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ARGUMENT, RHETORIC, AND TRANSCENDENCE: "THE ADHERENCE OF

MINDS" WITHIN THE DISCOURSE OF SPIRITUALITY

BY

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OF

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ABSTRACT

My study, "Argument, Rhetoric, and Transcendence: The 'Adherence of Minds' within a Discourse of Spirituality," addresses the questions: What persuades Americans to adhere to contemporary discourses of spirituality? What persuades audiences to adhere to the experiential truths found with this discourse? Furthermore, how exactly do contemporary writers of spirituality adhere audiences to reasonable understanding and pursuit of a union with a higher power? Using Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca's *The New Rhetoric* as a framework, I analyze how the persuasive machinery of current Catholic and Anglican spirituality texts guides readers to experience and understand a subjective union with an ineffable God, while simultaneously maximizing the social inclusivity of audiences. Contemporary Catholic and Anglican texts serve as a representative sample of the more general contemporary discourse of spirituality. Via close critical discourse analysis of 14 Catholic and Anglican texts spanning from 1983 to 2013, I explore the strategic cooperation of rhetorically argumentative schema found in these epideictic texts and unpack the implications. Overall, I find that the associative and dissociative schemas found in the contemporary discourse of spirituality can persuade diverse audiences into pluralistic communication, pragmatic contemplative action, and public service: all of which foster and strengthen human solidarity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my father, Ronald F. Hurley (1947-2010), who taught me to never give up – and to never settle for mediocrity.

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CHAPTER ONE:

BACKGROUNDS AND HISTORIES

Spirituality and Mysticism

To begin plotting the overlaps of spirituality and rhetorical constructed

discourse, I must first define the abstract term of "spirituality." Generally,

spirituality is the connection or relationship with something greater than the

self; in the monotheistic Christian tradition, this connection to "something

greater" is a connection with God. Defining spirituality more specifically is a

tricky task. For example, as I will reference in the study, communicators of

spirituality can use *apophatic* means of expression and argumentation: in other

words, expression and argumentation "applied to knowledge of God obtained

by way of negation" (OED). Why are apophatic means of expression and

argumentation used? In the Christian tradition, God is *ineffable*; in other

words, God is "too great for words; transcending expression"; the nature of

God is "unspeakable, unutterable, inexpressible" (OED). For instance, Meister

Eckhart, Christian spiritual authority and mystic of the Middle Ages, explains

of spiritual truth, "If I have spoken of it, I have not spoken, for it is ineffable"

(Katz 3). So how do the contemporary Christian authorities describe the nature

of God if God is ineffable? This question was most recently asked of the

current Monsignor of the Cathedral of Peter and Paul in Providence, Rhode

Island; his answer was both simple and vast. He posited that, "God is Being as

Idea" (Mancini) - a thoughtful answer, but again quite abstract. The

transcendent nature of God will be a component of this investigation; however, it is a component that is deliberately and appropriately abstract and difficult. And it is not just Catholic clergy that reveals these abstractions. Steven T. Katz of Boston University, scholar of Judaism and authority of spiritual linguistic expression, explains that "all language … is too impoverished" to capture to the "true unity of Being": thus creating a communicative problem (3) - and regarding spirituality, these types of traits are all we need to know about the nature of God – for now. Theologians, philosophers, and postmodern critical theorists seem better equipped to philosophize about the overlap of God and Being.[1]

For the sake of this study, we need to understand that the Christian God is ineffable. What other traits factor into spirituality? Various definitions of spirituality surface in the Christian tradition, and these definitions generally emphasize individuals uniting with this ineffable God. Martin Laird, an Augustinian monk and theologian at Villanova University, describes Christian spirituality as "as grounding union between God and the human person (2); Donald W. Mitchell, professor of religion at Purdue University and an authority on Eastern and Western religious dialogue, defines spirituality as "becoming divine by sharing in that reality at the inner most core of our consciousness" (Mitchell and Wiseman 32); and finally, Thomas Merton, renowned Catholic monk who popularized spirituality in the 1960s, describes spirituality as "in and through and beyond everything that we are […] it

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[1] Especially relevant in contemporary discussions is the 20th Century work of existentialism, process philosophy, and neo-orthodoxy: Heidegger, Levinas, Buber, Barth, Bultmann, among others.

becomes a living awareness of itself: and this awareness is not so much something that we ourselves have, as something that we are" (6-7). Each of these definitions exhibit two general components: (1) an emphasis on the subjective individual and (2) the blurring of binary distinctions. In Laird's definition: the individual is referenced with "the human person" and the blurring is signified with the "grounding union." In Mitchell's definition, the individual is referenced with "the inner most core of our consciousness" and the blurring is signified with "sharing in that reality." In Merton's definition, the individual is referenced with "something that we are" and the blurring is signified with "in and through and beyond."

Throughout this investigation I will conflate these primary components of spirituality, as recognized by experts in experiential spirituality, into my own usage of the term "spirituality." Therefore, when I refer to spirituality I refer to a human internal process in which binary distinctions of objective and subjective fold into each other via a union with a Higher Power, in the case of Catholic and Anglican perspectives, the Higher Power is God. Since I am addressing Catholic and Anglican texts, I will be referring to God; however, this is not to undercut the Higher Powers of other traditions. In other traditions, such as Wiccan or Buddhist traditions, the Higher Power does not have to be God. Outside of religious tradition, the Higher Power may be Nature, the Beyond, or a general awareness of one's place in the tapestry of life. Clearly, the discussion of Higher Powers opens up a Pandora's box of possibilities and conceivable explorations. To narrow the scope of my investigation, I have

chosen Catholic and Anglican texts as a way to tame a potentially unwieldy topic of spirituality; so it follows that the Higher Power I will be referring to will be God.

These primary components of spirituality, i.e. subjectivity and blurring of binary distinctions via a union with God, seem to be the same primary components of mysticism. So what differentiates spirituality from mysticism? Are they the same terms? I feel that I should address these questions, plotting similarities and differences of these terms to increase a better understanding of spirituality. First, I do so to clarify any confusion between the terms as I move forward in the investigation. Second, by means of definitional overlap and contrast between the terms spirituality and mysticism, I can increase the understanding of my usage of spirituality. Doing so brings in more perspectives: By showing juxtapositional or equitable definitional traits between "mysticism" and "spirituality," I open up more windows, allowing more sunlight to illuminate the shadowed term of spirituality. Finally, I choose to discuss mysticism to show that I am not running away in cowardice from this crucial historical perspective that has been absorbed into, and inherited by, the contemporary term of "spirituality." Mysticism is important to the present day development of spirituality, especially the Catholic and Anglican development of spirituality, and therefore cannot be ignored.

There are two basic definitions of mysticism. One definition is tangential to this study – and seems to be the most widely used; this definition generally pervades contemporary popular culture in a derogatory manner. The

Oxford English Dictionary defines this usage of mysticism as: "Religious belief that is characterized by vague, obscure, or confused spirituality; a belief system based on the assumption of occult forces, mysterious supernatural agencies, etc." This definition is misleading in the context of spirituality as defined by spiritual authorities such as Laird, Mitchell, and Merton. The derogatory use of mysticism via the words "occult," "obscure," and "confused," focuses on the vague unscientific aspect of religion as a *negative* aspect of religion. Negative vagueness in two meanings of negativity: (1) negative as non-existence or absence of concrete evidence and (2) negative as nonproductive belief. Although apophatic perspectives are inevitably bound to spirituality and mysticism, this popularized definition of mysticism will not work. The definition does not clearly sync with Laird's, Mitchell's, and Merton's definitions of spirituality; moreover, mysticism as "confused spirituality" plainly cannot work for this study of spirituality.

However, a second, more relevant OED definition of mysticism aligns more directly with the aforementioned definitions of spirituality by Laird, Mitchell, and Merton: "belief in the possibility of union with or absorption into God by means of contemplation and self-surrender; belief in or devotion to the spiritual apprehension of truths inaccessible to the intellect." This understanding of mysticism connects to the historical foundation of early Christianity, and more genuinely aligns with the original roots of "mysticism" (Greek: *mystikos*; Latin: *mysticus*), which refers to anything "hidden" (McGinn 3). More importantly, this second definition of mysticism syncs with

contemporary Catholic and Anglican spirituality. The union with God and the activity of contemplation are both mentioned.

From this second OED definition, it may seem that mysticism is equivalent to spirituality – and various 20th century theorists and theologians use mysticism in the manner, such as rhetorician Kenneth Burke (B. 1897 - D. 1993) and theologian Matthew Fox (B. 1940). This equivalence is a return to the Christian roots of spirituality that were planted in mystic visions and prophecy – such as the prophets of ancient Judaism and early Christian monastics. Despite contemporary spirituality having its roots in mysticism, mysticism's history may bind some tangential ideas to contemporary versions of spirituality. A caveat must be made in regard to this history. The historical mysticism may bring to mind medieval mystics. These mystics are crucial to the tradition of spirituality, are most famous for their visions, levitations, and even erotic unions with Christ. Angela di Folino (1248-1309 CE), for instance, mystically experienced the suffering of Christ that developed into screaming fits of pain as well as a documented love relationship with Jesus (Furlong 148-150). Catherine of Seinna also had a love relationship with Jesus via fantastic visions and mystical experience: hers were much more erotically charged and explicit. These are just two examples from the medieval tradition of extraordinary mystical experience.

So what does this history of Christian mysticism look like? Christian mysticism, which we now more inclusively refer to as "spirituality," was used as early as the second century CE to characterize the inner dimensions of early

Christian religious realities (McGinn 3). The term was initially used in relation to Biblical interpretation, which is the origin and textual standard of Christian mystics through Christian history. Mystic interpretation was neither academic nor indebted to doctrinal regulation and moral obligation; rather, it required interpreters to "penetrate the living source of the biblical message" (3). So throughout Christian mystic writings, a specific type of mystical close-reading of the Bible is discussed in detail – relating the close-readings to the human unity with God. The early contemplative spiritual tradition of *lectio divina* evolved from this mystic Biblical tradition – and it is a practice that is still used today and referenced in numerous contemporary spiritual texts. This contemplative practice allows the practitioner to experience the nature of God through the medium of Scripture. The practitioner ponders the words as a means to transcend the literature and "meet God" (Funk, *Tools* 9).

In early mystic tradition, asceticism also played an important role. Early Christian spiritual authorities such as Antony of Egypt (250-356 CE) and John Cassian (360-465 CE) would often practice self-denial of bodily pleasures to prepare for contact with the divine. These figures were some of the first monastics. Inspired by Biblical stories and figures such as Moses and John the Baptist, they intentionally separated from society and lived in the desert to arrive at pure spiritual experience and connectivity with God. These "proto-monastic" figures are referred to as the Desert Fathers (McGinn 47-50).

The Christian mystic tradition continued through the Middle Ages where the experiential nature of Christianity met some resistance from schools of

rigid scholastic logic. However, mysticism continued to persevere providing

new outlets for women empowerment in medieval society - as can be seen in

the work of Hildegard of Bingen and Joan of Arc. As mentioned earlier when

discussing Angela di Folino and Catherine of Seinna, many of these women

mystics experienced extraordinary mystical phenomena and illustrated the

phenomena in their writings. These illustrated phenomena resonated with

European medieval audiences and helped popularize mystical practice.

After the Protestant Reformation, Protestant mystics joined the tradition of

Christian mysticism. However, many of these Protestant spiritual authorities

were not as ostentatious with their mystical experience as their medieval

Christian ancestors. Pivotal figures such as Martin Luther (a pioneer of

Protestantism), John Calvin (a pioneer of Calvinism), George Fox (a pioneer of

Quakerism), and John Wesley (a pioneer of Methodism) offered new spiritual

perspectives into the Christian tradition, referring to mystic experience in their

work – but also quite grounded spiritual advice. Catholics and Anglicans

were, and are, certainly influenced by their texts.

Unlike much of the Christian mystical tradition, contemporary spirituality

is not concerned so much with the extraordinary; although, charismatic gifts

and psychic phenomenon may be a part of the spiritual experience, spiritual

experience does not revolve around their possibility as much as it had in the

earlier Christian tradition (Keating 9-11). Contemporary versions of mysticism

are more grounded and everyday: not as lofty or extraordinary. In *A Grammar

of Motives,* for instance, Kenneth Burke explains mysticism in a practical

manner, that is, as the mystic paradox and the transcendent Self within the machinery of language: evident in something as mundane as the first person pronoun usage (300). In *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*, Matthew Fox explicitly binds mysticism to Mother Earth and environmentalism. Both theorists see mysticism through a pragmatic lens: a much more different lens than that of the medieval mystics. Therefore, due to different uses of mysticism in the contemporary era than the mysticism of the past, I will use the term "spirituality" rather than "mysticism" throughout this project. Although they can be viewed as very much the same, the historical baggage that "mysticism" carries and the lofty connotations of the extraordinary may interfere with contemporary understandings of spirituality. Since assorted 20th century authorities such as Burke and Fox discuss "spirituality as mysticism" in their work, I will however refer to such mysticism while discussing spirituality.

Contemporary Spirituality and Contemplation

To avoid equating spirituality with solely extraordinary mystical gifts, I will explain what is meant by "active contemplation" - the primary subject of the contemporary Catholic and Anglican texts about spirituality. Active contemplation is action taken to attain a state of spirituality: an action taken to narrow "the gap between our spirit as subject and God as object" (Merton 70). Unlike "passive contemplation" or the reception of extraordinary mystical gifts, active contemplation "is a deliberate and sustained effort to detect the will of God in events and to bring one's whole self into harmony with that

will" (Merton 59); via constructive interiority, the individual actively nourishes this contemplation with meditation, reading, worship, etc. But Merton stresses that before establishing this connection, an individual must actively merge into a "unified and intuitive vision of reality" (59). In other words, active contemplation involves establishing a unified vision of the union with God; then, the practitioner must act on and foster the union with meditative and contemplative methods.

Passive or infused contemplation is arrived at after active contemplation is established. Passive contemplation is the spirituality found in the mystics and the saints in the form of received gifts from God, i.e. visions, extraordinary phenomenon, speaking in tongues, etc. Spiritual gifts are just that: given. Thomas Keating posits that spiritual gifts do not play a crucial role in contemplation ("Open Minds" 9). In other words, passive contemplation is like a person receiving a cashmere sweater as a Christmas present from their spouse. They may have achieved this gift by being a loving partner over the last year or years; however, they didn't actively have the "cashmere sweater motive" in mind when they love their spouse. The intersection of motive, action, and persuasion is crucial to the rhetorical strategies involved with contemporary spiritual texts. Since passive mystical gift reception does not embrace motive making and individual action, it does not hold as much importance to the realm of rhetoric.

Unlike extraordinary mystical gifts that are exclusionary, the act of contemplation is accessible to all human beings. Contemplation is an

inclusionary activity; therefore, as this study will show, the audience is inclusive. Based on the work of contemporary Catholic and Anglican authorities, contemplation involves varying techniques and epistemologies which many faiths can adhere, not just Catholics or Anglicans. For example, Laird, Mitchell, and Merton all explore the inclusive intersection of Eastern and Western contemplation in their texts. Catholic and Anglican spiritual texts revolve around contemplative methods and philosophies in different ways and depths. Overall, the texts rhetorically depict the contemplative realm as expansive, diverse, and genuine: emphasizing grounded methods and practice.

Tracing the Christian etymology of contemplation can help understand how contemplation is used in these texts. The term contemplation has its initial roots in the writing of the Bible. Contemplation can be initially traced to the Saint Paul and the New Testament. In his Epistles, Paul uses the word *gnosis* to refer to the intimate knowledge of God. The word *gnosis* is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word *da'ath*. However, *da'ath* refers to a more experiential knowledge of God associated with love, a connotation that is not primarily signified by *gnosis*. During those early times, the Greek Christian Fathers (e.g. Clement of Alexandria, Gregory of Nyssa) began using a third term, *theoria*, to refer to the knowledge of God. *Theoria*, a term widely used by the Neoplatonists of the time, meant an intellectual truth, moreover a supreme activity of wisdom. The Greek Christian Fathers updated this term however. They blended the original Hebrew term *da'ath* with *theoria* arriving a more precise understanding of the knowledge of God: one that accounts for

experience and love. This version of *theoria* was then translated into the Latin *comtemplatio*; the Latin term assimilated into the Christian tradition. The term was tethered to a spiritual practice in the Middle Ages when reflection and prayer was deemed as the means in which to arrive at the knowledge and presence of God (Keating 20-21). The activity of contemplation was further qualified in the 1520's by Ignatius of Loyola with his *Spiritual Exercises* (Keating 22-23). As a crucial developer of spirituality and contemplation, Ignatius posited that there were assorted introverted discursive methods of meditation in which to find God - a multiplicity of spiritual practices, rather than one spiritual practice. At the time, this was not received well by the Catholic Church who encouraged linear spirituality and prayer. Despite the Church restricting the early Society of Jesus (Jesuits) to one method of prayer, Ignatius' theory of multi-perspective contemplation still resounds today (Keating 23); this flexibility is evident in the texts of Catholic and Anglican spiritual authorities. Much influenced by Ignatius, contemporary Catholic and Anglican contemplative texts posit a multiplicity of contemplative practices in order to arrive at a union with God. The spiritual texts in this investigation do not embrace traditional philosophical approaches, i.e. teleological searching and for a singularity of truth, but align more open explorations of spirituality based on a general shared assumptions of the existence of a Higher Power.

American spirituality: now and then

The discourse of spiritualty seems to be gaining traction in America. What does this contemporary spiritual tradition look like? Data collected in recent Pew Research Institute polls and interviews, taken from a sample size of 4,000 Americans, indicate that approximately 68% of Americans believe in God, not necessarily religion; while 18% of Americans consider themselves spiritual and also not necessarily religious ("Nones" 41). The percentage of Americans unaffiliated with religion has risen from 15.3% to 19.6% from 2007 to 2012; moreover, the percentages of Americans who are affiliated with general spirituality, aligning themselves with "something else" / "other faith " and "nothing in particular" (but not religion, atheism, or agnosticism), have risen 2% and 2.3% respectively from 2007 to 2012 ("Nones" 13). In the religious sphere, 51% of recent religious converts joined a religion in order to satisfy personal "spiritual needs" ("Faith in Flux" 6); conversely, 43% of Catholics and 39% of Protestants drifted away from the religion because their "spiritual needs" are being met elsewhere ("Faith in Flux" 6).

These statistics illustrate the current American spiritual climate: spirituality motivates religious and spiritual identification, afflation, and unaffliation. Yet despite the increasing trend of "spiritual-but-not-religious" Americans, the trend does not mean that religion should be, or will be, eliminated from the equation. Quite the converse. As shown in the PEW data, 51% of recent religious converts joined a religion in order to satisfy personal "spiritual needs"; therefore, spirituality remains an important part in contemporary American religion as well. Overall, these statistics represent a

growing importance of spirituality in America, implying an increased need of how and why this spirituality is working in contemporary discourse – a need that I intend to explore in this study.

The intersection of religion, specifically Christianity, has played an active role in American culture since the nation's inception. American democracy and celebration of the individual can be traced to the Lutheran Reformation. American capitalism can be traced back to the Puritan work ethic. American presidents, Democrat and Republican alike, still mention God in their speeches. Ongoing debates still rage about, the placement of "one nation under God" in the Pledge of Alliance. Ongoing debates still rage about "Christmas trees" and "Holiday trees." The writing and talk about these subjects has not dissipated in the last 15 years. Discourse has been fueled by the 9/11 attacks; books such as Sam Harris's *Letter to a Christian Nation* as well as James Carroll's *Constantine's Sword*, have all contributed to the critical ripples, critiquing religion in America. Yet despite these factors that revolve around religion, it was spirituality rather than organized religion that originally motivated much of the rhetorically composed artifacts of the American Founding Fathers.

The American Founding Fathers (e.g. Franklin, Jefferson, Paine) strenuously argued against the irrationality of institutional religion and dogma, and did so without refuting a Christian God, and without embracing atheism (Fuller 19-20). This stemmed from Enlightenment principles, more specifically, Isaac Newton's investigation of natural laws. Newton's

investigation questioned the faith of organized, revealed religion, that is, Christianity. This Newtonian line of thinking led to "natural religion," an opposing view of organized religion. Natural religion denies a God that actively interferes with the course of human history; natural religion promotes a deistic Creator God that formed the world and the rational laws by which the world operates; natural religion pushes for moral rationalism, ethics, and humanism, while refuting dogma, right belief, and scriptural tenets (Lambert 172).

Founding Fathers such as Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine, aligning with natural religion, positioned themselves as deistic, spiritual, and not religious. Arming themselves with Newtonian Enlightenment principles, these men comprehended God as a means to reasonably understand the world, self, and good human behavior – and found it important to communicate and persuade others of this awareness. Their rhetorics were sometimes a bit atypical. For instance, the God in the Biblical Old Testament did not align with the pure rationality of natural religion, therefore, president Jefferson audaciously "edited" the Bible, deleting the entire Old Testament; additionally, in the New Testament, Jefferson discarded all miracles and supernatural stories as well. What exactly did Jefferson retain in the Bible? He retained any text illustrating Jesus' moral teachings and any text illustrating nature orientated truth. This Bible was called the "Jeffersonian Bible" (Lambert 174): a public text that rhetorically conveyed Jefferson's spiritual perspective.

In a more direct rhetorical approach, Thomas Paine fervently spoke out against organized religion. He used memorable polemical remarks in order to heighten pathos. Paine publically posited such statements as shown in his 1794 work *The Age of Reason, Being an Investigation of True and Fabulous Theology* (6-8):

> I do not believe in the creed professed by the Jewish church, by the Roman church, by the Greek church, by the Turkish church, by the Protestant church, nor by any church that I know of. My mind is my own church"; and later in this published volume, "The Jews say that their Word of God was given by Moses face to face; the Christians say, that their Word of God came from divine inspiration; and the Turks say, that their Word of God (the Koran) was brought by an angel from heaven. Each of those churches accuse others of unbelief; and, for my own part, I disbelieve them all. (Lambert 175)

However, to reiterate, Paine, like Jefferson, was not an atheist. Paine rhetorically conveyed his own spirituality while deriding religion: in Paine's own words, he believed and argued for "one God, and no more" (Lambert 175).

Even the architecture of Early America reveals a rhetorical expression of spirituality and not necessarily organized religion. The early 19th century American Greek revival architectural styles found in government buildings such as the Washington Treasury building in Washington D.C. (Hamlin, Plate XII) and the Massachusetts State House in Boston (Hamlin, Plate XXII), point

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to ancient Greece. This architectural movement was not an inception of master

architects of the time but rather can be seen as a deliberate movement

motivated by Thomas Jefferson. As an amateur architect himself, Jefferson

worked closely with numerous professional architects of the time in order to

forward Greek classicism as a personal rhetorical expression (Hamlin 17-20).

What exactly did this expression indicate to the public? In addition to the

suggesting that America was *not* England, it indicates that America aligned

with the idealization of the Western world found in the Ancient Greek culture

(Hamlin 3-5): a culture that established the basis for democracy in Western

civilization. This architecture also signifies other aspects of ancient Greek

culture: humanism, spirituality, and non-religion. Ancient Greece was not a

Christian culture but rather, a humanistic and spiritual culture. Metaphysics

are questioned and answered in the philosophical works of Aristotle, Plato, and

the Pre-Socratics; in all of these philosophies, metaphysics is viewed through a

humanistic lens. Plato's *Timeaus*, for example, explains the creation of the

universe and the distinction between the physical world and eternal world, yet

Plato chooses to illustrate these points via an interhuman dialogue; moreover, a

mission of Plato's dialogue of metaphysics in this work is to ultimately

determine the purpose of human beings. Spiritual and humanistic aspects can

also be found in the mythology of the Ancient Greece. The ancient Greek

myths illustrate the affairs of anthropomorphic Gods and Goddesses: gods and

goddesses generally acting like humans, and acting in human form. The

human/physical and superhuman/metaphysical traits cooperated within these

myths and consequently, humanistic and spiritual understandings cooperated in this ancient culture. Although there was ritual, homage, and sacrifice to the gods, the religion of ancient Greece was not a hierarchical rigid institution as seen later with Christianity. Homage to the Greek gods was largely individualistic; spiritual connections were made via material world vessels such as individual animal sacrifices. Therefore, early American Greek revival architecture does not point only to the Greek founders of democracy but also to a Greek spiritual tradition that was humanistic and not institutionally religious. American Greek revival architecture is a type of rhetorical composition that seems to represent a distinct spiritual perspective within history.

The historical residue of spirituality clings to American culture today despite the wane of Greek revival architecture, and despite the displacement of the Enlightenment climate of the Founding Fathers with contemporary postmodern climate. Spirituality remains strong – and perhaps its adherence is even stronger than before. As shown in ancient Greek culture, spirituality is an individual humanistic endeavor: an individual human connection with God that the Founding Fathers extolled, and it is the same individual human connection with transcendence that seems to be gaining adherence in American culture. Furthermore, spiritual adherences pervade the Christian religious sphere. Spirituality remains integral to the history of the Catholic and Anglican faiths, and demands attention today more than ever. Contemporary theologians such as once-Catholic-priest-turned-Anglican-priest, Matthew Fox, use spirituality as a means to update the awarenesses and functions of religion. And although

other contemporary authorities in the Catholic and Anglican Churches are not as polemical or audacious as Fox; authorities still use spirituality to express their religious faith, communicate spiritual experience and realities, and appeal to contemporary audiences.   Overall, these statistics and histories represent the importance of spirituality in America, one that has always been a part of American culture and is becoming increasingly valued. This implies a need of how and why this spirituality is working in American contemporary culture – a need that I intend to explore in this study by looking at the pertaining textual discourse.

New Age Spirituality

A popular usage of the term "spirituality" today is in the context of New Age spirituality. This association with New Age culture can be beneficial to understanding contemporary spirituality. According to Robert Fuller in *Spiritual, But Not Religious*, traits of New Age spirituality include but are not limited to "metaphysical seeking," holistic healing via crystal use, energies (the astral body, chakras, etc.) relating to higher cosmic planes, alternative medical systems such as "Therapeutic Touch," a multidimensional universe (Fuller 115-116). Although New Age is indebted to some early 20th century thinkers such as William James and Carl Jung, New Age spirituality emerged most prominently in the late 1960s through the 1970s (Fuller 55-58). In this later era, "trance channeling," i.e. channeling spirits with a medium or Ouija board, became an aspect of New Age spirituality as well as more prominent

healing features, spiritual prophecy, and communication with angels (Fuller 59-68). A crucial aspect of New Age spirituality is the overall belief in the power of the human thought and spirit to influence external material reality. This component seems to sets New Age spirituality in a different category than Catholic and Anglican spiritualities; however, these magical aspects pervade Catholic and Anglican spiritualities as well. This magic can be seen in historical events believed by practitioners of Christian religions (resurrection of Christ, miracles, parthenogenesis/virgin birth, etc.) – as well as in some rituals and prayers. For instance, in Catholicism specifically, believers hold the conviction that the Bread and Wine of the Eucharist literally transforms into the body and blood of Christ; to quote the Revised Catholic Catechism: "in the Eucharist…the whole Christ is truly, really, and substantially contained" (383 [1374]). Therefore, although New Age spirituality is outside the immediate scope of this study, Christian religions share the same *type of* perspectives regarding metaphysical forces affecting material reality. Therefore, although this is a study of Catholic and Anglican texts, numerous implications found in this study may be applied to New Age spiritualities as well.

How much of the American population actually identifies with these New Age approaches? Based on PEW Institute surveys, only 0.4% of the American population identifies with New Age ("U.S. Religious Landscape Study"). So who are the people buying New Age spiritual texts? How are New Age texts becoming bestsellers (e.g. Rhonda Byrne, Deepack Chopra) if the statistics reveal a lack of identification with New Age spirituality (0.4% of the

American population)? PEW data shows that 30% of the US public who are unaffiliated with a religion has had a mystical experience ("Nones" 24); and according to 2012 PEW research surveys, "roughly three-in-ten religiously unaffiliated adults say they believe in spiritual energy in physical objects and in yoga as a spiritual practice. About a quarter believe in astrology and reincarnation. In addition, nearly six-in-ten of the religiously unaffiliated say they often feel a deep connection with nature and the earth; about three-in-ten say they have felt in touch with someone who is dead; and 15% have consulted a psychic" ("Nones" 24). Many Americans who do not explicitly identify as New Age still experience and believe in New Age spiritual principles. This shows that the spirituality component of New Age affiliation remains an important part of American culture – despite the potential stigma of publically identifying as "New Age."

The fronting of spiritual components may be a method of updating religion for current postmodern times. Many pseudo-scientific spiritualities (e.g. astrology, psychics, communication with the dead) substantially differ from contemporary Catholic and Anglican spirituality. In fact, adopting these New Age beliefs is heretical in the Catholic Church. Yet, an important component of New Age spirituality should be considered. As the term "New Age" suggests, this type of spirituality was meant to bring a "new" fresh spiritual awareness; it is, and was, meant to update "old age" organized religion (Fuller 98). Despite the primitivistic leanings toward shamanism, teleological truth seeking, and literalism, New Age spirituality is, and was,

meant to be progressive or "new" in relation to dogmatic religious spiritualties. This progressive aspect of spirituality is important to contemporary understandings of Catholic and Anglican spirituality. Spirituality and the rhetorical expressions of spirituality are pragmatic tools that can update how religion works and how religion is relevant. This progressive view of spirituality syncs with contemporary postmodern understandings of the world (within and without religion) and, as I will demonstrate in this study, may contribute to the increasing general popularity of American spirituality – as, I will show, contemporary American spirituality seems to be gaining more traction because it is a more inclusive discourse.

Argumentation

Argumentation, in the context of the field of composition and rhetoric, is an important term in this study. Via the dimension of reasonableness, argumentation is a tool of persuasion that facilitates effective adherence of audiences. Since audience is a pivotal component of this study, argumentation must be defined and sketched. Furthermore, the subtitle of *The New Rhetoric* is "A Treatise of Argumentation" – and since I am using *The New Rhetoric* as a framework in this study, I find that is necessary to establish a context of the term "argumentation." Therefore, I will sketch how I will be using the term in order to clarify the meaning and dispel any myths surrounding the term.

Argumentation is a term that carries different baggages, different connotations, and different functions, depending on which disciplinary lens to

view it. Debate and forensics may see it as the spoken competitive argumentation in attempts to achieve consensus or arrive at the strongest position. Certain schools of philosophy, depending on which schools, may see argumentation bound to higher objective missions of truth – or bound to more subjective missions. A common everyday view of argumentation can imply a kind of combative state between two parties. A mother may reprimand her unruly child saying, "Don't be argumentative" – which implies "do not question my authority." If a friend describes another person as "argumentative," the implications can be negative, that is, "disagreeable" or "belligerent." The terms "argumentation" and "argumentative," like all uses of language and communicative symbols, depend on *karios*, audience, and topic for effective communicative function. Specific to this study is one general version of argumentation: written argumentation through the lens of Perelman and Olbrecht-Tyteca, rhetorical theorists who explore the techniques of written argumentation in their treatise, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*.

Written argumentation differs from spoken argumentation: it cannot react immediately to the responses of a real-time audience; instead written argumentation is potentially accessible to all audiences. Furthermore, as seen in Plato's *Phaedrus*, written argumentation is permanent as an evidential artifact – and this allows the writer to reflect on her own thinking or memory. Written argumentation does not concern oratory eloquence, such as gesture, mnemonics, dramatic art; written argumentation moves away from the strictly

oratory cultures of Ancient Greece and Rome and into the post-printing-press era (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 6); moreover, written argumentation moves us into the realm of digital texts and internet rhetorics which are dependent on written communication. Overall, the goal of the "New Rhetoric" by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, is to go "far beyond" classical oratory based conceptions of rhetoric and dialectic, adapting these elements and stretching these elements to the present age; to do so, the theorists focus on written discourse since written discourse "occur(s) in the most varied forms" (6). This allows their study to more be generalized and applicable to varied discourses (6). For Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, their "present age" was the late 1950s, however, these thinkers' theory of rhetoric and argumentation still commands relevance. *The New Rhetoric* helped revive the discipline in the mid- late 20th century and still contributes to the scholarship and understanding of rhetorical composition today (Bizzell and Herzberg 1196; Crosswhite, "Rhetorical Unconscious" 393).

The concept of argumentation has not remained static over the millennia and the "new rhetoric" is a testament to this activity. The ebb and flow of these concepts eventually led to the Perelmanian understanding of argumentation in the mid to late 20th century: one that emphasizes audience and the importance of humanness (Crosswhite, "Rhetorical Unconsciousness" 393-394). Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's treatise *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise of Argumentation* can be seen as a 20th century version of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. In Aristotelian fashion, rhetoric is generally viewed as the

counterpart (*antistrophe*) of the dialectic; however since then, Aristotle's

position has been updated. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca are these updaters.

They recognize argumentation as immersed in and saturated by language and

context; its function is reliant on audience. Unlike Aristotle's emphasis on

"demonstration," as Chaim Perelman explains in *The Realm of Rhetoric*,

argumentation "flows out of a natural language" (9). The role of language and

writing strategies are pivotal in argumentation. There is no universal language,

nor universal expression; therefore, the arguer makes deliberately strategic

choices about the components of their argument – moreover, the arguer

determines and chooses which argumentative articulations are the most

persuasive.

Where does logic fit into this linguistic argumentative activity? Pre

World War II logical positivism is largely extinct; postmodern sensibilities

have shown that logic cannot exist in a vacuum. A number of 20th century

thinkers, not necessarily labeled "postmodern," articulated and influenced this

more progressive understanding of logic. Pragmatist John Dewey explains

logic as a tool of inquiry: socially adaptable to (and evolving with) time,

context, and situations (*The Logic of Inquiry*); Stephen Toulmin, champion of

practical reason, sees logic as adapting to audiences; James Kinneavy asserts

that rhetorical composition plays an epistemological role since it is active in

determining situational contexts of meaning; Richard Lanham sees Platonic

dialectic cooperating with Sophistical rhetoric (Berlin 187-188). Similarly to

all of these theorists, Chaim Perelman emphasizes context, audience, and

practical reason in argumentation (*Realm* 5-8); so, in other words, logic is malleable since it is bound to rhetorical aims.

Logic is inevitably bound to processes of reasoning. The topic of spirituality requires processes of reasoning composed of highly subjective personal beliefs and experience-based knowledge. Since premises within the discourse of spirituality are largely subjective, the reasoning process is generally dialectical, not analytical. Dialectical reasoning seeks the most probable conclusions since the premises are not "necessary" as self-evident or facts, whereas analytical reasoning begins with the necessary and arrives at new knowledge by the logical deductive relationships of those necessary premises (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 5). Much of the discourse of spirituality discussed in this investigation will not be *dialogically* dialectic vis-a-vis Platonic dialogue; instead, the contemporary discourse of spirituality involves reasoning with probabilities and opinionated premises; therefore, dialectic reasoning of probabilities (i.e. a more nuanced type of inductive reasoning), is most appropriate for examining how a writer of spirituality secures, what Perelman coins, the "mental cooperation," of readers.

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca qualify this "mental cooperation" stating "all argumentation aims at gaining the adherence of minds, and, by this very fact, assumes the existence of an intellectual contact" - moreover, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca qualify "arguing" as "using discourse to influence the intensity of an audience's adherence to certain theses" (14). As my project's title suggests, this project investigates "argument" and

"transcendence": "argument" signifying the realm of dialectic exchange and "transcendence" signifying the realm of spirituality. In other words, this project examines how spiritual authorities *argue their spirituality*. To plug this synthesis into Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's definitions, this project can be described as an investigation into how spiritual individuals gain the "adherence of minds" via intellectual contact: in other words, how the contemporary discourse of spirituality rhetorically influences audience's adherences to certain subjective understandings of spirituality.

As mentioned, generative topics of argumentation for Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca are topics of dialectical reasoning – that is, topics involving probabilities. Probabilities fuel argumentation and debate; certainties do not require argumentation and debate, since certainties are accepted by consensus. Argumentation occurs when an audience requires convincing. Argumentation is not required if an audience considers concern premises and conclusions to be self-evident. Mathematics, for example, is based on premises and conclusions that audiences accept: 2+2=4 involve premises and a conclusion that are not generally argued. Mathematics involves demonstration, not argumentation (Perelman 9). In argumentation, premises and conclusions may be certain to an individual arguer, however, there may be outside populations or parties that do not see such premises and conclusions as certain. The arguer strives to convince the outside party; this striving or motivation puts the gears of the argument into motion. Outside of mathematics, there are topics that have phenomenological intersubjective certainty as well, and like mathematics,

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these topics are typically not debated or explained. For example, people do not

debate or try to persuade others about the claim, "the sky is blue." "The sky is

blue" can be debated via Cartesian perspectives in qualia; however, it usually

isn't argued. Why? Because as a human community, we agree on the

pragmatic truth of the claim; like Aristotle's reference to the "whiteness of

snow" (Topics, IV, 105a), it is not a topic that puzzles people. It is generally

reasonable to claim that the "sky is blue" or that "snow is white." And there is

human consensus about this claim based on the agreed concepts of "blue,"

"white," "snow," and "sky" as well as the dimension of human perception. It is

not a topic of argumentation – and according to Aristotle and Perelman, need

not be a topic of debate (*Topics*, IV, 105a; Perelman 9). Spirituality, on the

other hand, is not something that is consensually agreed upon as

intersubjective truth; therefore, argumentation and rhetoric play cooperative

roles within spiritual discourse in convincing audiences. Due to the pervasive

uncertainty of the topic, this cooperation, or "rhetorical argumentation" (within

the discipline of rhetoric) can be an effective lens to analyze this discourse,

rather than more logical discourse (found in the discipline of philosophy). The

topic of spirituality requires the use of practical reason: a type of reason that

emphasizes the humanness of the reasoning process – and which *The New*

Rhetoric is best equipped to unpack.

Richard McKeon and the "Architectonic Productive Art"

Aristotle simply, yet profoundly states as the first line of the

Metaphysics "All human beings by nature desire to know." This aspect of

human nature seems not to have changed much since the ancient era. Curiosity

still pushes us to fully understand; we still ache to know that which is

unknown. The human desire to understand is taken as a given in this

investigation. This investigation is concerned with the writer's post-

understanding delivery. Once *pistis* (belief, faith) is established,

communication of these understandings falls into the realm of argumentation

and rhetorical composition. In his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle mentions "…all [people],

to some extent, try to test and maintain an argument [as in dialectic] and to

defend themselves and attack others [as in rhetoric]" (1.1.1). Spirituality, in

relation to this insight, is concerned with the latter part of the former and the

former part of the latter; in other words, it is my opinion that spirituality is

concerned with *maintaining* an argument rather than testing an argument, and

spiritual writers are concerned more with *defending* themselves rather than

attacking others.

Maintenance and defense of a spiritual position aligns with Aristotle's

epideictic (*epideiktikon*) category of discourse, i.e. discourse that addresses

praise or blame. More specifically, maintaining and defending spiritual

positions seem less concerned with blame and more concerned with the realm

of praise (*epainos*). According to Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, in epideictic discourse

"all speakers praise or blame in regard to existing qualities, but they often also

make use of other things, both reminding [the audience] of the past and

projecting the course of the future" (1.3.4). So although epideictic discourse concerns the present state of things and therefore differs from exclusively deliberative (which concerns the future state of things) or judicial rhetoric (which strictly judges past events), it still can temporally overlap deliberative discourse and judicial discourse. This temporal flexibility of epideictic discourse allows the discourse of spirituality to be productive discourse to study since it can potentially allow more rhetorical avenues to be explored. However, "presence" and the " present moment" is fronted in the discourse of spirituality;[2] therefore epideictic discourse, a discourse that fronts "the present," is an appropriate lens in which to view the discourse of study.

The emerging phenomenon of spirituality is relevant to discuss, but there are other emerging cultural phenomena in America with their own forms of epideictic discourses. Surely, other phenomena and their corresponding discourses use argumentative schema in similar and differing manners. So what does spirituality demonstrate about rhetoric and argumentation that another discourses revolving around another phenomena do not? What is novel about the contemporary discourse of spirituality? Moreover, Catholic and Anglican epideictic versions of the discourse? What can this show about the uses of rhetoric and argumentation now and in the future? What will be the practical takeaways from this study?

To explore these questions, I will reach into Richard McKeon's corpus: work similarly inspired by Aristotle. McKeon's perspectives and insights into

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[2] For a more in depth philosophical and theological look at "presence," look to the "event ontology" of Buber, Levinas, or Barth.

the workings of rhetoric provide an effective and comprehensive theoretical to build my conclusions. Why McKeon? His theoretical analysis, almost more than any canonical rhetorician, is forward thinking. McKeon is concerned about the future of things. In his texts, McKeon constantly advises about where we need to go and what rhetoric should do. McKeon is a navigator of anxieties and potentialities; far from fear mongering, he theorizes the future and thinks about the role of *action*. Perhaps, this forward thinking pragmatism stems from his work with the United Nations; regardless, McKeon is a thinker to consult about the future of rhetoric and where it can take us as a society. In other words, through the lens of McKeon, I can demonstrate how a study of spiritual discourse and its accompanying rhetorical and argumentative techniques "do something in the world": something useful and needed.

The following study will show that subjective belief and experience play an active role in the discourse of spirituality. Argumentative strategies both increase the reasonability and the persuasiveness of the spiritual attitudes and actions. These strategies are flexible and adaptable. As I show in Chapter Two, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's argumentation is rhetorical and therefore can be understood as *techne*. Much in the same vein, and in the same vein as Aristotle, McKeon sees rhetoric as an art. However, McKeon qualifies this notion saying that contemporary rhetoric is an *architectonic* art ("The Uses" 11). McKeon's qualifier, "architectonic," is used in the ancient meaning of the word; he is implying that the rhetor is simultaneously the technician, the master craftsman, and the architect. The rhetor effectively uses tools of the

trade (e.g. words and argument), envisions a design, coordinates with specialists, and produces a final product (a text) (Backman xxi). More importantly, the architect/rhetor assumes greater responsibilities; she commands implications that transcend immediate textual form and function. In other words, an intermediary craftsman (e.g. editor) or user of the product (e.g. reader of the text) does not necessarily care about the transcendent implications of the product; the architect, on the other hand, as the grand designer of the product, is invested in the transcendent implications. Unlike Aristotelian sciences, which emphasize the productive nature of things themselves, such as plays, and poems, McKeon's architectonic arts focus on the means of production (Backman xxiii). McKeon understands architectonic art as "technology itself given a rhetorical transformation" ("The Uses" 12), providing "the devices by which to determine the characteristics and problems of our times and to form the art by which to guide actions for the solutions of our problems and the improvements of our circumstances" ("The Uses" 11).

So based on the argumentative strategies analyzed in this study, how do contemporary writers of spirituality, as grand designers of the discourse, wield architectonic artistry to improve our world and organize democratic dissonance? As I will show in Chapter Three, Catholic and Anglican discourse of spirituality helps audiences solve problems in their individual lives, providing order, peace, and serenity to chaotic lives. The texts persuade and teach readers about contemplative techniques, persuading readers to act on these teachings. These are productive implications; however, they are not quite

what McKeon has in mind. McKeon is a big picture thinker. Yes, spiritual discourse can help individuals take control of their lives but what are the bigger implications? What does the rhetorical composition of spirituality reveal about the current uses of productive architectonic rhetoric?

In the following chapters I will demonstrate that the rhetoric and argumentation of spirituality rely on certain techniques, but the spiritual content and expression requires flexibility and freedom. The discourse combats traditionally dogmatic modes of truth; it allows for kairotic adaptation; it explores *both/and* relationships, allowing for expanded subjective and objective potentialities; it is open for interpretation, giving agency to the audience. In other words, spiritual texts are epideictic in an instructive manner, not in a demonstrative manner. McKeon clarifies this type of distinction in his essay, "The Uses of Rhetoric in a Technological Age." He explains that Aristotle had two Greek words which worked with the processes of presentation: *apodeiktikos* and *epideiktikos*. Both generally mean "to make known" or "show forth," however, the prefixes qualify the words further: *apodeiktikos* precisely means "to prove" while *epideiktikos* means "to display" ("The Uses" 19). In other words, to Aristotle, *apodeiktikos* refers to scientific proof while *epideiktikos* refers to display oratory. It was Cicero who redefined the epideictic discourse category as "demonstrative," conflating scientific proof and "display" ("The Uses" 19). This Ciceronian inheritance still pervades conceptions of epideictic discourse today. Epideictic discourse should not be equated to proof, as McKeon proclaims - and contemporary discourse of

spirituality is a real-world example of McKeon's proclamation in action. As I will show through the analysis of the discourse, writing about spirituality returns epideictic discourse to its original Aristotelian position: as display. Moreover, my analysis also qualifies epideictic discourse as *educational* display: Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's updated version of Aristotle's definition. Contemporary discourse of spirituality displays subjective and practical perspectives, which are not demonstrable but can be considered truth. Communicative display is flexible and requires an artistic architect to organize the discourse, implant it with intention, and effectively deliver it to audiences. In this way, the contemporary discourse of spirituality is model example of rhetoric, argumentation, and writing as *techne* or art.

McKeon's "call for action" regarding epideictic discourse is a "call for action" that still resonates today. Contemporary discourse of spirituality reveals this call. As McKeon appropriately explains, mere demonstrative discourse of proof can be stagnant and thus problematic as a problem-solving tool. To heal this stagnancy, epideictic discourse must be flexible and pragmatic. For instance, McKeon asserts that demonstrative (and therefore, epideictic) rhetoric extends "to the whole field of human activity and knowledge" ("The Uses" 20): in other words, nothing is off-limits, including spiritual truths and experiences. Furthermore, demonstrative rhetoric needs not rely on "demonstrations by experts," that is a "demonstration by any one constitutes a datum, and affects the processes of judgment" ("The Uses" 20). Contemporary discourse of spirituality relies upon passing the authority to the

practitioner so that they can be fully autonomous in their contemplative journeying. Demonstrative rhetoric should propel audiences into action based upon an evolving united opinion: action that is filled with invention and discovery ("The Uses" 20). Contemporary discourse of spirituality offers this commonplace for audiences to be led by writers and autonomously discover spiritual truths. Therefore, the contemporary discourse of spirituality shows a progressive demonstrative / epideictic rhetoric. It is "display" mixed with pragmatic motivations and postmodern awarenesses. As I show in Chapter Five, when this concoction is poured into religious fields and spheres, the mixture seems to dissolve ideological boundaries and hegemonic restrictions.

A key component to the epideictic efficacy of the discourse of spirituality can be seen in " commonplaces." Hugh Blair defined commonplaces or "loci" as "general ideas applicable to a great many different subjects": some commonplaces work with different kinds of deliveries, some work more particularly (974). In Blair's example, demonstrative commonplaces may be the praise of a person's "qualities of his mind" or the" positions that he filled" (975). These types of rigid categorical commonplaces found throughout the Enlightenment and Early Modern period, are not the commonplaces of the 21st century. Our commonplaces for discourse and argumentation need a broader definition, closer to Aristotle's "common topics" as "places to look" for arguments (Bizzell 30-31). Kenneth Burke qualifies Aristotle's commonplaces further as "outside any scientific specialty" thus requiring rhetorical statements (*Rhetoric of Motives* 51). Similar to Burke,

McKeon applies a similar definition to the contemporary uses of commonplaces. Specifically, he explains that contemporary commonplaces are found in "creativity." In his 1973 essay "Creativity and the Commonplace," McKeon asserts "the new interest in creativity has made 'creativity' a commonplace with many meanings and with many places in art and science, in practice and theory, in logic and method" (33). It is a place of "inventions and discoveries …expressed in the inventions of language and in genres of discourse … constructed by arts or actions of innovation and fixation" ("Creativity" 33-34). Commonplaces of creativity combat ontological definitions and philosophical consensuses in respect to meaning and nature. Rather, commonplaces of creativity productively allow for "a pluralistic philosophy which establishes a creative interplay of philosophies…a rediscovery of the commonplaces of invention and memory for innovation rather than the establishment of a doctrine for proselytizing and conversion among marked-off heresies and dogmas" ("Creativity" 34).

McKeon's call for creative commonplaces is profound and energizing. However, McKeon, like in many of his works, does not supply any concrete contemporary examples of creative commonplaces in action – and even if he did, they would be from 1973 and not from the 21st century. The contemporary discourse of spirituality can fill this void. By analyzing several of the argumentative schema I show that by focusing on Being and subjective experience rather than strict rules or religious feast days, the discourse of spirituality allows for "interplay of philosophies." *The Gethsemani Encounter*

shows that harmonious Buddhist and Catholic interfaith dialoging is possible

and productive when spirituality is being discussed (Mitchell). Also, as I show

in Chapter Five, by dissociating itself from religiousness, spiritual discourse

resists all temptations for doctrine, heresy, or dogma establishment; moreover,

spirituality becomes a more reasonable topic to wider audiences when it

explicitly dissociates away from religiousness. In other words, the dissociation

away from rigid commonplaces of doctrine, commandments, and ideology,

into more creative commonplaces of metaphor, personal narrative, and belief,

is more inclusive and thus more widely persuasive.

For instance, this creativity is demonstrated by the contemporary

Catholic discourse of spirituality. The audience of these texts can be active

Catholics, lapsed Catholics, liberal Catholics, or conservative Catholics. The

commonplace of creativity allows all Catholics to effectively adhere to the

writer's perspective. Moreover, the overlap and similarity of Anglican

discourse of spirituality shows a cross-denominational inclusivity. Throughout

this study I show that within the general discourse of contemporary spirituality,

rhetorical strategies and perspectives of Anglican writers Cynthia Bourgeault

and Matthew Fox are almost indistinguishable from the Catholic writers.

Furthermore, as I demonstrate, the inclusive rhetorical strategies allow all

practitioners of spirituality to adhere to the texts in some subjective way. Even

atheists and New Age practitioners of spirituality can understand the writers'

perspectives as reasonable.

The creative commonplace is a "commonplace of commonplaces" according to McKeon. Such openness of discussion in which uncertainty is freely negotiated requires some kind of order and organization. By a commonplace of commonplaces, McKeon advocates a move into "transformations of innovation": in other words, pluralism fueled by invention ("Creativity" 36). This is a move away from reliance upon traditional commonplaces: that is, the comfortable familiar points of repetition that depend upon hindsight ("Creativity" 35). Familiar and traditional references have a place within a creative "commonplace of commonplaces"; however, these points of reference are the materials of fresh innovation. The creative process unites memory and invention to solve problems while not relying completely on past truths. *Referencing* past truths, rather than *relying* on past truths, can open up the inclusivity of the discourse: all audiences can participate and move the discussion forward ("Creativity" 35-36). It leads to "the establishment of the new in existence, experience, discursive exploration, and inclusive organization" ("Creativity" 36).

Final introductory remarks

In this chapter I have spotlighted numerous traits that compose the discourse of study: contemporary Catholic and Anglican discourse of spirituality. First, the discourse revolves around the understanding and adherence of spirituality. Spirituality, in the context of this study, can be defined as the human internal process in which binary distinctions of objective

and subjective fold into each other via a transcendental union with God. Secondly, as I have referenced from the alignment with New Age spirituality and as I will show in greater depth in this study, contemporary Catholic and Anglican discourse of spirituality can be seen as a postmodern update to traditional religious discourse: an update that, as David Bentley Hart says of contemporary Christian thought, depends upon the "triumph of rhetoric" (3). Fourthly, contemporary Catholic and Anglican discourse of spirituality uses techniques of rhetorical argumentation and practical reason to further the functionality of the communication. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyeca's *The New Rhetoric* is a framework adequately equipped to analyze such techniques. Thirdly, contemporary Catholic and Anglican discourse of spirituality is an epidictic discourse. The epidictic nature of this discourse inherits the attributes of display and instruction rather than demonstrative proof and ceremonial "praise and blame." Finally, contemporary Catholic and Anglican discourse of spirituality can be seen through a McKeonian perspective. This perspective highlights a constructive use of freedom and rhetorical creativity, which resists the temptation of more totalizing modernist religious discourses. All of these traits and perspectives will be further developed in this study by looking closely at the contemporary Catholic and Anglican spiritual texts. In the next chapter, I more specifically justify and explain the use of the *The New Rhetoric* framework and the overall methodology. In Chapter Three, I look at an important foundational set of associative argumentative schema, causal chains and staging, found contemporary Catholic and Anglican texts. In Chapter Four,

I look at a more complex and specific argumentative scheme, unlimited development, which depends upon causal chains and staging. In Chapter Five, I analyze the general argumentative strategy of dissociation found in contemporary Catholic and Anglican discourse of spirituality. In Chapter Six, I show how the strategies and schema can cooperate, explore overall implications of the study, and recommend further lines of inquiry. In sum, each chapter builds off of the previous chapter; the focus sharpens more and more which each subsequent section – providing, by the final chapter, a much clearer picture of the rhetorical construction of this discourse. By the end of my study, a reader will more fully understand the pragmatic, active, and inclusively argumentative functionality of contemporary Catholic and Anglican spiritual discourse.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY, METHODS, AND FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, I will explain the methodology (or "strategies of inquiry,"

Creswell 13), methods, and framework, that I used throughout this study– and

that I used to appropriately gauge the findings and implications. My research

design relies on assumed knowledge claims made within the discourse of

spirituality as well within the field of composition and rhetoric. In Chapter One

I sketched a general landscape of these knowledge claims through an overview

of rhetoric and argumentation as well as an overview of spirituality, mysticism,

and contemplation within the Christian tradition. Again, not only is it

important to demonstrate how argument, rhetoric, and spirituality are

understood today – but also to understand, and remind ourselves of the

historical baggage that these concepts inherit.

I have established the background and history of spirituality; however,

how exactly is spirituality currently being studied in the academy? What

methods are being applied? In the last twenty years, one approach has gained

traction within the field of religious studies: postmodern critical theory. An

area of study has carved itself out, aptly calling itself "religious

postmodernism," involving fresh theories of postmodern religion, secularism,

and spirituality - as well as reworked theories of Heidegger, Derrida, and

Deleuze. In his 2012 book *Postmodernism and the Revolution in Religious

Studies: Toward a Semiotics of the Event,* one of these theorists, Carl Raschke,

posits that despite this present heavy interest into the field of religious studies, there is a noticeable deficiency: a lack of "any serious deployment of the new philosophical tools provided by the postmodernist revolution in the study of religion"; he goes onto explain that although religion seems to be a Habermasian system of "communicative action," not much effort has been made to deploy any type of communication theory to the phenomena of contemporary religion (23). Raschke's perspective is from outside of composition and rhetoric; however, I discuss Raschke's remark to indicate a recent noticeable void in theory and understanding of the workings of religious and spiritual discourse: a void that requires some insight. I intend to provide some of that insight with this study.

In the field of composition and rhetoric, generative work has been done on institutional religious discourse, the rhetoric of religious ideology, and writing about faith in the college classroom (e.g. Crowley, Depalma, Ringer, Vander Lei) – and all of these theories I will engage with in Chapter Six. However, again, there seems to be a lack of investigation into the communication and discourses of spiritualities. My general investigation and the corresponding methods are meant to study and unpack the rhetorical construction of the discourse of spirituality and the implications of the discourse. Unlike Raschke and the theorists of 21st century religious postmodernism, I will not be theorizing the subjectivity of the writers of the contemporary discourse of spirituality, nor the subjectivities of the readers of the contemporary discourse of spirituality. Instead I will embrace discourse analysis as a research method.

Again, since I am studying the mechanisms of discourse rather than the convictions themselves, discourse analysis serves this study as the most appropriate and productive method. In the field of composition and rhetoric, not much research has been pursued regarding the contemporary discourse of spirituality. Therefore, rather than plunging into field research regarding human subjects, a *textual* study of contemporary discourse of spirituality needs to be established. An understanding of the *written product* needs to be laid down before *writing process* research takes place. My study serves as that necessary foundation. I anticipate studying the discourse of spirituality via human subjects and field research after this study is complete.

What type of discourse am I analyzing? My sample includes 14 contemporary Catholic or Anglican texts about spirituality. As I will show in this chapter, I have chosen this sample as a convenience sample. The sample narrows the scope of this project into a manageable endeavor, while simultaneously demonstrating some of the rhetorical trends within the general contemporary discourse of spirituality.

What is the sample? Below is a chart of the texts that were analyzed. I have organized them from most recent to least recent (Table 1):

Text title	Writer name (Affiliation)	Year of publication	Number of pages
Tools Matter: Beginning the Spiritual Journey	Mary Margaret Funk (Catholic)	2013	205

The Path of Centering Prayer: Deepening Your Experience of God	David Frenette (Catholic)	2012	229
A Sunlit Absence: Silence, Awareness, and Contemplation	Martin Laird (Catholic)	2011	192
Into the Silent Land: A Guide to the Christian Practice of Contemplation	Martin Laird (Catholic)	2006	154
Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening	Cynthia Bourgeault (Anglican)	2004	177
Thoughts Matter: The Practice of the Spiritual Life	Mary Margaret Funk (Catholic)	2003	140
Tools Matter for Practicing the Spiritual Life	Mary Margaret Funk (Catholic)	2001	167
Mystical Hope:	Cynthia Bourgeault	2001	104

Trusting in the Mercy of God.	(Anglican)		
Inner Compass: An Invitation to Ignatian Spirituality	Margaret Silf (Catholic)	1999	268
Centered Living: The Way of Centering Prayer	M. Basil Pennington (Catholic)	1999	219
"Invitation to Love"	Thomas Keating (Catholic)	1992	123
The Coming of the Cosmic Christ: The Healing of Mother Earth and the Birth of Global Renaissance	Matthew Fox (Catholic/Anglican)	1988	278
"Open Mind, Open Heart"	Thomas Keating (Catholic)	1986	125
Original Blessing: A	Matthew Fox (Catholic/Anglican)	1983	348

Primer in Creation Spirituality			

How diverse is the sample? Each text is written by a Catholic or Anglican writer: 4 texts by Anglican writers, 10 texts by Roman Catholic writers. From the 14 texts, 8 texts are written by men, 6 texts are written by women. Regarding the credentials of the writers, 2 texts are written by spiritual retreat directors (Frenette, Silf), 4 texts are written by Catholic and Anglican clergy (Bourgeault, Fox) and 8 texts are written by those in the monastic vocation (Keating, Funk, Laird, Pennington). The texts represent the contemporary era spanning from 1983 to 2013: 3 texts from the 1980s (1983, 1986, 1988), 3 texts from the 1990s (1992, 1999, 1999), 5 texts from the 2000s (2001, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2006) and 3 texts from the 2010s (2011, 2012, 2013). Each work is categorized by the Library of Congress Cataloging system as a text about "Spiritual Life," "Spirituality," "Spiritual Exercises," or "Contemplation."

What kind of discourse analysis am I administering to these texts? "Discourse" and "discourse analysis" have assorted meanings to scholars in different fields (Schiffrin 1). For this study, I have chosen to administer critical discourse analysis (CDA) to the 14 contemporary texts. As indicated by discourse analyst Teun Van Dijk, critical discourse analysis looks to "understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality"; CDA is not a

school of discourse studies, but rather offers a mode or a perspective for theorizing and analysis (352). She mentions that CDA provides an especially relevant perspective in the fields of rhetoric, argumentation, pragmatics, and stylistics (352, 358): all fields that will be addressed in this study. As Van Dijk indicates, CDA "does not have a unitary theoretical framework" nor is it a specific avenue of research, but rather, CDA navigates questions about social problems, society and culture, power, and the link between texts and society (353). Moreover, CDA looks to explain how discourse is a form of social action. In sum, in this study, I do not assert claims about how the texts are composed; I do not assert claims about cognition; rather, I analyze how the texts work in society, determining how the texts indicate changing power structures and guide audiences to action. In this study, the changing power structures relate to individual empowerment and social inclusivity within the spheres of subjective and religious belief. Therefore, critical discourse analysis offers the most appropriate method to navigate the following research questions of this study: How are rhetorically argumentative schemas are being strategically used within the discourse of spirituality? How do writers of spirituality adhere audiences in a rhetorically inclusive way? How do these writers to lead audiences to action? What does the contemporary discourse of spirituality reveal about the ways that religion is presently being culturally negotiated?

How do I specifically use critical discourse analysis in my project to investigate these research questions? I locate examples of rhetorical and

argumentative structures, (examples modeled by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca in *The New Rhetoric*), extract them, and unpack the rhetorical implications of the examples. I evaluate the importance of the textual examples in accordance to the frequency of the textual occurrences. The patterns of rhetorical structures and schema that most repeatedly occur throughout the 14 texts characterize the sample most adequately. Therefore, I dissect and explain the most repeated rhetorical structures and schema in the context of the contemporary discourse of spirituality, demonstrating how the writers inclusively adhere audiences to the message of spiritual texts.

This study is not meant to solely point out that certain argumentative schema exist, but rather this study means to show persuasively functions of the discourse of spirituality. In other words, I am concerned with how the discourse of spirituality works, rather than merely what the components are. I refer to the "persuasive machinery of the discourse of spirituality" throughout this study. By this I mean the active processes that theoretically affect an audience. Again, such machinery serves functional purposes of adhering audiences. I examine the argumentative schema as a means to understanding the pragmatic logic of projected persuasive trajectories. I do not show *every* scheme or "gear of this machine"; but rather, I show several major rhetorical constructions within this discourse, which reveal similar movements toward inclusive adherence. In brief, I do not make totalizing scientific claims based on this study. Instead, I use theories and frameworks to unpack various figures

found in the texts - and excavate how this particular persuasive adherence works, not merely what the persuasive adherence is.

This is a similar technique applied by Jeanne Fahnestock in *Rhetorical Figures in Science*. In the study, she examines verbal figures as they epitomize a line of reasoning. Fahnestock explains that a figure is "a representative or exemplary selection," "a verbal summary that epitomizes a line of reasoning," "a condensed…rendering of the relationship among a set of terms…that constitutes the argument and that could be expressed at greater length" (24). Therefore, in this study, I spotlight argumentative structures as epitomes in order to comment on the "relationships among sets of terms" and excavate that, which "could be expressed at greater length."

To show my use textual epitomes to capture particular argumentative structures I have spotlighted Fahnestock's methodology found in *Rhetorical Figures in Science*; however, unlike Fahnestock I am not highlighting rhetorical figures and tropes. Figures and tropes are generally associated with meanings of words, utterances, and changing significations at smaller levels - which can change large-scale meanings (Lanham 101)[3]. Rather than examine these impactful minutia, I examine schema, or general architectures of arguments found in the contemporary discourse of spirituality. A scheme, according to Richard Lanham's *Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*, is a "highly

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[3] However, in *Tropics of Discourse* Hayden White points out that "trope" derives from the Classical Greek *tropus*, which means "turn." Therefore, White's understanding of tropes and tropics broadly encompass "turns" in logic as well - such as moves within syllogistic reasoning (2-3).

artificial pattern" of which words are woven into.[4] Henry Peacham in *The Garden of Eloquence*, a popular Renaissance rhetorical handbook consulted by Richard Lanham, defines a scheme as "a fashion of writing or speaking made new by some Art" that does not change signification (28). In addition, Peacham defines a figure as "a form of words, oration, of sentence made new by the art" and he defines a trope as "an artificial alteration of a word or a sentence" (75). Peacham's definitions highlight that schema create more general artificial newness that does not alter sentence-level or word-level meanings – while, on the other hand, figures and tropes rhetorically alter sentence and word level meanings. So throughout this study I examine the former: schema or deliberately arranged argumentative patterns that increase reasonableness and create fresh rhetorical appeals without directly change word and sentence level meanings. In the context of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's *The New Rhetoric*, the schema relate directly to the rhetorical structures of practical reasoning.

Why am I not examining rhetorical figures and tropes proper? Since the contemporary discourse of spirituality is a relatively new area of study in the field of composition and rhetoric, it seems appropriate and responsible to examine the broad scaffolding of the arguments rather than jump to the smaller rhetorical units. "One must crawl before learning to walk" – as the idiom goes; analogously, "crawling" can be equated to understanding the larger argumentative schema whereas the "walking" can be equated to understanding

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[4] Whether or not the scheme changes the meaning of the words is sometimes debated but often ignored (Lanham 101) – and this semantic point lies outside the scope of my investigation.

the rhetorical figures and tropes. In a similar fashion, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca position their section on associative schema (Part III, Chapter Two, "Arguments Based on Structure of Reality") before the section on smaller units of relational argumentation (Part III, Chapter Three, "The Relations Establishing the Structure of Reality"). These smaller argumentative units include example, illustration, models, analogy, metaphor.[5] Although these are important elements of the discourse of spirituality, my study would be overextended if I fully and responsibly explored these elements of rhetorical construction. Therefore, as I explain in more depth in the next chapter, I humbly analyze the general schema of association, the "arguments based on the structure of reality," throughout this study, rather than the more focused "relations establishing the structures of reality." In doing so, I can sketch a broad picture of the discourse and flesh out general implications while maintaining control over a complex discourse analysis.

Why do I use so much theory in a study like this? The foundation of religious and spiritual discourse is built upon idea, feeling, and experience. As I have explained in Chapter One, the discourse of spirituality is a discourse that communicates ineffable and experiential complexities. These complexities resist not only linguistic expression, but also scientific investigation and proof. Since the discourse resists many empirical data gathering techniques, analyzing particular argumentative structures in relation to theory provides an appropriate excavation of the reasoning processes. By "theory" I mean

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[5] Analogy and metaphor are referred to in Chapter Six of my study to demonstrate the relational cooperation of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's schema.

primarily "rhetorical theory" which should not be confused with "philosophy."

My use of rhetorical theory in this study aligns with the ubiquity found in its

refusal of traditional philosophy or a refusal of, what Rorty titles, systematic

"normal discourse." I embrace the evolutionary elasticity of rhetorical theory

in this study as it cooperates with the evolutionary elasticity of spiritual

communication and discourse. As Maurice Charland contends in his 2003

article "The Constitution of Rhetoric's Tradition," "rhetoric, while not

disciplinary, nevertheless 'hangs together' as a domain of knowledge even

though it does not cohere conceptually"; rhetoric speaks to other intellectual

genres rather than defining them or being defined by them (119-120).

Therefore, the analysis of rhetoric in my study speaks to discursive aspects of

religion and spirituality: aspects that resist empirical data gathering techniques

and require theoretical exploration and at this initial foundational stage of the

investigation.

In this study, I have chosen to examine spiritual authorities in the

Catholic and Anglican tradition rather than medical authorities, self-help, or

psychological authorities in the sphere of spirituality. Strictly spiritual writers

such as clergy, retreat leaders, and monastics, possess reliable theological

training and backgrounds of personal spiritual experience. By highlighting

reliable authorities, I insulate the study from a potential interfering motive that

can skew the data: spiritual writers' desire for monetary gain via unethical

wielding of rhetorical power. The exploitation of spirituality and spiritual

advice as a means to make money can potentially cloud the authenticity of

spiritual experiences documented in the texts. An unethical book-selling

motive may be problematic when discussing the communication of truths and

advice found in texts about spirituality. So I am acknowledging the motive, as

a potential obstacle that requires economic and cultural critiques, which lie

outside of the scope of my study. As an attempt to combat these dangers

sometimes found in New Age and self-help subgenres of spirituality, I have

chosen to the explore spiritual authorities primarily from monastic orders who

write apart from the tempting (and many times twisted) marketplace ethics. I

think we can agree that monks and nuns (and ex-monks and ex-nuns) are

consummate authorities of spirituality and contemplation within the traditions

of Catholicism and Anglicanism. Besides a portion of the day spent physically

working so that the monastery and convent may sustain its livelihood, these

initiates spend a majority of their time in prayer, contemplation, or educating

or receiving education.[6] The writers whom I have selected who are not part of

a monastic order are knowledgeable authorities in the religious traditions:

experientially and theologically.

I have selected authorities in this study that convey knowledge, express

personal experience, and provide advice based on backgrounds of spirituality –

and wish to communicate such points successfully. As a foundation of this

successful communication, the audience must believe the writers' thoughts and

perspectives within the written texts. For the writer to arrive at a "believing-

audience" or "adherence of minds," the writer must rhetorically strategize

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[6] Information gathered from numerous daily itineraries found on official Catholic/Anglican
monastery and convent websites.

particular structures of argumentation to connect the reader, albeit perhaps only for the duration of the read, to the writers' own personal understandings of spirituality.

Overall, the sample of contemporary Catholic and Anglican discourse of spirituality can offer a representative sample of a more general contemporary discourse of spirituality. The conclusions drawn from this study reveal emerging trends in contemporary uses of rhetoric and argumentation as well as emerging trends in the spheres of contemporary religion and spirituality. However, as a representative sample, there are clear limitations that are inevitable and must be taken into account: published texts are only one type of discourse, Catholic and Anglican texts are only two denominations of Christianity, Christianity is only one world religion, the writers represent only American Catholic and Anglican spirituality. Despite the clear limitations, the following study may illuminate emerging trends that can be further studied within a larger discourse of spirituality, raise awareness about the constructive nature of this particular discourse, and open up future avenues of generative inquiry.

The New Rhetoric: Taxonomy and Techne

As illustrated in Chapter One, the flexible and fluid nature of spiritual content forces spiritual discourse to resist scientific and referential expressions. Spiritual content requires an openness of perspectives, frameworks, and rhetorical composition. Spirituality can be seen as an exemplary model of

resistance toward totalizing discourse: totalizing scientific discourse, logical discourse, and ecclesiastical discourse. Herein indicates the productivity behind studying rhetorical and argumentative structures that are found within spiritual texts. The topic of spirituality is malleable enough to sync and flow with the current postmodern condition and democratic relativisms: key components of the realm of rhetoric. And, as Kenneth Burke points out in *A Rhetoric of Motives*, it is rhetoric that can serve to "lead us through the Scramble, the Wrangle of the Market Place, the flurries and flare-ups of the Human Barnyard" (23); therefore, rhetoric provides an epideictic tool that can order spiritual perspectives in a communicative manner.

Based on history and the current trends in spirituality, alluded to in Chapter One, it seems that the conversation about spirituality will never end because spiritual realities are not objectively provable. Spiritual discourse is naturally composed of opinions; due to the phenomenological, subjective, and experiential dimensions of spirituality, there is always a degree of relativism. Vis-à-vis Richard Rorty's edifying discourse, spiritual discourse can be seen as a "protest against attempts to close off conversation by proposals for universal commensuration through the hypostatization of some privileged set of descriptions"; or in a more *positive* Rortyian articulation, "the infinite *striving for* truth over 'all of Truth'" (377). Since spirituality is simultaneously nebulous and experiential, discourse about spirituality lends itself to "keeping the conversation going"; this perpetual "striving for truth," as well as a perpetual desire to express and communicate the "striving for truth,"

necessitates argumentative and rhetorical aims. To accentuate Burke's observation again, argumentative and rhetorical aims, guide us through the "Scramble", "the Market Place", and "the Human Barnyard"; in this investigation, the "Scramble," the "Marketplace," and the "Human Barnyard" happen to be located in the discourse of spirituality.

If the discourse of spirituality aligns so fittingly with the postmodern relativisms of discourse and Rorty's edifying discourse, why use systematic descriptions and taxonomies of rhetoric and argumentation? Why use Aristotle's categories, viewing spirituality through an epideictic lens? Why use Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's *The New Rhetoric* to highlight the machinery of rhetoric and argumentation? Are not the systems of Aristotle and Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca totalizing? And consequently, isn't it counterintuitive to use totalizing systems to analyze that which naturally resists totalizing systems, i.e. rhetoric?

Richard Larson discusses this counter-intuition in his 1984 essay "Classifying Discourse: Limitations and Alternatives." In this essay, Larson specifically criticizes the limits of categorical taxonomies as found within James Kinneavy's *A Theory of Discourse*. To counter such taxonomic frameworks, Larson's offers "scales," rather than categories, in which to plot the operations and modes of discourse. He explains that scaling "can give much clearer direction to both analysis and creation than the more rigid taxonomies give"; scaling resists "making pieces of discourse conform to the supposed characteristics of uninformative classifications of discourse" (213).

Although I understand Larson's zeal to increase the flexibility of our analytical

tools as well as the problematic nature of Kinneavy's more rigid categories in

A Theory of Discourse, I think that it is rash to discard taxonomies altogether.

Taxonomies are useful if presented as pragmatic handbooks or guidebook of

techne that shed light on the rhetorical and argumentative machinery of

discourse.

To illustrate this point, I look to Walter Beale's introductory remarks

found in *A Pragmatic Theory of Rhetoric*. Written in 1987, Beale's

investigation can be seen as an updated more complicated version of

Aristotle's *Rhetoric*[7] (8). Both texts offer a comprehensive theory of discourse

and rhetoric via taxonomy of discursive aims, modes, and geneses. However,

Beale sees Aristotle's taxonomy too restrictive and complicates it with more

contemporary notions and contexts. Beale describes the ancient world as

restricted by preexisting discursive genres and traditions that have logical and

universal gravitas, whereas in the contemporary world, these discursive

foundations "exist in creative tension with individualistic motives and novel

forms of invention, inspired by novel situations" (108). Although more

meticulously categorical in his approach, Beale approaches the study of

rhetoric in a similar manner as Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca: both account

for the more complex activity of modern discourse. In Aristotelian fashion,

both theorists break down large concepts into smaller groupings and analyze

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[7] And can be seen as an updated version of James Kinneavy's *A Theory of Discourse* (1971) as well. Beale implies this later in *A Pragmatic Theory of Rhetoric* (57-60) – and not in his introductory remarks. Beale also uses "scaling" like Larson proposed; however Beale uses them in tandem with Kinneavy-like categories.

them accordingly, highlighting the relationships between the groupings.

However, unlike Aristotle, more modern views of rhetoric such as Beale and

Perelman's frameworks, acknowledge the agency of the knower, and

acknowledge that reality is not clearly defined as an independent entity

(Lunsford and Ede 47). Using a taxonomy may seem incompatible with more

postmodern sensibilities, that is, it may seem to suggest regressing back to

modernist epistemology and Enlightenment ontology; however, this is not

necessarily the case. Beale describes his own organized categorical taxonomy

as a collection of theories that can guide criticism and practice; moreover, like

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, he spotlights the pragmatism of the approach,

which is not predictive and comprehensive, but rather relational (Beale 3). In

other words, the components of the taxonomies, and assorted taxonomies as

entire systems, when put in conversation with each other, highlight types of

perspectives, rather than totalizing perspectives. Therefore, in response to

Larson's 1984 concern, these types of frameworks and taxonomies have a

place as a tool for understanding as long as the frameworks and taxonomies are

presented as handbooks of guidance, and not presented as totalizing meta-

narratives. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's treatise as well as Walter Beale's

work are presented as handbooks of guidance – and are productive as such.

However, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca implement a framed

taxonomy in *The New Rhetoric* that differs from Beale's *A Pragmatic Theory*

of Rhetoric: Perelman and Olbrecht-Tyteca highlight theory but also the

technical uses of rhetoric and argumentation. In other words, a rhetor looking

for persuasive strategies and rhetorical constructions can peruse *The New Rhetoric* for pragmatic and applicable techniques. Beale's book, on the other hand, is a theoretical taxonomy; a rhetor does not find a usable handbook of direct rhetorical strategies. The practical nature of *The New Rhetoric* allows it to be parceled into bits and pieces; it is systematic but not a transcendental system. We need to keep this in mind throughout my study - as it may be easy to succumb to the temptation, misunderstanding Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's insights as transcendental or totalizing (Crosswhite, "Awakening" 187). As James Crosswhite states in his 2008 article "Awakening the Topoi," *The New Rhetoric* "does not intend to offer a model, and the complexity of what it does offer raises doubts about whether it can even be referred to as a model…It [*The New Rhetoric*] is nowhere as simple as the Toulmin model…Its [the Toulmin model's] marketability as a model is due to its simplicity. The new rhetoric project has never been marketable" (187). *The New Rhetoric*'s structure is complex and flexible for use. Moreover, it is open and points to communal engagement. In *The New Rhetoric*, the authors write about their mission stating, "The theory of argumentation will help to develop what a logic of value judgments has tried in vain to provide, namely the justification of possibility of human community in the sphere of action when this justification cannot be based on a reality or objective truth" (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 514). As shown in Chapter One of my investigation, the discourse of spirituality is an epideictic discourse of open reality/open realities; due to the experiential quality of the discourse of spirituality, it can be viewed

as a discourse that naturally negotiates subjective diversity and resists objective truth. Therefore, by highlighting the argumentative aspects of a discourse of spirituality, the mission of Perelman and Olbrects-Tyteca can be spotlighted; that is, justifying, through discourse, "human community in the sphere of action" when the content resists a consensus of reality perception. The discourse of spirituality perhaps more than any other type of discourse underlines this democratic mission of *The New Rhetoric* - a mission that stresses talking/writing *to* each other and not *past* each other.

Since effectively communicative talking/writing *to* each other requires adaptation to audience and kairos, *The New Rhetoric*, like Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, can be seen as a handbook of persuasive strategies. By tracing strategies of rhetoric and argumentation throughout Catholic and Anglican spiritual texts, I gesture to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's approach of rhetoric and argumentation as practical craft. Therefore, by showing these strategies at work, I wish to illustrate that *The New Rhetoric* acts as a handbook of technological means. Simultaneously, I will spotlight how the nebulous area of spirituality must rely on a strategic communicative craft in order to share and part the "clouds of unknowing" for others. Therefore, the discourse of spirituality reveals *The New Rhetoric* as a handbook of techne – and simultaneously, *The New Rhetoric* reveals the discourse of spirituality as a discourse that relies on rhetorical argumentation as a craft or art. The handbook and this specific discourse can be instrumentally inter-reliant or reciprocal: the common denominator being techne. In other words, inserting a discourse that

resists linguistic expression (the discourse of spirituality) into a taxonomy such as *The New Rhetoric* spotlights the discursive need for a flexible craft to adequately express such a nebulous subject matter; at the same time, inserting a discourse that resists linguistic expression (the discourse of spirituality) into a taxonomy such as *The New Rhetoric*, spotlights the flexible nature of the taxonomy itself, thus showing that *The New Rhetoric* is not a rigid categorical Enlightenment-type of system, but rather it is a guiding tool of techne.

In *Rhetoric Reclaimed: Aristotle and the Liberal Arts Tradition*, Janet Atwill provides a thorough look at the ancient concept of techne (7th century BCE - 4th century BCE). She describes three foundational characteristics of techne that contrast the liberal arts tradition as well as many philosophical disciplines of knowledge (2, 6). This perspective of techne is primary to the understanding of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's *The New Rhetoric*, as well as the understanding of spiritual discourse. Enlarging Atwill's discussion to include *The New Rhetoric* and spiritual discourse can clarify a similar technical function of these bodies of work - and can justify how each can augment the other.

First, she explains, "techne is a never static, normative body of knowledge. A techne is described as … a set of transferable strategies, […] contingent on situation and purpose. A techne neither represents reality nor encompasses a set of deductive postulates" (she asserts in a footnote that her term "normative" refers to "standardized") (7). Clearly, *The New Rhetoric* fits with Atwill's first characteristic of techne. *The New Rhetoric* provides a "set of

transferable strategies" of persuasion and argumentation that can (and should) adapt to situation and purpose; Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca promote the transferability of these strategies remarking, "The essential consideration for the speaker who has set himself the task of persuading concrete individuals is that his construction of the audience should be adequate to the occasion" (19). It is no surprise that Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca clearly resist totalizing logical and traditionally philosophical discourse (e.g. Platonic ontology, Cartesian rationality, Hegelian dialectical logic) in the introductory and concluding chapters of *The New Rhetoric*. This resistance is a focal point of the treatise in general. Also, since the discourse of spirituality allows freeplay with the linguistic and persuasive representations of reality, techne seems to sync well with the content of spiritual discourse. Atwill points out that "a techne neither represents reality nor encompasses a set of deductive postulates"; it is a craft of freeplay. Techne as freeplay works well with nebulous spiritual content that requires freeplay to effectively communicate such freeform content to audiences.

A second foundational aspect of techne as explained by Atwill is an illustration of *subjective* freeplay. She explains that "techne resists identification with a normative subject […] every exchange of techne creates […] different subjectivities. As such, there are no well-defined boundaries between subject and knowledge" (7). As shown in Chapter One of this investigation, spirituality hinges upon experience, and therefore subjectivity, relativity, and difference are central to the writing and talk about spirituality.

Discourse about spirituality pushes the "boundaries between subject and knowledge" and consequently, requires techne to navigate past these boundaries and communicate these voyages in an effective and persuasive manner. *The New Rhetoric* appropriately supplies and explains strategies of rhetorical and argumentative techne for the writer to use when arguing spiritual content to an audience. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's handbook does not shut down subject agency and experience – but rather celebrates it as integral to rhetorical argumentation. The authors' mission certainly and famously revolves around audience ("it is in terms of an audience that an argumentation develops") yet the authors also mention that this development is based on opinion (5). Although adaptation to audience is a focus of *The New Rhetoric*, adaptation to audience is not a catchall that swallows up a writer's subjectivity, reforms it as inauthentic, and spits out "what the audience wants to hear." Subjective conviction and authenticity have a place in Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyecta's argumentative strategies (44) – which can include subjective conviction and authenticity formed by spiritual experience.

The third foundational attribute of techne according to Atwill is that "techne marks a domain of human intervention and invention. […] A techne is knowledge as production, not product; intervention and articulation, rather than representation" (7). Although, more concerned with "intervention and articulation" than "invention," both *The New Rhetoric* and the epideictic discourse of spirituality highlight process and action. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca promote that "an efficacious argument […] set[s] in motion the

intended action (a positive action or an abstention from action) or …a willingness to act which will appear at the right moment" (45). The epideictic discourse of spirituality uses rhetorical argumentation to adhere an audience but rather to genuinely teach spiritual tools. These epideictic texts rhetorically nudge an audience to practice spirituality in their own lives, simultaneously convincing the audience that it is a reasonable endeavor to pursue. Overall, the texts advocate a process. With an audience in mind, the spiritual epideictic texts show the avenues of deeper experiential understanding of God; however, this goal is an end-in-view, or a process of production, not a final telos or product. As explored in Chapter Four of this investigation, rhetorical argumentation reinforce an active process of spirituality in these texts, by constantly reinforcing the reasonableness of the action.

Less concerned with Atwill's emphasis on invention, I wish to look behind the curtain at the techne of rhetorical argumentation. This techne aspires for "adherence of minds" based on reasonableness, and not rationality - what Richard McKeon calls a "techne of logos." A democratic understanding of inquiry, rhetoric, and argumentation: one that aligns with McKeon's and Rorty's idea of "keeping the conversation going" rather than finding the one truth (Backman x-xi). McKeon's use of "logos" in his term "techne of logos" as well as the aspect of "striving for truth" within Rorty's "edifying discourse" both point to a unifying vision acting as the glue that quells the threat of a chaotic multiplicity (vis-à-vis Lyotardian relativism) and establishes order(s).[8]

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[8] Since Rorty studied under McKeon, this may be theoretical residue held on to by Rorty from McKeon. And could possibly explain the similarity here.

By analyzing these texts, I show how authors of spiritual epideictic texts harness both rhetorical and argumentative techne to persuasively articulate the topic of spirituality, adhere audiences, and suggest action.

Methodical Purposing

In sum, my critical discourse analysis, my representative sample of the discourse, and my choice of discourse, scratches the surface of the larger issue at play in the realm of spirituality, communicative theory, and rhetoric. I realize that this study requires a substantial amount of humility and restraint. This overall study is intended to raise questions, ignite discussion, and complicate existing conversations.

The novelty of the discourse of spirituality within the field of rhetoric and composition makes this a unique study; however, the argumentative devices examined are also evident in other discourses. Therefore, a close look at the "machinery" of applied argumentative schema of *The New Rhetoric* can provide new rays of light that can illuminate how these argumentative schemas work in other discourses. This is similar perspective to that provided by Jeanne Fahnestock in her 1999 look at *Rhetorical Figures in Science*. In the preface, Fahnestock seems to realize that scholars may approach her study with apprehension, not because of her expertise, but because the scholars may have limited interest in the rhetoric of science (xi). Similarly, I am aware that many scholars may not be particularly interested in religion or spirituality, given the general academic climate of secularity. However, I think all scholars of

rhetoric and composition can extract productive insights from my study of contemporary discourse of spirituality. Firstly, the analyzed discourse of my study is from the last thirty years. Therefore, it is a recent discourse, which reflects upon the current rhetorical and cultural trends and patterns. Secondly, as shown with the PEW Institute data, the rise of spirituality in America is a real phenomenon that is happening now. The kairotic relevance of my study can reveal patterns that can have implications in other discourses and fields: a cultural ripple effect. Thirdly, by closely looking at the contemporary discourse of spirituality, my study can vanquish misconceptions about contemporary religion and spirituality. Religion and spirituality, I think, too often is written off as impractical, foolish, and unintellectual. As my study shows, contemporary spirituality serves a practical function; and through rhetorically argumentative devices, I show that is a sophisticated discourse, a relevant discourse with its roots grounded in two thousand years worth of spiritual tradition. Is it unintellectual? Yes it is: truly and beautifully. And, to some extent, this study celebrates the unintellectual quality of the communication. The discourse of spirituality navigates experiences, which the intellect cannot comprehend: the apophatic and ineffable. The current rise of postmodern critical theory in religious studies reveals a soaring relevance of these issues and, as scholars of composition and rhetoric, it is our responsibility to acknowledge and think through the implications of these issues.

CHAPTER THREE

FIRST ANALYSIS OF ASSOCIATIVE SCHEMA: STRUCTURES OF

REALITY AND PRAGMATIC STAGING

As mentioned in Chapter Two, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca do not

advocate formal logic and rationality; instead, they are more concerned with

the practical uses of reason that are tethered to rhetorical aims. However, they

do not completely neglect the *uses* of logic. They explore the formalization of

essentially non-formal characteristics of argumentation. This is an

argumentative technique referred to as "quasi-logical" argumentation (193).

Although in the contemporary era, we are far removed from positivist thinking,

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca realize that formal logic still has a place as a

tool of argumentation. They must in good conscience admit logic into their

handbook: for to avoid discussing logic would be to make a totalizing

statement about the futility of logic. Instead they present logic as "quasi-logic":

one of numerous tools of argumentation to use in respect to a type of audience.

They make it clear that in isolation, formal reasoning is an "approximate and

imperfect" form of argumentation that is reductionist and should not be given

primacy (193).

In Chapter One of Part Three of *The New Rhetoric*, Perelman and

Olbrechts-Tyteca, explain various argumentative techniques or "schemes"

associated with quasi-logical argumentation, such as relationships of

contradiction, transivity, divisions of terms and claims, etc. The discourse of

spirituality does not front such logical elements to outwardly express rational appearance. Formal logic is not an appropriate mode of argumentation for the discourse of spirituality since spirituality is largely based upon experiential claims. As Episcopal priest Morton Kelsey, explains in *Encounter with God*, there is no logical certainty found in experiencable realities – only degrees of probability (125). Arguing probability necessarily implies reasonableness and rhetorical aims, rather than rationality and scientific aims.

And this is not a new issue when addressing the discourse of spirituality. Thomas Aquinas' and his fellow medieval scholastics systematically captured theology with formal logic – however, these efforts fell far from capturing the experiential nature of spirituality. Formal logic was deemed far too sterile and rigid to capture the open realm of possibilities found within spiritual experience. This was a primary point of the 12th century mystic, Bernard of Clarveaux: a point specifically found in his passionate stance against Peter Abelard and the Scholastics. Bernard claimed that *sola ratione* (reason alone) threatened genuine Christian subjective spirituality (Russell 382-383). Although Bernard was quite a zealot for the cause, he makes a valid point that can be factored into the contemporary discourse of spirituality: formal reasoning is not adequate in capturing the nature of spirituality.

What types of general argumentative methods are used then? There must be some kind of communicative middle ground that is not swallowed up

by the Lyotardian "differend" [9] and degenerate into absolute dissensus and chaos. Since there is no objective material evidence that supports spiritual realities, differing spiritual realities can be linked to common empirical realities so that audiences can commonly adhere to the possibility of the existence of spiritual realities. In other words, spirituality must be connected to the material world to prove a common dimension of realness. Such a connection does not have to be exclusively made through the *content* of the argument, but instead through the *structure* of the argument of which the content is bound. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca label these, "arguments based on the structure of reality": a subgrouping of Perelman's "schemes of association." Instead of focusing on the agreement of formal thought, such as found in the quasi-logical schema, "structures of reality," associative schema embrace the "agreement with the very nature of things" (191). According to the authors, these arguments "make use of this structure [of reality] to establish a solidarity between accepted judgments and others one wishes to promote." With argumentative structure acting as the glue to the real world, the audience becomes "sufficiently secure" in the proposed beliefs, and this can "allow the unfolding of the argumentation" (261). In other words, an arguer applies the structures of reality that are commonly associated with "how reality works"; then, the audience, familiar with these types of procedures because the procedures are commonly used, can follow and believe the argument. Perelman and Olbrecht-Tyteca clarify that by the use of the term "structures of reality," they do not assume any ontological position. What they are interested

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[9] Difference in the sense of "dispute." See Jean-Francois Lyotard's book *The Differend*.

in, and what I am interested in, is not an objectively described reality, but rather "the manner in which opinions concerning it are presented" (262). Figuring out an objective spiritual reality is not the goal here; instead, the goal in this chapter is to analyze how spiritual authorities use structures of reality to convey spirituality as a realistic possibility. The structure of reality is an argumentative strategy that bridges the gulf between subjective spiritual experience and the adherence of an audience. Discourse regarding abstract concepts, such as spirituality, cannot exclusively rely on real world observations to demonstrate that their claims are reasonable – instead, such writers can use real world *structures* to demonstrate that their claims are reasonable. This strategy does not audaciously compromise the integrity of the reader/listener's personal belief and experience; however, via "arguments based on structures of reality," the writer/speaker still solicits another party's adherence of values and attitudes, urging them toward "possible communion with regard to particular ways of acting" (74).

Again, like the clarification made in the previous chapter, I am not analyzing rhetorical figures or tropes but rather the general schema or architecture of the arguments. Rhetorical figures and tropes are much smaller units of rhetorical construction, such as analogy, metaphor, alliteration, etc. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca discuss some of these in Chapter Three of Part Three of *The New Rhetoric* (350-410). Although these figures and tropes compose the organic rhetorical system within the text, I am looking more at the skeleton of the argument – of which the organs hang upon and within. This

scaffolding is what is meant by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's "arguments based on the structure of reality" section, Chapter Two of Part Three in *The New Rhetoric* (261-349). As indicated in the previous chapter of my study, an analysis of the argumentative scaffolding is more appropriate for this study (as opposed to analyzing tropes and figures) because rhetorical analyses of this contemporary discourse has not frequented the field of composition and rhetoric. An investigation into the contemporary discourse of spirituality is relatively new investigation; therefore, the study requires a general look at the rhetorical structure of the discourse rather than a microscopic examination of smaller rhetorical figures and tropes.

Causal Chains and Pragmatic Ends

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca emphasize the importance of the causal chain within these argumentative structures of reality: causes leading to events or consequences (263-266). The causal chain is a fairly obvious and primal structure. Much of basic human understanding hinges upon this structure: human events or consequences proceed from causes. This structure of reality, however intuitive it may seem, is generally accepted and therefore can increase the believability of an argument.

To further adhere an audience to an argument, the *type* of consequence is foundational: a causal chain must build toward a desirable end. If the end is not desirable, then the audience will not see the argument as reasonable. For instance, if speaker insists that skiing is fantastic because she finds the snow

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painfully cold, this argument is not effective: the end is not desirable, pain is not desirable, therefore an audience would generally not adhere to her praise. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca label an argument that "permits the evaluation of an act or event in terms of its favorable or unfavorable consequences" as a pragmatic argument (266). For the audience to perceive the argument as reasonable, the writer must argue toward a desirable," common sense" end. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca define "common sense" as consisting in "a series of beliefs which are accepted within a particular society and which the members of that society suppose to be shared by every reasonable being" (99). Therefore, this type of generally agreed upon desirable end or consequence, such as avoiding pain or seeking happiness, resulting from a causal chain, can be viewed as "common sense" because it is generally shared by all reasonable beings.

The term "common sense" has differing definitions, some extending back into the Enlightenment. From their usage, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca imply the pragmatic definition stemming from a structure of reality: events leading to consequences that are desired by all reasonable beings. These types of consequences are common sense; they are "beyond discussion" or "do not deserve discussion" (57) because of intersubjective agreement (99). Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca highlight a flexible qualitative component of life that seems bound to happiness, a criteria of common sense. They state, "in many philosophies and religions happiness is presented as the ultimate justification of their theories" (268). According to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca,

increasing the quality of life via happiness is a desirable end; happiness is a type of "success" that human beings tend to agree upon. They explain that in such pragmatic argumentation, happiness is presented as "conformity with the real, of harmony with the universal order" (268); thus a connection with the material world.

The union with God is not a direct common sense desirable consequence: not as intuitively practical as, for instance, staying alive, maintaining hydration, or even material wealth. Attaining a spiritual connection with God seems to have no innate happiness or direct enjoyable use or immediate connection to the material world. So, what is reasonable, desirable, and useful about achieving a degree of union with God? Why does the writer of spirituality climb the causal ladder to attain such a consequence? Why does a writer of spirituality promote that the audience should climb this ladder as well? Benedictine culture whose primarily concern is self-serving (that is, the cultivation of their own inner life), may deem the spiritual connection to be an end in itself (Funk, *Thoughts* 14). However, how does spirituality interact with an audience that lives in a more normative sphere? How does spirituality act as a means to something common sense and practical?

In contemporary Catholic and Anglican texts about spirituality, the desirable consequence of connecting with God is often explicitly presented in the introduction of the text. Authorities on the subject use pragmatic argumentation to convey the reasonableness of their textual endeavor from

their very first words and paragraphs. The authors of these texts waste no time in establishing practical reasons that the audience should adhere to their point of view; the authors waste no time in persuading an audience that they (i.e. the author and the audience) are not crazy or mad for pursuing a line of inquiry found in spirituality.

As explained in the first chapter of my investigation, the consequences of spirituality are varying degrees of union with God. A reader of contemporary spiritual texts needs to be convinced that the outcome of the writer's message is desirable – and that the author's own desire for the consequence makes sense. In other words, the writer needs to convince the audience that their personal spiritual goal, the union with God, is a reasonable goal to strive after. This justifies the behavior of the writer, and establishes a strong ethos in which the audience can adhere. The audience can understand the writer's personal mission, and adhere to the possible spiritual application in his or her own life. A desirable end consequence increases the reasonableness of an argument, however, "only in terms of agreement on the value of the consequences" (268).

A primary technique of these contemporary texts is to begin with the end, that is, begin with the final pragmatic consequences of spirituality. The authors' forewords and introductions explain the end goal of their texts – and consequentially, the end goal of spirituality. Many of the authors do so in grounded terms, that is, they answer the question, "how does a seemingly impractical spiritual effort, help someone out practically?" The authors

establish the pragmatic and common desirable consequence from their very first words. Doing so, establishes reasons for pursuing spirituality. The first paragraph of Mary Margaret Funk's introduction of *Tools Matter for Practicing the Spiritual Life* (2001), reads as follows:

> Tools matter. In the garden of our souls we are both the farmer and the seed. We've been planted. Our awakening experience has happened. Staying awake is the problem. Our soul soon becomes crowded with weeds. If we know ourselves, we know that one disorientating factor can obliterate any peak experience in the blink of an eye. We try to pray but our thoughts are like weeds that choke the good seed. Sometimes we feel as if we are going mad, that we are "out of our mind" because our thoughts are always conditioned to keep us in stale, starched patterns. (1)

This first paragraph establishes a problem that needs to be resolved. Funk explicitly states that "staying awake is the problem." And the clutter, the conditioning, and the stale, starched patterns" can "choke" our quality of life, experience, and unique individuality. In other words, this paragraph implies that the problem lies in the temptation to sleep through life. Funk goes on in the introduction to explain that spirituality, contemplative activity, and "weeding our garden" can help us "stay awake" (1-4). In sum, the introduction forwards a common problem that all audiences have experienced in varying degrees (i.e. cluttered, unfocused quality of life), and connects this problem to a solution (i.e. spirituality), promising to give the audience the "tools" to arrive

at the solution. The pragmatic end is a richer, more ordered life found through spiritual means. This approach ties into Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's end of pragmatic argumentation, "harmony with the universal order" (268). This pragmatic end, i.e. order, is one that commonly agreed upon as a desirable consequence; a life "crowded with weeds," i.e. disorder, is an undesirable consequence. The rest of Funk's book illustrates tools to increase the uniting with God, which then lead to the desirable end: order, satisfaction, and ultimately happiness.

Similar to this approach, Martin Laird ends his beginning chapter of *Into the Sunlit Land* explaining that "the specific focus of this book will be on the practical struggle many of us face when we try to be silent- the inner chaos going on in our heads, like some wild cocktail party of which we find ourselves the embarrassed host. Often, however, we are not even aware how utterly dominating this inner noise is until we enter through the doorway of silence" (4). Again, there is a "struggle" presented: being "dominated" by "inner chaos" and "inner noise." Laird implies that this is a struggle with disorder. His book promises to lead the audience to solution in which they can control of their inner states, free from domination. Such a solution promotes a pragmatic final consequence: spirituality as a catalyst for order, a final consequence that can be agreed upon as desirable by an audience.

A third example can be seen in the first chapter of *Mystical Hope* by Cynthia Bourgeault which relates more to the "enjoyment" use of happiness and the pragmatic notion of happiness explained by Perelman and Olbrechts-

Tyteca. Bourgeault's first paragraphs illustrate the problem of despair. She writes that despair is the subjective consequence of particular events, such as a death of a loved one or losing one's job. She offers hope as a combative solution to such despair, and spirituality as a means to arrive at hope (2-3). Similar to the other approaches, a problem is described (i.e. despair, hopelessness) and spirituality becomes the means to a desirable pragmatic end (i.e. hope). Bourgeault is explicit about the practical consequences of hope: "…hope is tied to outcome. We would normally think of it as an optimistic feeling – or at least a willingness to go on-because we get a sense that things will get better in the future" (3). There is a definitive push toward outcome, future, and resolution. Bourgeault portrays spirituality as a tool to arrive at improvement and an optimistic worldview. She writes, "hope is tied to outcome"; since spirituality is tied to hope, in her view, then spirituality is tied to outcome as well. This example from Bourgeault touches on the pragmatic use of order tethered to a desirable end (i.e. hope as orderer of despair/disorder), but also more explicitly portrays the "enjoyment" aspect (i.e. hope as a means to happiness; happiness is a common sense desirable end).

In sum, the introductions of Catholic and Anglican spiritual texts promote spirituality as a tool to resolve day-to-day problems, instill order, and foster individual happiness/enjoyment. An angle to view this kind of pragmatic resolution is through the lens of Larry Hickman's pragmatism. In Hickman's perspective of Dewey's inquiry, spirituality can even be thought of as a technology meant "for the resolution of perceived problems" (Hickman

12). Technology, Hickman explains, "is more than just tangible tools, machines, and factories. It also involves the abstract thought" (26). Spirituality is a form of Hickmanian technology: not a tangible tool or machine, but "abstract thought" bound to resolution. Spirituality, rhetorically presented as a type of technology or day-to-day orderer, is bound to common sense consequences with desirable ends and instrumental benefits. Since the authors of spirituality present these pragmatic ends in the beginning of their texts, the audience is inevitably bound to adherence, seeing the argument as a technological, useful endeavor from the very beginning.

Staging: A Structure of Reality

Firstly and foundationally, the cause has to link to the end. The desirable consequence is laid out at the beginning of many Catholic/Anglican texts addressing spirituality. How then does the progression of causes or events lead to the end? How do the writers "show" instead "tell" the reader that spiritual paths lead to desired ends? Moreover, and more importantly to this investigation, how do the writers rhetorically depict this progression of linked causes?

As already mentioned, the introductory chapters of these Catholic and Anglican texts promote pragmatic consequences. The writer teaches the reader how to use the tools of spirituality in order to reach these consequences. Via epideictic discourse, writers of spirituality attempt to "strengthen the adherence" of this reasonable pursuit for the pragmatic/desirable end.

Considering spirituality is such an abstract topic, this is a complex task for these writers. In a majority of these texts, the writer explicitly stages the causal linkage in order to make the causes and effects abundantly clear to readers. Such a staging techniques, or "mystical itineraries," are evident throughout the history of Christian spirituality and mysticism (McGinn 149): seen in such texts as John Climacus' *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* or Saint Bonaventure's *The Mind's Road to God*.

　　In the contemporary sphere, writers of spirituality seem to specifically utilize this technique to emphasize spiritual goals as pragmatically accessible. An example of this staging strategy can be seen in the work of Thomas Keating's text, "Open Mind, Open Heart." After the introductory chapters, which elucidate the history of contemplative prayer, Keating explains that Centering Prayer as a foundational contemplative method. Before doing so in detail, he writes in the third paragraph of Chapter Four, "Divine union is the goal for all Christians" (31). Although the common sense desirability is not clear with this statement, the goal or final destination is explicitly presented: "divine union." Like the aforementioned introductory chapters by Funk, Laird, and Bourgeault, Keating communicates the end before communicating the means to reach the end. Unlike the pragmatic approaches of the aforementioned writers, Keating's argument, "Divine union is the goal for all Christians," is a maxim assumed under the Christian tradition. Keating's "Open Mind, Open Heart" is written for a Christian audience, a more exclusive audience than that of Funk, Laird, or Bourgeault.

Although, not explicitly pragmatic or common sense, Keating's goal is still presented first, and the causal chain to arrive at such a goal is presented soon after the goal. Two short paragraphs after Keating's claim that "Divine union is the goal for all Christians," Keating explains that "Centering Prayer can be identified as the first rung on the ladder of contemplative prayer, which rises step by step to union with God" (32). The metaphor of the "ladder" and the "step by step" activity refers to the causal chain of contingent events that lead to "divine union." Keating may not have asserted the final end of spirituality in pragmatic terms; however, he grounds the causal chain in easy recipes and careful instructions. Doing so, demonstrates that such a lofty end, divine union with God, is an attainable for all Christians.

In other words, the audience can easily adhere to Keating's abstract goal because the steps to attain the abstract goal are doable, easy to attain, and concrete. The staging of causal links into easily digestible processes can persuade the audience to adhere to a process of achieving a daunting end goal. As Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca rightly assert, "some ends appear desirable because the means to realize them are created or become easily accessible" (274). Therefore, establishing a pragmatic end goal as seen in Funk, Laird, and Bourgeault is not the only strategy to adhere an audience to abstract spiritual content. Tethering an abstract end goal to minute concrete stages can persuade an audience to see the argument as reasonable. A causal chain structure that is bound to the physical and mental worlds can persuade an audience that the spiritual end goal is reasonable – moreover, doable.

This is a technique seen throughout our culture: Alcoholics Anonymous' Twelve Step Plan, the Kuber-Ross five stages of grief, and even Dante's journey through circles of heaven and hell in *The Divine Comedy*. The technique is Aristotelian; the process breaks down an end into smaller contingent causes. However, it is non- Aristotelian in that the end is not final but constantly evolving and needing updating. In other words, these stages should not be seen as hierarchy, but as smaller, easier digestible pieces composing a larger goal. What are the rhetorical motives for doing this? Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca rightly highlight that "some ends appear desirable because the means to realize them are created or become easily accessible" (274). A careful presentation and discussion of spirituality can ease readers into shallow lukewarm waters rather than dropping readers into icy depths. Spirituality is an intimidating subject. Stages or steps rhetorically take the reader by the hand, like Beatrice and Virgil guiding Dante through heaven and hell; the reader is guided through potentially abstract chain of "places," action, and cause-and-effect. Many, if not all, contemporary Catholic and Anglican contemplative texts implement this rhetorical structure.

Centering Prayer

For Keating, the primary goal of "Open Mind, Open Heart" is to convey the method and importance of a particular contemplative method to divine union with God: "Centering Prayer." He promotes centering prayer to the reader as a "discipline designed to reduce the obstacles to contemplative

prayer" (31). Keating's subtle argument here aligns with Perelman and

Olbrecht-Tyteca's claim that "some ends appear desirable because the means

to realize them are created or become easily accessible" (274). Keating

conveys that Centering Prayer makes contemplation and spirituality more

"easily accessible." Keating further clarifies that "Its [Centering Prayer's]

modest packaging appeals to the contemporary attraction for how-to methods"

(31). Here Keating comments explicitly about rhetorical machinery and

presentation. He points out that the "how-to methods" or staging process is an

effective persuasive strategy to adhere a contemporary audience. In the

introduction of "Open Mind, Open Heart," Keating tells readers that this is the

case; and in the rest of the book, he shows readers that this is the case, thus,

verifying why other contemporary writers of spirituality implement this

strategy as well.

Keating's "modest packaging" of "how-to methods" pervade much of

the text; these techniques can be most clearly seen in the appendices where he

explicitly bullet-points the "guidelines" of centering prayer. "Open Mind,

Open Heart" wholly and deeply explains all of the "guidelines" in order. The

text is procedural in this way, and can represent a similar staging process found

in most contemporary spiritual texts. To show this explicit staging at work, I

have chosen to highlight the appendix component of Keating's text. The

"guidelines" portion of the appendices reads as follows:

1. Choose a sacred word as the symbol of your intention to consent to God's presence and action within

2. Sitting comfortably and with eyes closed, settle briefly, and silently introduce the sacred word as the symbol of your consent to God's presence and action within.

3. When you become aware of your thoughts, return ever so gently to the sacred word.

4. At the end of the prayer period, remain in silence with eyes closed for a couple of minutes. (118)

Each of these numbered steps is then specifically dissected into even smaller pieces in outline fashion; Keating titles this separate smaller section the "Explanation of the Guidelines." The above steps are mentioned again, however they are cut into smaller steps so that any threat of abstraction is reduced to simple actions. For example, step 2 is dissected as follows:

2.   Sitting comfortably and with eyes closed, settle briefly, and silently introduce the sacred word as the symbol of your consent to God's presence and action within.

a. By "sitting comfortably" is meant relatively comfortably; not so comfortably that we encourage sleep, but sitting comfortably enough to avoid thinking about the discomfort of our bodies during this time of prayer.

b. Whatever sitting position we chose, we keep our back straight.

c. If we fall asleep, we continue the prayer for a few minutes upon awakening if we can spare the time.

d. Praying in this way after a main meal encourages drowsiness. Better to wait an hour at least before Centering Prayer. Praying in this way just before retiring may disturb one's sleep pattern.

e. We close our eyes to let go of what is going on around us and within us.

f. We introduce the sacred word inwardly and as gently as laying a feather on a piece of absorbent cotton. (119)

This second staging tier demonstrates two aspects of the rhetorical technique. First, Keating breaks down the initial "guidelines" into smaller explanations. Doing so can increase the adherence of the audience by increasing the accessibility of the information. For instance, Keating's abstract phrase "silently introduce the sacred word as the symbol of your consent to God's presence and action within," may cause confusion and discouragement to a reader. The information seems a bit vague - as does the language. The language seems vague not because Keating is an incompetent writer or rhetor, but because spirituality is vague content in and of itself. Keating, aware of this natural vagueness and complexity, combats a potential disconnect with the audience by providing further smaller steps which explain the initial steps via smaller more physical concrete actions (e.g. closing the eyes, sitting positions),

and concretizing an internal experiential process via simile (e.g. "introduce the sacred word inwardly and as gently as laying a feather on a piece of absorbent cotton").

The staged presentation of the content plays an important role in relaying the content as more digestible. Keating chooses to deliver the Centering Prayer process in a particular format: the outline. The purpose of appendices, according to the *Chicago Manual of Style*, is to provide "explanations and elaborations that are not essential parts of the text but are helpful to the reader seeking further clarification" (1.82); however, Keating's appendices can be representational of a larger trend within the discourse of spirituality: the ordered rhetorical presentation via a staging technique. Outlines, numbered lists, and bullet-points provide easily digestible visual presentation. This ordered presentation is not only reserved for the appendices of these texts. Staged presentation, many times numbered lists accented with indentation, can be found within the chapter prose of contemporary contemplative texts. If the instruction requires steps or stages, then the authors generally recognize that outlines and lists deliver the content clearly and fittingly; outlines and lists structure the staged/stepped content in a staged/stepped manner. Indentations, single numbers, single letters, and punctuations visually demarcate particular steps and stages. In this way, presentation harmonizes with the content. Moreover, the unity of content and presentation seamlessly conveys a single picture and message to the reader,

therefore portraying Centering Prayer as contemplative method of spiritual attainment - a how-to method, a harmony without noticeable dissonance.

Multiple Chains

Centering Prayer is a relatively popular topic in contemporary Catholic and Anglican contemplative texts because it simplifies a complex subjective process into a series of four step accessible actions. The persuasive power of Centering Prayer is found in Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's observation. In other words, explicitly displayed and easily do-able causal chains are a structure of reality that can increase the reasonableness of a claim. Despite Keating's linear hierarchy of Centering Prayer in his prose and appendices, as well as in the work of the Keating's disciples (e.g. Cynthia Bourgeault's *Centering Prayer and Inner Awakenings*, David Frenette's *The Path of Centering Prayer: Deepening Your Experience of God*), contemporary spiritual writers have also generatively complicated this notion. Why complicate such tidy rhetorical structures? Linear oversimplification of a complex topic can be recognized by an audience. An audience may recognize that something may be lost. The complexity of spirituality and contemplation demands a degree of sophistication and depth. Therefore, many if not all of these writers are sure to highlight or imply that there are multiple causal chains that leads toward the union with God. Much in line with Ignatius of Loyola, these authors endorse contemplative multiplicity. Centering Prayer still has a place in this

contemplative discussion; however, these writers recognize that Centering

Prayer is *one way*, not the *only* way to unite with God.

For instance, M. Basil Pennington, in his 1999 book *Centered Living: The Way of Centering* Prayer (despite the singularity implied by the title: "*The Way* of Centering Prayer"), confesses that "I would never want it to be taken that I think Centering Prayer is the only or even necessarily the best way for each person to enter into the contemplative dimension of his or her life" (xxv). Pennington offers Centering Prayer as one technique among many contemplative techniques. His admission leaves room for the individual and individual sets of experiences. Since spirituality is such an open topic that resists scientific and referential definition, the discourse of spirituality allows for a multiplicity of practices and actions. Moreover, Pennington's admission outwardly combats any threat of totalizing discourse. It is an explicit demonstration that spirituality opens up discourse and practice beyond dogmatic linearity usually associated with Catholic and Anglican institutional traditions.

Although Pennington chooses to highlight Centering Prayer as one contemplative method within his book, other authors choose to illustrate numerous aspects and methods of spirituality in their chapters. These authors do not explicitly build spiritual concepts and techniques as one causal chain of contingent events/consequences; rather, these writers showcase multiple chains leading to the same general destination. For example, Morton Kelsey's *Encounter with God* fills most of his book with deeply sophisticated and

academic looks at spirituality, ineffability, and philosophy. Kelsey, then

grounds these concepts in the conclusion of his book; here, he discusses

"rules" in which a practitioner can experience a Christian spiritual reality (171-

212). These rules are meant to deepen the spiritual experience. Kelsey explains

the rules as "not a blueprint for a sealed-in relationship with spiritual reality"

and "not a philosophical system" but rather "suggestions" and "their real value

lies in being tried out" (174). Although Kelsey loftily subtitles his book *A

Theology of Christian Experience*, Kelsey binds a scholastic theological

exploration to practical rules, such as "keeping a journal" and/or "keeping a

record of dreams." Kelsey grounds these "rules" stating that "these rules are

much like the practical ones which athletes must follow; they are empirical

rules for spiritual training" (174-175). This statement, the last statement of his

introductory section before explaining each rule individually, reveals a

persuasive motive of Kelsey. He connects the pursuit for deepening spirituality

to concrete physical training tasks of athletes, and uses the words "practical"

and "empirical" to punctuate spiritual practice rather than theological theory.

All of Kelsey's rules are equally valuable avenues to arrive at a deeper spiritual

end. Kelsey's rules can, but are not required to, cooperate. He is not promoting

one path with ascending steps like the Centering Prayer approach of Keating or

Pennington, but rather twelve paths of potential means of spiritual "training"

which can potentially enhance each other or work in isolation.

Unfortunately, Kelsey's approach is not without faults. There remains a

problematic rhetorical choice made by Kelsey. Kelsey's term "rules" carries

with it an imperative connotation: necessary and commanded, similar to the Ten Commandments or the Rules of Saint Benedict. "Rules" imply that following them are means to ends, so this term persuasively accents the causal chain structure of reality; however, since "rules" carries with it an imperative connotation, it does not as persuasively emphasize the agency of reader. Kelsey, by merely the use of the term "rules," establishes an authoritative power dynamic: a top-down commanded set of instructions. If a reader does not follow a "rule," then the reader is "breaking" a rule or ignoring a rule. Although Kelsey's use of the term "rule" effectively highlights the seriousness and reality of spiritual experience (a rhetorical mission he alludes to in Chapter One, "The Perplexing Religious Scene" found in Part One, "The Reality of Spirit," page 15), the term also can objectively isolate the reader, and ignore the need for situational and contextual malleability. In other words, the top-down objectivity implied by the word "rule" may discourage a reader. Contemplative spirituality is a bottom-up individually subjective endeavor, and therefore, the reader needs to be given more explicit agency.

I highlight this problematic aspect of Kelsey's text to illustrate an evolution of the causal chained structure of reality, as well as the evolution of contemporary spiritual discourse. Morton Kelsey's *Encounter with God: A Theology of Christian Experience* is a crucial Anglican text on the nature and practice of spirituality; however, the book also hails from 1975. The book is progressive for its time, promoting multiple avenues to deepen spirituality; however, Kelsey still feeds top-down knowledge to the reader. Needless to say,

the rhetorical approach of multiple causal chains has been revised since the seventies. The more recent approaches demonstrate how the causal chain structure used in more recent spiritual discourse provides more agency to subject, thereby increasing the rhetorical power and adherence of an audience.

For an example, I refer back to Mary Margaret Funk. Funk's *Tools Matter: Beginning the Spiritual Journey* (2013) and *Tools Matter for Practicing the Spiritual Life* (2001), like Kelsey's *Encounter with God*, offer a constellation of practices and attitudes toward the common goal of spirituality. Funk's emphasis on "tools" in two of the titles reveals a differing rhetorical approach from Kelsey's approach. "Tool," an easy one syllable word, carries impactful persuasive power. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines "tool" in two general ways: (1.) as "the means of effecting something" which implies a causal chain of means to ends, or events to consequences, and (2.) as "a mechanical implement for working upon something, as by cutting, striking, rubbing, or other process, in any manual art or industry; usually, one held in and operated directly by the hand" which implies practical grounded application. "Tool" emphasizes the instrumentality of the spiritual process; the process is possible and bound to concrete usability and accessibility; tool as "held in and operated directly by the hand" implies a degree of individual use. Furthermore, "tool" emphasizes the causal process. "Tool" implies that it is something that is a means to an end: a "means to affecting something." For instance, the practice of fasting (which is labeled by Funk as a "tool") may lead to attitude changes regarding humility; humility may link with a person not

attaching themselves to worldly possessions; detachment from material goods may result in more energy devoted to spiritual development; more energy devoted to spiritual development leads to a deeper connection with God. A "tool" implies an instrumental practice that will aid the arrival at a particular goal: in these texts, the common goal is a deeper connection with God.

In Funk's two texts, she stresses assorted pragmatic methods that can be used to reach a deeper spiritual destination: some of these tools as general as "humility" or "watchfulness of thoughts," some of these tools as specific as "fasting" or the monastic environment of "the cell." The pragmatic approach allows the possibility of spiritual endeavor to audiences of all spiritual stages; moreover, it allows the possibility of spiritual endeavor to many audiences of all experiences and life situations. For instance, due to Funk's rhetorical use of "tools," busy parents with three infant children and full time jobs may find certain spiritual pursuit possible and therefore find Funk's stance reasonable. How so? Despite not having time or energy to implement Funk's more time consuming tools of "manual labor" or "fasting," busy readers may have time to practice basic "positive prayer tools," i.e. specific mantras, short prayers, etc. (Funk, *Tools Matter for Practicing* 110-128). Unlike "rules," "tools" are adaptable; readers can adapt certain tools to their life, while not adapting other tools. Funk's presentation empowers the individual reader; readers can pick for themselves which parts of Funk's instruction are more easily digestible and manageable, rather than requiring a consummate understanding and application. Funk's presentation of spirituality as a set of assorted causal tools

allows these texts to be more accessible to various readers: more accessible, and more persuasive. Instead of dictating "rules," and emphasizing spirituality as a "herculean task" as Morton Kelsey does (172), Funk emphasizes the agency of the reader, the instrumentality of the practices, and accessibility of her suggestions.

Concluding Remarks

By looking at these specific structures of reality as framed by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, I have highlighted some specific gears and levers within the rhetorical machinery of these contemporary texts. I have explored how causal chains and pragmatic desirable ends, and ease and accessibility can increase the reasonableness and accessibility of arguments. And this exploration is not merely a cerebral exercise, but it is fraught with practical implications. I return to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's mission of *The New Rhetoric*: "to develop what a logic of value judgments has tried in vain to provide, namely the justification of possibility of human community in the sphere of action when this justification cannot be based on a reality or objective truth" (514). Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's theory of rhetoric and argumentation balances community, action, and relativism in a functionally democratic manner. The speaker/writer is at the center of their theory as a member of the community of minds, persuading an audience to adhere to their stance. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca recognize that an audience has the power and freedom to not adhere to persuasive strategies; individuals are

empowered to listen or not listen (17-18). In order to gain the audience's attention, writers of contemporary contemplative texts implement particular "structures of reality" to ground ineffable, nebulous, and mystical concepts and practices in an everyday reasonableness found in the material world. Writers of these contemporary texts, using persuasive techniques based on structure of reality, lead an audience to multiple avenues of individual action; and if writers do not display these multiple avenues explicitly, these writers imply that multiplicities exist. By highlighting or implying multiple causal chains of action, these writers empower the audience to make choices in their own lives regarding spirituality. The writers' explicit confidence in the audience's individual choices reveals another layer of persuasive strategy. Instead of "talking down" to an audience or dictating a single teleological avenue of spirituality, these authors offer audiences multiple tools or rules (i.e. accessible causal chains or means-to-ends) in which to deepen spiritual experience. These contemplative texts are *epideictic*; so like a student positively responding to the praise of an instructor's comments, a reader can positively respond to the writer's explicit confidence in the agency of the reader. Celebration of reader agency seems to be a crucial rhetorical component woven into these structures of reality. Causal chains imply that readers can act or think via *means* to arrive at *ends*; pragmatic ends imply that readers can use spirituality in a self-fortifying manner; the multiplicity of spiritual strategies imply that readers are empowered enough to choose spiritual avenues for themselves.

As suggested early in the article, "structures of reality" can bind ineffable spiritual concepts (something that "cannot be based on reality or objective truth") to the physical world in order to convey reasonableness and thus strengthen audience adherence. And, simultaneously, structures of reality can also celebrate and energize individual agency within the "sphere of action" via causal chains and pragmatic ends. In sum, structures of reality act as two sides of the same coin within the discourse of spirituality. When these two aspects are synthesized within the discourse of spirituality, a rhetorical balance is achieved: a balance of communicative interdependence (between writer and audience), as well as active independence (an individual reader as a part of the audience). Therefore, a Catholic and Anglican contemporary epideictic discourse of spirituality can justify the "possibility of human community in the sphere of action when this justification cannot be based on a reality or objective truth" (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 514): the mission of *The New Rhetoric*, a mission that can act as the lifeblood of healthy democracy.

CHAPTER FOUR

SECOND ANALYSIS OF ASSOCIATIVE SCHEMA: UNLIMITED

DEVELOPMENT

As seen in Chapter Three, writers of Catholic and Anglican
contemporary contemplative texts use several interrelated argumentative
schema to demonstrate the reasonableness of a spiritual unity with God. Staged
causal chaining(s) and pragmatic arguments both play a structural role,
associating spiritual ineffable subjective realities to concrete effable objective
reality. These structures compose a strong foundation of reasonableness,
persuasion, and adherence of value, attitude, and action. However, a question
remains: When do the readers of the spiritual texts /pupils of the epideictic
discourse, actually reach their goal(s) via the contemplative methods and
attitudes? What happens then?

For instance, through months of training, perhaps a novice practitioner
finally experiences a form of transcendent union with God. Or perhaps, a
novice practitioner makes a habit of daily contemplative practice so her life is
more hopeful and ordered – and therein, she finds a renewed sense of joy. Are
these finite goals based on achieving a product? Both yes and no. As I will
show in this chapter, writers of contemplative texts suggest that a practitioner
of contemplation does not stop practicing because they have arrived at a goal.
Contemplative attitude and practices are infinite processes that require upkeep
and sustenance. According to the contemporary spiritual texts, a deepening

union with God is not entirely based upon the product of knowledge attained from the union; rather, it is based upon the ongoing sustained process of spiritual deepening (Bourgeault, *Centering* 70; Laird, *Into* 53). According to the fourteenth century contemplative text, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, "It is well said that man naturally desires to know. Yet at the same time, it is also true that no amount of natural or acquired knowledge will bring him to taste the spiritual experience of God, for this is a pure gift of grace. And so I urge you: go after experience rather than knowledge" (188). Although not a recent text, *The Cloud of Unknowing* remains a medieval spiritual text that profoundly influences Centering Prayer (Frenette xix), Thomas Merton (82-83), and many (if not, all) current Catholic and Anglican contemplative texts. So consequently, current Catholic and Anglican contemplative traditions inherit the point of view from this book: experience should be sought after via active prayer.

Experience based spirituality can be traced even further back in Christian history: back to 400 C.E. Augustine of Hippo posited some profound questions in his 1600 year old spiritual autobiography *The Confessions*, specifically Chapter One, Book One. Here, he asks God, "Grant me, O Lord, to know and understand which should come first, prayer or praise; or indeed, whether knowledge should precede prayer. For how can one pray to you unless one knows you?" Although not a card-carrying contemplative or mystic, Augustine is sophisticatedly attune to the subjective dimension of Christianity; therefore, he answers his own question much like a contemplative or mystic.

He writes, "they that seek shall find Him, and they that find him shall praise him" (1.1). Augustine emphasizes experiential seeking first, before praise. Experiential action leads to knowledge.

But this entire discussion of experience, prayer, action, and knowledge still begs the question: where does the experiencing end? When does the contemplative action stop? In the sixth century, Gregory of Nyssea defined the activity of *contemplatio* as "resting with God" (Bourgeault, *Centering* 67). Can the continuing action be seen as an end? Can the process be seen as the product? How is Gregory's "contemplatio as rest" viewed by the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* and Augustine? All of these writers describe a kind of end in "rest." The writer of *The Cloud of Unknowing* states that experience cultivates love, and love is full of rest. He/She admits that "rest" does seem like a counterintuitive term; however, he/she explains: "I call it [contemplative experience] rest because your spirit does rest in a freedom from doubt and anxiety about what it must do; and because during the actual time of prayer, it is secure…that it will not greatly err." He/She continues to paradoxically define "rest" as "a work that begins here on earth but will go on without end into eternity" (188). The use of paradox reveals that the author's concept of rest is not a typical understanding of the term: it is "rest" that is active and working. Moreover, it is a type of spiritual rest found in "freedom" that continues forever. In *The Confessions*, Augustine famously describes "our hearts are restless until they can find peace in you [God]" (1.1). Under the guise of an "end," Augustine alludes to "rest" found in a divine union with

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God; although this union can be found via mystical experience, Augustine is presumably pointing to an end in the afterlife. Therefore, like the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, "rest-as-an-end" is never found on Earth; rest remains an end-in-view, a functional placeholder, and an ideal.

The spiritual ends and pragmatic consequences discussed in Chapter Three are contingent on one another, and have foreseeable stopping points or goals. These goals can be achieved – but then the spiritual journey continues. For instance, through months of practice, a practitioner can become skilled using a contemplative scriptural reading method, *lectio divina*, to deepen her spiritual intensity; this "deepening process" is an achieved goal, a temporary fulfillment. According to the writers of contemplative texts, *lectio divina* will deepen a practitioner's relationship with God and help them find order and happiness in their life (Funk, *Tools Matter for Practicing* 9-16; Bourgeault, *Centering* 65-68); however, this is a micro-means to micro-ends - and certainly important. But there is a macro-scheme as well: a large scheme that scaffolds the rhetorical construction of Catholic and Anglican spiritual texts. I am referring to the notion of "rest" found in *The Cloud of Unknowing* and Augustine's *The Confessions*: again, the end-in-view, the functional placeholder, the ideal.

I use *The Cloud of Unknowing* and *The Confessions* to illustrate an inherited history of Christian spirituality. Unlike systematic theology or logical Medieval Scholasticism, spirituality embraces experiential, recursive, and ineffable substances. This type of humanness, openness, and flexibility is

similar to what unsettled the Catholic Church about Ignatius of Loyola's

Spiritual Exercises in the 1570s after Ignatius' death in 1556 (Keating 23-24;

Ganass 48-49). Conversely, it is no surprise that Thomas Aquinas remained

"the doctor of the Church" up until the 20th century; Aquinas concretizes issues

of ineffability, such as the existence of God (1.1.2) or the "substance of

angels" (1.1.50) via Aristotelian deductive logic. In other words, with his

summas, Aquinas teleologically arrives at conclusions or products and the

Roman Catholic Church embraced this approach for an extended period of

time. On the other hand, Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises* as well as *The Cloud of

Unknowing* celebrate the ambiguity and individuality of the experiential

spiritual process in a non-teleological manner. Both non-teleological texts were

not as triumphantly received by the Catholic Church, nor were they

commissioned by the Catholic Church as was the case with Aquinas' summas.

So the communicative strategies used by Ignatius and the author of *The

Cloud of Unknowing* can serve as a springboard into a discussion of

contemporary communicative strategies. The same rhetorical emphases are in

place. The same questions can be asked: How do authors of contemporary

spiritual texts wield non-teleology in a reasonable and effective persuasive

manner? How do these authors promote the ongoing the journey as

destination, rather than the destination as destination? How do these authors

persuade readers to embrace the restless "rest" that is found in unending

contemplative process? These questions lie at the heart of the systematic anti-

system. To better understand the complexity of this precipitous overarching

structure of associative argumentation, I look to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's discussion of unlimited development.

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's Unlimited Development

In *The New Rhetoric*, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca explain the argumentative scheme of unlimited development as "insist[ing] on the possibility of always going further in a certain direction without being able to foresee a limit to this direction, and this progress is accompanied by a continuous increase in value" (287). Of course, "value" here does not mean a purely numerical increase or quantitative increase, but rather as an attitudinal pattern that leads to potential action; Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca refer to value as "an admission that an object, a being, or an ideal must have specific influence on action and on disposition toward action and that one can make use of this influence in an argument, although the point of view represented is not regarded as binding on everybody" (74). In other words, unlimited development persuades an audience to particular attitudes of action via rhetorical gesture toward limitless direction. It is clear that an author writing about ineffability or philosophically vague content such as religion or ethics would find this technique to be especially useful. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca touch on examples from Sartre and Calvin to show how unlimited can be implemented. In such examples, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca explain, the writers spin the openness and vagueness of the content in a persuasively advantageous way - rather than highlight the deficiency of concrete

articulation. For instance, Calvin, in his "Prefatory Address to King Francis," mentions that one cannot go too far in the direction of goodness and virtue (287). This would be a basic scheme of unlimited development. Instead of concretizing the terms "goodness" and "virtue" in a scientific, Aristotelian, or even Thomist manner (i.e. in a way that can be attained), Calvin points to an unending direction as the place to go rather than the place to stop.

Contemporary epideictic texts about spirituality, as well as historical texts about spirituality such as *The Cloud of Unknowing*, promote the union with God as the goal of unlimited development used to adhere an audience to spiritual attitudes and contemplative actions. A general example of this can be seen in the discussion of spiritual "doorways" in *Into the Sunlit Land* (2006) by Martin Laird:

> I shall speak of three doorways that must be passed through in order to discover this depthless depth within, but indeed I could have said 30 or 300 doorways, for they seem endless. But in truth there are no doorways. We should always be wary of applying linear notions of progress to our prayer life and asking ourselves 'What stage am I in?' 'How far have I progressed?' Whatever 'progress' is supposed to mean, it certainly doesn't work like that." (53)

Here, Martin is not eliminating the use of staging process, after all, he is using the construct of the staged "three doorways" to explain to and adhere an

audience; however, he is discounting the stages as ends in themselves. He explains that, "There is nothing that separates us from this depthless depth whose ground is God. Paradoxically, however, this is only seen to be the case after crossing threshold after threshold. The present moment is a present moment opening into a pathless path" (53). In other words, as shown in Chapter Three of my investigation, I show that micro-level goals are used in these texts to instruct and persuade an audience; "staging" has a place in the minds of practitioners and in the spiritual texts – however, readers and practitioners should not rely on stages as ends. The macro-level goal or end of the spiritual journey is fathomless – and this is the ultimate goal of the spiritual journey; the process is the end – an end that develops unlimitedly. As Laird explains in *A Sunlit Absence* (2011), "we do not have to move through any doors, for Christ is also the door itself" (11).

Cycles, Seasons, and Spirals

How do writers account for a practical linear staging process that leads toward nonlinear unlimited development? How do the writers present this complex paradox in a communicative manner? Moreover, how do they present this "both/and" distinction in a persuasive manner? Writers emphasize the ongoing spiritual process via cyclical, seasonal, and spiral spiritual trajectories in order to account for the causal chains within an unlimited development construct.

Each of these techniques emphasizes equal parts recursivity and progression. David Frenette discusses a cyclical spiritual approach in his book *The Path of Centering Prayer: Deepening the Experience of God*. After touching on the complex distinctions between "states" and "stages" within contemplation, he defends the "season" metaphor in which he uses throughout *The Path of Centering Prayer* book (8). He mentions that "season of the year unfold in linear time": a year has a beginning and an end, a linear structure within an unlimitedly developed structure, i.e. time (9). The metaphor indicates a sense of progressive movement, a standard contemplative maturation that can be unlimitedly developed just as time unlimitedly develops. Therefore, the use of "seasons" promotes an underlying understanding of unending growth and maturation as a practitioner repeats contemplative methods and maintains spiritual attitudes. Frenette goes on to explain that seasons "recur in different ways, as an organic cycle, every year. Each of the four seasons has its own richness, challenges, and natural attraction for different people" (9). This second dimension of the metaphor accounts for difference: the categorical differences of contemplative methods (silence, *lectio divina*, stages of *lectio divina*, sacred breath, etc.) as well as subjective differences (individual aptitudes and opinions of different methods). Therefore, Frenette's choice of the season metaphor balances a "both/and" distinction of spirituality: stressing difference and uniformity, as well as a micro-level linear staging process within a macro-level unlimited developed module.

As shown with Frenette's "seasons," recursivity plays an important role in contemplative and spiritual texts. Why do the writers stress cyclical recursivity? Why not rather depict the spiritually unending process as purely linear, in which a practitioner eventually arrives at a union with God? Such an approach would surely be clearer and more persuasive. However, recursivity serves an important purpose. Recursivity emphasizes the process dimension of spirituality that requires upkeep, maintenance, and real world action. Spirituality is an active pursuit that revolves around action; it does not revolve around passive divine revelation that strikes a believer like lightning, nor is it solely based on capturing experiences to gain finite knowledge. To quote contemporary mystical theologian Matthew Fox, "The mystic is keen on the experience of the Divine and will not settle for theory alone or knowing about the Divine" (*Coming* 48). Recursivity emphasizes the never-ending experiential spiritual activity of the practitioner. Moreover, it emphasizes the relationship between the continuous spiritual development and unlimited development. This purposely vague relationship is effectively explained in David Frenette's discussion of "amen." Frenette defines "amen" as the surrender to an alignment with God which leads to" freer and more sustained action"(4). He states "at some point, all contemplative practices end with the attitude of amen - so be it, let it be- radical consent to receiving God. That is the reward of the interiority, the secrecy, the living relationship with God." (6). In other words, contemplative practices maintain an ongoing process, a "living relationship" with God, and the "ends" are that process of amen. Frenette

indicates that the unending-ends of contemplative practices are that of more freedom and more adaptable action.

The improved quality and nature of action within contemporary spiritual texts can be seen in Cynthia Bourgeault's 2004 book, *Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening*. In this book, she promotes "stations" rather than "stages" or "ladders" in a way that promotes kairotic empowerment and freedom. She tells readers that stations or spirals represent circular fluid spiritual process rather than rigidly linear movement toward a union with God (69). In her explanation she suggests that kairos requires a fluid spiritual process. Illustrating fluidity of the *lectio divina* contemplation strategy, she writes:

> Some days the mind will be full and sparkling, and your meditation will be filled with insights. Some days the feelings will be deeply engaged, and you'll find the words of scripture catapulting you into prayer. Other days, for no explicable reason, the feelings just won't come; in this state you find yourself skipping oratio and dropping straight into contemplatio. Sometimes, having spent that time in contemplation, you move out of it into an oratio that stirs itself to new depths; or an insight that began to incubate in the stillness will lead you back into the meditatio. It can go in any direction, always simply being attentive to the movements of the spirit. (69-70)

According to Bourgeault, the practitioner's situation is not bullied into particular rigid stages of a spiritual process, but rather, the practitioner is able to adapt the spiritual process to the kairotic moment. In turn, Bourgeault fronts the agency of the individual practitioner. The practitioner, not spiritual authorities nor God, decides if a particular spiritual technique is appropriate. This emphasis on individual agency, free play, and active spirituality is seldom stressed as explicitly in Early Christian, Enlightenment, and early 20th century texts about spirituality and mysticism. This exclusive contemporary quality links back to my Chapter Three discussion of multiple chains of causality; however, this rhetorical approach takes multiplicity a step further. Here, freedom and play have more of an active role; here, the practitioner has more power.

Ethos-based Incarnations of the Ideal

The scheme of unlimited development is vague. The persuasive power of the scheme lies in the strategic use of the vagueness. The scheme of unlimited development promotes unlimited movement toward a macro-level ideal. As Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca explain in *The New Rhetoric,* "the conception of an unlimited direction with hierarchized terms, one will present at the end an ideal which is unrealizable" (289). However, the vague unrealizable ideal is only one side of the coin. There needs to be something that humanizes the ideal. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca do not neglect this dimension. They go on to discuss the "realizable terms" which "incarnate" the

ideal. These "incarnations" or "realizable terms" act as a "mirror" or an "image" "ever purer, and ever closer to the ultimate term" (289). The realizable terms are tangible motivators that promote progress; without the "incarnations" or "realizable terms," schemes of unlimited development would easily frustrate the reader from adhering to argument, and discourage the reader from understanding the promoted values as reasonable.

Within contemporary spiritual texts, the unrealizable term or ideal is the rather vague: "divine union." In *The Cloud of Unknowing* and *The Confessions*, as already discussed, the unrealizable term is "rest" with God. These destinations remain vague despite that that process of "divine union-ing" with God subsumes grounded dimensions of practice and action. So how is this ideal or unlimited direction incarnated? Many times In contemplative texts, writers refer to themselves as the incarnated ideal reference point. They use themselves as the ideal in human form. Most of these writers are monks or nuns who devote their lives to spiritual perfection, and therefore, they can wield their own ethos as a realizable and reasonable model of the ideal.

The argumentative technique of wielding ethos as an incarnated ideal of divinity, is widely used in Catholic and Anglican texts about spirituality. Most writers about spirituality implement this technique in some way. For instance, Basil Pennington in *Centered Living: The Way of Centering Prayer*, describes the beginning stages of his "transformation" of "empowering Love that cherished and affirmed" him. He frames the spiritually internal enrichment with an anecdote of a trolley ride returning home from church. Although the

trolley ride was a mundane daily activity, Pennington recognizes a substantial

spiritual awareness during one particular trolley ride. The conditions of the

trolley car, a cabin tight with other people, helped Pennington understand the

spiritual connectivity of himself, other human beings, and God (17). The

concrete details of the trolley ride anecdote as well as Pennington's

personalized unity with God both assist the reader of the text to humanize the

unrealizable ideal. Pennington points to himself as the human face of the ideal.

And clearly, this serves another rhetorical function as well: bolstering his own

ethos to the reader. This fortified ethos persuades the reader to adhere to the

text, since Pennington has proclaimed himself as an authority of spiritual

experience.[10]

Mary Margaret Funk uses human reference points in a different way

than Pennington to facilitate an incarnation of the ideal. She uses historical

figures as archetypes of spiritual practice and development. These human

beings serve to illustrate certain spiritual practices and incarnate the unlimited

ideal. For example, in the first chapter of *Tools Matter: Beginning the Spiritual

Journey*, Funk discusses the history of the early Christian Desert

contemplatives. After establishing the context of this history, she spotlights

Desert Father, John Cassian, as an example of early Christian asceticism (6-

17). Funk uses Cassian as an example of someone who practiced

"renunciation," or the ability to "lay down our very self and merge with

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[10] This overall narrative identification, which can be found in spiritual discourse, also plays an important role in moving the argument outside of the rational-world paradigm when adhering belief and action; this aligns with Burkean identification and poststructuralist thought. See the work of Kevin McClure and Hayden White for a comprehensive discussion of narrative identification.

Christ's own consciousness of the Father through the gift of the Holy Spirit"

(15). The merging process is highly abstract as is Funk's explicitly

unrealizable that "All ascetical practices should be modified in the light of the

goal: God" (16). However, she uses Cassian as a human reference point,

showing the unrealizable as realizable; John Cassian practiced esthetic

renunciation, and describes his own merging union with God within his

mystical texts. Cassian does not only serve as evidence that the merging

process is possible but also serves to humanize a lofty ideal.

These *historical* incarnations, rather than present day incarnations, can

demonstrate that the unrealizable spiritual ideal has maintained importance and

traction throughout millennia. Historical references, especially those as old as

John Cassian (about 360 – 435 CE) rhetorically function to remind a reader

that spirituality has seemingly always assumed a role within human

civilization. And this can be reassuring to the reader, just as Funk explains at

the end of the chapter on Desert Contemplatives. She writes, "What is so

welcoming about these teachings is that we are not alone. Others have gone

before us and have done this inner work" (17). Contemplation, an activity that

can potentially isolate a practitioner from human community, is framed as a

historical inheritance that inserts a practitioner into the narrative of human

history. Using history, Funk incarnates the ideal in a consoling and reassuring

(and therefore, persuasive) manner.

Funk is explicit about these historical figures to orchestrate a *shared*

incarnation. She writes in *Thoughts Matter: The Practice of Spiritual Life*, that

early Christian contemplatives, such as John Cassian, provide a "common language to express a shared religious experience" (14). In other words, Cassian and other historical spiritual figureheads provide incarnated common referents to unite audience understanding and persuasion. Funk's approach brings the reader into the discourse community of contemplative writing and talk. As a member of the discourse community, the reader can be more comfortable with the message of the writer – and with ethos of Funk. Overall, both the membership into the discourse community and an increased concretization of spiritual practices via the "common language" of incarnation helps combat the danger of an audience becoming lost or discouraged when trying to digest the abstract spiritual process of unlimited development.

Pennington's incarnation strategy, via his own experiential authority, and Funk's incarnation strategy, via historical authority, augment the writer's respective ethos. In Pennington's case, he establishes and reinforces himself as the authority on spirituality through illustrated personal experience; as a monastic, he has been through the spiritual journey and remains engaged with the contemplative process of uniting with God. Fronting these subjective experiences, Pennington increases the trust that an audience has toward him, and consequently, increases the audience adherence to the text. With Funk's incarnation strategy, she reinforces her credible ethos by projecting herself as a learned authority on spirituality – and as an authority that can initiate readers into the discourse community of spirituality. Not only does her monastic vocation require that she engage in the contemplative process, but she is also a

knowledgeable teacher of the history of spirituality. Unlike some writers of spirituality in the Catholic traditions, such as Keating, Frenette, and Pennington, who avoid using a plethora of historical reference points, Funk uses the history of Catholic spirituality in an effectively persuasive manner; she incarnates the unrealizable ideal while simultaneously increasing the credibility of her ethos.

Matthew Fox's Incarnations of the Ideal

A writer's ethos is not always bound to the incarnation of the ideal. Sometimes the ethos of the writer is not perfectly in relation to the ideal. Some writers of spirituality, albeit a minority of them, are not actively monastic; although these writers have experienced divine unities with God, the writers do not front their experience as evidence in the way that Pennington does. Also, some writers may use historical authorities in differing way than Funk. Historical authorities may serve as reference points to provide multiple perspectives into spirituality; in other words, the writers evoke, not so much the historical authorities' spiritual experiences, but rather the historical authorities' insights. For example, in *Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening*, Cynthia Bourgeault (who is an Episcopal Priest and not a Catholic monastic), like Funk, references John Cassian; however, unlike Funk, she references 20th century theologian John Main's analysis of Cassian's writings, rather than Cassian's experiential unity with God (*Centering* 63-64). Although useful rhetorical touchstones, these perspectives do not function as explicit

incarnations of the unrealizable ideal; the reference points are used to increase

the power and clarity of the argument, as well as reinforce author credibility.

So a question remains, how do writers of contemporary spiritual texts

incarnate the unrealizable ideal if the writers do not rely on personal

experiential illustrations or historical experiential illustrations? Are there other

rhetorical options? By analyzing the progressive articulations of spirituality

found in Matthew Fox, some other rhetorical options can be spotlighted.

Matthew Fox's journey of writing and publishing about spirituality has

been unique. Although he has experiential background as a Dominican priest,

theologian Matthew Fox compromised much of his Roman Catholic ethos over

the years. As a Dominican priest in 1976, Fox began and sustained a

progressive institution of spiritual learning, The University of Creation

Spirituality at Mundelein College in Chicago, moving it to Holy Names

College in Oakland, California seven years later (Fox, *Pope's War* 77-78).

This university taught Creation Spirituality, a Fox coinage. "Creation

Spirituality," to quote Fox's letter to Cardinal Ratzinger in 1988, "liberates

peoples from consumerism and materialism, dualism and patriarchy,

colonialism, anthropocentrism and arrogance, boredom, homophobia, adultism,

and the trivializing of our lives" (*Pope's War* 83). Throughout Fox's corpus,

which extends from the mid-1970s to today, he promotes additional liberations

such as a feminist overhaul of the Catholic Church, strong advocacy for

"Mother Earth," and a "Vatican III" Council. Therefore, it is no surprise that

Fox has been officially silenced (or was attempted to be officially silenced) by

the Catholic Church in 1988 (Fox, *Pope's War* 99-100) – and in 1993, he was excommunicated.

Fox's numerous texts differ from the contemplative texts of Funk, Laird, and from those inspired by Keating and Merton. In his texts, Fox tackles worldly problems. He discusses spirituality (which he titles "mysticism") as a means to deflate these problems and bring about world peace and harmony. As he states at the beginning of *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*, he had a dream on March 15, 1986; Fox writes that the dream was "about the devastation our planet is currently undergoing because we lack a living cosmology. I call this devastation 'matricide,' or the killing of the mother, for this is how the dream spoke to me" (1-2). This vision implies that Fox is a mystic; however, unlike the mystics that he discusses in a majority of his work (e.g. Meister Eckhart, Hildegard of Bingen, St. John of the Cross), Fox does not use his own personal mystical experiences to fuel the argumentative machine. This seems to be an effective argumentative choice based on reasonability. Fox's content is edgy and new (especially for 1980s and 1990s Catholic and Anglican audiences); therefore, Fox does not front his own experiential visions since it could confound the differentness of his theology, and damage his credibility. After all, as Thomas Merton explains in his posthumously published *Notes on Contemplation*, madness, neurosis, and personal contemplation can easily be conflated (110-114).

So because Fox's ethos seems potentially problematic to audiences, how does he craft unlimited development without depending on his ethos?

Moreover, how does Fox blend his own version of Catholic spirituality/mysticism in a reasonable manner? How does he deliver his uniquely progressive pro-mystic arguments in a grounded way that can make sense to an audience? Fox is certainly attentive of the subjective dimension of spirituality, as shown in the aforementioned illustration of his own mystical experience or "dream." However, in his texts, Fox explicitly spotlights spirituality/mysticism as bound to the material world, i.e. nature or "Mother Earth." There is no mistaking his underlying sympathy for pagan spiritual traditions. For instance, in his "Twenty-one Running, Working, Experiential definitions of Mysticism" found in *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*, he is not bashful in promoting rich panentheistic aspects of spirituality, using scripture as well as mystical authorities such as Meister Eckhart to reinforce his claim that "healthy mysticism is panentheistic" (57).

Moreover, in his final definition of mysticism, Fox describes mysticism/spirituality as "globally ecumenical" (65). Fox understands spirituality as a part of all faiths and creeds can unite all faiths and creeds. This type of global ecumenism quite a progressive concept for Fox to promote in the Catholic tradition; however, this concept is not new to Christianity. Protestant thinkers, such as John Dewey (*A Common Faith*) and Friedrich Schleiermacher (the fifth speech, "The Religions," from *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*), have been promoting ecumenicalism for centuries. Ecumenism can be an incarnation of realizable possibility within the unrealizable scheme of unlimited development; the mystical unlimited

development becomes humanized in a pluralistic worldly manner. Global ecumenicalism morphs the unlimited development scheme, which is abstract and theoretical, into a grounded practice of reality. Fox explains this shift as ushering in a "new era": ecumenism moves "from the classrooms of academia to the sweat lodges and the sun dances and the solstice rituals of native peoples' religions" (Fox, *Coming* 65). Although ecumenism is an ongoing process (albeit utopian) that requires upkeep, Fox's dream incarnates the unrealizable infinitude as a realizable human process. Fox's approach is pluralistic, differing from the individualistic illustrations used by Pennington and Funk; however, the incarnation serves a similar persuasive purpose.

Another incarnation of the unrealizable procession can be linked to Jesus Christ. On the surface, this is seemingly obvious; after all, Jesus Christ is most pivotal of Christian symbols of incarnation. Jesus is God made human: a more understandable, less abstract conception of God. The symbol of Jesus aids the mystical practitioner's knowledge of the ineffable: Jesus represents equal parts human and God, the logos made flesh. According to the highly influential 5th-6th century mystic Pseudo-Dionysius, such types of religious symbols work in a two step process within the mind of a practitioner: first, the perceptible or material symbols point the practitioner in the direction of conceptions that are not perceptible, and second, the spiritual practitioner must reach beyond that conception for that which paradoxically "transcends knowledge" (53). Jesus as an incarnation of God is an epistemological stepping-stone to know the unknowable and ineffable God.

Despite the vague activity of knowing, Jesus Christ is a clear symbolic incarnation of the ineffable. However, incarnating ineffable knowledge differs slightly from incarnating the scheme of unlimited development. The "ineffable" refers to "that which cannot be expressed" according to the Oxford English Dictionary: "that" in this definition is many times assumed to be knowledge or product based. An example: God is an ineffable being, therefore Jesus incarnates or helps make the ineffable content become more effable content. Unlimited development differs because there is no explicit being or thing to make effable: unlimited development is action or process based. So how does the symbol and concept Jesus Christ work to illustrate a process? How is Pseudo-Dionysius' approach to symbols of incarnation updated for a contemporary pragmatic era? How does Jesus Christ work within Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's unlimited development scheme as a means to adhere an audience, share attitudes, and take action?

Again, Matthew Fox tethers the concept of Jesus Christ to individual spiritual practice and global ecumenism. The approach is central to his philosophy and rhetorical delivery. A clear place to see this at work is in Fox's *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*. The title of the book can reveal much of this persuasive agenda. From the term "cosmic Christ" alone, the audience becomes aware that Fox is not referring to the historical Jesus, nor just the Christian Christ. The title indicates that Fox is casting a wide net; he is addressing the universal "cosmos" in relation to Christ. Moreover, the word "coming" implies that Fox is looking to the future in this book: not exclusively

the past, not exclusively tradition. In sum, the title suggests a future orientated universality revolving around "Christ."

The title sparks interest. Beside the alliteration and the word choice, the book does not seem like a text written by a (at the time) Roman Catholic priest. The provocative title possesses an appeal and a mystery. However, the title also has a downfall. Initially, the book sounds like Fox is zealously proclaiming rapture, the second coming of Jesus, and the "end times." However, this would be a misreading, albeit a common and understandable misreading. Fox does not choose the word "Christ" merely to conclude the melody of alliteration. Theologically and etymologically, "Christ" does not have the same meaning as "Jesus." Jesus is a proper name representing the proper name Yeshua; Christ is an adjective describing Jesus (*Christos* in Greek meaning "anointed one") (McKenzie 432). Fox draws out this distinction in his own terms. He explains that the name "Jesus" alludes to the historical Jesus, and points to "a anthropomorphic and antimystical Christianity"; "Christ," moreover the "cosmic Christ" dialectically "dances" between the personal and the cosmic; the "Cosmic Christ" encompasses the historical Jesus and simultaneously moves beyond anthropomorphism to the ineffable (Fox, *Coming* 79). Ultimately, the term "Christ" in Fox's spiritual texts illustrates the unlimited development toward an ineffable ideal (i.e. the union with God) while, at the same time, referring to (and reminding the reader of) Jesus Christ, a realized, model of unlimited development in human form.

The term Christ not only encompasses a past historical incarnation, but also points to the realizably grounded potentiality that mystical practice can help execute. In other words, Fox's use of Christ points at the future more explicitly than most contemporary spiritual texts. Fox's texts are calls to action and individual spirituality is the vehicle of such action. He demands that a paradigm shift can and must be made: a paradigm shift away from Enlightenment rationalism, away from the patriarchal to the feminist, and away from modern spirituality toward postmodern mystical spirituality (Fox, "Mystical Cosmology" 29). As I have shown in the previous chapter as well as this chapter, contemporary Catholic and Anglican texts about contemplation and spirituality persuade the reader to engage in present and practical spiritual action. The writing techniques used by these assorted contemporary monastics and clerics ground an abstract subjective process in concrete action. Matthew Fox advances this approach one large step further. His perspective on contemporary Catholic and Anglican spirituality (because he is a part of both traditions) is thoroughly prescriptive. Chapter One of *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ* is saturated with subheadings of problematic issues, such as "Mother Earth is Dying," "Creativity is Dying," and "Wisdom is Dying"; but Fox is sure the end this chapter with the subheading "Our Mother is Dying, but Not Dead," leaving room for hope, solution, and future action (11-34). And as Fox clearly indicates throughout the rest of *The Coming the Cosmic Christ*, mystical / spiritual practice can help stop the "matricide."

Unlike many early Christian mystics who tried to relay the linear essence of spirituality, Fox's understands that spirituality is situated in kairotic human moments; his attention to kairos is like Bourgeault's aforementioned descriptions of the fluid stations of *lectio divina*. In fact, similar to Bourgeault, Fox explains in *Original Blessing* that his prescriptive spiritual paths are spiraled and do not ascend like a ladder. He writes that "like the movements of a symphony, each of the paths spirals in and out of the others until the spiritual journey expands and expands": movements that resist Enlightenment parsing and linearity (23). The fluid spiraling movement of Fox's spiritual stations of development allow for kairotic adaptation. However, unlike Bourgeault's kairotic moments that revolve around an individual spiritual practitioner's day-to-day obstacles, Fox's spiritual kairotic moments are global and communal. For instance, in *Original Blessing*, he discusses a global spiritual response to global unemployment booms (14), and throughout *The Pope's War*, he discusses religious ecumenism as a solution to Catholic oppression of women. These are global problems, communal moments, of which the mystical process can adapt to and help solve. Fox's rhetorical composition certainly forwards mysticism as a pragmatic technology, emphasizing causal chains as means to resolve a worldly problem; an attention to kairotic adaptation is central to the resolution process. Fox has published a plethora of books: most adapting mystical practice to worldly problems. Framing texts around global problems may seem like an obvious technique to get published: one that most writers use to propel and sustain their writing careers. However, in the context of Catholic

and Anglican spirituality, adaptation to global kairotic moments is not a common rhetorical approach. Contemporary contemplative and spiritual texts are usually centered on the individual practitioner or seeker, like the example from Bourgeault's book – or in Funk's books. Fox rhetorically depicts spirituality as a technological instrument of global resolution ecumenism – which can be used by the individual and the whole, both leading to human solidarity. The goal of human solidarity is the incarnation of the unending mystical process. It is a realizable ideal, albeit a group ideal, of the unending spiritual process that rhetorically humanizes these efforts.

Process and Product

Although writers of spirituality and contemplation use incarnated "products" to communicate an abstract goal, they still praise the immediate "process." The immediacy that is tied to kairotic moments, is crucial to the persuasive nature of the unlimited development scheme, the rhetorical construction of these texts, and the relationship to real world action. The unlimited development scheme allows kairotic flexibility due to its emphasis on argumentative structure rather than argumentative content.

For example, *lectio divina* is a contemplative practice that is praised and explained by many contemporary Catholic and Anglican writers of spirituality. *Lectio divina* is a contemplative reading practice that, with enough practice, allows the practitioner to arrive at a union with God by pondering the symbolic, allegorical, and moral meanings within texts, traditionally Scripture.

Benedict of Nursia, in the pivotal 6th Century Catholic monastic guidebook, *The Rule of St. Benedict*, provides exact times in the day and in the week in which monastics should engage in *lectio divina* with Scripture (Chapter 48). Benedict turns this practice into a law. However, Mary Margaret Funk disagrees with the containment of *lectio divina* in "law." In *Tools Matter for Practicing the Spiritual Life*, she writes that *lectio divina* is "not from the outside as an imposed 'law,' but an impulse from the deepest regions stored in our souls" (14). So Funk contemporizes the early Benedictine concept of *lectio divina*. First, she asks the rhetorical question "What if I'm not attracted to Scripture?" then explains that "Some individuals, especially women, find it [Scripture] violent, sexist, too academic, and full of memories of childhood catechism or family malformation. Scripture isn't a helpful starting point for people today." (16). Funk proposes that beginning practitioners should perhaps begins *lectio divina* with *The Cloud Unknowing*.

She also indicates that *lectio divina* can be done anywhere; it does not have to be methodically scheduled in a structured fashion as proposed by Benedict. Although structure can help the process, Funk explains that "more important than how we do *lectio divina* and what *lectio divina* is, is that we do it"; she explains that one can *lectio* experience or nature; *lectio* can even be done while drinking coffee on the back porch (16). In her texts, Funk demonstrates the contemporary adaptation of the structure of unlimited development. With this argumentative scheme, she permits room for kairos and subjective individuality and identity. She illustrates that a practitioner can

live one's life while doing *lectio divina*, rather than requiring cloistered monastic vocation.

Contemporary texts about spirituality certainly concern the future. This is shown in Matthew Fox's books about healing the Earth via mystical practice and solidarity, as well as smaller level pragmatic means to pragmatic ends (Chapter Three). However, while concerned with the future, writers that use structures of unlimited development also emphasize the present moment. The present moment is a conglomeration of working processes, whereas many times, the future is a culmination of products formulated by processes. As I have illustrated, Matthew Fox's perspective promotes that mystical practice will lead and mystical solidarity which will lead to the incarnated product of utopia. "Products" are many times future based. Processes are many times based in the present moment. Although the unlimited development scheme concerns versions of these components, there is a powerful rhetorical emphasis on the present moment.

In her well-known article, "Learning the uses of Chaos," Ann Berthoff stresses present moment "process" in a generative manner to this discussion. In the article, she addresses the inventive uses of chaos in the writing classroom; however, she also touches on key notions of meaning-making within the writing process. Berthoff writes, "Meanings do not come out of the air; we make them out of a chaos of images, half-truths, remembrances, syntactic fragments, from the mysterious and unformed"; she emphasizes ambiguity, using I.A. Richards slogan as a mantra: ambiguities are the "hinges of thought"

(648). The rhetorical use of the unlimited development scheme in spiritual and contemplative texts reveals a "use of chaos" and ambiguity. Much spirituality helps us order the ambiguities of the world, *writing* about spirituality helps us order the ambiguities of spirituality. In other words, writing about spirituality does not ontologically order spiritual ineffability, but rather *helps us* epistemologically order spiritual ineffability. Contemplative and spiritual texts demonstrate Berthoff's point: writing processes and products order chaos in a way that celebrates the chaotic nature of chaos; after all, as she explains, "The chief use of chaos is that it creates the need for that dialogue" (650). And I will add that the dialogue is unending, much like spiritual practices themselves. Why? Because both revolve around open processes, rather than closed products.

The "uses of chaos" persuasively extend to the reader of a text as well. The activity of reading allows the audience to engage in the present moment as they digest the words on the page. Reading situates the audience in a process based present moment: the process of reading. Although a task of a writer is to order the chaos for an audience (as well as themselves), the audience must still process the text via hermeneutic understanding. In other words, the audience still tames the chaos of the writer's ideas for themselves. Since the *apophatic* ideas found in mysticism and spirituality are so difficult to subjectively tame, the audience must constantly be productively engaged in the present moment via the written product. The skill of the writer of these texts is to persuade the reader to continually engage – and not resign the hermeneutic task.

Subjective Belief: Mastering *Tyche* and Chaos

In a sense, the freedom bound to ineffable content is wild. The task of the communicator, writer or speaker of spiritual content is to tame the content so that an audience feels comfortable with the content: intellectually and practically. Communicators of spiritual content must do so carefully; they cannot be heavy handed with the reins. If the wildness is too tame, the ineffability becomes portrayed as effable; the content is manipulated into something that it is not. So the communicator must be responsible to the content and depict it as it is. In other words, the logos or connection to reality must have a degree of accuracy. With the topic of spirituality, the accurate referential connection lies with the non-referential. Overall, the unlimited development schema provides an appropriate structure to allow an appropriate wildness, freedom, and reference of non-reference (i.e. the unrealizable ideal) while still maintaining scaffold, coherence, and direction toward a goal.

In *Rhetoric Reclaimed*, Janet Atwill discusses the ancient Greek concept of *tyche*. Tyche is a somewhat vague term – and this is appropriate because it refers to a vague topic. Tyche refers not to the metamorphous of chaos into order, but rather, to the ordering of chaos while not altering the chaos. So this is a much more liberal concept of taming wildness, than Francis Bacon's influential Enlightenment "knowledge is power" proclamation in

Book One of *Novum Orangium*[11] (Bacon 4). Atwill lists a series of meanings of the term that are found in Greek myth and thought, and are all interrelated: "an act of god," "an agent or cause beyond human control," "providence," "fate," and "chance" (93-94). Atwill remarks that all of these versions of tyche share indeterminacy and emphasize the limits of human knowledge. To demonstrate the nature of the indeterminacy, Atwill illustrates that the goddess Tyche. Tyche is the Greeek goddess of the sea, symbolizing indeterminate and unpredictable change, tossing around without direction with the waves and winds of the sea. Simultaneously, Tyche guilds ships through tumultuous sea conditions, providing direction and ordering the chaos for human vessels (95). Atwill equates this navigation with techne and rhetoric: two components that guide an audience through unpredictable content, taming the wildness of ideas.

The nature of Tyche puts a deified face on the "both/and" simultaneity: both unpredictable and predictable, both ordered and chaotic, both controlling navigator and slave of natural elements. A similar "both/and" relationship is seen in Kenneth Burke's work. The most famous example: the pentad in *A Grammar of Motives*, which implements the same type of paradox. Each of Burke's five dramatic elements is simultaneously distinct and merged (Burke, *Grammar*, xix). And why does Burke endorse, rather than resolve, the "both/and" relationship? Because he celebrates ambiguity. Burke tells his readers that "instead of considering it our task to 'dispose of' any

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[11] "Human Knowledge and human power meet in one; for where the cause is not known the effect cannot be produced. Nature to be commanded must be obeyed; and that which in contemplation is as the cause is in operation as the rule."

ambiguity…we rather consider it our task to study and clarify the resources of ambiguity"; such resources are, according to Burke, ""transformations," "distinctions," "interrelationships," "overlap," and "alchemic opportunity" (xix). To connect this back to Atwill, the effectively communicative wielding of these Burkean resources is in the realm of techne. That is, rhetoric (and I will add "argumentation") seems to be a craft, a skill, or an art that, like the goddesss Tyche, navigates the tumultuous seas without actually calming the very same seas. Tyche is a variation of Berthoff's writing student who wrestles with "chaos": navigating chaos with the technology of writing while simultaneously respecting that very same chaos.

Many of such tumultuous seas are based around the cryptic working of personal belief within writing and reading. Contemporary Anglican and Catholic texts about spirituality and contemplation all pivot on belief: the writer's belief and the audience's belief about the transmundane. The reading audience can certainly be a seeker of belief or may not possess any Christian belief as well. For instance, in reading a text about Centering Prayer, the audience can be looking for *more* spiritual direction as well as *a* spiritual direction. Epideictic discourse, in *The New Rhetoric* perspective, is a vehicle that propels belief or propels a desire for belief; the discourse is educational and praises an action system (54). These epideictic texts about spirituality use the argumentative structure of unlimited development to guide, not to strongarm, an a reader down a certain spiritual path: a path that the reader can adapt to their own beliefs.

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca clearly state that "Epideictic discourse, as well as all education, is less directed toward changing beliefs than to strengthening the adherence to what is already accepted" (54). Their perspective is reinforced by contemporary spiritual texts; unlike older Christian texts which threaten the reader with hellfire and damnation, new Catholic and Anglican texts respect readers' subjectivity. The contemporary approach found in these spiritual texts supports the Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca perspective on the term "argumentation," and supports the way that I am using "argumentation." Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca explain that educational argumentation should respect an audience's belief system and align more with "rhetoric" rather than "the ancients' dialectic" (54). This is the same type of epideictic argumentation that contemporary Catholic and Anglican spiritual texts apply.

Both Atwill's "tyche" and Berthoff's "chaos" can be seen as syncing up with subjective belief: in particular, this can be shown via Sharon Crowley's examination of belief in her book, *Toward a Civil Discourse: Rhetoric and Fundamentalism*. Like Atwill and Berthoff discussion of indeterminacy, Crowley describes "belief" as indeterminate in relation to external reality (69). She explains that there is no survival mechanism attached to belief; therefore, without dire consequences, humans can maintain mistaken beliefs. Moreover, belief can be learned through discourse and performance, again, which can be mistaken. Crowley demonstrates this indeterminacy to show that belief is "need only be true (in the sense of 'seemingly consonant with reality') within

the contexts where such consonance is useful to the believer"; in other words, belief is merely useful "conjecture" (68-69).

Ralph Waldo Emerson, American Transcendentalist and writer of spirituality, provides perhaps the most telling perspective into the collision of experience, personal belief, and the pragmatism of universal spirituality. Throughout his essays, he allocates equality between individuality, universality, and human solidarity: a spiritual perspective that celebrates subjective belief amidst the seeming chaos of the world. In his essay, "Experience," Emerson writes:

> A man's genius, the quality that differences him from every other, the susceptibility to one class of influences, the selection of what is fit for him, the rejection of what is unfit, determines for him the character of the universe. A man is a method, a progressive arrangement; a selecting principle, gathering his like to him wherever he goes. He takes only his own out of the multiplicity that sweeps and circles around him. (195)

In other words, human beings use personal individual belief to guide themselves through the chaotic world. And how is this guidance communicated to others? Individual subjective belief finds a communicative home within epideictic discourse where, in varying levels, individual belief is praised. The scheme of unlimited development within epideictic discourse displays that "man is method" in a "progressive arrangement": always moving, via the

ordering function of personal belief, toward a goal that ultimately cannot be materially reached.

The argumentative scheme of unlimited development leaves room for the guidance of individual belief; it leaves room for those specific beliefs that an individual pragmatically conjectures. The scheme permits this subjective space because the scheme is a structural construct; it does not dictate the content. Instead, the scheme is a persuasive arrow pointing in an unending direction toward a godhead. Moreover, the persuasive arrow is navigational. It provides a direction in which an individual can journey through the chaos. Spirituality, contemplation, belief, techne, writing, rhetoric, and argumentation all combine to serve this practical purpose: subjective navigation through external and internal indeterminacy and chaos. I did not include religion in this list of subjectively navigational components. Although religion affects individual belief, ideology plays a central role in religion and is tricky to plot. I will expound on the connection and the disconnection between spirituality and religion in the next chapter, Chapter Five.

Concluding Remarks

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's argumentative scheme of unlimited development adherers a reader to a certain single point of view: that of transcendental oneness with the ineffable. Perhaps the scheme may seem so vague and free that it may devolve into chaos; however, the writer has a certain direction in mind. A structure of reality scheme can adhere a reader to that

direction. Therefore, a rigid motive is involved. After all, the writer argues for the reasonableness of one direction, toward one general value (Perelman, *Realm* 89). This is the dimension of argumentation: an appropriate and effective backbone structure leading to reasonableness.

But as a backbone can only do so much for a human body, the structure can only do so much to adhere an audience. It is the rhetorical dimensions that tweak the structure, allow for kairotic flexibility, and incarnate the unrealizable ideals. As I have shown in this chapter, different writers implement different rhetorical strategies to dress up the unlimited development schema. The rhetorical dressings in these texts dispel the Platonic notion that rhetoric is superfluous trickery, and simultaneously dispel the Ramusian separation of rhetoric and philosophy/argument. Contemporary spiritual texts embrace and proudly display the *antistrophos* of rhetoric and dialectic in a way that illustrates a primary mission Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's *The New Rhetoric*.

And texts themselves can only do so much to adhere an audience. A body needs more than its anatomy; it also requires physiology. Just as the human body requires active processes to maintain one's Athenian breath and Promethean spark, texts require active processes to maintain the life of the message. These particular spiritual texts are amalgamations of the spiritual processes of writer and reader embedded in the processes of reading and writing: a complex recursive nesting sequence that requires equal complexity. The cooperation of rhetoric and argumentation found in the ever-active scheme

of unlimited development provides that complex framework: structuring ambiguity while simultaneously allowing the ambiguity to flow.

Overall, the processes found in the unlimited development may address and allow ambiguity; however, the processes are still processes of *association*. In *The New Rhetoric*, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca define the processes of association as "schemes which bring separate elements together and allow us to establish a unity among them, which aims either at organizing them or at evaluating them, positively or negatively, by means of one another" (190). The processes of association found in contemporary texts of spirituality demonstrate that writers' organize their epideictic discourse both positively (*cataphatic*) and negatively (*apophatic*) via several associative argumentative schema: unlimited development playing a primary role. Although an intricate associative tapestry of paradoxical and "both/and" relationships, the unlimited development schema serves persuasive purposes. As I have shown, unlimited development found in spiritual texts forms unities and juxtapositions that can guide audiences through (and with) abstract thoughts into concrete and realizable action, constructing associative bridges between ineffable realities and material realities in effectively communicative ways.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS OF DISSOCIATIVE SCHEMA: MOVEMENT AWAY FROM

RELIGION

In Chapters Three and Four, I have discussed the

rhetorical/argumentative structures and techniques of association: specifically,

"structures of reality," as conceived by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca.

According to the two thinkers, structures of reality "establish a solidarity

between accepted judgments and others one wishes to promote" (261); they are

associative because they unite separate components together as a means to

organize or evaluate particular opinions – and they do so rhetorically (190). In

other words, as shown in examples from contemporary Catholic and Anglican

texts, a discourse of spirituality implement these associations: uniting ineffable

and/or experiential referents to realistic, understandable structures (cause and

effect, staging, pragmatic arguments, unlimited development). I have shown

that these strategies adhere audiences to their arguments, opinions, and

teachings.

This chapter, Chapter Five, seemingly turns away from the

aforementioned rhetorical constructions seen in contemporary discourse of

spirituality (however, as we will see in Chapter Six, all of the constructions

ultimately cooperate). Associative structures serve crucial functions within

contemporary Catholic and Anglican discourse about spirituality. Without

associative argumentation strategies, communication would be ineffective at

adhering an audience; after all, the discourse of spirituality is saturated with nebulous, ineffable, and subjective referents. However, dissociation, an inversion of associative argumentation, can also serve a valuable persuasive function. In this chapter, I argue that dissociation is a pivotal, macro level argumentation strategy upon which contemporary discourse of spirituality rhetorically pivots.

As discussed in Chapter One, the terminology surrounding the discourse of spiritualty significantly overlaps. Sometimes vocabulary conflates into itself: terms such as "spirituality," "mysticism," "contemplation," and even "meditation" can signify different dimensions and practices to different writers within particular communities (Ganass 63). Sometimes communities and writers overlap discourse to be more ecumenical. One community can speak across communities, graciously absorbing them, sharing terms and ideas: such as seen in Matthew Fox's work. However, other times, a religious community defines itself according to domination. Dominations can be as large as "Christianity" or "Buddhism," or as small as "liberal Catholicism" or "orthodox Judaism." Within these religious denominations and categories, exclusively can fuel the disocurse: particular rituals, philosophies, beliefs, and symbols (including language[s]). The discourse of spirituality occurs within these separate religious spheres. Religious communities can many times provide the foundational hub of belief in which spiritual subjectivity and contemplative action radiate (Merton, *New* 146-148). Despite the overlap, difference plays a central role in separating spirituality from religion, and

separating accompanying discourses from each other in strategically argumentative and persuasive manners. Throughout this study, I examine the Catholic and Anglican textual spheres - and I would be deeply remiss if I did not discuss the deliberate rhetorical differences between spirituality and religion: a dissociation that packs substantial persuasive power.

The distance between spirituality and religion contributes to the growing popularity of spirituality in America – a trend seen from the 1960s until today, and a similar point that Robert Wuthnow makes in his book *After Heaven: Spirituality After the* 1950s (54-56). Through numerous sociological case studies, Wuthnow illustrates examples of Americans growing up in the sixties leaving organized religion while maintaining spiritual sentiments and convictions (54-56). However, since *After Heaven* is a sociological investigation, Wuthnow does not explicitly explore the rhetorical composition (and compositions) involved with this distancing movement. The distance between spirituality and religion is deliberately and persuasively wielded so to gain such popularity. How does emphasizing separation, difference, or dissociation boost the adherence of audiences? To answer this question, I will explain the theoretical framework of dissociation as depicted by Pereleman and Olbrechts-Tyteca. Next, I will discuss the differences between religion and spirituality, Finally, I will show and analyze dissociation at work within contemporary Catholic and Anglican texts, connecting it to the emerging phenomenon of spirituality. Doing so, demonstrates the harmonious workings

of spirituality within religion(s), and the powerful synergy of individuality and inclusivity found in the discourse of spirituality.

Dissociation

In *The New Rhetoric*, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca define the processes of dissociation as:

>…techniques of separation which have the purpose of dissociating, separating, disuniting elements which are regarded as forming a whole or at least a unified group within some system of thought: dissociation modifies such a system by modifying certain concepts which make up its essential parts. It is the way that these processes of dissociation are characteristic of all original philosophical thought. (190)

And in *The Realm of Rhetoric*, Perelman defines dissociative action as "separating elements which language or recognized tradition have previously tied together" (49). Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca are clear that the separation is not the primary function in itself, but rather the functionality of dissociation lies in modifying the structures of the separated independent elements and profoundly changing "the conceptual data that are used as the basis for the argument" (412). Administering such a drastic "new structuration of reality" offers a calculated haymaker, not merely not a powerful jab; it offers a "compromise solution to incompatibilities" that is resolutely

"inescapable" (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 415). As an argumentative maneuver, dissociation is blatant and bold. Therefore, the strategy does not hide in plain sight. The audience can many times figure out that something new or revolutionary is being proposed. Dissociation is a difficult strategy to administer in discourse because it requires arduous work and extensive justification on part of the writer. However, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca are convinced that, if done well, the argumentation scheme holds significant force because it proposes a new solution that can lead to the resolution of conflict and reconciliation.

Dissociation seems to side with the interpretation of "argumentation" as content based: dependent on the seeking of truth. However, the scheme extends a powerful persuasive pull as well. As we will see, rhetorical elements subtlety work within the scheme. Overall, dissociation is not often addressed by rhetorical tradition since it is a strategy used primarily in philosophical thought: systematically thinking/rethinking that which reinvents a coherent version of reality (Perelman 126; Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 414). Perhaps this is evidence of a Ramusian inheritance that we still latch onto today: separating philosophy from rhetoric. Yet, dissociation as explained by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, and demonstrated in contemporary discourse of spirituality, unites "truth-seeking" and rhetoric. As we will see, dissociation redefines particular concepts in original ways – and the very newness in contrast with the original definition, can conjure a strong persuasive pull.

Alan Gross, in his 2000 article "Rhetoric as Technique and a Mode of Truth: Reflections on Chiam Perelman," demonstrates several historical examples of dissociative argumentation at work. The most compelling example is Plato's *Phaedrus*. Gross explains that in this dialogue, as in many of the Platonic dialogues, Plato consistently depends on dialectic as a dissociative device. Describing the dialectical method, Socrates indirectly refers to dissociation in the *Phaedrus* as the second part of a movement from blame to praise within discourse. Socrates asserts that the first part of the dialectical movement is "perceiving and bringing together in one idea the scattered particulars" (265d) and the second part of the movement is "dividing things again by classes, where the natural joints are, and not trying to break any part, after the manner of a bad carver" (265e). Gross points out that this second part of the dialectical movement is dissociative (327).

However, Plato does not merely discuss the process from a distance; in a complex dissociative matrix, Plato applies the two-part-dialectical-process to the dialogue itself. For instance, although the audience may initially assume that the dialogue is truly about love, the dialogue dissociates the issue of love from the true issue: falsity and truth. The dialogue shifts with this dissociation. After this shift, the effective use of rhetoric is dissociated from the instruction of truth via Socrates' "Great Speech" (276c). In other words, eloquent speech/writing cannot adequately capture the truth. Thus, the entire dialectical voyage ends in praise of the dialectic and in blame of rhetoric – and the argument depends on dissociative shifts (Gross 327-328).

Gross also points out that, as shown in the *Phaedrus*, dissociation is a "mode of truth" that conveys to the audience that a certain new point of view is "true" whereby invalidating an old point of view. Clearly, this movement is integral to philosophy and the proposal and adherence of idea ideas. Yet, dissociation is not only seen in philosophy; it can also be seen in science as well. Scientists strive for objectivity; therefore, scientific theories usually cancel out and replace one another according to empirical evidence: a dissociative movement. With science, the quest for truth is more absolute and finite than in philosophy; however, the rhetorical dimension of dissociation ensures that this absolute way of thinking and listening is merely instrumental in its purpose. For example, the law of gravity is absolute – for now. The law of gravity is a placeholder. If new scientific information changes the law of gravity, then the new law would replace the law of gravity. The scientific argument proposes an adherence to a claim by providing a fresh new direction. What is the purpose of scientific rhetoric? According to Walter Beale, rhetoric moves in the direction of science when "it seeks to establish stable and incontrovertible propositions of understanding" (Beale 96). Replacing of an insight with a more "stable" insight demonstrates a crucial variation of dissociation: one that quests for truth, understanding, and argumentative adherence. Like any rhetorical device, there is no consummate logic to dissociation (Gross 333); argumentation and rhetoric cooperate as advocated by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca. Rhetoric accounts for language, human opinion, audience, and context (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 5-9). The

rhetorical dimension of this unification protects the audience from absorbing, and philosopher/scientist from projecting, false absolutism. Therefore, Plato may use a matrix of dissociations to argue his point as absolute in the *Phaedrus*; however, we know that dissociative conclusions are surely rhetorical adaptive and flexible.

Rhetoric is situational (Charland 119-120). A rhetorical understanding of dissociation ensures that dissociative truths are flexible and adaptive. Dissociative arguments occur in response to the ebb and flow of cultural movements and awarenesses. Religion is one cultural area where these shifts occur – and Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca certainly make this clear in their textual examples. In *The New Rhetoric*, to show dissociation at work, the authors refer to John Locke's argument against the unity of Church and State (412) as well the theological disagreements of the Early Christian Church (415). However, one of the most monumental instances of dissociative argumentation in the history Western religious thought, the 16th Century Protestant Reformation, is an historical instance neglected in Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's textual examples. The Protestant Reformation and Martin Luther's pivotal work provides other examples of dissociation that differ from Plato's *Phaedrus* – and brings us closer to contemporary definitions of religion and spirituality, and the accompanying cultural motivations.

The argumentative devices found in the Protestant Reformation are largely dissociative. Protestants *protest*-ed against Roman Catholicism. This movement did not merely voice grievances to tear down the Roman Catholic

Church, but instead to *reform* the Roman Catholic Church. Luther was

certainly an outspoken and radical critic of Roman Catholicism (and he

earnestly admits this [216-217]) – but his criticism was meant to reform, that

is, to overhaul Roman Catholicism. This is seen throughout many of his

famous texts. For instance, among a myriad of criticisms and propositions in

To the Christian Nobility, Luther posits "we ought to abolish church

anniversary celebrations outright, since they have become nothing but taverns,

fairs, and gambling places, and only increase the dishonoring of God and foster

the soul's damnation" (183); he then develops this argument using rhetorical

questions and scriptural evidence. Luther proposes a new philosophy based on

an argument, instead of merely claiming that the church anniversary

celebrations are wrong because they dishonor God. Luther does not discuss

what is wrong with the Church, but how it *should* be solved; and based on the

solutions that Luther posits, a new church is founded that subsumes these

changes. In other words, Protestantism ideologically dissociates from Roman

Catholicism; all of the other Protestant branches (e.g. Anabaptists, Calvinists,

Episcopalians) then dissociate from Lutheranism and Roman Catholicism

alike. Institutional dissociations followed the ideological dissociations.

What does the Protestant Reformation demonstrate about dissociation?

More evident than the example from the *Phaedrus*, the Protestant reformation

shows a reliance on cultural attitudes and values: a reliance that leads to

cultural action. Like Plato, Luther used texts to inspire action and change;

however, Luther's words are merely a powerful articulation of already existing

cultural yearnings in Europe for a renewal of the Church (MacCulloch 567-584).[12] In other words, religious dissociation occurs because cultural understandings of the world had shifted. The public desired more democratic and individual empowerment; and the desires reached a critical mass. Dissociation becomes the product of amassed frustration – and the dissociation is successful. It is adhered to by the masses, because the public desires it. As a writer and rhetor, Luther plays a pivotal role as the harbinger of the dissociative movement by effectively articulating the frustration and call for action via effective rhetorical and kairotic public writing.

Contemporary Dissociations of Spirituality

Is America seeing a paradigm shifting religious/spiritual dissociation, similar to the Protestant Reformation, albeit with subtler dissociative devices? Is spirituality dissociating from religiousness? How do these devices work in the contemporary age of postmodernity? Moreover, are cultural desires fueling the dissociation?

In asserting a dissociative mode of truth, the Protestant Reformation was progressive in the Renaissance; similarly, the growing international interfaith dialogues are a progressive force in the contemporary era. Many of these dialogues discuss spirituality as common discussion point that can lead to harmonious interfaith relations. For example, in 1996, the Dalai Lama, Mary Margaret Funk, Fr. James Wiseman, Donald W. Mitchell, and assorted

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[12] As can be seen in numerous ways: e.g. John Wyclif, Lollardy, a revived interest in humanism based on ancient texts that surfaced in the Middle Ages (567-584)

Buddhist and Christian spiritual, contemplative, and monastic authorities from

various traditions, participated in the "Gethsemani Encounter." The

Gethsemani Encounter was organized by the MID (Monastic Interfaith

Dialogue) to engage in a formal interfaith dialogue and share spiritual

understandings to aid one another's spiritual journeying (xi). Located at the

Abbey of Gethsemani, close to Louisville, Kentucky, the Gethsemani

Encounter participants "gathered the well-ripened fruits of a long interfaith

collaboration" which were initially planted by American Trappist monk

Thomas Merton. Merton maintained a strong relationship with the Dalai Lama

and the Buddhist tradition in the 1960s; therefore, the Gesethmani Encounter

offered an extension and continuation of Merton's monumental interfaith

dialogues - and the reason why the 1996 dialogues were located at the Abbey

of Gethsemani: the location where Merton spent much of his time (Mitchell

xi).

Donald W. Mitchell and James Wiseman captured, organized, and

edited The collaborative dialogues. The book, *The Gethsemani Encounter: A*

Dialogue on the Spiritual Life by Buddhist and Christian Monastics, was

released in 1997. The text is comprised of topical sections that alternate

between Buddhist and Christian perspectives of spirituality. Consequently, a

dissociative distinction is made between religiousness and spirituality,

especially in the sections involving the Dalai Lama. In his captured dialogues,

he understands and promotes the differences in religions. Religions encompass

differ philosophies and viewpoints; however, individuals require different

viewpoints for spiritual sustenance. Therefore, based on individual differences and needs, all religions should be respected and the differences should be embraced in a discourse of spirituality (Mitchell 46-48). In other words, according to the Dalai Lama, all religions should be embraced because they provide arenas of spiritual nourishment for *individuals*.

Tolerance of individual belief and subjectivities are largely agreed upon within the discourse of spirituality found in the Gethsemani cohort. In the words of the Dalai Lama: "we cannot say 'This religion is better, that religion is not good.' That we cannot say. However, on an individual basis we can say that a particular religion is good for us. For example, the Buddhist way is best *for me*. There is no doubt! But this does not mean that Buddhism is best for everyone" (48). As this passage indicates, the individual is celebrated, but practical flexibility is also celebrated: flexibility not found in stricter evangelist dominations like Christian fundamentalism. In the *Gethsemani Encounter*, several Buddhist members discuss the problem of evangelical Christianity. In particular, Havanpola Ratanasara and Samu Sunim mention the toxicity of proselytizing; they both urge Catholic members of the Gethsemani Encounter to pressure evangelical Christian communities to stop contributing to ideological disharmony (246-247). The Dalai Lama punctuates this point, emphasizing to the Christian community that dialogue "builds a healthy spirit of harmony on the basis of mutual understanding. With full knowledge of our differences and our similarities, we have developed mutual respect and mutual understanding" (248).

The Dalai Lama, Havanpola Ratanasara, and Samu Sunim offer a discourse of spirituality, a discourse of "mutual understanding" as a solution in contrast to Christian evangelism. Subjective spiritual experiences differ; religious traditions differ. And as the Dalai Lama posits, these differences can be respected and understood within a discourse of spirituality. However, where does the "healthy spirit of harmony" come from? What are the "similarities" shared by individuals and religious traditions? What is the common ground that fuels that dissociates spirituality from religiousness?

Firstly, difference can be seen as consensus, however, not in an unproductive "agree to disagree," Lyotardian legitimation crises," or "name calling" manner that can occur in heated argumentative writing and speaking (Faigley 189-190). Rather, the sphere of spirituality is a sphere of experiential subjectivity. Therefore, every individual is right. There is no objective proof. There is only what experientially works for individuals. Therefore, there is common ground: a common celebration of experiential relativity. And this is a celebration not emphasized as rigorously in religiousness.

The dissociation is clarified in Robert Wuthnow's 1998 investigation of social patterns of America spirituality. By examining case studies, he draws the distinction between "religious dwelling" and "spiritual seeking" "Religious dwellers" tend to accept institutional authority whereas "spiritual seekers" are dependent on their own autonomy, which takes precedence over traditional doctrine or external authority. Spiritual seekers can borrow across many traditions because they have the freedom and power as individuals to do so.

Spirituality dissociates from religiousness based on different priorities and emphases (Wuthnow; Dillion, Wink, Fay 428).

Differing priorities and emphases dissociate spirituality from religiousness, but not in an aggressive way; rather, the dissociation is gentle, reasonable, and persuasive. The dissociation occurs within the religious sphere, thus implying that spirituality is not breaking off ties completely from religion, but rather providing a fresh understanding and development of religious experience. A textual example of this can be found in an epideictic text regarding the contemporary practice of Ignatian (Jesuit) spirituality, *Inner Compass: An Invitation to Ignatian Spirituality* (2008/1999) by Margaret Silf. Silf begins in the first chapter as so:

The Invitation …

Is made out in your name.

But who are you?

Who is this person who feels drawn to explore the spiritual treasures that lie within you?

Yes, within you…

Not in some closet in the sky or the bishop's office.

Not in some divine database, to which only the elect hold the password.

But in you. (3)

What is Silf doing here? What are her very first words establishing for the audience? "The Invitation." The term hold a strong appeal to pathos, building a rhetorical bridge with the audience; "invitation" connects the audience to the message. More importantly with this passage, she dissociates spirituality from religiousness. Spirituality, referred to as "spiritual treasures," contrasts religious concepts ("bishop's office," "divine database," etc.). In this short introductory piece of text, Silf dissociates spirituality as internal ("within you") rather than external ("in the sky," "bishop's office,"); Silf dissociates spirituality as inclusive rather than exclusive ("password," "the elect"). Similar to Luther, she mentions a negative claim as a gateway into to a new claim. As I have shown, in many of Luther's works that respond to Roman Catholicism, Luther states that a aspects of Roman Catholicism "should not be," and instead, the religion "should be" reformed into something new. Luther dissociates reform away from Roman Catholicism. Silf's introduction, in a less agonistic manner, dissociates spirituality away from religiousness by using the "Not *this*… But *this*" construction. She is offering something new that differs from religiousness. And what is the "something new"? It is something unique to the individual. It is "in you." Later in the same introduction, Silf clarifies that the "spiritual treasures" are not merely "in you," but they "who you are" as well (3-5). Silf dissociates spirituality from religiousness by tethering spirituality to individual members of the audience, the readers; simultaneously, Silf dissociates the discourse of spirituality found in *Inner Compass* from more religious, perhaps exclusively Catholic, discussions.

Silf's introduction demonstrates that dissociative devices found in the discourse of spirituality can increase the inclusivity of the audience. Audience can identify with spirituality more so because it celebrates difference and individuality rather than suppressing individuality between a heavy institutional vice. However, this is not to say that Silf, and other contemporary Catholic and Anglican writers of spirituality and contemplation, are creating a clean cut binary that is removed from religiousness. Instead, writers such as Silf, spotlight a dimension of the religion and dwell in that topic for the duration of the text. Silf is drawing her discussion from the Ignatian tradition, updating the Jesuit tradition for contemporary audiences; unlike Luther, she is not overhauling or reforming the tradition.

An Evolution of Inclusivity

Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) was progressive for his time. In a way, he was responding to Renaissance call for more democracy in religion: a call that propelled the Protestant Reformation. Ignatius' *The Spiritual Exercises* (1524) provide much more individual agency in the contemplative process than the medieval mystical texts that came before. Highlighting autonomous faculties such as individual imagination and will, Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises give agency to the practitioner; however, the instructive mediations do not have the faculties romp wildly away from Catholic teachings. In the text, Ignatius maintains a balance, accounting for Catholic rules and guidelines for spirituality in his exercises. Throughout *The Spiritual Exercises*, Ignatius

emphasizes the use of faculties such as individual intellect, memory, imagination, and will. The tiers effectively balance spirituality and religiousness. For example, in the "First Exercise" of *The Spiritual Exercises*, Ignatius has the practitioner run through three mediations. The first meditation is to use memory and intellect to meditate on the sins of the angels; the second mediation is to remember and understand the sins of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden; however, the Third Mediation shifts toward active audience subjectivity. It is not directly based on Scripture, nor any mystical revelation of the author (a technique as seen in many medieval spiritual writings), but rather, the audience must become the active practitioner. The practitioner must integrate their own subjectivity and set of experiences. The Third Meditation urges the practitioner to ponder the meditative focus: someone in the world that has sinned. Ignatius' Third Meditation guideline read as follows, "use the same method on the third sin, the particular sin of anyone who has gone to hell because of one mortal sin; and further, of innumerable other persons who went there for fewer sins than I [the practitioner] have committed" (Genss 138 [52]). Therefore, the practitioner must pick someone whom they know has sinned, and then, meditate upon the sins, and imagine "the innumerable other persons,'' and "finish by using the will" to combat such sinning behavior. Via the faculty of imagination, the practitioner is given the power of free interiority; via the faculty of the will, the practitioner is given the power of free exteriority. Rather than being suppressed by more traditional prescribed prayers and catechisms, the subjectivity and freedom of the practitioner is

celebrated. In the final section of the exercise, the "colloquy," Ignatius has the practitioner discern their own actions, reflecting on their own sins via a combination of prayer and questions (Genss 138 [53]). The exercise is punctuated with interiority, self-reflection, and agency.

As a 16th Century Roman Catholic authority writing to a Christianized Europe, Ignatius founded a school of spirituality which emphasized personal growth, however Ignatius was not in the position to explicitly dissociate spirituality from Roman Catholic religion, as done by Silf. Rather, for Ignatius, spirituality and religion were two sides of the same coin. In the 21st Century, as shown by Silf's articulation of Ignatian spirituality, the dissociation of personal spirituality away from doctrinal religion is more explicit and thus more inclusive and persuasive to more diverse audiences. More global, more tolerant, and more postmodern Christianities demand this type of dissociation; therefore, rhetors of contemporary spiritual texts are indebted to the Jesuit tradition, while simultaneously propose a more progressive interpretation of the Jesuit tradition.

As alluded to throughout Burke's *Attitudes Toward History*, attitudes and values are in flux throughout the course of history. Cultural and intellectual tides are always rising and falling. So it may seem obvious that epistemological and ontological understandings of religion and spirituality have somewhat changed since the 16th century. However, a similar evolution can be seen within the postmodern period itself. The dissociation that I have shown in Silf's *The Inner Compass* not only updates the 500 year old Jesuit

tradition, but also updates contemporary contemplative perspectives to be *more* contemporary. For example, Thomas Merton is a Trappist monk who is known for being progressive for his 20th century understandings of contemplation and spirituality. Yet, in the 1961 text, *The New Seeds of Contemplation*, Merton praises Catholic authority and dogma as integral to proper Christian spirituality. Like Ignatius, Merton binds Catholic dogma and spirituality together so that without a deep and correct understanding of Catholic interpretation, a practitioner's spiritual state would be deficient. In the chapter "Tradition and Revolution," Merton dispels the notion that the mystics rebelled against (i.e. dissociated from) the authority of the Church (146). Spirituality, he states, is inseparable from the authority of the Church – and Catholic mystics were always bound to the Church. Merton goes on to write:

> The dogmas defined and taught by the Church have a very precise, positive and definite meaning which those who have the grace to do so must explore and penetrate if they would live an integral spiritual life. […] Every Christian ought to have as deep a comprehension of his belief as his state will allow him. And this means that every one ought to breathe the clean atmosphere of orthodox tradition and be able to explain his belief in correct terminology - and terminology with a content of genuine ideas. (147)

As a "progressive" Catholic perspective, Merton reads a bit conservative here. However, Merton is writing in 1961 as a cloistered monk at the Abbey of Gethsemani. Merton was certainly influenced by the American cultural context, the Catholic context, and his own life experiences during the time when he composed *New Seeds of Contemplation*. Contrary to the conservative sentiments here, *New Seeds of Contemplation*, was indeed "new" for 1961. However, as seen in Silf, more contemporary articulations distance spirituality more explicitly from religiousness. Silf's articulation of spirituality is explicitly and implicitly removed from the "clean atmosphere of orthodox" Roman Catholic tradition. Consequently, Silf's articulation is inclusive to those outside of the Roman Catholic tradition; while Merton can potentially lose the adherence of a more general audience who may not have the "correct terminology."

This difference can be examined through lenses of antifoundationalism and foundationalism. Spirituality compromises of both antifoundationalism and foundationalism; whereas traditional religion is merely a construction of foundationalism. In *Toward a Civil Discourse: Rhetoric and Fundamentalism*, Sharon Crowley discusses these implications. She explains that foundational belief systems hold ideologically noncontigent "first principles" as universal and noncontextual (13). Since all beliefs systems depend on such first principles in some way, every belief system is foundational; therefore, in Crowley's eyes, these belief systems are fundamentalisms in which subscribers hold foundational ideologies as favorable over other available alternatives (13-

14). This is a natural understanding of religious sects and denominations: loyal to foundationalism and fundamentalism, unwavering and proud. As Crowley explains, fundamentalism "delineates a particular strategy (and tone) that permeates defenses of … religious belief systems: a desire to preserve one's own founding beliefs from threat at any cost" (14). However, spirituality dissociates itself from fundamentalism while still maintaining foundationalism. Spirituality, as demonstrated earlier, is aware of and celebrates individual subjectivities while still maintaining foundational principles. How does it implement this both/and relationship? The foundational principles of spirituality are broad and flexible enough to be interpreted by the subjects in different ways. The foundational principles found in the discourse of spirituality concern experiential communion with (an) ineffable greater Being(s), force(s), or power(s) outside of the self. These central foundational principles indicate awareness directed outside of the self that believers can believe in. The methods of communion differ; the experiences differ; the understandings and traits of the awareness differ. And these differences are based on subjective interpretation from the spiritual practitioner. Spiritual foundations are more inclusionary than strictly religious foundations; spirituality provides a home for subjectivity and personal difference (many times in the form of personal narrative, which is found in every contemporary Catholic and Anglican epideictic text about spirituality that I have analyzed. See Chapter Six.). And this home is not merely an afterthought, but it is a

central dwelling place of spiritual practice and discourse: a major rhetorical difference between spirituality and religiousness.

Interfaith dialogues between Buddhist and Christian spiritualties are brimming with broad spiritual foundations that combat aggressive fundamentalisms (Mitchell 18-19; *With One Voice*). However, this broadness is also evident in non-dialogic spiritual expressions: epideictic texts about spirituality and contemplation. The definitions of God found in the texts demonstrate this broadness at work. Unlike more theological discussions of God which referentially debate the traits of God, Biblical meanings, and the "problem of evil," contemporary writers of spirituality do not narrow the definition of God so to not exclude audiences – and this sets this discourse apart from religious discourse. In *Into the Sunlit Land*, Martin Laird defines God as "Being of our being" and riffs off of Augustine indicating that "God is our homeland" (1-2); in *Thoughts Matter: The Practice of the Spiritual Life*, Mary Margaret Funk defines God as "our heart's desire" and mentions that "we must renounce our own images of God so we can enter into contemplation of God as God" that is, via interior experience rather than external definition (9); Basil Pennington defines God in *Centered Living*, as a "God of immense love" revealing "Godself" throughout creation and throughout the depths of "inner Reality" (xxiv). Moreover, he explains that,

> Our rational mind wants to distinguish these [theological] things, sort
>
> them out, and organize data accordingly. But if we insist on always

doing this in our minds, such compartmentalization may well carry

over into our lives. This we do not want. We want to experience the

fullness of the theological Reality very practically in our everyday

lives; we want it to flow through all we say and do. (xxv)

The broad definitions of God certainly are inclusive, allowing audiences of

different orientations, sects, and philosophies to adhere to the message.

Simultaneously, as indicated by Funk and Pennington specifically, the

experiential emphasis of spirituality requires abstractness. Discussion of

spirituality requires celebration of the abstract, whereas Christian

religiousness, many times requires theological totalizing meta-narrative

consisting of specifics. Therefore, as shown by these examples, the

foundationalism of spirituality is broad enough to empower the audience via

subjective experience – and thus, the foundationalism of spirituality is

strategically dissociated from the foundationalism traditionally found in

Christian religiousness.

Spiritual Subjectivity: Georges Bataille

What does this simultaneous celebration of the abstract and subjective

look like outside of religion? Using Georges Bataille's postmodern theory of

inner spiritual experience, I can demonstrate that a rhetoric of experience

dissociates spirituality from religion. This will show the distinct subjectivity of

spirituality in and against the external world. This fairly complex conceptual

navigation shows a dissociative "both/and" function of inner experience and spirituality of which audiences can adhere.

In 1954, Georges Bataille, a provocative and underappreciated French theorist, wrote *Inner Experience (L' experience Interieure)*. The text is a treatise that examines the collision of ineffable spiritual experience, human transgression, and individual sovereignty. The text is ambitious, unique, and profound – and although Bataille is surely atheist (without ever referring to himself as atheist), he provides a knowledgeable and intellectual perspective into the dissociative properties of spirituality (without ever using the term "dissociation").

Bataille uses of the term "inner experience" because it, although it has mystical qualities, cannot be directly associated with mysticism – because to him, mysticism is too narrow of a definition (3). Instead, inner (spiritual) experience is a place of "wildness," "bewilderment," and "nonsense": a place of "non-knowledge." Bataille is so celebratory of spiritual subjectivity that he claims that even the notion of God becomes an obstacle to the self. He writes,

> If I said decisively: 'I have seen God', that which I see would change. Instead of the inconceivable unknown – wildly free before me. Leaving me wild and free before it - there would be a dead object and the thing of a theologian – to which the unknown would be subjugated, for, in the form of God, the obscure unknown which ecstasy reveals is obliged to subjugate me. (3)

Bataille boldly dissociates inner experience away from God; he understands inner spiritual experience to be a unity with the unknown, that is "the fusion of object and subject, being as subject non-knowledge, as object the unknown" (9). Bataille's extreme conflation as well as his later conflation of Presence and Absence within inner experience, separates his version of internal spirituality from external religious authority. He states that due to the subject's experiential intelligence of "the extreme limit of the possible," philosophical and religious authority is no longer needed (7-8). Inner experience contains "all value and authority"; inner spiritual experience negates all other values and authorities; it takes on positive existence and "becomes itself positively value and authority" (7).

Bataille rigorously defends subjectivity; however, the idea of "experience as sole authority" has gravitas. Batailles realizes that inner spiritual experience can be related to external religious objectives within Christian ritual, prayer, and godheads; and similarly, in Chapter Three of this investigation, I have shown that spirituality can serve pragmatic functions that extend into the material world. Bataille understands this externality. However, in *Inner Experience*, Bataille wrestles with "inner experience" for the sake of itself. The anti-telos becomes a crucial property that can dissociate it from the telos-filled external world.

Unlike the scheme of unlimited development that involves an unattainable telos, the Bataillian inner experience perspective is devoid of telos

and just merely "is": a spiritual seeker is lost in a "labyrinth" that is being defined as he/she moves through it (xv). Although unlimited development has a place in contemporary texts about spirituality, the Bataillian anti-telos perspective can be found in the texts as well. Serving a complimentary rhetorical function, contemporary Catholic and Anglican texts also combat pragmatism and telos to rhetorically dissociate spirituality from teleological dualities found in Christian religiousness.

For example, Martin Laid, in *Into the Silent Land*, discusses Christian ritual and technique, specifically the Feast of Pentecost, Baptism, and Eucharist, in relation to inner spirituality. However, he breaks from the discussion, changing direction in a dissociative manner. Separating into a new paragraph (A spatial and organizational separation which rhetorically enhances the dissociation.), Laird writes: "Union of God is not something we acquire by a technique but the grounding truth of our lives that engenders the very search for God" (15). As seen in Luther and Silf, the sentence construction indicates a dissociative shift. Laird asserts that spiritual unity is not solely found via external action, but rather from the permeating being of God, self, and the world. He continues: "The fact that most of us experience throughout most of our lives a sense of absence or distance from God is the great illusion that we are caught up in; it is the human condition" (15). Similar to Bataille, albeit less Nietzschean and more Christian, Laird separates spirituality from religiousness. Laird contrasts spirituality of consistent permeating Being and humanness (the synthesis of creator and creation), with religious ritual and

external technique. The techniques found in Christian religion help seekers move toward a telos; whereas spiritual truths merely "are." Laird does so not just to clarify and explain, but rather to argue the reasonableness of spirituality and increase audience adherence. The truth of God is always within every human being; therefore, all audience members can potentially adhere to Laird's perspective; Laird includes all human beings in his audience. Similar, to Silf's technique, the dissociation increases inclusiveness by accounting for individuality and shared experience of Being.

Many contemporary Anglican and Catholic authors of spiritual discourse such as Funk, Bourgeault, and Fox, do not reference Christian rituals and feast days in their texts. The dissociation implied by such absence suggests that spirituality can be found outside of religious rites. The separation still occurs despite the authors not bringing attention to the separation like Laird and Silf had done. There is an implied inclusivity in the absence of religious holidays and rites. By not including these references, there is more emphasis on the subjective inner spiritual experience: an emphasis promoted by Georges Bataille as a human experience that we all categorically share.

Shared Reality

Bataille's atheistic perspective into spiritual inner experience provides a look into extreme subjectivity, but how does spirituality facilitate a common reasonable perspective? How does the discourse of spirituality help the audience share what Kenneth Burke defines as a "social basis of reference"

(*Attitudes* 342)? The deflation of agonistic binaries, a deflation of truth claims such as "my religion is right and all dissenters are wrong," enables effective communication. Emphasis on subjectivity and tolerance for difference facilitates this deflation. However, a cooperative contradistinction seals the spiritual vision in a harmonious way: communion via a shared type of reality.

As I have mentioned in Chapter One, practitioners of spirituality and contemplation share a type of common reality: experiencing a unity with a greater Being / life force. Subjective experiences can and certainly do differ; however, the *type* of spiritual experience is common. Therefore, despite dogma, denomination, and religious persuasion, spirituality is a dimension that is shared between different traditions. In the words Sister Pascaline Coff of *The Gethsemani Encounter*, "conversation" about spirituality becomes "communion" since the "profound spirituality reality" touches all practitioners in one way or another (3). In fact, Merton claims that that the spiritual life puts practitioners in "the fullest possible contact with reality – not as we imagine it, but as it really is" (*No Man* ix): a panentheistic sentiment that, as we have seen, is shared by Matthew Fox as well.

In the contemporary Christian tradition, this is many times referred to as the "Cosmic Christ." In the previous chapter, I have analyzed Matthew Fox's title of *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ* in terms of the unlimited development argumentative scheme. Matthew Fox is certainly a champion of the Cosmic Christ as a concept. But what exactly does it mean? How does it indicate a shared reality and dissociative strategy? Before every chapter in *The*

Coming of the Cosmic Christ, Matthew Fox lists a number of quotations from spiritual authorities. Before Fox's first chapter about the Cosmic Christ, he quotes 4th century archbishop Gregory of Nazianzus: "Christ exists in all things that are" implying that God/Christ permeates all of cosmic creation. The quote is curt and clear and packs strong ethos. Moreover, it rhetorically implies that the Cosmic Christ concept is foundational to Christian thinking as early as the 4th century (75). Fox allows the quotation to speak for itself; he does not need to explain this concept at length. Audiences "get it." It is a natural part of being human to inquire about the nature of "all things that are." It establishes a common terrain between Fox and the audience – and audience members with each other. The shared nature of cosmos allows all people to ponder beyond the cosmos as to what essence may permeate the cosmos – and therefore, this is a shared inquiry, shared practice, and shared experience.

From the inclusivity found within the shared type of spiritual inquiry, practice, and experience, the Cosmic Christ is an ecumenical term that is powerfully persuasive. The concept can be translated into spiritual traditions outside of Christianity. In *The Gethsemani Encounter* dialogues, Buddhist Dhammarakkhita explains what the Cosmic Christ implies: negotiation of difference while simultaneously embracing interfaith unity. He says that the Christian notion of the Cosmic Christ includes "the vertical depth of God and the horizontal reach of the cosmos" while his Buddhist perspective emphasizes the vertical depth of purity of the mind (which he says is mysteriously infinite)

and the horizontal dimension of service to the world. He explains that these shared concepts are united and can create a "global spirituality" (Mitchell 253).

The cosmos is traditionally seen through a scientific lens: as the stuff of the universe, materiality, a complex tapestry of matter and energy. Christ, on the other hand, is the anointed incarnation of God: human and divine, a connection with the theological, a link to God. The term "Cosmic Christ" rhetorically promotes the collision of these two areas, spirituality and science. Similarly, spirituality also serves a similar referential function as science: arriving at a common ground that is shared by all people. In *Permanence and Change*, Kenneth Burke points out that spiritual practitioners seek a "sounder basis of certainty" than those contingent on the "flux of history"; the mystic "seeks the ultimate motive behind our acts; that is he seek an ultimate situation common to all men" (222). Burke goes on to clarify the commonalities: "By examining a multitude of situations individually distinct, the scientist attempts statistically to extract a generalization common to all. The mystic makes somewhat the same attempt by looking within and naming as the ultimate motive a quality of experience common to all" (Burke, *Permanence* 222). The shared type of experience, fueled by inquiry and aided by referential function, sets spirituality apart from religiousness. Spirituality lends itself to global communion with truth: "a generalization common to all," a type of universal language, similar to science. Whereas religiousness embraces exclusive membership, in which members need to be initiated into the specific religious

essences, assume roles within the faith, and adopt vocabulary particular to the religion.

By no means is this shared reality and inquiry a new notion. Pre-Socratic philosopher, Heraclitus of Ephesus, posited this approach thousands of years ago. Heraclitus believed that the cosmos was a shared reality and therefore the root of all things that we ponder and experience. According to Heraclitus, the shared cosmos is the ultimate unity to all; the shared unity is thus superior to all differences and contrasts; opposites are ultimately the same; contrasts are undercut by an underlying sameness. These concepts have been renamed since the ancient era, but remain a driving emphasis in spirituality (Kroner 93). The emphasized unity between the cosmos, Nature, and other human beings pervades contemporary discourse of spirituality: a unity revealed in the panentheistic Comic Christ, a notion that dissociates spirituality from religiousness. Although, Christian religion may insist on universal love of Creation and other human beings, spirituality insists on a common unity that is innately human and permeates all religions. The idea of spiritual unity is a very old idea; it is not advocated only by Christians, Kenneth Burke, and Pre-Socratic Greeks. Numerous religions promote the same unity: Judaism, Hinduism, Sufism, Shamanism, and Buddhism (*With One Voice*). It has survived through thousands of years of cultural differences and religious strife. A dissociative emphasis on cosmic unity within the discourse of spirituality has more explicitly emerged in the last sixty years, and offers a return to Pre-Socratic ideas of spirituality, found not only in Heraclitus, but also in

Pythagoras and Anaximander. These profound yet simple ideas of

commonality can bridge the gaps between religions; these are ideas that

throughout history have been many times obscured by competition for the

Truth and religious factions.

The shared inclusive unity seems to gain traction by implicitly

distancing itself away from religious tradition, doctrine, and commandment.

But what do restrictive religious rhetorics look like? One example is the most

recent version of the post-Second Vatican Council *Catechism of the Catholic

Church*: a book that explicitly unifies a "synthesis of the essential and

fundamental contents of Catholic doctrine" (11 [11]). The catechism is surely a

book of religiousness, rather than spirituality. The book tells seekers, and

already existing believers, "what they are supposed to believe" in the Catholic

Church. As indicated in the catechism, the book is designed for teaching (12

[12]). Contemporary epideictic discourse of spirituality involves teaching as

well; however, contemporary discourses of spirituality generally does not look

to convert audiences to the religion; rather, as I have shown throughout this

investigation, the discourse of spirituality inclusively guides audiences through

reasonable attitudes and practices. Catechisms, on the other hand, are used for

conversion or maintaining commonly held beliefs. Many Catholic educations,

such as Catholic university religion classes and Catholic conversion classes,

such as RCIA classes (the Roman Catholic Initiation of Adults) require

catechesis. For example, Catholic colleges such as Holy Family University in

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania require undergraduate students to study the

catechism in theology classes; RCIA classes at Providence, Rhode Island's Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul require students to own the Catechism upon entering the first class – and subsequently read selections of the catechism before each class.[13]

How does the catechistic rhetoric work differently than contemporary discourse of spirituality? The catechism embraces objective truths that an audience must believe. In the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, readers are told that truths are solely found in the Scriptures and "Sacred Tradition" (31 [80-82]); in other words, according to the catechism, audiences cannot trust their own spiritual autonomy. As we have seen from the writers studied in this investigation, contemporary authorities in the Catholic and Anglican Churches have countered this catechistic approach. As I have shown, contemporary authorities have written epideictic texts to instruct seekers how to embrace their own spiritual autonomy; simultaneously, in these texts, seekers are persuaded to adhere (consciously or subconsciously) to the solidarity founded in shared experience of reality. The dissociative properties of the unity and peace contrasting the correctness of religious exclusivities, permits spiritual discourse to work between differing religions, rather than against them.

This is not to assert that "religious" texts completely neglect peace and unity. For example, according to the prescribed beliefs of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, "there is solidarity among all creatures arising from the fact that all have the same Creator and are all ordered to his glory" (99-100 [344]). Although first half of the reason aligns with the Pre-Socratic perspective of

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[13] Both examples are based on personal experience and observation (2013-2014)

shared reality, the catechism punctuates the reason with "and are all ordered to his glory." The punctuation implies that Catholics should embrace solidarity because they are commanded to do so by an authority, i.e. God. From the examples I have shown throughout my investigation, it is clear that contemporary Catholic writers of spirituality resist such outright appeal to authority. Unlike the catechism and other religion centered discourses, spiritual texts embrace Bataillian "Being" and Heraclitian "is-ness" found in the world and in ourselves. In other words, the discourse of spiritual dissociates its claims and reasons away from a commanding theistic authority – and gives the agency to the practitioner to arrive at spiritual truth. These spiritual truths involve human solidarity (Merton, *No Man*; Mitchell; Pennington 193-200; Funk, *Tools* 122-39) and connectedness to the essence of the physical world (Teilhard de Chardin, Fox).

Outside of the rigid taxonomies found in religious catechism, there are also rigid taxonomies of spirituality that are endorsed by the Church. One such taxonomy: *The Spiritual Life: A Treatise on Ascetical and Mystical Theology* by Adolphe Tanquerey, published and made imprimatur by the Catholic Church in 1930. The text portrays spirituality in a rigidly religious manner, demonstrating that the use of the term "spirituality" is not a "catch-all" emancipating term; it can still be used to restrict the autonomy of a reader. *The Spiritual Life* promotes the pervading assertion that is that Dogma is central to the spiritual life (vii). Tanquerey asserts that the supernatural "transcends nature" and pantheism does not have a place in a true (Catholic) spiritual life

(32). In *The Spiritual Life*, Tanquerey attempts to harness spirituality under the firm restrictions of religion, dogma, and logic – and he makes his motive clear in the "Author's Preface" (vii-viii). His overall approach resembles the firm yoke of Aquinas' summas and other medieval ontologies. Like Aquinas, there is room for Tanquerey to embrace panentheism ("all things in God and God in all things") rather than pantheism ("all things are God"); however, the rigid type of taxonomic discourse does not allow an effective and adequate expression of panentheistic playfulness. In other words, more open playful discourse (i.e. not taxonomic or doctrine-based discourse), more adequately can capture panentheistic spirituality. This is seen throughout the history of spiritual discourse: from Francis of Assisi's writings in the 12 century to Pierre Teilhard de Chardin in the 20th century. Unlike Tanquerey's Catholic approach to spirituality, more recent Catholic discourse of spirituality opens itself up to panentheistic perspectives in a Herocaclitian manner: via shared experience. Many Catholic spiritual authorities may not explicitly endorse panentheism as a vehicle of solidarity, such as Matthew Fox (*Coming* 57). However, spiritual authorities may subtly imply the panentheistic dimensions of individual spirituality, such as Mary Margaret Funk (See Chapter Four) who explains that "*lectio*-ing" experience or nature may be a practical way to reach a union with God (*Tools Matter* 16).

American Spiritual Trends

As I have pointed out in Chapter One using recent PEW Institute research, Americans are increasingly identifying with spirituality rather than religion. Also, contemporary Americans are resisting against older dogma-centered spiritualties (Tanquerey's *The Spiritual Life*). The evolution of Ignatian spirituality found in Silf's *Inner Compass* reveals this as well. The persuasive power of dissociative strategies within contemporary Catholic and Anglican texts can sync with an evolving history. However, a more profound dimension is at work than mere historical trending: dissatisfaction with the present and anxiety of the future. In *Permanence and Change*, Kenneth Burke states that there is a natural dissociation that comes with spiritual inquiry and adherence. Spirituality and mysticism mark separation from practical, contingent "concepts of duty." Spirituality (which Burke titles "mysticism") sees "behind these contingencies"; spirituality becomes more relevant "when the contingent criteria of action are frustrated or have in some other way have been brought into disrepute." Spirituality provides judgment criteria in which the "whole ailing world of contingent demands can be appraised. Otherwise, one is trapped in a circle of self-perpetuating judgments … *ad inf.* and *ad nauseum*" (223). In other words, spirituality is looked to when practical day-to-day activity and duties are deficient of human purpose and meaning. To link this with dissociative argumentation, spirituality is looked to when the practical day-to-day functions of *religion*, that is the "contingent criteria of action are frustrated" or "brought into disrepute." "Mysticism," Burke writes, is the "furthest reach of the search for new perspectives" (223). It is a dissociative

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reach for an ultimate dissociation: a yearning for an overhaul of human activity that moves beyond the traditional and the comfortable. Mysticism and spirituality, as Burke explains, "may be expected to flourish at periods when traditional ways of seeing and doing (with their accompanying verbalizations) have begun to lose their authority" (223). Contemporary interest in spirituality demonstrates a desire for a renewed sense of purpose that is currently not being found in tradition. In this Burkean perspective of spirituality, dissociation is evident: a break from comfortable tradition into a renewed fresh energy. In a sense, spirituality contains a restless revolutionary spirit. This indicates a persuasive dimension of dissociation found within a discourse of spirituality: finding one's active place in the present and unknowable future, rather than passively defining oneself by the past.

An emphasis on the present and future syncs again with Heraclitus' version of cosmic spirituality, a similar spirituality found in contemporary Catholic and Anglican discourse of spirituality. As I have shown earlier, writers such as Mary Margaret Funk and Matthew Fox use traditional Christian mystics as historical reference points to teach certain aspects of spirituality and contemplation; however, the writers are very practical about practicing contemplation in the present moment as means to improve the future. Also, in other chapters, I have also shown that spirituality and contemplative practice is flexible to kairos and subjective states. Similarly, Heraclitus also admits that nothing remains the same: rivers flow, the sun moves, and people change (94). Heraclitus posits that constant change is inevitable; according to Heraclitus, it

is futile to create a semblance of consistency through religious conversion or even dialectical thinking (94). Instead, there is a natural unity to the world via shared reality, and shared types of experiences and inquiries. From this perspective, Heraclitus celebrates the mystery found within present and future moments. After all, Heraclitus famously proclaimed "no man ever steps in the same river twice" (94): an adage depicting the flux of present and future. This is something found in spiritual practice. Rather than in recycling tradition and trying to "step in the same river twice," spirituality offers adaptive solutions for the present and future. The differing temporal emphasis dissociates spirituality from tradition based religious argumentation.

Based on Burke's understanding of spirituality, Americans may be embracing spirituality because they are wrestling with present and future crisis. Americans may not be satisfied with their current state; they may not be happy with the inheritance of authority and tradition. This public dissatisfaction is nothing new. Robert Wuthnow examines the American ebb and flow of religious and spiritual seeking and dwelling in his 1998 sociological investigation of spirituality. In *After Heaven*, Wuthnow plots a shifting historical narrative. In the 1960s, he discusses, Americans looked to individual spiritual experimentation and secular freedoms to "fully participate in the world" rather than be cloistered in religious communities (78). After the 1960s, a general upsurge returned Americans to more institutional spiritualties, and back into the arms of religion. While 1960s and early 1970s celebrated freedom, the late 1970s and 1980s celebrated religious strictness, asceticism,

and fundamentalism (85). In the 1990s, the trend took another turn: taking care of the "inner self" became increasingly popular. The perspective that "all that exists is what one is able to experience" becomes a prevalent philosophy, along with deep questions about the meaning/meaninglessness of life; consequently, therapy as well as self-help was bound to spiritual questing in the 1990s (146-149). Contemporary Catholic and Anglican spiritual texts indicate that the yearning to take care of the "inner self" is more prevalent in the 21st century than ever. Even in religious spheres, such as Catholic and Anglican spheres, spirituality is being rhetorically dissociated from religious rhetorics. This rhetorical shift in these religious spheres could be a natural reaction to 21st century cultural desires. Similar to Luther's dissociative rhetorical construction that articulated many popular sentiments regarding the Catholic Church in the 16th century, contemporary Catholic and Anglican writers of spirituality and contemplation are adapting to an emerging and current popular trend. Writers of these spiritual texts provide avenues for audiences to seek beyond religious doctrine, techniques to embrace subjective experience for spiritual nourishment, and the freedom to personally question and affirm God.

Concluding Remarks

Dissociation between spirituality and religiousness occurs in contemporary spiritual texts as a means to guide, teach, and persuade audiences; however, it would be reductionist to categorize texts as "solely spiritual" or "solely religious." The contemporary texts that I have investigated

highlight spirituality; yet, there still exists an underlying religiousness that is not fronted. Religiousness is not dissociated into oblivion; religiousness is dissociated into the background; the argumentation within contemporary spiritual discourse does not depend on doctrine, dogma, or formal logic as seen in catechisms or religious taxonomies of spirituality such as Tanquerey's *The Spiritual Life*. As shown throughout this chapter, argumentation is displayed in a liberal manner in contemporary spiritual texts: in a more rhetorical manner rather than a dialectical manner. This dissociative property separates it from more traditional religious discourse and allows it to sync with postmodern awarenesses and adhere contemporary audiences.

In turn, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's mission is illustrated by the schema of dissociation shown in contemporary Anglican and Catholic discourse of spirituality. The cultural context since the 1960, and especially since the 1990s into today, has been more resistant to authoritative and traditionally religious truth claims. As Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca explain, dissociative schemas allow incompatibilities to be diffused by "remodeling our conception of reality" (413). The resolution through separation prevents the same incompatibilities from being as abrasive. The method of "ironing-out-differences-by-highlighting-difference" creates a better understanding of the relationship and prevents differences from being disruptive in the future. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca state that at a practical level "the dissociation of notions amounts to compromise, but, on the theoretical level, it leads to a solution that will also be valid for the future," and still, the authors are sure to

mention, "it preserves, at least partially, the incompatible elements" (413). Religion, religious rhetoric, and religious modes of truth are not being obliterated via the scheme of dissociation. Rather, spirituality is being offered as a solution that can propel the discussion productively into the future. It provides practical spiritual perspectives and contemplative action that adhere contemporary postmodern audiences – within religions, between religions, and outside of religions.

CHAPTER SIX

COOPERATION OF SCHEMA, IMPLICATIONS, AND AVENUES OF

INQUIRY

Within today's postmodern climate, scholarly conversations about the

nature of religion and God are deep, wonderfully expansive, and complete in

their incompleteness. Many of these investigations embrace the complexity of

religious experience, apophatic theology, and the limits of communication. The

momentum from my previous chapter about spiritual dissociation can

gracefully move my inquiry into realms of postmodern religious and spiritual

studies such as the recent critical work of John D. Caputo (*The Insistence of

God: A Theology of Perhaps*, 2013), Amy Hollywood (*Sensible Ecstasy:

Mysticism, Sexual Difference, and the Demands of His*tory, 2002) or Richard

Kearney (*Anatheism: Returning to God After God*, 2011). This work is rich

with relevant cultural implications regarding postmodern spirituality. Yet,

instead of moving further into the out to sea, I will end my study by returning

to shore: grounded, practical, and humanistic.

Based on the previous chapters of analysis, I will navigate the necessity

of creative rhetorics, inclusivity, and plurality as displayed by the discourse of

spirituality; this closely relates to the cooperation of associative argumentative

schema and dissociative argumentative schema found in this discourse. I will

then discuss how the discourse of spirituality promotes action, service, and

global resolution. Finally I will remark upon the importance of the study.

Based on these concluding but not final discernments, I will extract

implications for the field of Rhetoric and Composition and future inquiry.

Ideology and Symbols: Cooperation of Association and Dissociation

To begin to explore the necessity of creative rhetorics, plurality, and

action within the discourse of spirituality, I must explain the relationship

between rhetoric and ideology. In the contemporary discourse of spirituality,

experience is persuasively shared: both uniquely subjective and categorically.

Despite spirituality becoming more popular (as shown via the PEW research),

the discourse of spiritualty does not currently occupy hegemonic status

("Nones"; "U.S. Landscape"). Such hegemonic expository discourse is

generally occupied by science (Crowley 66); however, as I have shown vis a

vis Kenneth Burke in *Permanence in Change*, spirituality can serve a similar

mission as science: creating general commonalities, and thus, referential

solidarity (222-223). Due to the integral subjectivity found in the discourse of

spirituality, spirituality is removed from the objectivity of science; spirituality

is also removed from a reliance on hegemonic ideology. Ideology, as defined

by Sharon Crowley, is "any system within which beliefs, symbols, and images

are articulated in such a way that they assemble a more or less coherent

depiction of reality and/or establish a hierarchy of values"; hegemonic

ideology is the dominant version of ideology (65-66). It seems that spirituality

occupies a unique position. Discourse of spirituality dissociates itself from

hegemonic discourse – and also separates itself from discourses that, Crowley tells us, aggressively fight for hegemonic domination (e.g. apocalypticism, Christian evangelism).

Spirituality and the discourse of spirituality seem to revolve around what Crowley entitles, ideological *belief*. Ideological belief differs from hegemonic discourse and practices. Ideological belief is more readily questioned and not blindly accepted; it concerns a population of fewer people and demands more defense because ideological belief does not "go without saying" like hegemonic ideology (Crowley 66). As previously stated, the celebration of individual subjective experience and interpretation is a crucial dissociative component of spirituality and the accompanying discourse. To rhetorically facilitate this dissociative component within spiritual discourse, ideological belief relies upon symbols (Crowley 65).

Symbols produce and maintain belief as well as represent belief. Symbols are representational vehicles of belief; the representations are indeterminate and potentially unstable (Crowley 65). This interpretative digestion of symbols by the subject allows the subject to construct the meaning of the epideictic discourse of spirituality in respect to the subject's spiritual experience. The use of symbolic discourse specifically found in metaphor, parable, and imaginative narrative is more prevalent in the discourse of spirituality (historical mysticism as well as contemporary epideictic discourse of spirituality) than in Catholic and Anglican religious discourse. Certainly, symbols pervade religious discourse, as they always have; however, the

meanings of religious symbols are usually dictated in an objective manner. Again, religious catechisms provide examples of this religious rigidity. Roman Catholic and Anglican catechisms define religious symbols and symbolic rites so that religious practitioners will be united in ideological interpretation (*The Catholic Catechism*; The *Catechism of the Protestant Episcopal Church*; St. John). This type of objectivity/intersubjectivity deflates the persuasive strength of symbol-using. When there is more emphasis on "belief" rather than the "ideology," as found in the discourse of spirituality, the subject is empowered to interpret the symbol subjectively, more intimately commune with the message, and adapt the message to personal kairos.

For example, the post-Second Vatican Council *Catholic Catechism* presents a "synthesis of the essential and fundamental contents of Catholic doctrine" (9), which accordingly "should be seen therefore as a unified whole" (11); moreover, the text explicitly mentions that the catechism "does not set out to provide the adaptation of doctrinal presentations and catechistical methods required by the differences of culture, age, spiritual maturity, and social and ecclesial condition among all those to whom it is addressed" (11). The text is referential and rigid. The text is also rhetorical in the Burkean sense of realizing the "possibilities of classification in its *partisan* aspects " in relation to groups (*Rhetoric of Motives* 22): the group of Roman Catholics in relation to other religions. However, the interpretative power of the symbolic is deflated. Symbols, such as commandments, components of matrimony, and

even literary symbols within The Lord's Prayer, are defined for the community.

In contrast, the symbolic elements found in the discourse of spirituality work in a different manner: symbolic interpretation fuels the discourse. The history of Christian mysticism is filled with examples: Teresa of Avila's *Interior Castle*, John of the Cross' *The Dark Night of the Soul*, and *The Cloud of Unknowing*, just to name a few. From the titles alone, we can see a blatant emphasis upon the symbolic and metaphor. In the contemporary discourse of spirituality, the symbolic tradition has not waned. Martin Laird's work is brimming with symbols that facilitate his teaching. In *Into the Sunlit Land*, he has chapters entitled "The Wild Hawk of the Mind" and "The Three Doorways of the Present Moment"; in *A Sunlit Absence*, he has chapters entitled "Standing at the Gate of the Heart," "Our Collection of Videos," and "The Open Porches of the Mind: On Silence and Noise." Laird develops the symbols in each chapter and frequently refers to them throughout the texts.

How does symbolic work within spiritual discourse? Beyond the basic Saussurian signification of words, symbols work at a higher level within spiritual discourse. Since ineffable content resists linguistic expression, symbolic language provides a more complex vocabulary to combat referential incompetency. Symbols are abstract and flexible, thus conveying and mirroring a similar type of message: abstract and flexible. Moreover, the symbolic allows heightened subjective participation in the discourse. Kenneth Burke explains this symbolic function in *The Rhetoric of Motives*:

The *Symbolic* should be at peace, in that the individual substances, or

entities, or constituted acts are there considered in their consequences,

hence outside the realm of conflict. For individual universes, as such,

do not compete. Each merely *is*, being its own self-sufficient realm of

discourse. […] Within the rules of Symbolic, the individual is treated

merely as a self-subsistent unit proclaiming its particular nature. (22-

23)

In other words, symbols leave room for individual agency and subjectivity,

which can diffuse the dangers of competitive vying for objective truth. Of

course there are different degrees of the symbolic. Poetry and aesthetic

symbolism allows this Burkean "peace" to be much more consummate. There

is no right answer in such interpretative symbolism; therefore, there is no

conflict or competition. However, in contemporary epideictic discourse of

spirituality, the writers provide interpretative direction for the audience;

rhetoric's role is to lead the audience to a general interpretation and tame the

wildness.

For instance, in the chapter "The Wild Hawk of the Mind" found in

Into a Sunlit Land, Martin Laird tells the personal story where a man walks

through open vast fields with four dogs. Three of the four dogs bounded in

front of the man through the fields, taking advantage of the freedom and space.

The fourth dog stayed close to the owner and ran in tight circles. Why did the

fourth dog not run through the open fields? The fourth dog spent most of its life in a cage; therefore, to "run" only meant to run in tight circles. The dog didn't know how to run with absolute freedom. Laird compares this to the human condition. He says that we are free but the "memory of the cage remains"; like the fourth dog, we remain running tight small circles even though we're "immersed in open fields of grace and freedom", i.e. spiritual grace and freedom (*Into the Sunlit Land* 19-20).

The concepts of "grace" and "freedom" are difficult to explain in respect to spiritual awareness, experience, and action. Through the narrative representation, Laird uses metaphoric thinking to convey these ideas in a persuasive and practical manner. This aligns more with I.A. Richard's understanding of metaphor rather than the Aristotelian understanding of metaphor (Foss 33). Laird uses metaphor to show a common relationship between two group of concepts: the first is personal anecdote about dogs and the second group concerns spiritual states of mind and heart. As in the Richardian view of metaphor, the association between the story and spiritual concepts provides the experience that an audience needs to understand spiritual referents (Foss 33). Metaphor provides some of the experience needed for audiences to adhere to the message. To quote Richards "what is needed for the wholeness of an experience is not always naturally present, and metaphor supplies an excuse by which what is needed may be smuggled in" (240). Richards is particularly relevant here because he emphasizes the centrality of *experience*. The discourse of spirituality pivots upon the development of

subjective experience and the transferring of messages about subjective experience; contemporary epideictic discourse of spirituality promotes contemplative and spiritual action as well. Therefore, metaphor, in the Richardian sense, a vehicle of experience transference, is a crucial communicative and rhetorical component in this discourse.

Metaphor as used to convey experience is not relied upon so heavily in the discourse of religion as it is throughout the discourse of spirituality. One reason for this is that religion is a broad area. It covers an array of specifics: church law, ethics, prayer, philosophy, homiletics, and spirituality. The pervasive use of metaphor as seen in the writing of Laird, moves the discourse of spirituality outside of religious discourse. Through literary devices and through the inherent negotiation of subjective experience found in metaphor, spirituality is dissociated from religion. The type of metaphor emphasizes subjective experience in way that highlights something different than religion: belief rather than ideology.

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca explain that writers choose to "awaken a metaphor" as means to dissociate literal meaning from metaphorical meaning if the discussion demands such rhetorical maneuvering (410). Discussions of spirituality, which are experience-based discussions, demand metaphorical transferences due to the nature and content of the discussions themselves. Simultaneously, metaphor functions in an associative manner as well. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca categorize metaphor under "The Relations for Establishing the Structure of Reality," Chapter Three of *The New Rhetoric*

(398-410). They classify metaphor as a type of analogy: a useful associative tool (399). How does analogy work? Analogy compares a point of discussion (the "theme") to a comparable point of reference outside of the discussion (the "*phoros*"). Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca explain that analogies (and therefore, metaphor) play especially crucial roles in arguments that associate themes "from the spiritual domain" with *phoros* from the "domain of senses." They explain: "the analogy makes it possible to build the theme with a structure that seems plausible, and this is particularly helpful since the structure cannot be known directly" (381). So in the aforementioned context of Laird's work, we see the use of metaphor, a more sophisticated form of analogy. Laird connects spiritual concepts of "grace" and "freedom" to the "domain of the senses": fields, dogs, running.

Why have I spotlighted metaphor in such depth? First, the rhetorical use of metaphor in the discourse of spirituality provides an emphasis on belief rather than ideology. This rhetorical strategy actively engages readers' individual subjectivities, increasing audience inclusivity and agency. As I have shown in Chapter Five, the inclusivity is a dissociative property of the discourse. Yet the dissociative properties of metaphor does not mean that associative properties disappear. Metaphor demonstrates the cooperation of associative schemes and disassociation schemes of argumentation. Each mechanism works simultaneously and depends on one another. Based on the categorical layout of *The New Rhetoric* (i.e. the separate sections for association and disassociation), it may seem that associative strategies may not

work harmoniously with dissociative strategies. However, Perelman and Olbrecht-Tyteca clearly state that the techniques compliment each other and imply one another: "the same form which unities various elements into a well-organized whole dissociates them from the neutral background from which it separates them" (190). Metaphorical constructs, as consistently relied upon by writers of contemporary discourse of spirituality, show this harmonious working of dissociative separation and associative unity.

The Discourse of Spirituality as Educational Discourse

Many religious texts seek to convert audiences and such conversion offers a clear persuasive agenda; however, epideictic texts regarding spirituality, as I have shown in this study, do not seek to *convert* audiences but rather to allow audiences to understand particular existing spiritual realities via display – and this requires much more subtle persuasive operations. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca suggest that epideictic discourse is educational and "less directed toward changing beliefs than to strengthening the adherence to what is already accepted" (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 54). What is "already accepted" in spiritual epideictic discourse? That there is something greater than ourselves, and that people can sync with this "something greater" and have subjective spiritual experiences. Via epideictic discourse, writers of spirituality attempt to "strengthen the adherence" by justifying and specifying to audiences of this subjective reality. Since the existence of spiritual reality may oppose accepted perspectives (e.g. material reality), specific justification and

description of spirituality is required from the writer. As seen throughout history, there has been a distinct need to justify one's personal truths despite accepted norms and threats of persecution (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*); simultaneously, there is a supplementary need for convincing and persuasive *delivery* in order to convey the reasonableness of these truths and resist such persecution. Overall, the rhetoric of spirituality operates differently than merely converting audiences to devotional belief. In the rhetorical composition of spirituality, writers do not adapt audiences to their point of view, but rather allow audiences to see their point of view in reasonable manner.

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca rightly posit that all arguments unfold in relation to an audience; audience receptivity is the source of an argument's strength and effectiveness (5; Crosswhite, Rhetoric Unconsciousness 393). Reasons, evidence, and proof are typical components of strengthening audience receptivity; however, the discourse of spirituality involves arguments that do not have these components as clearly defined. As we have seen in Chapters Three through Five, spiritual awarenesses are subjectively experienced and subjectively perceived as truth by the writers – the writers nudge readers into a similar understanding.

For a clearer version of subjective perceptions found in discourse of spirituality, I consult Michel Foucault who addresses subjectivity throughout his corpus. Since Foucault is an important philosopher of subjectivity, I find that I must acknowledge his contribution to the subject of spirituality – even if I am differentiating myself from Foucault's research approach. Overall, the

discussion of Foucault helps elucidate dimensions of subjectivity, conviction, and conversion found in the discourse of spirituality. How do I use Foucault? As a contrast. In doing so I demonstrate how a goal of my study was not to investigate subjectivity, but rather to demonstrate findings about discourse and rhetorical construction. Why is this difference is important for me to establish? A reader of my study may raise objections or questions regarding belief, conversion, and expressions of truth. The work of Foucault, despite the differences, helps illuminates my study and perspective in relation to potential avenues of discussion or objection – and clarifies the discourse of spirituality as Perelmanian epideictic discourse which does not seek to convert audiences but rather to educate audiences.

Where and how does Foucault address spirituality and discourse? Foucault specifically discusses subjective spirituality and the expression of truth in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* (1981-1982 lectures) and *The Government of Self and Others* (1982-1983 lectures). In these lectures, Foucault considers the intersection of rhetoric, argumentation, and pedagogy in relation to the subjective expression of truth and spirituality. In *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, Foucault states, "spirituality postulates that the truth is never given to the subject by right…The truth is only given to the subject at a price that brings the subject's being into play" and "It [spirituality] postulates that for the subject to have right of access to the truth he must be changed, transformed, shifted, and become, to some extent and up to a certain point, other than himself." (15). So according to Foucault, spirituality is not

something that one can exclusively grasp via external knowledge. The subject

plays an integral role in spirituality, in particular, *active* contemplation, rather

than passive contemplation (See Chapter One). For contemporary Catholic and

Anglican writers of spirituality as well as Foucault, the subject does not

passively receive spiritual truths as external knowledge, but the subject must

actively integrate one's being into such spiritual truths. What does this

integration of one's being suggest? It suggests that spiritual awarenesses do not

lean on material realities but rather, it allows for spiritual realities of non-

reality, or worlds of simulation (Baudrillard). The communicative signs within

this type of discourse can be "treated as if they were reality and are no longer

taken to represent reality" (Brummett 6). Therefore, the discourse of

spirituality can be seen as a discourse of subjective experience that points to a

reality of non-reality. This overall complex nature of spiritual realities makes

it to be a problematic topic when linguistically represented and argued; yet this

does not mean that it should not be taken seriously. If a statement is written

and the writer is motivated to write that statement, then the statement possesses

some type of importance; as Foucault rightly posits about linguistic

representation, "a sentence cannot be non-significant; it refers to something, by

virtue of the fact that it is a statement" (*Archaeology* 90); therefore, based on

this understanding, investigations regarding such "sentences" and "statements"

of spirituality are warranted.

Foucault discusses spirituality as a subjective conversion experience

that can remove 'the subject from his current status and condition" (*eros*), or

may require "work of the self by the self" (*askesis*) (*Hermeneutics* 15-16);

however, Foucault makes a crucial move from private experience to the public

statements about private experience or private truth. Foucault defines this type

of expression of truth as *parresia*. More specifically, he defines parresia as

"the frankness, freedom, and openness that leads one to say what one has to

say, as one wishes to say it, when one wishes to say it, and in the form one

thinks necessary for saying it" (*Hermeneutics* 372). Although he discusses

parresia in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, Foucault fully unpacks this

concept in The *Government of Self and Others* lectures. As the title of these

second lectures suggest, he ultimately uses *parresia* to illuminate the

subjective expression of truth and power in the political sphere; however, he

recognizes its place in numerous other fields, stating that the subject tethers

herself to the truth differently via different contexts and roles, such as "seer,

prophet, philosopher, or scientist in a scientific institution" (69). The writer of

personal spiritual truths within the discourse of spirituality seems to be

somewhere in between "seer," "prophet," and "philosopher."

  As I have shown throughout this study, discourse analysis seems to

play a large part in understanding specific modes of parresia since parresia

concerns types of expression, rhetoric, and argumentation; however, Foucault

warns against this type of analysis. He states that *parresia* is truth-telling via

philosophical discourse; the philosopher is "the parrhesiaist, the only

parresiaist, which the rhetorician, the man of rhetoric cannot be or function as."

(Walzer 6; *Government* 336). In more temperate explanation, Foucault clarifies

that *parresia* can "call upon the methods of rhetoric. But this is not necessarily

the objective and purpose of parresia" (*Government* 53). Since it is not crucial

to rhetoric that the discourse speaks the truth, Foucault mentions, *parresia*

should not be understood from the angle of rhetoric; in other words, *parresia*

does not "belong" to rhetoric. He also cautions that *parresia* should not be

understood as exclusively demonstration or debate (i.e. argumentation), or

pedagogy (53-56).

Foucault's *via negativa* explanation of parresia includes a key caveat

that relates directly to my study. Foucault cautions against analyzing discursive

strategies as a means to analyze parresia. Foucault states, and rightly so, that

the *speaker* should be analyzed, not the discourse, as a means to understand

parresia (56). However, in my investigation of rhetorical epideictic discourse

of spirituality, I inverted the terms. Why did I do that? Because my goals are

different. This is not a study of subjectivity. My research aims are different.

Instead of understanding the nature of parresia as an aim, I am exploring the

nature of discourse as an aim. In other words, my investigation sought out

parresia, specifically spiritual parresia which "call on the methods of rhetoric,"

in order to better understand the rhetorical construction, argumentation, and

epideictic discourse. Also, as Arthur Walzer highlights in his 2013 *Rhetoric

Society Quarterly* article, "Parresia, Foucault, and the Classical Rhetorical

Tradition," parresia can be very rhetorically artful if seen through the lens of

rhetorical tradition, rather than seen as exclusively philosophical through the

lens of Foucault. Parresiastic spiritual texts are far from Foucault's unartful

version, yet still maintain Foucault's emphasis on subjective sincerity. Spiritual texts involve balanced parresia; they convey risky and frank truthful content, yet do so in an artistically rhetorical manner. Walzer's perspective syncs with the view of rhetorical argument as techne that I have framed in Chapter Two. The discourse of spirituality, as seen through the lens of composition and rhetoric, demonstrates Atwill's techne – as well as McKeon's "architectonic productive art."

How does this understanding relate to "conversion"? The parresiastic aspect of spirituality involves the communication of subjective truth; when used alongside Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's term "adherence of minds," it seems that the audience *needs* to be converted to the truth of the writer. However, as previously stated, spiritual texts are epideictic and educational, so conversion is not necessary. How does the adherence of minds work in an epideictic manner within spiritual discourse? Although, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca do not define "adherence," the common use of the word is implied in their work: "sticking together" or to "resist being parted" (Goodwin 216). Moreover, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca recognize not one ontological "adherence" in the "adherence of minds," but rather, the adherence of minds is characterized by "variable intensity" and that "nothing constrains us to limit our study to a particular degree of adherence characterized by self-evidence" (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 4; Goodwin 217). In the context of discourse of spirituality, there are two important adherences to factor into the matrix of rhetoric and argumentation: (1.) the adherence of the writer/speaker to their

own spiritual convictions, and (2.) the audience's adherence to the spiritual

convictions of the writer/speaker. There are other adherences involved with

communication, but for the sake of the discourse of spirituality, these two

adherences of conviction are the most important. The second form of spiritual

conversion adherences is a possible effect of the discourse: an adherence that

possesses more intensity since it alters an audience's subjective conviction or

conception of the truth. However, spiritual or religious conversion of an

audience does not seem to be the primary goal of contemporary Catholic and

Anglican spiritual texts, but rather, as stated previously, *teaching* seems to be

the primary goal.

Conviction is a strong adherence, especially in Perelman and

Olbrechts-Tyteca's use of the term. Conviction is not directed to the external

state of things, but rather it is directed to the inner meanings or importances of

those external states of things (Goodwin 220). Conviction requires active

participation of the subject in order to sustain the conviction state; moreover, a

conviction may very well be a truth that the subject will theoretically die for: a

similar martyr aspect to that of Foucault's parresia (*Government* 56). And

also, similar to parresia, conviction is bound to the subject's identity of "who a

person is" (Goodwin 222). Unlike this subjective adherence of the

speaker/writer to their own conviction, an audience's adherence to a

writer/speaker's conviction has no necessary relation to their own conviction

of the truth. An audience must adhere to the writer/speaker's conviction insofar

as it aids the activity of learning. As Jean Goodwin points out in her article

"Perelman, Adhering, and Conviction,"

> Adherence, the sticking of a person and a proposition, is not necessarily
>
> the result of a choice for which a person is responsible; a person need
>
> not give adherence in order to have an adherence. It is only by
>
> admitting such unchosen adherences that we can make sense of the
>
> notion that arguments have force. A proposition with a solid argument
>
> can compel a person toward adherence. Faced with a solid argument
>
> presented by another, a person feels not that she sticks to it, but that she
>
> is stuck with it. She has not chosen to be so, although she may have
>
> some choices about how she responds to her predicament. In such cases
>
> the sources of the stable contiguity between the person and the
>
> proposition lies at least in part outside the person; adherence is not
>
> something she does. (230)

As I have shown throughout the numerous textual examples found in this

study, Catholic and Anglican spiritual texts revolve around Goodwin's type of

rhetorical adherence: not the conversion of audience conviction, but rather the

type of adherence, albeit temporary, formed by argumentation and persuasion.

This type of adherence fuels the pedagogical aspects of the epideictic discourse

of spirituality – and reveals that the discourse is meant for education than

conversion. Clearly, this is an inclusive rhetorical purpose that enables an

inclusive "universal audience" more than a limited audience. Moreover, this

type of educational discourse creates a "disposition to act" rather a "decision to

act," aligning the discourse of spirituality with the functions of philosophical thought, giving agency to individual readers of the text, and combating audiences' temptations to fall prey to "violent argumentation" or propaganda (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 54). From this perspective, the discourse of spirituality can be seen as a boon to inclusive democratic practice - effectively acknowledging difference(s) and aligning epideictic discourse with educational display rather than ceremonial praise or blame.[14]

Dangers within Pluralism and Inclusivity

The inclusive educational perspective of spirituality is not without its dangers. As Jeffery Ringer (*College English* 75.3) and Michael DePalma (*CCC* 63.2) point out, the overlap of identity, belief, and religion found in writing about faith requires rhetorical awareness. As I have shown throughout my investigation, the discourse of spirituality requires rhetorical awareness as well. Ringer mentions that this can be seen through the lens of Kenneth Burke's "casuistic stretching." Casuistic stretching is a process of updating where "one introduces new principles while theoretically remaining true to old principles" (Burke, *Attitudes* 229; Ringer, 274); the "truly liquid attitude" toward language leads to a "firmer kind of certainty" without the deceptive qualities of ideological persuasion (Burke, *Attitudes* 230-231; Ringer 274). Clearly, casuistic stretching is similar to McKeon's commonplace of commonplaces: using memory and invention to innovate pluralistic solutions for the present

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[14] As active freedom fighters that fought for the Jewish resistance and against Nazi Germany, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca would certainly applaud these dimensions of contemporary spiritual discourse.

and future. Unlike McKeon, Burke points out that the stretching process, absorbing past perspectives into new perspectives, can be impure. A rhetor can pervert the casuistry as a means to intentionally deceive an audience. In other words, the rhetor can manipulate old perspectives in a way that audiences will be willing to assume new principles without realizing it. This would clearly be an unethical form of persuasion: identities manipulated without the audience being consciously aware. Moreover, the rhetor can potentially deceive and manipulate *herself*, as she inadvertently stretches old principles into new principles in making particular discourse choices (Ringer 274). The manipulative strategies are concealed: at work without her actively aware of them. Again, she is not consciously aware of the identity shift. Through the choices within the discourse, she feels that she is remaining true to past principals, however, she is truly altering her beliefs and identity without knowing it. As Burke explains, impure casuistic stretching can lead to "demoralization," undercutting an individual's morals and beliefs (*Attitudes* 229; Ringer 274).

Can "demoralization" be evident in the discourse of spirituality? Possibly. Casuistic stretching does not only happen in the movement between one belief to another belief. It also occurs when one is moving from absolute truth or dualism to relativism. This move into a productive relativism is described by McKeon as a move from traditional "commonplaces" to a "commonplace of creativity" / "commonplace of commonplaces." Since the discourse of spirituality celebrates a form of relativism, a casuistic stretch

drives more objective religious ways of understanding into more relative

spiritual ways of understanding. This movement could potentially undermine

the original morals and beliefs of the individual. In other words, although the

rhetor and audience think they are maintaining past beliefs while updating

them, they are in fact overhauling their beliefs.

This is a danger that is a legitimate concern as the discourse of

spirituality evolves into the future. After all, is it right for a discourse to

overwhelm an audience into abandoning their right of absolute truth? As

DePalma, Ringer, and Webber explain in their article, "(Re)Charting the

(Dis)Courses of Faith and Politics, or Rhetoric and Democracy in the

Burkean Barnyard": exclusivities have a role in healthy democracy. A truly

democratic society allows the freedom of close-mindedness to exist - and this

serves a productive function. Furthermore, in his 2013 *College English* article,

Ringer uses William Perry's work in composition pedagogy to explain that in

the college student population, many students, upon the immersion into

pluralism, will retreat back into dualism as a coping mechanism. Therefore, not

every individual or population celebrates casuistic stretching. In fear of

demoralization, individuals can maintain old principals without absorbing the

new principals.

This retreating away from casuistic stretching may seem like stagnation

that counters McKeon's call for a future oriented pluralism of creativity and

pragmatism. However, the approach remains pluralistic if the individuals

remain actively thinking about the casuistic stretching, subjecting it

"continually to *conscious* attention" as Burke advocates (*Attitudes* 232; Ringer 274). Within the discourse of spirituality, individuals have the power and opportunity to either accept the casuistic stretching found in the discourse of spirituality or to retreat back into dualism. Either way, the discourse of spirituality provides a safe haven of discussion and instruction where all audiences are welcome and those choices are free to be made.

Contemplative Action / Contemplatives in Action

In Chapter One, I mention that I would explore how the discourse of spirituality propels audiences into action. We have seen that the discourse of spirituality advocates for a spirituality with pragmatic ends (e.g. the organization of one's life, peace, etc.). Spiritual texts adhere audiences to a message and convince audiences to try particular contemplative strategies as a means to help improve the individual lives of the practitioners. As I have shown in Chapter Three, this type of pragmatic argumentation leads to real world action. But do these contemporary texts explicitly call the practitioners to action? Is spirituality a vehicle for social action, rather than individual action? We have seen that the texts instructive contemplative action (i.e. seeking and uniting with God); however do the texts instruct audiences how do be, what Ignatius of Loyola referred to as "contemplatives in action"?

Firstly, what does "contemplatives in action" mean? Jeronimo Nadel, a 16th century companion and biographer of Ignatius describes that Ignatius "perceived and contemplated the presence of God and an attraction to spiritual

things, being a contemplative person while in the midst of action" (Genass 44).

For Ignatius, a loving union with God is not confined to prayers, but is also

enacted through external loving actions and service (Genass 231). The

contemporary discourse of spirituality embraces this spiritual philosophy and

adapts it for the present age. For a majority of the texts that I analyzed, the

writers call the audiences to action at the conclusion of their texts, the last 20-

30 pages. These calls to action not only imply spiritual and rhetorical

inclusivity but also active call for solitary and resolution that extends into the

social sphere.

Unlike many of the rhetorical and argumentative techniques that I have

discerned and deciphered in detail, the calls to social action are explicit:

expository and rhetorical. For instance, Thomas Keating, in "Invitation to

Love" (published in 1992), writes, "This [spiritual] commitment addresses the

whole of our being and all our activity, whatever our states of life may be"

(242). Spirituality is external and internal; it affects activity; it "does

something in the world"; therefore, it can positively influence the world.

Moreover, Keating is sure to mention that spirituality extends externally for all

committed practitioners of all "states of life": monastics, clergy, the laity,

young, old, men, and women. The externality speaks to everyone; and

therefore helps the rhetorical aim of inclusivity. Keating qualifies the

externality in the last sentence of the essay, He writes, "the Holy Spirit is

inviting lay persons and those in active ministries to become contemplatives

where they are, to move beyond the restricted world of selfishness into service

of the communities, and to join all others of goodwill in addressing the global problems of our time: poverty, hunger, oppression, violence, and above all, the refusal to love" (242). In this statement, Keating equates "becoming contemplatives" with "service of communities" in which the contemplative joins "all others of goodwill." Contemplation combats the "restricted world of selfishness" and embraces social justice.

Other examples of social justice and communal service found in contemporary spiritual discourse can be found in Matthew Fox's works. An exemplary instance similar to Keating is found in Fox's *Original Blessing*. While discussing the "newness" and "metanoia" of his action driven "New Creation" mysticism/spirituality, Fox explains,

> What is newest about our times is the global demand of our consciousness. The global pain, and global interconnections of beauty and pain. The invitation to create a global civilization of love/justice and ecological harmony is a new invitation. And so too are the global means to carry out the New Creation. […] The New Creation will be God's work and our work. We will truly be co-creators in this process of transformation. (256)

Although perilously coming close to "cult-like rhetoric" here, Fox's "New Creation" refers to the utopian goal sought after through global mystical practice and experience. And as he explains, the harmony will be "co-created"; therefore, a divine union between human beings needs to be first established via spiritual/mystic practice. Like Keating, Fox sees spirituality as positively

affecting social justice and communal relations. Also like Keating, Fox uses the word "invitation": a term that rhetorically urges all readers to accept the invitation and join the cause.

The rhetorical movement from internal spiritual practice into social justice is clear in this discourse; but how exactly does it work? How does the internal spiritual practice lead to external influence? What is the logic behind a seemingly large jump? Two terms used in the Fox passage can illustrate the logic: "global interconnections" and "ecological." Spirituality and contemplation allows practitioners to feel beyond the self, beyond the ego, beyond separateness. In her 1990 essay about postmodern spirituality, Joanna Macy emphasizes a "false reification" of the self: a myth concerning the separate individual as "unit of survival." She posits that effective human survival does not demand that individuals fight against other species or against the environment – but rather, the individual must cooperate interdependently with other species and environments (40). Spirituality and methods of pondering beyond the self, can tap into these larger survival attitudes: natural interdependence of environment, life, and human solidarity. Therefore, spirituality pressures practitioners to not only to behave more altruistically, but also to embrace behaviors that are beyond altruistic. As Macy points out, altruism implies the sacrifice of an individual ego (45); since spirituality stresses the natural interdependence of life and the world, deliberate sacrifice of the ego is unnecessary. In sum, Macy understands spirituality as practitioners harmoniously syncing with the "ecology" of our world: the

environment and other human beings. Through this perspective, social justice, community, and external action are natural products of spirituality: "a homecoming to our natural interexistence with all life forms, home to our deep ecology" (47). Macy's homecoming allows for global community, goodwill, and love: components endorsed by both Keating and Fox.

As I have shown, the discourse of spirituality promotes global community and action, but do the texts offer any active communities of spiritual practice outside of religion? Do the texts foster communal organization in a more direct and practical manner? Yes. All of the sample texts regarding Centering Prayer conclude their texts in a similar manner: emphasizing community and action. As the writers explain, Centering Prayer can be a social occasion: like-minded (open-minded) contemplatives gathering together to practice contemplation, strengthen each other's methods, and combat spiritual isolation.

As Basil Pennington explains in the last chapter of *Centering Living: The Way of Centering Prayer*, it is natural to want to share good things with other people; however, spirituality does not seem like something that should be shared because it is such a private endeavor (143). American culture, due to the separation between church and state, places spirituality and religion in a sphere of privacy – especially if the population is composed of varying religions (144). Pennington advocates that contemplatives should share the gift of Centering Prayer with others as a "social responsibility." Centering Prayer can help "heighten our moral consciousness as a nation." He explains "There is

probably no way to raise consciousness more effectively, with the highest

respect for the individual, than to help others find their true self in God" (145).

So, according to Pennington, contemplatives should delicately offer Centering

Prayer to others as a "gift."

The social potentialities found through spiritual practice allows for

support systems to be constructed. These support systems discourage

potentially dangerous spiritual isolation and the "bad spiritual experiences"

found when first trying contemplative methods. Contemplative experiences are

intense experiences. Although in the popular sphere, contemplation is many

times conflated into "meditation," they are two separate activities. In the

Benedictine contemplative process of *lectio divina*, a method promoted in

much of contemplative Catholic and Anglican discourse of spirituality (e.g.

Funk's texts and many texts regarding Centering Prayer), *meditatio* is merely

the second step of a four-step process toward *contemplatio*, the union with

God; in fact, by classical Christian usage, meditation is merely a "concentrated

effort of the faculties" (Bourgeault, *Centering* 66-67). In other words, that

which is popularly understood to be mediation (e.g. yoga) is certainly a

spiritual experience– but it is scratching the surface of true contemplation and

spiritual potentiality. According to the Catholic and Anglican discourse of

spirituality, mediation is useful, but cannot be equated to the spiritual intensity

of contemplation. Based upon this kind of contemplative intensity, novice

contemplatives can easily fall into "bad experiences," physically and mentally.

Through Pennington's years of involvement with Centering Prayer, he has

noticed that "bad experiences" are not uncommon – and these "bad experiences" come from novice contemplative trying too hard. Physical afflictions can be headaches, fatigue, or tenseness; mental afflictions can be contemplatives retreating into painful memories that may emerge during Centering Prayer (Pennington 183-184). Although spiritual practice is an individual practice, spiritual communities (inside religions, interreligions, or outside religions) have a pragmatic purpose of resolving these dangers: through coaching, instruction, and post-contemplation discussions.

Pennington discusses pedagogical attitudes and methods to effectively deliver this "gift" to others. He also explains that prayer groups are a beneficial place to practice and share the gift. Church parishes are most appropriate environment for Centering Prayer Groups; however, in a dissociative move, Pennington also sees spiritual prayers happening outside of churches: as a school program, as a YMCA program, or at a meditation center (165). There are resources outside of prayer groups as well. In his book *The Path of Centering Prayer*, David Frenette offers free online resources on his website and other websites to encourage support and combat spiritual isolation (212). As he explains, resources are made available by contemporary spiritual authorities as part of the Contemplative Outreach program, which is an informational formal community of Centering Prayer.

The Contemplative Outreach revolves around its website, a key vehicle of "outreach" to the public. The website is public, extending resources, readings, and retreats primarily to Christians; however, the Contemplative

Outreach welcomes all people: all Christians and anyone willing to partake in Christian rhetoric. Similar to the attitudes expressed in the texts that I have examined, the Contemplative Outreach website is epideictic writing; it is inclusive and rhetorically effective in its inclusivity. Firstly, the organization is not meant to convert readers to Christianity. According to the "Administrative Principals" found in the "Vision" section of the website: "As members of this evolving community we are responsible to foster and transmit the Vision of Contemplative Outreach. We fulfill our Vision through attraction to the Centering Prayer practice not by proselytizing." Although it does not seek to convert audiences, the website organization is still primarily Christian. So since it is primarily a Christian dwelling place, does the Contemplative Outreach take its orders from any church institutions? According to the Vision: "We cooperate with church authorities in the areas where we work, but do not seek to become a religious or lay institute." Moreover, to ensure inclusivity of the audience, the organization tells readers "We wish to remain accessible to every one. For this reason, we do not endorse particular causes or take part in public controversies, whether religious, political or social." The Contemplative Outreach active resists any type of message that may isolate or segregate communities: by avoiding controversial subjects in their public writing, contemplation is promoted as an inclusive activity of which all people can adhere. Furthermore, like I have shown in the spiritual texts, Contemplative Outreach discourse is adaptable to present and future needs. They indicate this in the very first Administrative Principal of their vision: "Contemplative

Outreach is an evolving community with an expanding vision and deepening practice, serving the changing needs of Christian contemplatives." The community is adaptable to kairos: an appropriate awareness for a kairos-centered medium (i.e. online writing), and appropriate to the flexibility and pragmatism found in contemporary spiritual practice.

I highlight the Contemplative Outreach online discourse of spirituality for several reasons. First, it demonstrates a public realm of writing and activity that is found within the contemporary discourse of spirituality: a rhetorical move that is many times overlooked. It is a rhetorical move that is included in books. Within the discourse community, writers of books point to online spaces to continue the conversation. This allows for natural evolution of spiritual discussion, the planning of collaborative social interactions between practitioners, and kairotic adaptability of the discourse itself. Of the texts that I examined, Frenette promoted online resources the most emphatically. Frenette's text was also one of the most recent contemporary texts that I examined (published 2012). This indicates a clear technological direction of which the discourse of spirituality is moving.

Spirituality is a private practice of seeking; however, it also extends into the public sphere in generative, flexible, and inclusive ways. The discourse of spirituality does not concern only the subjectively experiences but also external social support networks and global service. The Contemplative Outreach is evidence of this. And most importantly, Contemplative Outreach is effective. It is rhetorically successful. The blend of private spiritual practice

with public writing, collaboration, and service has adhered thousands of people. According to the website, Contemplative Outreach serves over 40,000 people, supports over 120 active contemplative chapters in over 39 countries, supports over 800 prayer groups, teaches over 15,000 people in locally-hosted spiritual workshops, and formally publishes texts on contemplation and spirituality (Contemplative Outreach: About Us). Fox, Keating, and Pennington may call audiences into action and service, using spirituality as a catalyst; Frenette and the Contemplative Outreach shows publically effective action taking place in the discourse of spirituality.

Other Directions of Inquiry

Contemplative Outreach is by no means the only online space of spiritual discourse. There are other Christian spiritual organizations such as the *Center for Action and Contemplation* as founded and directed by Richard Rohr, as well as New Age spiritual wellness organizations such as Deepack Chopra's *Chopra Center for Wellbeing*. These organizations have an active online presence that composes a large part of the contemporary discourse of spirituality. My investigation into textual, published discourse of spirituality is but one dimension. I work through a variety of questions; I put a sample of contemporary discourse under a microscope of rhetorical analysis. However, a constellation of other implications can still be investigated. As I have shown, the "contemporary discourse of spirituality" machine involves a number of complex gears and levers; it also involves a number of agents and operators.

The field of rhetoric and composition is an optimal discipline in which such investigations can take place.

Which areas in particular may prove generative? As I have shown, an examination into the mechanisms of online discourse of spirituality: not only formal organizations like the Contemplative Outreach, but also online forums and the blogosphere. Since these online spaces involve more deliberative rhetorics than published texts or more static websites, it would be an opportunity to plot how deliberative discourse of spirituality organically and dialogically unfolds.

Another potential area is to investigate the uses and purposes of spirituality in the composition classroom. As I have discussed, the discourse of spirituality is rhetorically inclusive and can be dissociative from religiousness. This complicates the already existing scholarship regarding religion in the classroom. Much scholarship has been done on evangelicals in the composition classroom (Ringer; Vander Lei; DePalma). This scholarship attempts to solve the problem of faith in the classroom by accounting for the generative tensions (Vander Lei; Vander Lei and Fitzgerald) and the pedagogical uses of rhetorical understandings (Ringer; DePalma). However, dualistic thinking and closemindedness in the classroom seems to be easily resolved by introducing spirituality in the classroom. The rhetorics of spirituality, if taught as a vehicle of inclusivity, invites plurality and collaboration, rather than stubbornness and competition. In other words, why not transform the classroom into a McKeonian "commonplace of creativity" using spirituality as a touchstone?

Similarly, in the field of Composition and Rhetoric, not much research has been done regarding seminarian students and writers in the monastic vocation. Within these spirituality centered discourse communities, members write about their personal faith within the religion and to audiences outside of the religion – and also, using writing, they communicate spirituality to themselves and to God. How do they write these deeply personal artifacts? What motivates these processes? What does the rhetorical composition look like? Exploring these questions with further study can help better understand the spiritual discourse community and better understand how faith and belief works in the writing process: implications that can transfer into the composition classroom and into postmodern discussions regarding religion. The current study can be seen as laying the groundwork for future investigations of spiritual writing processes and practices. Unfortunately, the field of Composition and Rhetoric has not explored the discourse of spirituality in depth; nor has the field explored contemporary Catholic and Anglican discourse in depth. With this study as a foundation, I think the field can move into these areas with a more informed understanding of the discourse of spirituality.

Catholic and Anglican discourse is but one expressions of spiritual discourse. This is a discourse that weaves through self-help culture, religions, and anti-religions. Due to the rhetorical flexibility and usefulness of spirituality, it turns up in some of the most unlikely places. In *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason*, a contemporary "*New York*

Times Bestseller" that harshly critiques the usefulness and ethics of organized

religion, Sam Harris posits that mysticism and spirituality has some value in

our society because it is a "rational enterprise" involving a "natural propensity

of the mind" whereas religion does not celebrate the mind (221).[15] Similarly,

Richard Dawkins seems to laud spiritual awareness in respect to science.

Dawkins understands experiences with nature to be filled with awe: the

individual becoming aware that he/she is part of the scientific tapestry of the

world. Although Dawkins does not admit that he is referring to "spirituality,"

he occasionally discusses the experiential spirituality of nature in much

broader understandings of the term (*Atheism Tapes*). The possible collision of

anti-religious and religious spheres within the discourse of spirituality allows

for interesting research regarding the dialogic debates between believers and

non-believers. Since religion/anti-religion debate is an ongoing tension in

America, this research in the field of Composition and Rhetoric can provide

generative perspectives with implications for deliberative discourse, online

writing, and uses for religion/anti-religion argumentation in the composition

classroom.

Final Remarks

   In Chapter Two, I indicated that by analyzing a sample of

contemporary discourse of spirituality, I would be illuminating Perelman and

Olbrechts-Tyteca's mission: "the justification of the possibility of a human

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[15] Sam Harris has written a book, *Waking Up: A Guide to Spirituality Without Religion* (will be released Fall 2014), more thoroughly discussing the subject of spirituality.

community in the sphere of action when this justification cannot be based on a reality or objective truth" (514). Throughout my analysis, I have shown argumentative strategies used by writers of spiritual texts. These strategies use association and dissociation simultaneously to allow audiences to adhere to the epideictic discourse. As I have shown, the content of the discourse, spiritual experience and ineffable unions with God, resist immediate linguistic expression and resist scientific explanations. Due to the obscurity of spiritual truths, empirical referents and Cartesian truths are not adequate means to reach a common ground with an audience. In other words, "justification cannot be based on a reality or objective truth." Spirituality permits a *type* of reality in which audiences can experientially agree upon and this communion permits communication. This common ground that is deemed reasonable through the use of argumentative strategies, provides the framework for community (As shown in this chapter.) as well as action and service (Also shown in this chapter.).

Most importantly, spirituality revolves around social inclusivity. The community of spirituality is not a small community of like-minded people based on past truths; instead, the community is extended to all human beings. By the use of associative and dissociative argumentative schema, the discourse of spirituality can adhere an inclusive audience. The discourse is based on common type of experience: the largeness of what is beyond ourselves. This is a type of experience that all people can feel and have felt. And this categorical understanding and experience is the primary reference needed to commune

with the message. The audience of the discourse is not only devout Catholics or practicing Anglicans. The reasonable and inclusive rhetoric allows lapsed Catholics or non-practicing Anglicans to commune with the message. Moreover, the inclusivity of spirituality does not scare away other religious or non-religious readers. Atheists and agnostics can read these texts without beings offended; Buddhists and New Age practitioners can also commune with these spiritual messages. Overall, the inclusivity of spirituality would not be effective if not for effective writing and rhetorical communication. After all, as Joshua Gunn rightly asserts about the rhetoric of occult, a rhetoric that, like the rhetoric of spirituality, pivots upon ineffable content matter: "The notion of ineffability itself necessitates a rhetoric to express the negativity of ineffability" (43). The discourse of spirituality depends upon designed and crafted rhetorical architecture, such as associative "structures of reality" and dissociations from religiousness, to heighten the "adherence of minds" and widen the inclusivity of the audience. Like Gunn points out, ineffable subject matters require rhetorics. Without the operative application of McKeonian rhetoric, "architectonic productive artistry," found with the discourse of spirituality, spirituality would not be in such a momentous and popular position ("Nones"; "U.S. Religious Landscape").

The writers of the discourse of spirituality make adherence accessible. As I have shown, epideictic discourse of spirituality is practical, pragmatic, and reasonable. Unlike mystical texts of Early and Medieval Christianity, such as Pseudo-Dionysius' *Mystical Theology* or John of the Cross' *The Dark Night*

of the Soul, contemporary discourse of spirituality can relate to real-world

applications, and can work within and around the daily lives of everyday

people. The discourse of spirituality demonstrates that even a topic and

discourse as seemingly lofty and transmundane still must obey human

constructions –and inevitably solve human problems. The contemporary

discourse of spirituality is a postmodern response to religion. Contemporary

spirituality flirts with objectivity while remaining indebted to individual

subjectivity. Contemporary spirituality allows pluralistic dialogue and

resolutions within institutional religious spheres. Contemporary spirituality

offers us a creative "commonplace of commonplaces" which will continue to

foster pluralism and democracy into the future.

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