Fundamentalist Differences: Using Ethnography of Rhetoric (EOR) to Analyze a Community of Practice

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The author conducted a four-year ethnography of American fundamentalists including fieldwork as a participant-observer in more than 250 worship services at some 200 churches in 17 states. While the private speech of laity is readily analyzable through an ethnography of communication (EOC), the approach could interpret only half the story. For a community of practice bound not by geography but by ideology, analysis of leaders' public communication is crucial to limning its culture. Not the content, but the form of leaders' public argumentation is decisive in setting communal practices. Where "expository preaching" is normative, leaders rule by expert authority and establish boundaries for communal discourse, though power distance is somewhat mitigated because members are viewed as being capable of contributing to communal deliberation and constructing identities through reason. However, where "narrative preaching" is normative, leaders rule by charismatic authority and power distance is increased because leaders validate the stories by which members construct their identities. This paper demonstrates how an ethnography of rhetoric (EOR), an approach recently suggested by Lindquist, can build on—and go beyond—EOC to provide a productive framework for studying ideological communities.

How does one analyze a culture defined by practice rather than geography? Working-class culture, for example, is not a product of bounded geographic space but has emerged from historical processes to become a community of ideological practice. To study such a culture, Lindquist (2007) proposes an approach she calls "ethnography of rhetoric" (hereinafter EOR). While *ethnography* can take the fieldworker to "natural settings for insights into the productive tensions . . . that make up the larger narrative," *rhetoric* offers the analyst "a heuristic domain" with the "potential to conceptualize links between motive, agency, and social effect" (p. 274-275). For that reason, Lindquist contends EOR could be a method uniquely suited to studying a culture that is political as well as anthropological, and ideological rather than geographical.

Although Lindquist does not explore the connection, I contend here that EOR can be seen as a method that builds on and extends ethnographies of communication (EOC). I will do so by presenting a case study in which EOR goes beyond EOC, and does things that EOC cannot do, in a way that is indispensable for analyzing the culture and practice of an ideological community. In essence, I am putting flesh on the bones sketched out by Lindquist. To further suggest the applicability and robustness of EOR, my case is not regarding the culture of the working class, instead I will present findings from a four-year ethnography of a minority religion—American Protestant Fundamentalism, a culture decidedly bound by ideology and faith rather than by geography.

In summary, my case is this: After four years of fieldwork as a participant-observer in more than 250 worship services at some 200 fundamentalist churches in 17 states, I collected

a rich trove of data for writing a conventional ethnography of communication. The speech of fundamentalist laity—for example, their forms of personal address, their public ritual of "sharing my testimony," and their natural conversation—clearly confirm Philipsen's (1997) prediction that "Wherever there is a distinctive culture, there is to be found a distinctive speech code" (p. 135), and that such phenomena function as "codes about the nature of persons, about the ways persons can and should be linked together in social relations, and about the role of symbolic action" (p. 138). Metacommunicative vocabularies, totemic rituals, cultural myths, social dramas—all were observed in abundance.

Despite the fact that my fieldwork concluded in 2007, I knew something crucial was missing. Though I could describe through EOC the speech codes of *laity*, I realized that the pulpit speech of *clergy*—the rhetoric of the preachers—set norms of practice in this ideological community. Yet, these norms were created not only, or even primarily by the *content* of what the leaders said, rather, the construction of identities and social structures within fundamentalist congregations was profoundly shaped by the *form* of suasion that a given leader normalized. What I needed to produce was an ethnography not only of speaking and communication, but of argumentative form, of rhetoric. In the end, EOR helped me to conclude that if the normalized argumentative form was narrative (i.e., a rhetoric of identification) then social identities were constructed through stories. This held true even as power distance was thereby increased between leaders (whose charismatic authority validated the stories) and members. If the form was text-based argument (i.e., a rhetoric of persuasion) then identities were constructed through deliberation, and power distance, though large, was somewhat flattened because the leader's power derived from expert authority (to delimit the accepted logics of the community) rather than charisma alone.

To make my case for the viability of EOR as an ethnographic method, I will proceed as follows: First, I will briefly review the literature on EOC and then outline Lindquist's proposal. Second, after providing the historical and institutional backgrounds of Fundamentalism (with a capital "F"), I will describe representative findings from my fieldwork regarding lay speech and demonstrate how they are eminently analyzable within the interpretive framework of a traditional EOC. Then I will show how such an EOC provides only half the story for the ideological community of practice I studied. Finally, after describing key findings regarding leadership communication—that is, preaching by professional clergy—I will demonstrate how the EOR approach can be operationalized to offer a full accounting of Fundamentalist culture.

Comparing Ethnography of Communication (EOC) and Rhetoric (EOR)

Hymes (1962) was the first to suggest that "ethnographies of speaking" could bridge the gap between anthropology and linguistics. Soon Hymes (1964) called for "ethnographies of communication" that could plumb the great variety of ways in which cultures conceptualize and practice communication. Later Hymes (1967) introduced "the basic notion of *speech community* in terms of shared knowledge of rules for the interpretation of speech, including rules for the interpretation of at least one common code" (p. 19, emphasis in original). As explained by Putnam and Fairhurst (2001), studies of speech communities, "coalesce around shared language use and schemata for interpreting linguistic codes" and "typically highlight the lexical and semantic fields, cultural functions of language, and ways that language enacts

communit[ies]" that, in turn, "shape the rules for and enact the meanings of speech acts" (p. 92-93).

An important strand of EOC research, particularly within intercultural communication studies, explores the culturally distinctive uses of speech codes. Philipsen, who in 1992 first advanced his theory of speech codes, began researching the phenomenon some two decades earlier after reading the works of Hymes and Bernstein (1971, 1973). While Hymes had shown that communicative behaviors varied among world cultures, Bernstein demonstrated that communicative codes could differ among social groups or classes within the same culture. Philipsen went on to publish communication ethnographies of a blue-collar urban district in Chicago (Philipsen, 1975, 1976) and an upscale suburban neighborhood in Seattle (Katriel & Philipsen, 1981). In time Philipsen formulated his speech codes theory by advancing four propositions in its original 1992 iteration and then adding a fifth in 1997 and a sixth in 2005. Yet as Philipsen (1997, p. 125) acknowledges, the theory remains grounded in Hymes's (1972) conception of speech communities as "sharing rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech, and rules for the interpretation of at least one linguistic variety" (p. 54).

In my own communication ethnography of American Fundamentalist speech codes, I found metacommunicative vocabularies (e.g., "having fellowship," "witnessing") that encoded assumptions "about the nature of persons"; forms of personal address (e.g., "Pastor," "Preacher," "Brother," "Ladies") that encoded assumptions "about the ways persons can and should be linked together in social relations"; and ritualized speech (e.g., "sharing your testimony") that encoded assumptions "about the role of symbolic action." These findings align with Philipsen, Coutu, and Covarrubias's (2005) proposition that "A speech code implicates a culturally distinctive psychology, sociology, and rhetoric" (p. 61).

But unlike Philipsen's blue-collar urbanites and affluent suburb dwellers, my religious fundamentalists do not inhabit a bounded geography, but instead are tied by ideology and practice. An ethnography of rhetoric approach, Lindquist suggests, can go beyond EOC by following the recent emphasis in sociolinguistics on *communities of practice* rather than the conventional notion of *speech communities*. Such communities of practice need not arise through geographic proximity, but emerge as members interact through *mutual engagement*, are involved in a *joint enterprise*, and develop a *shared repertoire* of symbolic resources to express common identity (see Barton & Tusting, 2005; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Adding the dimension of *practice* to that of *speech* is appropriate in studying the working class, affirms Lindquist, for its rhetoric is a "rhetoric of doing." In the same way, I found that fundamentalist sermons are calls not for deliberation but to lives of everyday practical virtue.

To analyze such rhetorics of doing, ethnography is the appropriate methodology. Lindquist (2007) calls for "a deep understanding of the dynamic enactments and resistances to ideological processes of lived . . . experience" through "look[ing] to the ethnography of rhetoric in natural settings for insights into the productive tensions—the small moments of stability and instability, tradition and invention—that make up the larger narrative of working-class history" (p. 274). Collecting oral interviews through conventional ethnographic fieldwork is merely "people theorizing but not creating social relations." And since outgroup membership "is, in one respect, to have limited access to public channels of communication," then "If we want to know working-class rhetoric as a set of inventive and adaptive practices,

we have to travel to the places where it happens…and listen to them talking in such a way that teaches us what they are doing, socially and politically, with their talk" (p. 274). The same challenges, I contend, hold true for analyzing a minority religious community such as historical Fundamentalism.

Hence *ethnography*—but why *rhetoric*? Lindquist (2007) acknowledges the many ways rhetoric is defined. But whether the vocabulary is Aristotelian or Burkean, she believes rhetoric offers "a heuristic domain that enriches established traditions of research on communicative behaviors, largely through its potential to conceptualize links between motive, agency, and social effect" (p. 275). Because rhetoric "implicate[s] knowledge, ideology, and performance" it gets the analyst closest to the properties of working-class discourse (and, I believe, minority religious discourse), while bringing within its ambit the persuasive function whereby "patterns of change and stability in beliefs…are activated in locally public communicative practices" (p. 275).

Approaching working-class discourse through EOR would, Lindquist (2007) contends, aid in addressing the inherent contradiction of space-time in ethnographic analyses. Class (or faith) is not spatially produced in the traditional sense of "sites of organized, stable experience" (p. 278) and the intersection of class (or religion) and culture is dynamic and a residue of historical processes. Working-class culture is political as well as anthropological, a fact that challenges both anthropology ("which is not well equipped to account for the field of larger structural relations") and cultural studies ("which have not yet fully accounted for the specifics of local practices") (p. 278). And here is where rhetoric can heuristically aid the analyst, for:

> [Rhetoric] stabilizes, but retains the dynamic and processual nature of, both ethnography and class culture, working at the intersection of empirical validity and interpretation. In so doing, rhetoric emphasizes what is strategic and hortatory—agentive, purposeful discourse, language that people use to explain themselves to themselves and the world. To study working-class [or minority religious] rhetoric is to position oneself as listener of a group's articulated theory of itself, and to project this theory back onto the field of larger social relations. (p. 279)

Further, "rhetoric's emphasis on more deliberate [versus spontaneous] forms of representation allows for special attention to whether and how linguistic action can direct the course of social processes, and under what particular circumstances" (Lindquist, 2007, p. 280). From the standpoint of anthropology, rhetoric can be viewed as filling in the *mesostructure* of a culture, the "phenomenological domain between structuration and practice" For that reason, Lindquist suggests that rhetoric "might be specially equipped" to navigate the shoals between social structure and lived experience (p. 281). Finally, constructing EORs can produce "dialogue between systematic and hermeneutic approaches to the study of culture" and unite ethnographic fieldwork with humanistic scholarship on cultural processes and social formation (p. 282).

Method and Background for the Study

     Having sketched out some basics of EOC and EOR, I will proceed to illustrate their respective applications for my ethnography of American Fundamentalism. In this section I will describe the conduct of my fieldwork and provide some needed historical and institutional background. Then, because the focus of this essay is clergy preaching rather than lay speech, in the following section I will review only briefly how examples of lay speech are readily analyzable through EOC, and then suggest why EOR is also necessary to analyze preaching. Later, in a concluding section, I will offer a full description of my findings about fundamentalist preaching and place them within an EOR interpretive framework.

     The present study issues from four years of fieldwork. During 2003-07 I traveled some 30 weekends per year by bus as a member of a semiprofessional gospel quartet to nearly 200 independent (nondenominational) Fundamentalist Baptist churches in 17 mostly Southeastern, Mid-Atlantic, and Midwestern states, thereby becoming a participant-observer in more than 250 worship services. Churches within the "Independent Baptist" movement invariably hold worship services on Sunday mornings and evenings, with members encouraged to attend both. Thus in a typical weekend the quartet would sing in the same church twice or in two different churches, though concerts could include special Saturday night or Sunday afternoon concerts.

     An explanation of the term "Fundamentalist" (as compared to "Evangelical") as here employed is needful and requires a brief foray into church history—which is appropriate since, as will be recalled, Lindquist notes how a community of ideology such as the working class is a residue of historical processes. Today, the term "fundamentalist" (with a small "f") has become commonplace. It is generally forgotten that the word was coined to describe a specific historical movement within American Protestantism. Simply stated, as the nineteenth-century movement toward higher criticism of the Christian Bible migrated from German seminaries to Protestant Europe and then to the United States, a struggle ensued within the historic American Protestant denominations over theological innovation (Cairns, 1996; Olson, 1999). The term "Fundamentalist" (with a capital "F") was coined in 1920 to identify adherents to *The Fundamentals*, a widely disseminated twelve-volume series of pamphlets issued between 1910 and 1915 (Beale, 1986; Olson, 1999; Wiersbe, 1990). Then in the postwar era of the 1940s and 1950s, some Fundamentalist leaders became disenchanted with what they viewed as the movement's strident tone and militant separatism and called for a "New Evangelicalism" (Beale, 1986; Olson, 1999). The Fundamentalists and Evangelicals irrevocably split in 1957 when Billy Graham rejected the invitation of independent churches to sponsor his landmark New York Crusade and instead chose to cooperate with the city's Protestant Council of Churches (Beale, 1986; Marsden, 1988; Olson, 1999; Ward, 2005).

     Thus for the past half century the Evangelical movement has gravitated toward "cultural engagement" and interdenominational cooperation, while the heirs of Fundamentalism have continued to uphold what they believe is a scriptural imperative to separate from apostasy and worldliness. My ethnography does not focus on "fundamentalism" in the present-day usage of the term, but on the contemporary heirs of a Fundamentalist movement that has subordinated cultural influence and numerical growth to doctrinal purity and cohesion. This makes historical Fundamentalism a particularly apt subject for studying the effects of rhetorical

practices, since differences in religious doctrine and message can largely be filtered out as a variable.

A second reason that Fundamentalism makes an apt study is its clear division into two "camps" that, in practice, are now separated by rhetorical rather than truly substantive doctrinal differences. The movement split in the late 1990s over the issue of Bible translations, with one side declaring itself "King James Version Only" and the other open to modern translations. My fieldwork confirms that the hermeneutical debate, which originated in the seminaries, quickly migrated beyond doctrine and entered local church life as the defining metaphor over differing rhetorics. The "KJV only" faction easily and seamlessly grafted a rhetorical vision of "the old-fashioned King James Bible" into its narrative of "the old-time religion" and the verities of an imagined Christian past. Meanwhile, for the opposing faction the term "KJV only" conjures up a rhetorical vision of anti-intellectualism, obscurantism and, for some, rural, Southern, and working-class stereotypes.

Thus it was possible, as I will illustrate below, to construct an ethnography of communication which described speech codes that were broadly shared and reproduced across churches of both Fundamentalist camps. But to go beyond the speech practices of laity and explore the rhetorical practices of clergy—and to examine how these leaders' differing rhetorical practices impact the social organization of individual congregations—requires an ethnography of rhetoric that can interpret how "deliberate [versus spontaneous] forms of representation . . . [and] linguistic action can direct the course of social processes" by filling in the "domain between structuration and practice" where "social structure is mediated by/invented in discursive practice" (Lindquist, 2007, p. 280).

EOC Analysis of Fundamentalist Lay Speech

Armed with four years of field observations, I could see that the naturally-occurring discourse of Fundamentalist laity could easily be accommodated through a traditional EOC approach. Since one of Philipsen's (1997) propositions tells us that speech codes function as "codes [1] about the nature of persons, [2] about the ways persons can and should be linked together in social relations, and [3] about the role of symbolic action" (p. 138), I will briefly describe three representative examples of Fundamentalist lay speech which illustrate these three categories of speech codes.

The ways persons can and should be linked together in social relations is encoded in the forms of personal address used in Fundamentalist culture. Verticality in social organization is reified by the practice of addressing the leader as "Pastor" (when referring to the individual) and "Preacher" (when referring to the office); by addressing Fundamentalist men with the title "Brother" followed by surname (in public) or first name (in private); and by the fact that women are never publicly addressed from the platform as individuals but instead are addressed by the collective endearment "Ladies." Fitch (1991) has shown how address forms can progress up a scale from universal (an actual, potential, or vicarious biological relationship) to cultural (a real or desired interpersonal relationship of power or solidarity, or a symbolic value attached to the other person). Thus "Pastor" and "Preacher" symbolically value the leader and encode the power distance within the culture. The desire for male-dominated communal solidarity is expressed by the form "Brother," while the form "Ladies" distances and subordinates women to neutralize the threat of their sexuality.

Codes about the nature of persons are found in the metacommunicative vocabularies invoked by Fundamentalist laity in their daily conversations. The way that people in a culture "talk about talk," and the names they give to different kinds of speech events, reveal the communication strategies they believe to be effective. My fieldwork found that Fundamentalists see themselves in a triadic universe inhabited by "saved" "believers," by "lost" "unbelievers," and by the God who superintends over all. In their metacommunicative vocabulary, talk directed to any one of these three categories constitutes a separate speech event and is given a different name. Strategic communication with believers is accomplished publicly through "sharing your testimony" and privately by "having fellowship"; with unbelievers through "witnessing"; and with God through "having personal devotions" and "having a prayer life." Thus the culture valorizes "sharing," "testifying," and "fellowship" between believers; by contrast, believers do not "share" or "have fellowship" with unbelievers.

Strategic communication with outsiders is called "witnessing," a generic term that describes the general notion of contacts with unbelievers and clearly places the latter in a category of cultural Others. Indeed, in four years of fieldwork I never heard a Fundamentalist use the term "non-believer." Rather, the terms "unbeliever" and "unsaved" are universal conventions, speech codes which apply to unbelievers, a form of negation that strongly reifies their Otherness.

"Having devotions" is the name given to strategic communication with God and refers to the practice of rising early and spending perhaps twenty or thirty minutes in solitary Bible reading and prayer. Though such devotions are in theory a voluntary spiritual discipline, in Fundamentalist conversation they carry the clear force of a command. Adherence is assumed to be normative and deviation is constantly excoriated from the pulpit. Encoded into this metacommunicative vocabulary of "having devotions" is a cultural assumption that believers should relate to God primarily through a rational, cognitive processing of fixed texts rather than any affective or experiential means.

The role of symbolic action in Fundamentalist culture is seen in "sharing your testimony," a ritual which illustrates Philipsen's (1997, p. 144-146) prediction that metacommunicative vocabularies are manifested in three culturally distinctive forms: (a) *totemizing rituals*, or a "structured sequence of actions the correct performance of which pays explicit homage to a sacred object"; (b) *cultural myths* "that, in the telling, provides its hearers with resources for interpreting their own experiences and for telling their own stories"; and (c) *social dramas* that depict the ways of guilt and redemption.

"Sharing your testimony" occurs most often as a rite of passage when adults join the church or teenagers and young adults have participated in a rite-of-passage group activity such as a youth retreat, summer mission trip, or school graduation. Through repetition, these conversion narratives have become a genre with recognized conventions. In four years of fieldwork I heard scores of students relate, in almost exactly the same words, how they "grew up in a Christian home"; heard a sermon at church one Sunday as a young child and were "convicted"; subsequently went home, where "my parents showed me the Bible and I asked Jesus into my heart"; later experienced doubt as a teen and neglected their Bible reading; were counseled from the Bible by spiritual mentors; "settled it" through a single intense prayer; and then evidenced "spiritual growth" by a desire to read the Bible, "have devotions," and engage in "witnessing."

Thus to "share your testimony" is to publicly admit one's helpless condition before God, acknowledge Christ's exclusive power to effect salvation, and reject the radical self-determination valorized by the surrounding dominant culture. Here are seen the *totemizing ritual* characterized by a structured sequence of words; the *cultural myth* that shows Fundamentalists how to interpret their experiences and construct their own stories; and the *social drama* that illustrates the cycle of how guilt is incurred and redemption achieved.

This analysis of social drama can be extended by using Turner's "anthropology of performance" as a framework for understanding Fundamentalist metacommunicative vocabularies. Such dramas, Turner (1974, p. 38–42) observed, cycle through four phases: breach, crisis, redressive action, and reintegration. As ritual performances, Turner (1968) theorized, social dramas are repositories for symbols, which in turn become "storage units" (p. 1-2) of meaning and interpretation. Symbols (see Turner, 1967, p. 28-29, 50-55; 1968, p. 18-19, 81-82; 1969, p. 11-13) can be *dominant* and possess a largely consistent and autonomous meaning across the total system, or be *instrumental* and only have meaning in relation to other symbols within the system. The conversion narratives told by Fundamentalists are easily framed as social dramas of breach, crisis, redressive action, and reintegration. And the Bible—much more so than the cross—is easily the one dominant symbol in Fundamentalism that can *condense* multiple actions or objects into a single representation, *unify* disparate symbolic meanings through common analogies or associations, and *polarize* the meaning around the two poles of social obligation (defending and practicing the Bible) and personal desire (relating to God through the Bible).

Thus a conventional EOC proves to be a useful approach for analyzing Fundamentalist lay discourse and natural conversation, providing a beneficial framework for understanding the distinctive assumptions that underlie the cultural patterning of its talk. By examining Fundamentalist speech codes we begin to grasp the cultural axioms which are enacted through its communication. But these religionists are not a geographic speech community; rather, they constitute an ideologically bound community of practice. And what drives these practices?

In geographically defined societies, culture can become virtually autonomous, passed down through the deep-structure institutions that arise among peoples who live generationally in constant proximity. Ideological communities of practice, however, are more fluid and less inert. There are no deep-structure multigenerational institutions in the same sense that such institutions operate in national, ethnic, or tribal cultures. Yes, it is true that working-class families pass along working-class values to their children, just as Fundamentalist families pass along Fundamentalist values to theirs. And it is true that working-class communities have their local union halls, just as Fundamentalists have their local churches. Yet as Lave and Wenger (1991) first noted, communities of practice have only mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared symbolic resources to bind them. By contrast, national societies have governments, economies, mass media, state religions, and other deep institutions to integrate members and make norms seem autonomous and self-sustaining. However, in ideological communities—or at least in the minority religious community I observed—norms of practice are driven by leadership communication. And this points up the need to go beyond EOC and employ EOR to gain a full picture of Fundamentalist culture.

Two Examples of Fundamentalist Preaching

In the same way that EOC analyzes communication not only for its content but as social action, EOR can analyze rhetoric not only for its argumentation but likewise as social action. This perspective is vital for my ethnography of Fundamentalist culture and social organization because I discovered that the *form* of preaching drove community practice as much, if not more so, than the actual arguments themselves. Recall that after leaders of the Fundamentalist movement split a decade ago over Bible translations, local churches identified with either the so-called "KJV Only" faction or the faction that accepts some modern translations. In general, I observed that preachers in "KJV Only" congregations favor what I have termed *narrative preaching* that eschews a close exposition of the texts and instead relates stories about "old-time religion" which congregants are exhorted to choose as the governing narratives for their own lives and the creation of their self-identities. By contrast, the other faction favors what it commonly calls *expository preaching* in which the meanings of the scriptures are rationally and logically teased out from a close examination of the texts.

For its part, *expository* preaching follows a structural pattern that is broadly reproduced across likeminded churches: (a) an initial reading of the scriptural passage to be examined; (b) perhaps a story or illustration to gain audience attention and express the central thesis; (c) a review of the central thesis and the main points, which are often three in number and frequently alliterated as a mnemonic device; (d) a sequential reconstruction and exposition of the meaning behind each verse in the biblical passage; (e) a chain of reasoning that builds toward the conclusion; and (f) an impactful closing that reviews the (alliterated) main points, may tell a story (or recite a short poem or hymn lyric) that balances the opening story or conveys the central thesis in an emotionally satisfying manner, including a closing prayer.

The structure is "classic" public speaking instruction, reflecting rational Aristotelian notions of rhetorical persuasion as they have come down to English-speaking academies and seminaries in the modern era. Many preachers distribute printed sermon outlines inserted in church bulletins to their listeners; an increasing number are incorporating PowerPoint® outlines. The nonverbal component of the sermons includes appropriate changes in vocal volume, pitch, and speed while speakers gesture for emphasis but remain largely behind the pulpit. Most preachers in these churches earn at least a master's degree from a Fundamentalist seminary before accepting a call to the position of senior pastor.

By contrast, *narrative* preaching is more loosely structured. Though it flows according to a structure of introduction/body/conclusion that may be inherent in Western storytelling, the sermons often: (a) begin with the reading of a single Bible verse or short passage; (b) progress, and sometimes ramble, through a series of stories regarding the waywardness of contemporary society and the contrasting verities of an imagined Christian past; and (c) conclude with a strongly emotional and often lengthy "invitation" in which congregants are exhorted to walk the aisles and, as the assembly sings a hymn of invitation, kneel at the front of the auditorium and pray for spiritual needs. For the body of the sermon, the preacher may have an overall framework of general points to address. However, he (and Fundamentalist preachers are always male) relies on Ciceronian *memoria*, or a fund of stories and memorized Bible verses that may be called upon as needed to flesh out the general points according to the needs of the audience or situation. Pastors who in private conversation speak in normal tones assume, through their nonverbal behaviors on the platform, an authoritative persona of

stentorian vocalization, sometimes rapid and pressured speech, strong gesticulation, and frequent movement (made possible by their *memoria*) away from the pulpit as they stride around the platform and even into the aisles.

Fundamentalists of both stripes are preaching essentially the same religious message—Christian conversion and commitment, scriptural inerrancy, biblical living, separation from worldliness—but with a contrast in rhetoric that is often striking. Yet preaching in both camps—the authoritative voice, the physical command of the sacred space, the strong gesturing—encodes the culture's view regarding the hierarchical social organization Fundamentalists believe is divinely ordained and necessary for orderly and satisfying human relationships. I observed, however, that the Fundamentalist faction whose rhetoric is characterized by a text-based examination into the meanings of its scriptures produces a community in which power distance is somewhat flattened; the leader rules by expert authority and not charisma alone, and community members are viewed as capable of *phronesis* and contributing to communal discourse. In contrast, the Fundamentalist faction whose rhetoric is characterized by narrative exhorts its members to create their self-identities according to the narrative; since the truth claims are validated by the charisma of the leader, power distance is increased and the community is more inflexibly stratified (and thus more alienated from a surrounding dominant American culture that valorizes self-determination).

To illustrate, I present two examples of Fundamentalist sermonic rhetoric, not because they are average but because each illustrates the two poles represented by my heuristic designations of *expository* and *narrative* preaching. Further, the two examples were chosen because I heard them in the same month and year, and both address the topic of men's sexual temptation by women. (My field notes of these two sermons are reproduced in Examples 1 and 2 below.) In practice, however, Fundamentalist sermons are not always exclusively one style or the other, many are admixtures of both. Rather, the concept of expository versus narrative preaching establishes, not a rigid dyadic categorization, but a continuum along which to analyze this rhetoric. Using this framework, my fieldwork confirmed the existence of two Fundamentalist communities, one whose sermonic rhetoric tends to cluster around the expository pole and the other around the narrative.

Example 1 is classically Aristotelian. The logic of this sermon is rigorously rational, supported at every point by a close examination of the text and related scriptures, and follows classical norms of invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery. The introduction features an attention-getting device (alarming statistics and trends), after which the thesis is clearly stated and its importance and relevance established. The body of the sermon logically unfolds and develops the speaker's ideas, while the conclusion reviews the main points and finally restates the thesis and leaves the audience with a memorable closing thought. The preacher did not stray from behind the large wooden pulpit and he spoke conversationally and gestured naturally without undue exaggeration. Almost like an audience attending a professional education seminar, listeners viewed a PowerPoint® outline projected on a large overhead screen and could follow along on printed handouts of the sermon that were available before the service in the church lobby. No altar call was given.

Example 1. Outline of a Fundamentalist Expository Sermon

TEXT / Proverbs 5:15-23

I. Introduction
    A. Census statistics on cohabiting couples
    B. "Polyamory" and the "Alternatives to Marriage Project"
    C. Low view of marriage stems from low view of God's Word (cf. Gen. 2:24)
    D. Yet Solomon also had a low view of marriage (cf. 1 Kings 11:3)
    E. But Solomon realized his folly later in life (cf. Eccl. 9:9)

II. Be Intoxicated with Your Wife's Love (vv. 15-19)
    A. Drink water from your own cistern (vv. 15-17)
        1. Only a privileged man owned a cistern to meet his household needs (v. 15)
            a. Water is a necessity and satisfies a natural desire
            b. God gives a wife to satisfy a man's physical desire (cf. Heb. 13:4)
            c. A wife is likened to a "well of living water" (cf. Song of Sol. 4:15)
            d. Having a wife is a privilege given by God (cf. Prov. 18:22)
            e. A man must meet his need from the source God provides
        2. The privileged man should not spill his cistern (vv. 16-17)
            a. Your cistern is a private source of satisfaction
            b. To drink from a public source is foolish (cf. Prov. 7:10-12)
            c. To share your private source is not God's plan
    B. Drinking from your own cistern leads to happiness (vv. 18-19)
        1. The husband rejoices in his wife, and she in his fidelity
        2. The husband sees his wife as refreshing and lovely (cf. Song 4:1-2)
        3. He is satisfied and "intoxicated" only with her (cf. Is. 28:7)
        4. This is a matter of decision, not just reaction

III. Why be Intoxicated with a Forbidden Woman? (vv. 20-23)
    A. God observes every man's way (vv. 20-21)
        1. Some women are forbidden (v. 20)
            a. Most of Solomon's wives were forbidden (cf. 1 Kings 11:1)
            b. Israelite men were troubled by marrying forbidden women (Ezra 10:2)
            c. Modern husbands are also surrounded by women forbidden to them
        2. Avoid or be careful around women who are forbidden to you (v. 21-23)
            a. God knows when a man embraces a forbidden woman (v. 21)
            b. The wages of sin is still death (vv. 22-23)
                i. Sin is enslaving (v. 22)
                ii. Failure to discipline natural desires results in death (v.23)
                    (a) Spiritual death
                    (b) Separation from God
                    (c) Dullness of relationships
                    (d) Even physical death

IV. Conclusion
    A. God created men to find women attractive in form and being
    B. Noticing an attractive woman is natural
    C. What a man does after noticing a woman is the teaching of this text
        1. Turn away your gaze and decide not to dwell on the attraction
        2. Lust leads to dissatisfaction with your wife, causing sinful thought and action
        3. Sin leads to broken fellowship with God and even physical death
    D. Drinking water from the wrong place is never worth the cost

In stark contrast, the performative aspect of Example 2 can only be appreciated through seeing or at least hearing the address. And its message can only be fully interpreted if the culture's speech codes are known to the listener. The preacher strode about the stage, gestured vehemently, and alternated between soft and shouted speech, stern injunctions, and tearful warnings. Only a single Bible verse was cited as the preacher's "proof text" and yet the verse was never again referenced during the sermon. The only scriptures in the address were occasional half-quoted verses that the audience could easily recognize as speech codes and—enthymematically—supply the intended meaning. Stories encoded assumptions about the ordering of communal relationships: pastoral authority comes from God; the old guide the young; parents discipline children; men must lead women and not be subdued by them. One story, told in Black dialect, recalled past days when communities were distinct and knew their places. Another lauded chains of command. And because leadership derives from charisma, the most poignant and tearful stories are those of fallen preachers whose loss of authority threatens communal order and identity. And if preachers can succumb to sexual failings then, by extension, so can every male in the congregation.

The sermon ended with an altar call, which was initiated by a formulation that is almost universal in Fundamentalist churches: "Heads bowed, eyes closed, nobody looking around." Then as a piano played softly, the preacher prayed; but the prayer was a sermonette addressed to the audience in which they were exhorted to walk the aisle. Finally he prayed to God, after which the congregation joined in singing a well-known hymn of invitation. All of this occurred with heads bowed and eyes closed. Thus the rhetoric of the preacher gathered its rhetorical force from a series of narratives. Invention did not occur through a text-based unfolding of logical argumentation but according to a mnemonic skeleton of alliterated slogans that served as a general framework to perform a stream of loosely connected communal stories.

Example 2: Outline of a Fundamentalist Narrative Sermon

TEXT / Ecclesiastes 12:13

I. Introduction
    A. Opening story: Christians need strong preaching like Cadillacs need high octane fuel
    B. Validation: God gave me this outline
    C. Scripture reading: Ecclesiastes 12:13
    D. Opening prayer (impromptu)
    E. Story/joke: Note from my wife, "Don't preach too long!"
    F. Story: But I can't "half-preach" anymore than I can "half-shoot" a gun
    G. Story/validation: Errant child ignores sibling but heeds parents; we must heed what God says
    H. Metaphor: I am "spiritually drunk" with my message
    I. Warning: To say "love casteth out all fear" is a misquote; the word "all" is not in the verse

II. Scared of Sin
    A. "Sin will take you down"
    B. Story: When I was a young preacher boy an older preacher gave me a lesson
    C. "It takes God"
    D. Story: Sin is like licking mama's cake bowl; you keep wanting more
    E. "Don't get too involved in sin"
    F. "Sin will take you down"
    G. "I'm afraid of sin"
    H. Little sins are like the little foxes who spoil the vine
    I. Sin took down big men in the Bible
    J. Refutation: People say I travel all the time and can't relate to their struggles with sin
    K. Warning: Don't go out and sin, thinking you can just confess it later
    L. Joke: Now I'm on "Preacher Savings Time" and really getting going!
    M. Story: Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom
    N. "How long has it been?"
    O. "Sin will dry you up"

III. Scared of Self
    A. "Be strong in the Lord"
    B. Story: All men are bothered by lust for women
    C. Story: Social drama about a fallen preacher
    D. "Stinking flesh"
    E. Testimony: I pray for strength while traveling from home
    F. Tableau: Nothing is better than my home in the woods, with wife and grandkids to greet me
    G. Song: "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms"
    H. "God is a refuge in the storm"
    I. "Greater is He that is in you"

IV. Scared of Shelf (cf. *adokimos* or "cast away"; i.e., God putting him on the shelf)
    A. Story: I was proud to answer the call in World War II and am proud to answer God's call
    B. Story: Social drama of preacher who is put on the shelf due to sin

V. Scared of the Seat (i.e., Judgment Seat of Christ)
    A. Song: "Saved by the Blood"

VI. Invitation/Altar Call
    A. Prayer: Preacher exhorts audience
    B. Prayer: Preacher addresses God
    C. Closing hymn of invitation

Aristotelian and Burkean Analyses of Fundamentalist Rhetoric

Within Fundamentalist expository preaching, the Aristotelian proofs—*logos, ethos, pathos*—are classically evident (and are taught in seminaries). I observed expository preaching that, at turns, was *deliberative* (determining the best policies for biblical living), *forensic* (making cases against false doctrines based on biblical evidence), and *epideictic* (as in weddings, funerals, and testimonial occasions). However, because the deliberative function predominates, expository preaching favors argumentative recourse to enthymemes and examples.

Much of the Aristotelian *topoi* (or Ciceronian *topica*, if one prefers) were in evidence. Expository sermons clearly followed classical notions of arrangement: entrance, narration, definition, proposition, confirmation, refutation, and conclusion. Style (see Lanham, 1970) could be characterized as *genus humile* (Plain Style), a generally conversational tone suited to teaching. This is not to deny that Fundamentalist expository preaching can at times be strident and emotional, or to suggest it is always measured and even; however, the *telos* or goal is clearly a communal *phronesis* or deliberation of good ends, as congregants are urged to "search the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11) and thus be persuaded to live committed Christian lives. For their part, expository preachers are guided by the biblical admonition to "worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24) and trained to strive for a "mean" (to borrow from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1109a20) in their speaking styles, avoiding excess (too much unthinking emotion) and deficiency (too much dry doctrine).

On the other hand, narrative preaching in Fundamentalist culture is less amenable to Aristotelian analysis because the *telos* is identification rather than persuasion. Among the three proofs, *ethos* and *pathos* are emphasized; *logos* is less critical to the outcome because the Bible and its charismatic (or "anointed" or "Spirit-filled") messenger (who is often called "the man of God") are *a priori* considered authoritative. Indeed, Aristotle speaks of artificial (*ethos, pathos, logos*) and inartificial (laws, testimony, documents) proofs. In a sense then, narrative preaching is forensic because it relies on proofs which the audience considers to be irrefutable "laws." As such, syllogistic rather than enthymemic argument can predominate. Narrative sermons often rely less on balanced organization or argumentative *topoi* than on

storytelling to propel the address forward. Yet narrative preachers are intuitively skilled, at least for their Fundamentalist audiences, in Aristotelian psychology: anger/mildness, love/hatred, fear/confidence, shame/shamelessness, indignation/pity, admiration/envy. In the faction of Fundamentalists that adheres to a narrative paradigm, preachers held up as role models are those who speak in *genus grande* (or the Grand Style as it is received in their culture), speaking for effect (or "conviction," as they would say) as well as content.

If Aristotle describes a rhetoric of persuasion, then Burke proposes a rhetoric of identification that may lend itself to analysis of Fundamentalist narrative preaching. "The key term for the 'old rhetoric' was *persuasion* and its stress upon deliberative design," Burke (1951) wrote. "The key term for the 'new rhetoric' is *identification* and this may include partially unconscious factors in its appeal" (p. 203). Along with its stress on identification, this rhetoric is apt for the present study due to Burke's complementary concepts of the *dramatistic pentad* and *guilt-redemption cycle* (not to mention his frequent recourse to theological terminology). Speakers and listeners both bring their *substances*—the totality of each person's interests, skills, histories, personalities, values, attitudes, beliefs, opinions—to communicative situations; the degree of their *consubstantiation* hinges on speakers' abilities to foster audience perceptions of shared traits. Without identification, persuasion cannot occur. Toward that end, speakers use *god terms* and *devil terms* that function, respectively, as the highest words for good and evil around which all other words cluster (Burke, 1966, p. 44-52). The Burkean rhetorical analyst would view a public address in terms of a dramatistic pentad encompassing: act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose (1945, p. xv). Underlying the entire drama is a guilt-redemption cycle in which most speakers, rather than publicly *mortify* themselves by admitting blame for their own shortcomings, will instead claim *victimage* (1970, p. 215-222).

According to the Burkean scheme, Fundamentalist narrative preaching persuades through identification, which is facilitated by the high degree of consubstantiation between speakers and audiences who are co-religionists and whose self-identities therefore overlap in significant ways. The god term and devil term of Fundamentalism are, actually, God/Christ/God's Word/Bible (which, theologically, are all the same) and Devil/Satan. The narrative sermon is a drama replete with an act (the sermon itself), scene (the worship service), agent (the preacher), agency (the preaching), and purpose (the exhortation and subsequent invitation). Although narrative preachers are willing to publicly mortify themselves—the doctrines of original sin and the total depravity of humankind make this acceptable and even obligatory—words of victimage also abound through chains of stories that center on the threats to godly living posed by liberals, secular humanists, feminists, abortionists, militant homosexuals, apostate denominations, false religions, and other movements inspired by Satan.

For me, Fisher's concept of the *rational-world paradigm* versus the *narrative paradigm* helped put in perspective the two Fundamentalist rhetorics that I observed. Fisher (1978) started with a concept of "good reasons" that cause an audience to be persuaded toward a course of action. Then he defined narration as "symbolic actions—words and/or deeds—that have sequence and meaning for those who live, create, or interpret them" (1987, p. 58). From this, he advanced five assumptions (p. 59-62) of his narrative paradigm: (1) People are essentially storytellers. (2) We make decisions on the basis of good reasons, which vary depending on the communication situation, media, and genre. (3) History, biography, culture,

and character determine what we consider good reasons. (4) Narrative rationality is determined by the coherence and fidelity of our stories. (5) The world is a set of stories from which we choose, and thus constantly recreate our lives. Just so, narrative preachers are essentially storytellers. Congregants make decisions on the basis of good reasons determined by their religious self-identity and culture. Sermons are perceived as rational because they make sense and strike a responsive chord for Fundamentalist listeners, who choose the proffered gospel story to create and constantly recreate/reinforce their lives.

On the other hand, Fundamentalist expository preaching very much accords with the five countervailing assumptions of Fisher's (1987) rational-world paradigm: (1) People are essentially rational. (2) We make decisions on the basis of arguments. (3) The type of speaking situation (legal, scientific, legislative) determines the course of our arguments. (4) Rationality is determined by how much we know and how well we argue. (5) The world is a set of logical puzzles that we can solve through rational analysis. Indeed, expository sermons may be summed up by the Bible verse: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD" (Isaiah 1:18).

Toward an Ethnography of Fundamentalist Rhetoric

What are we to make of these two Fundamentalist rhetorics? In this section I will attempt to operationalize Lindquist's proposal for ethnographies of rhetoric by suggesting the outline of an EOR method and then applying it to the Fundamentalist rhetorics I observed in my fieldwork.

Taking my cue from Lindquist (2007), the task of an EOR is to demonstrate how rhetoric, as a "more deliberate form of representation," functions as linguistic action to "direct the course of social processes" and establish the mesostructure of a community through filling in the "phenomenological domain between structuration and practice" (p. 280). Lindquist further sees in rhetoric a nexus of "knowledge, ideology, and performance" through which to interpret the "links between motive, agency, and social effect" (p. 275). Finally, an EOR would take communities of practice, rather the speech communities, as its units of analysis.

In all of this we see a number of elements; let us isolate them one at a time. Rhetoric is seen as more or less *deliberate* and locally *public*, as opposed to natural, spontaneous, and private. Thus we might assign analyses of the latter to EOC (as I demonstrated above with my ethnography of Fundamentalist lay speech) and the former to EOR. Rhetoric is further seen as *directive* with regard to social processes. Its directive force is manifested in a community's mesostructure, a space which may be conceived as the middle level of a three-tiered pyramid. At the bottom is *practice*, or the microstructure of natural, spontaneous and private discourse, that "space of everyday contentions" (Lindquist, 2007, p. 280) where the fieldworker finds "productive tensions" and "small moments of stability and instability, tradition and invention" (p. 274). At the top is the macrostructure, the realm where *structuration* occurs. According to Giddens (1984), structure is both the medium and the outcome of social action, a duality rather than a dualism. Members' actions simultaneously produce and reproduce the structural conditions—the interactional rules, the communicative resources—that make action possible.

Sandwiched between practice and structuration is the rhetorical domain, which is characterized as *phenomenological*. Thus in EOR, rhetoric is studied from the subjective or first-person point of view as the ethnographer analyzes the ways in which deliberate and

locally public representations gain their meanings according to how community members experience the rhetoric. Rhetoric implicates knowledge (how things "are" for community members), ideology (how things "should be"), and performance (how things are experienced). From a phenomenological viewpoint, we can then see how rhetors' motives and agency are linked to the social effects produced by members' experiences of the rhetoric. Thus in communities of practice—which are bound not by geography but by shared engagement, enterprise, and identity—rhetoric constitutes the "ideological processes of lived experience" (Lindquist, 2007, p. 274) by which "patterns of change and stability in beliefs . . . are activated in locally public communicative practices" (p. 275).

For communities of practice—which lack the "deep" multigenerational institutions found in geographically stable societies—rhetoric performs an integrative function, patterning the beliefs that bind members together in shared engagement, enterprise, and identity. Communal rules and resources for expressing belief and identity are produced/reproduced at the macro level, and the outworking of those rules and resources occur through spontaneous individual daily practice at the micro level. But it is the meso level, between structuration and practice, where members' experience of rhetoric shapes "purposeful discourse [and the] language people use to explain themselves to themselves and to the world" (p. 279). Exploring the dynamics of this mesostructure is the challenge and opportunity of EOR.

Using this interpretive framework, my EOR of Fundamentalist rhetoric has found that:

> 1. The historic Fundamentalist movement constitutes a community of practice.
> 2. In this Fundamentalist community, preaching by professional clergy functions as that "more deliberate form of representation" which directs social processes by filling in the mesostructure between communal structuration and individual practice.
> 3. Preaching fills in this mesostructure as community members experience either expository preaching that instantiates a rhetoric of persuasion through text-based argumentation or narrative preaching that instantiates a rhetoric of identification through stories.
> 4. Expository preaching implicates knowledge discovered through texts, ideology affirmed through deliberation, and performance experienced through cognition. Narrative preaching implicates knowledge discovered through stories, ideology affirmed through identification, and performance experienced through affect.
> 5. Leaders who practice expository preaching derive their power from the expert authority to delimit the logics of the community. Leaders who practice narrative preaching derive their power from the charismatic authority to validate the stories of the community.
> 6. With expository preaching, the leader's motives and agency produce a social effect in which power distance, though large, is somewhat flattened because members are viewed as capable of deliberating the sacred texts within the logics normalized by the preacher. But with narrative preaching, the social effect of the leader's motives and agency is an increase of power distance because the leader's charisma validates the stories by which members are expected to construct their identities.
> 7. The greater degree of power distance and vertical social organization, which is produced by narrative preaching, increases members' alienation from a dominant surrounding American culture that valorizes individualistic self-determination.

In my view, a traditional EOC would, as a method, have lacked the full complement of theoretical tools to interpret the rhetorics of the Fundamentalist community which I studied. EOC was fully adequate, and indeed quite powerful, for analyzing the speech codes deployed by laity in their natural and ritual discourse. But EOC did not take me as far as analyzing the social effects produced by leaders' rhetorical practices. Yet understanding these rhetorics and their social effects was vital for describing a community of practice bound by ideology rather than geography. In such a fluid community, rhetoric can perform an integrative function that in geographically stable cultures is perpetuated by deep-structure institutions. Thus to continue my analysis of Fundamentalist culture, I needed EOR.

For all these reasons, I believe EOR is a productive method for analyzing cultures—and especially the cultures enacted by communities of practice—which can build on and then go beyond EOC. In turn, understanding the cultural dynamics within communities of practice—ranging from the working class and minority religions to business organizations and professional associations—can advance our ability to theorize both intercultural and organizational communication. Indeed, if we concede for argument's sake that (a) EOC is suited to analyzing individual practice, and (b) EOR is beneficial for analyzing the mesostructure produced by leaders' rhetoric and members' experiences of those representations, then (c) we might ask whether a third method (perhaps "EOS" for *ethnography of structuration*?) could be useful for analyzing the macro level where the community produces and reproduces its rules and resources. But that is a discussion for another day.

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