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Finally, it is unclear what role speech cues play in initiating the processes of biased assimilation and behavioral confirmation in particular or in accounts of nonobvious or important social behavior in general. How do people integrate the information provided by speech with other cues? A number of sophisticated theories of impression formation (e.g., information integration theory), which go unmentioned in this book, might be useful in addressing this issue. Under what conditions are judgments based on speech cues made accurately or inaccurately? When are these judgments based on overestimation of the correlation between trait and speech cue or overgeneralization of the situations in which the correlation exists? When do these judgments lead to stereotypic responses in social behavior? Various authors provided suggestions and hypotheses regarding the behavioral significance of speech markers, but the reader will find that this book raises far more questions than it answers.

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DISCOURSE


Since preaching surely comes within the purview of sociolinguistics, we do well to occupy ourselves with a diachronic perspective in the study of sermonizing in the Christian tradition. What has persisted and what has changed through the dramatic events that have altered Christianity from century to century and from one country to another? These are questions worth considering. They are, of course, our questions, those of us who are trying to understand more and more about the way language functions in human experience.

This book takes us back almost 300 years, but contemporary preaching has vestiges of canons, techniques, and styles that can be traced to that era. In fact, when Bayley describes the rhetorical learning that was the foundation of early seventeenth century preaching, he is tracing our history back to Aristotle.

Because Bayley's concerns are primarily literary, he has chosen a period that for him separates those that preceded and followed. His argument is that "Pulpit oratory... is a gauge of changing prose styles, a guide to the background of literary convention and sensibility in a period, and an autonomous art form"
(180, see also 6, 13). His position is valid because he examines published
sermons: they were a significant part of literature of that period, and they were
also produced with great attention to literary craftsmanship (3). Moreover, these
were not your common garden-variety sermons that survived because, like last
summer’s flower, they were pressed into pages for preservation. They were
associated with special occasions (14), although this was more true of the
Catholic sermons than the Protestant ones.

Most of the analysis is devoted to formal matters, for example, the rhetorical
training and models that constrained the writing of sermons, their “prose patterns,”
and their structure and stylistic implications. Two chapters are devoted to
themes and their imagery, but this is not a book concerned with stylistics as such.

In an era characterized by extreme libertarianism in creative writing (and when
university students resent a professor’s editing of what they superciliously esteem
mere “style”), it is difficult for us to appreciate the great emphasis laid through-
out this period on the rules of rhetoric, taught in manuals, examined in great
writers, and practiced in essays and oratory. In the period under study the
diocesan seminary did not exist, and clergymen got the same training that any
schoolboy got (38). By the middle of the seventeenth century the classical model
was beginning to weaken in its grip on writers, but in the first part it was still
pretty strong.

The sermon, as socially situated speech, presupposes a relationship between
the speaker and his audience. In the early seventeenth century, as now in many
circles, the preacher was expected to appear learned, leading to what Bayley calls
the “thesaurus sermon,” one “built up by the indiscriminate heaping together of
undigested material culled from . . . reference books and the preacher’s own
commonplace-book” (78), the last being his personal collection of things he
could use. The preacher was advised to appear as impressive as possible (26). It
got so bad that critics complained that eloquence seemed to be measured by how
much a discourse had to be interpreted (35).

In those days, preachers, exercising what they learned in school, practiced a
great deal of word analysis. This preoccupation with language as material for the
display of intelligence, learning, and verbal skill was extended, among other
ways, to the creation of new words (27, 32) and the introduction of many foreign
words.

Here is an instance, I think, where the classical tradition has persisted to this
day, watered down to practically nothing in those styles where sermons
(Catholic, Protestant, or even Jewish of the Reformed variety) are like nonrel-
gious lectures, but thriving in those religious communities where the sermon is
the keystone to religion and performance is liable to subjective evaluation. In this
milieu one can find techniques so nicely used that one must talk about a living art
(Rosenberg 1970; Samarin 1972). (One only reveals one’s bias by calling it
“folk art.”) A close analysis of television preacher-healers is rewarding in this
respect. For example, Ernest Angley uses the epithet sin-bearer with reference to
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Christ for his declaration that the latter is, according to healing theology, also sick-bearer, a formal anomaly to be sure, because of the way sick is used, but striking for this very reason as well as being alliterative (Szuchewycz 1980). (The argument is that as Jesus bears away sin so he also bears away sickness.)

These devices, and several others, I say, were used to characterize the role of the preacher. The sermon, like speech in so many other situations, gives form to the expression of social role. But the sermon serves other functions as well. It was also meant to persuade. Persuasion was, however, only one of three functions of oratory and writing: persuading, delighting, and teaching, identified in antiquity as the genus sublime, genus mediocre, and genus humile, respectively. Each of these was characterized by particular rhetorical devices. There was a tension between these different functions, as we might very well expect and as we witness today in various samples of sermons varying from religious community to religious community or within discourses of the same preacher.

Discourse can be multifunctional, of course: that which can delight can also be persuasive. In what Bayley calls "orchestrated" prose, for example, "argument has to be developed affectively in order to persuade readers or listeners fully to accept it" (97). What is surprising is that the distinctive characteristic of this style is the sentence structure.

It is among Protestants, Bayley says, that this style seems to be found first (97). There are not too many such comparisons between Protestants and Catholics in the book, only that the former tend to strong affective oratory (31), that they favored both a close analysis of the biblical text (whereas the Catholics were inclined to use it merely as a starting point), and also the structuring of the sermon into explicit points or divisions, the three-point sermon (not extinct today by any means!) being especially popular.

Bayley does not concern himself with social analysis and only in a limited way with a diachronic perspective (e.g., the shift in French oratory from the "thesaurus style" to consecutive, affective, periodic writing). Since discourse style has its roots in a social system and ideology as much as discourse themes (Samarin 1973), we would like to have learned how this relationship was manifested. It is worth noting that another characteristic of Protestant preaching was that there seems to have been, as Bayley notes, something of a personality cult among Protestants (15).

The book is replete with carefully chosen selections from both rhetorical manuals and sermons. What limits their usefulness to the general reader is that they are not translated from the French and that neither the language nor the spelling has been modernized. There is also some untranslated material in Latin.

This is an erudite book, to be sure, but redeemed by the author's felicitous style and lucid analysis. It is a book for the specialist, but one others interested in the development of oral discourse styles in Occidental society could peruse with profit.

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This content marks a significant step forward in discourse analysis of narrative. Unlike so many edited volumes, The pear stories was produced by collaborators in a single project. Chafe’s Language and Experience Project was concerned with how people talk about things they have experienced and later recall. Thus all of the linguists contributing to the volume analyze various portions of the same data set.

The volume’s title derives from the experiment through which narrative data were collected. A basic assumption of the project is that much human knowledge is stored nonverbally. To investigate how speakers convert nonverbal into verbal information, samples of speakers of ten languages were shown “the Pear Film,” which has sound but no “talk.” The film opens with a man picking pears in an orchard. A chain of events follows, triggered when a boy on a bicycle takes a basket of pears and rides off. The film was shown, five persons at a time, to 50 speakers of English and 20 speakers each of nine other languages. Each person was interviewed separately after the viewing, and then again a few weeks later. The resulting narratives were tape-recorded and transcribed.

The book’s primary theoretical contribution is Chafe’s first chapter, “The Deployment of Consciousness in the Production of a Narrative.” Chafe discusses the properties of consciousness related to its deployment through time, suggesting the term idea units for linguistic expressions of focuses of consciousness. Idea units are “spurts” in spontaneous speech called “information blocks” by Grimes and “tone-units” by Crystal. In contrast, centers of interest in consciousness, which vary greatly in size and complexity and appear to be determined by learned schemas, find linguistic expression in extended sentences. Drawing on examples from English narratives, Chafe shows that speakers differ in the ease with which they move from one center of interest to another at different points in a narrative; their attempts to reorient constitute the spoken