible or contrasted, is through argumentative discourse.

Argumentation is a systematic way to assemble information in a specific order and with deliberate technique to make it convincing. Rhetoric – being the ability at effective and persuasive speaking – is not based on sharing the logical truth about demonstrated facts, but spreading knowledge about something conceivable dealing with values and morals more than with presumptions and acknowledged truths. The aim of the following analysis is to identify rhetorical patterns of persuasion in discourse about religion, finding among them similar persuasive structures. Recurring schemata of marked linguistic features are identified as part of persuasive discourses, spoken in front of a reasonable audience whose reception is inevitably influenced by emotions and common ground of knowledge.

Along with argumentation, stylistics focuses on the persuasive style employed by speakers, retrieving recurring features of identification in a clear, replicable way.

3.1 *Argumentation*

According to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's theorization of a new rhetoric[9] restored from ancient philosophy, argumentation is the linguistic discipline that deals with rational arguments uttered using non-demonstrative methods.

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[8] Anderson, *TED Talks*, XII.
[9] Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation* [1969] (Notre Dame, Indiana: Notre Dame U.P., 1973).

Within the argumentative process, human reason is used to support a cause or direct a choice using purposeful words.[10] The main aim in argumentation is the adherence of an audience to a certain mind-set. Listeners are influenced into performing an action, which can be negative or positive, present or future. By listening to a speaker committed to the cause of persuasion, hearers lose their inertia and set aside their doubts while being led to the reasonableness of a definite topic.

For this very reason, whereas formal logic tries to mute emotions, "the speaker aiming at a particular action, to be carried out at an opportune time, will, on the contrary, have to excite his audience so as to produce a sufficiently strong adherence, capable of overcoming both the unavoidable apathy and the forces acting in a direction divergent from that which is desired".[11] However, adherence to an induced idea does not interfere with human reason and common sense, it does not lead to an obliteration of truthfulness. Instead of presenting an idea in hopes of the audience's acceptance, argumentation proposes a reasoned persuasion, addressing both wit and will towards not one but several existing perspectives.

There is a slight but notable difference between persuading and convincing. While the former deals with a "particular audience" (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric*, 28), the latter addresses a "universal audience" (ibid., 31), meaning all listeners endowed with reason, beyond a particular dialogic situation. Although will and wit are not absolute opposites, persuasion generally solicits actions and pragmatic responses before strict logic is involved.

Argumentation – as well as stylistics – is concerned with discourse as the marked modality through which a subject is dealt with, thus focusing on premises, audience and manner.

3.2 *Premises*

Order and technique are the trump cards in the argumentative process. Salience and "presence" (ibid., 115) of definite arguments within the text are linked to the general intent of the discourse and motivated by their pertinence to the debate. To overcome scepticism, mistrust and doubt in a potential bystander, the orator must use precise rhetorical devices and take into account some premises:

1. A discourse should start from premises well-known to the hearers;
2. Arguments should be chosen according to the discursive purpose;
3. The presentation of said arguments should be able to strike the audience's attention.[12]

Speakers dealing with persuasion should bestow the right strategic value on time, space, and powerful connection with the audience: how the speaker introduces himself, who he's referring his discourse to, as well as the overall context of utterance which he's committed to – physical, personal, and cognitive[13] – are the main prerequisites for an influential public speech.

That being the case, persuasion can easily be described as a stylistic process of 'positive shading', "a narrative modality where the narrator's desires, duties, obligations of events are foregrounded".[14] While introducing his discourse, the orator shares his psychological point of view usually through first person pronouns and "*verba sentiendi*"[15] which are those verbs defining feelings and personal

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[10] Norberto Bobbio, "Prefazione", in *Trattato dell'argomentazione. La nuova retorica* (Torino: Giulio Einaudi Editore, 2013), XI, my translation.
[11] Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric*, 47.
[12] Bobbio, "Prefazione", XIV, my translation.
[13] See Paul Simpson, *Stylistics: A Resource Book for Students* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004).
[14] Ibid., 126.
[15] Simpson, *Stylistics*, 127.

experiences. The orator's status, his charisma and authority, as well as references to the self and to personal anecdotes, are integral parts of the structured premises and useful to ensure public engagement.

3.3 *Audience*

A hidden premise known as 'enthymeme', i.e. a discursive implicature usually understood through cultural hints and utterance conditions, may be used to create a connection with the audience. Said unspoken premises are based on a shared common ground of knowledge, presenting themselves as irrefutable, commonly agreed upon considerations. However, the speaker knows the audience he's facing. Thus, he is able to forecast his probabilities of success and also understand that they might have very different ideas from what he is going to reveal. Humour, self-deprecation and storytelling are usually the most suitable means for an alluring start.[16] Nevertheless, humour and sarcasm must be employed carefully, since at times they are too harsh and inappropriate, making people fidget or grimace, especially when an idea is not totally understood or shared. Ridicule is a double-edged sword which should be mastered with carefulness; it is employed to demean a potential opponent or a contrasting thesis, as well as to create a connection with a complacent public.[17]

Another fundamental process in trying to involve an audience is "priming", which is defined by Simpson as "the process by which one particular contextual frame becomes the main focus of attention for the reader".[18] Anderson also defines this process as "a way of nudging someone in your direction" and, using philosopher Daniel Dennett's words, it can be labelled as a set of "intuition pumps", referring to "any metaphor or linguistic device that intuitively makes a conclusion seem more plausible".[19]

Among the figures of speech employed as strategic discursive features are the so-called "figures of communion",[20] aimed at creating closeness with the audience. Here are those listed in *The New Rhetoric*:

- 'Allusion'*:* indirect reference to a known or shared fact, event, or past, calling for audience's recognition;
- 'Quotation'*:* citing famous authors and professionals to render the discourse authoritative and inspire recognition. Maxims, proverbs, and slogans are also quotations;
- 'Apostrophe', 'oratorical question', 'oratorical communication': 'fake' questions or assertions in which the answer is well known and not really required. The main aim is to elicit audience's engagement by making a point;
- '*Enallage* of person': 'enallage' means 'linguistic switch', it defines the usage of one grammatical form in place of another. In this case, the substitution of first or third person pronouns with second person pronoun 'you', or else the substitution of 'I' and 'you' with 'we'.[21]

3.4 *Modality and rhetorical techniques*

Argumentative discourse is highly selective, i.e. arguments are chosen according to strategic purposes, re-elaborated and interpreted by both the orator and the audience; the latter is given exegetic instruments through hints and implicatures. While introducing a definite idea, the orator first "demolishes something which is radicated in people's minds"[22] to start something new and powerful the audience is persuaded

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[16] Anderson, *TED Talks*, 56-61.
[17] Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric*, 205-206.
[18] Simpson, *Stylistics*, 91.
[19] Anderson, *TED Talks*, 89.
[20] Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric*, 187.
[21] Ibid., 177-178.
[22] Anderson, *TED Talks*, 86.

to believe in. This act of disruption is not taken for granted but is generally handled with prudence and professionalism.

As pointed out above, order and technique are fundamental for a successful discourse. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca list three possible discursive orders:

1.   Order of decreasing strength;
2.   Order of increasing strength;
3.   Homeric or Nestorian order.[23]

In the first case, the orator anticipates his thesis by placing strong arguments at the beginning of his discourse, while in the second there is a gradual path leading towards the main assumption. As for the third case, 'Nestorian order' – from Nestor, the Homeric warrior who placed his strongest fighters on the front line and in the rear guard, leaving the weakest in the middle – means that arguments which are more solid are displayed at the beginning and at the end of the argumentative discourse, giving the right initial and final idea to the audience.

The orator's ability to master grammatical and rhetorical techniques also depends on the employment of definite styles, verb tenses, pronouns, articles, and demonstratives. There is also a distinction between the paratactic and the hypotactic styles. On the one hand, compound sentences and parataxis are used to coordinate utterances on the same level to give the public the ability to interpret and associate on their own. On the other hand, hypotaxis and complex sentences constitute the typical persuasive style, since every connection among the arguments is made through subordinate conjunctions and, therefore, said connections have been aprioristically made by the orator, who leads his public towards a certain direction.

Among the other strategic figures of speech, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca further list the so-called "figures of choice" and "figures of presence"[24], the former suggesting or imposing a choice, the latter making evident the presence of certain arguments in the text.

Figures of choice are:

-    'Oratorical definition': it emphasises some elements to make them understandable;
-    'Periphrasis': definition clarifying a concept such as synecdoche and metonymy, or antonomasia, substituting a common noun with a personal noun and vice versa;
-    'Presumptio': such as prolepsis and anticipation, aiming at substituting a characteristic that would have raised objections and issues;
-    'Reprehensio': highlighting or reiterating a definition to confirm a choice;
-    'Correctio': same as substitution (172-174).

Figures of presence are:

-    'Onomatopoeia': a word whose sound evokes an object or suggest a meaning;
-    'Anaphora': repetition of a set of words to make them foregrounded;
-    'Amplification': exaggeration or enumeration;
-    'Synonymy (metabole)', 'interpretatio': the same idea is defined through different words to reaffirm its meaning and reinforce its presence;
-    'Imaginary direct speech': ascribing something to someone in an imaginary conversation, such as in 'sermocinatio' and dialogism;

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[23] Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric*, 499.
[24] Ibid., 171.

- ‘Enallage of tense’: substituting a verb tense with another. As in ‘hypotyposis’, which is a sudden switch from past tense to present, i.e. from narration to description (174-177).

3.5 *Stylistics*

As maintained by Simpson, stylistics is a "method of textual interpretation" that focuses on language, it is "interested in language as a function of texts in context, and it acknowledges that utterances (literary or otherwise) are produced in a time, a place, and in a cultural and cognitive context".[25]

Stylistics concentrates on the recognizable verbal devices used to fashion a message, cataloguing them. Said linguistic markers can be figures of speech – metaphors, in particular, as cognitive phenomena calling for active interpretation – points of view, but also ‘foregrounding’, a technique concerning the psychological reception of a text or discourse. That is, the audience's attention is focused on the orator's point of view through the repetition, parallelism, or deviation of pronouns, articles, and other specific linguistic items.

Stylistics allows the detection of reiterated linguistic patterns used for specific purposes. In the case of persuasive speech, the employed style for both scientific and religious discourse seems to equally focus on schemes of positive shading and deontic/boulomaic modalities. As this paper aims to prove, these features enable the constitution of a common ground of reasonable assumptions no matter if the audience is constituted by atheists or devotees.

Both argumentation and stylistics pay attention to point of view and modality, which reflect the marked, motivated choices made to build a message. While ‘point of view’ – whether spatial, temporal, psychological or ideological – refers to the angle a text is written or spoken from, embodying the speaker's perspective, ‘modality’ is "the means by which a speaker's attitude towards what they are saying is conveyed".[26] The four modal systems in English are "deontic, boulomaic, epistemic and perception".[27] The ‘deontic system’ indicates the speaker's "commitment (permission, obligation and requirement) assigned to the performance of given actions" and is expressed as follows:

1. Modal auxiliary verbs (*may, should, must*);
2. Adjectival and participial patterns like "BE + deontic adjective or participle + THAT or TO" (*It is possible for you to leave; You are forbidden to leave*) (Simpson, 43-44).

The ‘boulomaic system’ deals with the communication of the speaker's wishes and desires. It is realized through these structures:

1. Modal lexical verbs (*hope, wish, regret*);
2. Adjective and participial patterns like "BE + boulomaic adjective or participle + THAT or TO" (*It is regrettable that you're leaving. It is hoped that you will leave*);
3. Modal adverbs (*hopefully, regrettably*) (Simpson, 44).

The ‘epistemic system’ concerns the addresser's commitment to a certain proposition, as "it is concerned with the speaker's confidence or lack of confidence in the truth of a proposition expressed. It is suggested by the following features:

1. Modal auxiliary verbs (You may be right);

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[25] Simpson, *Stylistics*, 2-3.
[26] Paul Simpson, *Language, Ideology and Point of View* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 35.
[27] Ibid., 43-47.

2. Modal lexical verbs (I believe you are right);
3. Modal adverbs (*arguably, maybe, perhaps, possibly, probably, certainly, supposedly, allegedly*);
4. Adjective constructions like "BE + epistemic adjective + THAT or TO" (*You are sure to be right. It's doubtful that you're right*) (Simpson, 44-45).

The 'perception system' confirms the speaker's perceived confidence in the uttered proposition. Hence, it is deeply linked to the epistemic system, being expressed as follows:

1. Modal adverbs (*clearly, obviously, evidently*);
2. Adjective constructions in "BE + perception adjective + THAT" (It is obvious that you're right) (Simpson, 45-46).

These stylistic modalities mingle and overlap with the four argumentative modalities theorized by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca as follows:

1. 'Assertive', which is the common modality of affirmation in everyday language;
2. 'Injunctive', not directly dealing with persuasion, but with imperatives and power struggle;
3. 'Interrogative', which is rhetorical, leading people towards reasoning through real or mock questions;
4. 'Optative', dealing with desires, pleas, and requests.[28]

Being linked to the addresser's point of view, the stylistic procedures of 'positive', 'negative' and 'neutral shading' can be classified in terms of modality: positive shading, where the deontic and boulomaic systems are prominent; negative shading, with marked epistemic and perception elements; neutral shading, with no modality.

4. Analysing Persuasion

Even though religion and science are generally deemed opposing concepts, argumentative discourses concerning them have equal persuasive, illocutionary force when uttered by skilled orators with the reasonable purpose of moving the audience to action. Inasmuch as a mediation between such overly controversial themes is yet out of sight, an intermediary discourse about doubt in faith is also conceivable and widely spread.

Even though the proper success of a persuasive technique would benefit from a more thorough analysis of the perlocutionary side of language – here in the excerpts briefly represented by laughter and applauses – the selected texts show the accomplishments of public speech through the substantial use of a) storytelling; b) positive modality; c) humour. These may be classified as audience-oriented techniques.

The following texts are scripts of live conferences taken from the TED website. They refer to speeches held in public by professionals trying to state their thesis while talking about sensitive topics and legitimate scepticism. Significant excerpts of said texts are chosen according to two criteria:

1. Giving a representation of opposing discourses about religion held by two eminent representatives – a scientist and a preacher – plus an in-between neutral religious speech about doubt taken from TED;

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[28] Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric*, 158-160.

2. Proving the presence of the abovementioned argumentative styles and listed techniques and how they appear similar and have the same persuasive purposes in spite of the opposing views of the speakers.

The method of annotation divides the texts into sentences.

In text one, Richard Dawkins – a famous evolutionary biologist and fervent atheist – talks about the clash between religion and science, introducing new terms and using his sarcasm to demean the opposing thesis.

Speech two was given by Billy Graham, a renowned evangelical preacher whose powerful sermon aims to create a connection between technology and religion.

The last sample is taken from a talk given by journalist Lesley Hazleton, who uses the story of Muhammad on the mountain as an example to justify doubt in faith.

4.1 *Militant atheism* – Richard Dawkins[29]

Scientist Richard Dawkins is well-known for his opposition to creationism and for his contribution to evolutionary biology. His February 2002 TED talk is the perfect case of convincing criticism being led through sharp sarcasm and witty remarks. Dawkins' speech resembles a proper science lecture held in front of students; he's meticulous and sharp, grounding his statements on the ruins of all the religious beliefs he demolishes while speaking. He provides percentages, data and examples and uses quotations to corroborate his claims. Although his discourse is more demonstrative and assertive than interrogative, he succeeds in driving attention through his charisma.

Dawkins is also aware of his outsider status while speaking about religion and politics, "I'm not a citizen of this country, so I hope it won't be thought unbecoming if I suggest something needs to be done" (min. 18:38). With sarcasm being his main strategy during the whole discourse, Dawkins manages to accommodate his public using endearments such as "an audience as sophisticated as this one" (04:18, 4) and "elite audience" (27:21, 1).

In the first few minutes, Dawkins introduces himself, referring to his career, showing his charisma and authority through self-deprecation and the reiteration of the first-person pronoun 'I':

> 00:37
> [1] Can you understand my quaint English accent?
> 00:41
> (Laughter)
> 00:44
> [1] Like everybody else, I was entranced yesterday by the animal session. [2] Robert Full and Frans Lanting and others; the beauty of the things that they showed. [3] The only slight jarring note was when Jeffrey Katzenberg said of the mustang, "the most splendid creatures that God put on this earth." [4] Now of course, we know that he didn't really mean that, but in this country at the moment, you can't be too careful.
> 01:13
> (Laughter)
> 01:15
> [1] I'm a biologist, and the central theorem of our subject: the theory of design, Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection. [2] In professional circles everywhere, it's of course universally accepted. In non-professional circles outside America, it's largely ignored. [3] But in non-professional circles within America, it arouses so much hostility –

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[29] www.ted.com/talks/richard_dawkins_militant_atheism/transcript.

01:44
(Laughter)
01:45
[1] it's fair to say that American biologists are in a state of war. [2] The war is so worrying at present, with court cases coming up in one state after another, that I felt I had to say something about it.
01:58
[1] If you want to know what I have to say about Darwinism itself, I'm afraid you're going to have to look at my books, which you won't find in the bookstore outside.

In addition to the use of 'I', he employs 'allusions' (00:44, 1-4; 01:45, 1) to appear self-possessed and funny and an 'oratorical question' (00:37, 1) to elicit the audience's engagement – also signalled by the *enallage* 'I/we' (00:44, 4). He doesn't go straight to the point but uses the strategy of focusing on funny facts to put everyone at ease. While being generic to engage the audience, Dawkins' assertive tone soon evolves into a deontic system (01:45, 2; 01:58, 1).

As the script points out (laughter at 00:41, 01:13, 01:44; then at 04:08, 04:51, 05:00, 05:02, 06:17, 06:22), in public speech the perlocutionary side of language – which deals with the effect of the speech upon the audience – is fundamental to understand whether the speaker's persuasive purpose is being successful.

At min. 00:44, 3-4 and in the following statement, "Creationists, lacking any coherent scientific argument for their case, fall back on the popular phobia against atheism: Teach your children evolution in biology class, and they'll soon move on to drugs, grand larceny and sexual 'pre-version'" (03:11), Dawkins ridicules his counterpart by showing the absurdity of their assertions through 'exaggeration' and 'allusion' to perversion through a mock term.

04:03
[1] But here, I want to say something nice about creationists. [2] It's not a thing I often do, so listen carefully.
04:08
(Laughter)
04:10
[1] I think they're right about one thing. [2] I think they're right that evolution is fundamentally hostile to religion.
04:18
[1] I've already said that many individual evolutionists, like the Pope, are also religious, but I think they're deluding themselves. [2] I believe a true understanding of Darwinism is deeply corrosive to religious faith. [3] Now, it may sound as though I'm about to preach atheism, and I want to reassure you that that's not what I'm going to do. [4] In an audience as sophisticated as this one, that would be preaching to the choir.
04:48
[1] No, what I want to urge upon you --
04:51
(Laughter)
04:55
[1] Instead, what I want to urge upon you is militant atheism.
05:00
(Laughter)
05:02
(Applause)
05:05

[1] But that's putting it too negatively. [2] If I was a person who were interested in preserving religious faith, I would be very afraid of the positive power of evolutionary science, and indeed science generally, but evolution in particular, to inspire and enthrall, precisely because it is atheistic.
05:28
[1] Living creatures are too complex to have come about by chance; therefore, they must have had a designer. [2] This argument of course, shoots itself in the foot. [3] Any designer capable of designing something really complex has to be even more complex himself, and that's before we even start on the other things he's expected to do, like forgive sins, bless marriages, listen to prayers – favor our side in a war –
06:17
(Laughter)
06:19
[1] disapprove of our sex lives, and so on.
06:22
(Laughter)
06:24
[1] Complexity is the problem that any theory of biology has to solve, and you can't solve it by postulating an agent that is even more complex, thereby simply compounding the problem. [2] Darwinian natural selection is so stunningly elegant because it solves the problem of explaining complexity in terms of nothing but simplicity … [3] But here, I only want to make the point that the elegance of Darwinism is corrosive to religion, precisely because it is so elegant, so parsimonious, so powerful, so economically powerful.

The hypothesis at 05:05, 2 and the sarcastic remark at 05:28, 3 function as 'intuition pumps' to prepare the audience, to prove the wrongness of a point, in this case the reason behind ancient faith. Sarcasm is not only a rhetorical strategy used to mock and impress, but also to create communion with the bystanders through unspoken premises. Dawkins' way of speaking is self-referential but also manipulative, his utterances being set in a hypotactic style full of subordinative conjunctions such as 'if', 'but', 'therefore', 'thereby', 'because'. I.e., Dawkins' reasoning is astutely delivered to the public through slight grammatical changes, such as conjunctions and verbs, but also through the narration of personal experiences and authoritative quotations supporting his thesis.

While presenting the counterpart's certainties, Dawkins immediately disrupts their tentative arguments by contrasting creationism with Darwinism, using a series of biased adjectives describing what he clearly finds more endearing and conceivable about science (from 06:44 on): "stunningly elegant", "parsimonious", "powerful", "economically powerful". "I want" (04:03,1; 04:18, 3; 04:48, 1; 04:55, 1) signals a passage to a boulomaic stylistic modality. The speaker is projecting his desires, but also his beliefs through *verba sentiendi* "I think" and "I believe" (04:10, 1; 04:18, 1-2). This, along with the perlocutionary elements, signals that Dawkins is very much 'present' in his own speech, with his ideas and convictions, and very much aware of his audience, often called into an interactive exchange.

In the next part Dawkins quotes writer Douglas Adams, denouncing the social taboo according to which nothing can be said to further explain or counterstrike religious assertions.

08:21
[1] I quote, [1a] "Religion doesn't seem to work like that. It has certain ideas at the heart of it, which we call 'sacred' or 'holy.' What it means is: here is an idea or a notion that you're not allowed to say anything bad about. You're just not. Why not? Because you're not."
08:40
(Laughter)
…
09:31

[1] In my view, not only is science corrosive to religion; religion is corrosive to science. [2] It teaches people to be satisfied with trivial, supernatural non-explanations, and blinds them to the wonderful, real explanations that we have within our grasp. [3] It teaches them to accept authority, revelation and faith, instead of always insisting on evidence.

By showing his ideological point of view (09:31) Dawkins strengthens his thesis, which is how absurd and unconceivable religious claims are, by talking about the severe clash between religion and science. Religion is charged with obtuse stagnation, and identified as a notion that does not change through time, while science is ready to take chances and modify itself in light of new discoveries.

Another issue emerging from Dawkins' speech is the definition "atheist":

12:59
[1] In practice, what is an atheist? [2] An atheist is just somebody who feels about Yahweh the way any decent Christian feels about Thor or Baal or the golden calf. [3] As has been said before, we are all atheists about most of the gods that humanity has ever believed in. [4] Some of us just go one god further.
13:22
(Laughter)
13:25
(Applause)
13:32
[1] And however we define atheism, it's surely the kind of academic belief that a person is entitled to hold without being vilified as an unpatriotic, unelectable non-citizen. [2] Nevertheless, it's an undeniable fact that to own up to being an atheist is tantamount to introducing yourself as Mr. Hitler or Miss Beelzebub. [3] And that all stems from the perception of atheists as some kind of weird, way-out minority.

The use of oratorical questions (12:59, 1) and the massive *enallage* towards 'we' and 'us' (13:32) serve as means to engage the audience. Resistance to the concept of atheism is later overcome through the employment of synonyms, such as "agnostic" (20:23), "humanist" (24:00), "naturalist" (24:22) and, finally, "non-theist" (25:02):

25:02
[1] I think the best of the available alternatives for "atheist" is simply "non-theist." [2] It lacks the strong connotation that there's definitely no God, and it could therefore easily be embraced by teapot or tooth-fairy agnostics. [3] It's completely compatible with the God of the physicists. [4] When atheists like Stephen Hawking and Albert Einstein use the word "God," they use it of course as a metaphorical shorthand for that deep, mysterious part of physics which we don't yet understand. [5] "Non-theist" will do for all that, yet unlike "atheist," it doesn't have the same phobic, hysterical responses. [6] But I think, actually, the alternative is to grasp the nettle of the word "atheism" itself, precisely because it is a taboo word, carrying frissons of hysterical phobia. [7] Critical mass may be harder to achieve with the word "atheist" than with the word "non-theist," or some other non-confrontational word.
…
26:16
[1] Now, I said that if I were religious, I'd be very afraid of evolution – I'd go further: I would fear science in general, if properly understood. [2] And this is because the scientific worldview is so much more exciting, more poetic, more filled with sheer wonder than anything in the poverty-stricken arsenals of the religious imagination.
…
27:21

[1] Now, this is an elite audience, and I would therefore expect about 10 percent of you to be religious. [2] Many of you probably subscribe to our polite cultural belief that we should respect religion. [3] But I also suspect that a fair number of those secretly despise religion as much as I do.
27:45
(Laughter)
27:47
[1] If you're one of them, and of course many of you may not be, but if you are one of them, I'm asking you to stop being polite, come out, and say so. [2] And if you happen to be rich, give some thought to ways in which you might make a difference. [3] The religious lobby in this country is massively financed by foundations – to say nothing of all the tax benefits – by foundations, such as the Templeton Foundation and the Discovery Institute. [4] We need an anti-Templeton to step forward. [5] If my books sold as well as Stephen Hawking's books, instead of only as well as Richard Dawkins' books, I'd do it myself.
28:31
[1] People are always going on about, "How did September the 11th change you?"
28:38
[1] Well, here's how it changed me.
28:41
[1] Let's all stop being so damned respectful.

Again, the prompting hypothesis at 26:16, 1 and the biased praising pre-modifiers of science against religion (Ibid., 2) are used to show ridicule towards believers; these are followed by a series of directives to call the audience into action against "the religious lobby", with a continuous *enallage* 'I/we' (27:47). This last segment is totally injunctive in style and even harsher (27:47, 1; 28:41, 1), as the orator tries to instruct his audience to do something after having listened to all this evidence against ridiculous assumptions and naïve beliefs without logical explanation. Thus, while Dawkins goes on celebrating science with an adjectival amplification (26:16, 2), he also demeans the counterpart with sharp adjectives (Ibid.).

Being a scientist, even if persuasive discourse itself is not always logical and demonstrative, Dawkins conceives an authentic science class with a precise scheme of data. The passage deontic-boulomaic and the use of *verba sentiendi* demonstrates that this argumentative style is highly marked by positive shading, rendering Dawkins fully committed to the main topic.

It can be assumed he's using an order of increasing strength, in which he manages to avoid disappointment and frustration through sarcastic engagement and continuous '*enallage* of person'. He does not really acknowledge an antithesis with supporting evidence, if not to hint at it to demolish it harshly by showing its ridiculousness.

4.2 *On technology and faith* – Billy Graham[30]

While Richard Dawkins' discursive strategy is using bald sarcasm over tolerance, Billy Graham's speech is strongly based on a placid confrontation between science and religion, aiming at encouraging a diplomatic compromise between them.

Billy Graham was one of the most famous and prolific contemporary evangelical preachers, with his inspiring sermons being broadcast on television, radio, and even on the Internet. In his 1998 TED talk, with a meek approach, showing his authenticity and sympathetic feelings, Graham expressed his own admiration for the recent technological discoveries, trying to find a happy medium to make both technology and faith conceivable and acceptable.

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[30] www.ted.com/talks/billy_graham_on_technology_and_faith/transcript.

00:25
[1] As a clergyman, you can imagine how out of place I feel. [2] I feel like a fish out of water, or maybe an owl out of the air.
00:37
(Laughter)
00:40
[1] I was preaching in San Jose some time ago, and my friend Mark Kvamme, who helped introduce me to this conference, brought several CEOs and leaders of some of the companies here in the Silicon Valley to have breakfast with me, or I with them. [2] And I was so stimulated. [2a] And had such – it was an eye-opening experience to hear them talk about the world that is yet to come through technology and science. [3] I know that we're near the end of this conference, and some of you may be wondering why they have a speaker from the field of religion.
…
01:40
[1] But some years ago I was on an elevator in Philadelphia, coming down. [2] I was to address a conference at a hotel. [3] And on that elevator a man said, "I hear Billy Graham is staying in this hotel." [3a] And another man looked in my direction and said, "Yes, there he is. He's on this elevator with us." [3b] And this man looked me up and down for about 10 seconds, and he said, "My, what an anticlimax!"
…
03:39
[1] I know that as you have been peering into the future, and as we've heard some of it here tonight, I would like to live in that age and see what is going to be. [2] But I won't, because I'm 80 years old. [3] This is my eightieth year, and I know that my time is brief. [3] I have phlebitis at the moment, in both legs, and that's the reason that I had to have a little help in getting up here, because I have Parkinson's disease in addition to that, and some other problems that I won't talk about.
04:15
(Laughter)

Graham's discourse starts with a 'presumptio' (00:25): showing authentic vulnerability and embarrassment, he admits the weakness of being a clergyman in a scientific context, in order to avoid possible objections. This results in an immediate sympathy within the audience – as shown by the perlocutionary response (00:37, 04:15). The account of his life through storytelling and 'imaginary direct speech' (01:40, 3-3a-3b) is not self-referential but aimed at showing his being out of place in front of an audience accustomed to scientific discourses. His bitter humour in the form of assertives (03:39) serves to elicit an empathic response. Trying to soothe a potentially hostile public, Graham employs a plain paratactic style, with single sentences and coordinating conjunctions 'and', reiterated to let the bystanders draw their own conclusions about his thesis. The massive use of parataxis is evident in the following segment, where Graham's strategy of cutting the sentence, in order to make them shorter, simpler to understand and apparently separate, helps to put the audience at ease:

04:17
[1] But this is not the first time that we've had a technological revolution … [2] And there's one that I want to talk about. [3] In one generation, the nation of the people of Israel had a tremendous and dramatic change that made them a great power in the Near East. [4] A man by the name of David came to the throne, and King David became one of the great leaders of his generation. [5] He was a man of tremendous leadership … [6] He was a brilliant poet, philosopher, writer, soldier – with strategies in battle and conflict that people study even today.

Here Graham starts to slowly veer into his main assumption by storytelling the biblical King David's life, creating a 'simile' between David's doing and the outcome of modern technological revolutions.

Choosing a discursive order of increasing strength, the orator places his mentions of an antithesis right at the beginning of the text, and then goes on with arguments in support of his own beliefs.

> 06:37
> [1] There were many problems still left. [2] And they're still with us, and you haven't solved them, and I haven't heard anybody here speak to that. [3] How do we solve these three problems that I'd like to mention? [4] The first one that David saw was human evil. [5] Where does it come from? [6] How do we solve it? [7] Over again and again in the Psalms, which Gladstone said was the greatest book in the world, David describes the evils of the human race. [8] And yet he says, "He restores my soul." [9] Have you ever thought about what a contradiction we are? [10] On one hand, we can probe the deepest secrets of the universe and dramatically push back the frontiers of technology, as this conference vividly demonstrates. [11] We've seen under the sea, three miles down, or galaxies hundreds of billions of years out in the future.
>
> 07:46
> [1] But on the other hand, something is wrong. [2] Our battleships, our soldiers, are on a frontier now, almost ready to go to war with Iraq. [3] Now, what causes this? [3a] Why do we have these wars in every generation, and in every part of the world? [3b] And revolutionist? [4] We can't get along with other people, even in our own families. [5] We find ourselves in the paralyzing grip of self-destructive habits we can't break. [6] Racism and injustice and violence sweep our world, bringing a tragic harvest of heartache and death. [7] Even the most sophisticated among us seem powerless to break this cycle. [8] I would like to see Oracle take up that, or some other technological geniuses work on this.
> …
> 09:08
> [1] The Bible says the problem is within us, within our hearts and our souls. [2] Our problem is that we are separated from our Creator, which we call God, and we need to have our souls restored, something only God can do. [3] Jesus said, "For out of the heart come evil thoughts: murders, sexual immorality, theft, false testimonies, slander." [4] The British philosopher Bertrand Russell was not a religious man, but he said, "It's in our hearts that the evil lies, and it's from our hearts that it must be plucked out." [5] Albert Einstein – I was just talking to someone, when I was speaking at Princeton, and I met Mr. Einstein. [6] He didn't have a doctor's degree, because he said nobody was qualified to give him one.
> 10:07
> (Laughter)

In this excerpt, Graham acknowledges the existence of an opposing thesis with the periphrasis at 06:37, 10-11 and 07:28. From the very beginning, the orator has even shown admiration towards scientific discoveries (00:40, 2-2a).

Nevertheless, he also employs 'figures of communion' such as 'oratorical questions' trying to convince his public of what will say next. References to everyday issues, such as war, bad habits, racism, injustice, and violence, are 'intuition pumps' directing the bystanders towards Graham's aimed direction. Among all the possibilities and certainties given by science and demonstrated facts, the orator shows that something dealing with unrestricted values goes beyond the formal logic. The '*enallage* of person', exemplified by the passage from individual 'I' to inclusive 'we', urges the involvement of the audience in the following religious arguments.

Furthermore, quotations of illustrious men of science such as Albert Einstein and, later, Blaise Pascal (20:46), are used to create a common ground of mutual understanding, to inspire recognition among the hearers, who are led to believe that what Graham is saying about faith has been accepted even by illuminated and well-known scientists:

10:11
[1] But he made this statement. [2] He said, "It's easier to denature plutonium than to denature the evil spirit of man." [3] And many of you, I'm sure, have thought about that and puzzled over it. [4] You've seen people take beneficial technological advances, such as the Internet we've heard about tonight, and twist them into something corrupting. [5] You've seen brilliant people devise computer viruses that bring down whole systems … [6] The problem is not technology. [7] The problem is the person or persons using it. King David said that he knew the depths of his own soul. [8] He couldn't free himself from personal problems and personal evils that included murder and adultery. [9] Yet King David sought God's forgiveness, and said, "You can restore my soul."
11:14
[1] You see, the Bible teaches that we're more than a body and a mind. [1a] We are a soul. [1b] And there's something inside of us that is beyond our understanding. [1c] That's the part of us that yearns for God, or something more than we find in technology. [2] Your soul is that part of you that yearns for meaning in life, and which seeks for something beyond this life. [3] It's the part of you that yearns, really, for God.

By admitting "The problem is not technology. The problem is the person or persons using it" (10:52), Graham finally states his thesis and, at the same time, grants room for manoeuvre to those who also believe in science and technology. They are not opposites. He maintains that there is something beyond comprehension, something that lies outside the bodily constraints and cannot be explained through rationality.

The use of personal and possessive pronouns *we*, *us*, *our* (04:17, 1-2; 06:37, 2-3-6-10-11; 07:46, 2-3a-4-5-6-9; 09:08, 1-2; 10:11, 4; 11:14, 1-1a-1b-1c) shows the speaker's effort to engage the audience. But more than that, the use of exclusive 'you' renders the audience the absolute protagonist of the story, endowing them with full importance (06:37, 2; 10:11, 3-4-5; 11:14, 1-2-3; 24:37, 2). Thus, the author intentionally put himself in the shadows, showing commitment through storytelling but not through a bald positive shading (neither of the four modality systems are stressed). The real protagonist of the story is the audience as the imaginary characters, called into action through reiterated oratorical questions (06:37 3-5-6-9; 07:46, 3-3a-3b-9; 24:37, 4). Furthermore, these questions function as foregrounded points for the audience, whose attention is driven to them because they help the slow process of induce their reasoning.

Graham's discourse is a spiralling scheme proceeding towards a non-logical demonstration. His chosen argumentative modality is a wise mixture of assertion – as he was reporting a parable – and interrogation – always oratorical and engaging. It is a gradual exploration that persuades people through kindness, understanding, personal experience, acceptance of opposing assumptions and significant quotations, which are his main strategies. Once again, in the epilogue Graham refers to his own story, since he believes his happy outcome with faith could serve as an incentive to believe. There is no strong and definite assumption – thus a neutral shading since the choice is always left to the individual – the audience – who is the true determining protagonist of every choice of faith:

24:37
[1] One day, I was faced face-to-face with Christ. [2] He said, "I am the way, the truth and the life." Can you imagine that? "I am the truth. I'm the embodiment of all truth." [3] He was a liar. [3a] Or he was insane. [3b] Or he was what he claimed to be. [4] Which was he? [5] I had to make that decision. [5a] I couldn't prove it. [5b] I couldn't take it to a laboratory and experiment with it. [6] But by faith I said, I believe him, and he came into my heart and changed my life. [7] And now I'm ready, when I hear that call, to go into the presence of God.

4.3 *The doubt essential to faith* – Lesley Hazleton[31]

Lesley Hazleton worked as a reporter in the Middle East. She's an agnostic who dealt with religion from an objective point of view while writing Muhammad and other sacred personalities' biographies. In her papers and lectures, Hazleton looks at mystery, science, and religion with optimism and pragmatism, embodying everyone's hesitations about sensitive topics and unshared ideas[32].

Even though her TED talk is shorter than the previous ones, it is possibly the most striking for its meaning and final purpose: demonstrating how faith is possible if doubt becomes its indivisible part.

> 00:00
> [1] Writing biography is a strange thing to do. [2] It's a journey into the foreign territory of somebody else's life, a journey, an exploration that can take you places you never dreamed of going and still can't quite believe you've been, especially if, like me, you're an agnostic Jew and the life you've been exploring is that of Muhammad.
> 00:29
> [1] Five years ago, for instance, I found myself waking each morning in misty Seattle to what I knew was an impossible question: [2] What actually happened one desert night, half the world and almost half of history away? [2a] What happened, that is, on the night in the year 610 when Muhammad received the first revelation of the Koran on a mountain just outside Mecca? [3] This is the core mystical moment of Islam, and as such, of course, it defies empirical analysis. [4] Yet the question wouldn't let go of me. [5] I was fully aware that for someone as secular as I am, just asking it could be seen as pure chutzpah. (Laughter) [5a] And I plead guilty as charged, because all exploration, physical or intellectual, is inevitably in some sense an act of transgression, of crossing boundaries.

First, Hazleton presents herself and her work *in media res*, i.e. without verbose periphrasis, going straight to her work as a biographer, which is the starting point to her thesis and the reason why she thought about faith while being a "secular" (01:18) creature. She gives a meaningful premise to her discourse: since the title announces it will be about faith and she declares her agnosticism, she also wins public favour by saying even the unbelieving materialists can listen to a speech about faith. Thus, the audience is considerably widened through an inclusive strategy.

The '*enallage* of person' and direct reference to the bystanders with confidential, direct address 'you' allows an immediate communion with the public, who is presumably disoriented and sceptical. Hazleton chooses an order of increasing strength with a comprehensible preamble uttered before the main thesis. 'Oratorical questions' (00:29, 2, 2A) and humour followed by laughter (Ibid., 5) are used as 'figures of communion'. At min. 00:29 the beginning of the storytelling section marks a shift towards the main argument through an '*enallage* of tense', from present to past, i.e. from description to narration:

> 01:57
> [1] Which might be why when I looked at the earliest accounts we have of that night, what struck me even more than what happened was what did not happen. [2] Muhammad did not come floating off the mountain as though walking on air. [2a] He did not run down shouting, "Hallelujah!" and "Bless the Lord!" [2b] He did not radiate light and joy. [3] There were no choirs of angels, no music of the spheres, no elation, no ecstasy, no golden aura surrounding him, no sense of an absolute, fore-ordained role as the messenger of God. [3a] That is, he did none of the things that might make it easy to cry foul, to put down the whole story as a pious fable. [3b] Quite the contrary. [4] In his own reported words, he was convinced at first that what had happened couldn't have been real. [5] At best, he thought, it had to have been a hallucination -- a trick of the eye or the ear, perhaps, or his

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own mind working against him. [5a] At worst, possession – that he'd been seized by an evil jinn, a spirit out to deceive him, even to crush the life out of him. [6] In fact, he was so sure that he could only be majnun, possessed by a jinn, that when he found himself still alive, his first impulse was to finish the job himself, to leap off the highest cliff and escape the terror of what he'd experienced by putting an end to all experience.
03:47
[1] So the man who fled down the mountain that night trembled not with joy but with a stark, primordial fear. [2] He was overwhelmed not with conviction, but by doubt. [3] And that panicked disorientation, that sundering of everything familiar, that daunting awareness of something beyond human comprehension, can only be called a terrible awe.
04:22
[1] Yet whether you're a rationalist or a mystic, whether you think the words Muhammad heard that night came from inside himself or from outside, what's clear is that he did experience them, and that he did so with a force that would shatter his sense of himself and his world and transform this otherwise modest man into a radical advocate for social and economic justice.

The 'imaginary direct speech' at 01:57, 2a allows to make Muhammad more as a plausible character in Hazleton's story. While the other speeches are set on an inevitable contrast – further motivated by the very profession of the speakers – Hazleton's always gives alternatives and makes comparison, leading the audience towards a certain goal, but also leaving full freedom of choice (01:57, 5-5a; 04:22, 1). Her discourse truly is all-encompassing.

Through her reporter experience, light sarcasm, meaningful pre-modifiers (03:47, 3), and the continuous passage from descriptive present to narrative past, she acknowledges the difficulties of believing in something without logical foundation. Reiterated 'antithesis' at 03:47, 1-2-3 function as the pivotal, foregrounded point in Hazleton's storytelling. The reason behind a rightful doubt in faith is justified by the fact that Muhammad himself was scared. The discourse is apparently paratactic, and yet sentences are linked together to make the story more immersive. As the epitome of authoritative quotation, she gives the example of one of the most famous religious representants, of his fear and disbelief, to make plausible the uneasiness of doubt. Hence, she states her thesis:

05:32
[1] Yet what, exactly, is imperfect about doubt? [2] As I read those early accounts, I realized it was precisely Muhammad's doubt that brought him alive for me, that allowed me to begin to see him in full, to accord him the integrity of reality. [3] And the more I thought about it, the more it made sense that he doubted, because doubt is essential to faith.

The next excerpts are all arguments displayed in favour of the main assumption, giving once again the final example of an eminent religious person to justify fallacious human nature, which is made of decisions and retreats, trusted facts and changing opinions:

06:36
[1] If this seems a startling idea at first, consider that doubt, as Graham Greene once put it, is the heart of the matter. [2] Abolish all doubt, and what's left is not faith, but absolute, heartless conviction. [3] You're certain that you possess the Truth – inevitably offered with an implied uppercase T – and this certainty quickly devolves into dogmatism and righteousness, by which I mean a demonstrative, overweening pride in being so very right, in short, the arrogance of fundamentalism.
…
09:37
[1] This isn't faith. It's fanaticism, and we have to stop confusing the two. [2] We have to recognize that real faith has no easy answers. [3] It's difficult and stubborn. [4] It involves an ongoing

struggle, a continual questioning of what we think we know, a wrestling with issues and ideas. It goes hand in hand with doubt, in a never-ending conversation with it, and sometimes in conscious defiance of it.
10:14
[1] And this conscious defiance is why I, as an agnostic, can still have faith. [2] I have faith, for instance, that peace in the Middle East is possible despite the ever-accumulating mass of evidence to the contrary. [3] I'm not convinced of this. [4] I can hardly say I believe it. [5] I can only have faith in it, commit myself, that is, to the idea of it, and I do this precisely because of the temptation to throw up my hands in resignation and retreat into silence.
10:53
[1] Because despair is self-fulfilling. [2] If we call something impossible, we act in such a way that we make it so. And I, for one, refuse to live that way. [3] In fact, most of us do, whether we're atheist or theist or anywhere in between or beyond, for that matter, what drives us is that, despite our doubts and even because of our doubts, we reject the nihilism of despair. [4] We insist on faith in the future and in each other. [5] Call this naive if you like. [6] Call it impossibly idealistic if you must. [7] But one thing is sure: Call it human.

Directive speech acts at 06:36, 1-2 are employed to engage a now predisposed audience induced into a joined effort at reasoning. Min. 09:37 further proves Hazleton's discourse to be more convincing than persuading, for the very reason that it is about doubt, thus placing itself in the grey zone between faith and atheism where a choice is still left uncertain. She slowly and consciously drives the audience towards a reasoned conclusion through foregrounded 'anaphora' (10:53, 5-6-7). The use of modal verbs (10:14, 1-4-5) demonstrates the employment of a deontic system, i.e. Hazleton's point of view and commitment after enucleating her reasons are expressed through giving herself permission to believe. Hazleton's discourse is a well-built compendium, a happy medium between the other two: if Dawkins was relentless and sarcastic, and Graham tolerant and cautious, Hazleton is both. There's even an almost perfect equilibrium between 'parataxis' ("and", commas) and 'hypotaxis' ("yet", "and yet", "but", "for instance", "that is", "whether", "because"). Her argumentative modality oscillates among assertive, interrogative, and even optative hints ("This isn't faith. It's fanaticism, and we have to stop confusing the two. We have to recognize that real faith has no easy answers", min 09:37), being thoroughly journalistic.

5. Conclusions

Religious discourse is not always polite and tolerant, nor are its representatives and its opponents. It is mostly unforgiving and inexorable as long as antithetic ideas will thrive and dispute.

The stylistic analysis of these texts demonstrates that, in spite of their different points of view, the speakers all narrate personal experiences and employ humour and positive sharing modalities in order to elicit consent. In particular, Dawkins, Graham and Hazleton use:

1) Storytelling;
2) Hypothesis and oratorical questions as psychological prompts;
3) The 'enallage of person' 'I/we' for audience involvement;
4) An order of increasing strength;
5) An alternation between assertive and interrogative argumentative modalities.

While some stylistic oscillations – especially in parataxis and hypotaxis – serve as means to preserve the speakers' different thesis, the use of the same reiterated techniques further demonstrates how religious discourses benefit from the same persuasive modalities in spite of their internal differences. There are many ways, more or less persuasive, or even manipulative, to inspire conviction and trust in

a willing audience, even when the main assumptions are thorny and conflicted. It can be achieved through cunning sarcasm – as for Richards Dawkins' vehement harangue, full of hypotactic, induced reasoning – or through meek understanding – as for Billy Graham's sermon-like discourse, where bystanders are not stricken with sheer force, but persuaded with the promise of peace.

Whatever the means, public adherence is always accomplished, whether in a positive or negative way, and a consequential action, i.e. their commitment to one particular cause, is the desirable outcome of such heartfelt discursive confrontations. Persuasion counts many strategies in its arsenal and it is deeply linked to the shared commitment of the speaker to his/her own motifs.

However, faith can also be philosophically and linguistically bipolar and undecided. Religious discourse can drive people towards strong beliefs with equally strong, definite arguments, choosing foregrounded figures of speech to draw attention to the presence of an argument or the availability of a choice or even through an affective link with the orator. At the same time, it can lead towards doubt and a middle ground of an all-embracing confrontation through rhetorical questions and authoritative storytelling, as in Lesley Hazleton's speech.

Especially in this last case, the audience will always be the preferred interpreter of clear directives or implicated psychological prompts. Hearers can follow a reasonable path of explanatory arguments, but they have the right and the intellectual means to understand and take a stand, even if it's not a definite one, even when it's emotional, changing, and open to dialogue and further analysis. This openness is what makes persuasive discourse possible, always aimed at inspiring new concepts, leading to new actions and flourishing with changing ideas.

Emma Pasquali[1]

"Where It Says Donate, Okay, You Do It Right Now".
Exploring the Persuasive Strategies of Benny Hinn

Abstract: The present essay aims at unravelling the persuasive and influential strategies employed by the pastor and televangelist Benny Hinn to hinge on his followers to sustain his Ministry and TV format, streaming platforms and online avenues. After establishing a connection between deliberative rhetoric and televangelism and setting the context for Benny Hinn's persona, the present study decodes the underlying patterns of his persuasive strategy using a hybrid methodology, which integrates the seminal research by Searle and Yule. The excerpts drawn from the *Benny Hinn Healing Services* aired in 2021 will be examined both quantitatively and qualitatively to underscore that audience persuasion transcends both mere logical argumentation and the speaker's credibility and to dissect Hinn's persuasive framework, probing how he interweaves logical coherence, *ethos* and emotionally resonant appeals to mobilize financial support.

Keywords: *pragmatics*, *rhetoric*, *televangelism*, *persuasion*, *Benny Hinn*

1. Persuasion and Televangelism

Persuasion has been widely studied since Aristotelian times, and it can be defined as "the process of inducing a *voluntary* change in someone's attitudes, beliefs or behaviour through the transmission of a message"[2] or as "the addressing of arguments or appeals to a person in order to induce cooperation, submission, or agreement".[3] In other words, *to persuade* means to convince the hearer(s) to behave in a certain way and it is often achieved with the help of pragmatic argumentation (for instance, through "the recommendation of an action on the basis of its positive consequences").[4] Any means – non-verbal communication, music, art, language[5] – can help to persuade, albeit with a different grade of incisiveness.

A link between televangelism and persuasion was evidenced by Schmidt and Kess who, in their seminal work *Television Advertising and Televangelism. Discourse Analysis of Persuasive Language*, examined in detail previous theoretical studies, and analysed a selection of promotional segments from televangelists' broadcasts, comparing them with advertising messages[6] and posing the basis of a methodology apt to study such discourse. They selected excerpts directed to the audience that "contained appeals for viewer response or promotion of the ministry or the program itself", transcribed data from audio tape, and added punctuation with the help of intonation and verbal content; when unclear words were uttered, they included a phonetical transcription followed by a question mark. Non-verbal communication, instead, was excluded from their analysis. In short, the study explores persuasive language in

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[2] Rosemarie Schmidt and Joseph F. Kess, *Television Advertising and Televangelism: Discourse Analysis of Persuasive Language* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 1986), 2. Emphasis added.
[3] OED, "Persuasion, n." *OED Online*, www.oed.com.
[4] Jos Hornikx, "A Review of Experimental Research on the Relative Persuasiveness of Anecdotal, Statistical, Causal, and Expert Evidence", *Studies in Communication Sciences*, 5.1 (2005), 206.
[5] Schmidt and Kess, *Televangelism*, 2.
[6] Schmidt and Kess, *Televangelism*, 4-5.

television advertising and televangelism, highlighting that both forms of communication use similar rhetorical techniques to influence their audiences. The scholars analyse the structure, style, and content of the language employed in such forms of communication to understand how they create emotional appeal, establish credibility, and encourage viewers to take specific actions (that is, buying a product or adopting religious beliefs). The analysis pinpoints the strategic use of language to engage viewers, build trust, and persuade them to act in accordance with the advertiser's or televangelist's goals. The selected excerpts focus on the linguistic features of advertising highlighted by Lakoff[7] and Geis,[8] that is, novel terms and expressions, frequent repetition of names,[9] mitigation of claims, saying indirect things, adjectivization processes and imperative structures as suggestions, which are strictly bound to speech acts.[10] The results of their enquiry evidenced several similarities between the persuasive strategies in advertising and televangelist broadcasts; indeed, indirect speech forms and vague language are present not only in claims and arguments but also in assurances, predictions and issuing of directives. Furthermore, the scholars found evidence of "Geis' observation that product names often have more than a referring function and can themselves carry information that might aid in their promotion".[11] Indeed, the names of televangelists are frequently repeated, probably intentionally, as a drill.[12] Linguistic novelty, instead, is rarely present and "the literal strength of claims was also mitigated in televangelists' speech through a variety of linguistic devices reminiscent of Geis' original report, though the use of modal verbs for this purpose was not found in the data".[13]

2. Introducing Benny Hinn

Toufik Benedictus ("Benny") Hinn is a world-famous religious leader who reaches a wide audience through books, television and online live sessions.[14] He is among the televangelists who have a "near-celebrity status", and thus, have name akin to a brand, a persona that is constructed and shaped by his numerous media appearances and is perceived by the public as a "media commodity".[15]

He was born in 1952 in Jaffa (Israel), where his family moved from Greece; afterwards, they moved to Canada, where he began to build his (controversial) career. With his wife, Suzanne Harthern, he started a family, and they now live near the "World Healing Center Church" and the television studio, "Benny Hinn Ministries". The two "entities" together are a full-fledged corporation.[16] The ministry is active in the fight against famine and poverty, takes care of children's education and owns a hospital in Calcutta and two children's homes in Mexico and in the Philippines.[17]

Despite his commitment to the above-discussed causes, Benny Hinn has been harshly criticized in the last thirty years; for instance, in 1991, after he became famous thanks to his book *Good Morning,*

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[7] Robin Tolmach Lakoff, "Persuasive Discourse and Ordinary Conversation, with Examples from Advertising", in Deborah Tannen, ed., *Analyzing Discourse: Text and Talk* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown U.P., 1982).
[8] Michael L. Geis, *The Language of Television Advertising* (New York: Academic Press, 1982).
[9] In the case of televangelist broadcasts, the repeated names are the ones of people; instead, in advertising, product names are repeated (for further details, see Schmidt and Kess, *Televangelism*, 45).
[10] Schmidt and Kess, *Televangelism*, 39-61.
[11] Ibid., 63.
[12] Peculiarities of advertising that have not been found in televangelists' discourse are "1. [t]he terms introducing or announcing used to attract viewer attention; 2. the use of count nouns as mass nouns; 3. rhetorical questions; 4. elliptical comparatives; 5. odd uses of the definite article; 6. pragmatic anomaly". Schmidt and Kess, *Televangelism*, 64.
[13] Ibid., 63.
[14] The presence of an audience implies the possibility of interaction, and thus, of persuasion. Martin Adam, "Persuasion in Religious Discourse: Enhancing Credibility in Sermon Titles and Openings", *Discourse and Interaction*, 10.2 (2017), 7.
[15] Bryan and Albakry, "Personalization in Online Sermons", 700.
[16] About mega-churches functioning as corporations, see Simon Coleman, *The Globalisation of Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2000).
[17] Benny Hinn Ministries, "About us", bennyhinn.org.

Holy Spirit, which had sold over five hundred thousand copies, *Christianity Today* (1991) propagated that scholars and apologetic ministers, among them professor of theology J. Rodman Williams, raised serious questions about his doctrines, leading him to retract his early statements.[18] Further strong critiques came from Fisher and Goedelman, who published a collection of articles titled *The Confusing World of Benny Hinn* (1996), which provides the reader with extensive documentation aimed at highlighting the bizarre teachings and contradictory spiritual experiences of the purported healer.[19]

Due to the various critiques received and some criminal allegations of fraud and misuse of donations,[20] in 2019 Hinn decided to "amend" his prosperity gospel[21] theory, declaring it to be offensive to God, and he stated that he did not want to ask *to seed*, that is "to give", (certain amounts of) money anymore. However, as the corpus on which the present study focuses demonstrates, he changed his *modus operandi* only partially: a specific amount of money is not requested anymore, but offerings are still elicited.

3. The Corpus

The present essay analyses 5 excerpts from the *Miracle Healing Service with Pastor Benny Hinn*:

1. *Benny Hinn Healing Service* (H090721), 9th July 2021, *www.youtube.com.*
2. *Benny Hinn Healing Service* (H230721), 23rd July 2021, *www.youtube.com*.
3. *Benny Hinn Healing Service* (H011021), 1st October 2021, *www.youtube.com*.
4. *Benny Hinn Healing Service* (H221021), 22nd October 2021, *www.youtube.com*.
5. *Benny Hinn Healing Service* (H191121), 19th November 2021, *www.youtube.com*.

During the program, which airs on many platforms (among them, YouTube and Facebook), the Pastor guarantees "anointed worship, ministry and miracles".[22] People can either participate in-person, buying

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[18] Hinn responded to the allegations that his wrong statements were caused by "a lack of formal Bible training"; for example, the preacher affirmed that the Holy Spirit was formed by nine entities. *Christianity Today*, "Benny Hinn: Best-selling author admits Mistakes, Vows Changes", *Christianity Today*, 35.12 (1991), 44.

[19] G. Richard Fisher and M. Kurt Goedelman, *The Confusing World of Benny Hinn* (n.p.: Personal Freedom Press, 1996). Critics also came from the Methodist Church of Fiji, the Italian Evangelical Alliance and journalists. See, among others, Alleanza Evangelica Italiana, "Comunicato dell'Alleanza Evangelica Italiana" (2006), *www.alleanzaevangelica.org*; Sola Odunfa, "Pastor Hinn in Nigerian Money Row", *BBC News* (2005), *www.bbc.co.uk*; Religious News Blog, "Methodist Wary of Hinn", *Religious News Blog*, 2006, *www.religionnewsblog.com.*

[20] In 2007, the Pastor and other US televangelists were investigated by the Senate Finance Committee for misuse of donations. On that occasion, Hinn placed "a 'curse' from God against anyone 'who [dared] to speak a word about [his] ministry'". The investigation was concluded with no penalties for the Pastors who did not cooperate and "no definitive findings of wrongdoing". In 2017, instead, the investigators of IRS reached Hinn's headquarters in Grapevine (Texas) and sequestered around a hundred boxes of documents in order to investigate tax evasion and fraud against the government, but charges have never been filed. See Julieta Chiquillo, "IRS Investigators search televangelist Benny Hinn's offices in Grapevine", *The Dallas Morning News* (2017), *www.dallasnews.com*; William Crawley, "The heresy of 'televangelists'", *BBC News* (2007), *www.bbc.co.uk*; Vicky Baker, "The preachers getting rich from poor Americans", BBC News (2019), *www.bbc.com*; Benny Hinn Ministries, "Join Pastor Benny Hinn for a Miracle Healing Service in-person", *www.bennyhinn.org*; United State Senate Committee on Finance, "Letter to Pastor Benedictus Hinn", *United State Senate Committee on Finance* (2007), *www.finance.senate.gov*; Rachel Zoll, "Televangelists Escape Penalty in Senate Inquiry", *NBC News* (2011), *www.nbcnews.com*.

[21] Prosperity gospel, in general, sees faith as a force that activates spiritual energy, transforming spoken words into reality. It links faith directly to tangible outcomes, particularly in terms of *wealth* and *health*: financial prosperity and physical well-being are seen as indicators of a person's spiritual success, making material reality a measure of the strength of their faith. The movement also emphasizes that true faith is marked by victory, with believers convinced that no cultural, political, or social obstacles can prevent them from achieving success in life. Overall, faith is expected to produce visible, measurable results that reflect a successful life. Kate Bowler, *Blessed: A History of the American Prosperity Gospel* (New York: Oxford U.P., 2013), 7.

[22] *Benny Hinn Healing Service*, 1st October 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRECv2rnjTE.

a ticket, or online, for free.[23] During his live sessions, the Pastor prays in various languages and discusses current events and, only at (or towards) the end of each broadcast, a banner appears and Hinn directly asks for donations, as it will be highlighted in section 5. However, other forms of request are embedded in YouTube, which is one of his main distribution channels. Indeed, the platform provides its users with a lateral live chat, where people can not only comment but also donate. Furthermore, in the description of the videos, other useful information to donate are provided: "To give, please visit: www.BennyHinn.org/donate/ To give through PayPal: https://www.paypal.me/BennyHinnMinist.../ Or Text: BHM to 45777" (H050322).

The excerpts drawn from the programs listed above were transcribed and punctuation was added, following the guidelines by Schmidt and Kess. It was also taken into account that, on YouTube, the input of the user can be either be explicit or implicit: indeed, the platform allows the user to choose what to watch, however, an algorithm is also suggesting videos according to one's researches on the website (*i.e.*, preferences).[24] Furthermore, it should be taken into account that "[o]nline users do not merely consume content; they shape posted content, recommending 'viral' video clips that result in millions of 'hits.' Call-and-response preaching that used to garner a hearty 'Amen!' from certain traditions now results in plentiful comments on social media and the chat section of a livestreamed video, even from more reserved factions".[25] Furthermore, interaction among the viewers can take place in the comments.[26]

Since the *Healing Services* vary in duration, it was not possible to select excerpts of the same number of tokens.[27] It should also be noticed that the anecdotes preceding the banner about donating had a role in the strategy of the Pastor. Indeed, implicit or explicit claims about future events are essential when analysing pragmatic argumentation. According to Hoeken,[28] it is possible to distinguish between three types of persuading evidence: anecdotal, statistical, and causal evidence. Despite being the statistical evidence the most persuading type,[29] Hinn systematically introduces the request using anecdotes,[30] which specifically concern a certain person or group of people (*e.g.*, in H090721 he recounts anecdotes about the late Oral Roberts[31], and in H011021 about wealthy people).

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[23] During the Covid19 pandemic, the healing service took place online as did the healings themselves. Hinn showed the ability to cure people through Zoom and other online platforms, laying his hands on the displays. However, such events usually take place in person in his television studio; he is also used to recalling healings of the past.

[24] Stephen Pihlaja, "Language, Religion and the Digital World", in Stephen Pihlaja and Helen Ringrow, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Religion* (London and New York: Routledge, 2024), 131.

[25] Clint D. Bryan, "Pandemic Sermon Rhetoric and Evangelism", in Pihlaja and Ringrow, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Religion*, 196.

[26] Clint Bryan and Mohammed Albakry, "'To Be Real Honest, I'm Just like You': Analyzing the Discourse of Personalization in Online Sermons", *Text & Talk*, 36.6 (2016), 683-703.

[27] Despite their length varying from 62 to 156 tokens, their function and positioning within the *Healing Services* is identical.

[28] Hans Hoeken, "Anecdotal, statistical, and causal evidence: Their perceived and actual persuasiveness", *Argumentation*, 15 (2001), 425-437.

[29] Hornikx adds a fourth type of evidence to the categorization (*i.e.*, expert evidence) and agrees that statistical evidence is more persuasive than the anecdotal one, which is the least persuasive type. Hornikx, "A Review of Experimental Research on the Relative Persuasiveness of Anecdotal, Statistical, Causal, and Expert Evidence", 205-216.

[30] As studies in cognitive psychology have demonstrated, anecdotes have a relevant impact on judgements and decisions. See, among others, Hornikx, "A Review of Experimental Research on the Relative Persuasiveness of Anecdotal, Statistical, Causal, and Expert Evidence", 206; Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, "Subjective probability: a judgment of representativeness", *Cognitive Psychology* 3 (1972), 430-454; Richard E. Nisbett and Eugene Borgida, eds., "Attribution and the Psychology of Prediction", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 32 (1975), 932-943.

[31] Oral Roberts (1918-2009) was an American Pentecostal evangelist, renowned for his influential televised faith-healing ministry, the so-called "prosperity gospel": Roberts affirmed that God desires believers to experience "temporal happiness and security" and rewards their faithfulness, shown through generous tithing and donations, with financial prosperity and other blessings. Roberts not only shaped the landscape of religious broadcasting but also mentored a generation of ministers, among them Benny Hinn. Melissa Petruzzello, "Oral Roberts", *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 21 Jun. 2024, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Oral-Roberts. Accessed 22 August 2024.

The present essay will demonstrate that the Pastor, towards the end of his broadcasts, tries to convince his proselytes to "sow their seed", leveraging on wealth accumulation, a typical desire in the capitalist society. He uses a specific strategy, based on emotional appeals (*i.e.*, anecdotes) and the direct and indirect reiteration of the request, realized through the usage of directives and of representatives with the value of directives. Such anecdotes are clearly linked to testimonies, a very common communicative type in faith contexts.[32]

4. Methodology

The methodological framework designed to analyse the persuasive strategies of Benny Hinn draws on the theories by Searle[33] and Yule.[34] More specifically, the illocutionary acts will be catalogued according to Searle's model:[35] 1) representatives, which constitute a description the world; 2) directives, aimed at requesting something or giving an order; 3) commissives, used by the speaker to commit to some future action; 4) expressives, useful to express the speaker's feelings and opinions; 5) declaratives, aimed at changing the external situation/world through language. Then, it will be determined whether speech acts are direct or indirect: a direct speech act is present "[w]henever there is a direct relationship between a structure and a function"; on the contrary, when the relationship is indirect, for instance when a declarative is used to make a request, the speech act is indirect.[36] In the present analysis, the first type will be indicated with "D:" followed by the type of direct speech act (*e.g.*, D: Directive) ; instead, when and indirect speech act is present, both the form of the act and its illocutionary force will be indicated (for example, a declarative used to make a request will be tagged as follows: D: Declarative / I: Directive).

5. Patterns in the *Benny Hinn Healing Service(s)*

Benny Hinn Healing Services are characterized by widespread anecdotes and a request for money, which is always realized through the usage of the same linguistic means. The present section will highlight such features in the broadcasts object of the present qualitative study, showing a stable pattern.[37] More specifically, the anecdotes will be summarized and each request for money will be analysed within a table.

During the first *Healing Service* object of study, H090721, Benny Hinn makes his onlookers aware that, according to his experience, giving corresponds to receiving. More specifically, he recounted that once Oral Roberts told him that, to receive money, he just needed to write on an envelope that he was in

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[32] Coleman, *The Globalisation of Charismatic Christianity*, 119.

[33] John R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1969). John R. Searle, "A Classification of Illocutionary Acts", *Language in Society*, 5.1 (1976), 1-23. See also J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1962).

[34] George Yule, *Pragmatics* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1996).

[35] Searle, "A Classification of Illocutionary Acts", 10-13.

[36] Yule, *Pragmatics*, 54-55.

[37] Such patterns were observed across all *Benny Hinn Healing Services* from 2021 and 2022 available on YouTube, which include the ones object of the present study and the following ones:

Benny Hinn Healing Service (H230421), 23rd April 2021, *www.youtube.com*.
Benny Hinn Healing Service (H280521), 28th May 2021, *www.youtube.com.*
Benny Hinn Healing Service (H180621), 18th June 2021, *www.youtube.com*.
Benny Hinn Healing Service (H130821), 13th August 2021, *www.youtube.com*.
Benny Hinn Healing Service (H311221), 31st December 2021, *www.youtube.com.*
Benny Hinn Healing Service (H250222), 25th February 2022, *www.youtube.com*.
Benny Hinn Healing Service (H050322), 5th March 2022, *www.youtube.com*.
Benny Hinn Healing Service (H180322), 18th of March 2022, *www.youtube.com*.
Benny Hinn Healing Service (H190822), 19th August 2022, *www.youtube.com*.

debt because he bought a house and, in that way, the Lord would have got him out of debt; Roberts also suggested him to ask his church to do the same. Then, Hinn claims to have been given thirty thousand USD, which he used to help children in Matamoros (Mexico). Then, he affirms that the same person who donated to him the alluring sum, awarded him three hundred thousand USD, the exact amount of money he needed to pay for his home; he adds that such events do occur very often in his life and he prays and hopes that they could happen to his proselytes, too.

Later, he recounts another anecdote: God told him to give sixty thousand USD, the offerings he got in a day, to a person; after obeying God, he felt really bad but just a week later a person gave him one tenth of the money they got from the selling of a six million USD property since God told them to do so. The Pastor, then, affirms that "if it doesn't hurt, it doesn't work" and proceeds to tell another episode. He needed fifty thousand USD to buy a property, he went to the hospital to pray for a man who had a kidney illness and, later, he was brought that sum in his church. At this point of the broadcast, Hinn makes a direct request for money, lists the people from all over the world who were supposedly healed thanks to his service, lets the offering bucket pass and holds the communion.

Request	Analysis
[…] **You just go right around that platform** what it says Benny Hinn Ministries and so on, where it says donate, *okay* (my italics),	**[D: Directive]**
you do it right now;	**[D: Directive]**
you can go to bennyhinn.org,	**Possibility[38] 1: [D: Representative / I: Directive]**
you can text it bhm 45777,	**Possibility 2: [D: Representative / I: Directive]**
so simple, so simple and **watch what God will do with you**.	**[D: Directive]**
And, **I want you to do something:**	**[D: Directive]**
I want you to wave it to the Lord now;	**[D: Directive]**
maybe you can't do it with your whatever	**[D: Representative]**
but **take that credit card and just wave it to God**	**[D: Directive]**
or wave something, maybe your hand in your homes,	**[D: Directive]**
give him a wave offering.	**[D: Directive]**
It works in Israel,	**[D: Representative]**
when the Jews sow they always wave,	**[D: Representative]**
they wave their gift. I don't know why but I think it's biblical… all right,	**[D: Representative]**
what's going on there, Cherry? They're coming, huh?	**[Wh- question]** **[Rhetorical question D: Representative / I: Directive]**
Yes, they are. Huh, yes. […]	**[D: Representative]**

Table 1. Analysis of the request part of H090721

The above-quoted excerpt, formed by one hundred thirty-eight tokens, contains nine directives, five representatives and three representatives functioning as directives. In it, Benny Hinn orders his proselytes to donate; his persuasive request begins with two directives ("you just go around that platform",

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[38] With "possibility", I am here referring to the possibility of donation.

"you do it right now"); such requests are separated by an "okay" that, combined with the use of the second-person pronoun, creates a sense of direct personal interaction with the audience, making them feel more like spontaneous conversations rather than prepared speeches.[39] Then, the possibilities of donation are described through two representatives ("you can go to bennyhinn.org", "you can text it bhm 45777") conveying once again the same request (the indirect speech acts are thus directives). After highlighting the simplicity of the donation methods ("so simple, so simple"), the Pastor uses a directive, preceded by the conjunction "and", to tell his onlookers that God will do something with them. The usage of the conjunction "and" is a precise stylistic choice that implies the need to donate in order to receive something from God. The believers are then asked to wave something. Such act is requested since it has a strong visual impact, encourages other people to give since it creates the impression of widespread support and involvement, building a sense of community. Hinn, then, using the metaphor of sowing, which is common in the prosperity gospel,[40] says that it works in Israel and that waving has a certain connection with the Bible, leveraging on the holiness of the gesture. Lastly, the Pastor interacts with Cherry (as the wh- question and the and sobriquet "Cherry" demonstrate) and, through a representative, he confirms that donations are arriving, implicitly soliciting more of them.

In the following excerpt, H230721, Hinn shows his desire to live like the early church, that is, to seek Jesus and not wealth. He also adds that "the wealthiest people on earth are poor because they are not walking with God". As an example, he recounts to his onlookers that Evelyn Roberts (*i.e.*, Oral Robert's wife)[41] once told him about a miser Californian woman who kissed the expensive statues she had bought and wanted to bring them with her in the afterlife. On the contrary, Evelyn and Oral Roberts should be taken as examples since they have always been great givers: indeed, Mr. Roberts gave Hinn cheques whenever they met. The Pastor also adds that God told a woman to give him five thousand USD monthly, which is important for him since he can support elderly Pastors. He adds that he is still fit and healthy, thus, he has no problem with travelling the world to sow for his future; however, retired preachers cannot do so anymore and need (his and his proselytes') help.

At that point, he prays for people attending the service "that money will come to [them] supernaturally from sources [they're] not expecting". Furthermore, he expresses the desire to buy or build a big edifice in Orlando, to preach both on site and through online platforms. Indeed, he highlights that social media engagement is essential for his ministry since he wants to reach every "country" (among them Iran, India, Israel, Europe and Africa). Then, he tells the onlookers about some healings and about his wife, who has a medical condition (benign tumors).

Request	Analysis
[...] **you just sow**	**[D: Representative / I: Directive]**
and God does the rest,	**[D: Representative / I: Directive]**
it's so simple,	**[D: Representative]**
so, **let's do it now**!	**[D: Directive]**
You that are watching me online, **you can go right now to bennyhinn.org – our website –**	**Possibility 1a** **[D: Representative / I: Directive]**
or simply on the platform that you're watching us on,	**Possibility 2a: [D: Representative / I: Directive]**
put it where it says "donate",	**[D: Directive]**
and **you can do it right there**,	**Possibility 1b: [D: Representative / I: Directive]**

Table 2. Analysis of the request part of H230721

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[39] Bryan and Albakry, "'To Be Real Honest, I'm Just like You': Analyzing the Discourse of Personalization in Online Sermons", 687.
[40] About its distribution, see Bowler, *Blessed: A History of the American Prosperity Gospel*, 253.
[41] Petruzzello, "Oral Roberts".

Despite the fact that H230721 contains less tokes (62) if compared to H090721 (138 tokens), the pattern is very similar. Indeed, it contains two directives, a representative and five representatives with the function of directives.

Hinn, through a representative ("you just sow and God does the rest"), tries to persuade his onlookers to donate (I: directive). The implicit request is reinforced by the presence of a metaphor ["sow (your seed)"] following the schema *source-path-goal*, which is "important for religious discourse".[42] With such a metaphor, the Pastor is promising his devotees that they will receive something in return if they give; in other words, the donation would be a sort of spiritual financial investment.

Then, Hinn emphasizes the ease of giving and directly urges his audience to take action, using the inclusive "let's" ("[l]et's do it now!") to foster a strong sense of community and in-group belonging.[43] Subsequently, similarly to the previous excerpt, the televangelist lists the possibilities of donation through a series of representatives, which reiterate, and thus reinforce, the request for money.

In H011021, instead, Hinn does not provide the viewers with any specific anecdote; however, he discusses the lives of wealthy people, claiming that "they are not blessed" and that "when the economy starts to struggle, down they go". He affirms that humility and fear of the Lord are the keys to fighting the fear of diseases, death and poverty. He also says that according to *Proverbs 13* the wealth of the sinners will be given to people who believe in God. He adds that they give because they love God more than their life and want to serve him, not because they are greedy or selfish. Then, he makes his request explicit, prays and advertises his services and classes, highlighting the need to book via email.

Request	Analysis
[…] Praise you can sow your seed right now!	[D: Directive]
The information is on the screen for you,	[D: Representative]
for those watching us on our platforms *Benny Hinn Ministries*, you can sow right on the platform, you're watching me on,	Possibility 1: [D: Representative / I: Directive]
you can go to our website Bennyhinn.org	Possibility 2: [D: Representative / I: Directive]
or you can just simply text bhm 45777;	Possibility 3: [D: Representative / I: Directive]
you can just do it right now,	[D: Representative / I: Directive]
or just simply follow what it says on the screen.	[D: Directive]
God almighty will bless you as you sow your seed.	[D: Representative / I: Directive]
God almighty will never disappoint you,	[D: Representative]
he will open unto /?/ his good treasure;	[D: Declarative]
the Bible says "hallelujah" and, as you give and as you sow, I'm going to pray right now that god will bless you with the salvation of your loved ones too. […]	[D: Representative / I: Directive]

Table 3. Analysis of the request part of H011021

H011021 consists of one hundred twenty-four tokens, containing a declarative, two directives, two representatives and six representatives with the function of directives. In the chosen excerpt, Hinn asks his devotees to praise the possibility of sowing their seed in that moment; thus, his (implicit) request is once again expressed through a metaphor, which serves as a clear example of foregrounding. Then, as in the previous excerpts, he lists the possibilities of donation through representatives, which have the function

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[42] Peter Richardson, "Cognitive Metaphor and Religion", in Stephen Pihlaja and Helen Ringrow, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Religion* (London and New York: Routledge, 2024), 407. 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).

[43] About claiming in-group membership with hearer(s), see Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson, *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*, (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1987).

of directives ("you can sow right now on the platform you are watching me on", "you can go to our website bennyhinn.org", "you can text it bhm 45777"); indeed, he is once again repeating the request to give. Then, possibly due to the lack of anecdotes preceding the request, the Pastor tries to be more persuasive by emphasizing that God will offer them something in return. To achieve this, he uses two representatives with the function of directives ("God almighty will bless you as you sow your seed", "as you give and as you sow"), assuming that his followers are donating, as confirmed by the conjunction "as"; such speech acts are divided by a representative ("God almighty will never disappoint you") and a declarative ("he will open unto /?/ his good treasure") aimed at highlighting the power of God, thus legitimizing the donation.

In the fourth excerpt object of study, H221021, Hinn prays that the Lord blesses his onlookers financially. He lists the three main fears (*i.e.*, death, disease and poverty) and focuses on today's problem: "people seek money rather than the Lord". According to Hinn, if people seek money, they will not receive blessings; on the contrary, if they seek the Lord, they will receive them. Thus, there is no need for a preacher to convince them "to sow seed" since they will spontaneously. Then, he recounts a blessing he received (he stuttered but God healed him) and an anecdote: once he noticed a property but he had no money; however, he decided to call its owner and told them that those forty acres were the place for a church. The seller got angry but a woman said that her late husband affirmed that it was the place for a church and then Hinn is asked fifty thousand USD for the property, which he did not have. Later, he went to the hospital to visit a person with problems with their kidney and, later, such person recovered and gave him that exact amount of money.

In another occasion, he was given one million USD to preach the gospel in Nigeria. However, the Pastor needed ten million USD to pay the TV bills. He prayed and invited Oral Roberts to the Healing Service, telling him about his financial problem. Roberts just said to the camera "Benny is in trouble, help him" and Hinn received the money he needed. Then, he tells his onlookers that sometimes small seeds are not sufficient and big seeds should be sowed, if a person has a big problem. Then, he directly asks for money, affirms that "big things don't happen if you are scared" and advertises his next events.

Request	Analysis
[...] Well, **it's time to do it right now!**	**[D: Representative / I: Directive]**
I'm to do it you here	**[D: Representative]**
you can also do it	**[D: Representative / I: Directive]**
and you in your in your homes, all you have to do, **you know what I need**.	**[D: Representative / I: Directive]**
I've got to have that camera, darling. I need that camera, I need that camera, yeah! **You in your homes, now, watch me!**	**[D: Directive]**
You can give on the platform you're watching me on,	**Possibility 1: [D: Representative / I: Directive]**
you can go to our website bennyhinn.org	**Possibility 2: [D: Representative / I: Directive]**
or **you can text, you people can do the same here with the text because BHM 45777,**	**Possibility 3: [D: Representative / I: Directive]**
it's much easier than the envelope you've got in your hand!	**[D: Representative / I: Directive]**
Some of you here and in your homes **you can do the same thing**	**[D: Representative / I: Directive]**
and **I want you to tell the Lord**: "Lord here is my need, here is my need, I need this miracle today, Lord, in my finances and my business for my family and begin to praise him for [...]	**[D: Directive]**

Table 4. Analysis of the request part of H221021

H221021 consists of a hundred fifty-six tokens and contains two directives, a representative and eight representatives functioning as directives. Even in this case, the strategy is analogous; Hinn — in a series of four representatives with the function of directives ("it's time to do it right now!", "I'm to do it you here", "you can also do it", "you know what I need") — addresses the audience directly using the second person pronoun and creates suspense by not mentioning the donation; then, he orders the onlookers to watch him (D: directive), and, using representatives with the function of directives, he lists the possibilities of donation and highlights the ease with which one can donate ("[y]ou can give on the platform you're watching me on", "you can go to our website bennyhinn.org", "you can text", "you people can do the same here with the text", "it's much easier than the envelope you've got in your hand!"). Then, he concludes by giving instructions (D: directive) on how they should turn to God in order to obtain what they want; implicitly, as the use of the conjunction "and" suggests, the proselytes should seek divine intervention only after the donation.

Even H191121 is characterized by anecdotes: Hinn discusses the situation of David Yonggi Cho[44], a Korean Pastor, head of one of the largest churches in the world. After the war, Korean people were poor but God told Yonggi Cho that he had to teach his people to give. He was hesitant since they were poor, but he did what God asked. People began to bring vegetables to the church, and when the famine arose, only those people's farms were not affected. Thus, they began to sell their fruits and vegetables to the ones affected by famine and became millionaires.

Subsequently, Hinn recounts that on another occasion he went to Indonesia: the local Pastor, despite not asking for money and singing with a terrible voice, always received. Hinn was also particularly startled that the Pastor never mentioned the Bible, and asked him about the situation. His interlocutor affirmed that it was unnecessary since any person had to attend a two-year course to join the church, where they were taught the doctrine and to give. Furthermore, he added that the only paid staff was the non-Christian janitor and that everyone else was a volunteer since everyone was rich.

Hinn then affirms that he wants to air again on (national) networks since social media is not enough. However, to do that, he needs funds. He also adds that he has his local station in Orlando and that people can join him there if they do not like to follow him on social media. In addition, he highlights that he aired for free in Scandinavia and Italy, but in the US the situation is different; he does not want to "get in debt again", thus he asks his onlookers for money and emphasizes the fact that he got a good price and thanked the Lord. Then, he directly requests money.

Request	Analysis
[…] **So, here you can give in your homes,**	**Possibility 1: [D: Representative / I: Directive]**
you can you can send it online.	**Possibility 2: [D: Representative / I: Directive]**
Just send it online, Pastor Benny, uh… sorry, let's write that on the platform for you almost at Pastorbenny at Bennyhinn.org but that's our email,	**[D: Directive]**
but, anyways, **you can give it on the platform you're watching us on,**	**Possibility 1: [D: Representative / I: Directive]**
or **just go to our website**,	**Possibility 2: [D: Representative / I: Directive]**
or **simply text**	**Possibility 3: [D: Representative / I: Directive]**
even some of you here, **can also text without having to give it with an envelope,**	**Possibility 3 (restated): [D: Representative / I: Directive]**
you take your phone	**[D: Directive]**
and you text bhm 45777 bhm 45777 […].	**[D: Directive]**

Table 5. Analysis of the request part of H191121

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[44] Hinn is referring to David Yonggi Cho (1936-2021), a Korean Christian evangelist who established the Yoido Full Gospel Church (YFGC) in Seoul in 1958. Kang Suk-Kyu, "David Yonggi Cho", *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2 May. 2024, https://www.britannica.com/biography/David-Yonggi-Cho. Accessed 28 August 2024.

Thus, in H191121, which contains eighty-eight tokens (including three directives and six representatives functioning as directives), the same pattern found in the other excerpts under study can be traced. Firstly, Hinn highlights that it is possible to donate both in person and online: indeed, through two representatives with the function of directives, he asks everyone everywhere to donate ("[s]o, here you can give in your homes", "you can you can send it online"); then, with the same type of speech act, he lists the possibilities of donation, repeating the third one twice. Finally, he concludes by asking directly to the onlookers to take their phone and text in order to donate.

6. Conclusive Remarks

The present essay sought to analyze the persuasive techniques employed by the renowned televangelist Benny Hinn to encourage donations from his proselytes on YouTube, a rather new media that created a space that believers are curious to inhabit.[45] The first section provided a definition of "persuasion" and "televangelism," exploring their connection and presenting the state of the art. While the second section introduced Benny Hinn, the third detailed the process of building and transcribing the corpus. The fourth section outlined the methodological framework (Searle 1969; Yule 1996), leading to the qualitative analysis in the fifth. In the present section, the findings will be discussed and quantitatively analysed.

Benny Hinn – as most religious entities – relies on the collection of offerings for the survival of his Ministries. He and his team show donation methods in step with the times and apt for any believer: people can give in person, using an envelope, or they can send an SMS, donate on his website, on the platform they are watching Benny Hinn on or via PayPal. Thus, any proselyte – from the youngest to the oldest, from the digital native to the technology illiterate – can choose the method that better suits them.

The world-renowned preacher strategically employs anecdotes (often naming specific individuals)[46] just before making requests for donations, a tactic that holds significant value. These anecdotes are cunningly placed, forming a compelling narrative right before the call to action. Audiences are effectively swayed by the power of these examples, which often carry moral messages, a technique that was also praised by Aristotle in his *Rhetorica*. Hinn's micro-narratives try to stand as evidence for "miracles", demonstrating the existence of God, and thus, the need to donate (to his church) to receive divine intervention. Through a multitude of specific cases highlighted in various broadcasts, a rule is established:[47] it appears that there is a high probability, if not certainty, of financial gain after giving[48].

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[45] About religious discourse and new media, see among others Bryan, "Pandemic Sermon Rhetoric and Evangelism".

[46] As Adam highlights, persuasive power and reliability can be enhanced "by employing intertextual features as a means of supporting facts of different kinds, be it hard data (statistics) or other sources (quoting names, dates, newspaper/magazine citations, etc.) to provide a solid ground for the message and evidence of its credibility (it is true and it is known – here is the tangible proof); intertextual support of various sorts, appealing in the spirit of logos in particular. Regarding ethos, the intertextual aspect is rendered especially by personal stories […]". Thus, testimonial evidence (experience and eye-witness account) has a persuasive effect. Adam, "Sermon Titles and Openings", 20-21.

[47] Michael Billig and Cristina Marinho, "Using examples to misrepresent the world", in Jeanne Fahnestock and Randy Allen Harris, *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Persuasion*, (New York: Routledge, 2022), 113-114. Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric. A Treatise on Argumentation* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), 557.

[48] About the desirability of consequences see Eveline T. Feteris, "Pragmatic Argumentation in a Legal Context" in Frans H. van Eemeren, eds., *Advances in Pragma-Dialectics* (Amsterdam: Sic Sat: Vale Press, 2002). Hornikx, "A Review of Experimental Research on the Relative Persuasiveness of Anecdotal, Statistical, Causal, and Expert Evidence", 206. Peter Jan Schellens, and Menno De Jong, "Argumentation Schemes in Persuasive Brochures", *Argumentation* 18 (2004), 295-323.

Furthermore, Hinn continuously uses metaphorical language about botany ["sow (someone's) seed"], which research has shown to have a persuasive effect. In fact, Ottati, Rhoads and Graesser[49] – among many – have demonstrated that metaphorical content seems to have the ability to increase or decrease the motivation of the hearer; if the hearer is interested in the topic, such as Hinn's audience, they will be easily convinced; if they are not, their motivation will immediately decrease. Furthermore, the usage of the above-mentioned metaphor highlights the belonging to a specific discourse community, that is, the one of prosperity gospel. In addition, this type of figurative language enables the believer to contemplate highly abstract concepts, "often connected to the positing of invisible forces in a form that is more concrete, tangible, and easy to grasp and visualize".[50]

The quantitative data showed evidence of insisting requests (79,3%), either direct (31% D: Directive) or indirect (48,3% D: Representative / I: Directive):
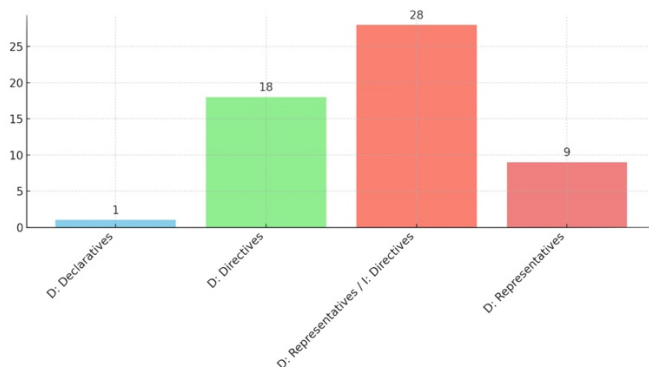

Figure 1. Quantitative data

By following a stable pattern constituted by anecdotes and the reiteration of the (in)direct request for money, mostly achieved through the usage of representatives with the function of directives, and considering the response of the audience,[51] Hinn's pragmatic argumentation proves highly effective. Such a strategy recommends the action of giving on the basis of its positive consequences, that is, receiving, and shows the peculiarities of advertising evidenced by Schmidt and Kess (indirect speech forms, vague language and repetition of names carrying information that helps the promotion).[52]

In conclusion, the present essay, through a case study, investigated how donations can be solicited online:[53] More specifically, it focuses on the ways Benny Hinn persuades people to accept his request for money. Preachers, indeed, seek to capitalize on the ubiquity of online platforms like YouTube, and they manage to do that "by adapting the content, language, and delivery of their sermons for the unique discursive event of the […] message".[54] Clearly, Hinn's speeches are staged, but their style makes them resemble spontaneous conversations rather than scripted speeches with occasional interactions.

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[49] Victor Ottati et al., eds., "The Effect of Metaphor on Processing Style in a Persuasion Task: A Motivational Resonance Model", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 77.4 (1999), 688–697.

[50] Peter Richardson, "Cognitive Metaphor and Religion" in Pihlaja and Ringrow, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Religion*, 408.

[51] Observing the YouTube chat, the presence of a great number of givers is apparent.

[52] Schmidt and Kess, *Televangelism*, 63-64.

[53] Religious podcasts and online sermon videos reach a wide audience and, nowadays, can be considered primary delivery systems. Bryan, "Pandemic Sermon Rhetoric and Evangelism", 194.

[54] Bryan and Albakry, "Personalization in Online Sermons", 685.

Further research on the same topic could focus either on 1) the type of anecdotes recounted by the Pastor, which often involve healings,[55] 2) on the moment when the perlocutionary act of the requests takes place, which can be observed thanks to the chat within the streaming platforms (YouTube, Facebook etc.)[56] or 3) on the non-verbal communication that accompanies the requests for money.

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[55] Indeed, not only does Hinn claim to be capable of healing people via screen, but he also reports in detail the people he healed in person and of the money he received after such events, which was not given to him by the healed person.
[56] For instance, thanks to the YouTube chat, it would be possible to define the exact moment when people donate: the words uttered by Hinn or his colleagues some instants before the donation could definitely play a role in their persuasion strategy.

Notes on Contributors

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Contributors

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