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ADAM ELLWANGER

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For Alice and Peter, who are at the outset of a wondrous, arduous journey. Walk with purpose. Act on principle.

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FOREWORD

Of Aristotle's three proofs, scholars of rhetoric have spent the most time with ethos and its constellate concepts. Scholars have produced countless studies of self-presentation, ethos, and personae over the past forty years. Yet for all this interest, little existing scholarship deals with how rhetors transform themselves. Rhetorics of self-discovery, self-transformation, reformation, conversion, and recovery abound, but we have few well-developed theories or critical tools to understand them. In this engaging book, Adam Ellwanger ameliorates this lacuna by offering us both metanoia as a critical concept and a historical overview of how rhetorics of self-transformation developed in Western culture. In doing so, he charts an exciting path for future research in rhetoric and reminds us of the vital importance of historical work in developing rhetorical theory and critical tools.

While Ellwanger explores metanoia and its related terms (e.g., epistrophe, redemption, and conversion) in both ancient and contemporary contexts, the extended study of Christian traditions of metanoia in chapter 2 marks a singular accomplishment. One could hardly overstate the influence of Christianity on Western thought and culture, but relatively few scholars of rhetoric study Christian rhetorics, and far fewer study the history of Christian rhetoric. By attending to early Christian rhetoric, Ellwanger has traced out something like a genealogy of Western conversion and transformation discourse. That genealogy unearths a crisis of authenticity at the core of Christian conversion rhetoric. How is a rhetor's avowed conversion and transformation judged as authentic or feigned? Who may do that judging? What rhetorical moves do conversion stories use?

Such questions are not only relevant to Christianity or religious discourses but are at the core of secular rhetorics of self-transformation and reform. As chapter 3 documents, metanoia is a common rhetorical tactic in modern public discourse. The tools publics use to judge such avowals of transformation

are both inherited from the earlier Christian tradition and take on new forms that suit modern culture and politics. How do Mel Gibson and Michael Richards attempt to demonstrate the authentic transformation of their characters after expressing racist views? How do publics judge the authenticity of such transformations of persona? I have seen no other study that engages these questions as boldly and directly as this one, while keeping a close eye on the rhetorical function of public discourse. Regardless of one's views on ontologies of authenticity, or even the epistemology of assessing authenticity, this book demonstrates that it lies at the core of how we judge personal transformations.

Ellwanger does not shy away from analyzing controversy, spurring discussion and research that could extend for decades to come. Studying the public discourse surrounding Caitlyn Jenner's transformation from a male public identity to a female one is difficult. One risks either producing facile affirmations or skirting the edge of unsavory social and political views. By contrasting this case with Rachel Dolezal's self-identification as African American, Ellwanger heightens the tension and difficulty of his task, but to great effect, in revealing the underlying principles of authenticity at work in public judgments of transformations of identity. He does not criticize or condemn Jenner's critics or Dolezal's defenders. Doing so would distract from his analysis of the rhetoric at play and what it reveals about the criteria for "authentic" metanoia today.

A reader can always argue that an author should have written a different book with a different purpose. Some readers may prefer a book that studies transformation and conversion through the lens of critical/cultural studies, or as a window into what is at stake in issues of gender, race, and ethnicity. This is not that book. Ellwanger's task is both simpler and more difficult. He seeks to understand how and why some expressions of personal transformation gain public acceptance and why some do not. In this regard, he makes a significant contribution to rhetorical theory and criticism.

I have known Ellwanger for well over a decade. We have read texts together, debated together, and sometimes disagreed sharply. He is a person of his own mind who listens and engages others thoughtfully. This book, and particularly chapter 3, allows him an opportunity to voice some of his concerns about uncritical thought in the academy. Those concerns and the questions he offers in the conclusion may produce some debate. I encourage readers to take them as I do, a scholar's expression of his views and an invitation to dialogue. Regardless of how one responds to these moments

in this book, one should not overlook the core contribution of recovering metanoia as a critical tool and tracing its history.

In pursuit of that contribution, Ellwanger brings a great scope of thought to this study. In a relatively short book, he covers more than two thousand years while drawing on an impressive array of sources. Ellwanger comfortably draws on the rhetorical tradition, a solid core of Western philosophy, religious studies scholarship, and contemporary political and social critics. His work spans not only two millennia but a range of viewpoints. In some ways, this book reminds me of the scholarship of Kenneth Burke, who was skilled at drawing on a breadth of sources and never shied away from a broad stroke when it was useful to make a point or accentuate a difference.

Perhaps most interesting is watching how Ellwanger himself navigates the challenges of ethos and metanoia. In chapter 2, he notes how conversion, as a kind of metanoia, and ethos more generally often demand a consistency in speech, thought, and behavior. We may take this as intuitive, a simple guide of good character, until we see how this becomes a hinderance to the development and improvement of character. Applied strictly, this standard makes reform, conversion, improvement, and even repentance impossible. Yet it lies at the core of how Western culture judges a rhetor's ethos.

Conversely, Ellwanger's studies in both chapter 2 and chapter 3 challenge us with the implications of simply accepting a transformation of ethos or identity solely on the word of the rhetor claiming to be transformed. Ellwanger's history of the Christian tradition shows the dangers of reducing repentance to formalism without some test of the internal remorse and desire to change one's behavior. Yet those same tests of repentance also become tests of "authentic" Christianity and divide Christian faiths.

Likewise, chapter 3 plays out the challenge of democratizing ethos, allowing each to make her or his own standards for judgment and ethical rules. The turn toward the self, toward self-governance and self-regulation, in accord only with rules made or accepted by the self on one's own terms, has long been a privilege of the elite. It is the very definition of sovereignty, that most privileged right of kings (and eventually the state). As Ellwanger documents, a core principle of the Enlightenment was to extend this right of self-governance to every person, to democratize sovereignty. Whether it be in his reading of proto-Enlightenment thinkers like Michel de Montaigne or deep into the Enlightenment with Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Ellwanger challenges us to look squarely at the conundrums and complexities concomitant with such democratization.

In some ways, I see chapter 3 as Ellwanger's own kind of confession, his own epistrophic metanoia. Here he expresses his own very modern authenticity as a countercultural difference, at least in relation to how he sees the dominant culture in the American academy. In doing so, he creates something of an interesting performative trap, perhaps for his readers but perhaps also for himself. This is not a fault but instead a compelling problem at the core of how ethos, metanoia, and identity function in the West. Should a culture, community, or people establish a sense of common identity? Should we police claims to that identity? Why or why not? When and how? Even as individuals, how do we respond to declarations of identity, transformation, and ethos?

When someone who has lived for decades as a white person declares herself to be African American and asks to be recognized as such, what is at stake and what risks emerge? When someone who has lived as a man for decades declares himself to be a woman and asks to be recognized as such, what is at stake and what risks emerge? Are the borders of such identities fluid and permeable in our lived social and political space? Even if the meanings, roles, and dynamics of such identities are historically and even biologically arbitrary, it seems irresponsible to make the facile assumption that there are no risks to the dissolution of those borders, no costs to establishing a right for anyone to declare membership to any given identity, social class, ethnicity, or group.

The grave difficulty of how we navigate the tensions of such fluidity and its repercussions occupies much of chapter 3 and the conclusion. While some readers may wish a different angle of intervention than Ellwanger takes, or find that at times he could be more attentive to the power dynamics in play, his analysis is original and insightful, and makes a vital contribution to the study of rhetoric. He time and time again shows that even in our postmodern, postessentialist, fluid-identities world, claims to identity and changes in identity are judged on a standard of authenticity. Whether rightly or wrongly, we (and that includes we scholars in the humanities) do tend to look for certain performances of authenticity when someone claims an identity. Recognizing this and grappling with the costs of such standards as well as the difficulty of doing without them is the most important next step for scholarship on contemporary ethos.

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As a professor and a learner, I think as much about my teachers as I do my students. If you reflect on it, almost everyone you know has taught you *something*. This book is the product of about fifteen years of study, observation, and thought, and I want to acknowledge the teachers who made it possible. I was fortunate to study rhetoric at the University of South Carolina with John Muckelbauer, Chris Holcomb, Christy Friend, and Pat Gehrke. I am indebted to each of them in different ways, but Pat had a profound influence on me as a thinker, and it is a distinct honor to have him write the foreword to this text.

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Finally, all praise to God, whose hand I felt guiding this process all along.

Introduction

Toward an Analytic Conception of Metanoia

We speak so often of "changing our mind" that the phrase seems totally ordinary—even banal. But in the most literal sense, it carries an unacknowledged gravity. Whether undertaken as an intentional act of reason or experienced passively as a spiritual event, to change one's mind or, similarly, to have a "change of heart" is not merely to think differently: it is to become someone else. How we live and what we believe are central to our identity. Our habits and beliefs are at the core of who we are. Thus to change one's mind is to experience a transformation of being—a renovation of one's personal ethos.

Changing minds is the central aim of rhetoric. Since the emergence of rhetorical theory in Ancient Greece, rhetorical theorists have sought to systemize the practice of persuasion. Not coincidentally, ethos was a primary concern of the first rhetors. In his fourth-century B.C.E. treatise *On Rhetoric*, Aristotle writes that "there is persuasion through character whenever the speech is spoken in such a way to make the speaker worthy of credence. . . . And this should result from the speech, not from a previous opinion that the speaker is a certain kind of person."[1] This idea may have been common sense in the ancient world, but it seems strange to modern minds that who we know a speaker to be should not play a role in how the speech is received. And yet Aristotle's assertion that one's ethos, that is, who one is, comes into being *as one speaks* sounds similar to the claims of postmodern and poststructural thinkers who argue that identity and the self are not "preexisting" parts of our personhood but are, rather, products of routinized rhetorical performances and interactions.

This idea that ethos is an effect of rhetoric has a profound explanatory power in our era, an era in which people are accomplishing personal transformations that would have been dismissed as impossible only decades ago. One need look no further than Olympic champion decathlete Caitlyn Jenner, formerly Bruce Jenner, who underwent a public transformation from man to woman in 2015. There is nothing new about gender dysphoria or someone's will to live as a sex other than the one given at birth. But there is a new insistence on the authenticity of the transformation. Twenty years ago, many people would have said a person like Jenner is "living as a woman." Today, such a statement would be viewed as an attack because it hints at a kind of persona manqué, a belief that the new ethos is inauthentic. Now, the public cultural ethic asks us to replace "Bruce is living as a woman" with "Caitlyn is a woman." Despite the anti-essentialist tendencies in modern thought, this shift is oddly Aristotelian: when Caitlyn spoke with Diane Sawyer on *20/20* about her transformation,[2] we were told that our reception of her speech was not to be informed by our memories of the years she went by "Bruce," nor by images of her legendary victory in the 1976 Men's Olympic Decathlon. Rather, Caitlyn's new ethos as a woman is extemporaneously authenticated through her speech—speech that rejects her life as Bruce and testifies to the always-latent femininity at the core of her being. If anyone doubts the power of the cultural ethic that accommodates these transformations, consider that after Caitlyn's interview, a bot was active on Twitter that automatically corrected or shamed authors of tweets that referred to "Bruce" or his former ethos as a man.[3] But today's popular conceptions of ethos and personal identity differ from Aristotle's in one critical way. Aristotle conceived of ethos as deriving from the audience—the listeners formulated the identity of the speaker as they listened to the speech. Today, ethos is thought to reside in the speaker: the identity that the audience attributes to the speaker is less important than who the speaker understands himself to be. Further, there is a growing sense that audiences are obligated to recognize the legitimacy of the speaker's self-conception. This distinction between the Aristotelian audience-centered conception of ethos and the modern self-centered notion of identity resonates throughout this text.

It is not possible to offer an adequate review of all the recent (and voluminous) research on the concept of ethos, but there is scant scholarship that tries to elaborate a general theory of how ethos transforms. Given the fluidity of personal identity in the contemporary period, this is a shortcoming of

modern rhetorical theory that needs to be addressed. Fortunately, there is a concept that dates to the earliest period of the rhetorical tradition that elucidates both how ethos transforms and how such transformations are signified in a variety of discursive contexts. That concept is *metanoia* (μετάνοια). Literally, metanoia means "afterthought" and is frequently rendered as "change of heart" or "change of mind," but English translations of the word do not do justice to the richness of the idea. In the following pages, I demonstrate that a broader investigation of the concept shows that metanoia itself has undergone some profound transformations over the course of its history. The central premise of this book is that by exploring metanoia's conceptual transformations, a more complete understanding of ethos will emerge—a deeper appreciation of how personal identity changes, how such changes are dependent on audiences, and how people testifying to personal conversions successfully establish (or fail to establish) the authenticity of their new ethos.

The earliest references to metanoia in ancient rhetorical theory represent it as a figure of speech: metanoia was understood as a particular strategy for persuading audiences. By enacting metanoia, a speaker "took back" an earlier statement and often replaced it with a different one. In so doing, the rhetor typically performed some measure of regret for the earlier claim. The persuasive power of this metanoic performance was rooted in the way that it reconfigures the speaker's ethos in the minds of the audience: it is a certain type of person who reflects upon earlier statements as he speaks, and a certain type of person who is honest and humble enough to publicly recant defective ones. After the peak of Greek society, metanoia rapidly became a key concept in a variety of rhetorical milieus, contexts that will be more fully described later. Given the remarkable versatility of metanoia, it is puzzling that modern rhetoricians have been virtually silent on the topic. Despite substantial research in philosophy, religious studies, classical studies, psychology, and even political science, those studying the art of persuasion have ignored metanoia. The reason is unclear.

In the following chapters, I try to establish metanoia as a key concept in the rhetorical tradition, no less important than pathos, or kairos, or doxa, or epideictic speech, or any other tool in the analytic toolbox. At the risk of overpromising the potential of this project, I go a step further: I argue that metanoia, understood as a "change of mind," is *the* rhetorical figure *par excellence*. The aim of rhetoric is persuasion: persuasion is about changing minds: metanoia is a theory of how minds are changed, one's own mind and the

minds of others. At the outset of the twenty-first century, metanoia is essential for understanding ethos, identity, authenticity, signification, and how these concepts interact. In our cultural moment, metanoia is the essence of rhetoric.

Three Types of Metanoia: Rhetorical, Spiritual, and Modern

In his book on rhetorical invention, John Muckelbauer tackles the problem of how the "new" and "different" emerge from within the context of dialectical negation.[4] The central issue is that change (as the means by which the new is invented) is inherently reactionary—that is, change comes only through a negation of the same, the old, or the status quo. Given that this dialectical mechanism of change is the one thing that never changes, the possibilities for novelty and difference to emerge are fairly limited. Thus what we call "the new" is only a different iteration of the old. Muckelbauer also notes that the driving force of deconstructionism and most cultural critique is a will to create the conditions for the truly new to emerge, whether that is "a new concept, a different social structure, a divergent form of subjectivity, a fresh reading, or an innovative technology."[5] And yet, despite the great appetite for new subjectivities, Muckelbauer provocatively claims that "although postmodern critiques have had a definite impact on the field of rhetoric, they have also met with a great deal of resistance—especially on questions concerning the status of the subject [or the self]."[6] In part, this book responds to this concern: my case studies examine how the self changes, what conditions allow for new subjectivities, and how those subjectivities are authenticated in discursive contexts. As the rhetorical figure of change, metanoia has a unique potential to address these issues.

In the following chapters, I offer analysis of three discrete models of metanoia: rhetorical metanoia, spiritual metanoia, and what I call modern metanoia. The first two types may be familiar to some readers, but I propose the third as a new theory of the concept. We can observe various forms of metanoia because different groups of people have found divergent uses for the idea over the course of history. Indeed, just as metanoia explains personal transformation, the concept itself has transformed over time. I argue that in the present moment, we can observe metanoia undergoing another reinvention. I refer to this new version as "modern metanoia." The theorization of this new model is enabled by a rhetorical description of the older ones.

Unquestionably, these three types of metanoia are not the only ones. It is my hope that this project spurs people working in rhetoric and communication to identify other forms of metanoia and other analytic applications of the concept. Before discussing the methodological orientation of this project, a further explanation of the three models of metanoia is in order.

The first type, rhetorical metanoia, is the most common. It is virtually indistinguishable from *epanorthosis*, another Greek rhetorical figure. The concept may be more familiar to some when called by its name in the Roman catalog of figures: *correctio*. All of these terms denote a verbal gambit by which a speaker substitutes, amends, or "takes back" an earlier statement and replaces it with a new claim, usually as a means to either amplify or mitigate the force of the earlier proposition. A basic example of rhetorical metanoia is a statement like "Earlier I said that he was the least qualified candidate for the job, but having looked at his résumé, that's not true. He is just lacking a few critical skills for the position." The first sentence recants the earlier claim, while the second replaces it with a similar (but less forceful) assertion. This strategy can be put to many uses, but as noted earlier, a large part of its persuasive power is the way it configures the ethos of the speaker. The simple substitution of a claim may seem relatively unrelated to such a grandiose idea as the reinvention of the self, but the rhetorical model of metanoia informs the other two varieties in important ways.

The second type of metanoia is spiritual metanoia (also referred to as religious metanoia). This kind was elaborated in the foundational documents of Christianity. Variations of the word *metanoia* appear dozens of times in the Greek New Testament. In English translations of the Bible, the term is usually rendered as "repentance," although some modern scholars of the New Testament translate it as "change of heart" or "change of mind," as these phrases hew more closely to "afterthought," the literal translation of the Greek.[7] The transformation of Paul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus is often cited as the prime embodiment of Christian metanoia. Like rhetorical metanoia, spiritual metanoia depends on a substitutive movement: the convert, recognizing the sinful nature of his life, rejects his old ways and takes on a new life in Christ, marked by regret, penance, and worship. Because this spiritual revelation is an interior phenomenon, ensuring that others recognize the transformation depends on a rhetorical performance—converts give a narrative testimony of their metanoic experience. The Christian call for repentance begins in the missionary work of John the Baptist and the directives of Jesus Christ, but there are numerous examples of Christian metanoic

testimony: Paul's epistles, Tertullian's "On Penitence," Augustine's *Confessions*, John Bunyan's *Grace Abounding*, and the women's conversion testimonies analyzed in Virginia Lieson Brereton's *From Sin to Salvation* all showcase the implications that religious metanoia has for personal ethos. The rhetorical hallmarks of Christian transformation can also be observed in some unexpected places—for example, Ohiyesa's (Charles Alexander Eastman) *From the Deep Woods to Civilization*, which chronicles his transition from his American Indian boyhood to living in white society, or contemporary prison writing in which convicts repent their criminal lives.[8] Even something as bland as academic writing on expressivist approaches to teaching composition consistently demands that students perform a kind of personal conversion in their writing. The ways that scholars describe these transformations are strikingly similar to Christian metanoic testimony.[9]

Modern metanoia, a third type of metanoia, is the emerging type found today in the secular, progressive West. Embracing the deconstructionist critique of essentialism, advocates and converts of this type of metanoia assert that ethos (identity) is a product of discourse rather than a constellation of inborn traits. The earlier example of Caitlyn Jenner serves as one instance of modern metanoia, in which identity depends on the self's experience of the self and the personal testimony that the convert offers regarding the new (and the old) ethos. This model has key similarities to both of the other two varieties, but one distinguishing characteristic is the way that modern metanoic testimony utilizes Christian tropes while eschewing the self-rejection and despair that mark the properly religious transformation. On the contrary, modern metanoia reinvents the Christian model in such a way that metanoia becomes an act of self-affirmation. Further, it incorporates features of another ancient rhetorical figure: *epistrophe*, which represents a kind of "return" to self. Epistrophe allows the convert to authenticate the transformation by rejecting the earlier ethos as mere performance and positioning the new identity as one that was always repressed but authentic. As an example, these themes of self-discovery, self-affirmation, and transformation are the basis of most contemporary self-help writing—a thoroughly metanoic genre, in the modern mold.

All forms of metanoia are transformations of the self, but each type has a very different character. In rhetorical metanoia, what the speaker "takes back" is speech. The conversion is of a fairly limited scope; there is no existential or spiritual dimension to replacing one claim with another. The linguistic substitution is not something that the speaker "experiences" but is rather the

product of some rational reflection. The motives that precipitate the taking back of the earlier statement are less important than the effects of doing so.[10]

But in religious metanoia, the metaphysical aspects of the transformation are central. To call religious metanoia a type of experience is to underscore the passive role of the convert. The transformation is not the product of an intellectual decision. This conversion is an *event* rather than an *act*. The religious convert does not replace one claim with another but is "born again" through the replacement of the sinful self with a new sanctified one. Michel Foucault puts the terms of this replacement in stark contrast: Christian metanoia is "a transition from one type of being to another, from death to life, from mortality to immortality, from darkness to light."[11] Therefore, it is a total "renunciation of oneself, dying to oneself, and being reborn in a different self and a new form which, as it were, no longer has anything to do with the earlier self in its being."[12] The scope of this conversion lies in opposition to the narrow purview of rhetorical metanoia.

Rhetorical metanoia modifies personal ethos in the eyes of the audience but only through a prior, agentive, and discursive act on the part of the rhetor. Religious metanoia is typically a momentary, private, unanticipated, passive, and nondiscursive movement of the spirit—an event that totally supplants personal ethos. Speech does play a role in religious metanoia but only as a post hoc means to externalize or represent what is largely an ineffable internal experience. The resulting metanoic testimony is the primary means of authenticating the new identity. As I show in this book, modern metanoia synthesizes aspects of the other two forms—in today's secular transformations, the convert undertakes a rhetorical process by which he rejects both earlier speech and a prior ethos.

Regardless of context, the audience plays a critical role in the function of metanoia. The observers and listeners must decide on the authenticity of these transformations. As shown by thinkers such as Kenneth Burke[13] and Erving Goffman,[14] the habitability of personal identity depends on the recognition of the other. In other words, when a new identity or characteristic is advanced by the speaker, the validity of that identity hinges on whether the audience believes that it is genuine. In most instances of rhetorical metanoia,[15] the figure of speech can only accomplish its objectives if the audience is convinced that the speaker is earnest in recanting the earlier claim. An example of this is an apology for some offending remark: if the hearer of the apology does not believe that the apologist truly regrets the earlier statement, the apology usually cannot achieve its reconciliatory goals. Similarly, religious

communities have always been critical of an inauthentic conversion—the "deathbed confession" of faith, for instance, has met with skepticism throughout the history of Christianity because of the convert's ambiguous motives. Needless to say, if Christians do not believe that the professed convert shares the true faith, her membership in the Christian community will be uncertain. Finally, modern metanoia is usually animated by the convert's belief in some essential truth about the self. Modern metanoic testimony addresses the public's ignorance of this truth: its aim is a kind of entelechy, a belief that the potential of the self must be realized. Of course, this entelechy is only achieved if the audience concedes the validity of the transformation. Without the recognition of the other, the "true" ethos remains inchoate and unfulfilled because of the disparity between one's self-image and one's public image: one cannot live as the person one claims to be. Given that authenticity is such an important element of metanoic testimony, and because the stakes are existential, converts of all types have developed recurring tropes and strategies for achieving public recognition of the transformation. The following chapters contrast not only these three different types of metanoia but also the means by which they are successfully signified in a variety of contexts.

Terminology, Methods, and Objects of Analysis

Metanoia is an integral concept for the study of rhetoric and communication, and thus there is a great diversity of objects for the analysis of personal transformation. Among them are political speeches, spiritual biographies, prison writings, self-help books, theories of composition pedagogy, and events in celebrity culture. It is true that because most of these examples are public forms of discourse, the picture of personal transformation that they give may not accurately represent the dynamics of transformation in private contexts. But there is rarely a record of private transformations, and therefore there is a dearth of such artifacts for analysis. This means that public communications allow a type of analysis that grants a generalized theory of how personal transformation works on a discursive level. My analyses do not give a picture of the experience of conversion. Rather, they provide a rhetorical portrait of how we talk about and negotiate that experience.

Although I offer much consideration of first-person accounts of metanoia, I also give equal analysis to *theories* of metanoia (texts that explicitly

describe the concept from various disciplinary orientations). Given the obvious divergences in these materials, one may have reservations regarding a unified study under the umbrella of a single idea: metanoia. I propose *metanoia* as the preferred term for understanding personal conversion for three reasons. First, because metanoia means "afterthought" in English, the word applies to a wide range of rhetorical phenomena. Secondly, most contemporary audiences will be unfamiliar with the term *metanoia*. This makes it a more malleable idea, one that I can reshape and transform without doing much violence to preexisting notions of metanoia. Finally, I prefer the Greek term because it is easily integrated to the largely Greek and Latin vocabularies of rhetorical theory. But I also use many other terms with similar connotations: *repentance*, *reformation*, *renovation*, *transformation*, *reinvention*, and *conversion*. I do not justify my word choice in relation to any specific usage. As I show, each of these terms means more or less the same thing in terms of identity formation, but I do sometimes use one word rather than another in an attempt to capture some nuance of a given instance of metanoia. For example, in referring to a "renovation" of one's identity, I may wish to draw attention to the speaker's role in the "constructedness" of the self and its demolition. Some audiences might bristle at the use of the term *conversion* in secular contexts. Yet Pierre Hadot notes that the literal meaning of the Latin term *conversio* is simply "a reversal," and therefore it can be used to "designate every kind of turn or transposition."[16] In any case, most secular testimonies of personal transformation are so shot through with the features of religious metanoia that they are properly called *conversions*, even with the spiritual implications of the term.

This book is not intended to be a theological study or a history of personal transformation in the West. Rather, I aim to show the versatility of metanoia and indicate how adopting a broader understanding of the concept (one that is not strictly limited to theology or history or psychology or philosophy) can provide the basis for a richer description of the role of rhetoric in identity (re)formation. Toward this end, I employ an approach that could be called "paratactical rhetorical analysis." Given that the relation between rhetorical analysis and parataxis is not immediately apparent, I discuss them each in turn. Rhetorical analysis is fairly straightforward: it explains a particular instance of discourse with an eye to how it makes use of persuasive strategies. Further, rhetorical analysis is uniquely attuned to the effects of speech and action. That is, the force and power of speech or action can be assessed by looking at the ways that audiences respond to it. Some readers may notice

that I offer little discussion of the motives and intentions of the converts that I analyze. Motives are relegated to the periphery for two reasons. First, it is very difficult to correctly assess why people do or say anything—it is a speculative exercise that shifts attention from what is known to what might have been and thus invites faulty conclusions. Secondly, in terms of understanding how personal transformation works, the motives of the convert are less important than the responses that conversion rhetoric elicits from audiences: what happens as a result of rhetoric is more readily observable than the reasons that a particular rhetorical act was undertaken. Because metanoia depends on whether the audience recognizes the transformation as legitimate, this concern with the effects of rhetoric is especially important. So, the objects of my analysis are theories of metanoia and examples of metanoic testimony. Parataxis is more complicated, and it relates to how I approach these theories and examples.

Like metanoia, parataxis was also conceived as a rhetorical figure of speech. The term itself combines Greek roots meaning "to arrange" and "adjacent." Thus parataxis is a placing of things side by side, whether those things are words, images, or objects. Classical rhetoric gave a special emphasis to orality, and parataxis was usually understood as a linguistic strategy of putting clauses next to each other without additional verbiage to connect them. A famous example is "I came, I saw, I conquered." On the semantic level of the phrase, the coming and the seeing have a key relation to the conquering. But the speaker does not spell out this relation. Instead, it is the audience who generates an idea of how the clauses relate to one another. James Wierzbicki contrasts parataxis with syntax and hypotaxis. The syntactical phrase clearly connects the articles placed side by side and the hypotactical phrase indicates how "one item is subordinate to another," but parataxis "offers no connection whatsoever."[17] Nevertheless, simply because no connection is *offered* does not mean that no connection exists. I argue that these connections are always implied through the mechanics of parataxis itself.

Today, parataxis often operates nonverbally, given the prevalence of text and image in modern communication. For example, many internet memes work paratactically: the creator places two images next to each other without indicating to the audience how those images are related. Paratactical meaning comes from two sources: it is partly generated from the "in-between" of the images as a logical effect of their similarities and differences, but it is also a product of an interpretive act by the audience, who explicates the ambiguous meaning of the "in-between." The interpretive role of the audience

shows that parataxis is a uniquely participatory mode of rhetoric. N. Katherine Hayles sees parataxis as a postmodern mode of expression,[18] not only because it reflects the discontinuity of contemporary life[19] but also because interpreting paratactical discourse requires a "rearrangement of consciousness."[20] In other words, like metanoia, parataxis is a strategy that relates to personal identity. As such, Hayles asserts that this technique of juxtaposition can be used analytically as "a cultural seismograph, extraordinarily sensitive to rifts, tremors, and realignments in bodies of discourse, as well as in bodies constituted through discourse and cultural practices."[21] Perhaps a nebulous figure such as metanoia can only be understood in paratactical terms.

In my approach to understanding personal reinvention, I utilize parataxis as a mode of cultural seismography that maps the constant renovation of the possible types of individual transformation and shows how those conversions are authenticated through the use of rhetorical testimony. By placing various conceptions of metanoia (and various instances of each type) side by side, I facilitate a clearer understanding of personal transformation as a rhetorical phenomenon that is intimately related to ethos. Parataxis is ultimately a figure of arrangement, and this book is arranged so as to provide a juxtapositional analysis of three "images" of metanoia: the operation of rhetorical metanoia in the ancient world, the emergence of religious metanoia in the context of Christianity, and the recent development of modern metanoia in the secular liberal societies of the West. The chronological treatment of these three moments is a deliberate choice, but I do not seek to provide a linear history of the concept. While each of the three moments certainly informs my understanding of the others, I resist narrating *how* metanoia transformed "from" one model "to" another. For example, I do not argue that rhetorical metanoia "turned into" religious metanoia. Instead, I propose a versatility that allows for different articulations of metanoia over time (or even simultaneously), and I occasionally compare varieties of metanoia when it aids the description of one particular model. These three moments that I place side by side are not the only three varieties of metanoia worth talking about. There are many more, and I hope my paratactical analysis allows for readers to draw their own conclusions and offer their own elaborations of the concept. Below, I offer a brief summary of the following chapters.

Chapter 1 focuses on metanoia as a rhetorical figure that takes back or amends earlier speech. Of central concern is how this strategy allows amplifications and reductions in the suasive force of a claim, and how these amplifications and reductions correlate to enhancements and diminishments

in the speaker's ethos. I begin by explicating a handful of closely related rhetorical figures (epanorthosis, *correctio*, epistrophe, *metameleia*, and *metamelomai*) in order to give a fuller picture of metanoia's function in discourse. I also catalog some important references to these concepts in classical literature and rhetorical theory. In order to demonstrate the ongoing vitality of rhetorical metanoia, I take up two cases of public apology to illustrate how taking back earlier speech entails some reconfigurations of the ethos, or personal identity. By analyzing the apologies of Michael Richards and Mel Gibson, I argue that the speech genre of apology at large can only be properly understood as a particular mode of metanoic performance (one with features that are much intensified in the religious metanoia of Christianity). I conclude with a brief characterization of the differences between the rhetorical metanoia of the ancient world and the religious metanoia that took shape in the context of early Christianity.

Chapter 2 addresses the Christian rhetoric of conversion (or repentance) as a prime example of religious metanoia. I begin by developing the characteristics of religious metanoia by looking at the rhetorical history of repentance in the Judeo-Christian tradition. This spiritual mode of personal transformation has endured with surprisingly little modification since the emergence of the Christian faith: we see metanoia as a central aspect of the Christian ethos in the letters of Paul the Apostle, an emphasis on regret and rebirth that is continued in Tertullian and Augustine, described in detail in the work of Bunyan and repeated in the Far East in conversions such as those of Dzing Sinsang[22] and Wong Ming-Dao.[23] Today, popular examples such as the conversion narratives of members of the nu-metal band Korn show that Christian metanoic testimony remains at the center of Western life.[24] Through rhetorical analysis of these conversion testimonies and others, I show how religious metanoia entails a much more rigorous engagement with the self than earlier modes of transformation. Further, I demonstrate how concern over the authenticity of conversion was intensified, with powerful implications for the convert's personal identity and role in the community at large. Finally, I describe the unique role that speech and discourse play in authenticating the inward experience of spiritual metanoia.

Chapter 3 introduces modern metanoia and shows how secular society allows new transformations of personal ethos by reinventing some aspects of both the rhetorical and the spiritual modes of conversion. In contemporary contexts, what appears to audiences as a reinvention of ethos is framed by the speaker as anything but a transformation. Rather, the speaker claims

that what others saw as the earlier, authentic identity was, in fact, a *performance*, in the most pejorative sense of the term. Put differently, the subject testifies that what looks to be a conversion is actually the emergence of the "true self" that was previously hidden by an inauthentic mask. This means that the inward change that occurs is not a decision to "become someone else" but a decision to finally be honest about who one is. This "return to self" is called epistrophe, a concept that is sometimes opposed to metanoia, but one that I argue is a central dimension of metanoia in the modern register. Given that modern metanoia often asserts an identity that is anathema to traditional norms, the speaker must undertake some symbolic risk in laying claim to the new ethos.[25] This willingness to risk public rejection of the new identity is one factor that works to authenticate the metanoic testimony. By comparing the public testimony of Caitlyn Jenner and Rachel Dolezal (a woman who claims a transracial identity), I offer a portrait of the salient features of modern metanoia and show how this variety is uniquely dependent on language to establish authenticity and secure the recognition of the audience.

The conclusion synthesizes the three modes of metanoia to offer a generalized notion of the concept. More importantly, I describe the uses of metanoia in rhetorical theory and analysis, a task achieved by discussing personal transformation in three different types of discourse: contemporary prison writing, academic scholarship from the field of composition studies, and the popular genre of self-help books. These three forms of writing show that each variety of metanoia is not necessarily bound to any particular historical period. That is, rhetorical metanoia did not end with antiquity; the spiritual forms of metanoic testimony have not been marginalized by the decline of Christianity in the West; and even "modern" metanoia is not solely a modern phenomenon. Further, my examples prove that two different models of metanoia can be operative in a single form of discourse. The three case studies in the conclusion also demonstrate that just as timing and kairos play key roles in the unfolding of any transformation, the place and space in which self-testimony unfolds have a major influence on how audiences view a specific instance of metanoia. Ultimately, the concluding chapter serves to point out a few directions that future researchers might take in applying metanoia as a tool for rhetorical analysis.

The twenty-first century has already brought significant shifts in cultural mores—particularly in Europe and the United States, which assign a very high value to the individual. The needs and expectations of society at large are

increasingly subordinated to the desires and perceptions of the self. Secular society advocates a special deference to the self's perception of the self: this can be observed in countless contexts, but the prevalence of "self-esteem" as a guiding force in contemporary education is a familiar example. Technological developments in biomedical engineering and augmented reality hint at even more profound personal transformations on the horizon. Further, breakthroughs in surgery and pharmacology will continue to alter the ways that we understand the self, the body, and personal ethos. Not only will these alterations change the way we talk about ourselves, but they will lead to new models of transformation that will demand new rhetorical strategies for presenting the self to the public gaze. Personal transformation is a central theme of our age. In the context of this trans moment, metanoia is an invaluable tool for understanding the rhetoric of personal transformation.

CHAPTER 1

Taking It Back

The History of Rhetorical Metanoia in the Classical Tradition and Beyond

Plato's *Phaedrus* is often recognized by scholars as a foundational text in the history of rhetoric. In it, Socrates's young friend Phaedrus is eager to rehearse a speech by Lysias in which the orator argues that the nonlover is more deserving of one's affections than the lover. Resting in an idyllic natural setting, Socrates is enchanted by Phaedrus's delivery of the speech—so much so that he is coerced into offering his own speech on the same topic. One of the major themes of the dialogue is that rhetoric has the capacity to transform both the audience *and the speaker*. Indeed, after offering the second speech, Socrates snaps out of his poetic trance and laments that Lysias's speech and the beauty of Phaedrus himself had such an influence that they made Socrates utter things that he knows to be false: *of course* the lover is superior to the nonlover. In the process of giving a speech that advanced a false view of love, Socrates took on a new ethos—he felt himself becoming someone he did not want to be. To correct this wrong, he resolves to give a third speech that speaks the truth: "Before suffering any punishment for speaking ill of Love, I will try to atone by my recantation."[1] Although the Greek version of this line makes no use of the word *metanoia*, this idea of recantation is central to the rhetorical conception of metanoia. Socrates recognized that his wrong was a discursive one, and he sought to resolve the wrong by *taking back* the earlier speeches and *replacing* them with a speech that honors the truth. The act of taking back his earlier discourse is framed explicitly as atonement, underscoring the moral dimension of his regret—a regret based in his awareness that speech has the capacity to transform one's ethos, the very essence of personal identity.

Like Socrates, most people have said or done something that they later came to regret. This regret may stem from a feeling that the statement or deed in question was untoward or untrue. Sometimes we regret true statements because they are hurtful to others, or simply because they are better left unsaid. Occasionally we might *not* regret what was said or done, but we are called upon by others to *perform* a measure of regret so as to make amends for a perceived offense. There are many rhetorical strategies by which one might accomplish an "unsaying"—a linguistic feat we colloquially refer to as "taking it back." The implications of the phrase "take it back" are tantalizing: they might suggest a recanting of earlier speech, a penitent acceptance of personal responsibility for one's speech and behavior, or even an affirmative gesture by which a speaker reclaims an authority over speech when it has been coopted by others.[2] All of these ideas fall within the scope of what I call rhetorical metanoia.

Metanoia has a very specific meaning within the classical tradition of rhetorical theory, but the nebulous usage of the word in those foundational texts obscures the fact that the "taking back" of speech is such a common phenomenon that it often goes unnoticed. In the United States, retractions and revisions of speech are so frequent that they have taken on ritualistic dimensions in popular culture. In a context where a single public statement can bring severe personal and professional consequences, barely a week goes by without some public figure defending, apologizing, or refusing to apologize for remarks that some audiences deem offensive. These dramas take place mainly in and through popular media, where commentators debate the severity of the offense and the sufficiency and authenticity of the offender's response.[3] These spectacles often serve a punitive function: by punishing the offender for speech that runs afoul of some public ethic, the public standards for speech are displayed and reaffirmed. Speakers who attempt a rhetorical metanoia (a taking back of earlier speech) can do so in a variety of ways. They can claim they had been misinformed when they spoke before. They can suggest that they merely "misspoke" or made a poor choice of words. Or they can testify to a defective ethos—a character flaw that was exposed through their speech. Whatever reason they identify for the erroneous or insensitive speech, those seeking to take something back often *replace* the earlier speech with new statements—ones that are more factual, or polite, or sensitive, or respectful, or savvy. Later in this chapter, I analyze the cases of Mel Gibson and Michael Richards (*Seinfeld*'s Kramer). Both men were forced to apologize for offensive statements, and each man's ordeal clarifies the function of rhetorical metanoia in contemporary contexts.

All examples of rhetorical metanoia share some features, notably a substitutive movement in which some speech or act (and the distinction is troublesome, as I will show) is replaced with another. This form of linguistic replacement happens in innumerable contexts, from recantations of courtroom testimony to journalistic retractions of fake news to mundane acts of interpersonal apology. As the aforementioned examples indicate, these discourses related to "taking it back" have ramifications beyond the simple saying of the statement. Whether or not the speaker chooses to retract, the choice has important effects on the speaker's ethos in the eyes of the audience. Put differently, rhetorical metanoia is not simply about *what we say* but *who we are* and the ways that our identities are performed through our rhetorical interaction. Before I undertake the case studies mentioned previously, I explicate the various formulations of metanoia and related concepts in classical rhetorical theory.

Metanoia in the Classical Tradition

A critical distinction must be made between early uses of metanoia (μετάνοια) and similar terms *as words* and uses of those terms as *rhetorical figures*. A literal translation of *metanoia* is "afterthought" or "think again." In its general uses as a word, there are a few cognates and variants of the term, but *metanoia* is typically a noun that is translated as "regret" or "remorse." μετανοεῖν (*metanoein* when transliterated) is the verbal form. In English, the verbal conjugations of *metanoia* are rendered as many different words, depending on the context in the Greek sources. These renderings include "to regret," "to relent," or even "to turn back."[4]

There is an array of terms related to metanoia in Koine Greek. Writing in 1891, Ernest D. Burton identified similar ideas such as *metamelomai* (μεταμέλομαι) and *metamelei* (sometimes transliterated as *metameleia*).[5] Burton also posits *metamelos* and *ametameletos* as words associated with regret and remorse.[6] More recently, Laurel Fulkerson added *metagignosko* and *metabouleuo* to the list.[7] The overlap between all of these concepts can be very difficult to parse.[8] For example, Aloys H. Dirksen tried to characterize the subtle differences between the terms: while *metanoia* is "to think afterward," *metameleia* is generally used to denote what was "*an object* of thought or care afterward," and *metamelomai* means simply "I think or feel differently."[9] In contrast, Fulkerson argues that in Ancient Greece, only

metanoia always connoted a regrettable *moral* failing,[10] whereas *metagignosko* does not necessarily have a moral dimension (but may have one),[11] and *metabouleuo* is always a change of mind "without an accompanying notion of mistake or regret."[12] Further, she asserts that the defining characteristic of *metameleia* is that it is oriented toward the future: for example, if an orator cautions an audience against a course of action by claiming that they will *regret it later*.[13]

There is ongoing debate about whether metanoia always carried a dimension of moral failing and personal remorse,[14] but very early uses of the term in Thucydides and Plato seem to settle the question. In *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Thucydides makes use of *metanoia* in a case of clear moral remorse,[15] while Plato (writing at nearly the same time) in *Euthydemus* uses it to refer to a very pedestrian remembering of a point after the moment it was called for.[16] In other words, even the single term *metanoia* was put to fairly divergent uses in the earliest existing records. The point here is not to nail down the shades of meaning that differentiate all of these terms. Rather, I aim to illustrate that there was an immense Greek vocabulary for talking about remorse, regret, and remembering. This lexicon includes terms that configure the relations between the self, its (mis)deeds, its (mis)speech, and the audience in very different ways. But while historical instances of *metanoia* and related terms *as words* show a great versatility, the use of *metanoia* as a rhetorical figure of speech is considerably more constrained.

Rhetorical figures have a long history in treatises on persuasion. In the most basic terms, a rhetorical figure is a strategy employed in the saying of the statement in order to increase the persuasiveness of the claim. But many rhetoricians offer contradictory accounts of what the figures are and how they can be usefully classified. Before talking about the use of metanoia as a distinct figure, more discussion of the figures in general is warranted. One example from among the long lists of figures is alliteration—the repetition of consonant sound. Martin Luther King Jr. applied this figure in his famous quotation about a world where people "will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character." This same content could have been stated less poetically—for example, "We shouldn't judge people based on their arbitrary physical characteristics, but instead on who they are on the inside." The reason King's articulation has much greater rhetorical power is because of the variety of figures that he employed in the statement. Alliteration is one of them: the hard *c* sound (in the words *color*, *skin*, *content*, and *character*) coupled with repeated *b* sounds make the statement more

memorable, and the device also contributes to the poetry of the statement, which lends the idea more gravity.

Beginning in the ancient world, some rhetoricians made a hobby of developing catalogs of figures and competing taxonomies for organizing them. Three of the most influential theorists who classified the figures were Cicero, Quintilian, and Pseudo-Cicero (the anonymous author of *Rhetorica ad Herennium*). In book 3 of *De oratore*, Cicero delineates two major groups: the figures of speech and the figures of thought. He explains that "the figure [of speech] suggested by the words disappears if one alters the words, but that of the thought remains whatever words one chooses to employ."[17] For Cicero, then, the figure of speech is "visible" to the audience either in the syntax, word choice, or usage of the statement. Figures of speech can also be "audible," though: the figure in the aforementioned King quote presents itself more to the ear than the eye. Figures of thought have a more ambiguous definition in Cicero.[18] Some of the tactics he defines as figures of thought seem to be stylistic tendencies in speaking (e.g., *commoratio* as a means of dwelling on a topic), while others seem to be *lines of argument* (a term that aligns the figures of thought with the topoi as theorized by Aristotle or loci in the Latin treatises).

At the outset of book 9 of *Institutes of Oratory*, Quintilian notes the divergent names and classifications for the figures. Interestingly, he uses a metaphor of personal transformation to dismiss these divergences: "The nature of things is not changed by a change in their appellations. Just as men, if they take a name different from that which they had, are still the same persons, so the forms of expression of which we are speaking, whether they be called tropes or figures, are still of the same efficacy, for their use does not consist in their name but in their influence."[19] This hints at the connection between rhetorical figuration and ethos. Indeed, transformation is an inherent concern of the figures: the word *trope* (a particular class of figures of speech) comes from a Greek word meaning "turn." Although he derides the work of classification, Quintilian still spends a good bit of time classifying. He, too, notes two kinds of figures:[20] "the first signifies the form of words, of whatever it may be, just as our bodies, of whatever they be composed, have a certain shape. The other, which is properly termed a figure, is any deviation, either in thought or expression, from the ordinary and simple method of speaking."[21] Quintilian goes on to note that because the division between speech and thought is so complicated, the classification of the figures is necessarily messy. Nevertheless, he maintains the functional importance of the figures, whose "greatest

power is shown in rendering oratory attractive, either by *giving plausibility to the character of the speaker*, by securing favor to his cause, by relieving weariness with variety, or by presenting certain points in a more becoming or safe light."[22] Put differently, Quintilian does not view the figures merely as a stylistic supplement. Rather, they are integral to the suasive potential of the speech and specifically relevant to the ethos of the speaker.

This association with ethos and identity continues in discussions of the figures throughout rhetorical history. It is especially evident in George Puttenham's late sixteenth-century catalog of figures entitled *The Arte of English Poesie*.[23] There, Puttenham adapts the classical figures for a Renaissance English audience. One way he accomplishes this is by suggesting English names rather than using the Greek or Latin term for each figure, noting "how the Greeks first, and afterward the Latines, inuented new names for euery figure, which this Author is also enforced to doo in his vulgar."[24] Interestingly, the English names he chooses often personify the figure or the ethos of the speaker who employs the strategy. Thus the figure *meiosis* becomes "the Disabler,"[25] *hyperbaton* becomes "the Trespasser,"[26] *dialysis* becomes "the Dismembrer,"[27] and *expeditio* becomes "the speedie dispatcher."[28] Puttenham's name for each figure indicates the type of person who would use it. In other words, the ways that we speak tell audiences something about our state of being.

Writing in 1999, Jeanne Fahnestock similarly noted that the figures are one means by which a speaker conveys emotion. She explores the possibility of whether figuration is merely a routinized way of expressing emotion or if the figures are actually constitutive of the emotion itself—that is, whether emotion can even be linguistically expressed *without* figuration.[29] This is a very complex question, noting as she does that in many cases it is nearly impossible to separate the form of the figure from its function, or the structure of the statement from its content.[30] Put differently, the saying of a figure is often a doing—in deploying the figure, one also undertakes an action. Rhetorical figures are a performative mode of speaking.[31] Fahnestock concludes that the figure and the emotion are not one and the same, but she seems to acknowledge that they are at least partly constitutive: even "'flat' or 'plain' or 'bald' sentences can still be said to convey an emotion: the emotion of flatness or calmness, seriousness, steady-eyed contemplation, or straight conviction. An even heartbeat is still a heartbeat. If it is impossible to have a text without emotion, it cannot be said that the figures add emotion to something wholly without it: they only help to express the emotion appropriate to the

context."[32] The figures were not invented. Rather, they came to the attention of rhetorical theorists as certain recurring *habits*: conventional, recurring means by which people externalize internal sentiment. In other words, the figures represent distinct modes of being because they are linguistic signatures of ethos and pathos.

Metanoia makes a number of appearances in various catalogs of the rhetorical figures, but it was (and remains) one of the more marginal ones. As a speech act, it is fundamentally substitutive. It typically consists of two statements or claims: an assertion is advanced in the first statement, while the second statement retracts, renounces, takes back, or modifies the first. In other words, the first statement is deficient in some regard, while the second statement embodies a kind of rectification.[33] Therefore, metanoia is a unique figure in that the action its saying performs is an *unsaying*. Obviously, once spoken, it is impossible to fully "unsay" a claim. Metanoia is a strategy to accomplish this reversal insofar as it is possible.

There is no particular syntactical formula for taking a statement back, so most ancient writers classify metanoia as a figure of thought. Many place it in a subclass of figures of amplification; that is, it is viewed as a means to enhance the force of the earlier, deficient claim. But it is clear that it can be used for the purposes of both amplification and mitigation of the first statement. For example, an amplifying example of metanoia might be as follows: "She is a great director of action films. Actually, no: she is the best director of action movies." A mitigating example: "Your 'borrowing' of the car was downright theft! OK, maybe not—but you knew what you were doing was wrong." These two instances also have implications for the ethos of the speaker: the first example shows a speaker who speaks with increasing confidence, while the second suggests a speaker who is perhaps prone to hyperbole and emotional influence. In other words, just as metanoia can amplify or mitigate a claim, it simultaneously empowers or diminishes the speaker. A skilled speaker can strategically use both of these manipulations of ethos: a diminishment of the self can be used to signify humbleness, humility, or ambivalence, and an enlargement of the speaker's identity can illustrate mastery, certainty, or strength. Although the figure always entails a rejection and a substitution of speech for speech (a verbal *act*), it also implies some degree of personal transformation via reconsideration (a mental *event*).

As an act that signifies an internal event (a "thinking again"), metanoia is a performative mode of testimonial speech. This means that there

are many considerations that must be taken into account when analyzing instances of rhetorical metanoia. In addition to the two primary functions of the figure, metanoia can also be used as a means of emphasis: by stopping the speech to amend or modify a prior statement, the speaker draws the audience's attention to the importance of a particular claim in the larger context of the speech. This shows that metanoia can be employed strictly as a technique: the rhetor can deliberately offer a defective claim in order to strengthen it with a replacement. Because the afterthought (metanoia) can be feigned, authenticity emerges as a central point of concern. Whether the speaker truly reconsidered the earlier statement and thought it was worthy of revision has important stakes for ways the audience receives the amending claim and perceives the speaker's ethos. Closely linked to the issue of authenticity is the question of timing (or kairos, to use the terminology of rhetorical theory). How long after the original, deficient statement does the speaker make note of the defect? How long does it take to offer an amendment of the claim? And must there even be an amended claim that follows the recognition of the defect? Or is the statement that acknowledges the defect itself sufficient for rhetorical functioning of metanoia? Audiences respond to an immediate correction differently than they do an attempt to revise a statement long after it has occurred.[34] To recant immediately might suggest that the speaker has a tactical motive but is more likely to meet with the immediate assent of the audience. A much-delayed retraction begs a question that clearly relates to authenticity: Why now? Nevertheless, the "wrongness" of some earlier statement lies at the center of all the variations of rhetorical metanoia. A close analysis of metanoia and related terms in classical texts of rhetorical theory enables a further description of the figure.

As noted earlier, the rhetorical figures often go by a variety of names, and there are often figures with different names that have very similar features. There is a handful of figures that are critical to gaining a deeper understanding of metanoia. They are *metameleia*, *metamelomai*, *epanorthosis*, *correctio*, *reprehensio*, *antistrophe*, and *conversio*. Some of these concepts are synonyms for metanoia and some are closely related figures, but all of them involve "taking back" or changing speech in one way or another. As they relate to ethos, they are all figures of conversion, a theme that is key to understanding the centrality of metanoic speech in rhetorical interaction. As Hadot notes, "the idea of conversion represents one of the constitutive notions of Western consciousness and conscience: in effect, one can represent the whole history of the West as a ceaseless effort at renewal by perfecting the

techniques of 'conversion,' which is to say the techniques intended to transform human reality."[35] Hadot also suggests that for the Greeks, conversion was a public practice that depended on rhetorical technique: "The practice of judicial and political debate in a democracy revealed to them the possibility of 'changing the soul' of the adversary through the skillful handling of language, through the use of the methods of persuasion."[36] Ancient rhetorical handbooks were the place in which these strategies were codified.

Both Plato and Aristotle used variations of metanoia to signify a variety of words and concepts. Some of these uses carried a dimension of regret, and others did not. One example comes from Aristotle's *On Rhetoric*. In book 2, he gives a list of emotions that can be used in the process of persuasion. In characterizing calmness as the antithesis of anger, he notes that people feel calm "toward those who admit and repent" wrongdoing.[37] The word that George A. Kennedy translates as "repent" is actually *metamelomenois*, which means something very similar to *metanoia*. Although Aristotle's treatise does not mention the figures of speech specifically, it is clear that it was already understood that confession and correction had unique rhetorical effects on audiences. One of the first references to metanoia specifically as a figure of speech comes from P. Rutilius Lupus, a first-century C.E. Roman rhetorician. In *De figuris sententiarum et elocutionis*, Lupus lists it as *metanoea* and briefly describes the figure before offering some examples: "This scheme is usually employed since in knowing himself, the speaker blames himself for what he said before and changes the thought after the fact."[38] There are a few things that call for attention here. The impetus of this figure of thought is a speaker "knowing himself"—this indicates a connection to personal identity even in the earliest descriptions of the figure. Further, Lupus shows that *metanoea* involves "blame," a performance of self-censure suggesting that the figure had an aspect of moralized regret (rather than simply denoting a morally neutral afterthought). Finally, Lupus demonstrates that *metanoea* is a *substitutive* interaction between two statements: the blameworthy thing "he said before" and the subsequent "change" "after the fact."

Rhetorica ad Herennium, a first-century B.C.E. Latin text erroneously attributed to Cicero, is probably the first extant text to introduce the term used as the Roman equivalent of metanoia: *correctio*. Pseudo-Cicero writes that "*correctio* retracts what has been said and replaces it with what seems more suitable."[39] After giving the requisite examples, he writes that "this figure makes an impression upon the hearer, for the idea when expressed by an ordinary word seems rather feebly stated, but after the speaker's own

amendment it is made more striking by means of the more appropriate expression. . . . But if you had at once arrived at this word [i.e., the amended statement], the grace neither of the thought nor of the word would have been noticed."[40] Again, we find a substitutive figure where the second claim (or "word") replaces an earlier one that was too "ordinary" or "feebly stated." The moral dimension that was evident in Lupus is absent here. If there is a "wrong" to which correctio responds, it is only a rhetorical error of style or technique. Given Pseudo-Cicero's disregard for the inward moral experience of the speaker, it is fitting that he underscores the tactical use of correctio: it is a figure of amplification where the orator presents an audience with a "striking" phrase. Responding to an imagined detractor who asks why the rhetor should not have just used the stronger word to begin with, Pseudo-Cicero suggests that in the absence of the initial defective utterance, an audience might not notice the meetness of the preferred word or phrase that replaced the defect. The acknowledgment of the error creates a pause in the message that draws attention to word choice. Thus correctio of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* is a deliberate strategy of stylistic display.

In book 3 of *De oratore*, where the real Cicero deals with the figures of speech and thought, correctio is mentioned very briefly.[41] He seems to classify it as a figure of thought, but it is ambiguous. He explains the figures as being "very effective . . . in explaining and amplifying the statement, with the object of making the fact we amplify appear to the audience as important as eloquence is able to make it."[42] Correctio is named in passing as one of these means of amplification: "correction of a statement either before or after one has made it" can have "a very great influence on the mind of the audience."[43] Later, Cicero mentions "self-correction" (*reprehensio*) again as a scheme that can be "brandished for show" because "there is sometimes force and in other cases charm . . . in slightly changing and altering a word."[44] The idea that correctio can be employed *prior* to the stating of the initial deficient speech is not found in most other rhetorical treatises. An example of this type of correctio is "I was going to talk to you tonight about the need for structural improvements to the school, but given today's events it makes more sense to discuss our financial situation." This anticipatory mode of correctio underscores the tactical emphasis in Cicero's treatment of the figures and offers another example of the apathetic, amoral style of correction.

A full understanding of metanoia and correctio is somewhat inhibited by the way some writers use the term *conversio* to denote a different figure.

One would suppose that a figure named "conversion" would relate to a transformation in the speaker—probably one in the form of an afterthought (metanoia). But many writers use *conversion* to denote a figure of repetition in which the speaker returns to a specific word or phrase a number of times—particularly at the end of successive clauses. This figure is alternately identified as antistrophe, epistrophe, *epanaphora*, or *repetitio*. For reasons that will become clear in the next chapter, I use the term *epistrophe* when referring to this figure (which becomes increasingly intertwined with metanoia throughout the modern era). The reason for this odd overlap between a figure of thought connoting a transformation (*metanoia*) and a figure of speech that uses repetition (*conversio*) is found in the etymology of the Greek word for the figures writ large: the word *trope* comes from the word στρέφω ("to turn"). This is evident in the words *antistrophe* and *epistrophe*, where the second part of the word reflects this root. The idea of a turning unites all of the figures under discussion. *Metanoia* refers to some inward-turning (a change of mind), and *conversio* (and synonymous figures) names a "re-turn" that occurs externally in the form of speech.[45] This connection reinforces the idea that the inward transformation must be externalized, a task that is achieved through particular modes of testimonial rhetoric.

One of the earliest uses of *conversio* comes in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, where it is translated as *antistrophe* in the Loeb edition. Pseudo-Cicero writes: "In *antistrophe* we repeat, not the first word of successive phrases, as in *epanaphora*, but the last."[46] In *De oratore*, Cicero uses *conversio* in reference to some form of linguistic "inversion."[47] These classical references seem to have influenced some writers of the Renaissance, a period that saw a revival of interest in the figures. *Conversio* shows up in Richard Sherry's 1550 catalog called *A Treatise of Schemes and Tropes*: "Antistrophe. Conuersio, convuersion is which taketh not hys begynnyges at al one and the same worde, but wt all one worde styll closet vp the sentence."[48] Johanne Susenbrotus also pairs *conversio* with epistrophe in the 1563 edition of his treatise entitled *Epitome troporum ac schematum*.[49] But these writers were also concerned with metanoia in the guise of correctio. In characterizing the figures of amplification, Sherry writes that "the first waye of increasyng or diminishing is by chaungynge the word of the thynge, when in encreasynge we vse a more cruell worde, and a softer in diminyshynge, as when we call an euyll man a thiefe, and say he hathe kylled vs, when he hathe beaten vs. And it is more vehemete if by correccion we compare greater wordes wyth those that we put before: As thou haste brought not a thyefe, but an extorcioner, not . . .

an adulterer, but a rauysher."[50] Again, we see the substitutional movement of the figure, and unlike many of his predecessors, Sherry understands that it can be used to both amplify *and* diminish the force of a claim. While he does not frame the figure in explicitly moral terms, the examples that he uses involve beatings, thievings, and ravishings—activities that were clearly chosen for their (im)moral dimensions. Susenbrotus's account of correctio is similar, but it is more associated with stylistic concerns: he suggests that the speaker takes back the earlier statement merely because he notices one that is more suitable.[51] Of more interest is that he connects correctio with reprehensio and epanorthosis, other synonyms for metanoia.

In a 2014 essay, Vincent Masse offers a more rigorous description of epanorthosis than is found in any of the classical sources.[52] Relying heavily on the treatment of epanorthosis found in Renaissance texts by Melanchthon and Foclin, Masse elaborates on how the figure operates on the mind of the speaker and audience. He agrees that it is a kind of correction, suggesting it is synonymous with correctio. But he also claims that the second, replacement word or phrase is "contradictory or contrary" to the first—on these grounds, Masse classifies epanorthosis as a figure of opposition.[53] This emphasis on contradiction seems totally absent in the historical source material, and even some of Masse's own examples undermine this characterization: one such example is "three, nay, four parts!" but it is unclear how "three" runs contrary to or "opposes" "four."[54] Nevertheless, Masse identifies a transcendental aspect of epanorthosis, which indicates that it is not simply a formal figure of speech. He sees it as a means for the "conveyance of newly discovered otherness," a characteristic shared with metanoia as it relates to identity, recognition, and transformation.[55]

With the Ramistic model of rhetoric, there came a flurry of new catalogs of the figures due to the ascendant view that the proper scope of rhetoric should be limited to style. The English stylists presented a distinct notion of rhetorical metanoia that probably could not have emerged outside the context of cultural Christianity. Henry Peacham's *The Garden of Eloquence* is an important text because it is a rare example of a catalog that includes both *correctio* and *metania*. Most previous theorists viewed these as synonymous, but Peacham sees them as two distinct (but related) figures. Their connection is reinforced by the fact that they are placed together in the list of figures. Peacham explains that *correctio* "is a figure which taketh away that that is said, and putteth a more meet word in the place whereof there be two kindes, the one is when a word is corrected before it is said."[56] He positions

it as a figure of amplification and emphasizes that to use correction to mitigate or diminish the force of the claim is a risky move: "it behoveth that the latter wordes be mightier then [*sic*] the former, for to reject a mightier and place the weaker betokeneth want of discretion in the Orator" is a "signe of follie."[57] Peacham gives a different account of *metania*, which "is comprehended under correction, and it is saith Rufinianus a description of things by reprehension. . . . But of other Authours it is taken for a forme of speech by which the Orator repenting himselfe of some word or saying past, by fault of memorie, or want of due consideration, and craveth leave to resume it, and to recite it, and to place a fitter word in stead thereof. Hereupon it is called *Poenitentia Dicti*, which repentence is many waies signified, and the leave to call words back is diversely expressed."[58] Peacham goes on to describe the occasions for the use of the figure when "either through rashnesse of affection, weaknesse of memorie, or imperfection of speech, he hath said some thing amisse."[59] And yet, he warns that in some cases, it is impossible to take a statement back, saying that "a word of offence is like a wilde bird which hath escaped thy hand and cannot be called againe."[60] Thus Peacham separates *correctio* and *metania* precisely on moralistic grounds: the former is an apathetic figure of style in which the speaker substitutes an earlier utterance with a more forceful one, and the latter is a figure defined by pathos in which a regretful speaker recants an earlier statement that might be viewed as morally deficient. The language used to describe *metania* is clearly drawn from Christian penitential discourses where the transgressor signifies remorse by embodying a particular ethos through testifying to the fault.

As noted earlier, Puttenham gives English names to the figures and often chooses ones that signify the ethos that animates each one. It is fitting that he calls metanoia "The Penitent."[61] Of all his predecessors and contemporaries, Puttenham endows the figure with the greatest emotional force, associating it explicitly with sorrow for past words and deeds. He writes, "Otherwhiles we speake and be sorry for it, as if we had not wel spoken, so that we seeme to call in our word againe, and to put in another fitter for the purpose: for which respects the Greekes called this manner of speech the figure of repentence:[62] then for that upon repentance commonly followes amendment, the Latins called it the figure of correction in that the speaker seemeth to reforme that which was said amisse. I following the Greek original, choose to call him the penitent, or repentant."[63]

In Puttenham, then, metanoia carries almost all the connotations and contradictions of the figure: it seems both a figure of speech and a figure

of thought, an outward act and an interior event, an ethos and a pathos, a substitution of self and of speech. These are the characteristics of the rhetorical mode of metanoia. As time went by, the strategy of metanoia became progressively intertwined with other figures and increasingly understood through emotions such as sorrow and regret—emotions of a penitent ethos. The operation of rhetorical metanoia as figure of correction and remorseful unsaying is well illustrated in the contemporary practice of public apology.

Apology as Metanoic Performance: Substituting Speech, Substituting Self

In *How to Do Things with Words*, a seminal text describing the performative nature of language, J. L. Austin shows the genre of apology to be a prime example of the theory of performativity.[64] "To apologize" is something you *do*—a particular type of act. But it is also something you *say*—a particular kind of statement. In other words, apology is a performative speech act: the saying *is* the doing. Yet there is no other speech act like apology because it is a paradox: the saying is a doing, yes, but the doing that it does is an *undoing*. The speaker usually tries to "undo" or negate an earlier statement or action. And as I show in the following two examples, the success of the negation depends in large part on the speaker's success in performing an *undoing of the self*. The regretful, sorrowful apology (as opposed to the defensive speech genre of apologia)[65] always entails some testimony regarding personal identity. Even when the apologist does not explicitly renounce a prior ethos, the very act of apologizing indicates a particular relation of the self to itself—a relation that embodies a penitent ethos. Absent this sort of testimony, audiences tend to deem apologies as "inauthentic." And inauthentic apologies usually fail to "undo" the offending speech or act.

Because the remorseful apology achieves the undoing through a linguistic substitution, it must be understood as a fundamentally metanoic mode of discourse. Especially when the wrong in question was an offensive statement, apology operates in ways that are identical to metanoia as a figure of speech: the speaker tries to "take back" the earlier statement by replacing it with speech that expresses regret, and perhaps with a new statement that contradicts the first one. In public apologies, it is critically important that audiences view the metanoic statement as both authentic and sufficient because such apologies are usually elicited by a public *demand* for rectification. This means that these apologetic spectacles are initiated by a group of accusers—people who try to

compel the offender to "take it back." Taking it back often depends on the apologist's success in performing an authentic form of metanoic testimony. The undoing of the original offense is dependent not only on the willingness of the apologist to offer the coerced apology but also on the accusers' willingness to recognize it as a felicitous statement.[66] A rhetorical analysis of the high-profile apologetic dramas of Michael Richards (who played Kramer on *Seinfeld*) and Mel Gibson illustrate the metanoic character of apology and how this variety of rhetorical metanoia is uniquely dependent on the performance of ethos and personal identity.

All Gaffes, No Laughs: Michael Richards at the Laugh Factory

Until late 2006, Michael Richards was very warmly regarded by the American public. Although Richards was a veteran of stand-up comedy and acting prior to *Seinfeld*, his portrayal of Kramer seemed so natural and effortless that many people assumed he was simply playing himself. Perhaps one of the reasons that the public was so shocked by his performance at the Laugh Factory on November 17, 2006, was that his behavior onstage was so out of sync with the ethos of the cool, happy-go-lucky Kramer.

Many audience accounts of that night suggest that throughout Richards's stand-up routine, a group of African Americans were ordering drinks, loudly conversing and taunting Richards, despite his periodic attempts to silence them. Finally, Richards snapped. The ensuing episode was filmed by an audience member. The most critical part of the diatribe begins with Richards looking up into the balcony and yelling very loudly at the group: "Shut up! Fifty years ago, we'd have had you upside down with a fuckin' fork up your ass! You can talk! You can talk! You can talk! You're brave now, motherfucker! Throw his ass out! He's a [n-----]! [Richards screams even louder] He's a [n-----]!! He's a [n-----]!!!"[67] This began a prolonged, epithet-laden exchange between Richards and the audience members. After the eventual departure of the people in the balcony, Richards, growing reflective, instructed the remaining audience, "You see? You see? There's still those words, those words, those words," before walking slowly offstage.[68]

Obviously, it is the use of the racial epithet *n-----* that was the primary offense here. By saying, "There's still those words," Richards almost immediately framed the wrong as one of using bad language. But "those words" related to ethos in two important ways—ways that his accusers used to construct an offense that went beyond mere impropriety.[69] First, the word

n----- has a unique capacity to signify the ethos of the speaker. This is true for speakers of all races and ethnicities. If a black person uses the word to refer to other people of the same race, the speaker positions himself as a certain kind of black person. And when the term is used by a speaker who is not black, the audience almost always sees this as indicative of a racist expression of ethnic superiority.[70] Certainly, the offense was aggravated by Richards's attempts to frame it as an instance of particularly foul language.

In the days following the dissemination of the video of the incident, the media hotly debated the authenticity of the performance and whether we had seen the "real" Michael Richards. Most of the public reached a very rapid consensus that Richards was a racist. Media outlets concentrated on reconfiguring Richards's public persona in this way, partly as an implicit *kategoria*—an accusation that called for some response from the offender. On *The Early Show*, comedian Paul Rodriguez suggested that the public had seen the true Michael Richards: "What surprises me is that you don't learn these words overnight. They're not part of your vocabulary. It sure came out like he'd done this before."[71] Kenny Kramer, the person upon whom the character of Kramer was based, insisted that "Richards is no racist, but the words come from somewhere."[72] *Daily News* journalist Michael Daly concluded that "[Richards] employed the dreaded epithet too many times and too clearly to even try to say he was merely using a little hip-hop lingo. . . . He was using that word as unmistakably and as hatefully as a [Ku Klux] Klansman."[73] It was settled—the event was no performance. His accusers were rhetorically constructing a new ethos for Richards: that of the public white racist, an identity that compelled Richards to respond.

Richards's first apology was clearly an attempt at what William L. Benoit calls "image restoration."[74] Strategies of image restoration pose a problem in metanoic discourses: if an apology appears to be motivated by a desire to repair one's ethos, it may undermine the perceived authenticity of the statement. The appearance of authentic remorse is central to the operation of rhetorical metanoia. Overt image restoration strategies can make an apology seem self-interested. Put differently, the apology that seeks to salvage one's personal ethos might appear more like defensive apologia than regretful apology.[75] Richards's decision to offer the first apology on David Letterman's late night talk show was also a mistake because it suggested to some that the apology was only another comedic performance.

Eight days after the initial offense, Jerry Seinfeld sat on Letterman's couch. In an act of friendship, Seinfeld ceded his time on the program to

allow Michael Richards to explain himself via satellite. Letterman asked a visibly and audibly contrite Richards how he was doing. As Richards answered, "Not doin' too good," Letterman's audience immediately began snickering. He proceeded, "I, uh, I lost my temper on stage. I was at a, uh, comedy club, trying to, uh, do my act and I got heckled and I, I, I took it badly, and I went into a rage. [More chuckles are heard in the audience.] And uh, uh, said some pretty, uh, nasty things to some Afro-Americans. [More laughing in audience.] Lotta . . . trash talk."[76] Although Richards seemed to differentiate his enraged comments from his attempts to "do his act," the mere suggestion of a performance (or "act") may have suggested to some that his offense was just a character portrayal gone wrong. This hints at a rejection of the racist ethos that embodied the core of the offense for much of his audience. His classification of the outburst as a form of "trash talk" underscored audience perceptions that Richards viewed the event simply as a poor choice of words. Some listeners might bristle at his use of "trash talk," as an appropriation of a term from African American vernacular (motivated by a presumption that Richards was a part of the very community that he had offended). Finally, employing the unusual term "Afro-Americans" may have suggested to some that he was joking or minimizing the event.

At one point, the laughter grew so loud that Seinfeld interrupted and chided the audience in his most serious voice: "Stop laughing. It's not funny." Richards then expressed his reservations to Letterman, saying: "You know, I'm hearing your audience laugh, you know, and it's, it's, uh, I'm not even sure that this is, uh, where I should be, uh, addressing, uh, the situation."[77] The apology was not going well. It was an attempt at the most basic kind of metanoia (or, perhaps, correctio): he apologized for the *statement* and replaced it with a statement of his regret, but he rejected the ethos of the white racist. After a few minutes, Richards briefly flirted with a deeper, more remorseful metanoia, saying: "I'm really busted up over this, and I'm, I'm very, very sorry, to those, uh, people in the audience, uh, the blacks, the Hispanics, the whites, everyone that was there that took the brunt of that anger, and, and, and hate, and rage, and how it came through. And I'm concerned about more anger, and more hate, and more rage coming through."[78] This statement obviously stops short of a full acceptance (and subsequent rejection) of a racist identity. But Richards closed with remarks that explicitly contested that ethos:

> You know, I'm a performer, I push the envelope; I work in a very uncontrolled manner on stage; I do a lot of free association, and spontaneous, I

> go into charac[ter]. . . I do a, I don't know—In view of the . . . of the situation and the act going where it was going. . . . The rage, the rage *did* go all over the place—it went to everybody in the room. . . . But you can't . . . you know, it's, it . . . I don't. I know people could, blacks could feel, what'd'ya sup[posed] . . . I'm not a racist! That's what's so insane about this! I don't . . . and yet . . . it's said! It comes through! It fires out of me . . . and even now, in the passion . . . that's here as I . . . as I . . . confront myself.[79]

The beginning of this statement implicitly suggests that the incident was an unfortunate by-product of Richards's unorthodox method of performance: the discussion of his "act" and his aborted statement about going into "charac[ter]" hint at a defensive tactic that asserts the person on the stage that night *was not really him*. His rejection of the way that his accusers were framing the offense fueled the perception of inauthenticity. His insistence that the rage "went to everybody in the room" undermines the idea that the African Americans present were especially victimized by his remarks. When he goes on to say that "blacks could feel. . ." it seems that Richards might not concede that blacks had the right to be offended. Further, when he said "What'd'ya sup[posed]. . ." it seems he stopped just short of claiming that he was the true victim of the spectacle.[80] Finally, Richards explicitly states he is not a racist, despite the words that he used onstage. Because Richards was unable to give an adequate explanation of this apparent paradox, his accusers did not view the apology as authentic metanoic testimony.

In the following days, the media was very critical of the apology on Letterman, which intensified the pressure to offer the full, contrite, metanoic apology that properly set the issue of Richards's personal identity at the center of the offense. The sufficiently metanoic testimony was offered on Jesse Jackson's radio program *Keep Hope Alive*. There, Richards conceded his racist ethos and willingly performed its demolition. Jackson began the discussion by attacking the inadequacy of the earlier apology, coaxing and guiding him toward a more properly metanoic apology: "A simple apology does not deal with the depth of the trauma. The first step is to acknowledge you're wrong. The second step is to be contrite about it, not arrogant. The third is, it takes time to regain or earn trust, and that's where the healing process begins."[81] Demonstrating his virtues as Jackson's student, Richards finally offered an impeccable metanoia: a sudden, repentant, complete repudiation of his identity and a commitment to become someone else. He promised his devotion to developing a new public ethos:

> Yes, [I am willing to begin] a great trust, and a great trust in peace, a trust with myself, and a trust with the African-American community. I know I've hurt them very, very deeply. Now I can say I'm deeply sorry for this, and proceed to go to healing. . . . I'm blind! I need to get into the depths of my being, into the depths of darkness, into the depths of rage and anger, because they are there, and it's a great tension of opposites between a good and a bad that I feel so deeply inside myself and I've got to do this work. . . . I can say I'm happy that all this has come about, because it is out in the open, and I've been a conduit to something that I think is quite meaningful, and the work begins outside and the work begins inside.[82]

After the apology on Jackson's show, the Richards story died down in the media.[83] As one might expect from a man forced to publicly destroy his identity, Richards is now publicly invisible. News reports in the summer of 2007 found him on a tour of Southeast Asia, on a quest to "feel [himself] out."[84] Richards provided an update to the American public: "That night, when I was insulted and disrupted, I lost my heart; I lost my sense of humor. I've retired from that. I'm taking time off to . . . get to know myself and appreciate other people."[85] This statement corroborates that Richards now views himself as someone else entirely; he "lost [his] heart" and needs to "get to know [him]self" again. That Richards apparently had to leave the United States to do this spiritual work, even after such a contrite repudiation of the self, shows the magnitude of his status as public pariah. Over ten years later, Richards is quietly living in the United States again. He most recently made news when some reporters cornered him in 2016 to ask why white men who supported Donald Trump's candidacy are allegedly so angry and how he feels about the decision to put Harriet Tubman (a heroic African American woman who escaped slavery) on American currency.[86] Clearly even his metanoic testimony and self-imposed Cambodian exile were not enough to jettison the ethos of the white racist.

Mad Mel: "Public Humiliation on a Global Scale"

Most of the American public is familiar with the actor Mel Gibson, acclaimed star of the *Mad Max* and *Lethal Weapon* films, and producer and director of films such as *Braveheart*, *The Passion of the Christ*, and *Apocalypto*. Gibson's public life has been one of significant controversy, and he has often made public

comments that fuel the claims of his detractors. For example, in 1991, Gibson disparaged gays in an interview with the Spanish newspaper *El Pais*, saying that they "take it up the ass. . . . [The ass] is only for taking a shit."[87] Despite accusations of homophobia by the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) and others, Gibson refused to apologize and was unusually brazen and public in this refusal. Asked by *Playboy* magazine about his resistance, Gibson responded by saying: "I'll apologize when hell freezes over. They can fuck off."[88] That Gibson was allowed to offer such a flagrant dismissal of his accusers shows how significantly standards for public speech have changed. The defensive strategies that worked in 1991 are not viable options today.

In the early morning hours of July 28, 2006, Gibson was arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol. Although the earliest reports suggested Gibson was arrested without incident, the written testimony of the arresting officer, James Mee, was leaked to a celebrity gossip website. Mee writes, "[Gibson's] conduct began to change when I advised him he was being detained/arrested for drunk driving. Gibson became increasingly belligerent as he took stock of his predicament. Gibson angrily stated 'Everything's fucked,' 'my life is fucked.' Gibson became fixated on his notoriety and concern that this incident was going to be publicized."[89] The officer recounted that Gibson tried to flee the scene when it became clear that he would be arrested. After he was handcuffed and in the cruiser, Mee claims Gibson grew more ornery: "Gibson yelled out profanities, . . . calling me 'You motherfucker.' Gibson repeatedly threatened me saying 'I'm going to fuck you. You're going to regret you ever did this to me.' . . . Gibson almost continually threatened me, saying he 'owns Malibu' and will spend all his money to 'get even' with me. Gibson blurted out a barrage of anti-Semitic remarks about 'fucking Jews.' Gibson yelled out 'The Jews are responsible for all the wars in the world.' Gibson then asked, 'Are you a Jew?'"[90]

Although Gibson's speech as reported by Officer Mee constituted a private offense, the media helped its audience *experience* the private act as a public one by disseminating Mee's arrest report, chock-full of choice quotation. Well versed as he is in navigating public controversy, Gibson offered an apology before any group made a public request for one. On the same day that Mee's account was revealed, Gibson's publicist released the following statement from him:

> After drinking alcohol on Thursday night, I did a number of things that were very wrong and for which I am ashamed. . . .

> I acted like a person completely out of control when I was arrested, and said things that I do not believe to be true and which are despicable. I am deeply ashamed of everything I said [*and I apologize to anyone who I have offended*].
>
> Also, I take this opportunity to apologize to the deputies involved for my belligerent behavior. . . . I disgraced myself and my family with my behavior and for that I am truly sorry.
>
> I have battled the disease of alcoholism for all of my adult life and profoundly regret my horrific relapse. I apologize for any behavior unbecoming of me in my inebriated state and have already taken necessary steps to ensure my return to health.[91]

This early apology is an example of the sort that is routinely dismissed in public disputes because it attempts to simply "take back" the offense instead of repudiate the self. Like Richards's first apology, Gibson's statement expresses regret for how he "acted." This indicates that the offensive behavior was out of character. This theme permeates the apology: by insisting that he does not believe the offensive statements "to be true" and expressing shame for "everything [he] said," Gibson established two personae: an authentic, humiliated, virtuous self and an inauthentic, belligerent, despicable self that overtook the true Mel Gibson as a result of his battles with the disease of alcoholism. This dichotomy enables Gibson to avoid accepting the ethos of the anti-Semite, which ensures that he need not perform a demolition of his identity. While the apology did express *personal* remorse for the earlier statement, it seems to position Gibson and his family as the primary victims of his disgraceful behavior. He does not mention Officer Mee by name and implicitly expresses doubt that others were harmed by his statements: he apologizes "to anyone who [he] ha[s] offended." By his account, there is no wayward self to repudiate because the statements he made were not representative of *who he is*. Thus rather than meet the metanoic requirement that new speech be put in place that modifies the old, the apology itself stands in for the substitutionary statement because it reprehends the offensive remarks. Nevertheless, as illustrated in the classical rhetorical manuals, the reprehension of an earlier statement and its replacement are generally separate steps in rhetorical metanoia.

Gibson's first apology was widely criticized: it was unsuccessful in unsaying the said because it did not involve an undoing of Gibson's ethos. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) took the lead in extracting a metanoic

statement that satisfied this requirement. The day after Gibson's first apology, Abraham Foxman, national director of the ADL, issued the following press release: "Mel Gibson's apology is unremorseful and insufficient. It's not a proper apology because it does not go to the essence of his bigotry and his anti-Semitism. His tirade finally reveals his true self and . . . it is unfortunate that it took an excess of booze and an encounter with a police officer to reveal what was really in his heart and mind."[92]

Foxman's statement not only ensured that the news story did not recede from focus, but it also performed important work regarding ethos. He successfully shifts the issue from what Gibson said to *who he is*. Both parties (Gibson and his accusers) offer contesting and contradictory accounts of his ethos. Foxman rejects Gibson's metanoia on the grounds of inauthenticity, suggesting that his comments show what is "really in his heart and mind." By criticizing the apology's silence on the "essence" of his character, the statement coerces a new apology that more properly exhibits a metanoic self-repudiation.

In a separate editorial for *New York Jewish Week*, Foxman virtually prays for Gibson to see the light and perform a metanoic conversion: "Like dealing with the disease of alcoholism, Mel Gibson must now confront the disease of bigotry. Once he completes his rehabilitation for alcohol abuse, we will be ready and willing to help him with his second rehabilitation to combat this disease of prejudice. We believe people can *change their hearts and minds*. . . . We believe Mel Gibson can have *an epiphany*. And when he does we stand ready to forgive him."[93] Foxman is fishing for proof of a personal transformation. One signifies such a spiritual rebirth by verbalizing its completion. This verbalization typically involves testimony that replaces old ideas and old selves with new ones.

On August 1, Gibson issued another statement. The salient parts of a very long apology are transcribed in the following quote:

> There is no excuse, nor should there be any tolerance, for anyone who thinks or expresses any kind of anti-Semitic remark. I want to apologize specifically to everyone in the Jewish community for the vitriolic and harmful words that I said to a law enforcement officer the night I was arrested on a DUI charge. I am a public person, and when I say something, either articulated and thought out, or blurted out in a moment of insanity, my words carry weight in the public arena. As a result, I must assume personal responsibility for my words and apologize directly to

> those who have been hurt and offended by those words. . . . But please know from my heart that I am not an anti-Semite. I am not a bigot. . . . I'm not just asking for forgiveness. I would like to take it one step further, and meet with leaders in the Jewish community, whom I have personally offended, to help me on my journey through recovery. This is not about a film. . . . This is about real life and recognizing the consequences that hurtful words can have. It's about existing in harmony in a world that seems to have gone mad.[94]

The effectiveness of Gibson's second apology is due to extremity of his language. There is "*no* excuse" and there should not be "*any* tolerance" for expressing or even *thinking* anti-Semitic sentiments. By claiming that even *thinking* an anti-Semitic thought to oneself should not be tolerated, Gibson seems to advocate a public annexing and policing of the *most* private space—the internal space of one's own mind. Although he insists that he is not bigot, he apologizes directly to the Jewish community—an act that implicitly concedes the truth of Mee's account of the offense. Like Michael Richards, he uses metaphors of spiritual sickness in his poetic discussion of an impending "journey through recovery." Although he still resists the ethos of the anti-Semite, his willingness to undergo a penance that extends beyond the apology itself indicates his willingness to become someone else.

Foxman's response on the same day affirms the sufficiency of the metanoic performance: "This is the apology we had sought and requested . . . and his apology sounds sincere. We welcome his efforts to repair the damage he has caused, to reach out to the Jewish community, and to seek help."[95] Although Foxman says the ADL asked for an apology, they never issued such a request. Suggesting that they did after the fact works to conceal the coercion implicit in their interaction with Gibson.

Months later, Gibson sat down for a retrospective interview with ABC News journalist Diane Sawyer. While he extensively described the personal torture of undergoing the media spectacle, he also looks back on it as a blessing because it put him on the path to the metanoia: "I got stopped before I did any real damage to anyone else. . . . That's a blessing. . . . Sometimes you need a big bucket of water to snap to because you're dealing with a sort of . . . a malady of the soul, and obsession of the mind, and a physical allergy. And some people need a big tap on the shoulder, you know? In my case, public humiliation on a global scale . . . seems to be what was required."[96] Gibson, who acted in at least a film a year from 1992 until 2005, did not

appear on screen again until 2011, an occurrence that parallels Richards's exile and underscores the limited role of forgiveness in the dynamic. Though the taking back of the statement was accomplished by rhetorical metanoia, the trappings of the offending ethos prove more difficult to escape.

Conclusions

As the cases of Richards and Gibson show, apology is a fundamentally metanoic genre of speech. All apologies, public and private, would be better understood if researchers analyzed them in this way—as an instantiation of rhetorical metanoia in which a speaker "takes back" an earlier statement or deed via routinized discursive tactics (i.e., the figures of speech). Apologies are only one type of speech by which people accomplish this type of unsaying—there are many more. Rhetorical metanoia is both an act (the saying of certain words) and an event (the internal reconsideration or transformation that precipitates those words). Thus it is a performative strategy, where the saying of the retraction is the embodiment of the metanoic deed. The speech serves as an externalized testament to some internal experience—whether that experience is one of guilt, regret, or some other phenomenon entirely. Rhetorical metanoia is unique among the figures of speech and thought because the goal of the substitutive statement is the *unsaying* of an earlier utterance. And further, the saying of metanoia is not simply a stylistic or formalistic exercise: the saying is almost always connected to the being. What we say is always indicative of *who we are*, and the act of taking back a claim (or unsaying it) is one that relates to ethos in important ways. As apologies often indicate, the sign of an authentic unsaying is often an undoing of the self: a demolition of the offending identity through the speaking of an internal metanoic transformation. The ancient and premodern rhetorical handbooks show that metanoia (and related figures) always carried some latent dimension of remorse. With the emergence of Christianity in the first century, the linguistic substitution that had been at the center of metanoia is marginalized by a new, rigorous emphasis on the rebirth of the self. Christians have theorized this experience as one that transcends the linguistic practices that defined the essence of rhetorical metanoia. Instead, language plays an important, but decidedly secondary, role in spiritual metanoia. This phenomenon of conversion yields a radically different image of the figure of transformation.

CHAPTER 2

Crucifying the Old Man

Christian Metanoic Testimony and the Changing of the Heart

Metanoia is a term of art in Christianity: it refers to something very specific, and yet the true character of metanoia is difficult to define, if only because its scriptural references are often cryptic or shrouded in metaphor. Most people in the English-speaking world are unfamiliar with the term *metanoia*, but they are generally aware that Christianity contains some doctrine of "repentance"—the word that is often used to translate the Greek term. In the most basic sense, Christian repentance simply means regret for past actions. Understood in this way, religious metanoia shares much in common with rhetorical metanoia. But there are key differences. Rhetorical metanoia usually regrets a specific fault—often a particular instance of speech. Further, that discursive wrong is also *undone* with speech; the expression of regret replaces the earlier statement. In contrast, Christian metanoia regrets a whole way of being. And although speech plays a role in *signifying* repentance, the speech itself does not constitute the metanoia. Rather, the metanoia is an inner, spiritual transformation. Religious metanoia maintains the substitutive movement of rhetorical metanoia, but instead of replacing speech with speech (*logos*) it substitutes the old sinful being with a new personal identity—an ethos that is defined by a penitent relation to the self.

Although it is true that other great world religions have traditions of repentance, the Christian idea of metanoia is the focus of this chapter because of the unique influence it had in developing the Western, secular notions of sin and the self that I discuss in the next chapter. In an essay on repentance in the Hindu tradition, Guy L. Beck shows that although personal regret

plays some role in atoning for sin, classical Hinduism relies heavily on ritual for the expiation of past wrongs.[1] A similar situation pertains in Islam. As Mahmoud Ayoub explains, "there is no savior in Islam"—and while forgiveness may be a gift from God, it is up to the believer to make himself worthy of the gift by following the law and engaging in ritual to repent of wrongdoing.[2] Buddhism presents a somewhat different case. Certainly repentance plays a role in Buddhist life, but it is not something demanded by the gods. Malcolm David Eckel quotes a Buddhist friend as saying, "'Think of the gods' . . . 'as friends in the town hall, very helpful for building permits, but no help when it comes to the great matters of birth and rebirth.'"[3] Instead, the Buddhists pursue Nirvana and enlightenment—a task that one must achieve through personal effort. Thus repentance is a personal, practical matter that guides the learner along the path to personal victory. Christian metanoia stands in stark contrast to these traditions. Only in Christianity does metanoia demand a total change in the identity of the penitent—one so substantial that Jesus insists a person must be "born again." Further, this rebirth into a new ethos is not marked by a new willingness to keep ritual or the law. On the contrary: the metanoic ethos in Christianity hinges upon an ongoing recognition that one *cannot overcome one's own moral inadequacy and is inherently unworthy of forgiveness*. Christianity teaches that it is faith in Jesus's divine sacrifice alone that allows for salvation and redemption. Thus the Christian doctrine of transformation is very strange indeed: Christians *must* take on a new identity, but a major part of that identity is a recognition that they are fundamentally unable to be the people they want to be. Unquestionably, Christian metanoia could not have emerged without the prior existence of Jewish notions of repentance. But again, Judaism insists upon the law in a way that is similar to Islam and thus differs from Christianity in important ways. For Christians, metanoia is a central component of the conversion experience. And because Christianity had such a broad role in shaping the culture of the Western world, understanding Christian metanoia is prerequisite to understanding all types of conversions in the secular West.

There is a primordial aspect of conversion: our world is defined by change, and conversion is simply the name we give to the unavoidable transition from one mode of being to another. In that sense, conversion has no history. It is as old as human consciousness.[4] Gerald Peters notes that throughout human history, conversion narratives appear everywhere, and that they offer "a means of creating a unified conception of individual identity legitimized

by a prevailing or emerging form of social authority." This "legitimization" is a kind of external recognition that promises the individual "personal 'salvation.'"[5] In other words, spirituality and redemption are ideas that are inherent to rhetorics of transformation. But when it comes to the rhetorical description of Christian metanoia specifically, there are a number of theoretical problems that must be addressed.

First, there seems to be some indeterminacy as to the *movement* of metanoia. Metanoia marks a "change" or a "turning," but is it a changing or turning away "from" something, or a changing or turning "to" something? Is it a 360-degree turn, where one *re*turns *to* a prior state of being that was lost? The term *epistrophe* is used to denote this kind of "full circle" *re*formation.[6] Or is it a 180-degree turn, where the subject, in an act of self-negation, turns *away* from one mode of being and is "born again" as a person with an entirely new ethos? *Metanoia* typically denotes this kind of transformation by renunciation. But this means that there must be both epistrophic and metanoic dimensions to any transformation—one cannot turn toward anything without simultaneously turning away from something else. This indicates a paradox at the heart of metanoia: it can be both a departure and a return. In his definitive work on conversion, Arthur Nock underscores the importance of the "at-homeness" the subject feels in relation to the present identity. For him, conversion is "the reorientation of the soul of an individual, his *deliberate turning from* indifference or *from* an earlier form of piety to another, a turning which implies a consciousness that a great change is involved, that the old was wrong and the new is right."[7] Nock advances an agentive mode of conversion that seems to conflate the language of epistrophe and metanoia. In describing the change as a "turning," he calls to mind the idea of epistrophe. But the turning he mentions is a turn *away* from something toward something new: not a return but rather the 180-degree turn that defines metanoic change. Nevertheless, Nock immediately acknowledges the tension between the two forms,[8] a tension echoed by Pierre Hadot between "*epistrophē*, which signifies a change of orientation and implies the idea of a return (return to origin, return to the self), and on the other hand *metanoia*, which signifies change of mind, repentance, and implies the idea of a mutation and a rebirth. . . . This fidelity-rupture polarity has strongly marked Western consciousness and conscience since the appearance of Christianity."[9] Hadot is right to locate the moment of the West's conversion crisis in the emergence of Christianity. As shown in the preceding chapter, metanoia was a well-formed idea a long time before the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

Another problem in understanding religious metanoia relates to the role the convert plays in the transformation. The supernatural dimensions of many conversions often minimize the agency of the convert, who is more or less powerless against the metaphysical or divine force that precipitates the sign. But signs require an interpretation, a hermeneutic act that depends on the will of the agent. A different way to distill this concern is to ask whether Christian metanoia is an act (something you do) or an event (something that happens to you). How one answers this question has major implications for the image of metanoia that appears. There are other key questions for understanding spiritual metanoia. One relates to the kairos of conversion: is metanoia a momentary phenomenon? Or is it the name we give to a process that unfolds over a long period of time? Finally, if metanoia often comes about through signs, what is the locus of this transformation and what are the ways it is signified? Most religious discourses suggest that the primary space of metanoia is "inside" the subject. Christianity is especially insistent that metanoia is not external—being converted is not simply a matter of employing a certain form of discourse, mobilizing particular rhetorical tropes, routinizing some behaviors and abstaining from others, or practicing ritual. Rather, it is a transformation of the mind and therefore the essence of the subject. Indeed, this mental change is literally the basis of the Greek term *metanoia*. And yet because Christian conversion occurs in the internal, private space of the subject, its recognition and authentication is especially dependent on outward forms of signification: converts must perform the inward change by saying certain things (the Lord's Prayer, the Nicene Creed, etc.), doing certain things (getting baptized, taking communion, etc.), and behaving certain ways (turn the other cheek, love your neighbor, etc.). For two thousand years, the church has been haunted by a crisis of authenticity: due to the way that recognition of an individual conversion depends on the public performance of signs, Christian communities naturally take a skeptical stance regarding the truth of one's repentance. This tension between the performative, rhetorical aspects and the metaphysical, subjective aspects is the signature of Christian metanoia.

Beneath all these concerns lies one more foundational question that must be addressed: in the Christian idiom, are metanoia and conversion synonymous? It is hard to overstate the stakes of this issue. In the Judeo-Christian scriptural tradition, metanoia and conversion are not always synonymous: in the Old Testament especially, those who are called to repentance are those who are *already* converted. In the Hebrew scriptures, God and the prophets

regularly implored the nation of Israel to *return* to the covenantal relationship with YHWH. In the New Testament, too, Jesus initially focuses his ministry on demonstrating to the Jews that he is the promised Messiah: it is only in the wake of his rejection by the law-obsessed Jewish establishment that the promises of the kingdom are extended to gentiles. Thus metanoia is similar to, but not identical with, conversion. But *how* the two ideas are related greatly depends on what is meant by "conversion." Here, I take the word to mean the conscious alignment of an individual with an institution, a philosophy, or a group of people—in short, identification. Understood as an alignment, there are three primary models of conversion: discursive, epistemological, and ontological. Discursive conversion presupposes a performative notion of communication wherein the externalized statement of alignment itself is what constitutes the conversion. An example would be that saying one is a fan of the Buffalo Sabres hockey team is what makes you a fan. Of course, you could say such a thing for any number of reasons, which indicates the limitations of the discursive model. The epistemological theory of conversion, in contrast, relates to individual *belief*: the alignment of the individual with another entity is coextensive with her acceptance of the entity's claims as true. In a religious context, the epistemological model holds that one becomes an Episcopalian when one believes the truth claims of the Episcopal church. The ontological model is perhaps the most rigorous of the three: it presumes that neither verbal testimony nor intellectual assent are sufficient criteria for conversion. In other words, a person can say they are a pacifist (discursive identification) and accept pacifist ideals as true and good (epistemological identification), but if they are still engaged in domestic abuse of a spouse or a child, then they are not an authentic pacifist. The ontological theory demands a consistency in speech (logos), thought (*nous*), and behavior (*bios*): the way you live is the prime indicator of what sort of person you are, and being a particular type of person is what makes a full alignment and a complete conversion. In other words, conversion is a type of identification that involves a change in ethos.

These three models of conversion as forms of alignment each relegate metanoia to a different place in the process of transformation. Discursive conversion is unique in that it has no place for metanoia at all. Because conversion is only signified externally in the form of speech, gestures, writing, or some other communicative practice, the internal phenomena of transformation is unimportant: people are who they say they are. The truth of the inner being is inaccessible, so the external performance is all we can rely on

to determine individual identity. In epistemological conversion, metanoia (transformation of the self) may occur simultaneously with the acceptance of a new set of truth claims: to believe something new is to become someone new. But the epistemological model also allows for a conversion without metanoia: one can accept a new doctrine or set of truths without becoming a different person. As the third model, ontological theories of conversion cannot function without metanoia—it is precisely the reinvention of the self that embodies the true conversion. External signs and intellectual assent still have important roles in authenticating an ontological transformation, but they are decidedly secondary to the inward "changing of the heart." Most religions call adherents to a particular mode of being, but as I will show, Christianity has almost always advanced a particularly strident theory of ontological conversion. In this chapter, I analyze the development of the Christian understanding of metanoia. I begin by discussing three early contributors to the development of Christian metanoia: the political and rhetorical models of civic transformation in ancient Athens, the competing models of personal philosophical conversion in the Greek and Hellenistic worlds, and Jewish traditions of repentance. Then, I describe the rhetorical features of metanoia as it is characterized in foundational texts from throughout the history of Christianity. Finally, I offer some detailed considerations of first-person metanoic testimony from diverse figures like Paul of Tarsus, Justin Martyr, Augustine, Bunyan, Charles Alexander Eastman (Ohiyesa), Chinese evangelist Wong Ming-Dao, and the members of the rock band Korn. Rhetorical analysis of these examples highlights the contrasts and continuities between religious metanoia and its rhetorical and modern variations.

The Ancient Foundations of Christian Metanoia

The Christian concept of metanoia did not emerge independently. It took shape through the interaction of three earlier discourses of conversion: I characterize each of these in turn.

Rhetoric and Transformation in Greek Political Life

As the earliest example of (fairly) large-scale democratic governance, rhetoric played an especially important role in the Greek political sphere. The success of a speaker engaging in public deliberation depended on his skill in

the art of persuasion. If the polis was to enact the proposal he advocated, the audience had to be convinced. In other words, success in the political sphere was bound to the practice of *changing minds*, an exercise that forms both the etymological and the conceptual basis of metanoia. Hadot notes the simultaneous refinement of rhetorical and democratic theory: "Above all, it is in the political domain that the ancient Greeks underwent the experience of conversion. The practice of judicial and political debate in a democracy revealed to them the possibility of 'changing the soul' of the adversary through the skilful [*sic*] handling of language, through the use of methods of persuasion. The techniques of rhetoric, the art of persuasion, were constituted and codified little by little. So they discovered the political power of ideas, the value of 'ideology,' to use a modern expression."[10] Jean-Pierre Vernant elaborates on this connection by characterizing the "reciprocal tie between politics and *logos*": "The art of politics became essentially the management of language; . . . rhetoric and sophistry, by analyzing the forms of discourse as the means of winning the contest in the assembly and the tribunal, opened the way for Aristotle's inquiries, which in turn defined the rules of proof along with the technique of persuasion."[11] He goes on to explain how installing speech as the primary instrument of political agency enfranchised people who were formerly excluded from the process of governance, a change Vernant refers to as "a radical transformation."[12] Thus the emergence of democracy was itself a metanoic event, one that dramatically increased the likelihood of future personal and political reinventions.

Yet scholars debate the degree to which metanoia, understood as a kind of regret, played a role in Greek political life. Despite identifying a number of places that regret and repentance pop up in the extant classical texts, David Konstan claims that "the classical philosophers—and indeed, classical writers generally—seem to have had little interest in the themes of remorse or repentance."[13] But Fulkerson challenges this idea by naming three reasons for the critical blindness to these themes: a longstanding belief that Greek society could not conceptualize remorse because the Greek ethic focused merely on avoiding censure, a limited body of evidence to support claims related to the role of regret in Greek life, and the tendency for an emotion like regret to be overshadowed by more universal emotions.[14] She persuasively shows not only the range of Greek words used to denote regret and remorse but that those emotions sometimes had a distinct moral dimension, refuting the idea that the Greeks had no shame.[15] Further, she identifies a number of writers who address metanoia and related emotions: Aristotle,

Demosthenes, Isocrates, Lysias, Plato, Antiphon, and more.[16] Torrance goes even further in rejecting the idea that *metanoia* and associated terms were without pathos, citing (among other examples) the maxim attributed to Bias the Sage, a renowned expert in successfully pleading causes in public: "Hate quickness of speech lest you fall into error, for *metanoia* follows."[17] Apocryphal or not, the saying indicates the political, rhetorical, and moral dimensions of metanoia in early antiquity. This is not to suggest it was the primary usage—all evidence suggests *metanoia* and related terms were used in myriad ways. However, it does show that the moral dimensions that would come to dominate the Christian notion of metanoia have a deep history in the ancient world.

Philosophical Metanoia

It might not be too hyperbolic to suggest that the dominant theme of most Greek philosophy was the need for the acolyte to become someone else. However, as the aim of teaching and learning a philosophical doctrine, personal reinvention was not metanoic in the Christian sense where the convert must wholly reject the prior self as hopelessly compromised and evil. Instead, philosophical conversion usually embodied an epistrophe: philosophical paideia often began from the premise that due to personal ignorance and the illusions of the physical world, the learner had become alienated from himself. Thus the primary task of one's studies was to progressively reverse this alienation. Foucault describes the process of epistrophe as "first of all [a] turning away from appearances. . . . [O]n the basis of this reversion to the self, we will be able to return to our homeland, the homeland of essences, truth and Being."[18] While the ancient political and rhetorical models of conversion contributed in important ways to the development of spiritual metanoia, philosophical conversion had even more power in shaping the contours of personal transformation in the Christian idiom.

Most of the major Greco-Roman schools of philosophy located their utility precisely in that they offered adherents a theory of good living. This is true of Platonism, Cynicism, Stoicism, and Epicureanism. Even Sophism, insofar as it can be considered a coherent theory of rhetoric or philosophy, implicitly advanced precepts describing the good life—mastering the art of rhetoric was synonymous with personal empowerment. The Pythagoreans may have been a notable exception, but so much of that school of thought is lost to history that there is no way to say for sure. Of course, these philosophical pursuits

would be useless if adherents had already achieved the ideal mode of being. Thus the sign of mastery of any of these schools was the transformation of the apprentice—a metanoia that effectively terminated the apprenticeship. As a prototype of Christian conversion, the work of philosophy was evangelical. Among the pre-Socratics, it seemed most philosophers evangelized only to adherents, but Socrates and Plato marked a major shift toward inviting the polis at large to a transformation.[19] This transformation represented the politicization of philosophy: afterward, it was increasingly difficult to separate the pursuit of the personal ideal and that of the public ideal.

But if philosophy at large called everyone to conversion, there was little unity in the character of that conversion. The Platonic model probably offers the greatest detail in what the individual transformation required. In his essay "Plato's Doctrine of Truth," Martin Heidegger suggests that Plato's allegory of the cave provides the template for the process. He notes that as the prisoner in the cave goes through the successive stages by which he is released from the darkness, there is a period of acclimation before he can accept the superiority of enlightenment. Heidegger links this acclimation with the idea of paideia (παιδεία), the process of learning and transformation, a "turning around" that represents the movement of conversion.[20] Speculating as to why this acclimation is necessarily slow, he notes that "the turning around has to do with one's being and thus takes place in the very ground of one's essence."[21] And yet, to follow the narrative of Plato's allegory, this "turning around" is not a conversion to something entirely new: rather, it is a turning to something that was previously unknown (but always there). The encounter with the real world, illuminated with sunlight, is not a creative invention of the freed captive. The figures in the cave were the prisoner's flawed opinion of the truth of being. Once adjusted to the light ("adjustment" being the reconciliation of man to the world, rather than vice versa), the convert sees things *as they really are* (and, in fact, always were). It is this *aletheia*, this encounter with truth as it is "unconcealed," that enables a fuller understanding of one's *own* being, and therefore a more authentic mode of being with the world as such. The change does have a relation to ethos and identity but only as a secondary effect of a prior shift from doxa (opinion or belief) to episteme (or knowledge). All of this is only to say that the transformation Plato describes is not a turn toward the "new." It is a shedding of ignorance—a reconciliation with the heretofore unknown already-there.

Platonic conversion as a kind of "return" suggests an epistrophic change. But a survey of the scholarship shows a frequent conflation of metanoia

and epistrophe. For example, in a valuable essay describing metanoia as the signature of philosophical transformation, Mátyás Szalay frequently uses language that hints at a return to the a priori rather than a metanoic break with the world in favor of the new: "Philosophical conversion is therefore not so much manifested in *turning away* from something but rather in *turning to* the whole of reality."[22] In *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, Foucault takes a strong stance on the irreconcilability of metanoia and epistrophe,[23] but elsewhere he describes Platonic metanoia in explicitly epistrophic terms: "knowledge and recognition are not distinct in *metanoia*. *Metanoia* is what permits the soul to recognize, both to recognize itself in the truth and to recognize the truth deep in itself. So that, in this perspective, illumination necessarily takes place in the form of *re*discoveries and memory. The soul *finds again* its kinship, the soul *finds again* what it is, and *finding again* what it is and being illuminated by being are one and the same thing."[24] Nock seems to distinguish between the two concepts, but the distinction is less than clear: "Plato spoke of the object of education as a 'turning around of the soul' (*Republic*, 518 D ff.): the word *epistrophe* later used by Christians of conversion, is applied to the effects of philosophy. . . . *Metanoeo*, the verbal correlative of *metanoia*, repentance, . . . implies an intellectual value judgement, and commonly a momentary realization rather than the entry on a state: it is also a word used by general rather than by philosophical writers."[25] But Nock's claim is explicitly refuted by the previously quoted passages from Szalay and Foucault: the differences between metanoia and epistrophe remain unclear.

This conflation is probably an accurate reflection of the likely interchangeability of these concepts in the discourses of philosophical conversion. The incongruence that I am pointing out in these writers probably only emerged as a product of early Christianity. Yet philosophical conversion shares a number of characteristics with Christian conversion. Szalay proposes that "philosophical conversion is fully realized when it leads to religious conversion(s)"[26] and points out that the theoretical concerns raised by Christian conversion are paralleled in philosophy: the question of whether metanoia is a volitional *act* or a passive *event*,[27] and the issue of how conversion unfolds temporally.[28] Although Christian metanoia exhibits major differences from the philosophical variety, the overlap of the critical issues pertaining to each indicates the historical and rhetorical debt of the former to the latter. As noted earlier, the third influence upon the development of Christian metanoia was the earlier Jewish tradition of repentance.

Old Testament Jewish Repentance

The Greek conflation of metanoia and epistrophe carries over into Hebrew texts of the same era. Today, most scholars agree that the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy) was reaching its final form in the sixth century B.C.E., but even before the scriptures were translated into Greek in the Septuagint (hereafter called the LXX), there was some imprecision in the words used to denote *regret* and *repentance* in Hebrew. Many scholars note that both *shuv* (or *shubh*) and *naham* (or *niham*) were used in the Old Testament to signify these ideas, and many offer detailed arguments that attempt to differentiate between usages of the two terms.[29] But this distinction is not terribly important, if only because most accounts of the differences in usage are hopelessly at odds with one another. What is important is that the lack of a clear boundary between *niham* and *shuv* was probably the main cause of the inconsistency in the usage of *epistrophe* and *metanoia* in the Greek LXX, which in turn may be responsible for the shifting meanings of metanoia over the course of history at large.

Variations on words with the root -στρέφω (-strepho, or "turn") occur quite frequently in the Old Testament (the precise count depends on which manuscripts are under scrutiny, but even conservative estimates number in the dozens). In contrast, variations of the word *metanoia* are very rare in the LXX: the exact number cited by researchers varies, but the average is probably around ten (I count fourteen, not including uses of related words such as *metameleia* and *metamelomai*). Given that the LXX was translated from the Hebrew in the third and second centuries B.C.E., even a handful of uses of metanoia is compelling: in an analysis of all extant Greek literature from the eighth century B.C.E. until the dawn of the common era, Guy D. Nave Jr. counts only ninety-five *total* uses of *metanoeo* and *metanoia*.[30] Put differently, of *all* of the recorded uses of *metanoia* prior to the common era, many of them occur in the texts of the Greek Septuagint. As Nave notes,[31] this does not suggest any indebtedness of the Hebrew use of the term to its Greek secular usage. Rather, the dates of the earliest written Hebrew scriptures suggest that ideas regarding repentance and regret were developing simultaneously throughout the ancient world and different cultures were adopting different vocabularies for expressing those ideas. But as I will show, the Christian era inaugurates a major refinement and elaboration of both the terminology of repentance and the practices that it entails: between 1 and 200 C.E., Nave finds more than a thousand written instances of *metanoia* and *metanoeo*.[32]

These three ancient discourses of metanoia (its use in Greek political rhetoric, Greek philosophy, and Hebrew scripture) all contributed to the development of Christian metanoia in the New Testament and in noncanonical foundational texts of the faith. The political life of Ancient Greece was important because it emphasized the public, verbal elements of "afterthought" and the expression of regret. The rhetoric of ancient philosophical conversion emphasized ethos in a way that would come to be central in the Christian articulation of metanoia: both movements aimed at a profound transformation of the individual. Hebrew conceptions of repentance were indispensable for Christianity, a religion that was introduced as a fulfillment of Jewish scripture. But in contrast to the Old Testament demands for a *collective* repentance in God's people, the New Testament *invites individuals* to a *personal* transformation and salvation.

The Rhetorical Features of Metanoia in Early Christian Scripture

Nock notes that prior to the monotheism of Judeo-Christian culture, religious conversion was all but impossible.[33] The pagan world saw no contradiction in worshipping the gods of the city and the household idols and deities. Only in the context of a faith that demands an unwavering fidelity to a single, all-powerful God does the need for a personal transformation become a precondition of embracing a new form of worship.[34] Christianity advanced monotheistic claims that demanded converts undertake a break with their past and testify to a new identity.

While *metanoia* was a rare term in the LXX, totally overshadowed by usage of variations on *epistrophe*, the synoptic gospels insist upon *metanoia* as the privileged term. Variations of *metanoia* occur about two dozen times in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Variations of *epistrophe* occur only six times in those texts. *Metanoia* and variations appear approximately fifty-four times in the New Testament. This is a curiosity: *why* did the writers of these gospels apparently see the need to institute a break with the traditional Hebrew vocabulary of repentance and contrition?[35] The answer is unclear, and it is complicated by the fact that some New Testament writers were either unfamiliar with the term *metanoia* or preferred other words. Most mysteriously, John's gospel always uses variations on *epistrophe*: *metanoia* does not appear once.[36] Another problem: Luke and Acts have been thought to be the work of one author, but while the book of Luke makes

the most frequent and enthusiastic use of *metanoia* of all the gospels, the book of Acts seems to use variations of *metanoia* and *epistrophe* more or less interchangeably. Paul's epistles also make use of both terms, perhaps reflecting that Paul was writing before the wide dissemination of the synoptic gospels standardized the word *metanoia* as the best signifier of Christian conversion. Nevertheless, metanoia is clearly positioned as a key experience in the life of any Christian. Before detailing exactly what is meant by *metanoia* in the New Testament, some issues related to translation must be discussed.

For many reasons, the word *metanoia* might have been better left untranslated when it came to rendering the scriptures in English. We really do not have a word that serves as a sufficient equivalent. Typically, *repent* or *repentance* are used to approximate the word in English. A number of authors (including John Calvin, William Douglas Chamberlain, Treadwell Walden, and David Bentley Hart) have suggested that this may be an error, one that probably results from translating New Testament Greek into Latin, then translating the Latin into English. *Metanoia* came into Latin as *poenitentia*,[37] which signals regret and remorse but does not capture the transformative element.[38] George Campbell, a theologian *and* a rhetorician, proposes that *metanoia* is more properly translated as "reformation"[39]—to equate it with repentance places too much emphasis on the emotions of sadness and regret at the expense of the newness of the transformation.[40] Although there does not seem to be any possible consensus on how best to render the term in English, all of these writers agree that central to metanoia is a profound transformation of the self—a rhetorical fashioning of a new ethos. The nature of this transformation can be described rhetorically through close analysis of early Christian scripture.

The entry of John the Baptist into the gospel narrative is a pivotal moment: John's emergence is an eschatological event. He is both a fulfillment of prophecy *and* a new prophet. It is John who first reveals that the duty of the faithful who await the appearance of the Christ is metanoia. John's prophecy of the Christ's arrival is fulfilled, and metanoia becomes the driving force of Christ's ministry. The initial Christian pronouncement occurs in Matthew 3:2, where John calls out in the wilderness: "Change your hearts [μετανοείτε]; for the Kingdom of the heavens has drawn near."[41] But upon seeing people from the legalistic Jewish sects of the Pharisees and the Sadducees come to be baptized, John warns them that metanoia is not simply an act (baptism) but a way of life:

> Brood of vipers, who divulged to you that you should flee from the wrath that is coming? Bear fruits, then, worthy of a change of heart [μετανοίας]; and do not think to say among yourselves, "We have Abraham as a father"; for I tell you that God has the power to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. And even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees; and thus every tree not bearing good fruit is felled and thrown into the fire. I indeed baptize you in water for the sake of transforming hearts [μετάνοιαν]; but the one coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry; he will baptize you in a Holy Spirit and fire: He whose winnow is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his threshing floor, and will gather his grain into the storehouse, and will burn away the chaff with inextinguishable fire. (Matthew 3:7–12)[42]

This passage clarifies quite a bit about metanoia. By chiding the Pharisees, John distances his idea of metanoia from the purportedly empty, self-serving ritualism of the Jewish establishment. Secondly, in warning them against supposing their righteousness as an extension of their family lineage (Abraham's children—God's chosen people), John separates righteousness from ethnicity and nationality. Put differently, he rejects the collective, identitarian notion of repentance at the center of Judaism in favor of an individual metanoia signified by an inward experience rather than an outward demonstration. And yet *the outward demonstration of righteousness still plays an authenticating role*: the truth of the inner change of heart is the bearing of fruit (i.e., visible outward action and behavior) worthy of salvation. The call to transformation is also decidedly foreboding: the implied reason that John gives for undertaking a metanoia is fear of the coming Messiah who will annihilate the unconverted. While the role of fear in conversion exists on the margin of contemporary Christian evangelism, it was a central part of the religion's persuasive appeal from the beginning. Writing near the beginning of the third century C.E., Tertullian uses the Matthean metaphor of fruit to warn that "where there is no fear, there, likewise, is no conversion, and where there is no conversion, repentance must needs be vain, since it fails to produce the fruit for which God planted it, that is, the salvation of man."[43] More than a thousand years later, Calvin concurs: "[Repentance] comes from a proper fear of God. For before the sinner's conscience is brought to repentance, it must first be moved by the thought of God's judgment."[44] The importance of fear shows the role of pathos in Christian conversion.

The feeling of fear also clarifies how regret relates to metanoia. Before converting, individuals must first accept the inherent virtue of the moral system that Christianity advances: only then is it possible to look backward and see one's past behavior as sinful. This concern for past action is also a major aspect of rhetorical metanoia, but where the rhetorical metanoia finds the speaker regretting prior speech because it was wrong or inaccurate, regret in religious metanoia derives from the recognition of one's prior deeds as *evil*. This particular relation of the self to its past embodies the rupture that allows for the Christian transformation. This transition is nothing short of *becoming a new person*—a reinvention of *ethos* in which a foundational quality of the new self is an enduring shame and remorse for the old self (and, further, for unwanted resurgences of the old self—a phenomenon discussed at some length by the Apostle Paul). This substitutive movement (the exchange of self for self, the exchange of identity) is another parallel that exists between rhetorical and religious models of metanoia.

As a rhetorical strategy, metanoia always replaces old speech with new speech. As shown in the last chapter, this persuasive tactic always entails some modification of ethos, if only because in "taking back" earlier speech and action, a speaker shows herself to be a certain type of person. But in Christian metanoia, the transformation goes beyond the utterance. A number of foundational Christian texts explain metanoia by using familiar metaphors of exchange and substitution. The author of the second letter of Clement, probably writing in the second century C.E., provides a few examples. The author writes, "While we have time to be healed, let us give ourselves over to the God who brings healing, *paying him what is due*. And what is that? Repentance from a sincere heart" (2 Clement 9:7–8).[45] Later, the text encourages readers to "remain hopeful, that we may *receive the reward*. For the one who has promised to reward each according to his deeds is faithful" (2 Clement 10:5–6).[46] Thus in Clement, we see two exchanges. In the first, Christ trades salvation and remission of sin for the sinner's agentive decision to undertake a transformation of the heart. The second exchange is the substitution of the old self for the new. Like the author of Clement, Tertullian also uses the language of monetary purchase:

> What folly it is, what perversity, to practice an imperfect penitence and then to expect a pardon for sin! This is to stretch forth one's hand for merchandise and not to pay the price. And the price which the Lord has set on the purchase of pardon is this—He offers impunity to be bought

> in exchange for penitence. If, then, merchants first examine a coin, which they have stipulated as their price, to see that it be not clipped or plated or counterfeit, do we not believe that the Lord, also, preexamines our penitence, seeing that He is going to give us so great a reward, to wit, life everlasting?[47]

In this metaphor of counterfeit currency, Tertullian raises the issue of authenticity, a concern that animates the discourse surrounding all forms of metanoia, secular and spiritual. In the fourth century, Ambrose (himself a major helper in Augustine's metanoic transformation) also uses mercantile language to depict salvation:

> Forgiveness is to be given on repentance. . . . Pay first that which you owe, that you may be in a position to ask for what you have hoped. Come with the disposition of an honest debtor that you may not contract a fresh liability, but pay that which is due of the existing debt with the possessions of your faith. . . . Man requires money for money, and this is not always at the debtor's command. God demands the affection of the heart, which is in our own power. No one who owes a debt to God is poor, except one who has made himself poor. And even if he have nothing to sell, yet he has wherewith to pay. Prayer, fasting, and tears are the resources of an honest debtor, and much more abundant than if one from the price of his estate offered money without faith.[48]

Calvin provides a final example that suggests that by the time of the Reformation, the idea that fear should be the motivation for the exchange may have already been waning: "Accordingly when the Lord offers us the forgiveness of sins, he commonly asks us in turn to amend our lives, testifying that *his mercy should be the motive and reason* for us to make the change."[49] These passages show that the religious transformation is shot through with the same logic of exchange as rhetorical conceptions of metanoia, and yet they clearly convey the ontological (rather than suasive) implications of the change. The transitional nature of metanoia also calls to mind the temporal considerations relevant to spiritual conversion.

Any transition happens over time, and the time signature of metanoia has been a subject of debate since the earliest days of the faith. Upon meeting the men who will become the apostles, Jesus simply says something to the effect of "Follow me"[50] and, seemingly entranced by the sound of his

voice, they leave their work, their homes, and their families to do his divine bidding. This total, momentary acquiescence casts the mold for an immediate metanoia. And yet even after seeing Jesus perform miracle after miracle, they are still skeptical of his power. In Luke 8:22–25, Jesus sleeps as he and the disciples cross the sea in the middle of a storm. When it seems their boat will sink, they wake Jesus, who commands the storm to cease. It does, and he rebukes the men for their lack of faith. Despite having seen equally impossible feats at the hands of Jesus, they still express their doubt: "And, being afraid, they marveled, saying to one another, 'Who then is this man, that he commands even the wind and the water, and they obey him?'"[51] This response reveals a critical point about metanoia in the Christian register. While the product of metanoia is a transformed ethos, the possibility of this transformation rests on a personal deliberation about Jesus's ethos. When the men in the boat ask "Who then is this man[?]," this is not the first time they have contemplated the identity of Jesus. He has made repeated implicit and explicit claims to be the Son of Man, the eschatological figure who will usher in the end of the age and establish a new kingdom on Earth for the Jews. Rather, their question indicates that they are still wrestling with the question of faith. They are not ready to unequivocally answer the question of whether Jesus is, in fact, who he says he is. The decision that lies before them—whether Jesus authentically embodies the Messianic ethos or if it is merely a performance—indicates that their conversion is not as complete as it seemed to be when they were first called. And metanoic transformation is entirely dependent on an independent, affirmative, rationally derived belief that Jesus *is who he says he is*—the Son of God.

The New Testament provides many other immediate, complete transformations (Saul's change into Paul being chief among them), but there are other troubling episodes with the Apostles that suggest that the transformation might happen progressively over the course of time rather than in a single mystical moment. The betrayal by Judas strongly suggests that his faith was lacking. Matthew 27:3, in which Judas returns the money he was paid to turn over Jesus (a figurative "undoing" of a literal monetary exchange), is often translated as Judas "repented," but the Greek word that is translated here is μεταμεληθείς (*metamelotheis*)—a word more properly rendered as "regretted." It seems that the choice not to use a variation of metanoia was probably deliberate here: the word choice signifies that Judas's remorse still falls short of the radical conversion of the heart. Peter's denial of Christ[52] after his arrest also indicates that metanoic transformation is incremental.

At the Last Supper, Peter righteously boasts that he would never reject Jesus and goes so far as to say he would die for him. Jesus warns him that he will deny him three times before the cock crows, and so it was: a metanoic *act* that effectively "takes back" his statement of devotion. *Epistrophe* makes some comparatively rare New Testament recurrences in relation to this episode. In Luke 22:31–32, anticipating his boast, Jesus looks past Peter's imminent rejection: "Simon, Simon, look: The Accuser has begged to sift you all like wheat. But I have prayed concerning you, that your faith might not fail; and you, when you have returned [ἐπιστρέψας], strengthen your brothers."[53] The culmination of this exchange comes in the epilogue to John's gospel, where the risen Jesus, eating breakfast with many of the disciples,[54] asks Peter three times if he loves him. Answering affirmatively three times, Peter effectively takes back his three denials of Christ (a poetic example of rhetorical metanoia). Jesus's three questions were a way to invite Peter to the "return" prophesied in Luke 22. After saying that he loves Jesus for the third time, Jesus commands him to "Follow me." The verse that immediately follows this imperative (John 21:20) reads: "Turning [επιστραψείς], Peter sees the disciple whom Jesus loved following behind—he who also had leaned on his chest at supper and said, 'Lord, who is he who betrays you?'"[55] Although this "turning" is clearly a physical movement of the body, the reference to the talk of the betrayal at the Last Supper seems to link Peter's physical turn with his spiritual return: presumably, Peter is forced to remember that like John (the beloved disciple), he could not imagine which of their company might betray Jesus. Thus he encounters his remorse for his ignorance and pride: while the consequences of Judas's betrayal were far more severe, Peter had betrayed him just the same.

The opposition between the turn (a 180-degree metanoic phenomenon) and the *re*turn (a 360-degree epistrophic movement) suggests that repentance and conversion are not "once only" events, as was widely held in the early church. Crossley offers a theory that explains the prevalence of *epistrophe* in the Old Testament and the preference for *metanoia* in the New.[56] Because the stories of the Old Testament tell the story of the people of the Abrahamic covenant, the people in it were *already* converted. This means that after their lapses, their *return* to the faith is properly called *epistrophe*. In the New Testament, though, the promises of the kingdom are extended to gentiles as well as Jews: pagans who convert to the new faith were probably "converting" for the first time (given Nock's insight that conversion only becomes possible in the context of a monotheistic belief system). This means that

metanoia more accurately connoted their rejection of an earlier way of life and their movement away from it.

I have discussed three central rhetorical features of Christian metanoia: an ethos that takes as its central feature a regret for and rejection of one's prior way of life, a logic of exchange that parallels the substitutive movement of rhetorical metanoia, and a contested theory of kairos in which the transformation may be immediate and unmediated or progressive and incremental. A final characteristic of religious metanoia is public testimony. Because Christianity is an evangelical religion that prioritizes building a community (the church), and because metanoic transformation as a key moment of conversion is an inward experience, converts are required to signify their transformation so that they can be initiated into the community. Just as there was an early debate about the kairos of metanoia, there was also some disagreement about the best ways to signify one's new ethos. Although followers of Jesus are routinely rewarded in the scriptures for explicit, public, verbal attestations of their faith, there are a number of places where the texts seem to favor a private or implicit demonstration of devotion. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus expresses reservations about the performative dimensions of religious piety (note also the monetary metaphors of exchange):

> And make certain not to practice your righteousness before men, in order to be watched by them; otherwise you have no recompense with your Father in the heavens. When you give alms, therefore, do not trumpet it aloud before you, as those who are playacting do in the synagogues and in the streets so they may be lauded by men; amen, I tell you, they have their recompense in full. But when you are giving alms do not allow your left hand to know what it is your right hand does, So that your almsgiving is in secret. And your Father, who watches what is secret, will reward you. And when you pray do not be like those who are playacting; for they love to pray while standing in the synagogues and on the corners of streets, so that they may be visible to men; I tell you truly, they have their recompense in full. But, when you pray, enter into your private room and, having closed your door, pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father, who watches what is secret, will reward you. (Matthew 6:1–6)[57]

This disdain for the rhetorical dimensions of religious testimony is even more pronounced in Paul's epistles. And yet the transformation *must* be

externalized in one way or another, so perhaps it is simply a question of avoiding an excess of showiness, which undermines the authenticity of the transformation in the eyes of the audience. Tertullian warns against the belief that private testimony is sufficient for salvation: "Some say, however, that God is satisfied if He be honored in heart and mind, even though this be not done externally. Thus they sin, yet lose not reverential fear and faith. This is to say, they lose not chastity and commit adultery! They lose not filial piety and poison a parent!"[58]

Responding to the Scholastic insistence that repentance must be "confessed by mouth," Calvin calls the proponents of auricular confession "Sophists," saying that "the person who fails to confess by mouth is nevertheless truly penitent[;] repentance can exist without confession."[59] In analyzing this problem, Foucault notes that "penitence in early Christianity is a way of life *acted out* at all times by accepting the obligation to disclose oneself. It must be visibly represented and accompanied by others who recognize the ritual."[60] At first, the means by which the conversion could be acted out were fairly varied. But as the nascent religion persisted beyond the Roman era and into the age of the institutional church, Foucault explains that the routines by which metanoia was signified became increasingly rigid and increasingly *verbal*.[61]

Having explored both the pre-Christian roots of metanoia and the basic rhetorical character of personal transformation within the context of early Christianity, we can articulate a number of questions to guide an analysis of first-person accounts of metanoia:

- How is metanoia different from conversion?
- How do particular converts negotiate the difference between metanoia and epistrophe?
- How do the symbolic, epistemic, and ontological models of conversion interact in personal metanoic testimony?
- Is Christian metanoia an agentive act or a passive event/experience?
- Is Christian metanoia an immediate, momentary phenomenon or an incremental process?
- By which symbolic means is the transformation signified or performed?

These questions are answered by rhetorical analysis of particular accounts of personal transformation throughout the history of the church.

Paul of Tarsus as Christian Prototype

The transformation of Saul the Pharisee into Paul the Apostle is the earliest extant conversion testimony in the Christian faith, and as such it retains significant power as a model for personal transformation in the West. What we know about Saul prior to his trip to Damascus is relatively little: he was a devout Pharisaic Jew, committed to the pursuit of righteousness through observance of law and ritual. He was a Roman citizen, a man somewhat familiar with the dominant philosophical currents of the Hellenistic world. And he despised the fledgling Christian faith as a blasphemous lie—one so pernicious that physical violence was justified in bringing about its annihilation. While traveling the ancient Near East to eliminate the first churches, he underwent a profound, nearly instantaneous metanoia on the road to Damascus.

The details of this experience are familiar to most from the book of Acts, but it is worth highlighting some key features of the narrative. Chapter 9 of Acts opens with Saul "still snorting out menaces and slaughter at the Lord's disciples."[62] The link between words (logos) and deeds (bios) is important here: Paul's hateful speech (snorted menaces) is accompanied by action (slaughter). The relation between the saying, the doing, and personal identity is an important theme in Paul's epistolary. As he was approaching Damascus, "suddenly there flashed about him a light from the sky," and he "heard a voice saying to him 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?'" (Acts 9:3–4).[63] Interestingly, this passage suggests Paul does not see the speaker—he only hears the speech. His immediate impulse is to connect the logos with an ethos: And he said "Lord, *who are you*?" (Acts 9:5).[64] The speaker identifies himself as Jesus, the object of Paul's persecution. Saul immediately concedes the authority of the speaker once he knows his identity: asking "Lord, what do you will that I should do?," Jesus tells him to go to the city and wait for instruction. Saul's traveling companions witness this in the same way that he does: they "stood speechless, clearly hearing the voice, but seeing no one" (Acts 9:6–7).[65] They do not see Jesus, but they hear his words. In that moment, they are "speechless," and are therefore without logos, which is simultaneously to be without ethos: this effacement of self will come to be a central feature of Christian identity. After this experience, Saul was blind. Through a series of divine revelations, a Christian named Ananias helps Paul's sight to return after three days—a period that clearly signifies the time that Jesus lay dead in the tomb. Upon regaining his sight (a metaphorical rebirth and

resurrection), his first act is to be baptized, "and *immediately* he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues: that 'This man is the Son of God'" (Acts 9:18–20).[66] With the return of his sight comes a new kind of speech: he readily offers testimony of his transformation to precisely those most opposed to his message. His testimony confirms his new ethos by asserting the truth of Jesus's ethos as Christ. The people at the synagogue were skeptical of this metanoia, but with his new identity comes a new rhetorical aptitude: "Saul was infused with more power, and confounded the Judeans living in Damascus, marshalling arguments that this man is the Anointed" (Acts 9:20–22).[67] After these events, Saul becomes someone else entirely. The transformation of his ethos is so profound that he takes a new name: Paul. These concepts of logos, ethos, rhetoric, and authenticity interact in unique ways that set the standard for Christian identity.

When Paul first encounters the other Apostles, they, too, are skeptical of his metanoia, but he apparently wins them over with the authenticity and zeal of his testimony, a strategy by which he "takes back" his prior ethos in the minds of his audience. A mutual friend tells the Apostles that "in Damascus he had *spoken boldly* in the name of Jesus," and in their presence he "spoke boldly" and "both spoke to and debated with the Hellenists" (Acts 9:27–29).[68] In the Greek manuscripts, the words used to denote this "bold speech" are variations of parrhesia (ἐπαρρησιάσατο and παρρησιαζόμενος, respectively). Foucault defines parrhesia as a rhetorical concept at some length. It is plain, unadorned, truthful speech, spoken in a context where the speaker undertakes some risk in speaking the truth bluntly because of a negative power differential in relation to the audience.[69] He claims that parrhesia is essentially a rhetorical figure of speech in which the rhetor refuses to utilize the ornamental features of rhetoric, referring to it as "the zero degree" of rhetoric.[70] Parrhesia is a critical concept for understanding the Christian ethos as embodied by Paul: Acts finds him speaking boldly, but his letters consistently voice disgust for rhetoric as it was commonly understood in the Hellenistic world—a means to power and intellectual mastery of one's adversary. But despite his constant claims of using a parrhesiastic mode of discourse, Paul's epistles are among the most highly stylized rhetorical documents of his era. This matters—as I will show, Paul's logos is virtually synonymous with his ethos (not merely because his audiences come to know him through his writing), and the contradictory impulses in the style of the logos parallels the contradiction between the flesh and the spirit—a conflict that defines Christian identity.

In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul further outlines how different modes of discourse (i.e., speech when present, writing when absent) call for a different construction of ethos and authority:

> Now I, Paul myself, implore you by the gentleness and equitableness of the Anointed—I who am indeed humble when among you in person, but bold toward you when away—And I beseech that, when I am present, I shall not be bold with that self-assured frankness I anticipate venturing toward some who think we walk as it were, according to the flesh. For though we walk about in the flesh, we do not go into battle according to the flesh—For the weapons of our campaign are not fleshly, and yet are (through God) powerful enough to overthrow fortresses—we who are overthrowing argumentations, And every high rampart reared against the knowledge of God, and taking every concept captive for subjection to the Anointed. . . . I shall not be put to shame—Lest I seem as though I am trying with my letters to intimidate you. "Because, in fact," says someone, "his letters are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presentation is weak and his speech is deplorable." Let such a man count on this: that what we are in epistolary discourse when absent, such we are as well in action when present. (2 Corinthians 10:1–11)[71]

Here, Paul shows an understanding that the writing is what makes him present to his audience when he is absent. Therefore, certain persuasive measures are required that would not be otherwise. His letters have a boldness and stylistic flourish that some claim are absent when he personally visits the new churches to whom he writes. But he assures them: in person his doings ("in action") match the power of his sayings ("epistolary discourse") when he is away. The bodily dimensions of this dynamic are key because they are an extension of the fundamental division in the Christian self: in his book on Paul, Alain Badiou argues that "it is of the essence of the Christian subject to be divided."[72]

This divided ethos is best represented in a passage from Paul's letter to the Galatians:

> Now I say, walk in spirit and you most certainly will not bring the longings of the flesh to pass. For the flesh longs in opposition to the spirit, and the spirit in opposition to the flesh, inasmuch as they are opposed one to the other, so that you might not do as you would wish. . . . Now

> what the works of flesh are is obvious: whoring, impurity, licentiousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, enmities, strife, jealousy, rages, rivalries, dissensions, heresies, Envies, inebriations, carousals, and things of that sort. . . . But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, magnanimity, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, Gentleness, self-mastery; against such things there is no law. . . . If we live in spirit, let us also be aligned with spirit. (Galatians 5:16–25)[73]

On one side there is the way of the world: the way of the flesh that is enslaved to the desires of the body and therefore a form of self-worship. The other side of the divide is represented by the way of righteousness: the way of the spirit that honors God by honoring other people, a habit attained through a systematic denial of the self. In the previous passage, Paul suggests that Christians are to strive to leave behind the world of the flesh and entirely embody a spiritual ethos. But Paul also notes that due to their power, people capitulate to the demands of the flesh. Indeed, Paul himself confesses that even he endures the constant tension of this inner divide:

> For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am fleshly, having been sold in subjection to sin. Because I do not know what it is that I accomplish; because what I wish, this I do not do; instead, what I hate, this I do. . . . For I know that in me—that is, in my flesh—dwells nothing good; for it is in me to will, but not to accomplish, the good; For I do not do the good I wish; instead, the evil I do not wish, this I do. . . . But I see a different Law in my bodily members warring against the Law of my mind and taking me captive by the law of sin that is in my members. I am a man in torment—who will deliver me from this body of death? (Romans 7:14–19, 23–25)[74]

The divide of the spirit and the flesh is a rhetorical divide that relates to both logos and ethos. The writing indulges in a bold, boastful style but only because the bodily absence of the author ensures that he cannot resort to deeds and behavior as the primary appeal to the audience. In contrast, when present with his audience in the flesh, the fruits of the spirit (action and deeds such as those described in the passage from Galatians) can serve as the primary means to demonstrate the Christian spiritual ethos. Thus the contrast between the parrhesiastic style of the writing and the weakness of the speech and the body is a dramatization of the whole of the Christian

ethos. Both sides of the divide are essential for the integrated Christian self: to constantly abide in the spirit is to be perfect, and to be perfect is to have no need of a Savior. But without its spiritual counterpart, the parrhesiastic boldness is an impious glorification of the self—one more way of walking in the flesh like the Gentiles.

This reading of stylized rhetorical discourse as an extension of the flesh (and therefore of the Hellenistic world) is borne out by the many invectives that Paul aims at the art of persuasion. In the first letter to the Corinthians, he acknowledges the importance of speech for his work, even while he dismisses the use of rhetoric:

> For the Anointed gave me a mission not to baptize, but rather to proclaim the good tidings—not in sophisticated speech, lest the cross of the Anointed be made void. For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, while to those who are being saved it is God's power for us. For it has been written: "I will bring ruin to the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will thwart." Where is the wise man? Where the scribe? Where the dialectician of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the cosmos? For since, in God's wisdom, the cosmos did not know God by wisdom, God thought it well to save the faithful by the foolishness of a proclamation. Since Judeans ask for signs while Greeks seek wisdom, And we proclaim the crucified Anointed One—both a stumbling block to Judeans and a folly to the Gentiles. (1 Corinthians 1:17–23)

Here, Paul clarifies that he is in the process of articulating a wholly new ethos—not simply for himself but as a prototype of an entirely new mode of being in the world. The description of this new ethos standardizes and shapes the process of Christian metanoic transformation. Badiou notes that this passage names three separate ethos: the Jew, the Greek, and the Christian. These three identities are correlated with three distinct actions. The Jews *demand* evidence of the divine will, the Greeks solipsistically *pursue* knowledge through the dialectical exchange, but the Christians *proclaim* the truth of Christ's resurrection.[75] In other words, the three modes of being are typified by actions that represent distinct epistemological positions: the Jews live in uncertainty and wait for the truth to be *revealed*; the Greeks remain unenlightened, but they seek truth in confidence that it is within the grasp of the philosopher; and the Christian knows the truth by revelation and, by duty,

works to disseminate it. This evangelism—the central work of the Christian life—is explicitly framed as a communicative rhetorical task.

Through the narrative of Paul's conversion in Acts and his own epistolary, Paul accomplishes two major things: he both creates a persistent model for Christian metanoic transformation and defines the ethos that is the culminating product of that process. To simplify, the transformation occurs as a momentary rupture between the individual's worldly past and the momentary recognition in the present of that past as *sinful*. The possibility of this recognition presumes a higher moral authority, embodied by God—the earlier rejection of this authority is the basis of the regretful pathos that animates the metanoia. The convert stands convicted before the divine, but through the sacrifice of Christ, he is redeemed. This redemption is also subsumed under the logic of the exchange: in return, the convert must break with the old way of life, reject the primacy of the self, and submit to the spiritual life that rejects the ways of the flesh. Embarking on the new life, the faithful adopt a new mission of spreading the truth of individual salvation—a rhetorical task that centralizes speech and action as the primary ways of signifying the authenticity of the rebirth. Although Paul's prototype would have enormous staying power in following millennia, the modes of Christian metanoia would multiply in the centuries following his death.

Varieties of Metanoia in the First Christian Millennium

The founding of the church at Rome in the first century ensured that the rituals surrounding the performance of personal rebirth became increasingly standardized. The writing of Josephus, born in the immediate aftermath of Jesus's crucifixion, shows that major changes were already afoot in the common understanding of repentance. In *Antiquities of the Jews*, where he historicizes the events of the Old Testament, Josephus often departs from the LXX's usage of words like *epistrophe* that connote some kind of "turning." Instead, he consistently uses variations of *metanoia* to signify the repentance of the Hebrews.[76] Whether this is due to an immediate influence of Christian theology on Jewish discourse is uncertain, but it certainly indicates that the emergence of *metanoia* as a term of art was not limited to Christian circles in the first century.

Beginning in the first century and continuing at least until the Reformation, there were two major concerns that animated the writing on metanoia.

First, the problems of knowledge, truth, belief, and falsehood received much attention. In keeping with the etymology of the word, Christian thinkers increasingly saw metanoia as an epistemological phenomenon: the event of personal transformation involved recognizing the claims of Christianity as true. The particular form of truth that metanoic conversion embraced was not what we might call a "personal" or "subjective" or "emotional" truth in the twenty-first century. Rather, Christians understood the veracity of scripture as an objective, universal truth that anyone *could* arrive at if they considered the evidence. The epistemological concern gave rise to the second major concern in early Christian writing on metanoia: authenticity. In Greek philosophical circles, the role of knowledge in enlightenment was of great importance. But there was comparatively little concern over the authenticity of philosophical conversion: if people claimed to have a secret knowledge when they did not, this had few consequences for others. Plato's *Gorgias*, in which Socrates demonstrates the illegitimacy of the Sophists' claims to knowledge, shows the consequences of inauthentic philosophical enlightenment, which mostly amounts to mockery and derision. But the truth claims of Christianity were different: if one falsely professed a knowledge of the truth, this was an assault on God himself. Christians claimed an exclusive knowledge to a universal truth. Their evangelism promised to provide access to this truth, which in turn offered eternal salvation. Because Christians were attempting to build a community around these ideas, inauthentic converts could only ensure an inauthentic community. Therefore, both concerns (knowledge and authenticity) were addressed in the same way: the development of routinized strategies by which new converts performed their knowledge of the truth and their willingness to manifest the truth in keeping with the values of the Christian community.

Even before Josephus, the Jewish philosopher Philo was using the Greek word *metanoia* to discuss penitential rituals. In his tract *On the Virtues*, he includes a chapter on repentance that perfectly illustrates the way that personal transformation requires discourse that testifies to knowledge of spiritual truth and signifies the authenticity of the personal change. He explains that repentance "exhort[s] men to *practice sincerity* and to reject pride, and to cling *to truth* and simplicity, those most necessary virtues that, above all others, contribute to happiness; forsaking all the fabulous inventions of foolish men, which their parents, and nurses, and instructors, and innumerable other persons with who them have been associated, have from their earliest infancy impressed upon their tender souls, implanting in

them inextricable errors concerning the knowledge of the most excellent of all things."[77] Here, Philo names a particular sort of knowledge, one that he later demands converts authenticate through both speech and behavior:

> Moreover, Moses delivers to us very beautiful exhortations to repentance [μετάνοιαν], by which he teaches us to *alter our way of life*, changing from an irregular and disorderly course into a better line of conduct; for he says that this task is not one of any excessive difficulty, . . . but it is near us, abiding, in fact, in three portions of us, namely, in our mouths, and our hearts, and our hands; by symbols, that is to say, in our words, and counsels and actions; for the mouth is the symbol of speech, and the heart of counsels, and the hand of actions.[78]

Clearly, rhetoric plays a central role in verifying new converts and integrating them into the structure of the community.

Justin Martyr provides another example of an early Christian writer for whom knowledge and truth play a key role in metanoia. In his *Dialogue with Trypho* (from the mid-second century), the author tells Trypho, a young Hebrew, of how he became a Christian. Martyr's explanation offers an explicit discussion of the relation between philosophical conversion and Christian transformation. He begins by noting that philosophy is "precious in the sight of God" and explains his youthful desire to pursue philosophy as a way of life.[79] But studying with his first master left him disenchanted: "When I first desired to contact one of these philosophers, I placed myself under the tutelage of a certain Stoic. After some time with him and learning nothing new about God (for my instructor had no knowledge of God, nor did he consider such knowledge necessary),[80] I left him and turned to a Peripatetic who considered himself an astute teacher. After a few days with him, he demanded that we settle the matter of my tuition fee in such a way that our association would not be unprofitable to him. Accordingly, I left him."[81] Clearly, Martyr's search was not for any old kind of enlightenment: he was looking for a particular episteme—a knowledge about God. After the Peripatetic, he went to a Pythagorean who ultimately dismissed him for his ignorance (presumably the very condition he came to the Pythagorean to address). Finally, he approaches a Platonist and believes he has found an intellectual home: "The perception of incorporeal things quite overwhelmed me and the Platonic theory of ideas added wings to my mind, so that in a short time I imagined myself a wise man. So great was my folly that I fully

expected to immediately gaze upon God, for this is the goal of Plato's philosophy."[82] But the face of God was not revealed. Effectively, Martyr ran the gamut of philosophy that the Hellenistic world had to offer but found no enlightenment.

One day, sitting by the seashore, taking a break from study, Martyr is surprised by an encounter with an old man. He engages him in conversation and the man manages to confound Martyr on some critical points related to Platonic philosophy: the old man asks questions that Plato did not seem to have an answer for. Further, he claims that the real philosophers were the Old Testament prophets, noting that "they alone knew the truth and communicated it to men," and that "in their writings they gave no proof at that time of their statements, for, as reliable witnesses of the truth, they were beyond proof; but the happenings that have taken place and are now taking place force you to believe their words."[83] The old man claims knowledge of a truth: one accessible to Martyr, but also one that does not seem to conform to the formal evidentiary criteria of mere philosophy. Even though the whole of the truth is "beyond proof," hearers are nevertheless called to "believe." Finally, Martyr says his spirit "was immediately set on fire, and an affection for the prophets, and for those who are friends of Christ, took hold of me; while pondering his words, I discovered that his was the only sure and useful philosophy. Thus it is that I am now a philosopher."[84] Here, he describes a momentary, immediate metanoia. But it is a rational one: he realizes that it was not that philosophy could not enlighten him—it was that what he had encountered was not authentic philosophy; its truth claims were untrue. In the wake of this conversion, only Christianity remains as the sole universal philosophy, one equally accessible to Martyr's auditor Trypho: "Thus, if you have any regard for your own welfare and for the salvation of your soul, and if you believe in God, you may have the chance, since I know you are no stranger to this matter, of attaining knowledge of the Christ of God, and, after becoming a Christian, of enjoying a happy life."[85]

There are a handful of other second-century texts that connect the problem of metanoic authenticity with rhetoric. The author of the second pseudepigraphic letter of Clement worries about what an inauthentic performance of metanoia might convey to people outside the faith: "And so brothers, now at last we should repent and be alert for the good. For we are filled with great foolishness and evil. We should wipe our former sins away from ourselves; and if we repent from deep within we will be saved. We should not be crowd-pleasers nor wish to please only ourselves, but

through our righteous activity we should be pleasing as well to those outside the fold, that the name not be blasphemed because of us."[86] In *The Shepherd of Hermas* (sometimes called *The Pastor of Hermas*), the text is comprised of words spoken to Hermas by the angel of repentance, who cautions him against artificial displays of remorse: "And so guard this commandment as I have spoken it to you, that your repentance and that of your household may be found to be in simplicity—and pure, innocent, and blameless."[87] Here, the angel prescribes a rhetorically unadorned, parrhesiastic mode of metanoia. He goes on to connect this plainness with God's truth, which needs no ornamentation. At this, Hermas begins to cry. Asked by the angel for the cause of this, Hermas expresses doubt for his own salvation as a result of his rhetorical schemes: "I have never in my entire life spoken a true word, but have always lived craftily with everyone, and portrayed my lie as truth to all. And no one has ever contradicted me, but has trusted my word."[88] Consoling him, the angel tells him that Hermas's remorseful confession of his manipulations stands in as a rhetorical metanoia because it effectively takes back the earlier speech and replaces it with "thoughts [that] are good and true."[89] Tertullian serves as a final example of the concern over authenticity, acknowledging that a cunning performance of piety can trick someone into believing false claims of repentance. He writes,

> I do not deny that the divine benefaction, I mean the forgiveness of sins, is absolutely assured to those who will enter the water [and be baptized]; they must make an effort, however, to succeed in getting there. And who will oblige you, a man so renegade to repentance, with a single dash of any water at all? It is easy, of course, to approach it dishonestly, and to cause the one who is in charge of this affair to be deceived by your protestations, but God guards His treasure and He will not permit the unworthy to take it by surprise.[90]

In effect, Tertullian cautions ministers against baptizing someone with a disingenuous repentance but also notes that such a baptism would not be recognized by God anyway.

Metanoia also gets a fair amount of attention in the more pagan mystic texts of the first and second centuries. Texts such as *The Tablet* (also called *The Picture* or *The Greek Pilgrim's Progress*), attributed to Cebes, and the *Hermetic Corpus*, attributed to Hermes Trismegistus (a composite demigod figure with roots in Egyptian and Greek lore), are more stylistically similar

to Greek philosophical texts than the early Christian works mentioned previously. They, too, express a latent concern with authenticity, but in contrast to the Christian texts, in these texts the meaning of authenticity *is* epistemic: to live authentically is to have a true knowledge of the nature of the world. In a chapter of the *Hermetic Corpus*, the wise Trismegistus is visited by a divine figure who calls himself "Poimandres, the Mind of Sovereignty."[91] As an ancient mysticism, Hermeticism is somewhat unique in its belief in a single divine unity governing all things. Poimandres promises to teach Trismegistus "the things that are, [to] understand their nature, and get knowledge of God."[92] Immediately upon speaking these words, Trismegistus relays that "*all things changed* in aspect before me, and were opened out in a moment. And I beheld a boundless view; *all was changed* into light, a mild and joyous light; and I marvelled when I saw it."[93] Here, it is Poimandres's speech, testifying that he will reveal the truth, that brings about a powerful metanoic experience for Trismegistus. After the mysteries are revealed to him, he is sent out by Poimandres to share his new knowledge with others. He does, and issues his hearers a warning: "Repent [μετανοήσατε], ye who have journeyed with Error, and joined company with ignorance; rid yourselves of darkness, and lay hold on the Light; partake of immortality, forsaking corruption."[94] The reason for the metanoia he advises is not evil deeds; rather, it is the false knowledge that results in evil deeds.

The epistemic characterization of metanoia is repeated in *The Tablet*, another pseudepigraphic text purportedly written by Socrates's student Cebes. At a temple of Saturn, a group of friends look at a tablet at the front of the temple. It depicts a picture that seems to beg interpretation: it "contain[s] certain peculiar words, whose significance we were not able to fathom."[95] An old man approaches and offers to decrypt the meaning of the image for them. From the outset, the aim of the interpretation is to unlock the tablet's secret knowledge, which in turn has ramifications for one's way of life: the old man tells them if they "understand and assimilate what [he] should say, [they] shall become wise and happy; but if not, [they] will live badly, having become foolish, unfortunate, bitter and ignorant."[96] The man proceeds to interpret the image, which represents a metaphysical journey toward wisdom. Various virtues, vices, and emotions are personified on the tablet, such as Delusion, False Opinion, and Sorrow. By being led astray down the path of False Opinion and vice, the pilgrim comes to reside with Punishment, Sorrow, Grief, Lamentation, and Despair, thus "he ekes out his existence in every misery unless, indeed, to him unexpectedly, Repentance [Metanoia],

having planned it, should meet him."[97] At this point in the narrative, the character of Metanoia becomes the pilgrim's usher from ignorance to knowledge. It is of note that Metanoia's appearance is not a product of any willful action on the part of the sorrowful pilgrim—the arrival of Repentance is part of a design in which the agent is Repentance herself.

The old man continues:

> "Well, what happens, should Repentance chance to meet him? She releases him from his evils, and associates him with another Opinion-and-Desire, who will lead him to genuine Culture—though indeed he might just as well be misled even then to Sham-Culture."
>
> "Well, what happens then?"
>
> "In the case," said he, "that he is taken in charge by this Right-Opinion who will lead him to genuine Culture, he is, on being purified, by her saved, so that his life grows blissful and happy;—otherwise, again he wanders, to be deceived by Sham-Culture."[98]

The role of Metanoia in the story is to lead the pilgrim on the tablet to salvation, but the salvation is mediated by the Right-Opinion as to the true nature of reality: in other words, the salvation is an epistemic one, located in this world, rather than a transcendence that cannot be described via recourse to reason. In turn, upon Metanoia's introduction of the pilgrim to Right-Opinion, the latter leads him to genuine Culture, who guarantees reformed behavior. The fact that False Opinion looks so much like Right-Opinion, and Sham-Culture is so easily confused with genuine Culture, indicates the ways that the problems of knowledge and authenticity are linked.

Writing in Asia Minor (probably) in the fifth century, Mark the Monk synthesizes knowledge of the truth, rhetorical performance of transformation, and authenticity as the essence of the Christian ethos—the identity conducive to salvation by Jesus Christ. He writes, "If the person who is merciful receives mercy, then it is repentance, I believe, that holds together the whole cosmos."[99] And for Mark, metanoia is not a momentary phenomenon but is an unceasing way of being in the world for all the faithful, *regardless of their worldly* ethos, which is supplanted by their identification of Christ as Savior: "It follows that for both those who are great and those who are not, repentance is unfinished until death. Even if we are unable to achieve it in practice until then, we ought to practice it as an aim."[100] Here, Mark advances metanoia as *practice*—something difficult, but *doable*—an action.

And he seems to tolerate a mere performance of metanoia on the grounds that an inauthentic metanoia is superior to a nonexistent one. The connections between metanoia, ethos, episteme, and authenticity are richly depicted in Augustine's *Confessions*.

The Eternal Second: Augustine's Turmoil and Transformation

Raised in the waning of the Roman Empire by a Christian mother and a pagan father, Augustine always had a foot in both worlds. This is a tension that mirrors the conflict between the flesh and the spirit in the writing of Paul the Apostle: the fleshy life of the Roman world with its ethic of power and its aesthetics of the body against the Christian spiritual ideal that demands a rejection of the world and an ethic of submission. Although Augustine had always been a seeker, up until his conversion he lived more in the world of the flesh, professing the cunning art of rhetoric and applying his skills in persuasion to the work of sexual seduction. The metanoia of Augustine of Hippo was a paradox: it was a passive event and an agentive act; it was both the product of a long process and a mystical moment. If Paul's conversion offered a prototype for Christian transformation, Augustine's demonstrated the range of ways that the new identity comes into being. Rhetorician James Murphy has noted that in some sense, Augustine's movement toward Christianity was synonymous with his movement away from rhetoric—a field of study that was the main area of his expertise until his conversion.[101] His resignation of his professorship in rhetoric was perhaps the culminating event of his conversion, a transformation that was the result of years of intellectual and spiritual turmoil. As Dave Tell has noted, rhetorical scholars have had difficulty squaring Augustine's rejection of rhetoric with the reality that he is indisputably a major figure in the development of rhetoric in the late Roman era.[102]

While most scholars have pursued a strategy of "containment," isolating Augustine's criticism of rhetoric from the insights offered in a text like *On Christian Doctrine*, Tell gives a rereading of Augustine's dismissal of the art of persuasion. He suggests that this rejection was not a rejection of rhetoric as much as it was an attack on the loquacious manner of "professing" prominent among advocates of Manichaeism, a prevalent form of heretical Christian worship with which Augustine was associated prior to his metanoia. Therefore, Tell proposes, the rejection was "an act undertaken on behalf of

rhetoric itself," "an affirmation of his belief in rhetoric" as a key tool in the dissemination of the truth of Christianity.[103] It seems to me that while Tell's essay is a valuable analysis of Augustine's relation to rhetoric, ultimately it is just one more way to explain away a problem that is not really a problem.

Many rhetoricians (including Tell) either cannot confront Augustine's antipathy for rhetoric, or they cannot admit that it is, in fact, antipathy. Why must we either ignore his disdain or reinvent the disdain as an affirmation? In *The Confessions*, Augustine treats the empty verbiage of the Manichees separately from the study of rhetoric. This is not to say that they are not connected—they are. But it is to say that they are not the same thing, and Augustine is critical of both. Rather than explaining the criticism away in one fashion or another, rhetoricians are better served trying to understand why such a skilled rhetorician would offer an intellectually grounded, unequivocal rejection of rhetoric. Toward the end of his article, Tell gets close to such an understanding: he asserts the rhetorical value of *The Confessions* on the grounds that Augustine gives a thorough depiction of "the union between modes of subjectivity and modes of speech."[104] Put differently, there is a unique relationship between logos, style, and ethos. But while Tell sees speech as an effect of a particular mode of subjectivity, I argue that the opposite is also true: one's ethos is also an effect of one's speech. Beyond this insight, *The Confessions* is a valuable rhetorical artifact because it is performative metanoic testimony—Augustine narrates his transformation as a rhetorical process, and the resulting narrative serves to authenticate his conversion in the mind of the audience.

Early in the text, Augustine links his skill in speaking with the type of person that he was at nineteen:

> The end to which my studies (which were deemed "respectable") were directed was "disputatious trials."[105] I was supposed to master these subjects—and the better I was at deceiving, the more praiseworthy I was. How great is the blindness of those who even boast about their being blind! I was top of the class in the rhetor's schoolroom. I reveled in my arrogance, I was puffed up with pride. . . . [A]t that vulnerable age, I was mastering works of rhetoric. I was desperate to excel on account of the pleasures of human vanity—what a conceited, damnable course of action![106]

And yet, even at that time, Augustine could not fully identify with his classmates who were constantly on the rhetorical attack: "I lived among them,

but with a kind of brazen embarrassment, for I was not one of them."[107] Not long after, Augustine considered himself "converted" and yet untransformed. Thus he separates the epistemic recognition of truth from the ontic becoming-someone-else. Speaking to himself in frustration, he asks: "Why do you go astray and follow your flesh? Let your flesh follow you, now that you have converted. Whatever you sense by means of the soul is partial, and you do not know the whole of which these are parts, and yet they delight you."[108] Here, the reader is called to remember the Pauline division between the flesh and the spirit. Augustine seems to suggest that a true transformation would mean a transcending of this division—a notable difference from Paul's account of his identity after metanoia. The possibility of a transformation beyond the epistemic aspects of conversion is underscored as Augustine speaks to God later in book 4:

> But I was trying to reach you and I kept being rebuffed by you so that I would have to taste death, for you resist the proud. What could be more arrogant than for me, in my incredible folly, to declare that I was by nature the same as you are? For although I was *mutable*, a fact that was obvious to me because I undoubtedly longed to be wise, and thus to *change* from a worse state to a better, I preferred nonetheless to believe that you were subject to change, rather than that I was not what you are.[109]

Augustine is *trying*—metanoia seems to be an agentive act that he seeks to accomplish. And yet God confounds his aims, in part because he is so convinced of his own prowess. Further, by equating his pursuit of wisdom with his quest for a new ethos, he concludes that an ontological reinvention must be possible, if only because an epistemic one clearly is.

The conflict between worldly knowledge and spiritual rebirth is dramatized in Augustine's struggle with rhetoric. He is quite impressed by the public conversion testimony of Victorinus, another African rhetorician. New Christians had to make a public profession of faith, but Augustine notes that the religious authorities would allow a private ceremony for those who might shrink before a large audience. He hears that Victorinus was offered this option, "But he preferred to declare that he was saved in the sight of the whole company of saints. After all, he had not usually taught salvation in rhetoric, and he had still professed that subject before the people. How much less, then, should he fear the reactions of your peaceable people when

declaring your word, after he had no fear of raging crowds when relying only on words of his own!"[110] Augustine takes note of the crowd's enthusiastic response, linking the truthful, public, testimonial speech of Victorinus with the new identity he proclaimed. Throughout book 8, the discord between the truth Augustine believes and the way that he lives grows progressively more painful. He cannot bring himself to change, but he cannot *not* change. In describing this phenomenon, he uses images that evoke a person being turned inside out. One particular passage seems to mix the metaphors of metanoia and epistrophe:

> Lord, you were wrenching me *back toward myself*, taking me away from the place behind my back where I had set myself while I was refusing to look properly at myself. And you placed me before my eyes so that I could see how vile I was, how deformed and filthy, how besmirched and full of sores. And I did see, and was horrified, and I had nowhere to run away from myself. But if I tried *to turn* my gaze away from myself . . . once again you set me against myself and impressed me upon my own eyes, so that I would find out my own sin and hate it. I knew it all right, but I was pretending I did not, and was suppressing and forgetting it.[111]

The metanoic qualities here are obvious—the sense of self-disdain and regret for sin. But he literally does not know where to turn. Is the solution a 180-degree turn away from the self as hopelessly defective? Or, in turning him "back toward [him]self" is God moving him a full 360 degrees so that the essential, repentant Augustine can become the person he was always meant to be?

The duality that Augustine suffers was not a momentary phenomenon; in fact, he felt rather frozen in the present, forever anticipating the future self: "In every direction you made it clear that you were speaking the truth, and I was convicted by your truth, and there was absolutely nothing I could say in reply excepting only slothful, sleepy words: 'In a moment,' 'Look, just wait a moment,' 'Give me just a second.' As for 'in a moment, yes a moment,' the moment never came, and as for 'give me a second,' that second just went on and on."[112] Further, he is aware that he himself must be an active agent in his transformation, which will be a process of effacing his present ethos: "I was the one who was willing, but I was also the one who was unwilling: It all came down to me. . . . So I was in conflict with myself, and my very identity was disintegrating, and the actual disintegration was in fact taking

place quite against my will."[113] But this passage also shows that there was some dimension of the metanoic process that was beyond his control, guided by the will of God. As Augustine approaches the culminating moment of his progressive transformation, his agency is incrementally diminished as God's role increases. He notes that his "unwillingness" is due to a full awareness that his transformation requires an unconditional self-destruction:

> I was twisting and turning in my chains, until they were utterly broken; until then they were restraining me, but only just. And you, Lord, pressed on in my innermost being with your relentless mercy. You redoubled the lashes of fear and shame to stop me from giving up again, from keeping that thin remaining link of chain unbroken. . . . I was hesitating dying to death and living to life, for habitual wrongdoing had more power over me than goodness, which was unfamiliar. The closer that moment came, *that point in time when I was to become different*, the more it made me shiver with dread.[114]

This existential crisis reaches its pinnacle in the minutes prior to the metanoic moment.

Sitting in the garden, crying and in turmoil, Augustine prays for an immediate transformation: "'How long? How long must it be 'tomorrow' and 'tomorrow'? Why not 'now'? Why not an end to my degradation from this very moment?" Miraculously, his prayer is answered at that "very moment."

> And look!—from the house next door I hear a voice—I don't know whether it is a boy or a girl—singing some words over and over: 'Pick it up and read it, pick it up and read it!' *Immediately my expression transformed*. I started to ask myself eagerly whether it was common for children to chant such words when they were playing a game of some kind. I could not recall ever having heard anything quite like it. I checked my tears and got up. I understood it as nothing short of divine providence that I was being ordered to open the book and read the first passage I came across.[115]

Right away, Augustine runs inside to grab the copy of Paul's letter to the Romans that he had been reading: "I snatched it up, opened it, and read silently the first chapter that my eyes lit upon: 'Not in partying and drunkenness, not in promiscuity and shamelessness, not in fighting and jealousy,

but clothe yourself in the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh concerning its physical desires.' I neither wanted nor needed to read further. *Immediately, the end of the sentence was like a light of sanctuary poured into my heart; every shadow of doubt melted away*."[116] And so, having completed his long metanoic process in a single transformative moment, he became someone else.

There are important parallels between Paul's experience and Augustine's—discourse plays a unique role in both. They each hear a disembodied voice to signal the imminent transformation. Further, the voice that Augustine hears points him to a text—a text by none other than Paul, the originator of the Christian metanoic type. That both men are called into a dialogue prior to the transformation signals the importance of rhetoric and persuasion in metanoia. And yet Augustine's transformation is not merely a reiteration of Paul's. In Paul's experience, the experience of conversion is synonymous with metanoia—they happen simultaneously, in a moment over which Paul has no control. In contrast, Augustine accedes to the truth claims of Christianity long before the metanoic emergence of the new self. The new self only arrives after a long, rational process of deliberation in which Augustine played an active role. But when the metanoic transformation occurs, Augustine takes a more passive role. It is over in an instant, marking the termination of the long process of conversion. Shortly after his transformation, Augustine gives up his career in rhetoric. But the paradoxical nature of his conversion multiplied the rhetorical forms of Christian conversion over the centuries leading up to the Reformation.

The Reformation as Institutional Metanoia: The Global Transformation of the Christian Church

As the Catholic church consolidated its institutional and political power, the Middle Ages brought increasingly standardized rituals of penance. The details of these practices can be found in Thomas Tentler's enduring book *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation*, but penance came to be synonymous with its outward display: repentance was the set of verbal, gestural, emotional, and bodily signs by which one signified metanoia. The selling of indulgences embodied the height of the empty formalism of repentance. Among devout believers like Martin Luther, there was a growing frustration that repentance had been reduced to rhetorical performance (in the worst

sense of the term). In other words, church reformers were concerned that metanoia had been decoupled from ethos—the signs of repentance had minimal connection to a certain *way of being*. The *Ninety-Five Theses* is a direct response to the problem of metanoia in the church. Luther begins the treatise by referencing the scriptural passages in which Christ explicitly frames metanoia as a spiritual state of being:

1. When our Lord and Teacher Jesus Christ said, "Repent, etc.," he meant that the *entire life of believers be a life of repentance*.
2. Jesus's saying does not refer to the sacrament of penance (that is, confession and satisfaction as administered by priests).
3. And it does not mean inner repentance only—mere internal repentance is useless if it does not produce external self-control of one's selfish desires.
4. Therefore, the penalty for sin endures so long as the hatred of self lasts (which is true internal repentance) until we enter the Kingdom of Heaven.[117]

Luther's revolutionary insight was that metanoia is not an *action* done in a church. It is not even an inner feeling, although that is a part of it. Metanoia means an enduring self-hatred that manifests in a change of personal behavior—a change in personal identity.

In short, what we call "The Reformation" was an instance of institutional metanoia—the church became something else. But the reformers saw their recommendations as a means to *return* to the essence of the Christian message as it was articulated in the Gospels, a message that was compromised by the political exercise of church authority. In that sense, the Reformation can also be understood as an epistrophic transformation, a return to the first principles of the faith in which the institutional interests of the church were secondary to the personal conviction of the individual in relation to the deity. This is reflected in the unique position of Calvin, one of the few early reformers who saw no necessary role at all for the verbalization of repentance: "the person who fails to confess by mouth is nevertheless truly penitent, repentance can exist without confession."[118] He goes on to explain that the so-called Sophists require an oral testimony of sin only so that they can arbitrate who is forgiven—a concern that belongs to God alone.[119] And yet, Calvin agrees with Luther that the essence of metanoia is a disdainful relation of the self to the self. Faith, which Calvin says is prior to repentance,

forces the sinner to recognize his sin. Consequently, the Christian "inwardly abhors himself" and "wishes he were different."[120] This wish is fulfilled in the form of repentance, "a true turning of our life to follow God and the path which he shows us, a turning produced by a genuine and unfeigned fear of God, and consisting in mortification of our flesh and of the old man, and in vivification by the Spirit."[121] Importantly, though, this turning is not an agentive act or a conscious decision on the part of the penitent: rather, "the Spirit of God *transforms* our souls by filling them with his holiness, and when he directs them toward *new thoughts and feelings*, so that they may be said *to be different to what they were before*."[122]

One example of a conversion narrative from the Reformation is Bunyan's *Grace Abounding*. Bunyan was a Puritan living in the seventeenth century. The book catalogs his youthful period of sin and then many years of vacillation between faith, doubt, and indifference. The idea that one can repeat metanoia or repentance is a defining feature of the Reformation. During the first millennium of the church, it was thought that metanoia and the change that it brings could only occur once. This reflected the concern over authenticity: if one returned to sinful ways after professing a conversion, the conversion was counterfeit. Calvin recognizes that even after conversion, Christian life is a cycle of sin, remorse, and forgiveness. Christ, he says, is a "perpetual advocate," "a perpetual propitiation by which sins are continually purged."[123] In his preface, Bunyan (like Augustine) adopts a parrhesiastic mode of telling his story:

> I could have enlarged much in my discourse of my temptations and troubles for sin. . . . I could also have stept [*sic*] into a stile much higher then [*sic*] this in which I have here discoursed, and could have adorned all things more then [*sic*] here I have seemed to do: but I dare not: God did not play in convincing of me; the Devil did not play in tempting of me; neither did I play when I sunk as into a bottomless pit, when the pangs of hell caught hold upon me: wherefore I may not play in my relating of them, but be plain and simple, and lay down the thing as it was.[124]

Again, there is a link between logos and ethos: the simple style of the words he uses helps accomplish the identity formation: in fashioning the text, Bunyan fashions the Christian self. Further, rhetoric is characterized as a kind of play, which echoes the Augustinian critique of persuasion.

By the seventeenth century, the opposition between a high rhetorical style and Christian truth had become a trope. Making use of this trope is one way that Bunyan signifies the authenticity of his transformation. He makes a point of noting that among his earlier sins was a rhetorical craftiness, one present even in contexts related to religion. Still in his sins, but learning much about the faith, Bunyan overhears a group of women discussing "the things of God."[125] He decides to insert himself into the conversation: "I was now a brisk talker also my self in the matters of Religion: but now I must say, *I heard, but I understood not*, for they were far above out of my reach, for their talk was about a new birth."[126] The women are explicitly discussing their respective conversions: "they talked how God had visited their souls, . . . they reasoned of the suggestions and temptations of Satan in particular, and told each other by which they had been afflicted, and how they were born up under his assaults: they also discoursed of their own wretchedness of heart, of their unbelief, and did contemn, slight and abhor their own righteousness, as filthy, and insufficient to do them any good."[127] Here, the ladies retrospectively consider their earlier sinfulness but note that even after their conversion they are still fighting their own sin. This reflects the ongoing self-disdain that lies at the center of Reformed metanoia. The retrospective aspect of their conversation is a model for Bunyan in that it serves to signify the substitutive nature of metanoia: only the new self can look at the past and understand its filthiness. The reformed Bunyan offers retrospective reflection on how their talk struck him, showing that his old self could not even conceive of its sinfulness: "At this I felt my own heart begin to shake, as mistrusting my condition to be naught; for I saw that in all my thoughts about Religion and Salvation, the New birth did never enter into my mind, neither knew I the comfort of the Word and Promise, nor the deceitfulness and treachery of my own wicked heart."[128]

Like Paul and Augustine, Bunyan also hears a divine voice, but in keeping with the progressive back-and-forth nature of Reformation metanoia, he does not heed it. After a sermon warning against not observing the sabbath, he decides to spend his sabbath day playing games with companions in the street. Then it happened: "I was in the midst of a game at Cat, and having struck it one blow from the hole; just as I was about to strike it the second time, a voice did suddenly dart from Heaven into my Soul, which said, *Wilt thou leave thy sins, and go to Heaven? Or have thy sins and go to Hell*?"[129] Humorously (but not intentionally so), Bunyan then decides that he has already sinned so much he can never get to Heaven, so he might as well sin as

much as possible. He returns to his game. The intermittence of his metanoia is captured well in one particular passage: "Wherefore I fell to some outward Reformation, both in my words and life, and did set the Commandments before me; . . . yet now and then [I] should break one, and so afflict my conscience; but then I should repent, and say I was sorry for it, and promise God to do better next time, and there get help again."[130] Bunyan's most decisive metanoia is a product of God's intervention, an experience in which "the Lord did more fully and graciously discover himself unto [him]."[131] This transformation also has the quality of an epistrophic return: he says he "was put into [his] right mind again."[132] But even this conversion is not decisive: in a sense, the overarching theme of Bunyan's transformation is his recognition that his perpetual doubt of Christ's grace is just one more sin that is graciously forgiven.

Reformed Metanoia in Multicultural Contexts

These features of Reformation metanoia persisted well into the modern era. In her book on women's conversion narratives in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Brereton shows that the tropes described previously held true in testimony from men, women, and even children. She notes that it was "fairly common" for children as young as seven years old to publicly attest to conversion.[133] She also demonstrates the didactic functions of the narratives: their aim was typically to inculcate metanoia in their audience members, and the formal features of their testimony provided a model for converts to frame accounts of their own transformations.[134]

When the church mediated the practice and ritual of repentance, the experience of Christian conversion was culturally bound: there simply was not the institutional infrastructure to make metanoia accessible to people in societies outside of the West. The Reformation, as a metanoia of the church itself, repositioned the individual as the locus of transformation. This is evidenced in the writing of reformers and protestants such as Luther, Calvin, Bunyan, Campbell, and countless others. Together, they refined a notion of conversion that could operate in places beyond the reach of formal church power. As a result, conversion testimony from all over the world began to reflect the same rhetorical characteristics.

The metanoia of Ohiyesa, a Sioux Indian born in the wilderness of nineteenth-century Minnesota, reflects some of the difficulties that native people

had with the process of conversion. Ohiyesa, more commonly known by his "civilized" name Charles Alexander Eastman, undoubtedly underwent a conversion—but determining what he converted *to* is a matter of some difficulty. Eastman would eventually become a physician with the American Bureau of Indian Affairs. His difficult path to that position is detailed over the course of three autobiographical texts: *Indian Boyhood*, *The Soul of the Indian*, and his most metanoic text, *From the Deep Woods to Civilization*. Eastman's father had some positive encounters with white people, and he decided that Ohiyesa would need to be raised in their ways. The family debates this decision as one regarding the boy's entire way of life—his ethos. His grandmother is strongly opposed because she views white culture as inherently inauthentic, a concern that echoes the discussion of Sham-Culture in Cebes's *Tablet*: "'It is not a true life,' she often said. 'It is a sham. I cannot bear to see my boy live a made-up life.'"[135] But the father points to the commonalities between the cultures, noting that white culture is superior only because of particular practices related to knowledge and discourse. He says, "The white man has a well-grounded religion, and teaches his children the same virtues that our people taught to theirs. The Great Mystery has shown to the red and white man alike the good and evil, from which to choose. I think the way of the white man is better than ours, because he is able to preserve on paper the things he does not want to forget. He records everything—the sayings of his wise men, the laws enacted by his counselors."[136] And so, with his grandmother's warning that he "not get lost on this new trail,"[137] the decision was made that Ohiyesa would leave to go live in white society.

His metanoia, his transformation from Ohiyesa to Eastman, is actually a number of conversions in one: a spiritual transition, a linguistic transition, and a cultural transition. Most of Eastman's writing documents his adaptation to "civilization," but he consistently links the acceptance of Christianity and the initiation to Euro-American life. In *The Soul of the Indian*, Eastman discusses both the merits and the limitations of Christianity in the eyes of the natives: "There was undoubtedly much in primitive Christianity to appeal to [the Indian], and Jesus's hard sayings to the rich and about the rich would have been entirely comprehensible to him. Yet the religion that is preached in our churches and practiced by our congregations, with its element of display and self-aggrandizement, its active proselytism, and its open contempt of all religions but its own, was for a long time extremely repellent."[138] Nevertheless, the first-person plural possessive *our* indicates that

Eastman, at least in a nominal sense, sees himself as belonging to the faith. But throughout his life, he echoes his grandmother's claims of inauthenticity when he discusses the civilized Christian ethos. One example: "As a child, I understood how to give; I had forgotten that grace since I became civilized. I lived the natural life, whereas now I live the artificial. Any pretty pebble was valuable to me then; every growing tree an object of reverence. Now I worship with the white man before a painted landscape whose value is estimated in dollars! *Thus the Indian is reconstructed*, as the natural rocks are ground to powder and made into artificial blocks which may be built into the walls of modern society."[139] And yet, Eastman's conversion is a rare case because it is unequivocally framed as agentive act: Ohiyesa *chose* to be transformed.

After leaving his family and arriving in white society, Eastman comments on the difficulty of the transition: "I hardly think I was ever bored in my life until those first days of boarding school. All day things seemed to come and pass with a wearisome regularity, like walking railway ties—the step was too short for me. At times I felt something of the fascination of the new life, and again there would arise in me a dogged resistance, and a voice seemed to be saying, 'It is cowardly to depart from the old things!'"[140] But after acquiring a job as a farmhand for the summer, Eastman finally made a conscious decision to convert to civilization and to Christianity: "It was here and now that my eyes were opened intelligently to the greatness of Christian civilization, the ideal civilization, as it unfolded itself before my eyes. . . . I renounced finally my bow and arrows for the spade and the pen; I took off my soft moccasins and put on the heavy and clumsy but durable shoes. Every day of my life I put into use every English word that I knew, and for the first time *permitted myself to think and act as a white man*."[141] Some readers may suggest that Eastman's complimenting of white society is merely a rhetorical strategy to win the goodwill of his white audience. This is surely true to an extent. But regardless, his compliments reflect the need for converts to signify the authenticity of their conversion to those within their new community. This particular mode of metanoic testimony was especially difficult for Indians because one way that native Americans showed reverence for personal spiritual truths was to *refrain from uttering them*: "First, the Indian does not speak of these deep matters so long as he believes in them, and when he has ceased to believe he speaks inaccurately and disparagingly. Second, even if he can be induced to speak, the racial and religious prejudice of the other stands in the way of his sympathetic comprehension."[142] In other words, regardless of the

authenticity of his testimony, Eastman's mastery of the tropes of conversion rhetoric are nothing short of remarkable. It seems that reformed Christianity facilitated Indian conversions, if only because it reduced the Catholic emphasis on public testimony and confession.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, China was also a site of much Christian evangelical activity. Both Catholics and Protestants preached the gospel to the indigenous people. Another record of conversion from this period comes from Henry Moule, an Anglican missionary. He wrote *A Narrative of the Conversion of a Chinese Physician* (1868), a text "compiled from journals and letters of Missionaries of the Church Missionary Society at Ningpo, and One of Their Catechists." It tells the tale of Dzing Sinsang and his conversion to Protestant Christianity. The veracity of Moule's account is somewhat questionable: the form of the first part of the text is clearly modeled on a Socratic dialogue—a choice that suggests Moule's cultural background may have determined the choices he made in narrating Dzing's experience. Nevertheless, there is little doubt that Moule was conveying a real conversion that happened at the mission (even if he embellished the details).

Interestingly, Dzing is not converted from some local religion to Christianity—he is "converted" from Catholicism to Protestantism. When the text begins, Dzing arrives unannounced to acquaint himself with a Protestant catechist named Bao, in hopes that he can convert Bao to "the Religion of the Lord in Heaven" (as the text refers to Catholicism). Likely due to the theological conflicts in England around the time of the text's composition, the book advances a fairly polemical critique of Catholicism, exhibited throughout the dialogue between Dzing and Bao. The narrative choice of a dialectical encounter between these men calls to mind the parallels between philosophical and religious models of conversion. The debate surveys a range of theological disagreements on the worship of saints, the supposed divinity of the Virgin Mary, the problems of scriptural translation, and more. One point in the conversation reflects the way that culture can work as a barrier to conversion. Dzing and Bao agree that the most difficult part of converting to Christianity was giving up the Chinese practice of ancestor worship—a practice forbidden for Protestants and Catholics. Dzing confesses his initial resistance to accepting this prohibition: "As to the worshipping of our gods of wood and clay I soon became convinced of the folly of this, but I did not so readily see why the worship of our ancestors was wrong."[143] Immediately, Bao draws a cunning parallel between Catholic veneration of the saints and ancestor worship: "Well, in joining 'the religion of the Lord of Heaven,'

what as to this have you really done? Why, sir, you have actually given up the worship of your own ancestors, and you have substituted for it the worship of the ancestors of these foreigners."[144] By using the term "substituted," Bao hints at the inauthenticity of Dzing's conversion—his metanoia was a false one. Such disagreement on Christian theological matters was much less common prior to the Reformation, especially in places like China, which lay far beyond the cultural boundaries of the Roman church. The widening range of ideas on questions of Christian practice and doctrine allowed for an adaptability to cultures that had been relatively impenetrable for the faith.

Predictably, Bao raises such a challenge to Dzing's Catholic beliefs that it is Dzing who ends up being converted—but this time the metanoia is one that is deemed authentic by the Englishmen at the mission. For a time, they would invite Dzing to be cross-examined by them. Finally, "after giving to them full satisfaction as to the clearness of his views on all essential points of Christian doctrine, and having expressed a strong desire to become a member of our Church, he was formally admitted. On this occasion, in addition to that renunciation of Heathenism which is required by the missionaries from all converts before admission into the Church fellowship, he made before the whole congregation a full and public recantation of the errors of popery."[145] The Western narrator gives some account of how he received Dzing's testimony:

> He told me in the most interesting way his early anxieties about his soul, and how, failing to keep his heart on the philosophical plan [of Confucius], he had tried Buddhism and Taouism with the greatest fervency, and was almost fatally entangled in them, when accidentally (by the grace of the Lord of Heaven, was his view of it), he became acquainted with Christian doctrine according to the Romish system, and after about a year's inquiry was baptized, and had since brought his mother and little son to be baptized also. I found it very difficult then to doubt the sincerity, and I may say the *spirituality* of the man's heart.[146]

Here, we see that the authenticity of Dzing's conversion lies in his mobilization of the major tropes of Christian metanoic testimony: a dissatisfaction with faiths held prior to the conversion, a divine intervention where the convert encounters the Truth, and the willingness to publicly confess the new faith and take part in its rituals.

Some of these tropes are mirrored in Wong Ming-Dao's spiritual autobiography *A Stone Made Smooth*. Wong was born in Peking into "extreme poverty" around 1900.[147] Having "strangled himself," his father was dead before Wong was born.[148] As a young boy, Wong was preoccupied with existential and cosmic questions, and he had an unusually urgent fear of death. Upon asking an uncle if there is any way to cheat death, he is told: "Get away from the world and its cares; give up fame and wealth; deny yourself all pleasure; meditate in a cave; drink the dew on the grass and on the leaves; dig up fungus from the floor of your cave and eat it. By practicing asceticism for a long time you will gradually become an immortal; you will not die."[149] The boy continually asks his uncle to accompany him to the mountains to help him find his cave. But eventually, he learns that even the emperors themselves died. Suspecting a lie, he confronted his uncle, who conceded that everyone must die. This brought about a new outlook for Wong: "I lost hope. No one could comfort me or bring me happiness. Whenever I gave myself to study or spent time in recreation my spirits would rise, but whenever I thought of human mortality, I became conscious of bitter pain."[150]

Although Wong had been to Christian church services with his mother (likely due to the social services provided by the European missions), his family was not Christian. His conversion came at fourteen when an older student at school became a mentor to Wong. Through their conversations on Christianity, "God saved" Wong.[151] This passive conversion brought about a transformation of his fatalistic ethos: "My life and my attitudes were vastly changed. . . . I began to hate all sin and unrighteousness. . . . I became unhappy about my unsatisfactory manner of life. I hated all the wicked things I had said to my fellow-pupils and all the wicked things I had done." His metanoia is decidedly incremental: "I was completely different. . . . I often confessed my sin to God. I made many resolutions and I experienced many failures. I fell and I got up again; I got up and I fell again."[152] But he made steady progress in the faith and eventually became a preacher. This new ethos was such a departure from his earlier mode of being that he changed his name from Yong-Shung to Ming-Dao: his translation of the new name is "truth-teller"—a tribute to the role of parrhesiastic testimony in his work. Indeed, Wong's conviction is that the world at large stands in need of metanoia: "The general level o[f] morality gets lower and lower. What the world needs today is a man of virtue, power and determination, who will devote himself to *the transformation of the human heart*."[153]

Like so many conversions of the Christian metanoic type, rhetoric played an important role in Wong's work. He suggests that he is performatively transformed *through his spoken testimony*—testimony that takes on a certain eloquence and power through its parrhesiastic simplicity:

> Some say that I am eloquent, but what they say is incorrect. My associates can testify that in ordinary conversation I am neither fluent nor clever; in fact I sometimes betray a slight stammer. . . . When I am speaking in the ordinary way, apart from enunciating clearly and using a resonant voice, my speech has no particular excellence, *but when it comes to preaching it is as if my mouth and tongue are transformed*. . . . Literature is not my forte. Poetry, songs, verse, stories, not one of these have I studied. Not one of them can I compose. Yet God enables me with a simple phraseology to testify to the truth. . . . The language I use is plain and forthright and true. If God withdraws his gift I immediately lose my power *and become a nobody*.[154]

Wong explicitly links his ethos with his God-given rhetorical power: the logos changed him and determines *who he is*. Similar to Dzing, Wong continues to change over time as he encounters new interpretations of Christian doctrine, a defining feature of Reformation metanoia. For years, Wong believed that one was saved (and led into the eternal life Wong sought as a child) by obeying the law as given in the Ten Commandments. But through an encounter with a Swedish reformer, Wong is further transformed: "At first, I could not receive his teaching but the passages of Scripture which he quoted at last began to *work in my heart*. By the spring of 1923, *my thinking had begun to change*. When I was fully enlightened by the doctrine of justification by faith *there was a great change* in my beliefs."[155]

By the twentieth century, the idea that one is justified by faith rather than good deeds was a dominant idea in evangelical sects of Christianity. The notion that metanoia is a *way of* being—a lifelong process of transformation—ensured that sin would remain a part of any Christian's life. The fact that one did not need to live a morally perfect life *after* a metanoic experience made the faith accessible to types of people who would have been excommunicated from the early church. Put differently, the Reformation allowed for more diversity in modern metanoic testimony. This diversity is evident in the conversion accounts that came out of the rock band Korn.

Metal, Methamphetamine, Marijuana, and Metanoia: Conversion in Korn

At the beginning of 2004, the nu-metal act Korn was one of the biggest rock bands in the world. They had just released their sixth consecutive platinum record (a shocking accomplishment for a band whose commercial peak came during the age of Napster and digital music piracy) and were on a world tour to support the album. The group, made up of vocalist Jonathan Davis, dual virtuoso guitarists Brian "Head" Welch and James "Munky" Shaffer, bassist Reginald "Fieldy" Arvizu, and drummer David Silveria, met as teenagers in and around Bakersfield, California, in the late 1980s. Korn serves as a useful case study because although the ethos of the band was starkly opposed to the ethos that animates Christian metanoia, two of the members had profound conversion experiences that they documented in books. Years after Head converted, bassist Fieldy undertook a metanoic conversion. The contrast between their stories indicates the range of Christian metanoia in the contemporary era. While both men experienced a progressive change, Fieldy's happened much more quickly. And while Fieldy's metanoia was largely an agentive *act* brought on by rational reflection, Head's experience was passive—a series of supernatural *events* manifested in the form of signs.

Korn helped refine a new subgenre of heavy metal: nu-metal was a descendant of thrash, combined with elements of hip-hop such as electronic sampling, deep bass, and occasional spoken word delivery. Their music was dark. Sonically, it was driving but broken, precise but chaotic. Jonathan Davis had a world-class metal bark, scream, and howl. His lyrics returned to themes of hopelessness, anger, fear, and existential torment. On the road, Korn's bios matched their logos: they were a traveling festival of debauchery and drugs. By the turn of the millennium, Korn was recognized as the primary innovators of the ascendant sound, and they were reaping the benefits: money, (very) young women, and constant rotation on radio and MTV. It seemed things could not get any better, a belief codified in their popular song "Got the Life," which finds Davis boasting of a conversation with God in which the deity acknowledges he cannot give the man anything he does not already have: "God paged me: 'You'll never see the light.' / Who wants to see? / God told me: 'You already got the life. Oh, I see.'" Rock on.

But coming off of the road in 2004, Head felt that his life was in turmoil. In his testimonial book *Save Me from Myself: How I Found God, Quit Korn, Kicked Drugs, and Lived to Tell My Story*, he recounts a pivotal moment in what would become a full-fledged metanoic process. Despite the fact that he "pretty

much lived on beer, pills, speed, and peanut butter and jelly sandwiches," Head retained sole custody of his five-year-old daughter. One day, he heard his daughter walking around the house singing the lyrics to "A.D.I.D.A.S," a Korn megahit. "All day I dream about sex," she sang over and over again. He writes, "I knew right then something had to change. That was the moment I started seriously considering leaving Korn, but even then, I knew considering such a move was a lot different from actually doing it. I didn't really want to leave. Since I was a kid, I had dreamed about becoming a rock star, and it seemed to me that quitting Korn also meant quitting on my childhood dream. . . . I wasn't sure what I wanted to do or what I should do, I just knew something had to change."[156] He continues, "I was already in the gutter, but hearing that song come out of Jennea's mouth really made me feel like a piece of trash."[157] While the "born-again metal star" might seem to be an anomaly, what is really remarkable about Head's testimony is how closely it resembles Christian conversions from all over the world for the last two millennia. In fact, the moment that he hears his daughter singing the obscene song is a strange inversion of the culminating experience of Augustine's metanoia. While a child's song marked the end of Augustine's metanoia, Jennea's singing marked the beginning of Head's conversion. Further, the song that Augustine hears invites him to turn *toward* something (the Book), while Jennea's rendition of the Korn song *repels* Head and impels him to *turn away*. This is paralleled in the accounts that authenticate their inward experiences: Paul calls Augustine to *turn away* from drinking, partying, and the ways of the world; Head's scripture calls him to *turn toward* Christ. In the midst of his remorse and self-hatred, Head received an email from a Christian friend "out of the blue."[158] It read:

> Brian:
> Not to get weird on you or anything, but I was reading my Bible this morning and you came to mind when I read this verse:
>
> "Come to me, all who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, there you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28–30).
>
> I don't know why but I had a very strong feeling this would mean something to you and that I should jump on email and send it to you. Please don't take that wrong.
> All the best!
> Eric

Head quickly replied: "I'm a lost soul, man. My life isn't fun anymore. I asked Jesus into my heart when I was a kid, and I felt something inside of me. I want to get back to that feeling, but I haven't prayed or anything. I feel guilty for not ever going to church. Do you have any advice on where to go from here?"[159] Eventually, his friends convinced him to go to a church service. Head was shocked to find that the scripture at the heart of the sermon was Matthew 11:28–30—the same passage that Eric had referenced in his out-of-the-blue email. At first, Head was convinced that Eric had set this up with the pastor. But retrospectively, he says: "It wasn't Eric by the way; it was God. It was one way that God used to call me to him. I started seeing that Scripture all over the place for the next couple of weeks."[160]

Head had a rough home life as he was growing up. His family was not religious, and he had a verbally abusive father. Around thirteen, Head became friends with a boy from a Christian family. The time he spent at their house provided some sanctuary and stability. One day, his friend's mother told him: "Jesus Christ is the savior of the world, and if you ask Jesus in your heart, he will save you, and come and live inside of you."[161] Later that night, those words were echoing in his head. Despite his skepticism, he knelt down on the floor of the basement bathroom and prayed for the first time. He describes the aftermath in metanoic terms: "I felt something. I was thirteen years old. I didn't know what I was feeling, but I definitely felt something inside me change. What was I supposed to do about that? What changed? Was I supposed to change how I lived? I didn't know what to do, and my knees were getting cold from the tile, so I got up, and pretty much went on with my life."[162] Shortly thereafter, his friendship with the Christian boy dissolved. The earliest incarnations of Korn were born. And Head embarked on a life of actions he would profoundly regret: giving up a child to adoption, routinely beating his girlfriend, and developing a dependence on pornography and a crippling addiction to methamphetamine.

As I explained earlier, these behaviors would lead Head on a rapid descent to madness and depression. But as time passed, it was a growing *regret* that precipitated his transformation. This regret for the past also animates rhetorical metanoia. As he grew more helpless against his addictions, he began to look outside himself for salvation, and he remembered his experience in the basement bathroom. He began to seek out Christian acquaintances, and eventually he accepted an invitation from his friend Doug to attend a church. But that was not the conclusion of his metanoia—far from it. In a coffee shop, another friend (Eric) pressured him into saying a prayer similar

to the one he said when he was thirteen. He said the prayer, but he was terrified afterward: he believed that because he was high on meth when he said it, God would punish him for praying inauthentically. Immediately upon getting home alone, he prayed again to God in an attempt at a rhetorical metanoia—he wanted to take back the earlier prayer: "God, I didn't mean that prayer that Eric pressured me to say! I'm still on drugs, and I know I'm going to do more. Like, today."[163] And he did.

Later, at a church service, the pastor advertised the spiritual benefits of metanoia and invited the unconverted attendees to be saved. Inspired by the idea of total forgiveness, Head eagerly volunteered:

> Well, that got me really excited inside, because to me, that meant that I could go home, snort lines, talk to God, and then he would take away my addiction. That sounded like exactly what I needed, so at the end of the service, when the preacher asked if anyone wanted to ask Jesus into their life, I raised my hand and decided on my own to go through with it. Although I had told God that I didn't mean that prayer I said at the coffee shop, this time, I meant it. January 9th, 2005 was the day I began my new relationship with Jesus Christ. My life was never going to be the same.[164]

Then, he went home and snorted some lines of meth. Immediately, a sign: an old drug buddy called on the telephone. He had been in the church when Head prayed earlier, a coincidence that Head frames as a divine sign.[165] A few days later, he invited a trusted friend to throw away all of his drugs. He cloistered himself in a hotel room to weather the impending withdrawals. Miraculously, he heard a voice telling him that he now belonged to God. The next day, he decided it was a hallucination, but within a few days, he was clean. Another metanoia: "I left the room and started walking around downtown Bakersfield, California, which I had never wanted to do before. It felt so good to be outside in the sunlight. Right then and there, my drug addiction began to fall away from me. I started talking to God nonstop. . . . I felt like a new man. I was feeling God touch me inside every day. I would just cry and cry for no other reason than that I just felt loved. I wasn't sad at all. I felt total peace."[166]

But a few weeks later, after church, Head found a big bag of meth in his house. He writes, "I'd like to say that I flushed it, but that would be lying. . . . I instantly chopped up that speed and snorted it. There was enough in

there to last me a week. . . . I quit talking to God. I put my Bible away. I was going to do the rest of my meth, and then quit for good. In a week or so."[167] Soon after, Head received a message from God to quit Korn. He did—and he felt fantastic. Then he snorted some meth—but it did not seem to be working. Later that night, reading his Bible, Head felt a divine embrace, a sign from God: "it was like someone poured liquid love into my body and all around me. I had chills all over my whole body—I had never felt anything like that before in my life. I was caught up in total ecstasy. . . . It was God."[168] Another sign! But then he "ended up doing drugs all night."[169] In the morning, a final sign. Like Augustine, Head randomly opened his Bible. The passage from Ezekiel warned against death as the inevitable consequence of sin. He would never use drugs again.

The encounter with Ezekiel ended his drug addiction and was yet another key step in his metanoia: "All at once I left almost everyone and everything connected to my old life. It was as though my old life had to die so that I could follow the Lord. There was no turning back—and it felt so right. I fell deeply and passionately in love with God, and I made up my mind that he was in control of every part of me from that point on."[170] Head's claim that he would never turn back suggests he sees metanoia as the 180-degree turn away, a dismissal of the possibility of the 360-degree *re*turn. But even this was not the culmination of his metanoia. Head's later baptism in the Jordan River was a highly public event attended by many journalists. The choice of the Jordan seems to be a way to signify the authenticity of the conversion, a truth driven home by the appearance of a miraculous sign: a white dove flying over the baptism scene,[171] paralleling Jesus's baptism by John. But the baptism, too, was only a beginning: "I did feel the presence of the Lord change me that day, but instead of being the end, it was merely the beginning. The baptism was just the first step of my transformation process."[172] In his epilogue, Head acknowledges the rhetorical function of his book: it serves as an invitation for others to give their lives to Christ. And he closes with a final plea to readers for an authentic metanoia:

> Remember how I said [that prayer] with Eric, and then took it back when I got home? It's because I needed to come to that decision on my own. I'm not trying to force you into anything here. I don't want you to say this prayer just to say it. My hope is that if you say it, you'll *mean* it; that it will be a sincere prayer to God, straight from your heart. . . . Talk to [God] like a friend, every day, as much as you can, and he will reveal

himself to you. Because now you are a friend, and a child of God. God bless you.[173]

Korn bassist Fieldy's metanoia offers an agentive, rational model that contrasts with the passive, supernatural, sign-based experience of Head. Fieldy also came from a nonreligious home and started abusing drugs and alcohol at a very young age. By the time of Korn's peak, he was on a daily regimen of marijuana, antianxiety drugs, opioids, and as much alcohol as he could drink. Although his addictions were a factor that led him to personal change, he was equally crippled by his habitual sexual infidelity and his tendency to verbally abuse people close to him in especially vicious ways. In his book *Got the Life*, he looks back (a gesture inherent to metanoia) on this period in his life and sees a steadily growing remorse and shame: "My spirit wasn't at rest. My conscience didn't allow me to live that lifestyle without paying a very high price."[174] The first glimpse of the role of agency in his transformation comes when Fieldy explains that no one beside himself could modify his way of life: "The guys [in Korn] must have figured out that they couldn't change me. It was a lot easier to work around all of the obstacles my behavior put in our way than it was to expect me to change. . . . The truth is, people won't usually change for anyone else. They have to do it for themselves. *I wasn't ready to transform my life yet*."[175]

Head's metanoia was a critical moment for the band. The religious reasons for their major songwriter's departure forced all of the band members to do some self-examination. In a private conversation with Head after he left the band, Fieldy censured him for trying to convert him, again stressing the willful act that necessarily precedes a transformation: "I tried to tell Head that we were all still his friends, too, but no one was ever going to change because *he* wanted them to. If we were to change our lives, it would have to be at our own pace. If we didn't, that would have to be cool, too."[176] At this point, the conversation turned into an angry argument—Head told Fieldy not to call him again until he "got straight with God."[177] Fieldy recounts his response: "'I'll never be straight with God. I'm not holy. If I was, I wouldn't need Jesus as the middleman.' . . . I looked Head square in the eyes and said 'I'm never going to call you again because I'm never going to be straight with God.' And that was the last time we talked for quite some time."[178] But at some point during Korn's rise to fame, Fieldy's father had converted to Christianity. His illness and eventual death became a turning point.

Minutes after his father's death, Fieldy sat with his stepmother in the hospital room. She told him that his father's last unfulfilled wish was that he give his heart to Christ. Fieldy was resistant, recalling that he "wasn't really ready to hear what she was saying."[179] Then, just as Head's friend forced him to pray in the coffee shop, Fieldy's stepmother asked him to pray with her. Reluctantly, he did: "I couldn't say no."[180] The prayer had no immediate effect, but in the following weeks, Fieldy became newly aware of his poor treatment of others—particularly his refusal to reach out to his bandmates when their loved ones had died. This reflection spurred a growing remorse, setting the stage for a more complete metanoia. But Fieldy was surprised that Head showed up at his father's funeral. When Head mentioned that his father's wish was for Fieldy to convert, things got ugly again: "'How do you know I don't have Jesus in my heart?' I shot back. I didn't want to hear Head preach to me. Not that day. Not at my dad's funeral. I turned and walked away."[181] Later that night, back at his house with family, Fieldy's stepmother asked everyone to join her again in saying the prayer from the hospital. Fieldy had a much different response: "This time, it was different. I felt cold and got the chills. It was overwhelming."[182] Afterward, he tried to go to bed but was up all night by himself, thinking about his father—and praying.

When he awoke, he did his morning ritual—smoking a pipe of marijuana. But by the afternoon, something had changed. He flushed all of his marijuana down the toilet. At dinner, he even refused the beer that he always had with his meal: "I could never resist a cold beer with Mexican food, but for some reason, I wasn't interested in drinking. Not then, not ever again. And that was the end of my drinking."[183] After another night of prayer, he was different: "The next day, I woke up, same as I always did. But this time, I had no craving for alcohol or drugs. My mind-set had changed. . . . Miraculously, I had no withdrawals, no shakes, nothing."[184] Similar to when the speed stopped giving Head a high and when he had so little withdrawal, the "miracle" of Fieldy's abstinence served as a sign of his transformation.

Although in the aforementioned quote it seems that his metanoia was a passive one ("My mind-set had changed"), throughout the remainder of the book, Fieldy uses decidedly active language to describe the conversion. Apologizing to his wife for making a sexual advance toward her sister years earlier, he frames the change as a choice that he consciously undertook: "I had to change every facet of myself to become a better man. . . . I changed everything about my actions—what I said, where I looked, and who I talked

to. I won't even cuss anymore because it's a negative way of communicating. It sounds so simple, but reprogramming who I am was one of the hardest things I have ever done. . . . I didn't change for [my wife]. I changed because of my fear of the Lord."[185] Notice, here, that the motive he names for his transformation is fear—the same one identified by Calvin as the proper catalyst for metanoia. Later, he emphasizes his transformation as a change of identity: "I was becoming a very different guy. . . . I needed to change my entire life."[186] Further, the change demonstrates the *substitution* of ethos—a central function of metanoia: "I'll admit that sin is fun. I loved to sin, but I realized there was no way I could handle the consequences I continually had to pay for my sin. It was obvious that *I had to replace it with something better*."[187]

Fieldy's behavior in the aftermath of his conversion shows the role of rhetorical metanoia in signifying religious metanoia. Just as the religious transformation substituted ethos for ethos, Fieldy demonstrated the change by using language to "take back" his earlier sins. He decided to write a letter of apology to each member of Korn. These self-motivated statements of culpability underscore that honest regret and apology can produce reconciliation and renewal—the apology is not simply a rhetorical strategy for negating wrongdoing. Fieldy's letter to Head shows the retrospective metanoic gaze of apology, and its relation to language and identity:

> Reading your book brought back some memories of some of the things I did to you. Looking back, I wish things had been a lot different. I especially wish I hadn't said so many things to hurt you. . . . Please forgive me for all the hurtful hell I put you through. . . . I know you turned your life around and I want you to know that I have turned mine around, too. If we ever hang out in our new lives, we will both have gray hair faster than Just for Men could cover it. . . . Today, you don't know me, but I'll tell you what: I would be the best friend you've ever had.[188]

The other letters also confess the sins he committed against each recipient. He expresses his remorse, his desire that he had acted differently, and his new ethos that will allow him to treat people with more dignity and respect. The letters (and the book that contains them) serve as metanoic testimony that authenticates his transformation. Because words and deeds cannot always be taken back, Fieldy is very conscious that he needs to embody a wholly different kind of behavior for the foreseeable future: he is openly concerned

that others accept his metanoia as authentic. This underscores the concord that metanoia demands between logos and bios—what you say must be validated in how you live.

Taken together, Head and Fieldy offer two very different models of contemporary Christian metanoia: one as a nonagentive, supernatural event; one as an agentive, rational act. But the similarities of their experiences outnumber the differences. For both, the animating pathos is a backward-looking remorse. For both, metanoia seems to denote the 180-degree turn away from the past, rather than an epistrophic return to origin. For both, the conversion is a long process that culminates in a moment—typically a moment verified by some divine sign. For both, metanoia is a substitutive transplanting of identity. And for both, metanoia is a phenomenon that occurs outside of a church community—a feature that would have been virtually impossible at any point in church history prior to the Reformation, with its insistence upon the unmediated nature of the relationship between the individual and God.

Conclusions

The basic outlines of religious metanoia in Christianity were sketched as early as Paul's fall from his horse, but the ensuing millennia brought a diversification of the ways that an authentic transformation could be signified. Nevertheless, the contours of Christian metanoic testimony demonstrate a remarkable consistency across time, space, and culture. The ancient notion of rhetorical metanoia—speech that "takes back" earlier speech—always had ramifications for the ethos of the speaker. But where the substitutive movement of rhetorical metanoia took place at the level of the logos, religious metanoia locates the substitution at the core of one's being. Ethos is replaced with ethos. The stakes of rhetorical transformation were low—whether or not the speaker *really* regretted the earlier statement did not much matter. But the stakes are high for the audience of religious metanoic testimony. Because it is ontological (rather than linguistic), personal change can have enduring ramifications for the role of the individual in the community. Thus authenticity is a much more prominent concern in religious metanoia: speakers need to work harder to signify the reality of their conversions.

Post-Enlightenment society saw a dramatic waning of church power, and religion was progressively moved toward the margin of daily life in the

West. This opened the door for new kinds of transformations—transformations that would have been impossible under the guiding assumptions of Christian society. But because of the centrality of Christianity in the history of the Western world, all of our discourses related to any kind of personal transformation are shot through with the remains of Christian metanoic rhetoric. While modern secular metanoia would retain the anxiety over the authenticity of transformation, the pathos that marks individual metanoic transformation would undergo major renovation. Postmodern metanoia intermingles elements of epistrophe. Perhaps more importantly, it completely reinvents the motive for personal change.

CHAPTER 3

Finding Yourself

Metanoia, Epistrophe, and the Ontology of the Modern Ethos

One theme that pervades the thinking on the modern era (regardless of the hypothetical dates of its commencement) is the idea that Western culture has become unmoored from something—its traditions, its symbols, its mythos, its epistemologies, its values, or its pieties. Some identify the break with the emergence of capitalism, some with the industrial revolution, some with the World Wars and the detonation of the atom bombs, some with the 1960s revolutions in consciousness. What broke and when it was broken are peripheral questions here. Of central importance is the cross-cultural, cross-political, cross-disciplinary assumption that we are suffering the aftermath of some societal cataclysm: this is as pronounced in Enlightenment thinking from the eighteenth century as it is in the so-called postmodern and poststructural theory that challenges Enlightenment notions of subjectivity, meaning, and politics. This disaster, whatever its contours and causes, disrupted the social sphere and called into question even the basic terms of social interaction. Put differently, we can no longer speak with any certainty as to the features of our collective ethos. Inhabitants of today's Western democracies have starkly divergent notions about who "we" are. Concurrent with our political identity crisis, a crisis of the self and personal identity unfolds. Mirroring the mass-scale confusion, the individual is no longer quite sure about who he or she is. With the weakening of traditional sources of cultural authority, society makes fewer demands than ever on who one *must* be. The farmer's son is liberated from the expectation that he will be a farmer, even as he is newly cursed with the recognition that he *need not* be a farmer. Happily, the

traditional domestic ethos of women is far from the minds of girls today, but like their contemporary male counterparts, they are now burdened with the work of *becoming* "someone."

This great broadening of the range of possibility for individual identity inaugurates a crisis of the self—not a crisis of the individual self but one of the concept of selfhood. One must *locate* a personal identity, and one must learn to project it in such a way that it is intelligible to strangers. Only then will others concede the legitimacy of this ethos and respond in ways that reflect their conviction regarding its truth. The name that we give to this audience approval in rhetorical circles is *recognition*. And the individual's perception of this recognition by others is the grounds for what we might call *authenticity*—a kind of spiritual fulfillment and a personal conviction that one is indeed who one ought to be. As I show below, the notion of authenticity is the core value of the modern politics of the self, and the negotiation of authenticity is a distinctly rhetorical process that unfolds through personal metanoic testimony. But because the cultural conditions of modernity have been altered in fundamental ways, metanoia itself (and the techniques by which it is signified) was transformed in ways that respond to the crisis of the self.

It is important not to overstate the rapid secularization of the West as a reason for the unmooring I am discussing here, but given that metanoia was largely developed through religious discourses, it must be noted that the decline of religious authority was a key factor leading to the reinvention of personal identity. C. G. Jung, in a later work entitled *The Undiscovered Self*, searched for ways that civilization could move forward from the horror and moral failure of World War II. One solution for healing the social crisis, he suggests, is to address the personal one: he laments that the church has abandoned its "real task of helping the individual to achieve a *metanoia*," noting that "it is, unfortunately, only too clear that if the individual is not truly regenerated in spirit, society, cannot be either, for society is the sum total of individuals in need of redemption."[1] Further, he holds up Jesus and Paul of Tarsus as the "prototypes of those who, trusting their inner experience, have gone their individual ways in defiance of the world."[2] And yet, for Jung, Christianity cannot address the cultural rift because "our conception and interpretation of it . . . has become antiquated in the face of the present world situation."[3] Thus it might not be too much of a leap to argue that Jung calls for the metanoia of metanoia—a phenomenon that only *became visible* in the past few decades. But this process, through which a

much different model of personal transformation was emerging, was under way at least from the Enlightenment.

In *Phenomenology of Spirit*, G. W. F. Hegel explicates how new epistemological orientations allowed for the problem of personal identity to be constructed in new ways. He claims that in the past, "certainty" (or true belief) was a designation assigned to things external to the individual consciousness.[4] In times past, he implies, the individual mind was demonstrably subjective and unreliable, an outlook he claims was reversed in his day: "But now, there has arisen . . . a certainty which is identical with its truth; for the certainty is to itself its own object, and consciousness is to itself the truth."[5] In essence, truth is true because we believe it to be—or so the acolytes of modernity implied. This idea is especially pronounced today—a day in which personal feeling is paramount. Indeed, a major requirement for establishing an authentic identity is the willingness to insist upon one's subjective feeling as it relates to personal ethos, *especially when such feelings diverge from the collective judgment of others and society at large*. Inner sentiment is elevated to the status of a higher truth—authenticity, in part, consists of the *parrhesiastic* work of testifying to these truths in explicit and implicit ways. Hegel insists that it is the self that discovers the self—a discovery that probably was not even possible prior to the epistemological shift described earlier: self-consciousness "come[s] *out of itself* . . . it has lost itself, for it finds itself as an *other* being."[6] In other words, the self that is "found" is one that is opposed to the self that discovers it. And yet the process of becoming conscious ultimately requires what might be called a third self—a self that rejects the earlier ethos in favor of the other self that it discovered. In his recent book on identity, Francis Fukuyama links this third part of the soul to *thymos*: an innate sense of personal dignity, which in the contemporary era has metastasized into an individual need to have others recognize one's *superior* worth: *megalothymos*. Fukuyama identifies this as "the seat of today's identity politics."[7] In short, self-consciousness is the product of a metanoic process in which one abandons an earlier ethos of "bondage," defined by *being-for-others*, and constructs an *ethos* of "lordship" by performing the discovered self as a means of *being-for-oneself*.[8] Interestingly, Hegel indicates that despite the new identification of the self with the discovered otherness, the individual experiences the conversion as "an ambiguous return *into* itself."[9] In identifying with the otherness of the discovered self, the individual comes to view the earlier self as manqué. In contrast, the authenticity of the new ethos gives rise to a perception of essentialism in

which the individual feels the transformation is merely a return to *who one always already was*. This is the most distinctive feature of the contemporary instantiation of metanoia: whereas in Judeo-Christian thinking metanoia and epistrophe were two fundamentally opposed models of conversion (the 180-degree turn versus the 360-degree one), modern secular conversion rhetoric intermingles the metanoic *and* epistrophic modes. This hybridity is even more unlikely considering that metanoia was a figure of negation, whereas epistrophe remains a figure of multiplication.

This chapter aims to accomplish a few different goals. First, I offer a rhetorical description of the modern virtue of authenticity and show how its historical emergence coincides with a growing rejection of repentance as it was understood in the Christian cultural milieu of the early modern period. Next, I demonstrate that many of the foundational thinkers fueling the rise of authenticity conceived of it as an epistrophic phenomenon; that is, the movement toward a truer self was explicitly framed as a *return* to an earlier (lost) mode of being. Finally, I describe and contrast two contemporary examples of modern metanoia to show how they incorporate an epistrophic rhetoric of return and how they represent a secularized version of earlier religious forms of transformation. The paratactical comparison of these cases allows an elaboration of the criteria of metanoic authenticity—the conditions that determine whether audiences will give recognition to a person, thereby validating the new ethos claimed by the convert.

Authenticity as High Virtue

The ideas that one must know oneself and that the self has some obligations to the self are not new. The Delphic Oracle, Socrates, Shakespeare, and countless others have offered variations on the same themes. Western modernity preserves these ideas but also offers a reinterpretation of them. Historically speaking, coming to self-knowledge was a highly technical ritual, rigorously pursued through either philosophical training or theological contemplation. In contrast, today's pursuit of the self is mostly a secularized and democratized affair. No special knowledge or ability is required to plumb the depths of the self; one need only to reflect on one's own desire. And in order to attain the virtue of authenticity and be true to yourself, *everyone* is obligated to undertake this kind of reflection. While earlier invocations to communion with the self served as moral injunctions that might allow one to lead a

good life, contemporary engagement with the self is more often undertaken as a means to live a *happy* life.

Happiness is not a new concept, either. But in our era, happiness is bound up with self-satisfaction in a new way. The ancient world was keenly aware that one can be misled by the self, its feelings, and desires—this is, perhaps, the central insight of classical tragedy. Early thinkers insisted that the self could be at odds with nature and the good. Further, in the event of such a conflict, they asserted that it was the self (not nature, or social convention, or public morality) that must be brought to heel. This is evident in the way that ancient schools of thought (Socratics, Cynics, Stoics, etc.), despite their philosophical differences, shared a concern with self-discipline as a means to reconcile the self to the world without. Today, the world within is the source of a higher calling to which the individual is *obligated* to respond—if one aims to achieve authenticity. Put differently, internal sentiment, feeling, and desire take on a hallowed status: sure, they might lead you wrong, but happiness is impossible to achieve if desire is repressed. Happiness, in effect, is the enduring satisfaction of living in accord with one's feeling and desire. Better to pursue desire fruitlessly and suffer the consequences than to repress desire and endure the pain of inauthentic living. In other words, any self-discipline of one's feelings in the old mold is tantamount to a repressive inauthenticity in the new. Nevertheless, the deepest yearnings of the self often remain at odds with both nature and society. It is too great a task for the individual to bring nature and social convention to heel, but subordinating the self to those forces is a kind of resignation to a life behind a mask—an intolerable fate for most modern people.

The essence of the self is thought to be located in the sum of one's feelings and desires, but these are not merely calls to crass self-gratifications; they are the substance of *who you are*, the substance of your ethos. Charles Taylor, perhaps the foremost thinker on authenticity, notes the importance of rhetoric in establishing the identity of the self: "We find the sense of life through articulating it. And moderns have become acutely aware of how much sense being there for us depends on our own powers of expression. Discovering here depends on, is interwoven with, inventing. Finding a sense to life depends on framing meaningful expressions which are adequate."[10] The discovery of the self, then, is an extemporaneous discovery of a self that existed only inchoately until its speaking through a process of rhetorical invention. The self, as it is spoken, is always a *becoming*—an ongoing moment in a discursive negotiation of the limits of personal identity. And yet the self

cannot just say anything: it needs to speak "meaningfully" in terms deemed "adequate," presumably adequate to an audience beyond the self, one without access to the truth of the inner world of the speaker. The adequacy of this metanoic testimony is determined by a sociocultural metric regarding what types of speech and being are intelligible within the general structure of the collective. This creates a problem: the self must offer a socially intelligible account of its feelings and desires in order to be perceived as authentic, but, as I have explained, those feelings and desires are often anathema to social convention. The individual is faced with a monumental rhetorical challenge: how to secure public recognition of one's identity through an intelligible account of that identity as based in feelings and desires that run counter to the conventions of the public at large. Without this public recognition of an identity that is avowedly *countercultural* in the most basic sense, the desired ethos will remain uninhabitable—whether it is authentic or not. These are the stakes of modern metanoic testimony at a moment in history where ethos is showing new signs of malleability.

Today, individual identities often undergo radical conversions that were thought to be fantastical only decades ago: transformations of race, sex, gender, and more. These transformations are of great interest to the public, as evidenced by the frequent coverage of trans issues and personal transitions of all kinds on television and in popular magazines. The growing discourse on these topics indicates that we have perhaps arrived at a "trans moment"—a cultural impasse with possibilities for new kinds of transformations to occur. This moment calls for a theoretical reconsideration of ethos—a study of how it functions differently now than it has in the past, and how it is successfully signified in new mediated contexts. Although converts often posit their new ethos as self-evident, major renovations of personal identity require sophisticated rhetorical performances. Before analyzing some specific instances of metanoic testimonies of this sort, some discussion of how the virtue of authenticity emerged is in order.

Although authenticity probably became a virtue at the dawn of the Enlightenment (or, as I will show, perhaps a bit before that), there was a transitional period between the mere possibility of authenticity as one virtue among others and the establishment of authenticity as a kind of ethical a priori—the moment when the need to live authentically became an unquestionable personal obligation. In his seminal work *Sincerity and Authenticity*, Lionel Trilling points to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as the period when authenticity came to displace the older virtue of sincerity. He explains

that authenticity suggests "a more strenuous moral experience than 'sincerity' does, a more exigent conception of the self and of what being true to it consists in, a wider reference to the universe and man's place in it, and a less acceptant and genial view of the social circumstances of life."[11] Howard Mumford Jones notes a change in the American conception of happiness at about this same time. He points to the work of pragmatist William James as a vehicle by which a legal and political notion of happiness as integral to public life was transmuted into a psychological concept pertaining to the private life of the individual.[12] James certainly broke new ground in advancing a new concept of selfhood: he says that the existence of "personal selves" is irrefutable and that the sum of the mental processes are "the very 'original' of the notion of personality."[13] Further, James seems to lay the foundation for a subconscious that needs to be "discovered," citing contradictory impulses in the psyche that may obscure one's identification of the true, essential self within. He notes the existence of "secondary personal selves" that "are cut off at ordinary times from communication with the regular and normal self of the individual."[14] By the nineteenth century, then, the new spiritual work is already laid out in full: you must "find yourself."

How did this happen? In *On Being Authentic*, Charles Guignon gives a detailed historical account of the circumstances that produced the virtue of authenticity—the virtue that animates most of the metanoic conversions of our era. (It is a fitting metanoic side note that Trilling traces the Greek etymology of *authentic* as perhaps meaning "self-murderer.")[15] Guignon identifies three particular causes that worked in tandem: the Protestant Reformation, Enlightenment ideas of science and nature, and the constructivist notion of society that came about in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[16]

Protestantism greatly elevated the importance of the individual. Not only did the opening of Luther's treatise posit metanoia as the primary aim of Christian life, but his theses advanced the idea of grace by faith. This meant that the tools for attaining salvation were *inside the self*. Salvation was made into a matter of personal belief, which meant that authentic religious experience became a product of a successful search of the self—an epistemological determination of what you *really* believe. On top of that, the Protestant idea of Christian practice removed the clerical barrier that mediated between the self and God. Protestant Christians discovered a new power: the ability to encounter God in and through the self. As the processes of secularization wore on, this ability would broaden significantly in scope: Guignon rightly laments the negative effects of this trend: "[The issue is] whether the ideals

and ways of thinking that originally made sense within that religious tradition are still meaningful when taken out of that tradition and planted in the secularized soil of modernity. When God became a sort of afterthought, or when the 'God within' comes to be thought of simply as God's *being me*, then the context of ideas in which the practice of inward-turning and expressing the true self originally made sense undergoes a profound change."[17]

The searching powers of the self were magnified by empiricism in a different way. The basis of science is the observation of a subject: human perception is key to establishing scientific truth. Prior to modern science, the smart set took a very skeptical attitude toward the correlation of our sense perception with reality—Plato's allegory of the cave remains popular even today. But science could document the correlation between our perception and reality with a new degree of veracity. In fact, it seemed that the two lined up quite well—to a newly great extent, we had good reason to believe that what we sense is what is true. Thus "the self comes to be seen as a subject, a center of experience and action, set over against a world of objects that are to be known and manipulated."[18] It should come as no surprise that the primary position we give to the self in understanding scientific questions would eventually carry over to spiritual and subjective questions about the self: if the self can reliably perceive the truth of the external world through feeling and perception, why should the truth about the *self itself* be beyond this kind of insight?

Finally, Guignon cites the growing popularity of the idea of social constructivism during the Enlightenment as a final factor that led to the elevation of authenticity. The educated classes came to understand the self, to some degree, as a product of a particular social arrangement. Further, they came to understand that the structure of society is not simply a given; rather, it is a product of specific cultural and historical forces. If society could have been something other than what it is, then it follows that other modes of individual being are possible, too. The result of this realization is a personal withdrawal from social space, or at least an increased wariness of it: "The modern outlook brings to realization a split between the *Real Me*—the true inner self—and the *persona* (from the Greek word for 'mask') that one puts on for the external world. With this division comes a sharp distinction between the way one appears in public life and what one truly is in one's inner self."[19] Thus these three factors—Protestantism, empiricism, and social constructivism—working in concert, allowed for the emergence of authenticity as a personal virtue. Further, all of them (in different ways)

emphasized the friction between the self and accepted sources of authority, whether that authority was the church, traditional conceptions of the natural world, or society at large. And in this conflict, Western society was increasingly siding with the rights of the self against the demands of external forms of tradition and power.

Although Guignon suggests that the materials for the virtue of authenticity were at hand in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, he argues that they were not fully assembled until the eighteenth. Many scholars identify the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as a time when there was an intensification of the experience of selfhood. In his book about the waning of the concept of evil in American society, Andrew Delbanco aptly identifies the link between nineteenth-century secularization and the elevation of the self: "By 1850, Americans found themselves both liberated and imprisoned by the enormously compelling idea—once decried as pride—of the striving self. There could be no place for the old devil in this new world, whose religion was pride of self."[20] He goes on to explain that the reality of the Christian devil was liquidated, and Satan was reconstituted as a metaphor: the devil became a symbolic stand-in for any obstacle standing in the way of the self and its desires. Thus "pride of self, once the mark of the devil, was not just a legitimate emotion but America's uncontested god. And since everyone had his own self, everyone had his own god."[21] It is not a coincidence that the process of secularization and the rise of selfhood coincided with the reinvention of the Christian model of metanoia as repentance.

By the peak of the Enlightenment, intellectual elites viewed the medieval notion of repentance in much the same way as disco is viewed today: as an old-fashioned curiosity—fun to dance to but only in the context of an ironic distancing that enforces its relegation to the historical archive. Indeed, the making-light of repentance (in the sense of a technique of Christian self-reinvention) started well before the Enlightenment. From the mid-sixteenth century on, there was a new emphasis on the role of writing about the self as a kind of secular mode of confession. Whereas Christian confession called upon the sinner to perform a self-renunciation, the secular style also called for confession of sin—but only as a means of *affirming* the authentic self that is the sum of these feelings and desires. Michel de Montaigne is an early and powerful example of this trend. In commenting on Montaigne's essays, Emerson notes that for Montaigne, the act of writing itself was a process of self-formation: "The sincerity and marrow of the man reaches to his sentences. I know not anywhere the book that seems less written. It is the

language of conversation transferred to a book. Cut these words, and they would bleed; they are vascular and alive."[22] The text itself seems coextensive with Montaigne's body. This is best displayed in an essay conveniently entitled "On Repentance," published in 1580.[23]

"On Repentance" clearly indicates that the virtue of authenticity was fully formed prior to the Enlightenment, even if it had not yet become a default virtue of the public at large. Montaigne begins by confessing that he wishes he could "refashion" himself.[24] But this is not to say that his identity is immutable. On the contrary: "I cannot fix my subject. He is always restless, and reels with a natural intoxication. I catch him here, as he is at the moment when I turn my attention to him. I do not portray his being; I portray his passage; . . . I must suit my story to the hour, for soon I may change, not only by chance but also by intention."[25] Even in the context of this ontic transience, Montaigne feels a moral compunction to write the self—to *publicize* himself: "Authors communicate with the world in some special and particular capacity; I am the first to do so with my whole being, as Michel de Montaigne, not as a grammarian, a poet, or a lawyer. If people complain that I speak too much of myself, I complain that they do not think of themselves at all. . . . No man ever came to a project with better knowledge and understanding than I have of this matter, in regard to which I am the most learned man alive."[26] Here, he locates the difference that validates his authenticity in the context of the audience: it is the *completeness* of his self-accounting that makes his essay valuable, and the essay is *coextensive* with the self: "Here my book and I proceed in agreement, and at the same pace. In other cases, the work may be praised or blamed apart from the workman; but here it cannot be. Who touches one, touches the other."[27] Such narrative framing serves as a precursor to a confession of an oppositional relation to widely held norms and values. In this case, the norms that are opposed by Montaigne are none other than those that comprise the Christian conception of the self—as a penitent, sinful creation of a God beyond the self.

Montaigne attacks repentance, and, by extension, undermines the Christian model of metanoic transformation: "I rarely repent, and . . . my conscience is content with itself, not as the conscience of an angel or a horse, but as the conscience of a man."[28] He goes on to describe another characteristic of modern authenticity, the idea that the self is morally accountable only to the self. The gravest sin would be to act against the call of the heart: "I have my own laws and my own court to judge me, and I refer to these rather than elsewhere. I certainly restrain my actions out of deference to

others, but I understand them only by my own light. . . . Do not rely on their opinions, therefore; rely on your own."[29] Montaigne rejects the substitutive qualities of both rhetorical and religious metanoia—he is opposed to the entire notion of the "afterthought" that animates them both: "Repentance is simply a recanting of our will and an opposition to our fancies."[30] But he harbors a special disdain for the Christian metanoic comportment that locates virtue squarely in the rejection of the self. Instead, in keeping with the nascent (but operative) virtue of authenticity, he characterizes his personal feelings and desires as unconquerable. His refusal to try to conquer them is the primary evidence of his authenticity: "For myself, I may wish, on the whole, to be otherwise; I may condemn and dislike my general character, and implore God to reform me throughout, and to excuse my natural weakness. But I should not, I think, give the name of repentance to this. . . . My actions are controlled and shaped to what I am, and to my condition of life. I can do no better."[31] Finally, given the choice to live a perfectly moral life, Montaigne says he would rather live authentically: "If I had to live my life again, I should live as I have lived; I neither deplore the past, nor fear the future. . . . I will have nothing to do, therefore, with these fortuitous and tearful reformations."[32] Montaigne's essay shows that authenticity was not an invention or discovery of later Enlightenment thinkers; rather, it was already one choice among other ways to live—for cultural elites. But as the modern democratization unfolded, authenticity progressively came to be an obligation for everyone—even those at the lowest levels of society.

It is not coincidence that the early modern period began a glut of confessional autobiographic writing: modern selfhood demanded parrhesiastic publication of one's essence, a testimony that risked a public rejection of the self. Jean-Jacques Rousseau is another writer who exemplifies the friction between Christian repentance and the new virtue of personal authenticity. More than a century after Montaigne claimed to be the first writer to reveal his "whole being" to the world, Rousseau opened his *Confessions* by claiming that his text is "an enterprise which has no precedent."[33] Undoubtedly, Rousseau was aware of similar works that other writers had undertaken for centuries. Rather, it is not the work itself that is unprecedented—it was Rousseau himself. His confessions are the literal embodiment of the authentic self: "My purpose is to display to my kind a portrait in every way true to nature, and the man I shall portray will be myself. Simply myself. I know my own heart and understand my fellow man. But I am made unlike any one I have ever met; I will even venture to say that I am like no one in the

whole world. I may be no better, but at least I am different."[34] Here it is clear that the source and value of his authenticity is located in his irreducible difference from others. The purpose of the text is to construct an identity and legitimize it in the eyes of the public, demonstrated in the opening to the seventh book: "You cannot judge [my reasons for writing] till you have read me to the end."[35] The encounter with the text is synonymous with an encounter with Rousseau himself. And yet he also implies that the audience might be unequipped to judge him in the end—whatever they think of him, the truth of Rousseau's experience is unassailable:

> The papers that I had collected to make good the defects in my memory and to guide me in this undertaking have all passed into other hands and will never return into mine. I have only one faithful guide on which I can count; the succession of feelings which have marked the development of my being, and thereby recall the events that have acted upon it as cause or effect. I easily forget my misfortunes, but I cannot forget my faults, and still less my genuine feelings. The memory of them is too dear ever to be effaced from my heart. I may omit or transpose facts, or make mistakes in dates, but I cannot go wrong about what I have felt, or about what my feelings have led me to do; and these are the chief subjects of my story. . . . It is the history of my soul that I have promised to recount, and to write it faithfully I have need of no other memories; it is enough if I enter again into my inner self.[36]

This passage shows a central tenet of the modern identity: that one's feelings are both irrefutable and irresistible. Living authentically means being honest about one's feelings and allowing them to guide one's actions. This idea cannot operate within the context of Christian penitence. Despite the title of his work, Rousseau effectively has nothing to confess—whatever his faults, they were inevitable consequences of feelings that stood accountable to nothing in particular. In short, Rousseau reinvents the notion of "confession" so that it accords with new politics of the self. The "confessions" named in the title are no longer animated by the rhetoric of self-rejection that served to catalyze metanoic transformation. Instead, secular liberality configures confession as an affirmational act by which the speaker performs his authenticity by acknowledging the ways that personal difference marks a person off from the traditional norms of society. That speaking these truths requires Rousseau to "enter *again* into [his] inner self" hints that modern

metanoic authenticity has taken on some epistrophic characteristics—the self that he reveals is not new. Rousseau is not "transformed"; he reveals a previously hidden self that existed a priori.

Although Rousseau rejected the Christian routines of confession, he nevertheless spoke in a vocabulary that was recognizable to a Christian audience. His contemporary Marquis de Sade rejected the whole Christian moral apparatus in very explicit terms. In "Dialogue Between a Priest and a Dying Man," the former visits the deathbed of the latter, asking: "Do you not repent the host of sins unto which you were led by weakness and human frailty?"[37] The man answers, "Yes, my friend, I do repent," but after the priest gives a statement of absolution, the dying man says that he and the priest are having a misunderstanding.[38] He clarifies the basis of his regret:

> By Nature created, created with very keen tastes, with very strong passions; placed on this earth for the sole purpose of yielding to them and satisfying them, and these effects of my creation being naught but necessities directly relating to Nature's fundamental designs or, if you prefer, naught but essential derivatives proceeding from her intentions in my regard, all in accordance with her laws, I repent not having acknowledged her omnipotence as fully as I might have done, I am only sorry for the modest use I made of the faculties (criminal in your view, perfectly ordinary in mine) she gave me to serve her; I did sometimes resist her, I repent it. Misled by your absurd doctrines, with them for arms I mindlessly challenged the desires instilled in me by a much diviner inspiration, and thereof do I repent: I only plucked an occasional flower when I might have gathered an ample harvest of fruit.[39]

In Rousseau, the reader is mostly left to herself to ascertain the implications of authenticity for Christian notions of piety; Sade rejects them outright as absurd and even elevates "Nature" (the source of human feeling and desire) as a higher deity. Further, in Sade, sex is depicted as the basis of authentic self-expression, which remains a key tenet of contemporary identity politics. His only regret, then, is too much concern with propriety and the Christian concept of personal sin. As the dialogue proceeds, the priest attempts to give a logical account of the faith. At one point, the dying man asserts a view of reality that shows the centrality of subjective perception as it relates to truth, another indicator of the virtue of authenticity: "anything beyond the limits and grasp of the human mind is either illusion or futility."[40] As

the conversation draws to a close, the dying man punctuates his opposition to the Christian call to metanoia: "Let the evil deed be proscribed by law, let justice smite the criminal, that will be deterrent enough; but if by misfortune we do commit it even so, let's not cry over spilled milk; remorse is inefficacious, since it does not stay us from crime, futile since it does not repair it, therefore it is absurd to beat one's breast, more absurd still to dread being punished in another world if we have been lucky to escape it in this."[41] With this alacritous dispatching of the priest's worldview, the dying man invites him to an orgy, which the priest promptly accepts.

These texts from Montaigne, Rousseau, and Sade are by no means the only examples that testify to the emergence of the modern virtue of authenticity in the period leading up to the Enlightenment and beyond. But the Enlightenment was coextensive with a democratization not only of government but also of culture. And as authenticity transformed from a luxury of the elite classes, a demotic conception of authenticity as a way of life emerged—one that placed even greater emphasis on the inviolable sanctity of the self.

One fascinating truth about today's processes of self-discovery and individual transformation is that no one ever discovers an authentic self that turns out to be more boring, more everyday, and more in line with traditional social norms than the older, inauthentic self was. The newly discovered authentic self is always one that is more exciting, more exotic, and more oppositional in relation to cultural expectations regarding personal identity. The reason for this is that the primary criterion of value for authenticity is *difference*. In Western social contexts, where diversity is positioned as an inherent good, the authentic self takes on public value as it fulfills a role in the diversification of the culture at large. As Taylor notes, this means that authenticity demands an "originality" in one's framing of the self: "Defining myself means finding what is significant in my difference from others."[42] His central insight here is that while it seems as though the contemporary individual chooses from a nearly infinite variety of ways to articulate his difference, the opposite is true: there are some differences that the individual may experience as integral to his identity (e.g., a missing finger), but not all differences are viewed by the public as grounds for ascribing recognition to an identity based on this characteristic. In other words, while some features of an individual may be quite unique, authenticity can only be derived from characteristics that the collective (or cultural elites) sees as valuable contributions to the diversification of society. This diversification is imbued with a kind of sanctity

because it serves as validating evidence for a democratic society's professed devotion to personal freedom. Thus the articulation of an authentic self on the basis of individual differences that run counter to perceived social norms and values indicates the larger society *must* be a free one because it not only tolerates these deviations but affirms them as the primary source of the individual's value in relation to the democratic enterprise writ large. And yet Taylor notes that this dynamic somewhat undermines the claim of the sweeping freedom to self-definition in the West. The possibilities for authentic identity are limited by what types of differences the society deems worthy: "unless some options are more significant than others, the very idea of self-choice falls into triviality and hence incoherence. Self-choice as an ideal makes sense only because some *issues* are more significant than others."[43]

The limiting role of the public has major implications on the primacy of personal feeling in identity formation. Lindholm notes that "the dominant trope for personal authenticity in modern America is emotivism—the notion that feeling is the most potent and real aspect of the self."[44] But the role of others in bestowing recognition ensures that "your feeling a certain way can never be sufficient grounds for respecting your position, because your feeling can't *determine* what is [socially] significant."[45] Given this reality, authenticity takes on a paradoxical cast: on the one hand, what authenticity means is being "fundamentally out of step with the mainstream,"[46] but it also entails being out of step *in ways that are very much in line with broader cultural values*. And this out-of-stepness must be performed in ways that correspond with the rhetorical expectations of the audience. Out of this contradiction springs the modern ethos, an idea emphasized by the scholarship and art produced during its gestational period.

The Heroic Return: Authenticity as Epistrophic Experience

While Hadot subscribes to the traditional opposition between epistrophe and metanoia, he nevertheless asserts that they are "differing responses to identical aspirations"—that is, they are both strategies by which people might inhabit some truer mode of being.[47] He characterizes epistrophe as a "recollection" that "mimics the original unity before the being," "an awakening remembrance of a time gone by."[48] Epistrophe's homecoming is contrasted with metanoia's departure, "the overturning of the spirit, a radical renovation."[49] For centuries prior to the modern era, metanoia was the default model for the

rhetoric of transformation. But in the context of modern authenticity, metanoia is an untenable model because it necessarily entails regret and rejection of the self—attitudes that now signal inauthenticity. Epistrophic conversion provides a model much better suited to the demands of the modern politics of the self because it is always framed as a revelatory embrace of a preexisting self. But in epistrophe, the convert does not *become someone else*: he becomes who he was. And many converts who testify to an epistrophic conversion have nevertheless become someone very different in the eyes of their audiences. If an individual "returned" to a self that was always already recognized as authentic in the eyes of the audience, there would be no need to publicly testify to change—it would be accepted without discussion. The fact that so many modern conversions require testimony on the part of the individual in order to authenticate the identity indicates that today's transformations are still firmly grounded in the metanoic realm. The modern convert imbues metanoic rhetoric with features of epistrophic conversion as a means to undertake a transformation without performing a self-rejection (and thereby conceding some inauthenticity). As Western society moved beyond the Enlightenment, thinkers across the disciplines began to emphasize the epistrophic aspects of personal transformation.

Guignon also notices the transition from the metanoic to the epistrophic model: in the past, most people were seeking to inhabit an identity that was presently beyond their reach. Today, most people are trying to become who they already are.[50] But some thinkers, particularly those coming at the question from psychoanalytic and mythological angles, see epistrophe as a prehistoric archetype that reflects an essential component of human development. Joseph Campbell reads the traditional narrative of the hero quest as a metaphor for the process of identity formation. The everyman begins in a situation where the collective to which he belongs is ill or fallen in some way—the trope of the wasteland embodies this theme. Thus the everyman leaves his home, on a mission to accomplish some particular goal that will revitalize the kingdom, whether that means defeating a dragon, rescuing a princess, winning a treasure, discovering some magic elixir, or a combination of these things. Of course, the quest to save the kingdom is first a quest for the everyman to transcend his averageness—his adventure represents his acquisition of identity, his transition from nobody to hero. But Campbell notes a feature of the narrative arc that is often forgotten: "the adventurer still must return with his life-transmuting trophy."[51] This new encounter between society and the savior is a critical test because it is actually a public

referendum on the hero's status as such. Campbell explains that the completion of the quest (and therefore, of the personal transformation) depends on the quester's ability to "survive the impact of the world."[52] And Campbell shows that, again and again, myth and folklore depicts manqué heroes who reject this part of the quest and seek to isolate themselves and the truth they have discovered from the broader culture—a choice that often meets with tragic consequences.[53] But should the hero return—should the epistrophic culmination of the transformation come to pass—he is faced with a new task. In order to achieve public recognition of the new identity, he must "knit together his two worlds."[54] Put differently, Campbell's hero faces the exact same problem as Paul of Tarsus faced: how to reconcile the world of his flesh (his Jewishness and the hedonism of the pagan world) with his inner spiritual identity (his Christianity as fundamental opposition to the flesh). His ability to achieve this reconciliation in the eyes of his Jewish, Christian, and Greek audiences was the main rhetorical work of his change from Saul into Paul.

It must also be noted that the everyman becomes the hero only through opposition to the conventions and values of society: "It is not society that is to guide and save the creative hero, but precisely the reverse."[55] But this begs the question: What is it that the hero creates? The hero creates a prototype for a new ethos, a mode of being that is different than the norm. Again, it is this difference that demonstrates the superiority and authenticity of the new type. Campbell explains this ethos through the use of religious language: "The divine being is a revelation of the omnipotent Self, which dwells within us all. The contemplation of life thus should be undertaken as a meditation on one's own immanent divinity."[56] Because this divine self exists within everyone, each person takes on a moral obligation to attain the prototype. But if *everyone* is a hero, the concept of the hero is liquidated: the extraordinary becomes the ordinary.

In *The Origins and History of Consciousness*, Erich Neumann elaborates on these themes. Adding to the Jungian binary of introversion and extroversion, Neumann invents a third term: *centroversion*. Centroversion is the name given to a psychic phenomenon that parallels the hero quest but reimagined as an internal drama. The goal of the individual who pursues a unified identity is to rescue the unconscious—to bring it to light as a conscious component of the self.[57] By this definition, centroversion is an approximate synonym with modern metanoia.[58] Because society has its own collective unconscious that works to repress the individual's consciousness of himself, the completion of

the quest pits the self against society.[59] Still, this work redounds to the benefit of the collective, even if this is not necessarily the objective of the hero, who "does not seek to change the world with his struggle. . . . Self-transformation is his true aim, and the liberating effect this has upon the world is only secondary."[60] The benefit reaped by society is the emergence of the prototype for a new ethos, one that Neumann explains could not be inhabited from within the cultural matrix until the hero's victory: "The hero or Great Individual . . . realizes the new values, the 'new images.' His orientation comes from the 'voice,' from the unique, inner utterance of the self, which has all the immediacy of a 'dictate.'"[61] The framework for authenticity is thus writ mythic: personal feelings are the key to (re)discovering the eternal essence of the self in the unconscious, and the virtuous (i.e., authentic) person is the one who cannot resist these feelings, even if (especially if) those feelings run counter to pieties of the collective unconscious. Thus the hero achieves the end of centroversion: an epistrophic return to a unified self through which he "molds [society] into shape by molding himself."[62]

The emergence of the epistrophic model of transformation is also documented in the transition from romanticism to modernism in the art world. The time period of this transition coincides with Trilling's account of the transition from the virtue of sincerity to authenticity. Guignon frames romanticism as a reaction to the ways that Enlightenment science had demystified the world. Yet for all the romantic celebration of the natural world, he notes that the movement was ultimately a rejection of nature's deterministic power: "the true goal of the Romantic quest is spiritual autonomy, and in relation to this goal the experience of oneness with nature is merely a preliminary stage. . . . The ultimate destination is the recognition of the absolute priority of the creative powers of the human imagination *over* both the natural self and nature."[63] Further, Guignon explains that the main objective of the romantic project was *recovery*—recovery of a preexisting self that was violated and effaced by the restrictions of culture.[64] Put differently, the epistrophic aspects of identity formation were already emerging even before the advent of modernism. But modern art insisted even more forcefully on a search for a (lost) self as central to the virtue of authenticity. Art became a mechanism for plumbing the depths of one's own interiority. The reason that modern art is notoriously "difficult" art is because, as a document of self-searching, it must be somewhat unintelligible to its audience—as I have shown, authenticity and its public value derive from the self's ineffable difference and its opposition to cultural norms and expectations. Guignon observes

that as authenticity was increasingly recognized as a virtue, there is a movement away from the long tradition of mimetic art: to merely *copy* the world (rather than create it) is necessarily unoriginal and thus inauthentic.[65] And as the true self must be unencumbered by outside demands, the artist-as-self no longer has any "compulsion to communicate anything to anyone."[66]

There are simply too many examples of the epistrophic quest for self in the modern literary tradition to document here. T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* has strong epistrophic aspects, as does his assertion in *Four Quartets* that

> *We shall not cease from exploration*
> *And the end of all our exploring*
> *Will be to arrive where we started*
> *And know the place for the first time.*[67]

The Great Gatsby is another example of such a work. But one of the most powerful literary depictions of modern metanoia comes from Willa Cather's novel *The Professor's House*. The book revolves around an aging professor, Godfrey St. Peter, and his apprehension at moving from an older house (with his beloved study) to a new one. The houses are clearly symbols of the self, signifying the spatial conceptions of ethos as a "haunting" or inhabitation. Over the course of the novel, St. Peter feels a growing alienation from his wife and his newly married daughters. His melancholy is compounded by the grief that he feels at the death of his vivacious young friend and brilliant student Tom Outland. As the narrative nears its conclusion, St. Peter's family is traveling abroad while he lives in his old house. During this time, the professor has what can only be called an identity crisis that hinges exactly on the question of authenticity.

St. Peter whiles the summer away alone, enjoying the nearby lakes and woods in a state between melancholy and euphoric bliss. In the waning summer, "He was cultivating a novel mental dissipation—and enjoying a new friendship. Tom Outland had not come back again through the garden door (as he had so often done in dreams!), but another boy had: the boy the Professor had long ago left behind him in Kansas, in the Solomon Valley—the original, unmodified Godfrey St. Peter."[68] This metanoia is clearly of an epistrophic character, one that highlights the many features of authenticity. The narrator notes that this was a "lost" self that he had returned to: "St. Peter [had] forgot that boy had ever lived."[69] Further, it was this rediscovered self that still embodied his essence, even after so many years: it

"was the realest of his lives, and . . . all the years between had been accidental and ordered from the outside. . . . [T]he design of his life had been the work of this secondary social man."[70] Here, we observe the fissure between the authentic self and the front that society demands. Confronted with the choice between living for himself and being-for-others, St. Peter affirms the higher priority of the self: "He seemed to be at the root of the matter; Desire under all desires, Truth under all truths. He seemed to know, among other things, that he was solitary and must always be so."[71]

Cather's use of the name "St. Peter" for her main character facilitates a connection to Christian metanoia—but the metanoia that Godfrey undergoes consists in *embracing* the older self instead of rejecting it. Finally, his transformation highlights the way that modern metanoia cannot accommodate the self-recrimination and remorse that marked earlier models of conversion: "The Professor knew, of course, that adolescence had grafted a new creature into the original one. . . . What he had not known was that, at any given time, that first nature could *return* to a man, *unchanged*. . . . Perhaps this *reversion* did not often occur, but he knew it had happened to him. . . . *He did not regret his life*; but he was indifferent to it. It seemed to him like the life of another person."[72] These italicized passages indicate the modern metanoic process, where the joyful, epistrophic theme of return to the self transplants the remorseful break with the self that defined both rhetorical and religious metanoia.

Modernism provided various dramatizations of authenticity, the self, and epistrophe, but these ideas were being worked out more explicitly in the work of modern philosophers. Again, I do not mean to suggest that the concept of the return to self was wholly a product of modern life. This concept was a feature of Platonic thought. And Hegel even articulated the problem in its modern dimensions in *Phenomenology of Spirit* when he observed that self-consciousness "come[s] *out of itself*" through a "return *into itself*."[73] But while these concerns with identity formation were peripheral for earlier philosophers, modern thinkers put them at the center of their investigations. Friedrich Nietzsche is perhaps the first to put the problem of identity and the art of living at the core of his philosophy. This is best embodied in his idea of the eternal return, an idea first hinted at in *The Gay Science*, then developed further in later works.

The concern with self-fashioning and ethos is written all over *The Gay Science*. In a characteristic passage, Nietzsche affirms the idea that becoming a "self" is fundamentally a creative act: "To 'give style' to one's character—that

is a grand and rare art!"[74] Later, he proclaims that people "want to be the poets of [their] lives, and first of all in the smallest and most commonplace matters."[75] It is near the end of the book that the eternal return is first associated with the ethical question of how we should live. In a section called "The Heaviest Burden," Nietzsche poses a hypothetical scenario: "What if a demon crept after thee into thy loneliest loneliness some day or night, and said to thee: 'This life, as thou livest it at present, and hast lived it, thou must live it once more, and also innumerable times; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and every sigh, and all the unspeakably small and great in thy life must come to thee again, and all in the same series and sequence[?]'"[76] Seemingly directing his attention to the reader, Nietzsche suggests: "If that thought acquired power over thee as thou art, it would transform thee, and perhaps crush thee; the question with regard to all and everything: 'Dost thou want this once more, and also for innumerable times?'"[77] This purports to be some guidance for living authentically: to do so, one must consider whether one's actions accord with one's deepest feelings and desires. Gilles Deleuze also sees the eternal return as an aspiring toward a metanoic ethos, an opening to "the possibility of transmutation as a new way of feeling, thinking, and above all, being."[78] But because it is the eternal *return* that enables this art of living, we see that epistrophe occupies a major place in this model of transformation.

Deleuze rejects the idea that the eternal return relates to identicality, instead associating it with the movements of difference and repetition that he is known for: "What is the being of becoming? What is the being inseparable from that which is becoming? Return is the being of that which becomes. Return is the being of becoming itself, the being which is affirmed in becoming."[79] It is important not to oversimplify Nietzsche's concept of the eternal return, but Deleuze's allergy to identicality somewhat distorts the idea. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche gives a richer account than in *The Gay Science*, one that clarifies that sameness is definitely in play:

> But the complex of causes in which I am entangled will recur—it will create me again! I myself am part of these causes of the eternal recurrence. I shall return, with this sun, with this earth, with this eagle, with this serpent—*not to a new life or a better life or a similar life: I shall return to this identical and self-same life*, in the greatest things and in the smallest, to teach once more the eternal recurrence of all things, to speak once

> more the teaching of the great noontide of earth and man, to tell of the Superman once more.[80]

For Nietzsche, the eternal return is about the experience of consciousness as ethos: "For your animals well know, O Zarathustra, *who you are and must become*: behold, you are the teacher of the eternal recurrence, that is now your destiny."[81] The Superman is nothing but the man who fully inhabits this epistrophic mode of being *while embracing the creative potential of the self*—and this creativity is where the Deleuzean idea of difference is instructive. This ethos of authenticity clearly takes on the status of something like a virtue in Nietzsche (or perhaps a "new value"). Discussing the composition of *Zarathustra* in the autobiographical *Ecce Homo*, he says that "the basic conception of the work, the *idea of eternal recurrence*, [is] the highest formula of affirmation that can possibly be attained."[82] This affirmational character is displayed in the epistrophic dimensions of modern metanoia.

Heidegger, almost certainly the first philosopher of authenticity as such, also links the concept with ethos and the process of self-formation. *Being and Time* is another work where individual authenticity takes shape in opposition to the mundane values of the crowd. In fact, it seems as though social life itself is what inhibits the expression of authenticity: Heidegger says that "averageness" is "an existential character of the they," one that constitutes a "*levelling down* of all possibilities for being."[83] His description of Da-sein (as the being of being itself) reflects some of the themes of the quest, in this case the quest for identity: "The self of everyday Da-sein is the *they-self* which we distinguish from the *authentic self*, the self which has explicitly grasped itself. As the they-self, Da-sein is *dispersed* in the they and must first find itself." Throughout, Heidegger's language implies that this authentic self preexists the they, and thus the search that Da-sein is committed to is one that involves an epistrophic recovery: "If Da-sein explicitly discovers the world and brings it near, if it discloses its authentic being to itself, this discovering of 'world' and disclosing of Da-sein always comes about *by clearing away coverings and obscurities* with which Da-sein cuts itself off from itself."[84] In this way, the preexisting authentic self is revealed and returned to a space outside the they once again.

Burke is the most prominent among the rhetoricians who discussed these ideas with a distinctly rhetorical vocabulary. In *On Symbols and Society*, Burke reorients the Aristotelian concept of entelechy to the discursive realm. Aristotle described entelechy as a metaphysical and biological force

by which beings and things naturally moved to actualize the potentials that were inherent to them.[85] In contrast, Burke analyzes the concept through the lenses of symbolic action and the self. Borrowing a phrase from Freud, he calls entelechy a "destiny compulsion" in which "the sufferer unconsciously strives to form his destiny in accordance with [an] earlier pattern."[86] This "unconscious" attempt to repeat an earlier mode of being recalls the psychoanalytic accounts of epistrophic transformation seen in Campbell, Neumann, and Jung. Specifically, Burke defines *entelechy* as "the individual's potentialities for becoming a fully representative member of its class."[87] This underscores its connections to identity and ethos, but in order for something to be "representative" it must be in some way *unoriginal*; this suggests that Burke might not see authenticity as a primary aim of self-formation. But the virtue of authenticity is implied in the way that Burke characterizes entelechy as a pursuit for personal perfection in which the self puts forth "almost superhuman efforts . . . to give his life a certain *form*, so shaping his relations to people in later years that they will conform perfectly to an emotional or psychological pattern already established in some earlier formative situation."[88] Ironically, the recognition that converts pursue depends on intelligibility: the *truly* authentic self is the *wholly* original self, but the wholly original self is *unrecognizable* as type. Therefore, the truly authentic self cannot do the work of identity formation. *True* identity operates by recourse to a *type*—the sameness of the thing that is "a fully representative member of its class."[89] In pursuing perfection, the self tries to align the pattern of "representation" (mimesis) with the image of the ideal (the highest embodiment of a type). That this process is guided by the emotions toward the recovery of an "earlier formative situation" shows that Burke is describing an epistrophic quest for authenticity.

To this point I have sketched the emergence of authenticity from the early modern period to the mid-twentieth century. One might assume that the postmodern trend in philosophy (beginning after World War II) would be opposed to the notion of authenticity. But as I show, that is not entirely true. The general attitude of recent thinkers (Sartre, Foucault, Derrida, Baudrillard, etc.) is that "essence" is a deeply problematic concept: the self is usually understood as being "a product of discourse" or a "social construct." Postmodern writers often argue that the experience of "subjectivity" (or selfhood, or consciousness) is an epiphenomenon that results from recurring interactions of power in society. This undermines the role of the individual in self-fashioning: faced with the exponentially greater force of social

convention, there is little space for the human will in identity formation. And yet because the social forces operate "behind the scenes," people maintain some illusory sense of self-determination. Following this current of thought, one might expect that authenticity simply does not make sense: there is no "essential core" to the individual that is not a product of social power, and so no self is any more authentic than any other one. Authenticity is no more a feature of subjectivity than bounciness is a feature of an eggshell. Curiously, though, as postmodern and anti-essentialist modes of thinking have gained philosophical currency, so has the political sense that the individual is the sole inventor and arbiter of her own identity. One need look no further than the contemporary university to prove this: in humanities and social science departments where postmodern thought remains most vital, there also exists a vehement insistence on the individual's right to fashion an authentic identity in accord with personal feeling—an identity that others are *obligated* to acknowledge and respect. How did this happen? Part of it is that the purveyors of postmodern critique are resistant to focusing their acidic analytic gaze on practices and ideas that are conducive to their political commitments. But Guignon offers a compelling complementary explanation:

> But even though postmodern thinkers give up on the original conception of authenticity as a matter of being true to a substantial Real Me, they make claim to a new ideal—a sort of postmodern version of authenticity—that preserves some of what the original ideal promised. This is the ideal of clear-sightedly and courageously embracing the fact that there is no "true self" to be, of recognizing that where we formerly had sought a true self, there is only an empty space, a gap or a lack. The postmodern ideal, then, is to *be* that lack of self with playfulness and ironic amusement. . . . We are really true to ourselves, in other words, when we unflinchingly face the fact that there is nothing to be true to.[90]

In other words, postmodern theory only leaves us with the jouissance of inventing—not inventing a self but inventing a creative means of pretending to be somebody. This account calls to mind some of the most acclaimed films of Woody Allen, in which his characters' ethos lies in their anxiety for "be[ing] that lack of self." But despite the left's revelatory account of this lack, when it comes to countering right-wing complaints about inauthentic forms of identity, the acolytes of postmodernity insist that there is nothing

playful at all here: any such complaints are deemed an attack on one's right to a self-determined social existence. These contradictory impulses regarding the self and its becoming are not without precedent. It was also evident in some of the foundational thinkers of modernity—thinkers who viewed the self as the result of a process of construction (sometimes agentive, sometimes passive), even as they characterized epistrophic modes of identity formation in which the self *returns* to some preexisting mode of being. These dual impulses between essentialism and constructivism, between nature's determinism and the self's creative powers, and between metanoic and epistrophic rhetorics of conversion are characteristic of all the personal transformations of our era. The following case studies illustrate this truth.

Rachel Dolezal and Caitlyn Jenner: Rhetoric and the Politics of Personal Authenticity

Two recent personal transformations that are familiar to the American public are those of Caitlyn Jenner (formerly Bruce Jenner, the gold medal winner of the 1976 Olympic men's decathlon) and Rachel Dolezal (former Caucasian and former president of the Spokane chapter of the NAACP). While Jenner announced that he would begin transitioning to a woman after spending his entire life as a man,[91] Dolezal eventually testified that she was a black woman after living most of her life as white. Both of these individuals endured public spectacles related to their transformations in 2015 and testified, through speech and physical alterations, to the authenticity of their conversions. But while Jenner was generally applauded by the public for her courage in heeding the authentic call of the self, Dolezal was widely criticized for an inauthentic performance. In the pages that follow, I do not engage in a comparison of the authenticity of these transformations: put differently, I am not interested in whether Jenner *really is* a woman or whether Dolezal *really is* black. Rather, I contrast these cases to show the implicit rhetorical criteria that determine the authentic or inauthentic performance in the eyes of popular audiences. Further, I underscore the way that modern metanoic testimony employs epistrophic themes, which indicates a conflicted stance on identity and its relation to essence.

Although both rhetorical and religious metanoia had political ramifications, the unique character of publicity and media in our era ensure that the debates over the authenticity of conversions like those of Jenner and Dolezal

are dominated by political concerns. Indeed, Kelly Myers cautions us that our arguments over personal metanoia are sometimes quarrels over the *implications* of the conversion rather than the conversion itself: metanoia "can be understood as existing at the heart of some of the most passionately fought debates, as conversions or transformations of thought that are experienced as truth can create seemingly impenetrable walls between clashing ideologies."[92] Because the reality of personal transformation is precisely what is at stake in the discourse on personal conversions as represented in the media, metanoia, as the rhetorical figure of transformation, serves as a critical tool for restructuring the concept of ethos in the context of the trans moment.

Jenner's Conversion from Man to Woman

In a study of the discursive construction of self among trans women, Douglas Mason-Schrock found that his interviewees used a number of tropes to signify the authenticity of their male-to-female transformations. Among the commonplaces of their metanoic testimonies are childhood memories of cross-dressing and gender nonconformity, failure or disinterest in the masculine endeavor of sport,[93] transitional stages of denial, and strategic use of personal distractions to alleviate the suffering associated with gender dysphoria.[94] These narrative components often facilitate public recognition that the new self is authentic. Mason-Schrock explains that through these stories of conversion "individuals did not simply learn new labels for themselves; the changes were more profound. The power of self-narratives, and of group affirmation, brought into being a new 'true self'—one almost antithetical to the old. In learning to tell different stories about themselves, transsexuals learned to be different people."[95] Caitlyn Jenner's account of Bruce Jenner's metanoia reflects these narrative elements in many ways.

Bruce Jenner was assigned male at birth in 1949. By all appearances, his early life was unremarkable, with the exception that he excelled at sports. Jenner began training in track and field events in high school, winning New York state championships in pole vaulting and the high jump.[96] Jenner attempted his first-ever decathlon in 1970 and took to the event immediately. By 1972, he was on the United States Men's Olympic Team. Teammates noted that his determination and effort were unparalleled. In preparation for the 1976 Olympiad in Montreal, Jenner coached himself, keeping a hurdle in his living room for practice at home.[97] After crushing the competition at the Olympics, Jenner catapulted onto Wheaties boxes and into American

sporting lore. His victory marked the beginning of a public life that would both complicate and facilitate his transformation. The masculine themes of his rise to greatness called for metanoic testimony that countered his public image.

In the past decade, Jenner is perhaps better known for his marriage to Kris Kardashian. The Kardashian women are celebrity socialites who have a television show called *Keeping Up with the Kardashians*, on which Bruce Jenner played a small role. Bruce began the critical stages of his transformation into Caitlyn privately and grew increasingly reclusive, which fueled media speculation that something was afoot. Paparazzi photos appeared in tabloids that showed Jenner with a significantly altered appearance. By 2015, Bruce was ready to begin the unveiling of Caitlyn. In April, Bruce sat down with Diane Sawyer on *20/20* to begin what would be the public narration of his metanoic conversion. By agreeing to this interview during his transformation (but *prior* to its completion), Jenner primed the public for the final revelation of Caitlyn in *Vanity Fair*. After some anxious tears, Jenner opened by confessing that her gender troubles began at a young age. Lowering her hand a few feet off the ground, Bruce said,[98] "I've always been confused about my gender since I was this big."[99] She continued, "So here I am stuck . . . and I hate the word 'girl stuck in a guy's body,' I hate that terminology. . . . I'm . . . I'm me, I'm a person, and this is who I am. Uh, I'm not stuck in anybody's body, it's just who I am . . . as a human being. My brain is much more female than male. . . . I look at it this way: Bruce, always telling a lie. He's lived a lie his whole life about who he is. And, um, I can't do that any longer."[100] In publicly confessing these truths, truths that run counter to widely held traditional notions of sex and gender, Jenner uses language in the tradition of Montaigne and Rousseau: the identification of personal feeling (and its public expression) as the highest ethical obligation of the self. By refusing the notion that she is stuck in a "guy's body," Jenner implicitly denies that she made a transformation from male to female. This parallels Erin F. Johnston's assertion that metanoic conversion is often described by the convert in terms that deny a transformation occurred. She notes that the people offering self-narratives often claim that they "do not undergo a transformation" but merely unveil "their true, authentic selves that were previously hidden, forgotten, or not fully articulated."[101]

The metanoic moment of Jenner's unveiling comes early in the interview. Sawyer asks "Are you a woman?" Bruce responds, "Um . . . yes, for all intents and purposes, I am a woman. People look at me differently. They see

you as this macho male. But my heart and my soul and everything I do in life, um, it is part of me. That female side is part of me. That's who I am. I was not genetically born that way. As of now, I have all the male parts, and all that kind of stuff, so, in a lot of ways we're different, OK, um, but we still identify as female. And that's very hard for Bruce Jenner to say."[102] The language of this confession both affirms and undermines the idea that Bruce has always been a woman. The use of second-person and plural pronouns indicate both a distance from the former self and an integration of multiple selves. Further, for Jenner to refer to her "female side" suggests that there is another side, presumably a male side, that suggests that she might not be *wholly* woman.[103] It is also important to note that she equates actual womanhood ("I am a woman") with the feminine ethos ("we still identify as female"). In electing to "identify" as female and positioning that identity as a "deeper" part of who she is, Jenner orients the conversion as an epistrophic one. Although Caitlyn's coming out was experienced as a return by Jenner, it represented a departure for many in her audience, who were familiar with Bruce. Thus Jenner was unable to entirely dispense with metanoic themes in her testimony.

The tension between the metanoic and epistrophic aspects of Jenner's testimony continued, even after its completion. Two months after the *20/20* interview, the new self was formally unveiled with the publication of the July 2015 issue of *Vanity Fair*. From the cover, a glamour girl gazed at the camera; the text read, "Call me Caitlyn."[104] The taking of a new name has, of course, been one of the defining features of religious metanoia: Jacob became Israel, Simon became Peter, Saul became Paul. By becoming Caitlyn, Jenner becomes a new person, which is different from an epistrophe. If Jenner was simply enacting an epistrophic return to who she had always been, it would make more sense to keep the name Bruce. A new name signifies a new ethos, wholly different from what was there before. And so, Jenner's description contains both epistrophic and metanoic language to persuade audiences of her authenticity. The magazine appearance began a series of engagements in which Caitlyn modeled the modern mode of metanoic transformation in which epistrophe features so prominently. A common feature of transgender narratives is early memories of cross-dressing. The *Vanity Fair* article explains that "when Bruce was around 10, he would sneak into his mother's closet, sometimes his sister's. He would put on a dress and maybe wrap a scarf around his head and walk outside."[105] Such claims are routinely used to signify authenticity. Jenner also recounts that cross-dressing continued

throughout his adult life—it was an open part of his marriages,[106] and in public appearances he would often be wearing women's underwear under his suit.[107] Although he began the bodily dimensions of his transformation in the 1980s by taking hormones, he later abandoned the process out of concern for his family.[108] Mason-Schrock notes that the "most commonly accepted evidence of transsexualism in the transgender community was cross-dressing or fantasizing about cross-dressing *as a child*. The age at which one began such activities was significant because transsexuals believed that the 'true self' was most likely to express itself at an early age."[109] This theme in which the convert returns to the authentic self of childhood, unmodified by society, is an epistrophic theme that is common to Rousseau and Romantic thinkers.[110]

Sporting also plays a significant role in much of the metanoic testimony of transgender individuals. Interestingly, many of those undergoing a male-to-female transition claim that they were always uninterested in sports or even unathletic.[111] Thus, as a world champion in one of the toughest athletic competitions that humans have devised, Jenner's life deviated from the conventional narrative. Mason-Schrock's research is useful in analyzing Jenner's depiction of her sporting success. Mason-Schrock demonstrates that while transgender people emphasize the parts of their past that support the authenticity of the transformation, they must also "*explain away* prior involvement in activities that signified their *un*wanted gender identity."[112] In these circumstances, the languages of denial and distraction are sometimes used to account for such apparent inconsistencies. For example, in a *Sports Illustrated* cover story about Caitlyn's new life, the author notes Jenner's "complex relationship with the [gold] medal," which she keeps in a bathroom drawer underneath her manicure supplies. This seemingly arbitrary detail might serve to symbolize the subordinate role of masculinity (the medal) in relation to Caitlyn's dominant femininity (the manicure supplies in the top drawer). Jenner explains that "the decathlon . . . was the perfect distraction."[113] She continues, "Little Caitlyn has been in there since I was this big. . . . I was female inside, but I wasn't an effeminate male. So I could easily hide in the male world. My life was distraction after distraction after distraction. Being macho was a way for me to try to convince myself that the woman living inside of me really isn't living inside of me."[114] According to Mason-Schrock, such explanations of distraction and denial allow transgender individuals to address the parts of their lives that appear to contradict the new identity: all of those past behaviors were merely a

means of denying the authentic self, a way to delay the inevitable return to the essential self.[115] After hormone treatment, a tracheal shave, permanent hair removal, breast augmentation, and other surgeries,[116] the external self that Caitlyn presented to the public finally matched the internal self that she had known all along. During a break in the Sawyer interview, an anonymous voice-over says "[Jenner's] dream is to reemerge." The program then cuts back to the interview with Sawyer suggesting an answer: "So you can reemerge." Jenner happily exclaims "As myself! As myself. How simple is that? Isn't that great?"[117] This calls to mind a quotation cited earlier, from Rousseau, one of the great architects of authenticity: "My purpose is to display to my kind a portrait in every way true to nature, and the man I shall portray will be myself. Simply myself. I know my own heart."[118]

After the conversion, Jenner expressed joy for a more integrated self. In a *Vanity Fair* follow-up, she notes that Caitlyn "has a lot more friends than he [Bruce] ever had."[119] She also describes the unburdening of her heart as a kind of rhetorical metanoia: "Bruce always had to tell a lie, he was always living a lie, every day, he always had a secret from morning till night. Caitlyn doesn't have any secrets."[120] Despite the epistrophic themes of her conversion, Caitlyn emphasizes that Bruce was a separate man who lived a separate life—a feature of metanoic authenticity. Her use of the past tense when referring to Bruce underscores the divide between the past and the present: in some sense, Bruce died so that Caitlyn could be born, a phenomenon not dissimilar to metanoia in the Christian tradition.

Although some private citizens condemned Jenner for her transformation, the response from the culture industry and the mass media was very positive. Voices from throughout the cultural landscape commended Caitlyn for her bravery, honesty, authenticity, and beauty. In a CNN article, Greg Botelho notes that the transformation was "widely applauded."[121] Jenner was awarded *Glamour* magazine's Woman of the Year award. Criticism of Caitlyn was largely censured and, in some cases, silenced. On Twitter, for example, some users created a bot that automatically responded with condemnations to any user comments that referred to "Bruce Jenner" or referred to Caitlyn with masculine pronouns.[122] Collectively, such public celebrations of Jenner's transformation worked to implicitly affirm the authenticity of her womanhood and discouraged voices that disputed her new identity. Her performance was met with the recognition that allowed for the integrated self that is on display when Jenner discusses her newfound spiritual peace.

Dolezal's Conversion from White to Black

The notion of racial "passing" has played a significant role in the history of American race relations. While passing is stigmatized but generally tolerated, there is major resistance to the idea that it is possible to actually become a different race. However, this resistance is getting more difficult to maintain. Usually, when one discovers that a person of one race is adopting the signifiers of another racial identity, it is considered an instance of passing. And yet also implicit to the idea of passing is that the person in question intends to deceive audiences about his or her true identity: in effect, the passer knowingly undertakes an insincere performance. However, in the context of a postmodern, metanoic conception of ethos, the difference between passing, identification, and being take on a new complexity. The idea that someone is "deceiving" the public about "who they are" assumes that the audience knows the essence of that person's identity. But in the modern politics of the self, it is assumed that others cannot possibly know our true selves. Because personal identity is now premised upon the interior feelings and sentiments of the self—feelings that are inaccessible to people outside—the concept of "passing" is rendered moot. To accuse someone of passing is to suggest that one has access to the inner experience of that person. This problem is dramatized in the case of Rachel Dolezal, another example of the modern model of metanoic transformation.

Dolezal was born to Larry and Ruthanne Dolezal, a Caucasian couple, in Montana in 1977. In an interview with KXLY, an ABC affiliate serving Spokane, Washington, and Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, her parents say that Rachel was a highly intelligent, happy child with unique artistic gifts.[123] During Rachel's teenage years, the family adopted four children of African descent. Her mother locates this event as the beginning of Rachel's fascination with blackness: "After we adopted the four children, Rachel began to focus more on African-American issues, and, um, was in her artwork also very focused on the African-American portrait."[124] Her portfolio of "exclusively African-American portraiture" won her a full scholarship to Howard University, a historically black institution.[125] It appears that Howard (and Dolezal) considered her to be Caucasian when she was admitted, an inference that is supported by the fact that during her graduate study Dolezal sued the university for discrimination, claiming that she was passed over for employment and student aid opportunities in part because she was white.[126]

Her mother sees the period around the end of college as the time when her interest in African American culture took on a new intensity: "And then she went through her college years, and was married, and it was after the divorce that she started trying to establish a new identity as a different person."[127] Her mother frames Dolezal's conversion in terms of an art project. She claims that "Rachel is very good at using her artistic skills to transform herself."[128] "Rachel is a master artist," she said, "so she is able to disguise herself and make her appearance look like any ethnicity."[129] She even went so far as to say, "It's all fabrication. It's Rachel creating her own reality."[130] These quotations indicate her mother's belief that Rachel is aware of her whiteness; she posits that Rachel is deceiving others about her true essence—that she is putting on an inauthentic metanoic performance. In effect, Ruthanne asserts that this is a case of passing. There is other anecdotal evidence to suggest that, at first, this assertion was correct. In an interview, her adopted brother Zachariah explains that Dolezal was slowly changing her physical appearance, modifying her typically European features in ways that signified blackness: "It started out with the hair, and um, then she'd have, you know, a little darker tan, and it was very progressive."[131] Another adopted brother, Ezra, indicates that she was aware this was an attempt to portray herself as someone she was not: "She told me not to blow her cover about the fact that she had this secret life or alternate identity. . . . She told me not to tell anybody about Montana or her family over there. She said she was starting a new life . . . and this one person over there was actually going to be her black father."[132] This comment shows that Dolezal herself was concerned with the appearance of inauthenticity, suggesting that Dolezal was conscious of a deception or worried that audiences would perceive one. Dolezal's assertion that a black man who she had befriended was her father was one of a few unreliable statements that led to her eventual outing by KXLY and the *Coeur d'Alene Press*.[133]

While living in Idaho, Dolezal was prominently involved in public organizations dedicated to addressing issues faced by African Americans. By this time, she had altered her appearance in ways that led people to believe that she was black, and she strongly implied as much in ways that were not limited to her physicality. According to news reporting, in the span of a few years Dolezal made a number of reports to police claiming that she had been the victim of crimes at the hands of white supremacy groups in Coeur d'Alene (presumably because she was black). She reported that her house had been

burglarized and that threats were made against her life and to kidnap her son. She also reported finding a noose hung in her carport and a swastika on the door of her place of employment, among other reports filed with police.[134] None of the cases were resolved, and police had no leads. Around 2012, Dolezal moved to Spokane. Her dedication to social justice causes there helped her to rise quickly to influential positions in community organizations. By 2014, she was president of the Spokane chapter of the NAACP and chair of the Police Ombudsman Commission, an organization that worked to mediate police contact with minorities.

Meanwhile, Jeff Selle of the *Coeur d'Alene Press* was convinced that the hate crimes that Dolezal had reported in Idaho were fabricated. He then heard that she was reporting new crimes in Spokane, which led him to begin a more intense investigation in concert with Jeff Humphrey of KXLY.[135] Together, they found evidence that some of Dolezal's claims were false, including her assertions regarding the identity of her father. Humphrey set up a video interview with Dolezal under the pretense that they would be discussing her work with the NAACP and her victimization by white supremacists. Below I transcribe the moment that Humphrey confronts Dolezal about her identity, beginning with Humphrey contesting Dolezal's claim that her "father" was not at a recent awards ceremony:[136]

Jeff Humphrey (JH): Is that your dad? *(holding up photo of the black man Dolezal had asserted was her father)*
Rachel Dolezal (RD): Yeah, that's . . . that's my dad.
JH: This man right here is your father? Right there?
RD: *(smiling coyly)* You have a question about that?
JH: Yes, ma'am. I was wondering if your dad really is an African American man.
RD: That's a very . . . I mean . . . I don't know what you're implying. . .
JH: Are you African American?
RD: *(after a long pause)* I don't . . . I don't understand . . . the question of . . . I did tell you that, yes, that's my dad. And he was unable to come in January.
JH: Are your parents . . . are they white? *(Dolezal begins walking away hurriedly)*
RD: I re[fuse?] . . . I re . . . *(moving out of range of the camera and microphone)*

A media story about local hate crimes quickly became a story about a racial impostor, at which point it became a national news event. Passing is fundamentally an attempt to conceal. In that way, it appears to parallel Jenner's retreat from the public eye as she went through the critical stages of her transformation. But while Jenner was able to choose a moment and a friendly outlet to facilitate her revelation, Dolezal was revealed against her will. Dolezal stepped out into the public while performing traditional signifiers of African American culture; Jenner retreated from the public gaze as the transformation entered the critical stages, reemerging to utilize media as a way to prime the public for her inhabitation of a new ethos that she acknowledged up front. As a private person who became public (rather than vice versa), Dolezal faced a much different rhetorical challenge than Jenner. As Rachel's story gained steam, she was called to respond. Her choices were fairly limited: either apologize for an elaborate deception (claiming to be someone she was not) or move from an implicit claim of blackness (her initial passing phase) to an explicit claim of blackness (a new phase of identification and being). She chose the latter. By rejecting the claim that she was passing, Dolezal began an explicit defense of the virtue of authenticity as based in the inner experience of the subject. Really, it might have been her only choice: acknowledging a deception about who you are is an admission of inauthenticity—a revelation that renders the desired identity uninhabitable: a fate tantamount to a rhetorical death.

Mere days after Jenner's triumphant *Vanity Fair* cover hit newsstands, Dolezal sat down with Matt Lauer on the *Today Show* to offer her first public statements on the story. Her first explicit claim to an authentic transformation occurs early in their conversation.[137] Lauer asks, "Are you an African-American woman?" Dolezal responds, "I identify as black." The distinction between identifying *with* blackness and identifying *as* black is a crucial one—it demonstrates the difference between emotional solidarity and ontology, between passing and authenticity. This reference to personal "identification" is an indicator of the way the self relates to the self as such. In other words, it conceives of ethos as a product of one's inner experience of oneself, an identity based in personal feelings.

Dolezal's metanoic testimony reflects many of the features of Jenner's narrative. The age at which Dolezal felt some incongruence in her identity was immediately at issue. Holding up a photo of a very Caucasian-looking teenaged Dolezal, Lauer asked: "Is she a Caucasian woman or an African-American woman?" Dolezal answered, "I would say that visibly she would

be identified as white by people who see her." Lauer continued, "But at that time were you identifying yourself as African-American?" Hesitantly, Dolezal said, "In that picture, during that time, no." This suggests that her transition is a metanoic one: she once identified as white, and now she identifies as black. Yet in another part of the interview, she advances an epistrophic account that contradicts the metanoic one: "This goes back to a very early age with my self-identification with the black experience. Um, as a very young child." Lauer then asked, "When did it start?" Dolezal explained, "I would say about 5 years old. . . . I was drawing self-portraits with the brown crayon instead of the peach crayon, and the, you know, black curly hair, and you know, yeah, that was how I was portraying myself." Throughout the interview, Lauer worked to undermine the authenticity of her transformation, finally accusing her of passing by asking "When did you start deceiving people?" In turn, Dolezal offered perhaps the most detailed chronological explanation of her conversion: "Well, I . . . it's a little more complex. . . . I was actually identified when I was doing human rights work in north Idaho as first 'transracial,' and then when some of the opposition to the . . . work I was doing came forward, . . . the next newspaper article identified me as being a biracial woman, and then the next article when there were actually burglaries, nooses, etcetera, was 'this is happening to a black woman,' and I never corrected. . . . I don't . . . put on blackface as a performance."[138]

Over the following weeks, Dolezal offered metanoic testimony to a number of media outlets in pursuit of public recognition of her new identity. In an interview with MSNBC's Melissa Harris-Perry, Dolezal explained: "I have really gone there, with the experience, in terms of having two black sons, owning what it really means to experience and live black . . . blackness. . . . I, from a very young age, felt . . . I don't know, a spiritual, visceral, just a very instinctual connection with, um, black is beautiful, um, you know, just . . . just the black experience. . . . And I didn't know how to articulate that as a young child. . . . I was socially conditioned to not own that and to be limited to whatever biological identity was thrust upon me."[139] The idea that whiteness was put upon her by people outside indicates an account of identity that views the properly formed self as a product of within. Further, her comment does not acknowledge any friction between essence/being and feeling/identifying: she has "lived" blackness as a result of her "felt" affinity for it. Talking to *The Guardian* about her earliest sense of personal identity, she said: "I would have these imaginary scenarios in my mind where I was

really a princess in Egypt and [my parents] kidnapped and adopted me."[140] This fantasy could be a metaphor for her pursuit of an epistrophic return to native soil, ontologically speaking. In various contexts, Dolezal also attempted to signify her authenticity by linking her experience to Jenner's.[141] And yet, despite great rhetorical effort, Dolezal was widely mocked and condemned in public discourse.

While Jenner explained that she had been lying her whole life and was celebrated for telling the truth as evidenced through her metanoic testimony, commentators assumed that the authentic Rachel Dolezal was the white girl from Montana, and they viewed her transformation as a lie. Writing for The Root, a popular website covering black issues, Yesha Callahan calls Dolezal "a basket case."[142] In the *Washington Post*, Jonathan Capehart wrote that "rather than be down with the cause as a white woman, she put on a bizarre minstrel show."[143] Diana Ozemebhoya Eromosele questions "how [Dolezal] managed to get one over on so many black folks," noting that she "pulled the wool over so many people's eyes that she sashayed her lily-white self up the ranks of a local NAACP chapter."[144] These statements are representative of the wave of media that deemed her conversion inauthentic.

The controversy came with major consequences for Dolezal. She was fired from her position as a columnist at a local paper, and her teaching contract at Eastern Washington University (where she taught in the Africana Education program) was not renewed.[145] Only days after her appearance on the *Today Show*, she resigned as president of the NAACP. Her resignation letter lamented that "the dialogue ha[d] unexpectedly shifted internationally to [her] personal identity in the context of defining race and ethnicity," and expressed that her departure was "in the best interest of the NAACP."[146] About six months later, Dolezal confessed that her ordeal had been personally devastating: "I'm trying to regroup, rebuild, remember who I was before the frenzy. . . . Locally, it feels like I am invisible. People don't want to associate with me. This great leader that won all these awards no longer exists. It's just like this disgust, and that was really hurtful, really hurtful."[147] In trying to get back to who she was "before the frenzy," she shows she is pursuing yet another epistrophe. Her sense that her former identity "no longer exists" shows that the audience's perception of authenticity was paramount: even deep personal conviction regarding one's identity cannot sustain the transformed self without public assent. The public's nonrecognition effectively annihilated her ethos.

The Criteria of Metanoic Authenticity

Analysis of the public responses to Dolezal and Jenner reveals the various criteria that validate, or invalidate, the authenticity of the modern metanoic conversion. Before elaborating, it is important to recall that authenticity is not the same as sincerity. Sincerity is a question of whether the individual believes their metanoic testimony. Put differently, sincerity is a matter of whether the speaker means what she says—it is a subjective, internal rhetorical phenomenon that functions irrespective of the judgment of the audience. In contrast, authenticity is an objective, external judgment that an audience renders concerning whether what a person says about themselves is true. The quest for recognition from others obligates one to a rhetorical performance of one's ethos, and, as Bryan Crable suggests, "to fail to present to others a persuasive performance is to fail to demonstrate a properly formed identity."[148] Melissa J. Brown echoes this idea when she writes that "identities are the negotiated outcome of what people claim for themselves and what people in their social environment allow them to enact."[149] We can determine the criteria that a new authentic identity must meet by analyzing media discourse, the field where personal metanoic testimony is publicly assessed.

Biology

For the public, the most familiar criterion used to assess identity transformation in cases such as those of Dolezal and Jenner is biology. Many claim that while gender is socially constructed (and thus mutable), sex is a matter of chromosomal and anatomical characteristics (and therefore cannot be changed). Racial considerations are similar. Many people assume that race is a matter of inheritance and family history. Others assert that race has no biological reality; instead, it is a rhetorical invention that manifests real effects in the public sphere.[150] As an object of discourse, biology is mobilized both to affirm and to reject personal claims of transformation, and the legitimacy of biology as a determinant of identity is highly dependent on whose identity is in question (and in what contexts). But in contemporary educated circles, the rejection of the biological holds sway: embracing a constructivist perspective is an affirmation of metanoic possibility and personal agency. From the postmodern position, an epistrophic model simply does not make

sense; there is no "prior" self to return to. Those who affirm the authenticity of Jenner's and Dolezal's transformations question biological data as a criterion of authenticity, while those who deny their authenticity underscore biology.

In an attempt to explain the inconsistency of affirming Jenner's transformation while rejecting Dolezal's, Vanessa Vitiello Urquhart argues that sex does have a biological reality, but "science has largely discarded the idea that racial difference . . . ha[s] any basis in genetics."[151] For Urquhart, this means that Jenner's sense of a female self has a medical basis, while Dolezal's sense of a black self does not. Indeed, during a telephone interview with the *Coeur d'Alene Press* as her identity was being questioned, Dolezal initially appealed to biology in an attempt to legitimize her blackness, telling the interviewer: "They can DNA test me if they want to."[152] Months later, Dolezal would argue against the biological criterion: "What I believe about race is that race is not real. It's not a biological reality."[153] This narrative inconsistency may have been due to the fact that (unlike Jenner) Dolezal did not get to plan the media rollout of her new identity. Nevertheless, it certainly undermined the authenticity of the conversion. Working to support Dolezal by displacing the public focus on biology, former MSNBC host Melissa Harris-Perry suggested that authentic blackness was more about personal experience.[154] This, in turn, was met with an angry rejoinder from Yesha Callahan, who wrote: "It's mind-boggling . . . that some of Dolezal's biggest defenders have been black people."[155]

Jenner also had to reckon with biological conceptions of identity. As mentioned previously, during the Diane Sawyer interview she said that despite being born male and having "all the male parts," she was still a woman.[156] In many media appearances, Caitlyn appeals to interior feeling as the main criterion of identity. Some media treatments encouraged popular audiences to dismiss their biological preconceptions. In the *Vanity Fair* article, Buzz Bissinger writes that "the transgender community for years has been trying to get the public to understand that genitalia are not a determinant of gender: you can be born a woman with male genitalia, just as you can be born a man with female genitalia."[157] Bissinger's sympathy to Jenner's plight is revealed in his rhetorical sleight of hand: it may be that the *transgender* community is correct, but Caitlyn was claiming to have changed her *sex*—until very recently it was considered a semantic mistake to conflate sex and gender.

There were other voices in the media that argued for the impossibility of Jenner's transformation on scientific grounds. Paul McHugh, former chief of psychiatry at Johns Hopkins, was harshly critical of the idea that those

undergoing gender reassignment *actually* change their sex. He writes, "First, . . . let us address the basic assumption of the contemporary parade: the idea that exchange of one's sex is possible. It, like the storied Emperor, is starkly, nakedly false. Transgendered men do not become women, nor do transgendered women become men. All (including Bruce Jenner) become feminized men or masculinized women, counterfeits or impersonators of the sex with which they 'identify.'"[158] He goes on to explain that there is "no evidence" that transgender individuals have "a biological source for their transgender assumptions."[159] Instead, he frames the phenomenon as a psychological illness in the family of anorexia and body dysmorphic disorder, arguing that the medical response to transgenderism "should not be directed at the body as with surgery and hormones any more than one treats obesity-fearing anorexic patients with liposuction."[160] In a *Washington Times* column, Armstrong Williams also implies that chromosomal and anatomical realities should be the primary criterion of authenticity: "the new politics of post-postmodernism demands that . . . we create public accommodations to suit the aforementioned psychological malady [referring to "transgenderism"] as if it were somehow based on any objective reality whatsoever."[161] Taken together, these comments regarding Dolezal and Jenner show that biological concerns are a central criterion used to both affirm and contest metanoic testimony.

External Signification

Public discourse also advances external signifiers as a criterion for judging the authenticity of personal transformations. A positive reading of this criterion asserts that because our judgments of strangers are often formed by physical appearance, if someone appears to be a particular sex or race, there is no reason to question the reality of that identity. As Brooke Erin Duffy argues, "the celebration of one's authentic self relies upon the communicative powers of material culture, as if the external self is a perfect projection of one's spirit."[162] People make conscious choices in their self-presentation, and we are justified to infer that those choices accurately represent the reality of their being. Conversely, another reading of the criterion of external signification argues that appearances and reality often differ. Thus someone who adopts the visual features of an identity that they are not socially sanctioned to inhabit is an impostor or a liar. Adopting new signifiers can be framed in both metanoic and epistrophic terms, depending on what one feels "inside."

And yet, this interior sentiment remains inaccessible to audiences, ensuring that even the claim about what is inside can be inauthentic—a strategic means to indicate a historical continuity of the self.

Dolezal used a popular black hairstyle, clothing often worn by blacks, and darkened skin as a means to argue for her authenticity. On a television show called *The Real*, when answering the African American hosts who challenged her blackness, she noted that on her traffic tickets the police identify her as black.[163] She suggests that because others identify her as black (and she identifies herself as such), then she must be black. Jenner's womanhood was closely linked to her utilization of feminine signifiers. Jenner's imperative that we "Call [Her] Caitlyn" is visually reinforced by her use of cosmetics, her long hair, her clothing, and her breast implants. Interestingly, while Jenner and Dolezal relied heavily on bodily appearance, both liberal and conservative commentators used this criterion to attack their authenticity. On *The Root*, Kirsten West Savali condemns Dolezal for slipping blackness "on like a coat from Burlington Coat Factory,"[164] similar to how Capehart derided her performance as a "bizarre minstrel show."[165] Writing for the conservative news site *The Federalist*, Sean Davis points out the contradictions of using physical appearance as the basis of authenticity: "Dolezal was born white but wanted people to believe she was black. Jenner was born a man but wants people to believe he is a woman. The only difference between these two is the extent to which society is willing to accept their delusions."[166]

Feeling and Spirit

The rhetoric of interiority asks audiences to prioritize subjective, personal feelings or convictions about the self. Because we cannot observe the truth of the heart, testimony based on the spirit has much in common with religious metanoia in which the primary evidence of the conversion is the claim that it occurred. Debora Shuger suggests the modern insistence on personal experience as the main means of reaching higher modes of being has its roots in the earlier Christian "grand style" of rhetoric, in which the "characteristics of style" were viewed as "the appropriate expression of the psyche in its attempt to apprehend and articulate transcendence."[167] Internal feeling clearly has a special sanctity in modern identity formation: transformed individuals almost always modify their bodily, external features to match their internal sentiment rather than the other way around. Thus when talking to Diane Sawyer, Jenner asserts that "gender identity has to do with who you

are as a person and your soul and who you identify with inside."[168] Dolezal tells *The Guardian*, "For me, how I feel is more important than how I was born. . . . This has been a lifelong journey."[169] The themes of the soul and the journey indicate the ways that religious discourse permeate secular metanoic speech. Still, some disagree with the argument from interiority. For example, Gayle Salamon writes that if you can authentically change your sex, then sex must be socially constructed, but if it is socially constructed, then how do we explain the inviolability of the apparently essential, internal, transcendent self that alerts the person of the dysphoria?[170] Only an account of personal transformation that carries aspects of both metanoia and epistrophe can begin to answer such a question.

Performative Speech

When coupled with a social constructivist view of identity formation, liberal democratic ideology suggests that individuals have a right to self-determination. This means that we have a moral obligation to accept whatever identity one claims to inhabit. This may sound very similar to the criterion of external signifiers, but there the audience assesses implicit, visual claims of identity. In the case of performative speech, it is the *speaking* of identity that commits us to recognition, regardless of our perception. Thus a trans woman who does not attempt or does a poor job of reproducing the external signifiers of womanhood (thus "presenting" as a man or a cross-dressing man in the eyes of the audience) would nevertheless be entitled to recognition as a woman if she verbally expressed her status as such. For proponents of this criterion, the saying itself *is* the metanoic transformation.

John Freccero notes that "conversion is inconceivable without its narrative expression,"[171] and Johnston also sees the importance of this criterion, explaining that "the content of self-narratives often performs 'cultural work,' helping to advance individual and collective definitions of reality."[172] The idea that the performative statement brings the new identity into reality is operative in both Jenner's and Dolezal's conversions. The statement on the cover of *Vanity Fair* has Jenner voicing an imperative: "Call me Caitlyn." After this statement, many would say that the audience took on an obligation to concede the authenticity of the transformation. Speaking on *The Real*, Dolezal supports her blackness by noting that when filling out forms she checks the box for "black"—the saying is the indicator of the being.[173] Still, there were those who do not accept performative speech as the grounds of

authenticity. Lonnae O'Neal writes, "We've always known white folks who have so much heart for black culture they get honorary status. But, and this is a big but, they don't actually say they're black."[174] Savali is more polemical: "[Dolezal's] blackness is somehow deemed self-determination. Dolezal's choice to be black has, instead, forced some black people to work through their own concept of blackness and how it should be defined. *Because the white woman said so*."[175] Many audiences are willing to recognize self-identification as a criterion of authenticity—but not on its own.

History and Duration

Myers notes that "the transformational aspect of metanoia unfolds over time," and so timing plays a critical role in assessing metanoic conversions.[176] First, the timing (and circumstances) of the unveiling of the new identity is important if it is to be accepted as authentic. Secondly, in testifying to the new ethos, the convert must emphasize the history of the new identity: while the performance itself may be new, the self that is performed is described as old. Thus epistrophic rhetorics are integral to establishing this continuity. While the end product of a transformation usually debuts suddenly in a particular moment,[177] the process of the transformation (narrated as a period of coming to terms with the self that was previously concealed) occurs incrementally. Because the conversion is an enduring affair, and an incomplete transformation is a sign of inauthenticity, the convert often seeks privacy during the transitional phases. Goffman describes this phenomenon when he writes that "when relatively complete passing is essayed, the individual sometimes consciously arranges his own *rite de passage*, going to another city, holing up in a room for a few days with preselected clothing and cosmetics he has brought with him, and then, like a butterfly, emerging to try the brand new wings."[178]

Central differences in the public perceptions of Dolezal and Jenner could be traced to issues related to timing. Jenner was able to retreat from the public eye during his transformation process, cloistering herself in her Malibu residence to avoid the paparazzi. As she transformed her body, she planned her debut, which only occurred on *20/20* (a venue of her choosing) when she was nearing the completion of the transformation. This first appearance primed the public for the full presentation of the new ethos in *Vanity Fair*. As evidenced in the interview with her brothers, Dolezal also incrementally transformed her appearance, seeking privacy and secrecy in the process.[179] But the media attention that she drew to herself ensured that

her debut unfolded in ways over which she had no control. Perceptions of Dolezal's authenticity were hurt by the fact that the public "discovered" what seemed to be a secret: her whiteness.

In narrating their conversions, both Jenner and Dolezal used epistrophic references to early childhood as the moment they became aware of the true self inside. Jenner noted his cross-dressing as a youth and took audiences from the earliest moments of feeling Caitlyn inside and through all the unfolding of the decades-long transformation. Dolezal talked about early drawings of herself as black and fantasies that she was a kidnapped Egyptian princess. In an interview on the *Today Show* one year after her outing, Dolezal claimed the conversion process took thirty years.[180] When asked to further describe the transformation, she is at a loss for words: "How do you sum up a whole life of coming into who you are in a soundbite?"[181] The way that kairos is mobilized as a criterion of authenticity is evidenced in an opinion column in *The Guardian*. In an attempt to affirm Jenner's authenticity while discrediting Dolezal's, Meredith Talusan argues that "the fundamental difference between Dolezal's actions and transpeople's is that her decision to identify as black was an active choice, whereas transgender people's decision to transition is almost always involuntary."[182] Though Jenner's testimony indicates the voluntary nature of his transitioning, we see Talusan establishing an opposition between the transformation that Jenner underwent and the one that Dolezal undertook. Put differently, the column suggests that Jenner was expressing an enduring, preexisting reality that had been stifled, while Dolezal was concealing an identity that she had presented since birth. As a criterion of authenticity, timing is often assessed through the heuristics of exposure and concealment.

Suffering and Experience

The authenticity of the metanoic transformation is also linked to whether the convert has truly experienced the realities of life associated with the new ethos. Yet in order to serve their legitimizing role, the realities experienced must be unpleasant ones. The difficulties of inhabiting a new identity stand in as a kind of secular penance that authenticates the transformation. If the experience of the new ethos was generally pleasant, it would incentivize cultural appropriation and undermine the latent punitive dimensions of the conversion ritual. Thus the new experience must be voluntarily undertaken despite its painful moments: this willingness to experience discomfort

validates the truth of the new self. It is not enough to feel like a woman or a black person "on the inside"—one must live the public experience of those categories. Interestingly, both Jenner and Dolezal belonged to empowered groups (males and Caucasians) and chose to convert to historically disempowered ones (women and blacks).[183] This bolsters the authenticity of both transformations because neither person stands to gain the benefits of the empowered group by passing. Because identifying as a less privileged group seems counterintuitive, audiences are left to assume that the converts' internal experiences of those categories are authentic. Suffering plays a key role in metanoic testimony: the convert must narrate the suffering that was experienced while performing an identity at odds with the internal ethos. The willingness to suffer stigmatization as a result of the transformation is another indicator of authenticity.

Many critics evaluated Jenner and Dolezal through the lenses of suffering and experience. Writing for the *New Yorker*, Jelani Cobb withholds recognition from Dolezal, noting that "the black suspicion of whites thus steeped in black culture wasn't bigotry; it was a cultural tariff— . . . if they knew all that came with [blackness], they would be far less eager to enlist."[184] But on *The View*, Whoopi Goldberg compares Dolezal's claims to those of transgender people, suggesting that she will recognize Dolezal as black as long as she is willing to endure the full range of experiences associated with that ethos.[185] Dolezal's own brother, Ezra, disqualifies her blackness, charging that her performance is "kind of a slap in the face to African-Americans because she doesn't know what it's like to be black."[186] Jamelle Bouie expresses concerns that "Dolezal is adopting the culture without carrying the burdens," "tak[ing] the best parts, and leav[ing] the pain aside."[187] D. C. McAllister attacks Jenner on similar grounds: "I was a tomboy, flat-chested and skinny. I thought of that as I listened to commentators go on and on about Jenner's perfect breasts. . . . How nice for Bruce not to suffer the indignities of developing real breasts. . . . There's the teasing, the awkwardness, the silliness. We endure it. It's all part of a girl becoming a woman."[188] As noted previously, both Jenner and Dolezal took pains to address the question of authentic experience in their metanoic testimony.

Political Expediency

There are major political stakes involved in the public recognition of transformations such as these. For example, the stakes of transgender authenticity

can be observed in the ballot battles over the access of transgender groups to the public bathrooms of their choice. Recognizing racial transformations as genuine has important ramifications for an issue like affirmative action. Often, public judgments of a metanoic conversion are guided by "consideration of the larger political and cultural milieu in which such changes are advantageous or disadvantageous, complicit with oppressive norms and/or resistant to them."[189] Of course, the opinions of the cultural and intellectual elite carry more weight than those of average citizens. Recognition does not depend on whether a majority of people view a personal reinvention as authentic; it is more important that the *right* people recognize it as such. Concern with political expediency is observable in the media discourse on Jenner and Dolezal. Urquhart writes that "for liberals who support trans rights and racial equality, there's an instinctive sense that Dolezal and Jenner are different, and that being transgender is in-bounds while being 'transracial' isn't."[190] In explaining why the medical community so rapidly abandoned the consensus that gender dysphoria is a psychological ailment, Dr. Paul McHugh points to the influence of politics.[191] The political implications of these transformations ensure that individuals such as Jenner and Dolezal serve as proxies for the deliberation of public issues that transcend their individual cases.

Narrative Coherence

Most often, assessments of authenticity do not focus on one criterion to the exclusion of all others. In fact, individuals likely win the most recognition when their metanoic testimony satisfies a number of the criteria described previously. Self-narratives run into trouble when they offer details that satisfy one criterion but complicate or contradict another. For example, one columnist disqualifies Dolezal by measuring one criterion against another: "Blackface remains highly racist, no matter how down with the cause a white person is."[192] Here, the author suggests that although Dolezal *seems* to satisfy the criteria of spirit and sentiment, her professed solidarity with the black ethos is undermined by her failure to legitimately perform the external signifiers of blackness. *The Guardian* quotes one observer as saying, "Obviously, [Dolezal has] probably felt for years that she was black on the inside and denied it all through her childhood. . . . Since she's transitioned and identifies herself as black, then we should just let her be and live her life in peace."[193] This statement concedes Dolezal's epistrophic authenticity on

the grounds of at least four criteria: her spirit/interior sentiment, her suffering, her performative verbal claims to blackness, and her mobilization of external bodily signifiers that are associated with blackness. In disqualifying Jenner's transformation, McAllister writes that true women "know what it's like to grow up and become a woman, and those experiences are integral to shaping their feminine identity—and an identity that is rooted in their nature, in their genes, not in their fantasies. It's something no transgender man can ever know."[194] Here, she appeals to the criteria of experience, biology, and spirit. Although a convert need not satisfy all the possible criteria to win recognition, a strong match with a number of criteria strengthens the perception of authenticity.

Metanoia, Epistrophe, and the New Politics of Personal Transformation

While some of the criteria described previously are hotly contested when applied to particular cases of transformation, the rubric as a whole sketches a general image of authentic conversion in our era. This image differs in some important ways from historical models of metanoia. The cases of Jenner and Dolezal serve as two examples of a broader trend that indicate the emergence of a new, modern theory of metanoic conversion. Writing in 1985, James T. Richardson already sensed this trend, but it had yet to be fully theorized in rhetorical scholarship. Richardson writes that "the old conversion paradigm . . . is giving way, at least partially, to another view of conversion."[195] What I call modern metanoia is the product of this shift. It takes form through a combination of elements from rhetorical and religious models of metanoia and the idea of epistrophe as an ontological return.

Both concepts embody types of conversion: metanoia represents an abandonment of the self and of the prior ethos, and epistrophe entails a return to the self from a place of existential alienation. Foucault describes the epistrophe as "first of all [a] turning away from appearances. . . . Second: taking stock of oneself by acknowledging one's own ignorance and by deciding precisely to care about the self. . . . And finally, the third stage, on the basis of this reversion to the self, we will be able to return to our homeland, the homeland of essences, truth and Being."[196] In *The Care of the Self*, Foucault refers to this process as a "conversion to self" that calls on an individual to "keep in mind that the chief objective one should set for oneself is to be sought within oneself."[197]

This prioritization of one's internal, spiritual calling anticipates the concern for authenticity and the defiance of convention that are at work in contemporary transformations of identity. In a study of modern conversion narratives, Arthur W. Frank observes something like epistrophic qualities in individuals' "discovery of what was fundamental to the self that always was."[198] However, Foucault sees metanoia and epistrophe as fundamentally irreconcilable: "the theme of conversion to the self, of return to the self [i.e., epistrophe], can[not] be assimilated to *metanoia* understood as a founding conversion taking place through a complete change of the subject himself, renouncing the self, and being reborn from himself."[199] Nevertheless, transformations such as those of Dolezal and Jenner can only be properly understood as a synthesis of these two ideas in the form of a new modern scheme of metanoia.

The first major difference between modern metanoia and earlier articulations of the concept is that it abandons the emotions of regret and penitence. The transformations of rhetorical and religious metanoia were always animated by a contrition, whether that was regret for an earlier erroneous statement or for the entire preceding life. In contrast, modern metanoia is usually accompanied by testimony that is celebratory and self-affirming. Foucault dates this shift to the Enlightenment: "From the eighteenth century to the present, the techniques of verbalization have been reinserted in a different context by the so-called human sciences in order to use them without renunciation of the self but to constitute, positively, a new self. To use these techniques without renouncing oneself constitutes a decisive break."[200] The cause for celebration is presumably the new commitment to live authentically, in accordance with the internal calling that precipitated the transformation. Karl F. Morrison makes similar observations in *Understanding Conversion*.[201] Kelly Myers is yet another scholar who senses a change in the concept of transformation itself, noting that "repentance and regret cannot dominate the concept of *metanoia*" and asserting that it can be retheorized as "a productive purging of regret via transformation."[202] But none of these writers go so far as to recognize that the definitive feature of modern transformation is a reconciliation of epistrophe and metanoia, two seemingly diametrically opposed models of conversion. It is this reconciliation that enables these techniques to be used in the affirmative mode that Foucault described. We observe the purging of regret in the metanoic testimony of Dolezal and Jenner, who expressed regret for the falsity of their lives prior to their conversions while they expressed peace and contentment in their new identities. Abandoning the regret that was immanent to the rhetoric of conversion, modern transformation requires

features of the epistrophe, in which Foucault observes "a pleasure in yourself, an enjoyment or delight," and "a movement directed towards the self, which doesn't take its eyes off it, which fixes it once and for all as an objective, and which finally reaches or returns to it."[203]

The second major feature of modern metanoia is also reflected in epistrophe: the transformation is not an unveiling of a *new* self. Rather, it is an expression of an older, more primordial self that was previously undermined by denial, distraction, and the tyranny of social convention. Johnston sees this phenomenon at work in the testimony of new pagans, who characterize their coming to paganism as "the (re)discovery of what they *always* were."[204] Thus a central characteristic in the testimonies of Jenner and Dolezal is that the "new" identity isn't a "performance" at all. Authenticity emerges through the rejection of the earlier mode of being as a *performance* in the most pejorative sense of the word. Despite the epistrophic nature of this "return to self," the testimony that rejects the older, inauthentic self echoes religious metanoia.

A third characteristic of modern metanoia concerns where the transformation occurs. In both earlier models of metanoia, the change was an internal one. Rhetorical metanoia entailed a speaker changing his mind, a change that was externalized in the figure of speech that took back the earlier statement. In religious metanoia, a convert underwent a change of the soul, a phenomenon that was signified through the testimony that rejected the earlier mode of life. Modern metanoia reverses the dynamic: rather than externally signifying an interior change, modern converts attest that the immutable interior self demands external changes. Dolezal and Jenner consistently claimed that there was no interior change, and that the bodily changes they undertook in an effort to live in accord with the true self inside was evidence of their authenticity. This reflects that modern metanoia has an agonistic relation with social convention. Both Dolezal and Jenner blamed convention for imposing inauthentic identities that resulted in personal suffering. Indeed, the impulse to affirm the call of the self in the face of social pressures has grown so strong that "for many people today, to set aside their own path in order to conform to some external authority just doesn't seem comprehensible as a form of spiritual life."[205] Although the absence of any internal change represents a break with historical models of metanoia, the disavowal of convention and the "ways of the world" is usually a feature of Christian metanoic testimony. As in religious discourse, the secular obligation to resist the conventions of society is performed through parrhesiastic testimony about the self's apostasy. And yet while Christian identity demanded the subordination of the flesh

to the newborn spirit, modern metanoia reverses the equation by adopting new external features to match the primordial internal experience.

The kairos of modern metanoia is another way that it differs from its counterparts. Both rhetorical and religious metanoia were ideally figured as momentary events. In the former, the rhetor does not take back a statement made days prior; usually she extemporaneously reconsiders an earlier statement the moment after it is uttered. Similarly, Paul's conversion serves as the Christian metanoic ideal—Jesus unexpectedly appears to Saul, knocking him off his horse and blinding him, an experience so transformative that Saul becomes Paul in the wake of the event (Acts 9:1–9). Because modern metanoia requires an external change rather than an internal one, the transformation is more gradual—it often involves medical interventions that need time to heal or take effect. Put differently, in contrast to older notions of metanoia, the postmodern variety is a transitional transformation (rather than a substitutive one). Still, the importance of the "moment" persists in today's transformations in the emphasis placed on the unveiling. As noted earlier, the transitional phases of the conversion are usually hidden from the public, so that the individual can "show them only the end product, and they will be led into judging him on the basis of something that has been finished, polished, and packaged."[206] This dynamic is crucial when it comes to the perception of authenticity and the bestowal of recognition. As I have shown, Jenner was able to keep his transition to Caitlyn private and negotiate the terms of her unveiling, while Dolezal was outed. These circumstances certainly conditioned how audiences responded to the moments of their official unveilings, on *20/20* and the *Today Show*, respectively.

The final distinction between modern metanoia and other varieties relates to agency. Although the rhetor played an active role in rhetorical metanoia by undertaking a revision of the statement, the religious model (with which modern metanoia arguably shares more similarities) ideally figured the convert as the passive object that undergoes the transformative event. In describing this mode of spiritual change, Richardson explains that "whatever the characterization of the active agent, that agent [i]s definitely *not* the person" who converts.[207] But in her articulation of contemporary transformation, Myers's emphasis on action and movement suggests that modern metanoia involves the individual as the active agent in the existential conversion: an epistrophic return to self.[208] Both Dolezal and Jenner affirm that their transformations were the products of conscious decisions that they made. So modern metanoia reflects the rhetorical model because it requires an active agent, and yet

it does not replace speech with speech but self with self—a feature of the religious model.

These five features are the essential characteristics of the modern iteration of metanoia. They can be observed in the interactions between the testimony of transformed individuals and the public discourse that assesses the authenticity of these transformations. Further, modern metanoic transformations demonstrate that the concepts of metanoia (the rejection of the self) and epistrophe (the return to the self) can, in fact, be reconciled. How such a paradox unfolded is worthy of more research, but it likely is an effect of the enduring influence of Christianity on the Western mind, even in the context of a growing secularism. Religious metanoia became a default model for conversion in the West. Freccero explains that "what was thematized in Christianity as the conversion of the sinner into the saint who tells his story may be thematized in a modern narrative in a variety of ways that need have very little to do with the Christian experience."[209] Although Gerald Peters does not use the terms *metanoia* and *epistrophe*, he suggests that perhaps their differences are effaced by their mutual position in larger discourses of salvation: "Whether one describes the process of conversion as the reorientation of a sick soul [metanoia] or the synthesis of a divided self [epistrophe], the goal undoubtedly remains the same—personal salvation, preservation from harm, deliverance from evil—in essence, the liberation of the individual from some sort of unhappy state."[210] As I have shown, modern secular ideology has equated the good life with the happy life, and therefore this liberation becomes the primary ethical aim of authentic living. When the rhetorical commonplaces of Christianity are mobilized in conjunction with the modern discourses of secular liberalism and the self, perhaps a curiosity like modern metanoia is the inevitable result.

Implications

In the 1999 preface to her seminal book *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler counters a naturalistic theory of identity by explaining that "what we take to be an 'internal' feature of ourselves is one that we anticipate and produce through certain bodily acts, at an extreme, a hallucinatory effect of naturalized gestures."[211] Indeed, the critique of essentialist models of identity has been perhaps the central enterprise of poststructuralism. The old "natural" concepts such as race, sex, and class were met with an overriding concern that the

coercive social power of these ideas was forcing people to live inauthentically, creating intolerable personal suffering and unhappiness. Anti-essentialist critiques have been very successful in neutralizing the power of convention in society: we have seen a proliferation of identities and subject positions that would have been either unimaginable or publicly untenable in the recent past. Metanoic rhetoric plays a central role in the authentication of these identities in the broader culture. Nevertheless, our devotion to thinking "difference first" has had some ironic effects.

The first irony is that some of the subject positions that were made possible by anti-essentialist theories of identity are publicly authenticated by decidedly essentialist strategies. As I have shown, those laying claim to transgender or transracial conversions often use metanoic testimonies that locate the authenticity of the transformation in essentialist, transcendent, spiritual notions of identity and the self. Deep inside, they tell us, the real person—a person who was always there, a self that is immutable and inviolable—can no longer deny the truth and accept the violence of social convention. Mason-Schrock explains that "because most people believe in gender differences and assume they are biologically based, transsexuals used these essentialist ideas to give plausibility to their stories. Their self-narratives thus supported . . . the naturalization of gender. Thus . . . their self-narratives actually reinforced a highly conservative view of gender."[212] This conservatism is underscored by the fact that sexual reassignment surgery reifies the normative idea that external anatomy *should*, in fact, reflect one's internal sentiment. In some sense, the way that poststructuralist critique ultimately facilitated a return to essentialism can be understood as a kind of epistrophe in itself—a return to essence as our defining critical concept, even in our attempts to transcend it. Although metanoia remains the default rhetorical strategy by which personal difference is articulated, the metanoia we see today is much different from earlier models. Therefore, the further description of this metanoia will be a prerequisite to developing new theories of ethos that account for the transformation of identity in the twenty-first century.

A second irony of the contemporary metanoic approach is that although it is meant as a strategy to facilitate respect for otherness, metanoic discourse almost always ensures that otherness is described in ways that reduce it to the same essentialist categories it hopes to displace. In *The Future of Invention*, Muckelbauer notes that even philosophies designed to escape the trap of binary conceptions of reality finally succumb to the logic of negation that defines all dialectical change: "whether the stakes are a new concept, a

different social structure, a divergent form of subjectivity, a fresh reading, or an innovative technology, difference and novelty only emerge by somehow overcoming or negating particular others—outdated concepts, oppressive social structures, limited subjectivities, or simply undesirable propositions."[213] In other words, even progressive culture cannot allow Caitlyn Jenner to be authentically other. Jenner cannot be a man with a female spirit. Jenner must be a man. Or a woman who was a man. Or a woman who seemed to be a man. Similarly, we cannot allow Rachel Dolezal to be other. She cannot be a woman who exists somewhere outside the scope of racial identity as we understand it. Instead, she must be white. Or black. Or a white woman who sympathizes with the black plight. Our dedication to these binaries is evident in the fact that metanoic testimony is only deemed authentic when it is built on these essentialist concepts. Rather than embody true difference by rejecting the essentialist assumption that the outside should match the inside, the subject of modern metanoia undertakes the conservative process of renovating the body to match the spirit or feeling inside. Muckelbauer distills the problem here: "In a seemingly odd reversal, transformation becomes the condition of stability."[214] He continues, "This is why all anti-foundationalisms are necessarily already foundationalisms. Because they advance themselves as a position, as a content that locates itself in relation to some other position, they cannot help but partake of the dialectical movement of appropriation that it enables."[215] Nietzsche's eternal return returns anew—the same as it ever was.

These ironies call us to reflect on whether anti-essentialist critique is the most effective approach to creating a space for difference. Perhaps even a reconsideration of the desirability of true difference is in order, given that those who embody the identities that are most anathema to mainstream culture seem so eager to describe themselves in terms that are wholly familiar components of the traditional rhetoric of identity. Understood as a revision of the conversion trope, modern metanoia is a concept that might help us rehabilitate the theory of ethos in such a way that we can offer authentic otherness the recognition it needs without reducing it to the same. Although the cases of Dolezal and Jenner are extreme cases of metanoic transformation, there are surely more banal, everyday instances of the new rhetoric of conversion, some of which are touched on in the conclusion. Further analysis of such cases can help rhetoricians continue to refine the concepts of ethos, metanoia, epistrophe, and authenticity in ways that facilitate a deeper understanding of the modern self and its expression.

Conclusion

Afterthoughts: Past, Present, and Future Selves

The concept of metanoia has worn many guises, but in all its varieties it remains a discursive marker for a constellation of related ideas: substitutive speech, personal identity, metamorphosis, reflection, and regret. Because metanoic speech is a strategic means to facilitate a becoming, it resides in a liminal space, constructing a bridge between the past (that which is going away) and the future (that which will be). Metanoia is a figure that operates in the present, negotiating the relation between what was and what is to come. Thus metanoia can be considered an epideictic form of rhetoric. Ethos has always been a key factor in epideictic speech, but metanoia is unique in that it is an epideictic form in which the subject of the speech is the self itself. If epideictic is understood as ceremonial discourse, the ceremony curated by metanoia is self-transformation: a ritualistic performance with common tropes and archetypes.

Ethos is a perennial subject of concern in the field of rhetoric, but the vast majority of research addresses how the rhetorical construction of the self can aid in persuading audiences of a given message—a message that is not inherently related to the identity of the speaker. Metanoic testimony presents a special case because the message that the speaker relates is one that is fundamentally about the self as such: the "message" is nothing but a series of claims about who the speaker is (or is not). Given that postmodern life is increasingly committed to the idea that personal identity is not an ontological a priori but is rather a performative construction of symbolic interaction, we are seeing a great proliferation of metanoic speech in contexts where it was not traditionally encountered. In understanding how these

transformational testimonies work on a rhetorical level, most recent scholarship on ethos is of little help: it tells us how ethos aids in persuasion, but it offers little insight regarding how ethos is formed and transformed. For this reason, there remains much work to be done in defining metanoia, recovering its conceptual history, cataloguing its manifestations in our era, and describing how today's metanoic speech succeeds or fails in establishing a new identity for the speaker.

To conclude this project, I identify three contemporary discourses that can be better understood by analyzing them through a metanoic lens: prison writing, composition studies scholarship, and self-help writing. I have chosen these for a number of reasons. Most importantly, they show that the three types of metanoia I described in the previous chapters are not bound by the historical periods in which I situated them. In other words, rhetorical metanoia is not located in the ancient world, spiritual metanoia is not limited to Christian contexts, and modern metanoia (with its incorporation of epistrophe) can be found in contexts that are remote from contemporary secular liberalism. Different varieties of metanoia coexist, and each one can be mobilized anew when a particular type of transformation must be performed. Another reason I chose these three case studies is that each one is linked to a particular *place* and *time*, ensuring that they each have unique rhetorical concerns. Prison writing is undertaken by prisoners in a space that we used to call the "penitentiary"—a name that underscored the metanoic functions of incarceration. Much prison writing is focused on the past self; these texts serve as a means for writers to come to terms with the life that led to imprisonment. Prison writing reflects many tropes that are common to religious metanoia. As the second object of analysis, scholarship in the field of composition studies focuses on how students (usually college students) learn to write. Thus experts in the field of composition are uniquely concerned with the space of the classroom: they produce texts about students producing texts. As I show, much research in composition is focused on the student's performance of self: often, these scholars favor a type of writing in which the student narrates the present self in the context of the university.[1] This work reflects qualities of both rhetorical metanoia and modern metanoia. Finally, self-help books (an enormously popular genre of writing) focus on renovating the space of the self itself. They typically assume that readers are dissatisfied with their identities, that they are seeking personal authenticity, and that they are open to transformation. In short, self-help writing is concerned with facilitating the emergence of the

future self through a modern metanoic transformation. Finally, considering these diverse sites of discourse as they relate to metanoia shows (once again) how this concept can be utilized as a tool for rhetorical analysis.

The Past Self in Prison Writing

In 2015, two of my colleagues at the University of Houston–Downtown earned a grant to conduct literacy work in local prisons. The ultimate goal was to reverse the "school-to-prison pipeline," making it instead a "prison-to-school pipeline." Our English faculty were uniquely positioned to do this work: our campus in downtown Houston is located directly across from a jail where inmates were serving up to three years of incarceration. I was invited to join the professors who developed the program. We each ran a book circle with between five and ten inmates. We met at the prison twice a week to discuss a book that we read together. Each professor could choose any book—provided it met with the approval of the Texas Department of Corrections, which kept a list of books that were unapproved. The reasoning for what was on this list was inscrutable: Richard Wright's *Native Son* was flagged for sexual content, but Jerzy Kosiński's *The Painted Bird* was allowed, despite its graphic depictions of bestiality, pedophilia, and violence. Two of the books that I read with the prisoners were George Orwell's *1984* and Kurt Vonnegut's *Mother Night*. At each session, I would assign how much reading we would do for the next session. Then, we would discuss the themes of the book, and I would encourage the men to do some free writing. The hope was that through developing their literacy, the participants might be more willing to apply to college—especially given that they had the acquaintance of a few professors at a university right nearby. These book circles were rewarding for all involved. The men were intelligent, and they were always happy to see me. I enjoyed our conversations, but I was always surprised at how eager they were to talk about their lives prior to their imprisonment—and the crimes that led to it.

Through our discussions and my reading of their writing, I came to understand that the moral functions of the penitentiary are still very much alive, even if the institutions themselves do almost nothing to advance them. Many people use the time that they are incarcerated to reflect on their identity: who they had been for most of their lives, and how they could be otherwise. These metanoic themes pervade prison writing. Because I did not have the chance

to ask the inmates I worked with for their permission to include their writing in this project, here I make use of essays by prisoners that are compiled in the book entitled *Fourth City: Essays from the Prison in America*.[2] The writing in this volume is different from the work produced in my book circles: the contents of *Fourth City* are polished, well-revised essays that were clearly meant for publication. But the themes dealt with in the book are virtually identical to those touched on by the men in my book circles.

An essay called "It Could Be Me" by a New York prisoner named A. Whitfield serves as a demonstration of the struggle that inmates have in reconciling themselves to their past. Reflecting on the recent death of a young inmate at the hand of another prisoner, Whitfield writes: "I have been moldering away in one prison or another since 1985, and I have seen too many die, both young and old. I can no longer imagine myself waking up in the morning, brushing my teeth, dressing (can I wear these socks a second day?), stepping out of my cell, and driving a piece of steel through a man's chest. There was a time, not too long ago, when I could have done it without a second thought."[3] Reflecting on his past crimes, Whitfield laments the difficulty of the metanoic process in the space of the prison: "I tell myself with conviction and sincerity that the creature I was then is not the man I am now. I am more of a human being for detesting and condemning my actions, yet less of a human being for having committed the act. I struggle. Transformation is difficult in any environment, but in prison the helplessness and hopelessness can be overwhelming. I am often beset with feelings of doubt and guilt and pain and fear."[4] Here, Whitfield describes himself as stuck somewhere between an inhumane past and a human future. His guilt for who he was is a central feature of religious metanoia. He longs for the rejection of the self that animates the Christian conversion experience, but a new self cannot be reborn when he *must* remain in the space of the prison—a situation that can only be explained if Whitfield continues to acknowledge the enduring reality of his criminal self. So, he struggles. And as he shows later in the essay, the essence of that struggle is an uncertainty about whether his transformation is complete, whether it is authentic, and whether it is an improvement on his earlier identity. He writes, "It pains me at times to confront what I could have been and what I have in fact become."[5] This passage suggests a squandered potential and a resignation to the fact that he remains a violent criminal. Yet only a few lines later, he says that he doesn't want to heal. His pain "serves as a reminder of what I was then and what I never want to be again."[6] Using the past tense to describe that earlier self, he indicates that perhaps he

has changed. But even if so, his previous animalistic self always threatens to return: "I'm scared I'll wake up one morning to look in the mirror and see the monster that was once me staring back, ready to devour me."[7] Thus it is the combination of Whitfield's will to be born again and his confinement in the consequential space of the prison that ensures he remains frozen in the midst of the metanoic process, a man trembling between two lives.

The predominance of the religious model of personal transformation is evident in the ways that other writers talk about the space of the prison. Like Augustine, Dean Faiello explains that his transformation crept up on him: "Changes in my own behavior took place slowly, over the course of years. Often, others noticed a change before I did. . . . But the biggest change I exhibited was in sharing my feelings, talking about what was going on down deep."[8] Here, Faiello underscored the importance of speech in personal transformation: it comes into being immanently—and incrementally—through the expression of the interior experience of the self. Edward C. Shelley, a prisoner in Washington, explains that incarceration facilitates a kind of introspection that cannot happen in other contexts: "By peeling away the layers of my outside self, I've begun to learn what it is about me that is good, wholesome, and worth saving. In some respects, this prison experience has been like a monastic experience: becoming unplugged from so many outside influences, and reducing life to the lowest common denominator, which has given me the opportunity to focus on inner change."[9] Explicitly describing imprisonment in religious terms, Shelley is able to achieve a change that could not have happened in everyday life. And this change is not simply metaphorical—many prisoners see themselves literally as different people than they were before prison. The profundity of this change is illustrated by Connie Gibbs, a woman incarcerated in Nebraska:

> My own incarceration is only one year, and I have the good fortune of my own home, family, friends, and a job to return to. Yet I still foresee many major, difficult transitioning issues that I will need to face. The most pressing to me is the question "How will I fit into the space that I left behind, since I am virtually not the same person that I was when I left home?" I foresee that this will affect all aspects of my personal and professional life, in many ways. My loved ones have just begun to grasp the depth of the changes that have occurred within me. . . . I believe both my family and I will need help with this transition because *the woman coming home is simply not the same person as the one who left*.[10]

This metanoic testimony has important epistrophic dimensions: given the fullness of her transformation, Gibbs wonders how she can *return* to a place (home) that is an extension of an ethos she no longer inhabits. And although her change is one that largely lines up with the premises of the religious metanoia (a regretful rejection of an earlier sinful ethos), she expresses a strong skepticism of prison spirituality as a means of transformation:

> Many inmates who have never known spirituality, or who have lost touch with it long ago, seem to take to it out of pure desperation in prison. Imagine giving a sandwich to a woman who is suffering from starvation. When she has finished gobbling it down, if you ask what it tasted like, she would not be able to give you a true account. To the starving person the taste, if any, was simply irrelevant. The sandwich was a means to an end. For many inmates, institutional spirituality is that sandwich. They are literally starved for unconditional love, acceptance, and forgiveness, which they are told is God. The message is not wrong; however, the people delivering it often do not understand that these individuals rarely consume it in a way that will exact actual change.[11]

Gibbs's resistance to the authenticity of the prison house conversion hints that other models of metanoic transformation can exist alongside religious metanoia in the penitentiary.

Robert Saleem Holbrook, a Pennsylvanian inmate, wrote an essay entitled "From Public Enemy to Enemy of the State," a title that names the old ethos and the new identity that replaced it. Holbrook is an activist for prison reform with an interest in the personal empowerment of prisoners. He advances a more modern model of metanoic transformation as a means to that empowerment: "Life is about transitions and transcending one's limitations, and sooner or later, for better or worse, we all make or miss the transition that will define who we are and, most importantly, choose to be. No longer will the state define me. I will dare to define myself."[12] Rather than calling for a return to a godly essence, Holbrook asserts his right to self-fashioning as a mode of resistance, calling to mind the political stakes of transformations like those of Dolezal and Jenner.

Writing from a prison in Texas, Terrence Sampson's "Evolution of a Dreamer" mixes metanoic modes throughout the essay. He opens with a confession: "I regret the pain caused to others. But in some ways I am thankful for *my* adversities, for were it not for the struggle and the pain, I wouldn't

be the man I am today."[13] This is a complex statement. By expressing "regret," Sampson aligns his statement with religious metanoia. But while he regrets the pain of others (note the passive construction of the statement, which minimizes his own culpability in causing that pain), he does not regret the personal consequences that came from his infliction of that pain. The adversity that he is thankful for would not have come without the pain that he regrets. Clearly, Sampson is happy with "the man [he is] today." Thus the statement also parallels modern metanoia, in which the self is affirmed. Taken together, the regret and contentment suggest that all of the misfortune (Sampson's and his victims') was simply inevitable—it was just part of the inexorable process of entelechy in which he was becoming who he was always meant to be. Sampson goes on to question the very possibility of change: "I committed murder; I feel guilty for the pain that I have caused others; and I feel a sense of frustration for what can never be changed, for as badly as I want to change my past mistakes, I simply can't."[14] The guilt that served as the motivator for Christian metanoia is here, but Sampson rejects the idea that any substitutive change is possible. Later, though, he changes his mind (which is to undergo a rhetorical metanoia): "But everything is susceptible to change, and I was no exception."[15] The essay goes on to tell of a near-fatal injury Sampson sustained in a fight. After the fight, the religious components of his transformation become more pronounced. While in solitary confinement for thirteen days, "a divine presence" spoke to him, "through past images of what had been, and images of what could be—what *would* be."[16] Sampson concludes with a very traditional testimony of Christian metanoia:

> I am now a new man with a new understanding. I seek redemption through actions that are now not focused on me, but on how I can enrich the lives of others. . . . It was through embracing change in my life that I began to understand that it's not about who I was and where I've been, it's about who I am now and where I intend to go. . . . I have debts to pay that can never be repaid, but God willing I will have a second opportunity to accept the responsibility of my past actions and show the remorse that I truly feel towards those that I have hurt.[17]

Thus Sampson moves beyond the self toward a being-for-others, a hallmark of the Christian ethos. A final example, by Michael B. Beverley, links the prospects for personal transformation to the possibility of an institutional

metanoia: "Prison inmates are people who have made legal and moral mistakes, but they are worth rehabilitating and giving a second chance at being productive members of society; if we believe this, *we must endeavor to change the current [prison] system*. . . . [W]e should see that increasing prison populations, parole violations, and recidivism are not testaments to the degradation of society; they are testaments to the failure of the prison to value, educate, and *transform* its inmate population."[18] In calling for prison reform, Beverley hints at a theoretical question that I have only peripherally addressed in this book: the question of whether an institutional metanoia is possible.[19]

Together, these testimonies show how the space of the prison partially determines the possibilities for transformation. The texts represent the metanoic testimony that serves to structure the reformed identity of the prisoner through an intensely emotional encounter with the prior self and its deeds. While religious metanoia is the dominant model in the context of the prison, as I have shown that space does not preclude the deployment of other metanoic modes. In discussing ways that college students fashion the present self, composition scholarship is another site that allows for the deployment of multiple metanoias.

Composition Pedagogy and the Negotiation of the Present Self

Although college-level courses in nonfiction prose writing date back to the late nineteenth century in America, "composition" as a field of professional expertise did not arise until the 1960s. In the wake of the GI Bill and the end of World War II, colleges and universities were admitting an unprecedented number of students—many of whom were underprepared for the academic rigor of postsecondary work. The discipline of composition studies developed as a response to the increased need for remedial interventions in freshman writing. Teachers who focused on writing instruction were often seen as less "scholarly" by faculty who specialized in the more traditional areas of literary hermeneutics and philology. This remained the case even after composition came to be recognized as a discrete field of knowledge, and the marginalization created an identity crisis within the field: compositionists are especially concerned with "who we are" as a field. Indeed, in a seminal essay entitled "Where Do English Departments Come From?," William Riley Parker asserts that "*'English' has never really defined itself as a discipline*."[20] While discussing a survey of syllabi from an assortment of

freshman English courses at a variety of institutions, Albert R. Kitzhaber underscores this uncertainty:

> Anyone reading this many syllabuses or visiting this many freshman English programs—or even a fraction of the number—would almost certainly be struck by at least three main weaknesses of the course as it is now constituted. First, he would be impressed by the confusion exhibited in the course—a widespread uncertainty about aims, a bewildering variety of content, a frequent lack of progression within the course. Second, he would notice a variety of administrative adjustments and precautions that indicate little confidence in the expertness of those who teach it. And finally, he would notice that the textbooks for this course are for the most part less rigorous and less scholarly than those for other college freshman courses.[21]

Given the disciplinary identity crisis among composition scholars, it may come as a surprise that so many of them view the coherent performance of a particular identity as a major criterion of good writing. Writing teachers often conceive of their courses as a means for students to undertake a metanoia, a transformation that is enacted through the texts that they compose. Although there are aspects of a modern understanding of metanoia in composition studies, most often scholarship in the field hints at the centrality of rhetorical metanoia—a substitution of discourse that unfolds in the present space of the classroom, where student texts manifest the core features of their individual identities.

Because the great societies of the ancient world privileged oral modes of communication, rhetorical metanoia in Greece and Rome was associated with oratory: performing a regret for an earlier statement, a speaker then replaced it with a new one. In contrast, today's college writing courses are partly a product of the centrality of textual literacy in modern life. Because compositionists are primarily concerned with teaching people to write, the scholarship in the discipline is something of a curiosity: it is writing about teaching writing. And a key theme of the research is the importance of metanoic testimony in good student writing. In an essay entitled "Paideia as Metanoia: Transformative Insights from the Monastic Tradition," Brett M. Bertucio connects teaching and learning with the personal transformation of the learner.[22] He explains that the activity of writing is constitutive of the metanoia: a text is "an expression of its author's νους," an embodiment of

the author's self.[23] Thus individual identity is synonymous with one's logos.[24] These ideas are reflected in various theories of composition pedagogy.

Surveying the history of composition in the early 1990s, compositionist Lester Faigley suggests the discipline is a faddish one, where new theories of writing pedagogy rise quickly, only to be soon displaced by even more novel theories.[25] But Faigley was writing about what was still a very new discipline. Nearly thirty years after Faigley's text, composition seems to be fad-free. In fact, most contemporary research in composition can be classified as stemming from one of a handful of theories that have held great sway for decades. Dating to the 1970s, process pedagogy still has an enormous influence: almost all people who are today being trained to teach college writing are told that the writing process should receive more emphasis than the product that students complete. Expressivism, dating from the same period, remains unavoidable: students are routinely encouraged to engage in textual self-explorations as a means to learn to write (which, as I show, is tantamount to "learning to be"). So-called critical pedagogy, another product of the countercultural movements of the '60s and '70s, still calls upon today's writing teachers to inculcate an oppositional relation to the "status quo" among our students. These are perhaps the three most dominant perspectives in composition today, and what they share is a fixation on the self and its transformation. And, as Faigley notes, despite the great affinity that compositionists have for postmodern notions of ethics and culture: "Where composition studies has proven least receptive to postmodern theory is in surrendering its belief in the writer as an autonomous self. . . . Since the beginning of composition teaching in the late nineteenth century, college writing teachers have been heavily invested in the stability of the self and the attendant beliefs that writing can be a means of self-discovery and intellectual self-realization."[26] Some examples from the seminal texts of the discipline (drawn mostly from the oft-assigned anthology *The Norton Book of Composition Studies*) provide a more detailed view of metanoia as it relates to the writing process.

In "Inventing the University," David Bartholomae addresses the problem of voice in college writing.[27] Teachers expect students to write authoritatively, as though they are writing to an audience of peers. But the evaluator of the writing—usually a professor—is not a peer of the student, neither in terms of authority nor knowledge. The students' task, then, is to write in authoritative voices as though engaging peers on topics that they are not authorities on, to audiences who are not their peers. One of the alluring parts of an

expressivist pedagogy is that in shifting the topic of the writing to the self, one ensures that the student is always the foremost expert on the topic of the writing. Bartholomae does not take an explicitly expressivist position on the problem, but the transforming self does loom large in his essay. He is immediately concerned with genre. By analyzing short essays that students wrote to determine their placement in writing courses, he shows how students work to invent an authoritative voice in the text. This work relies heavily on imitation, and for Bartholomae, the quality of student writing is partially dependent on originality.

Discussing his review of about five hundred placement essays on the topic of creativity, Bartholomae ultimately suggests that the students' success is contingent upon how effectively they characterize a personal transformation. He writes that "I found that the more successful writers set themselves in their essays against what they defined as some more naïve way of talking about their subject—against 'those who think that . . .'—or against earlier, more naïve versions of themselves."[28] Below is a quotation from an essay that makes this move: "At the time of the writing [of my songs], I felt that my songs were, in themselves, an original creation of my own; that is, I, alone, made them. However, I now see that, in this sense of the word, I was not creative. The songs themselves seem to be an oversimplified form of the music I list[en]ed to at the time. In a more fitting sense, however, I *was* being creative. Since I did not purposely copy my favorite songs, I was, effectively, originating my songs from my own 'process of creativity.'"[29] Bartholomae ranks this essay as the best among the ones he cites, mostly because "the author rhetorically separated herself from her younger 'self'"—a transformation of a purportedly naive girl into a more enlightened adult thinker. He asserts that "the more advanced essay[s] for me, then, are those that are set against the 'naïve' codes of 'everyday' life."[30] The mechanical components of the student's language use (traditionally a major concern in the evaluation of student writing) are apparently unimportant here. Rather, competence takes a back seat to the student's ability to perform a metanoic conversion from an ethos of ignorance to an ethos of wisdom. For Bartholomae, it is this transformation that allows students to manufacture some textual authority. In the way that the most effective authors advance an earlier (flawed) idea only to take it back and replace it with a more mature (enlightened) idea, this transformation parallels the rhetorical model of metanoia. Through a textual dramatization of the present self, the author forms a new ethos through a strategic substitution of ideas.

Rhetorical metanoia is also played out in composition studies scholarship on the topic of revision. Bartholomae's songwriter revised her *thoughts*, but revising one's *writing* is another way to signal a personal transformation. Compositionists, particularly those ones devoted to process pedagogy, have much to say on the process of revision. Nancy Sommers is one writer who picks up on the differences between the revision of speech and the revision of text.[31] While she cautions against understanding textual revision simply as "afterthought,"[32] I argue that in a broader metanoic sense, afterthought sums up the process nicely. After all, the rhetorical figure of metanoia is essentially incorporating an afterthought. Sommers notes that students typically undertake only surface revision related to grammar, syntax, and issues of correctness. She notes that more mature writers do more significant revision, partly due to their "anticipation of a reader's judgment."[33] But I suspect that weaker writers are also concerned with the judgment of the reader. If Bertucio was correct that one's writing stands in as an avatar for the self (one's unique nous), then the evaluation of writing is simultaneously an evaluation of the writer—and not simply *as a writer* but as a person. Revision, then, is not simply a means to change a text; it is a metanoic praxis for changing the self. Understood in this way, it makes sense that students are reticent to revise—it starts to appear that personal reinvention is a requirement for success in the course. Can one *compel* another to undergo a metanoia?

Postmodern trends in philosophy have created a strong association between the body of the text and the body of the author (which writing represents by proxy). This association has intensified the students' experiences of the judgments that readers make of their texts. Many of the trends in expressivist pedagogies are attempts to dissolve these student anxieties, but it may be that the expressivist emphasis on the self is the *source* of those anxieties. Kitzhaber is among the many writers who notice the current popularity of personal writing in college courses.[34] James L. Kinneavy suggests that "more sophisticated types of discourse are often preponderantly expressive of *social* personalities"[35]—put differently, expressivism privileges modes of communication that involve the development of ethos. Mike Rose is among the many compositionists who attack correctness as the prime criterion of effective writing.[36] But such critics rarely name what *are* the proper grounds of evaluation. It cannot be effort: there is no reliable way to assess how much time a student spent on a text. It cannot be effect: the response of the evaluator to a given text is necessarily subjective, and thus it cannot serve as a reliable measure of quality. I propose that the true criterion of quality

for expressivists is the depth of the engagement of the author with herself. The modern politics of authenticity ensure that the self cannot be judged by others—but the self's judging *of the self* can be judged. The student text serves as the documentation of this type of introspection. And because any educational curriculum aims to produce a certain type of person, the texts that narrate that metanoic process of becoming often meet with approval from professors, if only because the transformation requires recognizing the prior self as deficient in some way.

As noted earlier, education has always aimed at personal transformation—this is one lesson of Plato's allegory of the cave. But proponents of critical pedagogy have a unique zeal for facilitating metanoia for their students. Brazilian educator Paulo Freire is often identified as the progenitor of critical pedagogy, and Henry Giroux, Saul Alinsky,[37] Ira Shor, and Stanley Aronowitz are key figures who popularized the approach in North America. Freire's book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* spells out the movement's general convictions: that institutes of education are sites that serve the interests of bourgeois "oppressors" by indoctrinating oppressed students so that they are blind to the causes of their suffering and are therefore impotent in resisting the system. Freire and other critical pedagogues tend to be very binary in their thinking—there are selfless good guys and selfish bad guys, there are the duped masses laboring under a false consciousness and the few enlightened liberators who have attained an authentic "critical consciousness." The aim of the humanistic teacher, then, is to open a dialogue with students that problematizes the notion of a static reality. Through the dialogic process, students come to recognize the possibility of social change and their own power to facilitate it. Coming to recognize these truths demonstrates that, like the teacher, the student has now attained a critical consciousness. This conversion gives birth to a new "radical" ethos for the student.

The central objective of critical pedagogy is catalyzing the student's metanoia by emphasizing the deficiency of the past self: "The pedagogy of the oppressed is an instrument for their critical discovery that both they and their oppressors are manifestations of dehumanization. Liberation is thus a childbirth, and a painful one. The man or woman who emerges is a new person."[38] This recognition of one's own inadequacy shares much in common with Christian conversion, a similarity made all the more intriguing given the disdain that Marxists and Socialists often harbor for religion. Although all forms of education aim to transform the student, critical pedagogy demands a very *particular* sort of transformation. If the student rationally arrives at

conclusions that do not parallel the teacher's understanding of the world (if she believes that she is not oppressed, or is not an oppressor), that the traditional model of education is a valid means to student empowerment, or that Marxist political agitation is not tantamount to humanization, for example, then she simply is not critically conscious—she exists as a "divided, unauthentic being" who labors under a false consciousness.[39] Nedra Reynolds is an example of a contemporary scholar who sees any authentic agency as fundamentally oppositional.[40] Freire basically concedes this intellectual chauvinism: "Conversion to the people requires a profound rebirth. Those who undergo it must take on a new form of existence. . . . Accordingly, until they concretely 'discover' their oppressor and in turn their own consciousness, they nearly always express fatalistic attitudes towards their situation."[41] Critical pedagogy amounts to a kind of coerced metanoia. The problem with *demanding* a conversion from someone is that it is impossible to assess the authenticity of that conversion. Therefore, the insistence on student transformation seems out of place in a theory that affirms "authentic" and humanistic modes of being. This concern for student transformation is widespread among composition scholars, even those who do not explicitly position themselves as practitioners of critical pedagogy.

Composition studies' fetishization of the changing self is apparent in its enthusiasm for the personal essay. In discussing *What Makes Writing Good*, a collection of student writing deemed "excellent" by top scholars in composition, Faigley notes that virtually all of the forty-eight texts included were some type of writing about the self.[42] Although he is skeptical of the volume of personal writing done in composition courses, his is a minority perspective. Barbara Schneider assigns literacy narratives as a means for students to embark on a self-critical examination of race.[43] Carolyn R. Miller and Dawn Shepherd celebrate confessional writing in blogs as a means to a modern metanoic becoming and self-affirmation: "Disclosure, however, should not be understood as the simple unveiling of a preexistent or perdurable self, but rather as a constitutive effort. The self that is 'disclosed' is a construction, possibly an experimental one, which takes shape as a particular rhetorical subject-position. In a blog, that construction is an ongoing event, the self being disclosed a continual achievement."[44] As a major figure in scholarship on process pedagogy, Peter Elbow notes that inviting writing students to work more on "voice" seems to elicit more autobiographical and self-exploratory writing that focuses on the expression of feelings.[45] Elbow sees this shift as a movement toward authenticity: "Real self. Real voice."[46]

And again, standards of correctness and convention (the traditional criteria of good writing) are viewed as enemies of an authentic self in transition: "Your most fluent and skillful voice is usually your *acceptable voice*—the voice you develop as you work out an acceptable self. To get it, you probably had to push away feelings, experiences, and tones of voice that felt unacceptable."[47] Elbow acknowledges that pursuing these "unacceptable" impulses will probably result in bad writing in the present, but personal authenticity (which is identical with textual/stylistic authenticity) is clearly the higher virtue.[48] Thus identity formation remains the primary goal of student writing: "Writing is usually a communication with others. And yet the essential transaction seems to be with oneself, a speaking to one's best self."[49]

The themes of self-discovery and identity formation are so pervasive in composition studies that it is impossible to exhaustively catalog their appearances. In the research, they are everywhere. In public life, the highest criterion of prose writing remains linguistic competency, but in the field of expertise called composition studies, that criterion has been replaced: an emotionally meaningful, original description of metanoia seems to be the mark of the best writing. Because of the limited duration of the contact between professors and students (two or three hourly sessions per week over four months), these transformations are mostly performed for the sake of satisfying course expectations: personal transformations do not unfold in accord with the university semester schedule. Thus student writing that testifies to metanoic transformation is a negotiation with the present self: it extemporaneously fashions a new "authentic" (and academic) identity through rhetorical metanoia—a substitution of past thoughts, feelings, and claims with new ones that conform to the self-critical values of university life. There is nothing inherently wrong with framing education as a means for personal transformation—but when the contours of the change are more or less prescribed by a teacher, when the change is a transparently ideological way of understanding and viewing the world, and when students feel some obligation to conform to that mold, "authentic" seems like a poor descriptor of even the best writing that students produce.

The Coming Metanoia: The Future Self in Self-Help Writing

"Self-help" books have been around for a long time, although they were not always referred to as such. Stoic texts such as Aurelius's *Meditations* or the

Discourses of Epictetus (as preserved by Arrian) were something like self-help for the ancient world. But in America, self-help came to be understood as a genre—one with an enormous commercial appeal. As I showed briefly in chapter 3, American ideology almost necessitated the rise of self-help. In a nation that claims you can be whoever you want to be, such unprecedented freedom demands an instruction manual. And there are a lot of them. Most estimates of the annual revenue of self-help books in America are around ten billion dollars. The implied premise of the self-help genre is a tragic one: it is that you are not the person you want to be. In short, what makes a self-help book is a description of how to undertake a personal metanoia, how to bring about the future self.

Today's self-help books almost always reflect a commitment to the modern form of metanoia, with its emphasis on authenticity and a return to a lost and inviolable personal essence. Of course, modern metanoia (which arguably did not become the *default* model for the masses until the last third of the twentieth century) insists that your feelings and desires *must* be expressed and realized, and social repression of these impulses must be overcome. But as late as the mid-twentieth century, most writing on self-improvement still advocated the ancient approach to personal happiness: if you find that your feelings and desires are out of step with social convention, you need to revise and discipline your feelings and desires.

In Howard Mumford Jones's 1953 book *The Pursuit of Happiness*, he does a brief survey of twentieth-century self-help writing that reflects the then extant value that social norms take priority over personal feelings and urges. In 1913's *Happiness as Found in Forethought Minus Fearthought*, Horace Fletcher attributes the cause of unhappiness to "weak habit of thought."[50] Thus the self is at fault for its own unhappiness—the remedy is a metanoia consciously undertaken by changing the way one thinks. In the same year, Orison Swett Marden's *The Joys of Living* agrees that we only have ourselves to blame for unhappiness but asserts that the solution is not better thinking—it is simply better forgetting: "What else in life is more valuable than the art of forgetting, of burying, covering up the disagreeable, everything that has caused us pain and hindered our progress?"[51] In 1921, Josephine A. Jackson and Helen M. Salisbury's *Outwitting Our Nerves* explained that "a neurosis is a confidence game that we play on ourselves."[52] In a 1937 magazine article entitled "Getting an Early Start on Happiness," the author argues that personal satisfaction is a choice: "Happiness is . . . an individual product; it depends upon the chemistry of our hormones, the organization and

health of the body's cells, the stability of the nervous system, the attitudes of the mind. . . . As such, it may be learned."[53] A 1949 essay in *The Rotarian* agrees: "Happiness is an act of will, a free decision to put an end to vain regrets and vain wishes."[54] A 1950 issue of *Woman's Home Companion* proposes a mix of common sense and professional help: "Actually, as the experts would tell you, that lost feeling—those Sunday afternoon blues—can't be blamed on your hard or boring life. It's all in your head. What you need is scientific guidance to help you regain true perspective and start living life fully again."[55] All these early twentieth-century accounts have one thing in common. They claim that dissatisfaction is a choice that the individual makes (consciously or unconsciously). Thus if one wants to be happy, one must merely choose to be so. This amounts to a willingness to reconcile the self to external circumstance; one must either learn to ignore or reinterpret life's difficulties.

Beginning in the later twentieth century, the self-help genre adopted a new fundamental premise that affirms a modern conception of metanoia: unhappiness is not your fault. It is the product of a collective effort to enforce the suppression of the authentic self. Simply put, the self-disciplining that the earlier self-help texts endorsed was recast as an unfair imposition of society that forces individuals to negate the feelings and desires that are constitutive of personal essence. Thus the task of the self-help genre was reinvented: rather than discipline the self, today's seekers are provided with methods to combat the forces in life that inhibit a full expression of the authentic self. Typically, this process begins with an epistrophic rediscovery and recovery of that self, which is buried far beneath a false mask that we mistake as our true identity by course of habit.

The epistrophic dimensions of today's self-help are evident in a popular book by Dennis William Hauck entitled *The Emerald Tablet: Alchemy for Personal Transformation* (1999).[56] Not only does the text advocate a return to a lost self, but it argues that the means to achieve this return can only be found through a return to the ancient wisdom of premodern civilization. Before discussing the book itself, some description of its source content is in order. The Emerald Tablet is an artifact shrouded in lore—whether it ever actually existed is unknown. It was purportedly a tablet of green stone or glass on which a god-man figure named Hermes Trismegistus inscribed the fundamental principles of the cosmos, supposedly in ancient Egypt. The tablet is suggested as the primary influence for the *Corpus Hermeticum*, a set of dialogues perhaps dating to the third century C.E., in which Hermes reveals

the basic tenets of what became hermetic philosophy. The earliest references to the tablet itself come in Arab texts from the early medieval period, some of which transcribe the alleged content of the tablet. Most translations of these transcriptions agree on two basic premises of the tablet.[57] First, "As above, so below," an idea that suggests the truths of our world parallel the truths of the spiritual realm. Second, the tablet asserts that all spirit and matter are an extension of a One Mind or One Thing, most perfectly embodied in the person of Hermes Trismegistus.[58]

The *Corpus* texts that extend from the wisdom of the tablet advance some contradictory ideas that have both metanoic and epistrophic overtones. In the first book of Hermes, Trismegistus says: "And let this, Oh son, be the end of religion and piety; by which when one arrives, you will both live well and die blessedly, while your soul is not ignorant wither it must return, and fly back again."[59] This suggests an inevitable spiritual return that marks epistrophe. But later, the *Corpus* proposes a transformation in line with a spiritual metanoia of regret, where one transforms rather than returns. The first book explains: "All things in Heaven are beyond guilt; all things upon Earth are subject to reprehension."[60] In a later dialogue entitled "His Secret Sermon in the Mount of Regeneration" (a title that may reflect a familiarity with the Christian Gospel of Matthew), Hermes is quoted as saying: "No man can be saved before regeneration."[61] This clearly echoes a Christian concept of metanoia that seems to be at odds with the concept of the return, a paradox embodied by two other tenets of the book: "Every body is able to be changed" and "Every essence is unchangeable."[62] The hermetic tradition provided the foundational texts for the discipline of alchemy (a metanoic art) from its inception well into the Enlightenment.

In *The Emerald Tablet*, Hauck frames hermetic wisdom in the terms of modern metanoia. Hauck claims that the themes of alchemy in the tablet and the broader *Corpus* were not meant to be applied to inert matter—rather, they were a metaphor for the alchemical transformation of the self. Correctly interpreting the tablet, then, allows "the reader to personally experience the renewed energy and amazing synchronicities unleashed by transmuting the lead of one's innermost being into gold."[63] This transformation will result in "a quantum leap in consciousness."[64] This "transmutation" of the self sounds like a religious metanoic conversion, but later it is described in decidedly epistrophic terms: "Thus, the only way to change our situation, to be set free from the endless cycle of birth and rebirth, is to identify with our immortal essence—the One Thing—instead of concentrating on transitory

illusions like material possessions, wealth, appearance, fame, or power over others."[65] This passage is followed by another that reflects the modern metanoic tendency to characterize the self as divine: "Moreover, the One Thing within us and the One Thing of the whole universe are really the same—just as the One Mind within us and the One Mind of the universe become the same in meditation. Through these correspondences between the Above and the Below, mankind can know and live in absolute truth. That was the message of the Emerald Tablet."[66]

Hauck claims that there have been different embodiments of Hermes Trismegistus throughout history—anyone who fully unlocks the self can speak in his voice. Hauck identifies the "first Hermes" as Thoth, the Egyptian god of the underworld, who he apparently believes was actually a historical person. Thoth was identified as "Lord of Rebirth" and the "Soul of Becoming," which provided the foundation for the metanoic themes of hermeticism.[67] But Hauck's interpretation of these ideas features all the characteristics of epistrophe. If one can successfully deploy the tablet's seven steps for transforming matter (calcination, dissolution, separation, conjunction, fermentation, distillation, and coagulation), then the initiate can "return to the stars and be reborn as the true Self hidden in the soul, which is part of the Signature of God in each of us."[68] The product of this process is "the return," "for at the end of the alchemical process, we arrive back where we started from."[69] Although it is difficult to call Hermeticism a religious tradition, its emphasis on spirituality is shared with a number of other self-help texts with explicitly religious orientations.

Mary Ogden Davis's 1984 book *Metanoia: A Transformational Journey* is a self-help book that reinterprets the major events of the life of Jesus Christ as archetypes of inevitable stages in the process of personal transformation—properly interpreted, readers can enact this process in their own lives to achieve transcendence. Davis claims that "there is for each of us a perfect Self-Expression."[70] But if Christ can help us approach this state, Davis does not accept the regretful metanoia that his ministry advocated. Instead, we must move beyond repentance because "we would not be the person we are; we would not have the love, the understanding, would not be ready for whatever God has for us today, if we had not had the experiences that we have labelled 'wasted.'"[71] Davis reinterprets Matthew and Mark's assertion that blasphemy is the Unforgivable Sin: "'The Unforgivable Sin' is our denial of the presence of God within us." This hints at modern metanoia's deification of the self, an idea most fully expressed when Davis writes that when

the New Testament says that Christ is within us, it "means that when once we have contacted the *mystic power within*, and have allowed it to take over our responsibilities for us, it will direct and govern all our affairs from the greatest to the least without effort, without mistakes, and without trouble to us."[72]

Jordan B. Peterson is a professor of psychology whose YouTube lectures and critiques of campus leftism have recently elevated him to celebrity status among right-wing intellectuals and libertarians. His bestselling book *12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos* reads like a self-help mixture of Jung, Stoicism, and American pragmatism. The work is a rare contemporary example of a self-help text that refuses the idea that the self is unjustly repressed by social convention: like the writers from the early twentieth century, he suggests that if you are unhappy, "it's time to examine your values. It's time to rid yourself of your current suppositions. It's time to let go. It might even be time to sacrifice what you love best, so that you can become who you might become, instead of staying who you are."[73] Although Peterson reifies the older notion of self-help as self-discipline, his book nevertheless contains the unique mix of metanoia and epistrophe that betrays the influence of modern metanoia. As an advocate for cultural Christianity, Peterson frames the eating of the Edenic Apple as the first historical example of transformation—Adam and Eve's metanoia "opened their eyes," made them afraid and conscious of their nudity.[74] But he notes that it is this event that ratifies the possibility of personal change.[75] Thus the Fall from Grace also inaugurates the very possibility of epistrophe—the "return" to Eden is inconceivable until after the exile. His description of personal transformation usually hints at epistrophe. For example, "I have a nature and so do you, and so do we all. We must discover that nature and contend with it before making peace with ourselves. What is it that we most truly are? What is it that we could most truly become, knowing who we most truly are?"[76] That even a thinker like Peterson, who is opposed to so much of the modern politics of identity and authenticity, still operates from the perspective of modern metanoia shows the cultural dominance of this notion of personal transformation.

A growing subgenre of self-help books adopts a quasi-empirical perspective and aims to replace the quackery of new age self-help with scientific legitimacy. Daniel J. Siegel wrote a book called *Mindsight: The New Science of Personal Transformation*. Incidentally, its cover displays a blurb from Norman Doidge, the same man who scribed the foreword for Peterson's book. Siegel argues an awareness of some general tenets of cognitive science is the true

key to personal change. "Mindsight" is a focus on "the internal workings of our own minds"[77] and "is a truly transformational tool"[78] for a strategic project of self-reinvention. Scientific interpretations of self-help like *Mindsight* are largely a reaction against the mysticism and spirituality that marks more popular self-help writing. And yet there are those who within the scientific community oppose the rationalization of metanoia. Stanislav and Christina Grof put together a collection that seeks to reaffirm the mystical elements of personal transformation against the encroachment of a clinical approach.[79] They write that "the healthy mystical core that inspired and nourished all great spiritual systems is now being rediscovered and reformulated in modern scientific terms."[80] The aim of their project is to destigmatize the crises that define the process of metanoia: they argue that the transformative experience is not an illness. And their rejection of an overly scientific understanding of personal change is tantamount to a defense of modern metanoia. Describing transformations that involve "psychological renewal through return to the center,"[81] Grof and Grof explain that the converts' "visionary states *tend to take them farther and farther back*—through their own history and the history of humanity, all the way to the creation of the world and the original ideal state of paradise. In this process, they seem to strive for perfection, *trying to correct things that went wrong in the past*."[82] This passage demonstrates both an epistrophic return to origins *and* a metanoic effort to amend the past, the hallmarks of the modern model of transformation.

Self-help writing, then, reflects all the characteristics of modern metanoia: it emphasizes spirit and the process of becoming, it alternates between epistrophic and metanoic themes, and it prioritizes authenticity and a deified self over social convention. But the genre also reflects one more feature of modern metanoia: the refusal of guilt and repentance in favor of an affirmative celebration of one's essence. A major part of bringing the future self into being is refusing to apologize for the thoughts, desires, and actions of the past and present selves. In *The Four Agreements: A Practical Guide to Personal Freedom (A Toltec Wisdom Book)*, Don Miguel Ruiz reinterprets the thinking of the native Central American Toltecs for implementation by a contemporary audience seeking personal change. Ruiz sees the pathos of religious metanoia (guilt, repentance, punishment, etc.) as a major barrier to personal change: "How many times do we pay for one mistake? The answer is thousands of times. . . . The rest of the animals pay once for every mistake they make. But not us. We have a powerful memory. We make a mistake, we judge ourselves, we find ourselves guilty, and we punish ourselves. If justice exists,

then that was enough; . . . but every time we remember, we judge ourselves again, we are guilty again, and we punish ourselves again, and again, and again."[83] When one chooses instead to affirm the past self, "the whole concept of sin changes from something moral or religious to something commonsense. Sin begins with rejection of yourself. Self-rejection is the biggest sin that you commit."[84] In short, sin is conceptually inverted: one can only do wrong by *not* heeding one's feelings and desires. This sanctification of desire is key to modern metanoia, and it is written all over modern self-help.

Another example comes from Anodea Judith's *Chakra Balancing Workbook*. For the uninitiated, yogic practitioners and some Eastern religions maintain the idea that each person has seven chakras: "A chakra is a spinning vortex of activity created by the presence of consciousness within the physical body. These vortices exist within what is called the subtle body—a hidden field of energy that carries your urges, emotions, and habits, as well as the imprints of all that has happened to you."[85] Each of the seven chakras are associated with a region of the body, which in turn are associated with a set of spiritual concepts and bodily needs. In discussing the second chakra, which is conveniently associated with the genitals (among other parts of the sacral region), Judith addresses one's "basic right" to "feel": "You may have had this right compromised by being told 'you shouldn't feel that way,' or that your feelings were wrong or bad. . . . You may have been told to keep your feelings to yourself and not express them. . . . These cultural attitudes keep us 'out of touch' with ourselves."[86] Not only are the feelings inviolable—one is *obligated* to express them. Judith goes on to explain that "the demon of the second chakra" is "guilt": "When the right to feel is compromised, it creates . . . guilt. Guilt tells us that we shouldn't feel a certain way, we shouldn't want this or need that, we shouldn't even have this or that desire."[87] Needless to say, guilt works to inhibit the balancing of the chakras, and thus it must be expunged from our consciousness if we are to "fully experienc[e] the basic pleasures of being alive."[88] Again, self-affirmation forms the core of modern metanoia, and as we saw in Sade, unencumbered genital pleasure is the most hallowed affirmation of the modern self.

The self-help books that I have described not only indicate the predominance of the modern notion of metanoia but highlight the displacement of the religious variety of metanoia through an affirmation of the essential self—a self that is inherently good but unexpressed due to some combination of false consciousness, habit, and the tyranny of social convention. Thus self-help as a genre represents a rhetorical impetus for the transformations

of its dissatisfied readers. The books serve as how-to primers for undertaking modern metanoia as a means to give birth to the future self.

Conclusions: Metanoia, Subjectivity, and the New

Prison writing, composition pedagogy, and self-help writing are only three sites at which metanoic themes can be found. Finding other locations where the self is in transition will aid in the description of metanoia as a key analytic concept for rhetoric. As a figure that embodies a "change of mind or heart," metanoia serves as a metaphor for the aim of rhetoric at large: persuasion. And in the current historical moment, analyzing themes of change (personal, institutional, ecological, or cultural) is essential for understanding the function of contemporary rhetoric. I have described the function of three transhistorical models of metanoia: rhetorical metanoia, which aids in amending past speech through some performance of regret; spiritual metanoia as a penitential technique for signifying a personal religious rebirth; and modern metanoia, which achieves a transformation by an epistrophic, affirmational return to a lost essence. All three are operative in contemporary discourse. But there are questions about metanoia that I have been unable to explore. For example, is a collective metanoia (a single experience of transformation experienced as a group) possible? If so, what are the unique concerns of signifying a collective metanoia? What would an institutional metanoia look like? How does third-person metanoic testimony operate? That is, what are the features of metanoic speech when the transformation is not initiated by the convert himself but, rather, is *attributed* to him against his will from outside? It is my hope that this book inspires researchers in rhetoric and communication to take up these questions.

At the outset of this project, I quoted Muckelbauer, who notes that a main goal for postmodern trends in cultural criticism is to facilitate "a divergent form of subjectivity."[89] Simply put, many contemporary thinkers are seeking new possibilities for being—the emergence of a different self. Of course, Muckelbauer is skeptical of the idea of the new. Following Deleuze, he suggests that what we call the new is inevitably a different iteration of the old. Particularly over the past ten years, people have been undertaking renovations of personal identity that would have been very difficult to achieve in the recent past. Whereas these risky transformations used to take place in secret, there is an increasingly public dimension to today's reinventions

of the self. The cause of this openness (and the liberating confessions that it entails) is a new insistence on authenticity. As I showed in chapter 3, authenticity is a prerequisite for recognition of the reformed self—it is a judgment that the audience renders of the metanoic performance.

Because the purpose of public metanoic testimony is to secure the recognition that validates the new ethos, we must conclude that Muckelbauer is correct that the "new" ethos is not really new—at least not as the term is conventionally understood. To craft a truly new identity would be to ensure that the ethos is uninhabitable: the authentically new is inherently unrecognizable. When rhetoricians speak of "recognition" as a social legitimization of the self, they mean the ability of an audience to identify a particular example of something as belonging to a type. The authentically "new" is not *representative* of a new type; rather, it embodies a *prototype*—the originary instance of a thing that represents a moment of departure from the traditional schema for being. Thus, strictly speaking, an important feature of the prototype is that it is *unrecognizable*. Metanoia does not create a new subject-position—it is a *relocation*, a deployment of a constellation of *recognizable* signifiers in a *different* way. To use everyday speech, the identity that successful metanoic testimony produces is "the same but different." By representing a known type, the convert ensures that the new ethos will find a space to operate within the existing social sphere. But by departing from *some* of the conventions of the type, the convert retains some degree of individuality and originality, which are so important for human happiness in the modern politics of the self.

Tracing the etymology of the word *ethos*, many rhetoricians link the term to ideas like a "habitude" or a "dwelling." This idea of "at-homeness" embodies the stakes of the metanoic debate over the legitimacy of the transformed ethos. Understanding ethos as one's customary space dramatizes the point of contention: who will determine what space a particular individual "customarily" inhabits? The collective or the individual? If we side with the collective, then the possibilities for one's identity will be circumscribed, running afoul of the values of secular, humanist society. But if we side with the individual, then the very idea of a "custom" (as a *social* formation) is liquidated, and with it, the fundamental principle for a *shared* culture. In short, fully prioritizing the autonomous self over social convention negates the possibility for the social, as such.

Finally, the determination of what (social) space one will be allowed to inhabit—what ethos one will be allowed to claim—demarcates the limits

of metanoic possibility. Although "metamorphosis" is a worthy definition of *metanoia*, the cocoon or chrysalis is not an apt metaphor. The caterpillar cannot resist turning into the butterfly, and once the transformation is complete, no one can deny its legitimacy: the caterpillar was confined to the space of the ground, but the butterfly lives in the air. A better symbol for the metanoic transformation of ethos is the hermit crab. Born with an exoskeleton but with a soft, vulnerable abdomen, it seeks out a shell for a home. The hermit crab cannot make its own shell. It can live without one—but not for long. So it searches. It knows what it is looking for because it is a type—usually the vacant shell of a dead mollusk. When it finds one, it is ready-made: the crab just needs to crawl in. But other crabs can (and sometimes do) keep it from doing so. The crab occupies the space of the shell only with the consent of other creatures. And even then, it is only a temporary home. As the crab grows, the shell becomes less comfortable. It finds a new one for a while—if it can.

Our era has people taking up residency in unusual places, shells with unlikely markings and dimensions. Further, it seems people are moving more frequently than they used to. In the human world, rhetoric is the medium by which these land disputes and property cases are negotiated. Understanding metanoia, in all of its shapes and sizes, in all of its contexts, is indispensable for identity and the reformation of the self in the world today.

NOTES

Introduction

1. Aristotle, *On Rhetoric* 1.2.4 (trans. Kennedy, 38–39).

2. "Bruce Jenner: The Interview," by Diane Sawyer, ABC News, April 24, 2015, https://abcnews.go.com/2020/fullpage/bruce-jenner-the-interview-30471558.

3. Andrew Griffin, "Caitlyn Jenner: Twitter Bot Created to Remind Social Media Users to Use the Right Pronouns," *The Independent*, last modified June 2, 2015, https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/gadgets-and-tech/news/caitlyn-jenner-twitter-bot-created-to-remind-social-media-users-to-use-the-right-pronouns-10291551.html.

4. Muckelbauer, *Future of Invention*, 10.

5. Ibid., 4.

6. Ibid., 26.

7. See, for example, David Bentley Hart's recent translation of the New Testament, which contains a discussion of his approach regarding the term *metanoia* (*New Testament*, 560).

8. Larson, *Fourth City*.

9. See the conclusion to this monograph for examples of composition scholarship that involve metanoic testimony.

10. The idea that the effects of the statement matter more than the motives and sentiment that animate it is only true from the distance of the rhetorical analyst. Surely, the motives and sentiment of the speaker are of paramount importance for audiences. Consider personal apologies: the recipient's prime concern is whether the apologist "means it." This fixation underscores the centrality of authenticity in metanoic discourses.

11. Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 211.

12. Ibid., 211.

13. See the chapters entitled "Identification" and "Identification and 'Consubstantiality'" in Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives*.

14. See Goffman, *Presentation of the Self*, and Goffman, *Stigma*.

15. Sarcastic, mocking, or adversarial replacement of claims might be an exception here. A showy, deliberately disingenuous metanoia operates differently than an earnest one. An example might be something like: "Oh, I am *just so sorry* that you finally had to hear me say the truth. From now on, I'll just keep on lying to your face, like everyone else."

16. Hadot, "Conversion."

17. Wierzbicki, "Inventive Listening," 27.

18. Hayles, "Postmodern Parataxis," 395.

19. Ibid., 396.

20. Ibid., 417.

21. Ibid., 398.

22. Moule, *Narrative of the Conversion*.

23. Ming-Dao, *Stone Made Smooth*.

24. Fieldy, *Got the Life*, and Welch, *Save Me from Myself*.

25. The need for recognition unites all the varieties of personal conversion, but different models of metanoia demand different forms of recognition. Religious metanoic testimony only results in a successful conversion when those *inside* the religious community accept the transformation as authentic—whether Christians perceive authenticity in the testimony of a convert to Islam is irrelevant. In contrast, modern metanoic testimony generally seeks recognition from audiences *outside* the immediate community of the convert—for example, for a man in the process of transition from a masculine to a feminine identity, the recognition of the trans community can usually be taken for granted. It is the so-called cisgender audience that is called upon to legitimize the transformation.

Chapter 1

1. Plato, *Phaedrus* 243b (trans. Fowler, 463).

2. Familiar examples of this include the "reclaiming" of epithets such as *queer* in the gay community or *n-----* in some African American communities.

3. As I demonstrated in "Rhetoric of Public Apology," the media deliberately shapes these events as spectacles of humiliation—which, in turn, shows that public apologies often constitute a punitive discourse rather than a reconciliatory one.

4. These usages are apparent in English translations of the Greek Septuagint version of the Old Testament, which I discuss in the next chapter.

5. Burton, "Outline of an Inductive and Historical Study," 278–88. This source is an indispensable catalogue of uses of these terms in texts from the fifth century B.C.E. to the second century C.E.

6. Ibid., 285, 286.

7. Fulkerson, "*Metameleia* and Friends," 256.

8. For example, Aloys H. Dirksen notes that the pseudonymous hermetic text called *The Picture* (attributed to Cebes of Thebes) uses *metanoia* and *metameleia* interchangeably ("New Testament Concept of Metanoia," 167, 175).

9. Ibid., 173; emphasis added.

10. Fulkerson, "*Metameleia* and Friends," 245.

11. Ibid., 254.

12. Ibid., 256.

13. Ibid., 251.

14. For example, David Konstan asserts that classical writers had little interest in remorse or repentance. Fulkerson and Dirksen clearly disagree ("Assuaging Rage," 246).

15. Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 3.36.4.

16. Plato, *Euthydemus* 279c.

17. Cicero, *De oratore* 3.52 (trans. Rackham, 200–201).

18. And yet, according to Stephen Usher, Cicero believes that the figures of thought confer "more distinction" on oratory than figures of speech do ("*Sententiae* in Cicero *Orator*," 99).

19. Quintilian, *Institutes of Oratory* 9.1.8.

20. Jeanne Fahnestock notes that Quintilian's own catalogue of figures deviates from the divisions he set out at the beginning of book 9 (*Rhetorical Figures in Science*, 9).

21. Quintilian, *Institutes of Oratory* 9.1.10.

22. Quintilian, *Institutes of Oratory* 9.1.21; emphasis added.

23. Puttenham, *Arte of English Poesie*.

24. Ibid., 14.

25. Ibid., 236.

26. Ibid., 214.

27. Ibid., 281.

28. Ibid., 296.

29. Fahnestock, *Rhetorical Figures in Science*, 21.

30. Ibid., 21–22.

31. This is particularly evident when considering Puttenham's catalog. For example, in employing the figure called "the Disabler" by engaging in a particular type of mocking or criticism, the rhetor disables certain modes of response from the interlocuter.

32. Ibid., 21.

33. There are a variety of ways in which a statement might be deficient: it might be untrue, imprecise, uncouth, hurtful, and so on.

34. See Katz, "'Please Believe Me,'" 160–66. In studying children who revealed physical or sexual abuse to trusted adults who later reported it to authorities, all of the children in the study recanted their earlier claims "within a few days to 6 months" (162). Katz notes the ways that the timing of the recantations figured into the researchers' assessments of their credibility.

35. Hadot, "Conversion."

36. Ibid.

37. Aristotle, *On Rhetoric* 2.3.5 [1380a] (trans. Kennedy, 121).

38. P. Rutilius Lupus, *De figuris sententiarum et elocutionis*, 9: "Hoc schema fieri solet, cum ipso se, qui loquitur, reprehendit, et id quod prius dixit, posteriori sententia communtat." The translation above is a loose one of my own.

39. [Cicero], *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 4.26.36 (trans. Caplan, 319).

40. [Cicero], *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 4.26.36 (trans. Caplan, 319–20).

41. Cicero, *De oratore* 3.53.200–204 (trans. Rackham, 161–62).

42. Cicero, *De oratore* 3.53.202 (trans. Rackham, 161).

43. Cicero, *De oratore* 3.53.203 (trans. Rackham, 163).

44. Cicero, *De oratore* 3.54.206 (trans. Rackham, 165).

45. See DeValve, "*Epistrophe*," 118–27. DeValve is one of very few contemporary scholars focusing on the concept of epistrophe. Although he is not a rhetorician, he briefly discusses the rhetorical roots of epistrophe. Dissatisfied with epistrophe's historical connection to linguistic form (rather than content), DeValve tries to establish its internal, transcendental implications. He calls it "a fundamental turning in perception," which is "more massive than an epiphany" (122). He goes on to relate epistrophe to spiritual conversion and "an ongoing process of revising thought and action" (123).

46. [Cicero], *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 4.13.19 (trans. Caplan, 277).

47. Cicero, *De oratore* 3.53.207 (trans. Rackham, 165).

48. Sherry, *Treatise of Schemes and Tropes*, 2.

49. Susenbrotus, *Epitome troporum*, 54.

50. Sherry, *Treatise of Schemes and Tropes*, 43.

51. Susenbrotus, *Epitome troporum*, 79.

52. Masse, "Opposition as a Technique of Knowing," 113–34.

53. Ibid., 122.

54. Ibid., 122.

55. Ibid., 127.

56. Peacham, *Garden of Eloquence*, 172.

57. Ibid.

58. Ibid., 173.

59. Ibid.

60. Ibid.

61. Puttenham, *Arte of English Poesie*, 273.

62. Puttenham probably references later Greek literature from the first century C.E. and beyond. It is only then, after the emergence of Christianity, that the Greek word *metanoia* routinely denotes a repentance.

63. Puttenham, *Arte of English Poesie*, 274. Puttenham follows his entry on metanoia with the figure of *antanagoge* (or, as he calls it, "The Recompencer"). He explains that it is much like The Penitent,

"but doth not as the same recant or unsay a word that hath bene said before, putting another fitter in his place, but [rather] having spoken any thing to deprave the matter or partie, he denieth it not, but as it were helpeth it againe by another more favourable speach and so seemeth to make amends" (274–75).

64. See especially lectures 4–7 in Austin's *How to Do Things with Words*.

65. See Ellwanger, "Rhetoric of Public Apology," 30–66. The second chapter deals with the historical transition of apology from a mode of defense against charges of wrongdoing to a regretful acceptance of culpability for wrong.

66. This, too, represents a paradox: by *demanding* that someone offer an apology, one ensures that it can never be known whether an apology is authentic. Did the offender apologize because she genuinely felt some regret for the earlier act? Or did she merely say she regretted it because she was commanded to do so?

67. "Michael Richards Spews Racial Hate—Kramer Racist Rant," YouTube, July 14, 2012, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BoLPLsQbdt0.

68. Ibid.

69. If it *was* a case of mere linguistic impropriety, this event probably would never have been considered an offense at all: improper language is part of the essence of stand-up comedy, and audiences expect to encounter it at a stand-up performance.

70. There are, of course, a few contexts in which white people *may* be allowed to use the term. But generally, these contexts are limited to usage by particularly successful Caucasian rappers, or rare tactical uses of the term that are meant to advance anti-racist objectives.

71. Quoted in Amy Bonawitz, "Jesse Jackson Talks to Michael Richards," CBSnews.com, November 25, 2006, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/jesse-jackson-talks-to-michael-richards.

72. Michael Daly, "Reality Bites Real Kramer: N-Word Furor May Affect His Life, Concedes 'Seinfeld' Namesake," Nydailynews.com, November 21, 2006, http://www.nydailynews.com/archives/news/reality-bites-real-kramer-n-word-furor-affect-life-concedes-seinfeld-namesake-article-1.571170.

73. Ibid.

74. See Benoit's *Accounts, Excuses, and Apologies*.

75. The defensive discourse of apologia is not inherently metanoic like the apology of regret. Apologia usually takes one of two forms: either the accused party rejects culpability for the offense or he accepts responsibility for the act in question and *rejects* its status as an offense. Strictly speaking, neither mode requires any linguistic substitution.

76. "Michael Richards [Kramer] Apologizes on the Letterman Show," YouTube, November 22, 2006, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6hYrmPUwknk.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid.

79. Ibid.

80. See Ellwanger, "Apology as *Metanoic* Performance," 307–29. There, I demonstrate that Richards was a victim—not of his own offensive remarks but rather of a deliberately staged apologetic spectacle. These coerced spectacles are one means by which representatives of the public punish people for speech that is considered offensive under the dominant discursive ethic. These ritualistic dramas of apology generally take place over the course of days or weeks and are meant to reinforce the rules for polite discourse—rules that the apologist is deemed to have violated.

81. Bonawitz, "Jesse Jackson Talks to Michael Richards."

82. Ibid.

83. There were many who doubted the authenticity of his conversion. After the metanoia, Reverend Al Sharpton was among those rejecting the possibility of

Richard's kairotic transformation: "I told Richards you need to sit down and deal with this. This is not about accepting an apology. This is about starting a process to really deal with the continual problem of racism in this country. I think that what he did was so injurious that he needs to sit down with a group and decide how he tries to . . . dealing with the obvious problem that he's got in his own mind and his own heart, because it wouldn't come out of you if it wasn't in you" (quoted in "Sharpton: Comedian's Apology Not Enough," CNN.com, November 23, 2006, http://www.cnn.com/2006/SHOWBIZ/TV/11/22/sharpton.richard/).

84. Gina Serpe, "Kramer Cools Heels in Cambodia," E!News, July 13, 2007, http://www.eonline.com/news/55629/kramer-cools-heels-in-cambodia (site discontinued).

85. Ibid.

86. "Michael Richards—On 'Angry White Men' and Harriet Tubman . . . Very Awkward Moment," TMZ, April 21, 2016, http://www.tmz.com/2016/04/21/michael-richards-donald-trump-harriet-tubman.

87. DeAngelis, *Gay Fandom and Crossover Stardom*.

88. Grobel, "Interview: Mel Gibson," 51.

89. "Gibson's Anti-Semitic Tirade: Alleged Cover-Up," TMZ.com, July 28, 2006, http://www.tmz.com/2006/07/28/gibsons-anti-semitic-tirade-alleged-cover-up.

90. Ibid.

91. The text of the apology below was originally taken from Judy Faber, "Mel Gibson Admits Alcoholism Battle," CBS News, July 29, 2006, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/mel-gibson-admits-alcoholism-battle. I accessed it first during research in 2006 and again in mid-2011. Since that time, the language in brackets was excised from the article. The remaining link at CBS News makes no mention of any edits and does not use any ellipsis to indicate the excision as of February 2018, at which time the article still listed the text of the apology as "complete." The possible reasons for such stealth editing tell us a great deal about the role of media in staging these apologetic spectacles, punishing discursive offenses, and maintaining a public record of past violations of individuals. The full, complete record of that particular passage of the apology can now be found in Ken Lee, "Gibson 'Ashamed' About His Behavior," *People*, July 29, 2006, https://people.com/celebrity/gibson-ashamed-about-his-behavior.

92. "ADL Says Mel Gibson's Anti-Semitic Tirade Reveals His True Self; Actor's Apology 'Not Good Enough,'" ADL.org, July 30, 2006, https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/adl-says-mel-gibsons-anti-semitic-tirade-reveals-his-true-self-actors-apology.

93. Abraham Foxman, "Gibson Must Confront Disease of Bigotry," *New York Jewish Week*, August 4, 2006, https://www.adl.org/ADL_Opinions/Anti_Semitism_Domestic/20060804-JWeekoped.htm (site discontinued); emphasis added.

94. "Mel Gibson's Apology to the Jewish Community," ADL.org, August 1, 2006, https://www.adl.org/news/letters/mel-gibsons-apology-to-the-jewish-community.

95. "ADL Welcomes Mel Gibson's Apology to the Jewish Community," ADL.org, August 1, 2006, https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/adl-welcomes-mel-gibsons-apology-to-the-jewish-community.

96. "Gibson: 'Public Humiliation on a Global Scale' Made Him Address Alcoholism," *Good Morning America*, October 12, 2006, https://abcnews.go.com/GMA/Entertainment/Story?id=2561919&page=1.

Chapter 2

1. Etzioni and Carney, *Repentance*, 85.
2. Ibid., 108.

3. Ibid., 122.

4. Although there are countless types of conversion, the Christian type is a critical example, if only because it is unique in its demands: it calls the convert to turn not into something merely different, but something *opposite*.

5. Peters, *Mutilating God*, 2.

6. Interestingly, the latter part of the word *epistrophe* comes from the same root that gives us the word *trope*, a connection that highlights the relation of the spiritual "turn" to the rhetorical one.

7. Nock, *Conversion*, 7; emphasis added.

8. Ibid.

9. Hadot, "Conversion."

10. Ibid.

11. Vernant, *Origins of Greek Thought*, 50.

12. Ibid., 51.

13. Konstan, "Assuaging Rage," 246.

14. Fulkerson, "*Metameleia* and Friends," 241–42.

15. Ibid., 241–59.

16. Ibid.

17. Torrance, *Repentance in Late Antiquity*, 60–61.

18. Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 209.

19. Nock, *Conversion*, 165–72. The entire chapter entitled "Conversion to Philosophy" addresses the problematic I discuss here.

20. Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, 166.

21. Ibid.

22. Szalay, "Metanoia," 490.

23. Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 211–17.

24. Foucault, *On the Government of the Living*, 144; emphasis added.

25. Nock, *Conversion*, 179–80.

26. Szalay, "Metanoia," 502.

27. Ibid., 492–93.

28. Ibid., 490–92.

29. See, for examples, Dirksen, "New Testament Concept of Metanoia"; Nave, *Role and Function of Repentance*; Torrance, *Repentance in Late Antiquity*; Chamberlain, *Meaning of Repentance*; Burton, "Outline of an Inductive and Historical Study"; and Crossley, "Semitic Background to Repentance."

30. Nave, *Role and Function of Repentance*, 39.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid. The similarities and differences between the meaning of metanoia and epistrophe in the Greek Old Testament are perhaps best illustrated by analyzing the handful of biblical passages in which uses of both words appear: Jeremiah 4:28, Jeremiah 18:7–10, Joel 2:12–14, and Jonah 3:9–10.

33. A possible objection to this could be the pharaoh Akhenaten's quasi-monotheistic reforms in ancient Egypt, though after his death, the Egyptian establishment promptly returned to their traditional polytheism.

34. Nock, *Conversion*, 14.

35. Some answers to this question are ventured in the first two chapters of Chamberlain, *Meaning of Repentance*.

36. This trend in the Johannine literature holds in the three New Testament letters attributed to John the Elder, in which *metanoia* is never used. This may offer some evidence to support a case for a common authorship between the gospel and the letters.

37. George Campbell, *The Four Gospels with Preliminary Dissertations* (1824), Internet Archive, 335–37 (6.3.11), https://archive.org/details/fourgospelstrans1824 01camp/page/322.

38. Walden, *Great Meaning of Metanoia*, 14.

39. Campbell, *Four Gospels with Preliminary Dissertations*, 321–23 (6.3.1). Chamberlain also makes this distinction; see *Meaning of Repentance*, 32.

40. Campbell, *Four Gospels with Preliminary Dissertations*, 332–33 (6.3.10).

41. Hart, *New Testament*, 4. The explicitly metanoic qualities of John's ministry

can also be observed in Mark 1:14, Luke 3:3, and Luke 3:8. After his baptism by John's hand, and John's subsequent incarceration, Jesus begins his work in earnest and asserts metanoia as duty for the faithful: "Change your hearts [μετανοείτε]; for the Kingdom of the heavens has drawn near" (Matthew 4:17; Hart, *New Testament*, 6).

42. Ibid., 4–5.

43. Tertullian, *On Penance* 2.17–18 (trans. Le Saint, 15).

44. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 299.

45. Ehrman, *Lost Scriptures*, 189; emphasis added.

46. Ibid.; emphasis added.

47. Tertullian, *On Penance* 6.86–91 (trans. Le Saint, 24).

48. Ambrose, *Concerning Repentance* 2.9.80–81 (trans. H. De Romestin, 265).

49. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 304; emphasis added.

50. See Matthew 4:18–22, Mark 1:14–20, Luke 5:1–11, and John 1:35–51.

51. Hart, *New Testament*, 124.

52. This episode is treated with much consistency in Matthew 26:69–75, Mark 14:66–72, Luke 22:54–62, and John 18:15–27.

53. Hart, *New Testament*, 160.

54. The breakfast is some of the 153 fish that miraculously appeared in Peter's net. It is of note that *even after* the first appearance of the resurrected Jesus, Peter still returns to his old life as a fisherman. This return to his earlier ethos calls into question the completeness of his conversion.

55. Hart, *New Testament*, 218.

56. Crossley, "Semitic Background to Repentance," 138–57.

57. Hart, *New Testament*, 10.

58. Tertullian, *On Penance* 6.87–91 (trans. Le Saint, 23).

59. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 306.

60. Foucault, *Technologies of the Self*, 42; emphasis added.

61. Foucault, *On the Government of the Living*, 223–29.

62. Hart, *New Testament*, 238.

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid., 239.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid., 240.

69. Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, 14–20.

70. Ibid., 21.

71. Hart, *New Testament*, 363.

72. Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 56.

73. Hart, *New Testament*, 377–78.

74. Ibid., 301.

75. Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 58.

76. For a list of the occurrences of *metanoia* in the work of Josephus, see Burton, "Outline of an Inductive and Historical Study."

77. Philo, *On the Virtues* 33.178 (trans. Yonge, 658); emphasis added.

78. Philo, *On the Virtues* 34.183 (trans. Yonge, 658); emphasis added.

79. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 2.1 (trans. Falls, 6:149).

80. While the Stoics may not have been interested in a particular divinity, at least a few were concerned with matters of repentance. For example, in book 8 of his *Meditations*, Marcus Aurelius uses variations of the word *metanoia* a handful of times. One notable instance is in 8.2, where Aurelius recommends that "on every occasion of every act ask thyself, *How is this with respect to me? Shall I repent* [μετανοήσω] *of it*?" Here, he describes a kind of *pronoia* (anticipatory forethought) that seeks to avoid metanoia. The idea of pronoia makes occasional cameos throughout the history of rhetorical theory (where it is sometimes called pronoia and other times by other names). The kairotic role of forethought is a topic worthy of much more description by rhetoricians.

81. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 2.3 (trans. Falls, 6:149–50).

82. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 2.6 (trans. Falls, 6:150–51).
83. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 7.2 (trans. Falls, 6:159).
84. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 8.1–2 (trans. Falls, 6:160).
85. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 8.2 (trans. Falls, 6:160).
86. 2 Clement 13:1 (trans. Ehrman, *Lost Scriptures*, 190).
87. *Shepherd of Hermas* 27:7 (trans. ibid., 265).
88. *Shepherd of Hermas* 28:3 (trans. ibid., 266).
89. *Shepherd of Hermas* 28:4 (trans. ibid).
90. Tertullian, *On Penance* 6.93–96 (trans. Le Saint, 25).
91. Trismegistus, *Divine Poimandres*, 115.
92. Ibid.
93. Ibid.; emphasis added.
94. Ibid., 133.
95. Guthrie, *Greek Pilgrim's Progress*, 1.
96. Ibid., 3.
97. Ibid., 11.
98. Ibid., 12.
99. Mark the Monk, *Counsels on the Spiritual Life*, 161.
100. Ibid., 160.
101. Murphy, "St. Augustine and the Christianization of Rhetoric," 26.
102. Tell, "Augustine and the 'Chair of Lies,'" 384–407.
103. Ibid., 386.
104. Ibid., 406.
105. Here, Augustine probably refers to declamations, a Roman-era classroom exercise in which students demonstrated their rhetorical cunning.
106. Augustine, *Confessions* 3.2.6–7 (trans. Hammond, 99–100).
107. Augustine, *Confessions* 3.2.6 (trans. Hammond, 99).
108. Augustine, *Confessions* 6.11 (trans. Hammond, 161).
109. Augustine, *Confessions* 4.26 (trans. Hammond, 175); emphasis added.
110. Augustine, *Confessions* 8.5 (trans. Hammond, 365).
111. Augustine, *Confessions* 8.16 (trans. Hammond, 387); emphasis added.
112. Augustine, *Confessions* 8.5 (trans. Hammond, 377).
113. Augustine, *Confessions* 8.10 (trans. Hammond, 397).
114. Augustine, *Confessions* 8.11 (trans. Hammond, 405); emphasis added.
115. Augustine, *Confessions* 8.12 (trans. Hammond, 409); emphasis added.
116. Augustine, *Confessions* 8.12 (trans. Hammond, 411); emphasis added.
117. Luther, *Ninety-Five Theses and Other Writings*, 3.
118. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 306.
119. Ibid.
120. Ibid., 296.
121. Ibid., 298.
122. Ibid., 300; emphasis added.
123. Ibid., 331.
124. Bunyan, *Grace Abounding*, 5.
125. Ibid., 14.
126. Ibid.
127. Ibid.
128. Ibid., 14–15.
129. Ibid., 10.
130. Ibid., 12.
131. Ibid., 34.
132. Ibid.
133. Brereton, *From Sin to Salvation*, 4.
134. Ibid., 27.
135. Eastman, *From the Deep Woods*, 16.
136. Ibid., 17.
137. Ibid.
138. Eastman, *Soul of the Indian*, 5.
139. Ibid., 23; emphasis added.
140. Eastman, *From the Deep Woods*, 27.
141. Ibid., 33; emphasis added.
142. Eastman, *Soul of the Indian*, xv.
143. Moule, *Narrative of the Conversion*, 17.
144. Ibid.
145. Ibid., 24.
146. Ibid., 25.
147. Ming-Dao, *Stone Made Smooth*, 1.

148. Ibid., 2.
149. Ibid., 9.
150. Ibid., 12.
151. Ibid., 20.
152. Ibid., 21–22.
153. Ibid., 49; emphasis added.
154. Ibid., 30; emphasis added.
155. Ibid., 81; emphasis added.
156. Welch, *Save Me from Myself*, 3.
157. Ibid., 124.
158. Ibid.
159. Ibid. Note that Head's "guilty" feelings about not going to church parallel the "afterthought" at the heart of rhetorical metanoia.
160. Ibid., 133.
161. Ibid., 18.
162. Ibid., 19.
163. Ibid., 132.
164. Ibid., 133.
165. Ibid., 134. Head's narration clearly frames the incident as a divine intervention.
166. Ibid., 136.
167. Ibid., 137.
168. Ibid., 140–41.
169. Ibid.
170. Ibid., 147.
171. Head faced major skepticism in the hard rock community. They doubted the authenticity of the conversion and derided it. See ibid., 166 for Head's comments on this phenomenon.
172. Ibid., 163.
173. Ibid., 220–21.
174. Fieldy, *Got the Life*, 90–91.
175. Ibid., 160–61; emphasis added.
176. Ibid., 179.
177. Ibid., 180.
178. Ibid.
179. Ibid., 188.
180. Ibid., 189.
181. Ibid., 191.
182. Ibid., 194.
183. Ibid., 195.
184. Ibid.
185. Ibid., 208–9.
186. Ibid., 216.
187. Ibid., 219; emphasis added.
188. Ibid., 199.

Chapter 3

1. Jung, *Undiscovered Self*, 32.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., 33.
4. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 104 (B.IV.166).
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., 111 (B.IV.a.179).
7. Fukuyama, *Identity*, 18.
8. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 115 [B.IV.a.189–90].
9. Ibid., 111 (B.IV.a.181).
10. Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 18.
11. Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity*, 11.
12. Jones, *Pursuit of Happiness*, 146.
13. James, "Stream of Thought," 23.
14. Ibid., 23–24.
15. Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity*, 131.
16. Guignon, *On Being Authentic*, 35.
17. Ibid., xii.
18. Ibid., 32.
19. Ibid., 35.
20. Delbanco, *Death of Satan*, 105.
21. Ibid., 106.
22. Emerson, "Montaigne, or the Skeptic," 241.
23. Montaigne, "On Repentance."
24. Ibid., 235.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid., 236.
27. Ibid., 237.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid., 239.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid., 245.
32. Ibid., 249.
33. Rousseau, *Confessions*, 17.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid., 261.
36. Ibid., 262.
37. Sade, "Dialogue," 165.

38. Ibid.
39. Ibid., 166.
40. Ibid., 168.
41. Ibid., 174.
42. Taylor, *Ethics of Authenticity*, 35–36.
43. Ibid., 39.
44. Lindholm, *Culture and Authenticity*, 65.
45. Taylor, *Ethics of Authenticity*, 37.
46. Guignon, *On Being Authentic*, 76.
47. Hadot, "Epistrophe et metanoia," 31–36.
48. Ibid., 32.
49. Ibid.
50. Guignon, *On Being Authentic*, 3.
51. Campbell, *Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 167.
52. Ibid., 194.
53. Ibid., 167–78.
54. Ibid., 195.
55. Ibid., 337.
56. Ibid., 275.
57. Neumann, *Origins and History of Consciousness*, 250–56.
58. In various works, Jung also describes a concept with key similarities to metanoia: enantiodromia.
59. Neumann, *Origins and History of Consciousness*, 335.
60. Ibid., 220.
61. Ibid., 375.
62. Ibid., 221.
63. Guignon, *On Being Authentic*, 61; emphasis added. It must also be said that Guignon ultimately suggests that the Romantic rejection of the Enlightenment only ended up fueling the popularization of Enlightenment ideas about nature and the self.
64. Ibid., 60–61.
65. Ibid., 75.
66. Ibid., 76.
67. Eliot, "Little Gidding," 208.
68. Cather, *Professor's House*, 239.
69. Ibid., 240.
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid., 241.
72. Ibid., 242–43; emphasis added.
73. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 111.
74. Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 125.
75. Ibid., 131.
76. Ibid., 152.
77. Ibid.
78. Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 71.
79. Ibid., 24.
80. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 237; emphasis added.
81. Ibid.
82. Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, 99.
83. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 119.
84. Ibid., 121; emphasis added.
85. See Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 9 (*Theta*).
86. Burke, *On Symbols and Society*, 72.
87. Ibid., 241.
88. Ibid., 72.
89. Ibid., 241.
90. Guignon, *On Being Authentic*, 119–20.
91. I recognize that some readers would say that, in actuality, Jenner never was a man. That question lies beyond the scope of my study here. In the following analysis, I aim to be faithful to the language, including pronouns, that Jenner herself used prior to and throughout her transformation.
92. Myers, "*Metanoia* and the Transformation of Opportunity," 15.
93. Although the assertion that one can change one's sex suggests that sex is not an essentialist or biological category, the assumption that "real" boys show an aptitude for sport hints that there are perhaps essential characteristics of sex and gender.
94. Mason-Schrock, "Transsexuals' Narrative Construction," 179–83.
95. Ibid., 178.
96. Layden, "American Hero," 35.
97. Ibid., 36.
98. At the time of the *20/20* interview, Jenner did testify that she was a woman, but still used the name "Bruce."
99. "Bruce Jenner: The Interview."
100. Ibid.

101. Johnston, "'I Was Always This Way,'" 561.

102. "Bruce Jenner: The Interview."

103. Although it may be questionable to apply this level of rhetorical scrutiny to what appears as unguarded, extemporaneous speech, surely the interview was edited and packaged as a message that Jenner and *20/20* wished to convey to the public. As a critical moment in Jenner's transformation, it is also likely that she gave significant consideration to what she would say in the interview. Speech plays a primary role in Jenner's conversion—especially before its completion. Thus Jenner's comments on *20/20* require a close analysis if we are to understand the rhetorical functions of her testimony.

104. Buzz Bissinger, "Call Me Caitlyn," *Vanity Fair*, July 2015, 50–106.

105. Buzz Bissinger, "Caitlyn Jenner: The Full Story," VanityFair.com, July 2015, https://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2015/06/caitlyn-jenner-bruce-cover-annie-leibovitz.

106. "Bruce Jenner: The Interview."

107. Bissinger, "Caitlyn Jenner: The Full Story."

108. "Bruce Jenner: The Interview."

109. Mason-Schrock, "Transsexuals' Narrative Construction," 180.

110. Guignon, *On Being Authentic*, 59–65.

111. Mason-Schrock, "Transsexuals' Narrative Construction," 182.

112. Ibid., 183.

113. Layden, "American Hero," 32.

114. Ibid., 39.

115. Mason-Schrock, "Transsexuals' Narrative Construction," 183.

116. "Bruce Jenner: The Interview."

117. Ibid.

118. Rousseau, *Confessions*, 17.

119. Buzz Bissinger, "Caitlyn Jenner Talks About Her Mother's Reaction and Transgender Fans (NEW PHOTOS)," VanityFair.com, July 2015, https://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2015/06/caitlyn-jenner-photos-interview-buzz-bissinger.

120. Ibid.

121. Greg Botelho, "Ex-NAACP Leader Rachel Dolezal: 'I Identify as Black,'" CNN.com, last modified June 17, 2015, https://www.cnn.com/2015/06/16/us/washington-rachel-dolezal-naacp/index.html.

122. Griffin, "Caitlyn Jenner: Twitter Bot Created."

123. "Raw Interview with Lawrence and Ruthanne Dolezal," YouTube, last modified June 17, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xTkHDoUAYdA.

124. Ibid.

125. William Saletan, "Rachel Dolezal's Truth," Slate.com, last modified June 15, 2015, http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/politics/2015/06/rachel_dolezal_claims_to_be_the_target_of_hate_crimes_the_former_naacp_official.html.

126. "NAACP Imposter Sued School over Race Claims," TheSmokingGun.com, June 15, 2015, http://www.thesmokinggun.com/documents/bizarre/rachel-dolezal-discrimination-lawsuit-786451.

127. "Raw Interview with Lawrence and Ruthanne Dolezal."

128. Jeff Selle and Maureen Dolan, "Black Like Me?," *Coeur d'Alene Press*, last modified June 11, 2015, http://www.cdapress.com/archive/article-385adfeb-76f3-5050-98b4-d4bf021c423f.html.

129. "Rachel Dolezal Doesn't 'Give Two S***s' What Anyone Thinks," *Daily Mail*, https://www.dailymail.co.uk/video/news/video-1191624/Rachel-Dolezal-doesnt-two-s-s-thinks.html.

130. "Raw Interview with Lawrence and Ruthanne Dolezal."

131. "Rachel Dolezal's Brothers Address Her Race," YouTube, last modified June 14, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0SELHPXvcdw.

132. Ray Sanchez and Ben Brumfield, "Rachel Dolezal's Appearance Is 'Blackface,' Brother Says," CNN.com, last modified June 15, 2015, https://www.cnn.com

/2015/06/13/us/washington-rachel-dolezal-adopted-brother/index.html.

133. Selle and Dolan, "Black Like Me?"

134. Ibid.; Shawntelle Moncy, "A Life to Be Heard," *Easterner*, February 5, 2015, https://theeasterner.org/35006/eagle-life/a-life-to-be-heard.

135. "How the Coeur d'Alene Press Broke the Dolezal Story," KXLY.com, last modified November 20, 2016, https://www.kxly.com/news/local-news/how-the-coeur-dalene-press-broke-the-dolezal-story_20161121043013233/176697849. This sequence of events counters a popular (and erroneous) public belief that it was Dolezal's parents who contacted the media with the aim of "outing" their daughter.

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137. "Rachel Dolezal Breaks Her Silence: 'I Identify as Black,'" YouTube, last modified June 16, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lG9Q2_Hv83k.

138. Ibid.

139. "Rachel Dolezal Exclusive Extended Video | Melissa Harris-Perry | MSNBC," YouTube, last modified June 17, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=USr_bm39hrU.

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141. Ibid.; "Race vs. State of Mind: Rachel Dolezal's Thoughts on Whiteness," YouTube, last modified November 2, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=54QrcxCKo1o.

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148. Crable, "Rhetoric, Anxiety, and Character Armor," 11.

149. Brown, "Changing Authentic Identities," 466.

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152. Selle and Dolan, "Black Like Me?"

153. McGreal, "Rachel Dolezal: 'I Wasn't Identifying as Black to Upset People.'"

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168. "Bruce Jenner: The Interview."

169. McGreal, "Rachel Dolezal: 'I Wasn't Identifying as Black to Upset People.'"

170. Salamon, *Assuming a Body*, 83.

171. Freccero, "Autobiography and Narrative," 20.

172. Johnston, "'I Was Always This Way,'" 552.

173. "Race vs. State of Mind."

174. Lonnae O'Neal, "Lonnae O'Neal: Spokane Woman Is a Race Chameleon of a Different Stripe," *Washington Post*, June 12, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/lonnae-oneal-black-like-dolezal-spokane-womans-choice-is-a-puzzle/2015/06/12/2b05c47a-111b-11e5-adec-e82f8395c032_story.html.

175. Savali, "Let's Not Question Blackness Because a White Woman Says So"; emphasis added.

176. Myers, "Metanoic Movement," 397.

177. Goffman, *Presentation of the Self*, 44.

178. Goffman, *Stigma*, 79.

179. "Rachel Dolezal's Brothers Address Her Race."

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194. McAllister, "Why Bruce Jenner Can Never Be a Woman."

195. Richardson, "Active vs. Passive Convert," 164.

196. Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 209.

197. Foucault, *Care of the Self*, 64.

198. Frank, "Rhetoric of Self-Change," 43.

199. Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 215.

200. Foucault, *Technologies of the Self*, 49.

201. Morrison, *Understanding Conversion*, 7.

202. Myers, "Metanoic Movement," 391.

203. Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 214.

204. Johnston, "'I Was Always This Way,'" 550.

205. Taylor, *Secular Age*, 489.

206. Goffman, *Presentation of the Self*, 44.

207. Richardson, "Active vs. Passive Convert," 165.

208. Myers, "Metanoic Movement."

209. Freccero, "Autobiography and Narrative," 17.

210. Peters, *Mutilating God*, 3.

211. Butler, *Gender Trouble*, xv.

212. Mason-Schrock, "Transsexuals' Narrative Construction," 190.

213. Muckelbauer, *Future of Invention*, 4.

214. Ibid., 10.

215. Ibid., 32.

Conclusion

1. All of the scholarship that I have chosen to demonstrate this trend in composition studies is drawn from Miller's anthology *The Norton Book of Composition Studies*. There are obvious limitations to advancing generalized claims about a discipline from a single anthology. Nevertheless, the fact that so many of the seminal essays in this collection reflect a pedagogical fixation on personal transformation shows that this is a major theme in composition scholarship. I believe that even a brief survey of other major works in composition would reflect the same tendency.

2. Larson, *Fourth City*.

3. Ibid., 61.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid., 83.

9. Ibid., 266.

10. Ibid., 270; emphasis added.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., 242.

13. Ibid., 95.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., 99.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., 101.
18. Ibid., 30; emphasis added.
19. I address this question of institutional metanoia in a chapter of the forthcoming anthology entitled *Looking Back to Move Forward: Official Apologies as Political Texts*, edited by Jason Edwards and Lisa Storm Villadsen.
20. Miller, *Norton Book of Composition Studies*, 13.
21. Ibid., 258.
22. Bertucio, "Paideia as Metanoia," 509–17.
23. Ibid., 512.
24. Ibid., 513.
25. Faigley, *Fragments of Rationality*.
26. Ibid., 15.
27. Miller, *Norton Book of Composition Studies*, 605–30.
28. Ibid., 620.
29. Ibid., 621.
30. Ibid., 623.
31. Miller, *Norton Book of Composition Studies*, 323–32.
32. Ibid., 324.
33. Ibid., 329.
34. Ibid., 267.
35. Ibid., 372.
36. Ibid., 586–604.
37. See Ellwanger, "Charisma as Rhetorical *Technē*," 205–24.
38. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 48.
39. Ibid.
40. Miller, *Norton Book of Composition Studies*, 898.
41. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 61.
42. Faigley, *Fragments of Rationality*, 120.
43. Miller, *Norton Book of Composition Studies*, 919–32.
44. Ibid., 1461.
45. Elbow, *Writing with Power*, 284.
46. Ibid., 293.
47. Ibid., 301.
48. Ibid., 301–2.
49. Ibid., 179.
50. Quoted in Jones, *Pursuit of Happiness*, 156.
51. Quoted in ibid.
52. Quoted in ibid., 157.
53. Quoted in ibid., 160.
54. Quoted in ibid., 161.
55. Quoted in ibid.
56. Hauck, *Emerald Tablet*.
57. Trismegistus, *Emerald Tablet of Hermes*.
58. Those who believe that the wisdom of the tablet does, in fact, date to the time of the ancient pharaohs have suggested that it reflects a pagan anticipation of Christian monotheism. Hermetic writing does share some interesting connections with Gnostic and Coptic Christian writing, but this is probably because the *Corpus* dates to roughly the same period as those spiritual movements.
59. Warwick, *Corpus Hermeticum*, 10.
60. Ibid., 13.
61. Ibid., 54.
62. Ibid., 11.
63. Hauck, *Emerald Tablet*, ix.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid., 10.
66. Ibid.
67. Ibid., 23.
68. Ibid., 153.
69. Ibid., 168.
70. Davis, *Metanoia*, 97.
71. Ibid., 23.
72. Ibid., 16; emphasis added.
73. Peterson, *12 Rules for Life*, 170.
74. Ibid., 52.
75. Ibid., 56.
76. Ibid., 193.
77. Siegel, *Mindsight*, ix.
78. Ibid.
79. Grof and Grof, *Spiritual Emergency*.
80. Ibid., xii.
81. Ibid., 16.
82. Ibid., 17; emphasis added.

83. Ruiz, *Four Agreements*, 12.
84. Ibid., 31.
85. Judith, *Chakra Balancing Workbook*, 2.
86. Ibid., 25.
87. Ibid., 26.
88. Ibid.
89. Muckelbauer, *Future of Invention*, 4.

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