

Alive to the Other: Using Distance to Help Listeners Overcome Self-deception

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Abstract: *Although homileticians have offered various accounts on what leads people to change, this paper argues that helping listeners overcome self-deception is central to human transformation. In so doing, it is not suggested that the listener needs to come to some particular abstract truth, but rather they need help in opening themselves up to the truth of the humanity of the other. Relying on the account of self-deception posited by C. Terry Warner, this paper offers an indirect model that can help listeners make meaningful changes by overcoming the obstacle of self-deception. This preaching model draws on the author's previous qualitative research in the field of instructional design and builds on homiletic principles discussed in Fred Craddock's Overhearing the Gospel.*

Introduction

It is not a secret that we live in an uniquely polarized time. In light of this divisive environment, many homileticians have offered counsel on how one might still preach effectively.¹ What makes the homiletician's task particularly challenging is that a preacher's role is not simply to give "interesting takes" or offer insightful commentary; rather, preachers are supposed to help change lives.² Considering our contentious North American society, how can we preach so that people are actually open to making changes in their worldview and way of life?

In this article I will offer an indirect model that can help listeners make meaningful changes by overcoming the obstacle of self-deception. Although homileticians have offered many accounts of what leads people to change, I will argue that helping listeners overcome self-deception is central to human transformation. In so doing, it is not suggested that the listener needs to come to some particular abstract truth, but rather that they need help in opening themselves up to the truth of the humanity of the other. The account of self-deception I will draw upon originates from the philosopher C. Terry Warner who has argued that self-deception is not a small part of psychological experience but is a central aspect of everyday life. Because self-deception is defensive by nature, it is challenging to help listeners overcome this problem directly. Therefore, I will offer an indirect preaching model that draws upon my previous qualitative research in the field of instructional design and builds upon the homiletic principles discussed in Fred Craddock's *Overhearing the Gospel*.

Homiletic Conceptions of Change

In order to see how an understanding of self-deception might inform a homiletic model, I will briefly highlight some of the more common assumptions regarding human change discussed in homiletic literature. Although preaching models are often given the most attention, they

¹ Lead D. Schade, *Preaching in the Purple Zone: Ministry in the Red-Blue Divide* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2019); O. Wesley Allen, *Preaching in the Era of Trump* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2017).

² Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, 3rd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2016), 142; Henk Stoorvogel, Mark van Vuuren, and Menno de Jong, "Sermons That Have Changed My Life: A Qualitative Study of the Factors in Sermons that Elicit Change," *Homiletic* 44, no. 1 (June 2019), <https://doi.org/10.15695/hmltc.v44i1.4731>.

presuppose philosophical and theological conceptions of human transformation. These conceptions inform the principles and practices that homileticians suggest will lead to human change. I highlight a few of the more common assumptions to show how self-deception might add to the homiletic discussion surrounding human transformation.

Many homileticians (especially those associated with the New Homiletic) have argued that the listener will change through a shift in their imagination. Fred Craddock noted how a listener may agree rationally with an argument but will not manifest any actual change in their behavior because “the consciousness in its imaginative depths is unaltered.”³ For Craddock, people need “new images [to] move against the old and shake them into discomfort.”⁴ In like manner, Barbara Brown Taylor argued “the human imagination turns out to be the place where vision is formed and reformed, where human beings encounter an inner reality with power to transform the other realities of their lives.”⁵ Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, drawing on the work of theologian Garret Green, asserts, “Preaching as local theology has as a goal the transformation of the imaginations of the hearers in accordance with the message of the gospel.”⁶ More recently, Frank A. Thomas summed up this view succinctly. Relying on the work of Russell Kirk, Thomas argues, “While it is often assumed that human beings understand the world through calculations, formulas, and logical syllogisms, the reality is that we understand the world through images, myths, and stories, and thereby, comprehend our relationship to God, nature, others, and the self.”⁷

Related to imagination, Alyce McKenzie has argued that “scenes in sermons can function, as they often do in literature and film, as ethical simulation chambers for dealing with real-life challenges, drawing us in to identify with characters, undergo changes with them, and take that changed perspective back into our world.”⁸ Here, the sermon provides an opportunity for the hearer to vicariously change alongside characters in our sermon stories. For McKenzie, identification with characters in stories is a primary impetus for listener change. Obviously, there is a long precedence for this in homiletics, especially with those associated with the New Homiletic.⁹ In like manner, one finds arguments suggesting that humans change vicariously through story in other fields including instructional design¹⁰ and the social sciences.¹¹

Besides seeking to influence listeners’ imagination, other homileticians have emphasized how the gospel can fill an “inner neediness” that frees the listener to change behaviorally.¹² In this line of arguing, if the listener understands and experiences the love of Christ, they no longer

³ Fred B. Craddock, *Overhearing the Gospel* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2002), 114.

⁴ Craddock, *Overhearing the Gospel*, 114-115.

⁵ Barbara Brown Taylor, *The Preaching Life* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1993), 574, Kindle.

⁶ Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, *Preaching as Local Theology and Folk Art* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 642, Kindle.

⁷ Frank A. Thomas, *How to Preach a Dangerous Sermon* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2018), Introduction. ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁸ Alyce M. McKenzie, *Making a Scene in the Pulpit: Vivid Preaching for Visual Listeners* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2018), 96, Kindle.

⁹ Craddock, *Overhearing the Gospel*, 95; Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, 40.

¹⁰ Patrick Parrish, “Aesthetic Principles for Design,” *Education Technology Research and Development* 57, no. 4 (2009): 515.

¹¹ Geoff F. Kaufmann and Lisa K. Libby, “Changing Beliefs and Behavior through Experience-Taking,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 103, no. 1 (2012): 1.

¹² Timothy Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism* (New York: Viking, 2015), 130.

have a need or motivation to sin. For example, when speaking of an “oppressive personality,”¹³ Eugene Lowry said, “The redeeming focus for change is to remove the necessity so that they no longer need to look down upon others.”¹⁴ For these homileticians, the central issue of sin is not necessarily imagination but motivation. According to Bryan Chapell, “In Christ-centered preaching, the rules of Christian obedience do not change; the reasons do.”¹⁵ These homileticians insist that sermons should focus less on behavioral exhortations in helping the listener change and instead teach the work of Christ. Paul Scott Wilson (who advocates a similar approach) has bemoaned how often his students’ sermons “were mostly about human failures and weaknesses in the past, and duties and obligations in the present and future. The burden fell on humans to do everything that was needed.”¹⁶ Instead, Wilson asserts, “Excellence can be measured best by the effectiveness of sermons in ministering the gospel to the people.”¹⁷

Through their “conversational” approach to the sermon, O. Wesley Allen and Ron Allen argue that the listener is invited to grow, “better able to say yes,” and “can be vulnerable” through “authentic conversation.”¹⁸ For them, the openness of conversation invites the listener to the possibility of change. As the preacher becomes more vulnerable in their viewpoints and conversation, so does the listener. Similarly, Mason Lee has recently argued, “The moral power of the gospel arises from the reality that one does not have to believe. . . . The message-bearer’s rejection of coercive strategies in their announcement and speech is precisely that which allows the persuasive power of the gospel to shine through.”¹⁹

Obviously, the assumptions behind listener change are nuanced and varied. The examples above are meant to suggest some of the more common views on how sermons can invite transformation. In homiletic literature, however, little emphasis is given to the role that self-deception may play in human nature and formation. As will be explained further below, one who is self-deceived is actively, though unintentionally, resisting the message of a sermon. In order to see how this is possible, it is important to remember that listeners are always already interpreting the material they hear.²⁰ In other words, they do not listen to a message and then interpret it. Rather, the listener comes with interpretations about the world before they ever hear a sermon. As James K. A. Smith has argued, “perception and evaluation are inextricably intertwined: as soon as I take in a scene, before I ‘think’ about it, I’ve already evaluated it on the basis of predispositions I bring to the situation.”²¹ If the listener is self-deceived in a way related to the sermon message, they will interpret the material in light of their self-deception. The listener may hear profound imagery, identify with sermon stories, feel their needs met through the love of

¹³ Eugene L. Lowry, *The Homiletical Plot: The Sermon as Narrative Art Form* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 86.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon 2nd ed.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2005), 312.

¹⁶ Paul Scott Wilson, *The Four Pages of the Sermon: A Guide to Biblical Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2018), 20, Kindle.

¹⁷ Ibid., 24.

¹⁸ Ronald J. Allen and O. Wesley Allen, Jr., *The Sermon without End: A Conversational Approach to Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2015), 94.

¹⁹ Mason Lee, “Vulnerable Good News: Distance & Patience in Gospel Performance,” *Homiletic* 47, no.1 (2022):16. <https://www.homiletic.net/index.php/homiletic/article/view/5323>.

²⁰ James K. A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom (Cultural Liturgies): How Worship Works* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2013), 34, Kindle.

²¹ Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom (Cultural Liturgies): How Worship Works*, 34, Kindle.

Christ, or hear their own voice in the homiletic conversation, but they make sense of this information in light of their current self-deceived way of being.

Self-Deception

According to the philosopher C. Terry Warner, self-deception occurs when someone ignores their sense to revere the humanity and vulnerability of the other.²² Often calling this process self-betrayal, Warner describes this phenomenon as “a sort of moral self-compromise, a violation of our own personal sense of how we ought to be and what we ought to do.”²³ For example, someone feels they should say hello to someone walking by, offer extra help to a struggling student, or spend time with their child. For Warner, this sense to treat others with respect and kindness is not the result of an unhealthy perfectionism²⁴ or based on a list of ethical or religious rules,²⁵ but rather from simply seeing the humanity of the other. Drawing on the work of Emmanuel Levinas, John McClure writes, “the face of the other introduces a profound obligation into my experience. This obligation persists as an infinite responsibility to and for the other, discovered in what Levinas calls ‘proximity’ or ‘the-one-for-the-other.’”²⁶ Simon Critchley further explains:

Levinas's point is that unless our social interactions are underpinned by ethical relations to other persons, then the worst might happen, that is, the failure to acknowledge the humanity of the other. Such, for Levinas, is what took place in the *Shoah* and in the countless other disasters of [the last] century, where the other person becomes a faceless face in the crowd, someone whom the passer-by simply passes by, someone whose life or death is for me a matter of indifference.²⁷

According to Warner, the way that one betrays their sense to see and respect others is through justification. “Self-betrayal is a unified act of self-justifying self-display. It displays itself to be a justified or excused self-protective and perhaps admirable response.”²⁸ For instance, a woman walks to her mailbox after arriving home from work one night. She notices her neighbor across the street, but the woman ignores her sense to spend a few minutes visiting with her neighbor *by* displaying a subtle air of being tired and stressed. She quickly offers her neighbor a forced smile while looking through the mail and then walks into her house. Before entering the door, she conveniently remembers how her neighbor has a tendency to talk for a long time.

²² Warner, *Bonds that Make Us Free: Healing Our Relationships, Coming to Ourselves*, (Salt Lake City: Shadow Mountain Pub., 2001), 19-20. I am using the term “the other” to primarily refer to other human persons.

²³ Ibid., 20.

²⁴ Ibid., 116.

²⁵ C. Terry Warner, “What We Are,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (1986): 39.

<https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2428&context=byusq>.

²⁶ John S. McClure, *Other-Wise Preaching: A Postmodern Ethic for Homiletics* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2001), 8, Kindle.

²⁷ Simon Critchley, “Introduction,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, ed. Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 13.

²⁸ C. Terry Warner, *Self-Betrayal and the Crisis of Self-Misunderstanding*, (N.p. Linacre Prince Publishers, 2019), 141.

Through her self-betrayal, the woman convinced herself that she was justified in not visiting with her neighbor. She was also slightly accusatory (and therefore victimizing²⁹) of her neighbor by remembering her neighbor's tendency to visit for a long time. However, if the woman had simply and straightforwardly talked with her neighbor there would have been no need to emphasize her neighbor's faults for the purposes of justification. Although this is a small example of self-betrayal, others picking up Warner's work have argued that denying the humanity of others and thus creating a need for justification (which leads one to see others as less than human) is at the heart of all war, racism, and any other large scale human conflict.³⁰ Indeed, entire peoples and societies have felt justified in their racism, violence, or dismissiveness to the other. If a society or culture wants to overcome its divisiveness, it must end its self-deception.

Warner is quick to point out that one does not betray their sense to do what is right and then come up with an excuse for why they could not do their best in a given situation. Rather, "blaming others and making it seem that we're doing our best in spite of them is *the way* we betray ourselves."³¹ It is also significant to note, that this process is not exclusively a cognitive one; self-deception occurs at the level of being. Warner argues, "When we betray ourselves, we undergo a transformation. By seeing others suspiciously, accusingly, or fearfully, we become suspicious, accusing, or fearful ourselves."³² If this is true, rational argument, statistics, and even powerful stories and imagery will only have a limited effect on the listener. Hearers do not just bring their cognition and emotions to a sermon; they bring their way of being. As Warner observed: "Philosophers and psychologists may have shown adverbs too little respect... Instead of speaking simplistically of whatever is done, it behooves us to attend to the manner or way in which it is done."³³

Interestingly, people can develop styles of self-betrayal. Whether it's self-righteousness, an over-the-top self-assertiveness, childishness, perfectionism, or self-disparagement, people learn patterns that reflect different forms of accusing others and excusing themselves.³⁴ If a man ignores his sense to financially help a struggling friend, he can do it by either asserting his own right to his property or he can self-disparagingly think, "I never have been good at helping other people." In the end, these are just varieties of not yielding to the vulnerability of his friend.

Collusion

Self-betrayal in oneself invites it in others. If a high school teacher maintains a defensive disposition toward their students and establishes rigid classroom rules, then students will feel justified in their own defensiveness. The teacher's dismissive and strict way of being invites the students to rebel. "The more others engage in the accusing behavior we are provoking by our attitude toward them, the more they give us the excuse we need for having that attitude. Both our suffering and their wrongdoing give us proof that they are wrong and we are right."³⁵ In this sense, people do not respond only to our behavior, but our way of being toward them. We may smile, speak politely, and even perform acts of kindness, but others will always notice small

²⁹ Ibid., 60.

³⁰ The Arbinger Institute, *The Anatomy of Peace: Resolving the Heart of Conflict*, (San Francisco: Barrett-Koehler Publishers, 2008), 52-55.

³¹ Warner, *What We Are*, 41.

³² Warner, *Bonds that Make Us Free: Healing Our Relationships, Coming to Ourselves*, 41.

³³ Warner, *Self-Betrayal and the Crisis of Self-Misunderstanding*, 53.

³⁴ Warner, *Bonds that Make Us Free: Healing Our Relationships, Coming to Ourselves*, 111-123.

³⁵ Warner, *What We Are*, 43.

hints that our heart is accusatory and self-justifying.³⁶ They, in turn, will seek to justify themselves against our accusations. Warner calls this collusion because it is as if (although not literally) the parties involved are working together to excuse themselves.

The implications of this aspect of Warner's thought for homiletics are profound. To the degree that a preacher has a self-deceived way of being she invites the listener to respond defensively or take up her own justifications. If the preacher speaks condescendingly, self-righteously, or even self-despairingly, the congregation will feel justified in their own self-betrayal toward the preacher. The congregation may agree with the content of the sermon but will find themselves put off by the preacher's manner. For instance, if a preacher ignores their sense to respect the listener's agency and bears down too hard in manner and message then the audience will naturally react defensively. In response, the preacher may think they should try harder to get the congregation to listen by increasing intensity or volume, which will simply invite more resistance from the listeners.

On the other hand, the audience can also collude with the preacher by joining in with the preacher's subtle accusations toward the other. For example, if a preacher communicates that she is slightly superior to others because she has a charitable heart (which acts as her excuse to be dismissive to the uncharitable), those in the congregation who suffer from a similar self-righteousness will feel justified.

Ultimately, even if the listener does not find significant justification in the preacher's self-deception, they may still have an ongoing self-deceived way of being that is leading them to be dismissive of the humanity of family members, co-workers, racial groups, social-economic groups, or other people. This, of course, leads to much social divisiveness. Suppose someone has consistently ignored their sense to see immigrants as fully human by believing that they do not deserve "American jobs." If a sermon focuses on the phrase "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" from Matthew 25:35, the listener is thinking of rationalizations that act as an excuse not to embrace the humanity of immigrants (regardless of one's political persuasion). Even if the preacher offers a heart-wrenching story about an immigrant family moving to the United States, without using methods that help others work through self-deception, the story will probably be interpreted by the listener as manipulative.

When a person is mired in self-deception they feel as if their moral options are limited. As Warner pointed out, the "world we experience as self-betrayers offers us opportunities to submit in humiliation or to stick up for ourselves defiantly, which are both self-absorbed actions, but it offers us no chance of simply doing the right thing without concern for ourselves."³⁷ In other words, when we are accusatory toward others and see ourselves as victims of them, we can find no way to simply love or respect them straightforwardly. We are stuck in our self-absorption.

Becoming Alive to the Other

We are freed from self-deception "when someone we have been blaming becomes real to us..."³⁸ As a result, "We become a person who sees another person as real. We change from being accusing, guarded, and self-absorbed to being open, self-forgetful, and welcoming."³⁹ According to Warner, this cannot happen simply by taking thought to see people differently or as

³⁶ Warner, *Bonds that Make Us Free: Healing Our Relationships, Coming to Ourselves*, 36-37, 83.

³⁷ Ibid., 124.

³⁸ Ibid., 152.

³⁹ Ibid.

an act of willpower.⁴⁰ Rather, one must yield to the truth about another's inner life in a way that allows us to see their humanity.⁴¹ We begin to see people as having thoughts, desires, emotions, and intentions that matter just as much as our own.⁴²

In both academic and non-specialist writings, Warner has identified multiple avenues where this change can take place. For example, someone we have been accusing is compassionate to us and therefore our coldness toward them melts.⁴³ Another way that often invites us to see the humanity of another is when we witness them go through adversity. Seeing them struggle opens us up to their vulnerability.⁴⁴ Also, asking ourselves if we might "be in the wrong" toward someone can soften our disposition.⁴⁵ Of course, this is not necessarily wrong in some abstract propositional way, but in our way of being toward others. In addition, simply asking ourselves what is the simple, straightforward, and respectful way to treat a person we've been struggling with can also help others become real to us.⁴⁶ Furthermore, a sense of how we should be toward others can "take hold of us because it is rooted in truthful, living relationships with others."⁴⁷ In other words, loving and considerate relationships can help us see how we should be toward others. Interestingly, Warner suggests that these relationships can exist with "beings seen or unseen, factual or fictional, living or dead."⁴⁸

Although Warner identifies these and other ways that people can become real to us, there is one catalyst for overcoming self-deception that Warner discusses that is particularly relevant for homileticians. When Warner's ideas are taught in public seminars, teachers and participants share "true stories of self-betrayal, collusion, and the like."⁴⁹ Warner has noticed that "for the large majority of people, hearing others' stories enables them to see their own experiences in a new, truthful light. They realize—usually instantaneously—that a story another has told is their own story, only with different details. This realization seems to sneak past their defenses."⁵⁰

Homileticians will quickly notice this phenomenon as the principle of "overhearing" explained by Fred Craddock in his preaching classic *Overhearing the Gospel*. Obviously, if self-deception plays a central role in preventing people from hearing the message of a sermon, one can see why an indirect approach would be necessary. As we have already seen, the way that people excuse themselves from doing what they sense is right is through justification. When a self-deceived person is directly challenged, they will have ready-made excuses to prevent themselves from internalizing the message of a sermon. In fact, they might verbally or intellectually agree with a preacher, but will still maintain emotional defensiveness.⁵¹ Therefore, an indirect approach is one of the best avenues to cut through self-deception.

In the next section, I will suggest preaching principles that indirectly help listeners overcome self-deception. In doing so, I will draw upon a teaching model that I offered in some of my previous research in the field of instructional design. However, I will also add another

⁴⁰ Ibid., 161.

⁴¹ Warner, 21, 226.

⁴² The Arbing Institute, *The Anatomy of Peace: Resolving the Heart of Conflict*, 30.

⁴³ Warner, *Bonds that Make Us Free: Healing Our Relationships, Coming to Ourselves*, 151.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 152.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 197.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 219.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 212.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 212.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 214.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 215.

⁵¹ C. Terry Warner, *What We Are*, 41; Craddock, *Overhearing the Gospel*, 114-115.

element to this model that helps listeners give up their self-betrayal so that they can better see and revere the other.

An Indirect Model that Helps Listeners See the Other

In a previous qualitative research study, I interviewed experts in different fields of storytelling (i.e., film, theatre, painting, narrative preaching, and writing) to learn principles and practices of crafting transformative indirect communication.⁵² The purpose of gathering their ideas was ultimately to create an indirect teaching model that invites transformative learning experiences. This model, which was influenced by Fred Craddock's overhearing homiletic, consisted of four combined elements: 1) cognitive space 2) emotional space 3) inviting change and 4) meaningfulness. For the purposes of this paper, I will add a fifth element: 5) seeing the other. In the following sections, I will explain and apply each of these elements to the field of homiletics to help listeners overcome self-deception. I will also provide an illustration of the first four elements from different sermons and the last element (seeing the other) from a story collected by C. Terry Warner. Each illustration not only contains examples of transformative indirect teaching, but also offers ways for listeners to break out of self-deception.

Cognitive Space

A listener is granted cognitive space when they have room to interpret the content of the sermon for themselves.⁵³ Thomas Long described a similar phenomenon when he argued that effective stories have "enough ambiguity built into them to force the hearer to make a decision about the story's meaning and application... The listeners have to roll up their sleeves and get involved in the project of making meaning in the sermon."⁵⁴ Cognitive space is not only afforded through stories. Material that emphasizes concrete details as opposed to abstract principles also gives the listener room for interpretation.⁵⁵ Furthermore, using illustrations, stories, characters, and images that contain some sort of moral ambiguity can also create cognitive space.⁵⁶ When characters contain both positive and negative traits or when the listener has to make sense of difficult moral issues without the communicator explaining everything, then the hearer has the cognitive space to interpret the sermon for themselves. Another way to offer cognitive space to the listener is to communicate ideas by emphasizing the *behavior* of characters in stories.⁵⁷ As a filmmaker suggested: "typically what you're doing in a given scene is you're setting the interaction of the characters up in such a way that their behavior communicates that meaning."⁵⁸

Alyse McKenzie illustrates cognitive space in a story included in her sermon entitled *Peel Off the Plastic*:

Some years ago, a student told me a story about a seven-year-old boy in her church named Brandon. He had an inoperable tumor and limited time to live. His

⁵² When referring to the storytelling experts from my previous instructional design study, I will simply refer to their respective titles: filmmaker, preacher, playwright, author, or painter.

⁵³ Stephan D. Taeger and Stephen C. Yanchar, "Principles and Practices of Designing Narrative Distance for Transformative Learning Experiences," *Educational Media International*, 56, no. 2 (2019): 170. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09523987.2019.1614322>

⁵⁴ Long, 40-41.

⁵⁵ Taeger and Yanchar, 170.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 171-172.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 170.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

parents began bringing him to church. He requested baptism. Normally, a child of his age would be asked to attend several classes during the Sunday school hour to learn about the Bible, worship, and baptism. My student told his parents she would waive that requirement in his case. “No,” Brandon told them. “I want to come to the classes.” So there he sat in his chair in the circle. One Sunday, my student was using a flannel board to teach the parable of the lost sheep. She was employing the “I wonder” format, in which you tell a Bible story and then have the children ask “I wonder” questions. After she finished telling the story, one boy put his hand up, “I wonder if any of the sheep got eaten while the shepherd was gone.” Another said, “I wonder if the shepherd got in trouble for leaving the sheep.” Then Brandon put his hand up, “I wonder . . . if the sheep is stuck way down in the hole and is so tired and so weak that it can’t move, will the shepherd come all the way down to get it?” Her answer? “Absolutely, Brandon, absolutely.”⁵⁹

Instead of explaining the story in propositional terms, McKenzie simply describes the event and lets us discover the meaning. In the context of the sermon as a whole, McKenzie doesn’t draw any tired “lessons” from the story, but rather lets us interpret how the story fits into the larger experience of her sermon. The story also contains some ambiguity in the reply of the teacher. One might ask, “should the teacher really promise Brandon that he is going to be rescued? In what sense will he be rescued?” Therefore, the listener has the cognitive space to draw their own conclusions.

Although these methods were often championed by the New Homiletic, they also play an essential role in helping people overcome self-deception. Not providing cognitive space can serve to entrench the listener in self-deception in at least two ways. First, self-deceived listeners are on alert for direct messages that provide justification for not embracing the message of a sermon. For example, suppose a listener’s way of being toward those in struggling socioeconomic communities is one of dismissiveness. If that listener hears a repeated theme (and even cleverly crafted statements) about “helping the poor,” these will be used as flags by the listener to not take the message seriously. As shown by Warner’s work, those caught in self-deception are actively, though unintentionally, looking for reasons to justify their own belittling of the needs and inner life of the other. Secondly, and somewhat surprisingly, a lack of cognitive space also serves to justify the listener in mindlessly *agreeing* with authority figures or world views.⁶⁰ In this case, direct messages that lack meaningful opportunities for interpretation can serve as ways to *show* that one agrees with a message or broader worldview without having to open oneself up to the other. Using the example above, a listener can self-deceivingly agree that helping those in lower socioeconomic communities is what one is expected to do without letting their own being be influenced by the needs of others. In this case, this mental assent may serve as a way to self-righteously prove to themselves or others that they are charitable. However, if the listener is granted cognitive space, they are more likely to have to make their own decisions about helping others without finding signals that they are part of some “in group,” regardless of how noble that group claims to be.

As with all of the examples I will use, this story not only illustrates an indirect method, but also it invites us to see the humanity of the other. Rather than saying something like, “God

⁵⁹ McKenzie, 145, Kindle.

⁶⁰ Warner, *Bonds that Make Us Free: Healing Our Relationships, Coming to Ourselves*, 214.

helps those in dire need,” McKenzie allows us to experience the simple vulnerability of a hopeful boy. This is the kind of story that some preachers may be tempted to use manipulatively, but McKenzie employs the story in a way that invites the reader to acutely see the other. Ideally, these types of stories will open self-deceived hearts to the humanity of others.

Emotional Space

Emotional space gives the listener room to experience the sermon in the way they choose. “In other words, the content presented does not seek to manipulate or force the listener to feel something. Instead, when emotional space is present, the listener feels respected, valued, safe, and understood.”⁶¹ As Craddock argued in *Overhearing the Gospel*, “No matter how much a speaker pledges sincerity, shows feeling, and swears to genuine concern, a direct disgorging of emotion does not reproduce that same experience in me.”⁶²

Homileticians have long been concerned with concepts associated with emotional space. Michael Brothers, drawing on Craddock, explained that the purpose of distance in a sermon is to give the listener “room, or space, to consider a message without being lured, pressured, manipulated, or coerced by means of direct confrontation.”⁶³ Paul Scott Wilson suggested that one should “evaluate the emotional and spiritual impact of stories” in a sermon.⁶⁴ One reason to maintain emotional space is that overbearing emotion or a contentious disposition can lead to defensiveness. When explaining their conversational homiletic, Wesley Allen and Ron Allen advised that one must be careful to not allow “conversation to devolve into argument”⁶⁵ warning that this can lead one to “valuing their own position more than respect for others.”⁶⁶

The storytelling experts in my previous qualitative study said that emotional space is maintained during communication in several ways. In some form or another, a few of the participants spoke of avoiding “unearned emotion.”⁶⁷ In other words, one should not try to create an emotional experience without doing the necessary work that would naturally lead to such an experience. This may happen, according to one participant, by “simplifying human conflict.”⁶⁸ In the realm of preaching, the listener will probably feel manipulated if the preacher is trying to create a powerful emotional experience without first appropriately probing the complexity of an issue. Another way that one can avoid emotion which is “unearned” is using “denotative words as opposed to connotative.”⁶⁹ In like manner, homiletician William Brosend argued, “One of the simplest ways to add interest to our sermons is to pay more attention to how we describe and phrase things. Sharp, vivid, active words and phrasing beat tortured, adjective-laden, convoluted ones every time.”⁷⁰ In addition, one of the participants in my study mentioned the importance of avoiding “expressing emotion through dialogue.”⁷¹ In the context of the sermon, this principle applies to preachers who tell stories, create parables, or use imagery that maintain emotional

⁶¹ Taeger and Yanchar, 172.

⁶² Fred B. Craddock, 106-107.

⁶³ Michael Brothers, *Distance in Preaching: Room to Speak, Space to Listen* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 74.

⁶⁴ Paul Scott Wilson, *The Four Pages of the Sermon: A Guide to Biblical Preaching*, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press), 126, Kindle.

⁶⁵ Allen and Allen, 97.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Taeger and Yanchar, 173.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 178.

⁷⁰ William Brosend, *The Preaching of Jesus: Gospel Proclamation, Then and Now* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 152.

⁷¹ Taeger and Yanchar, 178.

space. Finally, providing authentic descriptions of life and everyday experience also creates emotional space. As one playwright (with the pseudonym Michael) explained:

Interviewer: What happens for the listener when something appears to be inauthentic? When they're watching a show and they go, "oh, that didn't seem real."

Michael: Well the word that most people use is "manipulative." You're just trying to manipulate me... if we try to take shortcuts... then it's the same thing as just using a lot of violins in a musical soundtrack. Sweeping violins to create an emotion that's not really being represented."⁷²

In a sermon on Romans 16, Fred Craddock offers a poignant example of offering listeners emotional space while still inviting them to see the other. After indirectly establishing that lists of names (including the list of names in Romans 16) are meaningful because they represent people with histories, relationships, etc., Craddock begins to describe an experience he had in Atlanta with a well-known list:

"I remember when they brought the famous list to Atlanta. The workers set it up in the public place, block after block to form a long wall of names. Vietnam names. Some of us looked at it as if it were a list of names. Others went over closer. Some walked slowly down the column. There was a woman who went up and put her finger on a name, and she held a child up and put the child's hand on a name. There was a woman there who kissed the wall at a name. There were flowers lying beneath the wall. Don't call it a list. It's not a list."⁷³

Craddock masterfully maintained emotional space in a variety of ways. First, the emotional impact of this moment had been earned through the context he had already established in the sermon. In other words, he didn't try to "cash in" on this moment without first analyzing the complexity of the issue, providing context to the idea, and even giving us emotional breaks through humor. In addition, his illustration contained no emotion expressed through dialogue—only descriptions of behavior. Craddock's image is not bathed in connotative words that would try to force us to feel something. And ultimately, the illustration seems authentic; humans act like real humans.

Maintaining emotional space is essential for helping the listener work through self-deception. If listeners feel that the preacher is violating their emotional space, they will feel as if the preacher is manipulative. Warner suggests that when we manipulate, "...we aren't primarily responding to the need of another but are pursuing the goal of getting them to change. There's an accusation embedded in this effort; the message is, 'You're inadequate; you need to shape up.'"⁷⁴ As argued above, another's accusation toward us is often the very thing we use to justify our own self-betrayal. Suppose a preacher is speaking on how the effects of hurting the environment are mostly felt by those in marginalized communities. If the preacher addresses this topic in a way that violates emotional space, the listener will experience subtle messages that communicate

⁷² Taeger and Yanchar, 173.

⁷³ Fred Craddock, "When the Roll is Called Down Here," in *Creative Styles of Preaching*, ed. Mark Barger Elliot, (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 16.

⁷⁴ Warner, *Bonds that Make Us Free: Healing Our Relationships, Coming to Ourselves*, 118.

beyond the content of the sermon. These accusations will communicate that the preacher doesn't think the listener is "good enough" or that they are "evil" and therefore "broken" in some way. This, of course, will invite defensiveness from the listener and provide justification for not caring about the environment or those most likely to be affected by its mistreatment. What makes these kinds of accusations particularly dangerous is that they happen at the level of being, not necessarily through the propositional content of the sermon. In other words, the preacher communicates their subtle disdain for the listeners through body language, tone of voice, or word choice. In response, listeners might say something like, "I'm not sure why, but that preacher is annoying to me." On the other hand, if listeners experience the respect that comes from granting someone emotional space, they are less likely to be defensive.

Another way a preacher might violate emotional space is to draw exclusively from narratives, illustrations, or words, from certain cultures, socioeconomic classes, or worldviews. Speaking of the New Homiletic's emphasis on representing the listener's experience, John McClure explained, "the problem lay in the largely inadequate, uncritically examined quality of the experience to which these homileticians ultimately appealed. In short, appeals to common human experience ... fail to pay true attention to the real experiences of the many people, with their own partial and contradictory stories/lives."⁷⁵ Listeners might feel manipulated, disrespected, or unseen if the preacher uses sermon stories or images that represent limited societal, racial, or cultural groups. Central to giving people emotional space is to realize that aspects of one's experience might be dramatically different than those of the listeners. Otherwise, the communicator might unintentionally suggest that the listener's experience or story is somehow less valuable or insignificant. In this case, our own self-deception (as manifested by not seeing the specificity of ourselves and individual others) will work to invite defensiveness and self-deception in the listener.

Like the previous examples, Craddock's illustration described above also invites us to come alive to the other. Through subtle descriptive language, we see the inner life of those remembering loved ones at a Vietnam memorial wall. While granting emotional space, Craddock paints a powerful scene that allows us to see the care, vulnerability, and love of others for others. These are the kinds of illustrations that are most likely to break through our self-deceptions and help soften our way of being.

Inviting Change

Granting the listener cognitive and emotional space is not enough to assist the listener in ending self-deception. The preacher needs to invite the listener to change. I have been arguing that an indirect method is the most effective way to do this when dealing with self-deception. In the following example, notice how John McClure (in a sermon called *Speak the Truth*) invites us to change while still maintaining cognitive and emotional space:

"Sometimes it takes a serious wake up call. That's what happened to me. And it woke me up from a lot of things. Started me rethinking a lot of things that I took for granted. It was 1994. And I was visiting my family for Christmas in the countryside near Springville, Alabama. My wife and I were driving through the pine trees and barren oak trees with one of our best friends in the back seat. And out of the blue, she said just enough to indicate that something was going on at home that was not good. I mean really not good. And in that moment, everything changed. Everything. Her trauma awakened me to the

⁷⁵ John S. McClure, op.cit., 49, Kindle.

reality of the trauma of hundreds and thousands of frightened and abused women and children. My worldview changed on a dime. And then my comfortable theology had to change. Everything changed. I was no longer a bystander about that one injustice. It just wasn't possible. And that began to snowball into waking up about a lot of other injustices all around me."⁷⁶

McClure maintains cognitive space by giving us room to interpret his story. He also does not come across overbearing or manipulative, thus maintaining emotional space. Obviously, just granting the listener space would not be enough to help them overcome self-deception. McClure instead invites us to be different in at least three ways. First, he creates an emotional experience without violating our emotional space. Both playwrights I interviewed for my previous instructional design study mentioned that people are ultimately changed through emotional experience and not information.⁷⁷ The illustration of McClure's friend who hints that her situation at home was "not good" is poignant and impactful. The second way McClure invites a shift in the listener is by offering us a vicarious opportunity to change alongside himself. In other words, as he shifted into a new person, we are given an opportunity to do so ourselves. As an author said: "in a novel, the character is the one who changes and the reader changes vicariously with that character."⁷⁸ When a preacher offers an illustration with characters who change, we are giving the listener a small chance to do the same. Finally, McClure subtly "provoke[s] people in a way that invites them to think or see things differently."⁷⁹ As he discussed his own change of heart, McClure said, "then my comfortable theology had to change." As a listener we can't help but ask ourselves, "Does my comfortable theology have to change, too?" McClure effectively maintains cognitive and emotional space by not directly and overbearingly asking us to reconsider our "comfortable theology." Instead, by focusing on himself, we are indirectly invited to reexamine ourselves.

Granting cognitive and emotional space by themselves would probably not lead to someone overcoming self-deception. At some point, listeners need a chance to come to the truth about the other's inner needs, feelings, and humanity. McClure's story does this effectively through the methods mentioned above, but also by including a story where he "awakens" to the suffering of others. As mentioned above, Warner described one exit from self-deception as when "the person blamed suffers some stern adversity or tragedy that renders him or her helpless and thereby makes our various petty, self-absorbed concerns minuscule and shameful by comparison. The vulnerability of that person, struggling with his or her difficulties, melts our hearts."⁸⁰ A self-deceived person may not realize their dismissiveness or apathy toward the suffering of others. A story like McClure's may begin to end the self-betrayal of the listener so they begin to think that other's suffering matters just as much as their own.

Meaningfulness

In order for stories to have a potentially transformative effect they must be meaningful to the listener. Obviously, if a listener doesn't perceive sermon material as mattering then they are

⁷⁶ John S. McClure, "Speak the Truth," YouTube, November 18, 2020, video, 6:51, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2UHgVi86S7c>

⁷⁷ Taeger and Yanchar, op.cit., 175.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Warner, *Bonds that Make Us Free: Healing Our Relationships, Coming to Ourselves*, 152.

not likely to be influenced by its content. When speaking of hearing a story, a playwright said, “we’re hoping that we are going to be able to liken this thing unto ourselves; that something in there is going to happen, where I can look at these people and go, ‘...I know exactly how he feels.’”⁸¹ Besides simply providing opportunities for application, a meaningful story affords moments of identification.⁸² Meaningful identification moves beyond superficial references to the personal tastes of the hearer such as the local NFL team or lyrics from a pop song. These might matter on some level, but meaning is best established through discussing the weightier human topics like love, truth, justice, relationships, and the divine.⁸³

The preacher I interviewed in my previous study suggested that one should choose a character and maintain their point of view through the sermon.⁸⁴ In other words, if one chooses the viewpoint of the Levite in the parable of the Good Samaritan, the preacher should use illustrations that reflect his point of view. In this case the preacher may give examples of typical excuses that one uses for not helping others in need. However, in narrative preaching (or similar forms) beliefs will often refine during the sermon as the preacher “learns” in front of the audience.⁸⁵ In this way, there doesn’t necessarily have to be identification with just one scriptural character, but rather one worldview that shifts and improves during the sermon. The preacher invites change through the vicarious shift in thought taking place in the sermon and creates a meaningful experience by focusing on one point of view. As a film director said, “a good film story is about one person... because if it’s only about one person that gets you to identify emotional, much more intensively.”⁸⁶

When speaking of engaging preaching, the homiletician I interviewed said that the preacher should “know where your people are so that they find you’re asking the questions they ask.”⁸⁷ Perhaps one of the most important aspects of creating meaningful stories or content is to make sure that the preacher addresses topics and questions that the congregation is asking. Obviously, this has received a lot of attention in homiletic literature. However, I emphasize this principle to suggest that the stories and illustrations one uses, whether the preacher intends it or not, contain implicit questions and answers. For example, if the preacher shares a story about a mother who has a cold relationship with her daughter and then shares how the mother was able to reconcile that relationship—a question is answered. Part of the reason for this phenomenon is that stories have an inherent moral quality. In the words of the philosopher Charles Guignon, “...insofar as composing a story always draws on the background of communal stories of trials, struggles, conquests, and defeats, such storyizing has a moral dimension: the narratives constructed have a ‘moral’ to the extent that their resolution implies the achievement of some goods taken as normative by our historical culture.”⁸⁸ In the realm of preaching, we can review the stories or illustrations a preacher is using and ask ourselves if the kinds of questions the congregation cares about are addressed directly or indirectly.

⁸¹ Taeger and Yanchar, 176.

⁸² Fred B. Craddock, 106.

⁸³ Stephan Taeger, “Using Narrative Distance to Invite Transformative Learning Experiences,” *Journal of Research in Innovative Teaching & Learning* 13, no. 2, (2020): 223; Stephen C. Yanchar, “Participational Agency,” *Review of General Psychology*, 15, no. 3 (2011): 280.

⁸⁴ Taeger and Yanchar, 176.

⁸⁵ Fred B. Craddock, 112, 114.

⁸⁶ Taeger and Yanchar, 176.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 177.

⁸⁸ Charles B. Guignon, “Authenticity, Moral Values, and Psychotherapy,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Charles B. Guignon, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 289.

In a sermon called *Grace and Disgrace* Fred Craddock demonstrated how to use a story that is meaningful, albeit in an indirect fashion. In speaking of once grading a student's sermon, he said:

I gave a student a C on his sermon. He was upset; he thought it was a grand sermon. I didn't think so. There were some things to be improved. There were basically two things wrong with it: What he said and how he said it. So I gave him a C. I thought it was sort of a sign of encouragement. Just keep working; it'll be a B and then an A. He came in a few weeks later and flopped that C sermon down on my desk and said, "Prof., I preached that sermon in my home church and I got a standing ovation." He picked it up and stomped out. Has he passed the point? The last time I saw him, he was hanging onto the furniture to keep from ascending. Is he still teachable? It won't be long until he will be standing at the door of his church somewhere, people filing by, "Good sermon, Pastor."
"Good sermon, Pastor."
"Good sermon, Pastor."
"Good morning, Pastor."
"Uh, oh, I wonder what's the matter with her? I'll have to call on her in a pastoral way."⁸⁹

There are several aspects of this story that make it meaningful for the listener. Although one might think that the typical congregation could not identify with a story about a homiletics student, this illustration touches on the universal human theme of acceptance. In addition, another aspect of this story that makes it meaningful is that it reflects the point of view of the main character in the sermon from which it originates. In this particular message, Craddock discusses Saul's (first king of Israel) need for approval. Rather than listing off principles of application from the story, Craddock spends time *investing* in this specific person and point of view. Finally, this story, as well as the theme of the sermon, are indirectly dealing with the question, "what should I do with my need for approval?" In one sense, the answer to this question is found inherently in the story itself. By illustrating how one should *not* handle their need for approval in the way the homiletics student did, Craddock is showing us how one should give up their constant need for acceptance.

Using stories that are meaningful is essential in helping the listener overcome self-deception. As mentioned above, when Warner described people hearing stories of others coming to honesty about their self-deception, he said these people "realize—usually instantaneously—that a story another has told is their own story, only with different details."⁹⁰ Unless the listener sees themselves and the things that matter to them in the story, they probably will not be open to listening to its inherent moral invitation.

Like the other examples noted above, this story invites one to see the humanity of the other and overcome self-deception. At first glance it might seem difficult to see how someone could see the humanity and vulnerability of someone who is acting in a way that is so self-serving. However, those mired in self-deception, "struggle anxiously with what they falsely believe to be threats needing to be dealt with. In the world as they construe it, they act purely in

⁸⁹ Fred B. Craddock, *The Collected Sermons of Fred B. Craddock*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 22.

⁹⁰ Warner, *Bonds that Make Us Free: Healing Our Relationships, Coming to Ourselves*, 215.

self-defense.”⁹¹ Interestingly, Warner suggests that this understanding is essential in setting *ourselves* free from self-betrayal and therefore creating a space for others as well. He says that if we “understand how threatening the world seems to them, we will set ourselves free of our accusing, judgmental attitude. We will become, as onlookers, more open, truthful, and considerate in our way of being, more responsive to them as they really are.”⁹² In the instance that Craddock offered, the listener can feel genuine concern for someone trapped in the constant need for approval or affirmation. The preacher can help the listener open themselves to others by framing examples of people who are trapped in self-deception as an opportunity to be empathetic. By seeing the humanity of those caught in self-deception, we begin to liberate ourselves from our own self-betrays and give others reason to see us as a human deserving of their respect and kindness.

Seeing the Other

In a popular book based on Warner’s philosophical work, people who embrace the humanity of others are described as seeing that another’s “hopes, needs, cares, and fears [are] as real to [them] as [their] own.”⁹³ People who do not see the humanity of others are described as seeing humans as “obstacles, vehicles, [and] irrelevancies.”⁹⁴ As Martin Buber argued, we can either have an “I-it” or an “I-thou” way of being towards other people.⁹⁵ In the sections above we see a variety of ways that stories can help us come alive to others, helping us embrace an “I-Thou” way of being. For the purposes of further illustration, the following story provides another example of this phenomenon. Taken directly from Warner’s work, it concerns a man named Monte who had a son and a daughter-in-law living at home because they were evicted from their residence. When they moved into Monte’s home, they borrowed his car since their own vehicle “required a major repair.” Sometime later, Monte “got a call informing him that they had been in an accident.” Although filled with anger, Monte decided to try his best to act cordial.

Monte was almost to the car before he could see his daughter-in-law, who was sitting in the driver’s seat. Her head rested on the steering wheel, and she was sobbing. At that moment, he said, his heart melted. What melted this man? He had, after all, done everything that lay within his power to act as considerately and generously as possible.

What melted him was the sight of his daughter-in-law broken and contrite. This image punched through his shell of self-concern. It disrupted the certainty with which he had judged her.”⁹⁶

In other words, Monte developed an “I-Thou” way of being toward his daughter-in-law. When including these kinds of stories in sermons, it is helpful to highlight the moment when a person becomes *real* to another. In addition, if a preacher can maintain cognitive and emotional space, the listener is more likely to discover how the story relates to themselves without feeling

⁹¹ Ibid., 79.

⁹² Warner, *Bonds that Make Us Free: Healing Our Relationships, Coming to Ourselves*, 79.

⁹³ The Arbing Institute, *The Anatomy of Peace: Resolving the Heart of Conflict*, 30.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ The philosophical debate has a long and nuanced history surrounding these issues. I use Buber’s distinction between “I-It” and “I-Thou” for the limited scope of this article. See The Arbing Institute, 79-80.

⁹⁶ Warner, *Bonds that Make Us Free: Healing Our Relationships, Coming to Ourselves*, 152-153.

emotionally repulsed. This is the kind of preaching that can allow the listener to move past defensiveness and social division and open themselves up to the needs of others.

It may be helpful to reemphasize that the process of someone becoming real to us is not a matter of willpower. Otherwise, a preacher may give the impression that listeners need to grit their teeth and be more loving. Rather, as Warner said regarding the example above, “All the willpower Monte could muster had failed to extinguish the accusation in his heart, but something about her, the very person he had been despising, rendered him unable to retain his hardness toward her any longer.”⁹⁷ Warner speaks of “allow[ing]” or “yielding” to the truth of the other.⁹⁸ With this in mind, it may be wise to use these words or terms like “open” or “honor” when speaking of becoming alive to the humanity of others.⁹⁹ In one sense, rather than framing the issue as a matter of willpower, these terms help us see that the ending of self-deception is a matter of reverencing the other as an image bearer of God. Ultimately, the kind of agape love that sees others needs willingly, and even joyously, responds naturally to their humanity.¹⁰⁰

Conclusion

Influencing human transformation can be particularly challenging for societies that are locked in social divisiveness. Homileticians have offered various accounts of what leads to human change. Although these have been helpful to one degree or another, there has not been much emphasis on the role that self-deception plays for the listener. Self-betrayal occurs when one denies their sense to honor the humanity of the other. We engage in this way of being by taking up justifications that are inherently accusatory. Since self-deception is also defensive by nature, I have offered an indirect model that can be employed by preachers to help listeners come to greater honesty about how they might relate to others. As preachers share sermons that contain cognitive and emotional space but also meaningfully invite the listener to come alive to the other, they may help listeners overcome self-deception. John McClure, drawing upon Emmanuel Levinas, explained what happens when we see the other: “In the neighbor's face (visage), we experience an absolute obligation toward compassion, resistance, justice, and hope that grips our lives and holds us to a new vision for all humanity.”¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ Warner, *Bonds that Make Us Free: Healing Our Relationships, Coming to Ourselves*, 154.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 108 and 36.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 139.

¹⁰¹ John S. McClure, 134, Kindle.