

# AIMING AT CHANGE

## The Transformative Dimension of Preaching

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In the context of the Reformation, the sermon was placed at the heart of the ecclesiastic practices. Luther called it »the major and most distinguished part« of the service;<sup>1</sup> without preaching, it would be better not to sing, not to read and not to come together at all.<sup>2</sup> This emphasis is accompanied by a great confidence in the power of linguistic and oral communication. The sermon was expected to touch the conscience. To provoke and to strengthen faith was regarded as its most notable task.

Because of this appreciation, the Reformatory concept of preaching is often called a sacramental one. According to the Protestant reformers, the sermon was a *verbum efficax*. It has transformative effects.<sup>3</sup>

In the following, I want to show, firstly, that this transformative aspect is still an important component of the current understanding of preaching. Secondly, I try to determine three major problems which are connected to this component. For this purpose, I will refer to philosophical theories concerning the practice of criticism. In this way, I hope to identify some categories, differentiations and perspectives with which the specific conceptions of the

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<sup>1</sup> S. WA 19, 78, 26 (»das groessist und furnempfst stuck«).

<sup>2</sup> S. WA 12, 35, 24f.

<sup>3</sup> S.e.g. FRANK M. LÜTZE, *Absicht und Wirkung der Predigt. Eine Untersuchung zur homiletischen Pragmatik*, *Arbeiten zur Praktischen Theologie* 29, Leipzig 2006, 23; SYBILLE ROLF, *Zum Herzen sprechen. Eine Studie zum imputativen Aspekt in Martin Luthers Rechtfertigungslehre und zu seinen Konsequenzen für die Predigt des Evangeliums*, *Arbeiten zur Systematischen Theologie* 1, Leipzig 2008, 383: »Apparently, Luther assumes that the spoken and preached word of God is able to constitute and transform reality« (»Luther geht offenkundig davon aus, dass das gesprochene verkündigte Wort Gottes Wirklichkeit konstituieren und verändern kann«).

transformative aspect of preaching can be analyzed. Thirdly, I want to present some first observations offered by such an analysis. This last point will be a still tentative attempt rather than the summary of a finished study.

## **A THE TRANSFORMATIVE DIMENSION OF PREACHING: AN ISSUE OF RECENT GERMAN-SPEAKING HOMILETICS**

Since the Reformation, the transformative dimension has always remained an important component of the Protestant understanding of preaching. In order to emphasize that recent German-speaking homiletics refers to this transformative aspect, too, I want to give three examples.

a) In an article published in 2001, Michael Meyer-Blanck puts forward the following thesis: It should be one aim of the sermon »that the listeners learn to see themselves in a new perspective in the light of faith by learning to see something new concerning a biblical text which is uttered in the service with the implicit assumption that God is present.«<sup>4</sup> Meyer-Blanck adopts the motif of »seeing something in a new perspective« from Viktor Šlovskij, a Russian literary scholar. According to Šlovskij, art offers new possibilities of perceiving reality. Ordinary patterns of perception are transformed by aesthetic entities. According to Meyer-Blanck, the sermon has the same function. At best, preaching transforms the established views of its addressees. It discloses new possibilities of perceiving their own selves, their social relations and the biblical texts. Thus, the aim of the sermon is not simply to reinforce the views of the listeners, but to renew them.

b) According to Albrecht Grözinger, every sermon holds at best a transcending momentum. It should not just copy the empirical reality of its addressees; it should exceed it.<sup>5</sup> Grözinger marks this transcending momentum

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<sup>4</sup> MICHAEL MEYER-BLANCK, Reden, hören, neu sehen lernen. Didaktische Aspekte der Predigt, in: UTA POHL-PATALONG/FRANK MUCHLINSKY (Eds.), Predigen im Plural. Homiletische Perspektiven, Hamburg 2001, 133–142, 136 (»Die Predigt hat darauf zu zielen, dass die Zuhörenden sich selbst neu im Licht des Glaubens sehen lernen, indem sie Neues an einem biblischen Text sehen lernen, welcher im Gottesdienst unter der impliziten Voraussetzung von Gottes Gegenwart zur Sprache gebracht wird«).

<sup>5</sup> S. ALBRECHT GRÖZINGER, Homiletik, Lehrbuch Praktische Theologie 2, Gütersloh 2008, 110–113: »A sermon proclaiming just what is already the case, is a waste sermon. [...] A sermon has to recognize more in its listeners. [...] A sermon should not just duplicate the factual reality of the listeners« (»Eine Predigt, in der [...] nur das laut wird, was ohnehin

by the concept of ›invention‹. The sermon should ›invent‹ its hearers, which means that it should develop a picture of them which differs from their accustomed self-images. Thus, the sermon becomes a place where people can find possibilities for experimenting with new self-descriptions and alternative concepts of identity. This transformative potential is conceived with the help of Wolfgang Iser's theory of the ›implicit reader‹.

c) Wilfried Engemann included the semiotics of Umberto Eco into the homiletic discourse. Eco's conception of ambiguity is of special interest to him. An essential feature of ambiguous entities is that they provoke irritations. They disrupt established strategies of interpretation, challenge ideas with which one is familiar and unsettle the ordinary views on life, on the world and on God. By handling those irritations, these strategies of interpretation, ideas and views are potentially being changed. Such changes should be aimed at by preachers, too.<sup>6</sup>

These three examples show that contemporary German-speaking homiletics refers to issues which are marked by terms such as ›irritation‹, ›innovation‹ and ›change‹. Transformative functions are assigned to the act of preaching.<sup>7</sup>

Certainly, the issue of transformation and the linguistic attempts at initiating new perspectives are not uncontroversial since they are connected to several problems. In the following, I want to determine three of these prob-

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schon der Fall ist, ist eine überflüssige Predigt. [...] Eine Predigt nimmt mehr an den Hörerinnen und Hörern wahr als nur das, was der Fall ist. [...] Predigt soll die Vorfindlichkeit der Hörenden nicht einfach nur verdoppeln«).

<sup>6</sup> S. WILFRIED ENGEMANN, Einführung in die Homiletik, Tübingen/Basel <sup>2</sup>2011, 208: »One part of the intention of the communication of the gospel is that fixed or ›frozen‹ notions and distorted pictures that people have regarding themselves, God and the existing relations to others can be transformed« (»Es gehört [...] zur Intention der Kommunikation des Evangeliums, dass festgefahrene bzw. »eingefrorene« Vorstellungen und Zerrbilder des Menschen von sich selbst, von Gott sowie von den bestehenden Beziehungen zu anderen verändert werden können«).

<sup>7</sup> The presence of questions concerning the transformative dimension of preaching can also be proven by pursuing another track. Empirical surveys have touched on this dimension again and again. Examples are two studies arranged by Uta Pohl-Patalong and by Helmut Schwier and Sieghard Gall. Both studies show that for the respondents impulses for change are desirable functions of the service in general and the sermon in particular. S. UTA POHL-PATALONG, Gottesdienst erleben. Empirische Einsichten zum evangelischen Gottesdienst, Stuttgart 2011, 219; HELMUT SCHWIER/SIEGHARD GALL, Predigt hören. Befunde und Ergebnisse der Heidelberger Umfrage zur Predigtrezeption, Heidelberger Studien zur Predigtforschung 1, Berlin 2008, 241f.

lems. For this purpose, I will refer to the theory of criticism.<sup>8</sup> My main assumption is that a discussion using philosophical considerations on the practice of criticism is helpful for identifying and elaborating on three crucial problems which arise when the sermon aims at transforming its listeners. Against the background of these problems, it will be possible to analyze contemporary conceptions of the transformative dimension of preaching. By considering if and how these conceptions deal with the problems, a better understanding of these conceptions can be achieved.

## **B IN DISCUSSION WITH THE THEORY OF CRITICISM: THE DESCRIPTION OF THREE MAJOR PROBLEMS**

The theory of (social) criticism does not treat the question of change as what one might call a theoretical-logical problem but as a more practical and social one. The procedures of transformation and the relations between the ones using them and the ones who are addressed by them form the focus of interest here.

By exploring diverse reflections on these procedures and relations at least three important problems can be reconstructed. I call them the problem of ›immanence and transcendence‹, the problem of ›symmetry and asymmetry‹ and the problem of ›positivity and negativity‹.

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<sup>8</sup> Critique is an essential part of human activity. Since ancient times, this part has been reflected on again and again. Different meanings, functions and scopes and various grades of importance have been attributed to it. While for some criticism is precisely the core moment of scientific reasoning, others regard it as a common part of our daily life. Thus, the theory of criticism is a very heterogeneous entity. It includes, for instance, the Kantian programme of a critical philosophy, the left-Hegelian traditions of social criticism, the Foucaultian notion of a genealogical critique or the sociology of criticism elaborated by Luc Boltanski (s. e.g. RAHEL JAEGGI/TILO WESCHE [Eds.], *Was ist Kritik?* [stw 1885], Frankfurt a. M. 2009; KURT RÖTTGERS, Art. Kritik, in: OTTO BRUNNER/WERNER CONZE/REINHART KOSELLECK [Eds.], *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, Vol. 3, 651–675). I mainly refer to the considerations of Michael Walzer. He understands criticism as a form of our common social and cultural practice and exposes its transformative character (s. MICHAEL WALZER, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*, Cambridge 1987; MICHAEL WALZER, *The Company of Critics. Social Criticism and Political Commitment in the Twentieth Century*, New York 1988; MICHAEL WALZER, *Thick and Thin. Moral Argument at Home and Abroad*, Notre Dame 1994).

## I THE PROBLEM OF ›IMMANENCE AND TRANSCENDENCE‹

The problem of immanence and transcendence is the core problem of each practice aiming at transformation. Such practices face a double challenge.

On the one hand, they must ›reach‹ their addressees. For this reason, practices of transformation have to be *intelligible*, *relevant* and *acceptable*. At best they use idioms which can easily be understood by their receivers. Michael Walzer enlarges this apparently simple point. According to him, meaning is not an absolute, but a context-related entity. It is determinable first in specific linguistic and practical contexts. Hence, the critic should design his subversive text out of the complex contexts of the experience of his addressees.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, to ›reach‹ its addressees the subversive text has to be considered relevant by them. It should have to do with the questions, desires and concerns determining their lives. Otherwise, it would be »easy to shrug off«, as Walzer puts it.<sup>10</sup> At last, the subversive text has to be acceptable. The addressees »must be capable of integrating it into the affectively imbued constellations of reasons that are formative of their identities«<sup>11</sup>. The critic is obliged to offer reasons his concrete listeners can identify with. The concept of immanence refers to these three aspects: intelligibility, relevance and acceptability. Practices aiming at transformation need a design that allows for consistent relations to the linguistic and practical contexts of their addressees, to their systems of values and their regimes of beliefs that form their identities.

On the other hand, such practices have to hold an innovative momentum. If they want to evoke transformative effects, they need a momentum transcending the already existing systems of values and beliefs. Otherwise, the established orientations and understandings of the addressees would only be reproduced and confirmed. The concept of transcendence relates to this function of innovation. A subversive text has to be fashioned in such a manner that is able to stimulate the recipients despite all affirmative reference to their systems of values and beliefs.

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<sup>9</sup> S. e.g. WALZER, *Interpretation* (s. note 8), 91f.; WALZER, *Thick and Thin* (s. note 8), 6ff. S. also MICHAEL WALZER, *Objectivity and Social Meaning*, in: MICHAEL WALZER, *Thinking Politically. Essays in Political Theory*, ed. by DAVID MILLER, New Haven/London 2007, 38–52.

<sup>10</sup> S. WALZER, *Company* (s. note 8), 188.

<sup>11</sup> MAEVE COOKE, *Re-Presenting the Good Society, Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought*, Cambridge/London 2006, 17.

Martin Saar expresses this connection of immanence and transcendence very concisely when he writes: The addressees of a critique should »recognize themselves in an alienated manner.«<sup>12</sup> The motif of recognizing oneself represents the aspect of immanence. The motif of the alienated manner represents the aspect of transcendence.

## II THE PROBLEM OF ›SYMMETRY AND ASYMMETRY‹

The second major problem is the problem of symmetry and asymmetry. This problem focuses on the relational level between the speakers aiming for transformation and their addressees.

In general, practices which aim at transformations are suspicious. How can a person claim the right to change others? How can it be guaranteed that the provoked transformations are authentic, that the addressees can identify with them? And is this transformation not due to any manipulative strategies?

In the theory of criticism, such questions are reflected on in the context of the problem of symmetry and asymmetry. To gain a first access to this complex problem, I want to refer to a differentiation used by Meave Cooke. Cooke distinguishes between »epistemological authoritarianism« and »ethical authoritarianism«.<sup>13</sup> An epistemological authoritarian relation exists in the moment in which a critic claims a privileged and extraordinary access for his interpretation of reality. Thus, he is able to protect his view on life, the social world or divine things from critical questions. A strong asymmetry is established between him and his addressees. An ethical authoritarian relation

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<sup>12</sup> MARTIN SAAR, *Genealogie als Kritik. Geschichte und Theorie des Subjekts nach Nietzsche und Foucault, Theorie und Gesellschaft* 59, Frankfurt a. M./New York 2007, 139 (»sich in einem verfremdeten Sinn wiedererkennen«). – S. also JOACHIM KÜCHENHOFF, *Mitspieler und Kritiker. Die kritische Hermeneutik des psychotherapeutischen Gesprächs*, in: JAEGGI/WESCHE (Eds.), *Kritik* (s. note 8), 299–318, 316f.: According to Küchenhoff, the practice of criticism is connected with a twofold movement: »the movement of internalization« (»Bewegung der Internalisierung«) and »the movement of externalization« (»Bewegung der Externalisierung«). Both movements interlock in the sense of an »oscillation« (»Oszillation«). And Rahel Jaeggi and Tilo Wesche emphasize that critique means always at once »dissociation« and »association« (»Kritik bedeutet immer gleichzeitig Dissoziation wie Assoziation«) (s. RAHEL JAEGGI/TILO WESCHE, *Einführung: Was ist Kritik?*, in: JAEGGI/WESCHE [Eds.], *Kritik* [s. note 8], 7–20, 8).

<sup>13</sup> S. COOKE, *Society* (s. note 11), 16f.; MAEVE COOKE, *Avoiding Authoritarianism: On the Problem of Justification in Contemporary Critical Social Theory*, in: *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 13 (2005), 379–404, 382f.

exists in the moment in which the addressees are not placed in the position to integrate the critic's view in their constellations of »deep-seated, normative intuitions and expectations«, in the moment in which they are not able to connect his interpretation with the »most stable elements« of their identities.<sup>14</sup> In other words, where the validity of a subversive text is not linked to the reasoning of the addressees in their thick contexts of language and practice, Cooke talks about ethical authoritarianism.

Against the background of this account, it is clear that the problem of symmetry and asymmetry is closely related to the problem of immanence and transcendence. One could say that overstressing the aspect of transcendence entails epistemological authoritarian relations, while deleting the aspect of immanence entails ethical authoritarian relations.

### III THE PROBLEM OF ›POSITIVITY AND NEGATIVITY‹

The third problem could be called the problem of positivity and negativity. It refers to two general possibilities of initiating transformations. On the one hand, it is possible to step in at the level of the existing status. On the other hand, one can start at the level of the intended future status. Thus, for instance, the transformation of a certain image of God could be achieved by pointing out its ›deficits‹. By illustrating the psychological strains a picture of God entails that is connected with motifs such as observation and punishment, this understanding could perhaps be irritated. The theory of criticism calls this approach a negative one. Certainly, it would also be possible to provoke such irritations by confronting the existing image of God with an alternative one, for instance, by interpreting the Parable of the Prodigal Son and disclosing the possibilities of relating to God which are presented here. In this way, a positive counter-image is drawn.

In the perspective of the theory of criticism this second form of initiating transformation is especially controversial. The discussions about the usefulness of this form of critique have generated several differentiations regarding the functions of positive criticism. At least four functions can be mentioned.

Firstly, a positive alternative draft can serve as a *blueprint of practical realization*. Considered in this way, it offers concrete instructions for a successful life, a wholesome social order or a proper understanding of the self, the world and God. This function is the main reason why a lot of theorists adopt a critical attitude towards positive criticism. They fear that by this means the

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<sup>14</sup> S. COOKE, *Society* (s. note 11), 17.

addressees are confronted with an all too thick notion of life and are thus patronized.<sup>15</sup>

Secondly, a positive alternative draft can serve as a *medium of motivation*. From this perspective, the exact relation between model and realization is unimportant. The focus shifts towards the actuating and moving effects of positive criticism. Counter-images, attractive descriptions of a different state or the sketch of a new way of living are believed to have an »affective pull«. <sup>16</sup> Thus, they can excite certain aspirations or disclose specific wishes which give an orientation to our activity.

The third function can be interpreted as a specific form of the second function. Positive alternative drafts can serve as *mediums of reflection*. By presenting a new opinion or developing a surprising idea, they impose themselves upon the addressees as objects of meditation and reflection.

Fourthly, a positive alternative draft can serve as what one might call a *medium of simulation*. This perspective reflects the function of positive criticism in terms of aesthetic considerations. The alternative draft is perceived as a fictional formation. Like literary fictions it offers its addressees the possibility to identify with different opinions, attitudes and patterns of behavior. Temporarily and by way of trial, they can place themselves in different situations and submit themselves to different experiences. Thus, the addressees are able to simulate new relations to reality.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> S. *ibid.*, 162.

<sup>16</sup> S. *ibid.*, 88.

<sup>17</sup> S. *ibid.*, 118f. – Against the background of this description positive criticism can be related to different concepts such as the concept of »make-believe« or the concept of »transportation«. According to the literary concept of »make-believe«, the readers of fictional texts »are intended by the author to make believe that the story as uttered is true« (GREGORY CURRIE, *The Nature of Fiction*, Cambridge et al. 1990, 18). They submit themselves voluntarily to the fictive worlds which are described by him. Analogous to playing children they get involved with a different reality for the time of reading. S. also FRANK ZIPFEL, *Fiktion, Fiktivität, Fiktionalität. Analysen zur Fiktion in der Literatur und zum Fiktionsbegriff in der Literaturwissenschaft, Allgemeine Literaturwissenschaft – Wuppertaler Schriften 2*, Berlin 2001, 214–217.248–252. The concept of »transportation« is used by Melanie C. Green and Timothy C. Brook to explain and analyze the persuasive functions of narratives. »Transportation« describes »a convergent process, where all mental systems and capacities become focused on events occurring in the narrative.« As a consequence, readers lose »access to some real-world facts in favor of accepting the narrative world that the author has created«, they »may experience strong emotions and motivations« and they »return from being transported somewhat changed by the experience« (MELANIE C. GREEN/TIMOTHY

## C A FIRST TENTATIVE APPLICATION: REFLECTING ON RECENT CONCEPTIONS OF THE TRANSFORMATIVE DIMENSION OF PREACHING

I will have a look at the recent German-speaking homiletic debate now against this background. This last point is a still tentative attempt and not the summary of a complete analysis.<sup>18</sup> I just want to indicate some first observations and starting points; further examinations will have to elaborate on this.

a) Looking back on the three examples in the beginning, it is striking that each approach conceives the transformative dimension of preaching in aesthetic terms: Meyer-Blanck refers to the literary scholar Šlovskij, Grözinger relates to Iser's theory of the ›implicit reader‹ and Engemann deals with Eco's conception of the ›open work‹.

b) This observation can be specified: The three examples are not only combined in their general aesthetic approach, but each of them also describes the transformative dimension of preaching in exactly the way that the fourth function of positive criticism points to. At least, this is one main line of describing it. Transformations should be caused by staging attractive concepts of identity that the addressees could identify with temporarily and by way of trial.

c) In each approach, this aesthetic conception is linked to the problem of authoritarianism in one way or another.<sup>19</sup> The aesthetic conception of the transformative dimension is regarded as an adequate answer to the question of symmetry and asymmetry.

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C. BROOK, The Role of Transportation in the Persuasiveness of Public Narratives, in: *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 79 [2000], 701–721, 701f). S. also SONYA DAL CIN/MARK P. ZANNA/GEOFFREY T. FONG, Narrative Persuasion and Overcoming Resistance, in: ERIC S. KNOWLES/JAY A. LINN (Eds.), *Resistance and Persuasion*, Mahwah/London 2004, 175–191.

<sup>18</sup> To achieve illuminating results, the problems described will have to be refined further before being applied to the homiletic discourse. In my opinion, at least three intermediate steps are necessary: The categories, differentiations and perspectives achieved with the help of the theory of criticism should be reflected (1) in the context of the sociology of religion (the dimension of *culture*), (2) in the context of ritual and liturgical considerations (the dimension of *service*), and (3) related to rhetorical contexts of reflection (the dimension of *oration*).

<sup>19</sup> See e.g. MEYER-BLANCK, Reden (s. note 4), 133.135.139f.; GRÖZINGER, Homiletik (s. note 5), 113.160.235.241f.; ENGEMANN, Einführung (s. note 6), 210.236.240f.

At this point, a more accurate examination would be necessary. This examination would have to be guided by the following questions:

- In which way does the question of symmetry and asymmetry arise? This means, what exactly is understood by ›authoritarianism‹? What is considered as an illegitimate influence?
- Are there concrete criteria by means of which legitimate and illegitimate influences can be distinguished?
- How do the aesthetic conceptions ensure that illegitimate ways of influence are excluded? This means, in which way do they claim to solve the problem of symmetry and asymmetry?
- Can aesthetic conceptions clearly identify the normative claims associated with intentional transformative processes or do popular formulations like ›exploding our conventional attitudes‹, ›being imagined as another‹ or ›evoking new and surprising views‹ possibly conceal such normative claims?

d) It is remarkable that in recent German-speaking homiletics the demand for initiating change is accompanied by emphasizing the necessity of relating to the everyday reality of the listeners. Against the background of the theory of criticism, of course, this is not a contradiction. Referring to the systems of belief and value and the linguistic and practical contexts of the addressees is rather a necessary condition for the possibility of transformation. As the problem of immanence and transcendence shows, such a reference belongs to the internal structure of transformative processes.

Grözinger and Engemann relate to this structure explicitly.<sup>20</sup> They mention the necessity of a close relationship of immanent and transcendent aspects. Further examinations will have to focus on the specific ways in which this connection is achieved, on the question how the »constellations of interiority and exteriority«<sup>21</sup> are linguistically arranged.

e) At last, one may ask whether there are no further possibilities of conceiving the transformative dimension of preaching. In my opinion, there are

<sup>20</sup> S. GRÖZINGER, *Homiletik* (s. note 5), 114f. (›tension between familiarity and unfamiliarity« [›Spannung von Vertrautheit und Nicht-Vertrautheit«], »mixture of recovery and invention« [›Mischung aus Entdeckung und Erfindung«]); ENGEMANN, *Einführung* (s. note 6), 200 (›dialectic of use and consumption« [›Dialektik zwischen Gebrauch und Verbrauch«]).

<sup>21</sup> TILO WESCHE, *Reflexion, Therapie, Darstellung. Formen der Kritik*, in: JÄEGGI/WESCHE (Eds.), *Kritik* (s. note 8), 193-220, 204 (›Konstellationen von Innen und Außen«).

such alternatives. Thus, for instance, changes could be motivated by more argumentative procedures.<sup>22</sup> Recent German-speaking homiletics contains reflections on argumentative structures.<sup>23</sup> If my analysis of them is correct, however, these reflections are not related to the question of transformation as clearly as aesthetic reflections. And they are not elaborated on with the same accuracy as the aesthetic questions in general. In my opinion, a closer reference to rhetorical conceptions of argumentation could complement the relation to aesthetics. At least two reasons are indicative of this.

Firstly, in its centre rhetorical reflections on argumentation tackle the problem of immanence and transcendence. One of the central questions of rhetorical argumentation is: How can a hitherto new and unfamiliar perspective be transformed into an acceptable one by relating to existing systems of belief and value?<sup>24</sup>

Secondly, in our tradition the notion of argumentation is closely linked to the claim of establishing non-authoritarian ways of influence. On the one hand, argumentative procedures allow for critical inquiries. Whoever argues puts his addressees into the position of challenging his intentions. He does not claim an extraordinary access to his point of view. On the other hand, rhetorical argumentative procedures aim for the subjective insight of concrete persons. Thus, rhetoric emphatically links the validity of arguments to the reasoning of the addressees. In this sense, both versions of authoritarianism Cooke points to are tackled.

In the light of these two reasons, rhetorical theories of argumentation appear as a second potential candidate for conceiving the transformative dimension of preaching besides the aesthetic approaches. As in the case of these aesthetic conceptions, here much more differentiated analyses would have to be conducted, too.

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<sup>22</sup> Naturally, I do not want to claim that aesthetic forms of preaching lack argumentative structures. For instance, narrations are potential mediums of argumentation. Thus, the four gospels show that ambitious theologies can be developed and justified narratively.

<sup>23</sup> S. e.g. GRÖZINGER, *Homiletik* (s. note 5), 200; ENGEMANN, *Einführung* (s. note 6), 239–243. – An extensive reference to rhetorical theories of argumentation is provided by URSULA ROTH, *Die Beerdigungsansprache. Argumente gegen den Tod im Kontext der modernen Gesellschaft*, *Praktische Theologie und Kultur* 6, Gütersloh 2001.

<sup>24</sup> S. e.g. JOSEF KOPPERSCHMIDT, *Rhetorische Überzeugungsarbeit. Annäherung an eine kulturelle Praxis*, in: RENATE LACHMANN/RICCARDO NOCOLOSI/SUSANNE STRÄTLING (Eds.), *Rhetorik als kulturelle Praxis*, *Figuren* 11, Paderborn 2008, 15–30, 26; CHAIM PERELMAN, *Das Reich der Rhetorik. Rhetorik und Argumentation*, Beck'sche Schwarze Reihe 212, München 1980, 30.