

Article

A Différent Kind of Preaching: Derrida and the Deconstruction of Contemporary Homiletics

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Abstract: Homiletics manifests as a *technē* that commends certain kinds of preaching over others. As such, homiletics structures debate unaware of the philosophical assumptions operative within it. This paper challenges the logocentrism of contemporary homiletical theories in light of Jacques Derrida's deconstructive analytic. I take as my privileged conversation partner Fred Craddock, the much-lauded king of the New Homiletic. I argue that in commending inductive over deductive logic, Craddock merely inverts the logical movement of preaching, thereby reinscribing logocentrism. Utilizing Derrida's neologism *différance*, I press homiletics toward what I am labeling *conductive preaching*, which reframes homiletical theory beyond the epistemological biases that condition it.

Keywords: homiletics; homiletical theory; preaching; Jacques Derrida; logocentrism; *différance*

If preaching is primarily defined spatially and through power differentials, then the practice of preaching will always mirror the ills of those parameters.

—Chelsea Brooke Yarborough (2022, p. 225)

1. Introduction

I will speak, therefore, of a word. This word hovers between not being a word at all and being *the* word, the magic word, the word of words in postmodern parlance. Regardless of its worldly and wordly status, it disrupts the speaking of words, all words, even the proclaimed Word. This word (is) *différance*.¹ Born too soon and yet late to arrive, this “word” marks the spatiotemporal conditions of discourse, including holy discourse to and on behalf of that which stirs in the name of the Holy. As luck or perhaps as a certain providence would have it, this super word that (is) not a word (is) also holey, even if holy discourse—we sometimes call this preaching—has tended to ignore homiletical holeyness for the sake of its supposed holiness. With Derrida, I proclaim that there is “nothing kerygmatic” about *différance*, but that does not mean that there is nothing *différent* about the *kerygma*. Announcing *différance* does not constitute a “prophetic annunciation of an imminent and as yet unheard nomination” (Derrida 1982, p. 27). At the same time, and as Derrida stresses in his later writings, striving to name the unnamable astir in and through our nominalizations arises from a desire for justice (Derrida 1992, p. 35).

Derrida emphasizes that *différance* (is) neither a word nor a concept; i.e., it holds no lexical space in the dictionary (at least when Derrida invented it). Derrida packs a lot into this “quasi-transcendental” neologism (Gasché 1986). First, in French, the verb *différer* carries two distinct connotations: (1) to defer and (2) to differ (from). Thus, *différance* evokes both the notions of deferral (a temporal designation) and difference (an ontological designation). Thus, for starters, *différance* connotes a delay or a suspension of a decision *as well as* a dissimilar otherness, a discernibility, or a condition by which we can tell two things apart. The verbal root of *différance* (*différer*) is always and already polysemic. Second, the noun *différence* (with an *e*) in French is a passive noun. In other words, it does not convey the idea of actively putting off, of deferring. In French, *différence* only means difference (as in “dissimilar to”), which is a passive idea. Third, the French language does not put forth a gerund (noun–verb) to render the sense of active deferral (in English, the gerund



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would be “deferring”). Typically, a French gerund is formed from the present participle of the verb: *différant*. Since no such gerund existed, Derrida invented his own. Moreover, the French ending *-ance* is retained in French as a vestige of the middle voice, which is now obsolete. To illustrate, Derrida cites the word *mouvance*, which does not simply mean the fact of moving, of moving oneself, or of being moved, but remains ambiguously related to all three. Thus, Derrida’s neographism, *différance*, remains undecidable between the active and passive. This will prove significant later.

Much cannot be heard in this holey discourse concerning holy discourse, and I would argue that it is that which cannot be heard—that which Derrida will label the “purely graphic” (Derrida 1982, p. 3)—that exposes homiletics to think a *différant* kind of preaching. Note that I am not calling for a *different* kind of preaching (and it is on account of my discourse in English and not French that you are able to *note* this at all). Preaching *differently* will not take us where we need to go because it positions us after the fact, i.e., after identities have been rendered such that differences are discernable. We must learn to think beyond kinds of preaching. We have all *kinds* of preaching. Narrative preaching, conversational preaching, expository preaching, celebratory preaching—these are kinds of preaching. They are species dwelling under the genus *praedicare contemporalis*. *Différance* helps us think preaching with and beyond homiletics’ house of Being built on logocentrism and the *ego cogito*; it points us to the upside-down kindom—otherwise than both kingdoms and kind-doms—where even *the* impossible becomes possible, perhaps (Caputo 2006, p. 104).

Let us interrupt the wholly, holey, holy speech of Christian preaching by thinking with the holey (not wholly) irreverent, differential, and arbitrary spacing that structures the conditions of preaching’s possibility—in short, by thinking according to *différance*. By summoning this magical, made-up word, we might become better equipped to disrupt and thereby deconstruct the logocentrism operative within our many kinds of preaching.²

2. *Différance* and/in Proclamatory Signification

My present intervention in homiletical theory arises from a profound respect for God’s self-revealed otherness (pace Barth 1933, p. 288). As radically other, the Word proclaimed manifests a quasi-noumenal interiority that remains indistinguishable from its exteriority. This *je ne sais quoi* theology labels the Word of God. Continental philosophy labels this “the Thing”—even if philosophers debate what exactly this Thing “is” (e.g., the in-itself, the for-itself, lack, nothingness; a saturated phenomenon). The Word’s adumbrated phenomenality through preaching bodies is possible only according to a *différance* that constitutes it. We do not experience the Word directly. Its noumenality is inferred from its phenomenality. As Derrida puts it, “*différance*, which (is) nothing, (is) in the thing itself. It is (given) in the thing itself. It (is) in the thing itself. It, *différance*, the thing (itself)” (Derrida 1992, p. 40). In terms of homiletical theory, we might put it like this: the Word proclaimed points toward a pre-ontological figure of expropriation aiming but never arriving at some divine essence.³ The Word given in and through the preacher’s various significations—which transcend her mere words (McCray 2015)—prepares the event of such expropriation. *Différance* affects and infects both the preaching of the Word and the Word preached. Despite our most earnest homiletical efforts, preaching cannot by itself deliver the Word *in itself*.

Taking *différance* to heart—and to the heart of homiletical theory—opens new questions. It forces us to factor an irreducible undecidability into proclamatory discourse, both at its origin and toward any ultimate completion or end to the play of sermonic signification. Thinking through (and with) *différance* invites us to entertain the possibility that we were never supposed to have it all figured out. Hardwired into language itself is an obdurate, wily, and frenetic disposition that hovers over the surface of the deep reservoir of language. It teems with an energy we cannot control, no matter how violently we strive to subdue it, to arrest its restlessness through privileged forms. *Différance* (is) master of language without enforcing its sovereignty. It (is) not God, as Derrida insists on several occasions (esp. Derrida 1987a), but it ought to shape the ways we attempt to speak about (and for) God in Christian preaching. Theological thinking according to *différance* is already taking

place, and it turns out to be not so foreign to Christian thought. As William Willimon avers, “There is a relentlessness about the speech of this God, an effusive loquaciousness, a dogged determination not to rest, not to fall silent, not to cease striving until every single one of us is part of the conversation” (Willimon 2005, p. 15). What might Willimon’s theological assertion suggest about God’s relationship to language? How might we need to reconsider signification theologically if this is true?

In this essay, I venture an “upsetting of the [homiletical] heritage” (Derrida 1997, p. 14), not to destroy but to deconstruct an epistemological assumption driving homiletical theory. The “unnamable glimmer beyond the closure” that Derrida glimpses in his early work and boldly preaches in his later work calls for the dissolution of the sign/divinity structure within the logocentrism of Western discourse (Derrida 1997, p. 29), a structure in which “God” functions as the transcendental authorizer of linguistic meaning. I have glimpsed a glimmer of my own. To articulate this vision will require an originary affirmation (*oui, oui*) of Derrida’s project that marks the originary work of writing at the heart of speech, an arche-writing *avant la lettre*—literally.

Homiletics has swallowed the metaphysical hook of logocentrism. Drawn by the juicy worm of presence, homiletics has assumed a certain power of speech over writing, and this assumption structures both the logic of preaching and the ways of homiletical discourse. I have addressed this at length elsewhere (Myers 2018). Taking my own “privileged example”, as Derrida models, let us look closely at the work of Fred Craddock—preacher extraordinaire and king of the New Homiletic. The so-called newness of the New Homiletic is not really new. In inverting the logical trajectory of preaching, it reinscribes the binaries sustained in homiletical theory. To illustrate, consider Eugene Lowry’s panegyric to the New Homiletic as

a paradigmatic shift involving moves from deductive to inductive, from rhetoric to poetic, from space to time, from literality to orality, from prose to poetry, from hot to cool, from creed to hymn, from science to art, from left brain to right brain, from proposition to parable, from direct to indirect, from construction to development, from discursive to aesthetic, from theme to event, from description to image, from point to evocation, from authoritarian to democratic, from truth to meaning, from account to experience. (Lowry 1993, pp. 95–96)

While seeming to stress the New Homiletic’s radicality, Lowry signals its derivation. A truly radical and deconstructive approach would not rest at mere inversions—as if the poetic were not always also rhetorical, as if the hymnic and creedal functions could be separated. The way Derrida teaches us to think is to interrogate the very conditions of possibility of privileging one term over the other. That is what I am attempting to do here.

3. As One without *Différance*

Central to Craddock’s argument in his groundbreaking text, *As One Without Authority*, is the uncritical connection between preaching and logos. He challenges the connection between preaching and Greek rhetoric—a mainstay in the history of homiletics—and yet, through his uncritical adoption of Heideggerian thought, he posits “a fundamental understanding of what words are and what they can and cannot do” (Craddock 2001, p. 8). Craddock identified the central problem of preaching in the logical movement of preaching—the “downward” movement of deductive logic, to be more precise. Before Craddock, mainline and evangelical preaching were of a kind; both relied on a deductive movement from a proposition or thesis statement defended logically throughout the sermon in three or four points and ending with a concluding bit of practical application or emotionally evocative rhetoric (often this has been caricatured as “three points and a poem”). Though others before him recognized the power of induction (esp. Davis 1958), Craddock inverted the logic of contemporary preaching, or, at least, he is the one who carried this inversion into the pulpit and classroom.⁴ Craddock taught us to preach inductively. With inductive preaching, the sermon logic moves from broad empirical knowledge toward a question or proposition posed to the listener. If deductive preaching follows the logical movement

of the essay, inductive preaching follows the logical movement of the story; if deductive preaching focuses on sermon meaning, inductive preaching is all about its meaningfulness. It is precisely this epistemological prejudice that I wish to interrogate. I share this concern with homiletician Sunggu Yang, who challenges the “text driven mono-dimensional focus of ‘how’ and ‘what’ [that] has prevented holistic-aesthetic and multidimensional education in preaching” (Yang 2021, p. 5).

Two problems plague Craddock’s thinking, and these are the twin pillars of his homiletical kin(g/d)om. First, both deductive and inductive preaching are wedded to a certain logos: the former *monological*, the latter *dialogical*. Even though he eschews rhetoric for usurping hermeneutics, his thinking remains tethered to rhetoric, to persuasion (Craddock 2001, p. 5). Thus, the movement of Craddock’s method is still governed by a certain telos, a certain *wanting to say (vouloir dire)*. Second, Craddock amplifies the logocentric privileging of speech over writing. He privileges spoken words as the “purest form” of language in which we find words “in their natural setting in the world of sound” (Craddock 2001, p. 23). He argues that the oral/aural event of preaching signifies (Divine) presence. These two homiletical assumptions drive Craddock’s influence among the many kinds of contemporary preaching; we might think of these assumptions as viceroys operating under the sovereignty of the king of the New Homiletic.

Following the calling to proclaim God without reducing God to a mere object of our thinking and speaking, homiletics proclaims certain techniques. Such *technē* are not in themselves proclamation. But they do condition the possibility of proclamation. As with all conditions of possibility, what they enable, they also tend to delimit.⁵ When homiletical theories insert themselves between the preacher, Scripture, and the preacher’s congregational or other context, they simultaneously commend certain practices and discourage others.

The primary problem Craddock found with the dominant mode of proclamation in his day was its lack of relevance or connectivity to sermon hearers. Deductive sermons presume a position of authority removed from the lived experiences of the listeners. Without a point of contact, without relevance, the sermon could never be a Word of the Lord for them. Craddock argued that the pulpit was in the “shadows” because preaching failed to connect with the existential situation of congregants and parishioners. In Craddock’s words, “The point must be clearly understood that these various movements in preaching are not games of hide-and-seek or cat-and-mouse. The sole purpose is to engage the hearer in the pursuit of an issue or an idea so that he will think his own thoughts and experience his own feelings in the presence of Christ and in the light of the gospel” (Craddock 2001, p. 124). Craddock’s solution to the perceived irrelevance of preaching in late-1960s America was to reverse the logical flow of the sermon from deduction to induction. Moving from “the particulars of human experience that have a familiar ring in the listener’s ear to a general truth or conclusion” fosters a more receptive hearing of the gospel, wagered Craddock (Craddock 2001, p. 57). By changing how we present our sermons, he envisioned how the listener could become a co-creator of existential truth with the preacher.⁶ He believed that such participatory investment by sermon hearers would not only make sermons more interesting but would also create spaces where the gospel could be experienced at a deeper, affective level. Craddock’s solution and its concomitant inductive method for preaching captured the North American homiletical imagination for the next thirty years.

Contemporary homiletics, like contemporary democracy, is open to different kinds of preaching, but not all kinds. It is hospitable to certain kinds of preaching, but “remains limited and conditional” (Derrida 1982, p. 10). The spacing between the *demos* and the *voyou*, between the citizen and the rogue, between those with authority and those without, marks the homiletical as much as the political. Wrapped up in kinds of preaching are specific ways (*voies*) of preaching. To suggest a new kind of preaching is to participate in the democracy of the homiletical academy, but to proffer the roguish proposal for that which is otherwise than kinds constitutes what Derrida labels a *counter-sovereignty* (See, for instance Wilson 2004, p. 137). Moreover, the demagoguery manifesting in certain kinds of

evangelical and mainline preaching remains radically critical of roguish proposals that do not conform to homiletical logocentrism.

Already at work, here, in the middle and from the beginning (*arche*) of my discourse on hol(e)y discourse is a logos that rules (*arche*) in and against preaching's logos: preaching's rules depend upon a certain *différance* that can help us think toward preaching beyond kinds. Preaching's internal semantic dissemination aids preaching, for it harbors a challenge to homiletical paradigms of temporization and spacing. If *différance* (is) anything, it (is) "the non-full, non-simple, structured and differentiating origin of differences". Sermonic discourse—qua discourse—is no different. In Derrida's words, it (is) "the name we might give to the 'active', moving discord of different forces, and of differences of forces" (Derrida 1982, pp. 11, 18). Thus, *différance* simultaneously structures the possibility of the hol(e)y event of preaching as presence, which resists hermeneutical closure, as well as the impossibility of preaching ever manifesting the presence it desires. Derrida unwittingly critiques Craddock's existential-phenomenological assumptions when he writes,

The alterity of the "unconscious" makes us concerned not with horizons of modified—past or future—presents, but with a "past" that has never been present, and which never will be, whose future to come will never be a production or a reproduction in the form of presence. Therefore the concept of trace is incompatible with the concept of retention, of the becoming-past of what has been present. One cannot think the trace—and therefore *différance*—on the basis of the present, or of the presence of the present. (Derrida 1982, p. 21)

Another way of putting this is that the holy discourse of preaching is fundamentally holey discourse; because preaching is a kind of signification, it is marked by the trace—the spatiotemporal play or give in linguistic structures—and thus, it subverts the kingdom of contemporary preaching as a kind-dom. It defers the presence necessary for preaching-as-presence, even in the purported eventfulness of inductive preaching. Derrida's roguish proposal routs Craddock's contention that "unlike written words, spoken words are never past or future; sound is always present, always an existential experience" (Craddock 2001, p. 25). Such an assertion becomes absurd before the play of presence and absence in/as/on account of *différance*.

Moreover, *différance* signifies the unraveling of the sovereignty of the preacher who aims to control the meaning of her discourse absolutely. Following Derrida, I want to suggest a movement of preaching that is at once "strategic and adventurous. Strategic because no transcendent truth present outside the field of discourse can govern the totality of the field. Adventurous because this strategy is not a simple strategy in the sense that strategy orients tactics according to a final goal, a telos or theme of domination, a mastery and ultimate reappropriation of the development of the field" (Derrida 1982, p. 7). Preaching is fundamentally *adventurous*, and thus, it is haunted by that which is both beyond presence and yet not quite absent. In short, *différance* helps us think the rhetorical "movement" of preaching beyond deduction and induction, which both presume a full presence (in speech) and a simple origin (in thought). Derrida explains that "the circulation of signs defers the moment in which we can encounter the thing itself, make it ours, consume or expend it, touch it, see it, intuit its presence". No matter how many words we employ, we never escape the semiotics of language, which cannot deliver the "thing" our words signify. This is true of *all* language. How much greater is this deferral when the "thing" intended is God? Derrida continues, "And this structure presupposes that the sign, which defers presence, is conceivable only on the *basis* of the presence that it defers and *moving toward* the deferred presence that it aims to reappropriate" (Derrida 1982, p. 9). Because the semiotics of language requires that which it lacks (i.e., full presence), merely playing with the directionality of sermonic logic cannot extricate us from an originary lack that simultaneously impels and imperils preaching.

4. Conductive Preaching

To recap, Craddock's groundbreaking text *As One Without Authority* argued on philosophical and theological grounds for preaching to shift direction by supplanting deductive logic with inductive logic. But here is the thing that bears repeating: both deductive and inductive kinds of preaching operate under logocentrism. Logocentrism names the meta-physical privileging of speech over writing. It assumes that the former manifests the logos of discourse in its full presence, and the latter merely imitates such presence. Derrida shows that the hallowed quest for presence is equally elusive in speech and writing. Craddock's rhetorical stratagem aims to negotiate distance (spatially) to render the transcendental signified imminent (temporally) in the sermonic event. Like a fish in its natural environment, the waters of logocentrism have gone unnoticed in the pond of homiletics. When construed as a means of arresting the play of deferral and difference, homiletics remains stuck in a logocentric quagmire. Given the Derridean turn in the philosophy of language, homiletics must reimagine itself as a playfully deconstructive practice that resists the temptation to commend a particular kind of preaching.

Below, I pose a means of resisting logocentrism that I am calling *conductive preaching*. I have selected this term for several reasons. First, it maintains an intentionality operative within the Latin verb *dūcere*—both in terms of movement (“to conduct, guide, lead; to draw, pull”) and epistemology (“to consider, regard, think”). At the same time, conductivity resists any determinable directionality. It seeks to embrace a shift toward a certain ambivalence, playfulness, and *différance* always already ingredient in Christian proclamation. Second, the conductivity signified by conductive preaching celebrates a polyphony that pushes homiletics beyond epistemologies without forsaking them. It moves us to include epistemologies alongside deontologies, ontologies, and teleologies.

Before I articulate its colors and contours, we must remain vigilant to some dangers inherent in conductive preaching. First, it is tempting to see this as a proposal for just another kind of preaching. While I celebrate its capacity to subvert the binary logic—deductive vs. inductive—that Craddock left unaffected in reversing the logical flow of preaching, such a proposal runs the risk of reification. As such, it would displace rather than disturb the governing logics of homiletics. Second, as Charles Campbell has argued, it is easy for homiletics to become so preoccupied with the form of preaching that we neglect sufficient attention to its content (Campbell 1997, pp. 168–70). While I pause before the form/content juxtaposition (What formless content could appear in a sermon? What form could exist devoid of content?), Campbell is right that modifications to sermonic form will not save us. Third, if conductive preaching remains within the bounds of logic alone, it misses the opportunity for homiletics to touch the material realities of contemporary Christian proclamation. Doing so would perpetuate insufficient attention to intersectional significations of race, gender, and sexuality—the impossibility of which a number of homileticians have recently challenged (See Kim-Cragg 2019; Liu 2022; McDonald 2023; Wiseman 2024). There is an epistemological bias in Craddock's thought that calls for deconstruction. Paradoxically, it is out of such deconstruction that we may come to know the Word proclaimed. Bearing Derrida's insight in mind that that in the name of which one deconstructs is not in the last instance deconstructable, deconstructing homiletical theory according to sermonic *différance* opens a way out of no way, which Derrida labels *justice*. (Derrida 2002, pp. 229–30). Just as no sermonic idea can make itself known apart from some form that manifests it, so too can no sermonic idea emerge without some *body* preaching it. Sermons do not arise from logical movement alone—whether that movement begins with a general proposition or an empirical observation.

4.1. Preaching Conduct

Conductive preaching begins with the Levinasian–Derridean insistence on ethics as “first philosophy”. Displacing epistemology and ontology as philosophy's starting point, Levinas argues that prior to discussing how we might ascertain the beingness of the being, we must first vow not to kill the other. Rather than following Husserl's charge toward “the

things themselves”, Levinas identified a problem inherent in the very act of charging in, which reduces the other to an object of the perceiver/speaker’s experience. Conductive preaching will strive to honor the Word’s otherness (alterity) by resisting the temptation to totalize otherness in sameness.

The ethical injunction against totalizing (non-)human others and the Divine Other finds its strongest homiletical proponent in John McClure. In his groundbreaking text *Other-Wise Preaching*, he argues on multiple fronts against totalization, which is a byproduct of logocentrism. Treating the Bible as other honors the sanctity of Divine alterity manifested within it. McClure argues that “the Bible as scripture does not hold on to itself. It deconstructs even its own revelation, exits its own house . . . in such a way as to place the exegete into a certain proximity to the text’s others” (McClure 2001, p. 20).⁷ McClure’s Levinas-inspired ethic for preaching extends beyond textual hermeneutics to what we might label *contextual* hermeneutics. McClure cautions us against the tendency bolstered by the New Homiletic to “reify homiletic meanings that emerge more from positionality within the language system (and thus from dynamics of power and symbolic capital) than through any secure relationship between language and Being” (McClure 2001, p. 81). McClure rightly underscores the politics ingredient in inductive homiletics. He urges us to exercise caution in naming others’ lived experiences. As he puts it in an earlier work, “In symmetrical relationships, . . . what is often missing is the sense of how different the experience of someone else may in fact be. The urge for symmetry can preclude the experience of the other as truly other” (McClure 1995, p. 43).

Conductive preaching does not commend a new kind of preaching to supplant those that might totalize others’ lived experiences. There can be no overcoming. The Latin verb animating my argument here is *conducō*, the perfect passive participle of which is *conductus*. This participle resuscitates an element of our Latin root (*dūco*), which means to draw along from place to place or simply to lead. It is a small step from the act of controlling or directing one’s movement to doing the same with one’s behavior—hence the ethical overtones of the English word “conduct”.

The conduct immanent within conductive preaching constitutes a radical homiletical proposal—radical in the truest sense inasmuch as it signifies an act of rethinking, re-staging, reimagining, and reinventing. Radicality returns us to the root (*rādx*) of the matter, pressing us to get at what is really going on. As John Caputo puts it, “a radicalization is always the radicalization of something, something that was passed on to us, transmitted, something already up and running by the time we arrived on the scene, which is pretty much what tradition means. The radicalization of a religious tradition means to unearth what we can really believe in that tradition even if we no longer believe the official line they were selling us” (Caputo 2023, p. 12). Conductive preaching will be concerned first and foremost with the preacher’s conduct—hermeneutically and discursively—above stipulating which direction the preacher’s logic ought to travel. If we flub this first step, all our homiletical efforts are but clanging symbols and crashing gongs, to paraphrase the apostle Paul (1 Cor 13:1; see Myers 2021).

Différance abounds here due to our perpetual recourse to language vis-à-vis the other. As Derrida puts it, “the sign is usually said to be put in the place of the thing itself, the present thing, ‘thing’ here standing equally for meaning or referent” (Derrida 1982, p. 9). When we speak of others—whether they be human, non-human, or Divine—we signify or represent the other in our language. Such an act presupposes a certain mastery over language, which can very easily turn into mastery over others. Conductive preaching will strive to preserve the other’s alterity. Here the holeyness of holy discourse transcends semiotics. Conductive preaching will conduct itself ethically by perpetually opening itself to the alternative reading, the alternative preaching. Preaching, like rhetoric, opens vertiginous possibilities of referential aberration. Or at least it *should*—and yes, we are being deontological here. Whatever kinds of preaching the preacher adopts, his conduct ought to recognize that our rhetoric is superseded by a grammar that deconstructs it. Such preaching is less concerned with logic than with difference, with *différance*. It constitutes

preaching's *supplement*. Its conduct will be playful and will content itself to a state of suspended ignorance, a knowing ignorance. Phil Snider articulates this well when he writes that "sermons are preached in restless pursuit of the event that is harbored in the name of God (the hope and desire that stirs in the name of God). At the limits of language, preachers stumble upon the impossibility of expressing the inexpressible, where words can only give way to proclamations of praise and prayer" (Snider 2022, p. 96). Here at the limits (is) the Thing, the Word, approached beyond totalization.

4.2. Preaching Conductors and Conduits

The second aspect conductive preaching illumines beyond the logical movement of the sermon revolves around the one doing the leading (*dūcere*), i.e., the preacher him, her, or themselves. Here, we hold in abeyance the logical axes of induction and deduction to consider the material manifestation of Christian proclamation. The English word *conduit* is a doublet of *conduct*, which makes sense when we consider the agential assumption baked into conduct: there can be no conduct without one conducting the conduct. Accordingly, conductive preaching presses inductive and deductive kinds of preaching to stress the *différential* significance of the preacher. Sunggu Yang remarks that homiletical pedagogies over the past decades have stressed the textual "what" and the literary/performative "how", and in so doing, homiletics has neglected the "who" and "why" of preaching. He encourages would-be preachers to experience the Word of God descending upon them in all its holistic-aesthetic noumenosity. He writes, "Let preaching students so experience, enjoy, and participate in the same holistic-aesthetic event of the Word of God that their whole persons are imbued with the saving Word of God wrapped in the transcendent beauty and its transformative energy" (Yang 2021, p. 12). Though he does not use the word "conductive", Yang does speak of art being a "conduit" for the divine.

Other homileticians share Yang's concern for more than the movement and direction of preaching. Ruthanna Hooke acknowledges the truth in the adage, "they didn't come here to see you" (i.e., the preacher). She nevertheless argues that "it is important that this personal element in preaching be present in a way that enhances rather than detracts from the ultimate goal of encountering God" (Hooke 2013, p. 20). Hence, we ought to recognize the performative capacities of our particular bodies, leveraging our voices, facial expressions, and physical gestures to signify new ways of thinking and feeling. This bodily performativity transcends our mere materiality but in no way supersedes it. Hooke asserts that our preacherly bodies are sites where the Holy Spirit enters our lives and transforms us: "... in allowing the personal into preaching, as the place that the Spirit breathes into and transforms, we create the possibility for performances that transgress and disrupt established norms so that a new identity can be shaped within us" (ibid., p. 42). Our bodies, in other words, can become sites of holy mischief, wreaking havoc on the systems and structures that try to restrict or constrain our capacities for being and behaving. She concludes her argument by saying, "As we offer the personal, and then allow it to be transformed through the performance of this other (the text, and God in the text), we become our essential selves and at the same time are inspired by the divine breath and participate in the becoming flesh of the divine Word" (ibid., pp. 24, 42–43).

Others push us to consider the spatio-material biases propagating preacherly authority, biases that grant certain kinds of bodies access to certain kinds of spaces. Casey Thornburgh Sigmon rightly questions through her "homilecclesiology" why, in his work of "other-wising" homiletics and "exiting" its various sources of authority, John McClure fails to "exit" the pulpit itself as a marker of preacherly authority. "Even if the preacher exits metaphorically", writes Sigmon, "the collective gaze looks not within or to each other but up at the pulpit awaiting the word of God to be given voice and presence. This final hegemony remains unchallenged..." (Sigmon 2017, p. 145). Furthermore, due to the ways the pulpit's symbolic authority has favored and continues to favor white, well-educated, heterosexual men, Chelsea Brook Yarborough aims to "decenter" the pulpit to acknowledge the ways that Black women might foster authority apart from such spatio-material limits.

“By deconstructing the pulpit itself, we inherently deconstruct the definition of preaching as a pulpit practice and open the door to wonder at all the ways in which God might be speaking” (Yarborough 2022, p. 222). Such ontological critiques do much to challenge the sovereignty of all kinds of preaching.

Craddock’s thoroughly epistemological project misses the ontological element that is always already at work in and through preaching. Here, I am speaking of the materiality of the Word manifested through and contingent upon the preacher’s body. Inductive preaching merely inverts the dominant logic of preaching. It remains entrenched in the epistemic and affective capacities of language. Because Craddock is so deeply attuned to homiletics’ way with words, he undervalues the most obvious element of preaching: the preacher herself. As the conduit of proclamation, the preacher’s materiality matters just as much (or more!) than what they say or how they say it. Because the church has historically delimited the kinds of bodies it allows in the pulpit, it is unsurprising that the bodily manifestation of God’s Word would escape homiletical critique. As Jerusha Neal observes, “The church’s manifestos on the body’s importance in preaching have been tools for norming *certain* bodies and ridiculing others” (Neal 2020, p. xiii, emphasis original).

Focusing on the Black preaching tradition but speaking beyond it, Lisa Thompson attends to how a certain masculinity constitutes the privileged conduit for gospel proclamation. Thompson is right to challenge hearers’ expectations of what preaching “ought” to sound and look like. Women and women-identifying preachers who wish to be received as preachers may be dismissed by congregants or parishioners when their timber and performativity fail to align with the cis-male stereotype. In her words,

Whether individuals actively resist or adopt this practice of preaching, it functions as a narrative that links black preaching to a particular performance of masculinity in pulpit space and rhetoric. Thus, it links the practice of preaching to masculinity, privileging the bodily productions of a particular type of a heterosexual black cisgender male over the hopes of an encounter with proclamation. . . . Women, who preach within these traditions, constantly imagine and invent their sermons in conversation with and in juxtaposition to the tradition and its inherent power in a community; this requires both creativity and ingenuity for the sake of (re)imagining both the sermon and preaching”. (Thompson 2018, pp. 17–18)

Here we are concerned less with the logical directionality of sermonic discourse than the logic-wielding human animal in the pulpit—and perhaps beyond it.

Building on the work of W. E. B. Du Bois and Dianne Stewart, Melva Sampson names a “two-sided identity” performed by marginalized preachers as a mode of both survival and resistance. We may discern such performative strategies of survival and resistance in the act of masking. Sampson explains, “Masking happens when Black people across the diaspora force their philosophical, theological, aesthetic and cultural conceptualizations into Western frameworks to camouflage the specificity and blunt the sharp edges of what they are protecting while keeping the core intact” (Sampson 2019, p. 15). Sampson helpfully signifies something more than the respectability politics she identifies with institutional African American denominational churches. It is against such a backdrop that her own homiletical innovations emerge to subvert the homiletical status quo. Sampson manifests a deconstructive digital homiletic in her playfully subversive cyber assembly, the Pink Robe Chronicles. Through her preaching praxis, Sampson embraces what she labels a “radical subjectivity”, one that is “addressing and readdressing, deconstructing and reconstructing while simultaneously subverting forces” that conspire against her Black, feminine preaching body. In donning her pink robe, Sampson unmask homiletical whiteness and androcentrism. She avers, “I preach to set the captive free, even when the captive is me. I preach. We preach. My body preaches through womanish gestures” (Sampson 2019, p. 9). Sampson continues, arguing that her “breasts preach sermons of anatomical acceptance when they refuse to be disguised by shapeless and non-pink robes that bear the tried marks of truth telling and wisdom sharing. Instead, they stand mostly with assistance to proclaim the acceptable day of God. I am fearfully and wonderfully made!” (ibid., p. 10). Here we

have a powerful model for deconstructing the foundational pillars bolstering homiletical logocentrism: whiteness and misogyny. Sampson adopts the persona of a “digital griot”, one who “conjures” Afrocentric language, imagery, and bodily significations to subvert discursive and spatiotemporal bifurcations between Christian/non-Christian practices, ancient/future possibilities, and sacred/digital spaces. This griotic persona enables Sampson to “exorcise” white supremacist narratives.

Beyond the preacher’s bodily and spatial conductivity, a final material aspect of preaching is the preacher’s words. It is through their sonic significations and gestures that preachers make meaning. In a series of fascinating articles on bodily excesses that both emerge from and exceed speech, Donyelle McCray writes of a “strange holiness” preaching bodies exude. McCray focuses on sweating, spitting, cursing, and weeping as extralinguistic signs bearing witness to and revealing the Word in and beyond holy words (See McCray 2015, pp. 52–62; 2021a, pp. 106–7). She writes, “The gravity of the [preaching] moment presses on the preacher and draws a truth out of the preacher’s body” (McCray 2015, p. 53). In her important work on reimagining the generic conventions of sermons, McCray pushes us to blend multiple forms of discourse to rethink frameworks for prophetic speech. Such genre-bending ought to aim at more than novelty for novelty’s sake, and it should not be used to avoid grappling with difficult issues from the pulpit. Genre-bending sermons, McCray argues, help us reimagine authority structures, wherein the preacher emerges as a sage, bearing witness to an archive of communal stories, rituals, and practices to express the faith in new ways (McCray 2021b). Through such conductivity and playfulness, McCray helps us think beyond kinds of preaching to preaching’s generic conditions of im-possibility.

4.3. Conducive Preaching

Yet another word ramifying from *condūcere* is the adjective “conducive”, which means “having the quality of promoting or furthering”. But the adjective bears an additional connotation, namely, that of making a certain situation or outcome likely or possible. Here, I signify that which contributes to production, particularly that which is most favorable or helpful for an activity or operation’s success. In common discourse, we speak of things as being or not being conducive to certain sorts of activities. A whole-food, plant-based diet is conducive to good health; stiletto heels are not conducive to playing basketball. In homiletics, we speak of ways of speaking and gesturing we believe to be conducive to gospel reception. Many teachers of preaching also present their students with a laundry list of homiletical faux pas believed not to be conducive to gospel proclamation. Attention to such conduciveness moves us away from kinds of preaching to the various ends conditioning kinds of preaching.

Couched in terms of a receptacle, the sermon is a fold effectuated and inhabited by *différance*—the differing, differed, deferring, and deferred spatialization of time and temporization of space—which enables the Word to abide in its non-identity and otherness to itself. The emptying of *différance* virtually fills the sermon to the point of merging with it above and beyond the Word that motivates its kind, but the identity of the sermon immediately encounters *différance*. Paradoxically, *différance* also constitutes a non-identity, the congenital splitting of the sermon that is never—strictly speaking and despite its earnest efforts—gospel. Preaching that is conducive adds to or supplements (*suplée*) preaching with something else. It is this something else, this purported conduciveness, that is added to preaching to foster or bring about some desired result. Hence, there remains an undecidable *différance* between preaching and conducive preaching. There is no preaching that does not intend some result; to preach is always to preach toward an end. Otherwise, we are merely talking. Another way of saying this is that every kind of preaching aims to do something, to lead (*dūcō*) sermon hearers somewhere. This is its teleological dimension.

To inquire into preaching’s conduciveness is to operate in the dative mood: nothing *is* conducive in and for itself; things may only be conducive *to* or *for* certain outcomes. This is to say that a teleological impulse drives homiletical quests for kinds of preaching.

And so, we must ask, Conducive for what? Conducive for whom? Such an interrogative coefficient ought to accompany every kind of preaching. *Différance* grants us space to think homiletically about the conduciveness of particular kinds of preaching alongside the particular ends driving them. I will not receive angry emails for asserting that all kinds of preaching aim to be conducive to something that is not preaching. We might disagree on what motivates such conduciveness (e.g., salvation, conscientization, material action), but no preacher I have ever met has confessed that they hope their sermonic efforts will yield nothing. This is not to be mistaken with claiming complete control over the results of our preaching. Here, Willimon's dictum holds: "Our job as preachers is to stand up and speak the truth as God gives it to us; congregational response is God's business" (Willimon 2005, p. 22). Rather, commending this or that kind of preaching coincides with one's teleology of preaching. Frank Thomas names this well when discussing whether to preach the text or preach the gospel; when forced to choose, Thomas chooses the latter (Thomas 2020, chap. 1).

To illustrate, expository preaching is a kind of preaching focused on mining the biblical text for gospel truths. Haddon Robinson, a leading proponent of this approach, asserts that "God speaks through the Bible". It is the medium through which God encounters and confronts humans and "seizes them by the soul". Robinson clarifies that his homiletical method is irreducible to historical or doctrinal explication and that many who operate under the banner of expository preaching are actually doing something else entirely. Robinson insists that "genuine expository preaching" is the kind of preaching that "best carries the force of divine authority" (Robinson 2014, p. 4). Robinson articulates an ideational approach, i.e., the communication of a "biblical concept" that is "derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in context" (Robinson 2014, p. 4). What is central for Robinson is that the preacher attend to the thought of the biblical writer, for only this is sufficient to determine the substance of the sermon. Bryan Chapell agrees, writing, "Expository preaching solemnly binds a preacher to the task of representing the precise meaning of a text as intended by the original author or as illumined by another inspired source within the Bible" (Chapell 2005, p. 7). A common trait of most, if not all, expository preaching is the deductive flow of its logic. When assurance of divine authority is at stake, preachers must evince a clear line of sight between what the text is saying and what the preacher herself is saying.

If assurance of divine authority constitutes the telos of deductive kinds of preaching, an inductive kind of preaching stresses a sermon's relevance. As audience reception and active participation in the process of sermonic meaning-making drive Craddock's logical inversion, it is incumbent upon the New Homiletic preacher to present the gospel in such a way that its meaningfulness becomes apparent to listeners. Craddock writes, "Sermons that move inductively, sustaining interest and engaging the listener, do not have points any more than a narrative, a story, a parable, or even a joke has points. But there is a point, and the discipline of this one idea is creative in preparation, in delivery, and in reception of the message" (Craddock 2001, p. 81). Craddock is not advocating subterfuge or manipulation. His kind of preaching aims to engage the hearer such that she will think her own thoughts and experience his own feelings in the presence of Christ (Craddock 2001, p. 124).

A third example substantiates my argument for preaching's conduciveness. A "new" kind of preaching emerged in the United States in the early 1970s that came to be called Black Preaching. (I place "new" in air quotes because its purported newness was only such vis-à-vis the white homiletical establishment; as Dale Andrews avers, aspects of the so-called New Homiletic have been part of African American preaching for centuries (Andrews 2010, pp. 96–97). Regardless of its purported newness, this constituted a distinct kind of preaching from expository or narrative preaching. Black preaching (also known as celebratory preaching, *pace* Thomas 2013) also fits awkwardly within the discursive confines of deduction or induction. In his groundbreaking text *Black Preaching: The Recovery of a Powerful Art*, Henry Mitchell writes, "Reason may make straight the highway or prepare the path, but faith invades our lives through the intuitive and emotive sectors of

consciousness. . . The intuitive realism is affected more directly by experiential encounter” (Mitchell 1990, p. 23). Mitchell (1990, p. 79) makes it clear that he regards the sermon as a vehicle for experiential encounter with the Spirit. Thus, here we have an account of preaching’s conduciveness according to the experiential encounter it evokes in the minds and hearts of worshipers. Teresa Fry Brown offers a similar *raison d’être* for preaching: “Black preaching is experiential. Black preaching is based on establishing black identity as God’s people by the assurance of grace or good news. Through concrete, logical, ethical, emotive, and reflective thought, the black preacher illuminates the possibility of reconciliation, restoration, and healing” (Fry Brown 2003, p. 161).

A final kind of preaching manifests from a different kind of conduciveness we might label political preaching. For such homiletical thinkers, it is not enough for a sermon to be authoritative, relevant, or experiential. All of these are fine, provided they are subordinated to a kind of preaching that intervenes in the concrete aspects of congregants’ lives “toward the healing of socio-economic and political systems” (Voelz 2019, p. 10). This is by no means to suggest that various kinds of preaching do not overlap with the political for particular preachers or that such a *telos* is antithetical to the goals of expository, narrative, or celebratory preachers. For politically oriented homileticians, sermons manifest the gospel most profoundly when they intervene in the sociopolitical situation suffusing the preaching event. As Lisa Thompson puts it, “Unless a message candidly addresses life on the ground and moves to collective concerns of life together, it succumbs to being an insular message hovering in the clouds” (Thompson 2021, p. 12). We may behold a similar call for preaching’s conduciveness among recent feminist homileticians. Leah D. Schade, for instance, proffers an ecofeminist homiletic that highlights the joint and interrelated oppression of women and creation. Among multiple tactics, Schade’s homiletic employs “creative actualization”, where the preacher retells biblical stories from the Earth’s and women’s perspectives. Such a hermeneutic cuts against the grain of the biblical text itself, which is almost entirely centered on male human animals, and thereby challenges phallogocentric ideologies that denigrate the feminine and non-human “other” (see Schade 2015, chap. 4).

Interrogating preaching’s conduciveness alongside various kinds of preaching yields an irony. Because what works for one kind of person might not work for another, every kind of preaching ultimately abandons its *telos* in service of form. Even as a homiletician advocates this kind of preaching over that kind, the conduciveness supplementing sermonic kinds ends up being subsumed under a generic hegemony.

5. Conclusions

Conductive preaching is hol(e)y discourse oriented to preaching’s necessary deconstruction in the name of that which stirs in the name of proclamation’s holiness. Thus, conductive preaching plays in/between the kataphatic, apophatic, and anaphatic, the latter of which manifests a prayer-like discourse of those pursuing sacramental presence (see Hooke 2023). Conductive preaching, with its built-in ambiguities and multiplicities, participates in the force of *différance* inasmuch as it “permits the different threads and different lines of meaning—or of force—to go off again in different directions, just as it is always ready to tie itself with others” (Derrida 1982, p. 3). It points to a different kind of movement in preaching altogether, as it resists the totalizing impulses of logocentric preaching; in brief, it participates in the deferral of meaning by embracing the differential structure of sermonic signification. Recall Craddock’s assertion that “there are basically two directions in which thought moves: deductive and inductive” (Craddock 2001, p. 45). Indeed, the history of preaching has mostly flowed linearly in one of these two directions, but such “movement” overlooks other modes of signification that are nonlinear and aspects of sermon delivery beyond epistemology. Conductive preaching challenges the linear, logocentric flow of information from the pulpit—and even the pulpit itself (*à la* Yarborough 2022) or a traditional church building (*pace* Sampson 2019). Conductive preaching holds out hope for multiple kinds of preaching that are open to divergence and convergence, to

changing directions, to redoubling, to circuitry. Conductive preaching is poetic and poietic: “it is an evocative discourse that articulates the event” and otherwise than “normative discourse governing entities” (Caputo 2006, p. 103).

I have attempted to articulate in this essay three conductive modalities that can foster deeper reflection on a kind of preaching’s a priori ethical commitments; the material conduits and conductors who are inseparable from this or that kind of preaching; and the teleological *supplément* present in its absence in every kind of preaching. We might render this graphically as

Deductive Preaching privileges Assurance
 Inductive Preaching privileges Relevance
 Conductive Preaching privileges *Différance*

Conductive preaching is a roguish enterprise precisely because it refuses to take (*prendre*) the logic of the logos as its guiding principle. Rather, it brings together (*condūcere*) worldly and wordly matters arising from the call of the o/Other that gives rise to holy discourse in the first place. Conductive preaching is ruled by a “sacred anarchy”, an an-archy, a sovereignty without a sovereign. It is summoned speech. As Levinas puts it, “To speak, at the same time as knowing the Other, is making oneself known to him. The Other is not known, he is *greeted* [*salué*]. He is not only named, but also invoked. To put it in grammatical terms, the Other does not appear in the nominative, but in the vocative” (Levinas 1997, p. 7).⁸ Conductive preaching follows the pathos of holy discourse and the ethos of discourses through the holey logos of discourse understood grammatologically. It helps us imagine preaching, not as an event demanding a full presence in speech qua Word but as an event yearning for the advent of a presence to come (*a venir*); it is trembling (*tremblement*) with discursive possibilities beyond all possibilities: the impossible. With Caputo, we can describe it as “hailing an event that is otherwise than being” and that “pose[s] the possibility of something life transforming” (Caputo 2006, p. 104).

Conductive preaching recognizes that we cannot know or even think God apart from *différance*. It lends itself to reconsidering the structural and material manifestations of the Word in and beyond forms of knowledge and kinds of preaching. *Différance*, after all, (is) at once a priori, contemporary, and a point of erasure upon all a posteriority. As such, it takes to heart Jesus’ parable of the Pharisee and the publican (Luke 18:9–14), seeking not to exalt itself as holy discourse before God; rather, it will not even look up to heaven in recognition of its humble state qua holey discourse. Conductive preaching does not traffic in the strong logic of the given (*es gibt, il y a*); rather, it moves in the turbid waters of the “perhaps”. As such, it participates in the “weak force” of discourse before an event for which we desperately long and which may not ever come. I repeat, there is no kingdom of *différance*, and *différance* is sovereign over nothing. Conductive preaching, therefore, is not a new kind of preaching, not a new sovereign seeking to rule as soon as the old king loses his head. Nor is it a democracy à la roundtable preaching because it abdicates all kinds of *-cracy*, all rule. If it is a kingdom at all, it is a *voyoucracy*, celebrating the sacred anarchy inaugurated by wholly, holey, holy discourse. *Différance* (is) for rogues (*voyous*), who are kingdom-less, not those feigning authority as a logocentric ruse, but for those sojourners in a “counter-kingdom or a kingdom set on countering the business as usual of kingdoms”, as Caputo puts it (Caputo 2006, p. 27). This is the vision of preaching I envision and toward which I am yearning (*viens!*).

Perhaps because I am rather childish (*kindisch*), too playful for a homiletician, I seek a preaching that is not yet but always already may arise from a childlike faith. This vision sees through the logocentric assumptions of preaching kinds, praying for something to arise (perhaps) out of an erotocentric desire, namely, a yearning for a *différant* preaching beyond every kindom and kingdom, one that remains radically open to an impossibility beyond every homiletical possibility. Lisa Thompson names my desire well, writing, “Having the humility to recognize that, in preaching, we’re grasping for something we never fully achieve is a call to integrity and accountability without a need for perfection. . . . For with it

comes the need to reassess our claims in an ongoing manner as we listen with our hearts to the ground” (Thompson 2021, p. 86). Amen to that!⁹

Rather than seeing sermons as a direct manifestation of the Word, how we understand both Word and sermon arises from their interplay. There never was a gospel out there or back then that existed apart from its proclamation. No kind of preaching stands independent of an originary teleology that structures a particular condition of gospel possibility. It is incumbent upon homiletics to interrogate this teleological structure itself rather than debating which kind of preaching best renders the capital-W Word. There can be no certainty here, which is the driving desire of logocentrism. By regarding kinds of preaching as reflecting or embodying the Word, what is ignored or concealed are all the other possible interpretations of Word not encapsulated in a particular kind of preaching.

A *différant* kind of preaching arises from the deconstruction of kinds of preaching. Such an approach is concerned with counterposing the idea of gospel as a transcendental origin or originary trace that any kind of preaching can render fully present. From this troubling emerges a *différant* kind of homiletics, one that refutes the notion that it is possible to transgress the institution of preaching to discover something beyond some pristine and perfect gospel independent of any kind of preaching. This notion manifests in Derrida’s corpus as “There is nothing outside the text”, which simultaneously means there is no non-contextually conditioned text (Derrida 1997). For Derrida, the origin and its manifestation are co-originary, i.e., it cannot exist independently of its institution.

Can we move beyond kinds of preaching? No. This would be as impossible to achieve as separating a sheet of paper’s front from its back. But it is the very impossibility that makes the effort worth it. I am much more interested in the yearning than the achieving. Rather than hanging our heads in dismay that even our most sophisticated kinds of preaching cannot deliver the one thing they were created to do, *différance* ought to drive us (mad). Homiletics would not and could not exist apart from *différance*. At the same time, what I have tried to demonstrate in this essay is that *différance* helps us think about preaching beyond the trajectory of sermonic logic. A *différant* kind of homiletics simultaneously embodies gospel desire and the constraints placed on the gospel through the kinds of preaching. In this regard, gospel is defined equally by what is included in discrete kinds of preaching and what is not.

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Notes

- ¹ Throughout this essay, and following Derrida’s pattern, I place the ontic value of *différance* in parentheses to underscore the fact that *différance* (is) not a word. It is only within such ontological displacement and deferral that we might begin to understand the significance of Derrida’s neologism and its homiletical significance.
- ² “I have identified logocentrism and metaphysics of presence as the exigent, powerful, systematic, and irrepressible desire for such a signified” (Derrida 1997, p. 49).
- ³ On the homiletical notion of preaching *toward* the Word, see Alexander Deeg’s helpful distinction concerning the possibility of adequation between one’s perception of a thing and one’s cognitive possession of a thing (Deeg 2023, p. 9).
- ⁴ In homiletics, mention of inductive logic goes at least as far back as the nineteenth century. See (Broadus 1870, p. 162), though Broadus adds, “Only therefore in case of violent repugnance or extreme prejudice, or for some other special reason, will it be judicious for a preacher to keep back the statement of his proposition” (Broadus 1870, p. 163).
- ⁵ A classic illustration of the solidarity between conditions of possibility and impossibility is the postcard. One must entrust their postcard to the postal service to ensure that it reaches its destination. But in trusting the postal service, one runs the unavoidable risk that one’s postcard might *not* reach its destination (Derrida 1987b).

- ⁶ For Craddock, this is achieved through “distance” and “participation” in the event of preaching. See (Craddock 2002, p. 98).
- ⁷ (Cf. Craddock 2010, pp. 18–19): “Preaching is both words and the Word. To deny any relationship between one’s own words and the Word of God, whether due to one’s notion of proper humility or to an abdication of the authority and responsibility of ministry, is to rob preaching of its place and purpose”.
- ⁸ In another context, Levinas labels this “completely gratuitous” movement without return of the same to the other “liturgy” (Levinas 1986, pp. 349–50).
- ⁹ “Deconstruction is never merely negative; its desire is never satisfied with ‘no, no’. Deconstruction is thoroughly mistrustful of discourses that prohibit this and prohibit that, that weigh us down with debts and ‘don’ts.’ Deconstruction is so deeply and abidingly affirmative—of something new, of something coming—that it finally breaks out in a vast and sweeping amen, a great oui, oui—à l’impossible, in a great burst of passion for the impossible” (Caputo 1997, p. 3).

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