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Brian Fehler  
*Texas Woman's University*

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## Recovering the Rhetorical Tradition: George Campbell's Sympathy and its Augustinian Roots

Brian Fehler

Texas Woman's University

The year 1776 saw the production of two important documents of the Enlightenment: the US Constitution and George Campbell's *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*. Both documents were products of Enlightenment thought, and both demonstrate the conflicting attitudes in the era toward the rhetorical use of emotional appeals. Recent scholarship by John Witte examines the religious roots of the anti-emotionalist rhetoric expressed by Federalist politicians in the Constitutional era and in particular the influence of the Calvinist clergy of New England, with their "Puritan covenantal theory of ordered liberty and orderly pluralism."<sup>1</sup> Like the Federalists who were in charge of the new US government, the Calvinists of New England not only celebrated the victory achieved in the Revolution but also worked to ensure that the new American republic did not descend into the kind of chaos that later consumed revolutionary France. The Federalist politicians and the Calvinist clergy shared a suspicion of mass rule, of mobs enflamed by emotion. Politicians such as John Adams and James Madison were careful to acknowledge that the US Constitution was not too easily subjected to the whims of the mob, what Adams famously called "the tyranny of the majority" and what

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1. John Witte, *The Reformation of Rights: Law, Religion, and Human Rights in Early Modern Calvinism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 278.

Madison called the "violence of faction."<sup>2</sup> For their part, the members of the Calvinist clergy of New England, the heirs of the tradition of Jonathan Edwards, who were known as the New Divinity men or Consistent Calvinists, hoped to do their part to restrain the emotions of the mob by advocating for religious revivals that were sober in tone, revivals in which participants conducted themselves with the decorum expected of responsible, self-governing citizens of a new republic.

On the other side of the Atlantic, rhetorician and Scottish divine George Campbell presented a rhetoric that privileged the place of emotions in communication. Campbell was concerned less with continuing the rhetorical tradition than with modernizing it. As Lois Agnew points out, Campbell wished both "to synthesize classical precepts and incorporate the contemporary insights of science into a groundbreaking philosophical approach."<sup>3</sup> Campbell's primary concern was integrating the classical rhetorical tradition and the new sciences of his own era into a rhetorical system that would serve students studying for the ministry.

In so many ways, Campbell's *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (published as a whole in 1776 but presented and written in various forms over the course of many years) brought the rhetorical tradition into the new era of philosophy and learning and has been "lauded as the most important Enlightenment theory of rhetoric produced in Great Britain."<sup>4</sup> Campbell's contribution to the rhetorical tradition is most often noted for its incorporation of faculty psychology. Campbell's theory is, in fact, "a theory of rhetoric based on mental operations."<sup>5</sup> These mental operations, or faculties, must be addressed in order for a subject or an audience to be persuaded. For Campbell, the faculties, reflecting John

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2. John Adams, *The Political Writings of John Adams: Representative Selections*, ed. George A. Peek (Cambridge, MA: Hackett Publishing, 2003), 154; and James Madison, "Federalist No. 10," in *The Federalist Papers*, ed. Clinton Rossiter (New York: Penguin, 2003), 73.

3. Lois Agnew, "The 'Perplexity' of George Campbell's Rhetoric: The Epistemic Function of Common Sense," *Rhetorica* 18, no. 3 (2000): 80.

4. Arthur E. Walzer, "On Reading George Campbell's 'Resemblance' and 'Vivacity' in the *Philosophy of Rhetoric*," *Rhetorica* 18, no. 3 (2000): 321.

5. Arthur E. Walzer, *George Campbell: Rhetoric in the Age of Enlightenment* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 40.



Locke's categories, are understanding, imagination, passion, and will. "The path to persuasion in Campbell's theory," Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg write, "passes through each of the faculties in turn."<sup>6</sup> Accordingly, an audience's understanding must be engaged, by facts or information, which results in conviction that the problem being discussed is a serious or relevant one. Then, an audience's imagination must be pleased, usually by examples of beauty or experience. Following that, an audience must have its passion stirred by emotional examples of sympathy and pathos. Finally, an audience's will must be moved, which a speaker achieves through vigor of written or spoken expression. For the first time in a major rhetorical treatise, Campbell introduces faculty psychology to a rhetorical treatise in English, and in his formulation of it he validates the use of emotion in rhetoric.

Campbell cannot be entirely credited with developing a process of faculty psychology from scratch; his ideas reflect the earlier work of Locke. Campbell's contribution to rhetoric results from his presenting faculty psychology, as it relates to communication, in what would become a popular textbook as well as a theoretical treatise: *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*. Similarly, Campbell was not alone among Enlightenment thinkers in privileging a sense of sympathy and emotional connection in human relations. Throughout history, various sources on sympathy can be identified, although these sources echo what Francis Hutcheson calls, in this case, benevolence, that "determination of our nature to study the good of others; or some instinct, antecedent to all reason from interest, which influences us to the love of others."<sup>7</sup> Lloyd Bitzer recognizes the philosophy of David Hume as a special influence on Campbell in terms of sympathy and other matters as well. Bitzer writes, "Major elements of Hume's view—including the primacy of imagination and feeling . . . were taken over by Campbell without significant modification." Bitzer further maintains that Campbell's view of sympathy, "that means by which one person communicates emotion to another," is essentially

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6. Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg, eds., *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present* (Boston: Bedford, 2001), 898.

7. Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (London: J. Darby, 1726), 155.

Humean.<sup>8</sup> More recently, Dennis Bormann has suggested that Bitzer overemphasized Hume's influence on Campbell. Bormann looks further afield for influences on Campbell's work, across the English Channel, in fact, to the eighteenth-century French treatises on style and belletrism, "those popular works in France with which Campbell was so well acquainted" with their "emphasis on the Longinian sublime in literature and rhetoric."<sup>9</sup> Norman Fiering takes an even more extensive view, considering classicism as sources for Enlightenment notions of sympathy. Using interchangeably the terms *sympathy*, *humanity*, and *irresistible compassion*, Fiering suggests that Enlightenment thinkers "inherited from the ancient world many of the ingredients of the doctrine of irresistible compassion." He cites as sources Juvenal on compassion (as translated by Dryden in his 1693 edition of the *Satires*) and Cicero on the preference of avoiding cruelty (as presented by John Cockman in his 1699 translation of *De Officiis*).<sup>10</sup>

To this long line of antecedents of eighteenth-century sympathy, particularly in the way Campbell recognized the concept as important for rhetoric, this study suggests one additional source be added: St. Augustine's *De doctrina Christiana* (*On Christian Doctrine*).<sup>11</sup> Gerald Press recognizes that *De doctrina Christiana* "has long been considered an important text in the history of rhetoric because Book 4 has been judged to be the first Christian homiletic"; Douglas Ehninger, many years ago, concluded that Campbell's *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* "stands without challenge as one of the great classics in the field of rhetorical theory."<sup>12</sup> In terms of sacred rhetoric, *De doctrina Christiana* and *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* probably stand as the two most important contributions to understandings of sacred rhetoric by major rhetorical

8. Lloyd Bitzer, "Hume's Philosophy in George Campbell's 'Philosophy of Rhetoric,'" *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 2, no. 3 (1969): 140, 156.

9. Dennis R. Bormann, "George Campbell's *Cura Prima* on Eloquence—1758," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 74, no. 1 (1988): 46.

10. Norman S. Fiering, "Irresistible Compassion: An Aspect of Eighteenth-Century Sympathy and Humanitarianism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 37, no. 2 (1976): 196–97.

11. I am referencing an English translation of Augustine's work but refer to it by its Latin name, a practice common in Campbell's time.

12. Gerald A. Press, "Doctrina in Augustine's *De doctrina Christiana*," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 17, no. 2 (1984): 98; and Douglas Ehninger, "George Campbell and the Revolution in Inventional Theory," *Southern Speech Journal* 15, no. 4 (1950): 270.



theorists. This study not only suggests that Augustine's work serves as an important antecedent to Campbell's eighteenth-century notions of sympathy but also draws the conclusion that sympathy, although it might sometimes be found absent in secular rhetoric (such as Aristotle's), should be recognized as an important factor in Western sacred rhetorics.

As Bitzer, Bormann, and Fiering suggest, sympathy as a philosophical concept was well recognized by the time Campbell produced *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*. For Campbell, sympathy was especially important, as his aim was to produce a theory of communication, a theory to which a sense of emotional connection and compassion for preachers, congregations, audiences, and interlocutors was vital. Campbell's support of the validity of emotional appeals countered the anti-emotional attitude of the earlier Enlightenment philosopher Locke but allowed Campbell to establish the possibility of a sacred rhetoric in the age of reason that was both intellectually respectable and spiritually satisfying. Augustine's notion of *caritas* (brotherly love) can be seen as an antecedent of Campbell's rhetoric of emotion and sympathy. The importance of *caritas* in Augustine's rhetoric has been largely overlooked by scholars of rhetoric; by viewing *caritas* as a precursor to Campbell's more widely recognized reliance on sympathy, one will also begin to recognize and trace the importance of compassion in Western conceptions of sacred rhetoric.

Whereas Campbell wished to revitalize the rhetorical tradition by informing his work with findings of science and overlooking the formulaic sermon guides of the Middle Ages, Augustine, for his part, had wished to recover a Platonic search for truth in rhetoric and to reject the Second Sophistic of his day. Charles Baldwin recognizes Augustine's innovative spirit and suggests that Augustine, in fact, "begins rhetoric anew" and that Augustine's rhetoric "ignores sophistic" and goes "back over centuries of lore of personal triumph to the ancient idea of moving men to truth."<sup>13</sup> Baldwin places Augustine's rhetoric in the context of sophistic rhetoric of the day, and thus, given the excesses and

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13. Charles Baldwin, "St. Augustine on Preaching," in *Essays on the Rhetoric of the Western World*, ed. Edward P. J. Corbett, James L. Golden, and Goodwin F. Berquist (Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt Publishing, 1990), 195.

flourishes of the Second Sophistic, Augustine's emphasis on truth and clarity seems especially distinctive. In the days of the Roman Republic, classical rhetoric had reached a zenith, as politicians and orators such as Cicero debated the issues of importance in people's lives. As the Roman Republic gave way to the Roman Empire, however, rhetoric's agonistic and useful role slipped into the background. Public debate was replaced by imperial decree. The practice of rhetoric did not altogether disappear in the Roman Empire, of course. The teachings of the Second Sophistic still maintained a role of entertainment and even social mobility, and the educational rhetoric of Quintilian proved valuable in private spheres. However, vigorous public debate declined.

The new rhetoric that Augustine proposed in his principal rhetorical work *De doctrina Christiana*, as Thomas Conley suggests, "continued to be read and copied . . . even during the darkest of the Dark Ages, because it made any other such treatise unnecessary, if not impossible to supersede."<sup>14</sup> In book 1, Augustine begins to establish his theory of *caritas*. Augustine makes the rather remarkable claim that no interpretation of scripture that advocates a spirit of goodwill and brotherly love is incorrect or deceptive, although it may be faulty. If a reader of scripture, Augustine writes, "draws a meaning from [scripture] that may be used for the building up of love, even though he does not happen upon the precise meaning . . . his error is not pernicious, and he is wholly clear from the charge of deception."<sup>15</sup> According to Augustine, no reading that advances a theory of brotherly love can be discounted, and the person who proposes such a "misreading" is likened to a traveler who takes a different road but reaches the "same place to which the [correct] road leads."<sup>16</sup> Later, Augustine clearly defines his use of the central terms of *caritas* and *cupiditas*. He writes:

I mean by *caritas* that affection of the mind which aims at the enjoyment of God for His own sake, and the enjoyment of one's self and one's neighbor in subordination to God; by *cupiditas* I

14. Thomas Conley, *Rhetoric in the European Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 78.

15. Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, trans. J. F. Shaw (Boston: Benton, 1952), 635.

16. *Ibid.*



mean that affection of the mind which aims at enjoying one's self and one's neighbor, and other corporeal things, without reference to God.<sup>17</sup>

Augustine clearly distinguishes between *caritas* (brotherly love but also charity) and *cupiditas* (lust, cupidity). Gerald Schlabach suggests that the straightforwardness of Augustine's distinction between these two kinds of love actually masks an ambiguity between their definitions. Schlabach writes that "Augustine's very definition of Christian charity in *On Christian Doctrine* hints that love for God itself might not be quite so straightforward," and in order to define love of God, "Augustine had to do so in relation to other loves, including the false loves it was not."<sup>18</sup> For Schlabach, there is a certain uneasiness regarding Augustine's definition by negative—defining *caritas* by defining what it is not. At this point, Schlabach probably overlooks the fact that Augustine was trained as a rhetorician, that to define his terms was a necessary act, and that to define by negatives is really the only way he could define anything. In any case, philosophical uneasiness aside, Augustine sets up his terms, *caritas* and *cupiditas*, in a way that is important for his rhetoric and that foreshadows Campbell's work centuries later.

Hannah Arendt, whose doctoral dissertation *Love and Saint Augustine*, published in 1996, provides a discussion that is relevant to an understanding of Augustine's rhetoric on "love understood as craving" and on "the neighbor's relevance" to this love.<sup>19</sup> Considering *caritas* and *cupiditas*, Arendt makes the important observation that "they are distinguished by their objects, but they are not different kinds of emotion" (LSA 18). *Caritas* and *cupiditas*, in other words, are both "craving," the one for God, the other for the world. However, given that human beings must actually live in the world among other human beings, "would it not be better," Arendt asks, "to love the world in *cupiditas* and be at home? Why should we make a desert out of this world?" (LSA 19). Arendt hints at the answer: "The justification . . . can only lie in a deep dissatisfaction with what

17. *Ibid.*, 662.

18. Gerald W. Schlabach, *For the Joy Set Before Us: Augustine and Self-Denying Love* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 2001), 30–31.

19. Hannah Arendt, *Love and St. Augustine*, ed. Joanna Scott and Judith Stark (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 7 (hereafter cited in text as LSA).



the world can give its lovers" (LSA 19). Craving, in short, is not a "sinful" desire, and Augustine's reason that craving for God (*caritas*) is superior to craving for the world (*cupiditas*) is a pragmatic one: in craving for God, humanity finds the fulfillment, not the repression, of its desires, while in craving for the world, humanity finds only frustration. Arendt writes, "The reason that self-love, which starts with forsaking God, is wrong and never attains its goal is that such love" will always be outside of the person seeking love (LSA 20). In Augustine's thought, *caritas* is the only way to achieve the goal of happiness, and Augustine wanted humanity to achieve that goal.

Though the goal in Augustine's work is love of God, love of neighbor plays an integral role in a person's attainment of the love of God. Humanity's love of neighbor is perhaps the least understood concept in Augustine's *De doctrina Christiana*, and Arendt does a good job of clarifying love of neighbor as an attribute of *caritas*. Arendt writes that "love of neighbor is man's attitude toward his neighbor, which springs from *caritas*. It goes back to two basic relations: first, a person is to love his neighbor as God does; and second, he is to love his neighbor as he loves himself" (LSA 93). The topic of love of neighbor is important in understanding Augustine's rhetoric, for, although Arendt herself does not pursue this rhetorical line of inquiry, loving a neighbor must include attention to how to understand a neighbor, encounter a neighbor, and communicate with a neighbor. Ideally, as Arendt suggests, "for the lover who loves as God loves, the neighbor ceases to be anything but a creation of God" (LSA 94). This concept of all humanity as a creation of God existed in Christianity before Augustine, yet Augustine provides a new emphasis—a new communicative emphasis—on loving one's neighbor. When one loves a neighbor as a creation of God, *caritas* enables an ideal level of communication.

Augustine's notion of neighbor-love is seen by some critics as problematic. The problem is simply this: if Augustine commands Christians only to love—to use—neighbors in order to gain one's own salvation, the role of the neighbor is reduced to a usable "thing" (*res*). This problem is one recognized primarily by twentieth-century scholars. Helmut Baer, in "The Fruit of Charity," surveys and then rejects this line of criticism. Baer writes that, apparently, "when Augustine speaks

of 'using' the neighbor, he offends our basic moral sensibilities by recommending what appears to be an instrumental treatment of the neighbor.<sup>20</sup> The controversy arises primarily from Augustine's use of the words *uti* (use) and *frui* (enjoy). Augustine advocates that people "use" their neighbors and "enjoy" God; neighbors can teach people much about love, yet even so, neighbors are only to be "used" for this knowledge, not "enjoyed."

Baer offers that scholars who suggest that Augustine intends "using someone" to mean something like it does in current, popular idiom do not understand the context of Augustine's discussion. Importantly, Baer points out, Augustine also suggests humans "use" Christ. Elsewhere in *De doctrina Christiana*, Baer writes, "*uti* is the key term for understanding the relationship between God and humanity. Human persons 'use' Christ to find their blessedness in God, or to speak more properly, God makes himself 'useful' to humanity through Christ."<sup>21</sup> In short, then, a comprehensive reading of the many passages in *De doctrina Christiana* that mention "*uti*" suggests that, "for Augustine, to 'use' another is to relate to that person in charity."<sup>22</sup>

In fact, the critics who suggest Augustine, in the *uti* passages, means something like our modern sense of the term "use" ignore one of the major themes of *De doctrina Christiana*: that love of neighbor is necessary for salvation and for present happiness. Moreover, Augustine would hardly contradict the Christian scriptures on so vital a matter, and, as Carol Harrison points out, although Augustine wrote a good deal about brotherly love, the idea is present throughout the New Testament. Harrison writes, "Christianity's distinctive emphasis upon the practice and rhetoric of love in its Scriptures and preaching allowed it to create a linguistic community in which the central message of faith could be communicated and understood in such a way that it was then practiced and lived."<sup>23</sup> In a way, friendships among Christian believers were strengthened because they believed those friendships

20. Helmut David Baer, "The Fruit of Charity: Using the Neighbor in *De doctrina Christiana*," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 24, no. 1 (1996): 48.

21. *Ibid.*, 53.

22. *Ibid.*, 63.

23. Carol Harrison, *Augustine: Christian Truth and Fractured Humanity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 67.



enabled them to experience a love that reflected an even greater, more perfect love.

The interpretations that suggest Augustine meant something pernicious, simply overlook a long history of scholarship regarding Augustinian friendship. In order to counter the negative *uti* interpretations, Donald Burt looks at Augustine's letters to his own friends as well as references to passages in the *Confessions* where Augustine discusses friendship. Burt cites Augustine's letter to a friend, in which Augustine wrote that friends "spread no small comfort about them even in this life. . . . If such people are with us, then in large measure, our bitter trials become less bitter, the heavy burdens become lighter."<sup>24</sup> Undoubtedly, Augustine well understood the benefits of earthly friendships.

In addition to his rhetorical advice on preaching, a spirit of *caritas* can also be identified in Augustine's exegetical work. Augustine has been credited, since medieval times, with helping to establish rules of interpretation that allow allegorical readings of scripture. Discussions of Augustine's enormous influence in contributing to an allegorical understanding of the Bible do not often address Augustine's rhetorical and sympathetic preoccupations, however. Although it is true that Augustine's training as a rhetorician allowed him to recognize tropes and figures in the Bible, a recognition that some critics have felt seems sometimes strained, Augustine's influence as a rhetorician was not limited to tropological issues. Indeed, in Augustine's establishment of an allegorical hermeneutics, he hearkens back to Aristotle's rhetoric, which sought to identify the importance of arguing by probabilities as well as reasoning by certainties. It hearkens back, too, to the perhaps "purer" sophistry of the early generations of sophists, such as Isocrates and Gorgias, who sought to teach people how to live practically in the world—how to adapt to a changing society. While Augustine, the scathing critic of the Second Sophistic, would probably not wish to be associated with any form of sophistry, his efforts to establish an allegorical tradition of scriptural hermeneutics demonstrate his concern not only with the unchanging truth he believed was found in the Bible

24. Donald Burt, *Friendship and Society: An Introduction to Augustine's Practical Philosophy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 59.

but also with ways in which biblical truth could be applied in a variety of ages and situations. In short, Augustine absolutely believed that the Bible contained God's truth; however, he would remain suspicious of humans who claimed to fully know that truth. Human nature, he felt, was simply too fraught with sinfulness. Rules could be set down, generalities proposed, and communities established that could do their best to ascertain the truth, but, in the end, the human agent would always be prone to error (and this is one reason why *caritas* was so important: it served as a safeguard against those who adopted a harmfully dogmatic hermeneutics).

Augustine's allegorical hermeneutics may be more revolutionary than scholars have long supposed, for while "ancient Christian allegorical readings of the Bible have often been regarded as the means by which interpreters translated the unique images and stories of the Bible into the abstractions of classical metaphysics and ethics," David Dawson writes, "Augustine's recommendations concerning how to interpret Scripture suggest that nonliteral translation ought to move in the opposite direction." That is, instead of "dissolving scriptural language into nonscriptural categories, allegorical reading should enable the Bible to refashion personal experience and cultural ideals by reformulating them in a distinctively Biblical idiom."<sup>25</sup> Dawson's claim presents an intriguing scenario, one that is important for an understanding of *caritas*.

In order that we do not miss the significance of Dawson's claim, it is important to draw out its implications, for these implications are also applicable to the work of Campbell. Although Augustine has been long credited for refashioning classical rhetoric—as Baldwin, among others, has noted—it is important to emphasize that Augustine's rhetoric was not *only* a refashioning. Instead, it is useful to consider that Augustine intended to create a wholly new rhetoric, and, being a rhetorician, Augustine understood that classical rhetoric could help him accomplish his aim. Augustine's reputation as a sacred rhetorician, then, should spring not only from his attempt to "save" some elements

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25. David Dawson, "Sign Theory, Allegorical Reading, and the Motions of the Soul in *De doctrina Christiana*," in *De doctrina Christiana: A Classic of Western Culture*, ed. Duane Arnold and Pamela Bright (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1995), 123.



of classical rhetoric but also from his recognition of the rhetorical situation in which he found himself. Dawson suggests that Augustine's allegorical hermeneutics represent more than an attempt to make scripture acceptable according to a classical standard. Indeed, we should probably extend this notion to Augustine's entire rhetorical project, for Augustine, in his writings, starts with the human condition (the rhetorical situation) and then applies whatever intellectual traditions are at his disposal to explain and clarify humanity's journey out of an earthly rhetorical situation toward what Arendt calls "not-time," a nonsituation—salvation. For this reason, long lists of oratorical and interpretive rules should be learned only by students who are gifted in this way. Augustine writes that "the rules and precepts" of oratory and interpretation must be acquired "by those who can do so quickly."<sup>26</sup> For Augustine, the ultimate expression of sympathy for fellow humans, and of his rhetoric of *caritas*, was to bring listeners to Christian salvation—no other act, for him, showed love so clearly.

In this way, perhaps, Augustine's rhetoric is pragmatic as well as sympathetic; he wants his allegorical hermeneutics to illuminate specific conditions of specific people's lives, not necessarily to confirm eternal truths. Similarly, his advice to preachers in book 4 of *De doctrina Christiana* displays this pragmatic bent; Augustine's rules are there for guidance, but the preacher should remember that the specific situation of a church or a person might cause certain rules to be altered, amended, or discarded. David Tracy recognizes Augustine's willingness to accept arguments that are not only eternal but also adaptable. Tracy considers Augustine to be "the first great rhetorical theologian" and *De doctrina Christiana* the first great statement of rhetorical theology, for in *De doctrina Christiana* "one may find both a classical reformulation of 'theology and culture' as well as a rhetoric of both discovery and communication."<sup>27</sup>

John Schaeffer suggests a valuable reason for Augustine's acceptance of the adaptability of interpretive rules. Augustine was, in short, "bending

26. Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, 453.

27. David Tracy, "Charity, Obscurity, Clarity: Augustine's Search for a True Rhetoric," in *Morphologies of Faith*, ed. Mary Gerhart and Anthony Yu (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1990), 124.

the rules" himself in many ways: by adapting classical rhetoric, by giving a new direction to allegorical hermeneutics, and by emphasizing a law of love based on *caritas*. Augustine's many efforts to "refashion" rhetoric for Christianity resulted from, in no small part, the transition from orality to literacy that occurred during Augustine's lifetime. Schaeffer suggests that book 4 of *De doctrina Christiana* is probably laying out advice for preachers to deliver sermons extemporaneously. In disavowing the Second Sophistic, then, Augustine is "returning to the orally based rhetoric of republican Rome," Schaeffer writes, "which he is adapting to a textually based religion attended by an emerging sense of interiority."<sup>28</sup> In this interpretation, Augustine's system of rhetoric must necessarily be highly adaptable, and this adaptability eschews rigid codification. "The paradox of Christianity in late antiquity," Schaeffer writes, "is that people were taught to believe in a written teaching that most could not read but only heard."<sup>29</sup> Although Schaeffer does not make this point—a point that would become more important in the Reformation, when attention was given to individual interpretation of scripture—Augustine's *caritas* was important in an age when few people were literate. *Caritas*, which demands self-humility, is something any interpreter of scriptures must practice, for in claiming a rigid dogmatic interpretation, a preacher could easily lead his (illiterate) flock into error. But above all, extemporaneous performances demand adaptability in order to ensure an audience's understanding. Schaeffer correctly recognizes that "an orator must sense the audience's thoughts and feelings and adjust to them."<sup>30</sup>

What prevents Augustine's orator, dedicated though he may be, from straying too far in his extemporaneous performances? What keeps the orator grounded in scriptural truth? The answer is that an orator must possess *caritas*. Here the importance of *caritas* becomes apparent. In an orally taught culture, the orator must be careful to avoid pride and error. This task would perhaps intimidate many orators, but Augustine provides assurance. Training in interpretation under respected teachers,

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28. John Schaeffer, "The Dialectic of Orality and Literacy: The Case of Book 4 of Augustine's *De doctrina Christiana*," *PMLA* 111, no. 5 (1996): 1134.

29. *Ibid.*, 1136.

30. *Ibid.*, 1140.



coupled with a true spirit of *caritas*, will enable an orator to behave rightly, and even, after an orator has done his best, should he fail, if he acted in a spirit of love, God would forgive the failure. Thus *caritas* is not simply a virtue an orator must teach; it is a safeguard against preaching error.

Like Augustine, George Campbell was an adapter and an innovator of the rhetorical tradition. As Augustine proved innovative in his allegorical and rhetorical hermeneutics, Campbell would prove innovative in his studies of faculty psychology and motive. The times in which Campbell lived required him to be both an adapter and an innovator. By the time Campbell was born in Scotland, Enlightenment notions of truth and meaning had already begun to thrive both in the old world and the new. Campbell could not assume, as medieval and even Renaissance rhetoricians could, that his audience would understand the finer points of the Christian tradition. The age of reason had dawned, and adherents of religious dogma found themselves increasingly on the defensive. This age of reason saw the birth of many capable defenders of Christian theology, not the least of whom were Jonathan Edwards in America and Campbell in Scotland. Campbell and Edwards shared some similar characteristics. Both were well educated, impassioned ministers in the provinces of the British Empire. Both were influenced by Enlightenment philosophers, such as Locke, yet they rejected the primacy of the scientific method, believing that truth could be found through other sources, particularly through religious feeling and sensation. Campbell was driven to develop as complete a system of persuasion and motivation as he was capable of doing, "a tolerable sketch of the human mind," as he famously states in the introduction to his *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*.<sup>31</sup> In any event, Campbell was clearly more a theorist of the rhetorical tradition than Edwards or other ministers who practiced oratory with skill but never looked specifically to the history of rhetoric for information on effective preaching. Campbell remains a unique blend of rhetorician: a student of rhetoric and a rhetor—an oratorical practitioner. As both a practitioner

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31. George Campbell, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1841; repr., Delmar, NY: Scholars Facsimiles and Reprints, 1992): 2.

and theoretician, Campbell advocated an emotional connection and the spirit of sympathy as a foundation for rhetoric.

Campbell's *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, a collection of lectures that were presented at Marischal College (where Campbell served as principal) and before the Aberdeen Philosophical Society (of which Campbell was a founding member) finally appeared in print in 1776, although the lectures were already well known. It should not be forgotten (as Corbett and Golden point out, and as Arthur Walzer does in *George Campbell: Rhetoric in the Age of Enlightenment*) that Campbell was a churchman—a reverend of the Church of Scotland. Campbell's interest in the sciences of human nature resulted from his curiosity to better understand the workings of what he believed to be one of God's great creations, the human mind. In addition, much of Campbell's advice on oratory was presented to support successful pulpit oratory, as evidenced by one of Campbell's other works, *Lectures on Pulpit Eloquence*.

Campbell's goal of creating a new sacred rhetoric for his times, however, did not permit him to accept all characteristics of faculty psychology as previously described by Locke. Campbell differed from Locke in an important area: Campbell, like Hutcheson in his philosophical treatises, maintained throughout his work the importance of sympathy as a motive. In doing so, Campbell demonstrated that on this topic he had more in common with St. Augustine than with his own near-contemporary Locke. Connecting the motive of sympathy to the broader category of emotional appeals, Beth Innocenti Manolescu writes, "For Augustine emotional appeals cure disorder; for Locke they cause it."<sup>32</sup> Whereas Augustine celebrated emotion and its connection to religious experience, Locke displayed, according to Gerald Cragg, an "almost pathological fear of religious emotion."<sup>33</sup> As a rhetorician concerned with religious propagation, Campbell recognized the importance of religious feeling, and, like Augustine, the central feeling for Campbell's rhetoric was also compassion.

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32. Beth Innocenti Manolescu, "Religious Reasons for Campbell's View of Emotional Appeals in *Philosophy of Rhetoric*," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 37, no. 2 (2007): 160.

33. Gerald R. Cragg, *Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 10.



Campbell writes that sympathy "is not a passion but that quality of the soul which renders it susceptible of almost any passion, by communication from the bosom of another."<sup>34</sup> Unsurprisingly, because sympathy is a social quality moved by others, it is affected by the company it keeps. Campbell writes, "Sympathy may be greatly strengthened or weakened by the influence of connected passions. Thus love associates to it benevolence, and both give double force to sympathy. Hatred, on the contrary, associates to it malice, and destroys sympathy."<sup>35</sup> It is this view on the importance of sympathy, and of religious emotion generally, that allows Campbell to fall on the side of Augustine and revise an ancient rhetorical attitude toward pity. As far back as Aristotle, philosophers, including Cicero and Hobbes, recognized pity as, really, a self-reflection. For Aristotle, for example, pity is a "feeling of pain caused by the sight of some evil . . . which we might expect to befall ourselves."<sup>36</sup> For Campbell, however, pity is "a full participation by sympathy in the woes of others."<sup>37</sup> In this definition, sympathy provides the background quality of the soul on which the proper passion of pity plays out.

A genuine concern for the needs of others rather than for one's self, the importance of reaching out in sympathy, is a hallmark of Campbell's rhetoric. Thus Campbell accepts the Enlightenment notion of the importance of sympathy, and he brings that concern to rhetoric and communication. While he defines sympathy in his instructional lectures that compose *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, Campbell also practiced what he preached in his public disputations. The most well-known of these in his day was Campbell's *A Dissertation on Miracles*, which was written in response to Hume's "On Miracles," a chapter in his *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. Hume had suggested that since miracles could not be subject to scientific validation, he himself could not believe in the biblical miracles. As mentioned previously, Bitzer draws many parallels between the work of Hume and Campbell and suggests that Hume was an important source for Campbell's work. In "Some 'Common Sense' about Campbell, Hume, and Reid," Dennis

34. Campbell, *Philosophy*, 131.

35. *Ibid.*

36. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, trans. Rhys Roberts (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2004), 77.

37. Campbell, *Philosophy*, 131.

Bormann takes further exception with Bitzer's claims.<sup>38</sup> Bormann suggests that Campbell and his contemporaries saw Campbell's work in frequent opposition to Hume's work and more in line with the philosophy of Thomas Reid.<sup>39</sup> Campbell, in any case, took up the debate with his fellow Scotsman Hume. In doing so, Campbell demonstrated what he had declared in *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*—that reasonable debate was best practiced when interlocutors engaged in a feeling of sympathy for one another.

In *Dissertation*, Campbell writes that the sheer weight of evidence—moral evidence—supported the biblical accounts of miracles. In defending miracles, Campbell drew on the importance of testimony. It would be likely, he admitted, that miracles would be doubtful if only a few people testified to their occurrence, but the numbers of people in the Bible who witnessed miracles were too substantial to overlook. In reasoning from analogy, Campbell suggested miracles, like all religious revelation, were similar to accounts of any historical record. For example, one did not have to scientifically demonstrate that the Norman Conquest occurred. Written records, in such cases, are valuable and often proof enough.

Campbell certainly begins *Dissertation* in a spirit of charity and sympathy. He writes, in the very first sentence of what he calls his "advertisement," that "it is not the only, nor even the chief design of these sheets, to refute the reasoning and objections of Mr. Hume with regard to miracles: the chief design of them is to set the principal argument for Christianity in its proper light."<sup>40</sup> The whole of what would be called the Campbell–Hume debate on miracles was conducted in a respectful, genteel fashion. To be sure, Campbell disagreed with Hume's argument that miracles could not be verified because they could not be reproduced. Campbell felt Hume's empiricism too rigorous and narrow, but Campbell nonetheless counted himself among the many admirers of Hume's thought. This debate, then,

38. Dennis R. Bormann, "Some 'Common Sense' about Campbell, Hume, and Reid: The Extrinsic Evidence," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 71, no. 4 (1985): 395–421.

39. *Ibid.*

40. George Campbell, *A Dissertation on Miracles* (London: Thomas Tegg, 1824), iii (hereafter cited in text as DM).



carried out in the name of the skeptic and the divine, was a debate inspired by the writings of the two men, although Campbell and Hume did not really participate in the debate after their respective works were published. Hume, in fact, did not even feel it necessary to respond to Campbell in later editions of *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, although he revised the work in other ways. Campbell did include letters exchanged among himself, Hume, and belletristic rhetorician Hugh Blair on the subject of miracles in later editions of *A Dissertation*. To the end, Campbell remained an enthusiastic supporter of Hume's overall body of work, and Hume remained complimentary, in a general way, toward Campbell's objections, although Hume never discussed them specifically.

Interestingly, Campbell's *Dissertation* is much longer than the essay it responds to; the *Dissertation* runs to more than 123 pages, whereas Hume's essay, which made up part 10 of his *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, filled fewer than 40 pages. Campbell's primary contention against Hume—that human knowledge consists of more than the empirical scientific method—anticipated twentieth-century notions of knowing, such as new rhetorical and metaphorical ideas. In fact, much of Campbell's *Dissertation* consists of examples and extensions of this claim: "The whole [of Hume's argument] is built upon a false hypothesis. . . . Testimony has a natural and original influence on belief. . . . Accordingly youth, which is inexperienced, is credulous; age, on the contrary, is distrustful. Exactly the reverse would be the case, were this author's [Hume's] doctrines just" (DM 38). Hume, in his essay, had hoped to show that doubt is the primary act of the mind, the Cartesian principle that only that which could not be doubted should be believed. Campbell held that assent, rather than doubt, was prior in the human mind, an idea Cardinal Newman would later develop. In Campbell's *Dissertation*, testimony replaces Hume's empiricism as the primary way in which humans are convinced, the surest way in which we come to know.

Walzer suggests that Campbell's *Dissertation* was the most highly regarded of the refutations to Hume's "Of Miracles" because Campbell "raised the issue to a general philosophical issue—the epistemological

question of the validity of testimony.”<sup>41</sup> Campbell did not produce an invective in response to “Of Miracles,” a work considered in many quarters at the time to be an attack on Christianity. Instead, Campbell responded reasonably, suggesting that Hume’s definition of human knowledge was not sufficiently capacious. Campbell’s work, especially *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* and *A Dissertation on Miracles*, provides examples of a rational Christian thinker attempting to demonstrate the reasonability of religious faith in an era of increasing Enlightenment skepticism. Perhaps for this reason, of all his published works, Campbell instructed that only *Dissertation* be mentioned in his eulogy.

In addition to *Philosophy* and *Dissertation*, Campbell penned two other major works, both also reflecting the influence of the *caritas*–sympathy tradition. The first of these two works is Campbell’s two-volume translation of the Gospels. In the preface to this work, Campbell, always eager to provide insight into his motives for publication, defends his decision to produce a gospel translation when many other versions were already available. In Campbell’s estimation, simply, many English translations did not seem quite right. “As far back as 1750,” Campbell writes in his original preface to the 1788 translation, he began to take “notice of such proposed alterations on the manner of translating the words of the original [Greek New Testament], as appeared not only defensible in themselves, but to yield a better meaning, or at least to express the term with more perspicuity and energy.”<sup>42</sup> Campbell the rhetorician, even in his early days as a parish pastor, recognized certain deficiencies of language, deficiencies he set out to improve (and one should not be surprised that one of Campbell’s primary aims was increased *perspicuity*, a term he discusses at length in *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*). Although Campbell seemed to anticipate that some people would find his rendering superfluous, he hoped that his work would be given a fair reading. For, he writes it had been one of the goals of his life to “give a patient hearing and impartial examination to reason and argument, from what corner soever it appears,” and Campbell wished for his readers to return this favor (FG 2). His motivation for producing

41. Walzer, *George Campbell*, 10.

42. George Campbell, *The Four Gospels* (Boston: Wells and Wait, 1811), ii (hereafter cited in text as FG).



this work, and other works, is simple, Campbell insisted: always to seek the "love of Truth" (FG iv). Campbell expected that the reader would realize that his translation was an effort to clarify the truth of the Gospels.

Campbell astutely realized that an unoriginal work such as a translation (unoriginal in the sense that a translation is a rendering of some work that already exists) nonetheless comprises an argument. Living in an age of proofs and warrants, Campbell understood that even the seemingly objective, value-free acts of literal translation and of philological study were rhetorical enterprises. Campbell concedes that the "essential quality of philology" lies in the ability to "trace such changes [in language use] with accuracy" (FG xv). To trace with accuracy involves judgment calls and choices of value, the limits of which are determined by audience, for "when a change is made from what people have long been accustomed to, it is justly expected that the reason, unless it is obvious, should be assigned" (FG xv). This attention to a reader's response, even in the matter of translation, demonstrates Campbell's concern with building sympathy. "Sympathy," for Campbell, writes Silvia Xavier, "identifies speaker with auditor."<sup>43</sup> Any communication, be it an original sermon or a translation of an ancient text, Campbell believed, required a writer or speaker to make rhetorical choices with attention to building sympathy.

Another of Campbell's works, *Lectures on Pulpit Eloquence*, deals directly with the topic of sacred rhetoric and demonstrates how sympathy can be applied to teaching. This work, as its title suggests, consists of lectures Campbell produced for his students at Marischal College. Campbell understood that not all of his students wished to engage in a close study of rhetorical theory, quibbling with Aristotle, for example, as Campbell himself did, over the usefulness of the enthymeme. For these students, preparing for parish work, their teacher wished to lecture on the practical nature of rhetoric. (One recalls Augustine's insistence, in Book 4 of *De doctrina Christiana*, that a student, should he be unable to grasp the theoretical implications of rhetoric, must move on to practical matters,

43. Silvia Xavier, "Engaging George Campbell's 'Sympathy' in the Rhetoric of Charlotte Forten and Ann Plato, African-American Women of the Antebellum North," *Rhetoric Review* 24, no. 4 (2005): 440.

for a preacher's cause is sacred, but his time is scarce.) Walzer recognizes Campbell's attempts to reach out to students in plain, practical language and suggests that of all Campbell's works, *Lectures on Pulpit Eloquence* "is written in a readable, collegial style—creating a professional stance in which the assumed difference between the professor and student is a matter of experience only."<sup>44</sup> Campbell was sensitive enough regarding audience to know that the essays on rhetoric that he presented before the Aberdeen Philosophical Society (published as *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*) were too theoretical in nature to suit the practical needs of the students at Marischal. Campbell, who had reached out in sympathy to his intellectual peer David Hume in *A Dissertation on Miracles*, approached his students in a simpler, but just as sympathetic, manner.

This is not to say that Campbell lowered his intellectual standards in his lectures to his students. To do so would have represented a merely shallow view of sympathy. Instead, one must conclude that, in fact, Campbell's divinity students received a solid rhetorical education. In the twelve lectures that appear in *Lectures on Pulpit Eloquence*, Campbell touches upon many valuable topics. In the introductory lecture, he provides a brief history of the discipline, claiming, as he does in *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, that his contemporary rhetoricians have made little improvements on the classical rhetoric of Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian. In this lecture, too, Campbell insists, as does Augustine, that "knowing the truth of the gospels" is insufficient if one cannot also effectively proclaim that truth.<sup>45</sup> In lecture 6, which deals with the composition rather than the delivery of sermons, Campbell reveals his fondness for a vivid image, insisting that a powerful demonstrative sermon must be "almost equal in vivacity and vigour with the perceptions of sense."<sup>46</sup> Campbell's concern for vivacity is apparent throughout the lectures. Vivacity and vigor are important in Campbell's lectures for a practical reason: the preacher must gain and maintain an audience's attention. In lecture 7, Campbell suggests that a "good choice [illustration] may contribute previously to rouse attention, and even

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44. Walzer, *George Campbell*, 118.

45. George Campbell, *Lectures on Pulpit Eloquence* (London: John Bumpus Company, 1824), 152.

46. *Ibid.*, 238.



to put the hearers in a proper frame for the subject to be discoursed on as well as to keep their minds in the time of preaching from wandering from the subject."<sup>47</sup> In this way, effective rhetorical choice and illustration are ways of reaching out in sympathy to an audience or congregation. In taking a look at these lectures, a reader familiar with *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* will recognize typical Campbellian topics, such as the distinction of will and of passion and of other allusions to faculty psychology, while gaining a fuller understanding of the practical, sympathetic aims of Campbell's rhetorical endeavors.

Of the various sources recognized as ingredients of eighteenth-century sympathy, Augustine's notion of *caritas* should be recognized as one, particularly when considering the rhetorical work of Campbell. Neither Augustine nor Campbell, with their wide-ranging interests, was a rhetorician only, of course. Jeffrey Suderman, for one, laments that Campbell's original works (with the exception of *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*) are studied too little today by scholars other than historians of rhetoric because most of the current scholarship on Campbell is produced by rhetoricians.<sup>48</sup> Although both men wrote on a variety of subjects—theology, education, and ethics for Augustine and criticism and the New Testament for Campbell—their interests certainly centered on finding the best way to communicate the Christian beliefs they both held. Undoubtedly, it is because Augustine and Campbell were interested in so many things that the rhetorics they produced have been recognized and studied for so long; Campbell and Augustine's rhetorical treatises, in other words, were not merely formulaic textbooks, as were many of the homiletics texts of the nineteenth century. Of course, because of the variety of topics Augustine and Campbell addressed, their treatises have been read by many people other than preachers-in-training. Their audiences have been Christian and non-Christian alike, resulting in a richer field of scholarly response from both.

Still, we must recognize that Augustine's *De doctrina Christiana* and Campbell's *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* are special kinds of rhetorical treatises; they are sacred rhetorics and probably the most important

47. *Ibid.*, 268.

48. Jeffrey M. Suderman, *Orthodoxy and Enlightenment: George Campbell in the Eighteenth Century* (Montreal: McGill Queen's University Press, 2001), xiii.

contributions of their kind to the larger rhetorical tradition. Although Augustine's and Campbell's works are separated by centuries, the status of *De doctrina Christiana* and *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* as significant sacred rhetorics helps us to make some generic comments regarding the concerns of Western sacred rhetorics through the centuries. In recent years, scholarly attention to sacred rhetorics has increased, evidenced by Laurent Pernot's plenary address at the International Society for the History of Rhetoric. In his address, Pernot claimed that "we are today witnessing the return of religion. As the French writer and statesman André Malraux predicted, the twenty-first century would be religious. This is why it is important—and perhaps why it is the duty of academics and intellectuals—to find new ways of thinking about religion in a world where unthinking and depraved uses of religion can be dangerous."<sup>49</sup> In a similar way, Luigi Spina, echoing Pernot, claims, "We are today witnessing the return of religion . . . and we are today witnessing also the return of rhetoric."<sup>50</sup> Other recent works look more specifically at generic concerns of specific works of sacred rhetoric, such as Paddy Bullard's commentary on Jonathan Swift's pulpit advice. Though Swift is not often considered in the realm of sacred rhetoric, Bullard demonstrates the value of Swift's pulpit commentary and emphasizes that the "most consistent feature of Swift's sermons and of his writings about sacred eloquence is this emphasis on conciliation and mutual attentiveness."<sup>51</sup> Old as the tradition of sacred rhetoric is, scholarly attention to the field, as a subset of the larger rhetorical tradition, has grown especially lively in recent decades, as Bullard's work shows, as texts from the past are reconsidered in light of their contributions to sacred rhetoric.

This study's examination of Augustine and Campbell demonstrates that more can be learned about the interests and limits of sacred rhetoric by looking at figures squarely in the sacred rhetoric tradition. In both Augustine's *De doctrina Christiana* and Campbell's *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, we have been able to identify the *caritas*-sympathy tradition

49. Laurent Pernot, "The Rhetoric of Religion," *Rhetorica* 24, no. 3 (2006): 236.

50. Luigi Spina, "Fall and Rise of Rhetoric and Religion," *Rhetorica* 26, no. 3 (2008): 214.

51. Paddy Bullard, "Pride, Pulpit Eloquence, and the Rhetoric of Jonathan Swift,"

*Rhetorica* 30, no. 3 (2012): 276.



as an important element of these two treatises, and in so doing, we have been able to recognize *caritas*—sympathy as not only an important element of Christian theology but of Christian sacred rhetoric as well.