

CHAPTER THREE

THE SERMONS AT ST. SAVIOUR’S, LEEDS: PUSEY’S DIALECTIC OF LACK AND FULFILMENT

I have argued thus far that a dialectic of lack and fulfilment is constitutive of the Tractarians’ incarnational poetics. Their poetics follows the dual impulses of Wordsworth’s and Coleridge’s theories of language which offer both a highly affirmative estimation of language’s symbolic character and anxieties over language’s insufficiencies. I have broadly included these impulses under the categories of lack and fulfilment, and have employed this dialectic as a means of interpreting the various tensions in Wordsworthian, Coleridgean and Tractarian theories of language. The model of this dialectic is the incarnation, in which Christ both reveals the Godhead (fulfilment) *and* is subject to mortal death (lack).

In this chapter I will show how Pusey articulates such an incarnational poetics in the *Sermons on Solemn Subjects*. Of particular significance is Pusey’s ability to show the correspondence between these two aspects of language: the death of the word (its lack) is constitutive of its ability to fulfil. However, I will begin with a consideration of the events surrounding the composition of these sermons. Their historical moment of production is extremely significant, taking place during some of the most turbulent times in the Victorian church’s history. Indeed, the sermons are best understood (as is the founding of St. Saviour’s itself) on the horizon of ecclesiastical and personal upheaval that marked Pusey’s life during the six years prior to their delivery, culminating in Newman’s secession to the Roman Catholic communion. In conjunction with an emphasis on the influence of Wordsworth and Coleridge on Pusey and the Tractarians, this brief

historical introduction will provide the framework for a reading of Pusey's sermons.

I. THE HISTORY OF ST. SAVIOUR'S CHURCH: AN OVERVIEW

"And now I fear my note will arrive to turn Easter joy into sorrow," wrote Pusey to his friend H.A. Woodgate on Good Friday, 1845:¹

It relates to our friend Newman. His despondency about our condition has been deepening since 1839; he has done all he could to keep himself where he is; but his convictions are too strong for him, and so now my only hope is that he may be an instrument to restore the Roman Church, since our own knows not how to employ him. His energy and gifts are wasted among us. But for us it is a very dreary prospect. Besides our personal loss, it is a break-up, and I suppose such a rent as our Church has never had. Besides those already unsettled, hundreds will be carried from us, mistrusting themselves to stay when he goes. It is very dismal ... I doubt very much whether next Advent he will be any longer with us ... It makes me almost indifferent to anything, as if things could not be better or worse. However, if one lives, one must do what we can to gather up the fragments that remain, and meanwhile pray for our poor Church. (2: 451-52)

Pusey was correct in his surmise concerning John Henry Newman's future in the Church of England. On October 9, 1845, he was received into the Roman Catholic Church, only three weeks before the consecration of St. Saviour's, Leeds, on October 28, the Feast of St. Simon and St. Jude. In the ensuing week Pusey preached his *Sermons on Solemn Subjects*. The history of St. Saviour's properly begins in 1839 (the year referred to in Pusey's letter to Woodgate). It was a year which saw Newman increasingly unsettled about his place in the Church of England after the Episcopal censure of the Tracts he had been writing

¹ All citations of Pusey's letters are taken from H.P. Liddon's *Life of Pusey* unless otherwise noted.

and editing, and which were one of the central means of disseminating the Oxford Movement's vision. It was also the year that Pusey and Newman were first approached by W.J. Hook, then vicar of Leeds, with the proposal of founding a Church in Leeds on Tractarian principles to accommodate the growing influx of labour into the city. Moreover, it was the year that Pusey's wife died. I will begin this overview of the founding of St. Saviour's with these three "moments" which, it seems to me, mark the founding of St. Saviour's and the tenor of Pusey's *Sermons on Solemn Subjects*. The series of personal losses preceding the composition of the sermons greatly influenced their aesthetic structure and content.

The death of Pusey's wife constitutes a central moment not only in the founding of St. Saviour's, but also for the remaining forty years of Pusey's life. He interpreted her death as punishment for his manifest and hidden sins², though John Keble and Newman counselled him against exaggerated feelings of culpability (Liddon 2: 109). Nevertheless, as H.P. Liddon writes, "Mrs. Pusey's death had effects upon her husband's life which it is not easy to exaggerate ... to use his own phrase, from that hour the world became to him a different world" (2: 107). The primary difference that marked his life was the determination to live his remaining years as a penitent. In keeping with this he undertook such practical measures as curtailing his household expenditures, increasing charitable donations and activities, and severely limiting his public engagements: "His

² As Pusey wrote in May 1839 to John Keble: "You will pray for me that I may humbly and penitently resign her to Him Who gave her to me, and that the sins may be forgiven me for which, out of the usual order of His dealings, she, once so strong, is taken from me" (3: 95). And, after the death of his daughter, Lucy, in 1844 he writes to Keble again: "I am indeed ... in earnest that all my sorrows are the fruits of my own sins, and all my chastisements so many mercies" (3: 95). Its difficult to determine precisely what sins Pusey felt most ashamed of. Rather, it seems that his conscience accused him of a general state of sinfulness. This was accompanied by a scrupulosity that discerned in the least significant errors profound wrongdoing.

sorrow was a call to retire from the world” (Liddon 2: 108). The severity of Pusey’s asceticism, and his consciousness of his own sin, became characteristic of both his preaching and correspondence from this time onwards. As Liddon notes, after the death of Emily Pusey “the nothingness of this world, the disciplinary value as well as the atoning power of the Cross, the awfulness and reality of the Day of Judgement, assume a new prominence in his sermons”³ (2: 109). Indeed, Pusey undertook to build the church in Leeds as an anonymous penitent in order to make a penitential offering to God and to further “fix and deepen [his] sense of sin” (Liddon 3: 95). He arranged for the funds to be procured from a “willing penitent” who, Pusey maintained to all concerned, wished to remain anonymous.

Nowhere is Pusey’s extreme sense of sinfulness more clearly expressed than in a letter to John Keble in September 1846. Striking about this letter is not only the extreme rhetoric, but also the light it casts upon Pusey’s sermons and devotional theology. As John Saward points out in his *Perfect Fools: Folly for Christ’s Sake in Catholic and Orthodox Spirituality*, Pusey’s extreme sense of personal sin corresponds closely with that of Père Jean-Joseph Surin, whose work Pusey had translated and edited in 1844. Surin was a Jesuit Priest in the seventeenth-century who is most famous as an exorcist during the series of possessions at the Ursuline convent in Loudun (famously depicted in Aldous Huxley’s novel *The Devils of Loudun* and John Whitting’s play *The Devils*), but his life was marked afterwards by a twenty-year bout of extreme mental illness with many characteristics of schizophrenia. Saward points out that Pusey was in the midst of translating Surin at the same time that he suffered the loss of his

³ It is worth noting that Pusey’s new found emphasis on the disciplinary value of the Cross in conjunction with the atonement parallels the double movement of Coleridge’s aesthetics discussed in chapter two. The liberatory power of the Romantic sensibility for Coleridge parallels the atonement for Pusey and both moments are tempered by a theological disciplinarity.

daughter and was faced with the imminent secession of Newman, as well as the ecclesiastical disagreements surrounding the founding of the church in Leeds (204). Pusey's explanations for these events (that they are the result of sin) and his melancholic disposition make for a strong resemblance between himself and Surin. Indeed, the rhetoric of his letter to Keble and the writings of Surin are remarkably similar. Both insist on their unsurpassed depravity and sinfulness, though Pusey more often employs images of deformity and disease to represent the state of his soul. As he writes to Keble:

My dear wife's illness first brought to me, what has since been deepened by the review of my past life, how, amid special mercies and guardianship of God, I am scarred all over and seamed with sin, so that I am a monster to myself; I loathe myself; I can feel of myself only like one covered with leprosy from head to foot ... and so I go on, having no such comfort as in good Bp. Andrewes' words, to confess myself 'an unclean worm, a dead dog, a putrid corpse,' and pray Him to heal my leprosy as He did on earth, and to raise me from the dead.... (3: 96-97)

This compares strikingly with Surin's comments in a letter to Père Doni d'Attichy in May 1635: "For three and a half months I have never been without a devil at work beside me.⁴ Things are come to such a pass, permitted by God, I think for my sins..." (cited in Saward 121). And then in a letter to Père Jean Richard in 1655 detailing his experiences during the worst period of his illness:

Although I was not in hell, I felt myself to be as damned as those who were there. That is why my most frightful crime was still to hope to want to try to do good ... When I was seated, I began to accuse myself in this manner, because, quite honestly, all the other sins seemed nothing to me, mere bagatelles, in comparison with that ... And so I confessed as one

⁴ Pusey comments in a sermon that this sense of the presence of the devil ("an almost seen presence of the Evil One") often accompanies those who are being led into the "the deeper ways of the Cross, seasons of darkness, dreariness, disquiet through evil thoughts...." (*Sermons* 192).

who was damned, and not as living man on earth who still had hope. (cited in Saward 125)

According to Liddon, this extreme emphasis on the experience of personal sin is characteristic of those “advanced in holiness of life” (3: 97). For Saward it points out a much neglected aspect of the Catholic Revival in the Church of England during the nineteenth century: the degree to which it was “undergirded by martyrdom, by faithful witness in the face of vilification and mockery, of legal harassment and discrimination, and, as we now see in the case of Pusey, in the face of deep psychological suffering” (207). But for the purposes of reading Pusey’s sermons we should note that throughout them the emphasis on the grievous nature of sin, the need for penitence, and the blessedness of suffering, are recurring tropes. In his first sermon at St. Saviour’s, “Loving penitence”, Pusey preaches on the life of St. Mary Magdalene, the prostitute forgiven by Christ, as the archetype for the penitent. An essential aspect of Pusey’s preaching is the gulf he fixes between the sinful penitent and forgiveness. His tendency is to portray a radical separation between God and the sinner, to bring the auditor or reader almost to the point of despair, and to thereby emphasize more strongly the miraculous charity of God who bridges the gulf through Christ. As he writes in his first sermon concerning the “steps” of penitence:

Our first step then is to contemplate our sins by the sight of His love. Darkness seems blacker when over against the light. *Yet not even thus can we gain contrition or love.* Could we, by any thoughts on God’s mercy, gain love, that would be to convert ourselves. *His* look melted Magdalene’s icy heart, *His* word cast out the seven devils; and would we have the fire of love kindled in us, or the daemons of our sins cast out, we must pray *Him* to give us power to pray, ask for *His* gracious look to bring us to ourselves ... grieve, for love of Him, that we have offended Him, desire to grieve, not for ourselves alone, not so much that we have deserved Hell, not for the glory we have forfeited, not that we are wrecks

of what we might, by His grace, have been, but that we have sinned against Him Who so loved us ... (*Sermons* 15-16; my emphasis).

Pusey's rhetoric makes the soul radically dependent upon God, and even while he discards reasons for our penitence (that we have deserved Hell; that we are wrecks), he is simultaneously asserting that these are indeed the characteristics of our souls, if not the primary motivations for penitence – with a notable resemblance to his letter to Keble cited above.

The penitent and his or her participation in the Cross of Christ also occasions moments of self-referentiality throughout the sermons, in which Pusey holds up the “anonymous penitent” (himself) who built the Church as an image of penitence. In these moments the extremity of Pusey's rhetoric is well evidenced. He employs almost Gothic descriptions of sin and suffering. Speaking anonymously of himself in the first of his sermons, Pusey writes with characteristic vividness:

To-day, then, is a festival of penitence and love. [The penitent] hath, in this, done what he could out of love, imperfect as it must be, to Him Who first loved him; and ye will pray that He Who has this day accepted His offering, will, for our loving Redeemer's sake, accept himself, will bind up the wounds which yet remain, pour into them the austere wine of penitence, and if it seem good to Him, the oil of His consolations, at least the healing Unction of His Spirit, and restore to his soul some portion of the grace and beauty which by sin it lost. (*Sermons* 2)

Though this is not always the case for Pusey, here the “austere wine of penitence” not only precedes consolations but there is no necessary correlation between them. The only thing necessary is penitence. More often, Pusey explicitly identifies suffering as a consolation itself – or rather, not the suffering, but the way in which it writes on the body the marks of Christ's crucifixion: “It were a

dream, then, and contrary to Holy Scripture, to think that we could love the Passion of Christ and not engrave it on our lives” (*Sermons* 176). And as he writes in a sermon entitled “Looking unto Jesus, the means of endurance”, more clearly illustrating his adequation of patient suffering with consolation:

Think not then of evil men, if any crosses come through them, except to bless and pray God for them; yea, love them the more who to thee have been made, by God’s mercy, ministers of good, and have brought to thee, though they knew it not, that most precious token of God’s love, the Cross of Christ . . . as men would welcome and honour the messenger of an earthly prince who brings them word of some honour or distinction of this earth, and give him gifts; so love thou whosoever brings to thee that choicest gift from the King of kings, the healing Cross. (*Sermons* 203)

One could refer to instances *ad infinitum* that present suffering in this light.

As has been said, Pusey undertook to build St. Saviour’s at the instigation of W.F. Hook, for whom it was an ideal opportunity to put to practical test the theories of the Tractarians. For Pusey the idea presented itself as a perfect exercise for a penitent and it was as such that he proceeded with plans to build the Church. His only condition was that the inscription “Ye who enter this holy place, pray for the sinner who built it” be affixed in it (Liddon 2: 468).

Comparatively few churches in the nineteenth-century were built with the express intent of conforming to Tractarian principles. Most Tractarian churches were so under the instruction of clergy sympathetic to the Movement. But as Nigel Yates points out in his brief history St. Saviour’s, it stands as an interesting example of a church

founded on ‘high church principles’ with the purpose of popularising ‘high church practices’. [It] occupied a special place in the history of the Oxford Movement in the north of England; founded by one of the leaders of the movement . . . to serve a deprived, working-class community . . . (1)

St. Saviour's was built in a poor district of Leeds with a rapidly increasing population of mechanics and mill-labourers and the church was in some ways the model upon which the later Anglo-catholic "slum ministry" would be based (Liddon 2: 472).⁵ But the building of the church was accompanied by considerable agitation. The Bishop of the Diocese was hesitant about some of the doctrinal positions of the Tractarians and wanted to ensure that inscriptions, church name and church furnishings would not betray hints of "Romanizing". To this end, Pusey had to change the name of the church to St. Saviour's from Holy Cross, because the Bishop was frightened that he might appear to approve of medieval superstitions pertaining to relics of the true cross. Moreover, on the day of the church's consecration, he refused to proceed unless he could be assured that the person to whom the inscription in the church referred was alive, thereby assuring that he would not be perceived to countenance prayers for the dead (one of the more controversial of the Tractarians' doctrinal positions).

It was in August 1845 that Pusey first approached Hook about the possibility of preaching a series of sermons during the week following the church's consecration. In the previous chapter the emphasis in nineteenth-century homiletics on earnestness and sentiment has been discussed, and it is striking to

⁵ "Slum ministry" refers to the work done by priests and nuns of the Church of England in inner-city parishes. The battle over Ritualism in the Church of England was in large part fought in poor neighbourhoods in the nineteenth century. They were often under the care of highly devoted clergy who saw the inner-city as a barren mission field, abandoned by the Church's establishment. The inner-city was the ideal place to prove the worth of a pastoral style that emphasized the Sacraments and "high" Ritual (which was often seen to be the best means of catechizing the illiterate). Slum ministry became a hallmark of Anglo-catholicism, and in many ways Anglo-catholicism was responsible for "stirring up" the conscience of the Church of England in the latter half of the nineteenth-century. It is worth noting that the alignment of Ritualist parishes and inner-city ministry continues today. See Geoffrey Rowell's *The Vision Glorious*, 116-40, for a brief history of Ritualism and slum ministry.

note the way in which Pusey employs similar terms to describe his vision for the sermons. In a letter to Hook on August 11 he writes:

I thought there might be a course of earnest sermons (more directed to the feelings, perhaps, than on ordinary occasions of regular continued instruction) on solemn subjects ... good must come, one should hope, from earnest stirring sermons, with earnest intercession, at least to some. (2: 486)

And again on August 25 he writes: “My wish is that [the sermons] should be, as perhaps I said, warm, energetic, earnest, with both severity and love, and addressed more to the feelings at the end than sermons generally are ... [preaching] too is a gift of God and a means of grace” (2: 487). With Newman’s secession, however, there were moves made to cancel the series of sermons. Hook suspected Pusey’s fidelity to the Church of England given his close friendship with Newman, and he also suspected Pusey’s reluctance to engage in anti-Roman Catholic polemics (Hook himself was at times rabidly anti-Catholic). In the end, the sermons were delivered, though of the nineteen sermons (only ten of which were written by Pusey) he ended up delivering seventeen. Some, such as Keble, were kept from preaching their sermons due to family illness, and others felt unable to appear in public following Newman’s conversion given the significance of its blow to the Movement. But for Pusey the only reasonable response to Newman’s secession was to continue with the sermons. Writing to Hook on October 16, twelve days before the consecration of the church, he is certain that “increased prayer, and more devoted exertion, are the only remedies of this crisis” (2: 490). Indeed, for Pusey it was profoundly a lack of prayer that occasioned Newman’s leaving. In a letter to the *English Churchman* a week after Newman was received into the Roman Catholic Church, Pusey wonders if it may

not be that “we have forfeited him because there was ... so little love and prayer? And so now, then, in this critical state of our Church, the most perilous crisis which it ever passed, must not our first lesson be increase of prayer?” (2: 461). It is possible to read these comments as a “frame” for Pusey’s sermons at St. Saviour’s. In his Preface to the sermons he writes explicitly about the departure of Newman and even dedicates the sermons to “those severed in the flesh yet united in Him”.⁶ Indeed, Newman’s departure seems to inform Pusey’s intentions for the sermons and also marks the state of mind in which Pusey approached them. Writing about preparations for the sermons, Pusey says:

As the time drew near, trial seemed to hang over the plan. Heavy distress, still more for the Church’s sake than for his own, broke at last suddenly on the writer; and for the first time, he had to go forth to his labour, apart from the friend of above twenty-two years, who was to him as his own soul, with whom had been shared what little he had himself been enabled to do to God’s service in our Church, and whose counsel had been to him for the last twelve years, in every trial, the greatest earthly comfort and stay. Of those also, to whom he looked to assist him in the plan, some who would kindly have shared in it, were hindered ... Still, what was undertaken simply for the Glory of God and the good of souls, it seemed wrong to abandon; and the plan was continued, in trust in Him, to Whom, it was hoped, souls might thereby be won. (*Sermons* ii-iii)

Pusey approached the sermons, then, from a desolate place, bereft of the company of Newman (“who was to him as his own soul”) and of the company of other sympathetic clergy. But as is characteristic of Pusey, this desolation is somehow prophetic of future joy, a joy perceived through prayer and self-sacrifice. So

⁶ Newman’s departure not only affected the sermons delivered by Pusey at St. Saviour’s. It also dramatically affected the first fifteen years of the church’s existence. Amid charges of Romanizing and numerous other pressures, seven of the first twelve vicars and curates of St. Saviour’s followed Newman’s example and joined the Roman Catholic Church. Newman himself received some of them into the Roman communion.

Pusey writes at the end of his Preface, explicitly commenting on Newman's departure again:

It seems hopeless, for the time, that many of us can understand one another. It will be a great gain if ... we censure not one another. There are enemies enough abroad, moral and intellectual, which may gain possession of the citadel while our attention is draw off in another direction ... If we, as Christ's faithful soldiers, are, within and without, in earnest warfare against His enemies, we shall, in the very warfare itself, the armour we bear, His watchword, His gracious help, His love, the more readily recognise those whom He vouchsafes to call 'My friends.' God give us grace more and more to seek Him; so, if we find Him, we shall in Him find each other who shall have sought Him our common Centre; shall in His light and love at length understand one another; shall see in one another the work of His Grace, and love one another in Him, and Him in one another. (*Sermons* viii-ix)

For our further considerations of the sermons below its important to keep in mind Pusey's ability to translate suffering and hardship into a vision of the Divine (as in this passage, where Pusey transfigures the pain of division and misunderstanding in the Church into a vision of unity in Christ). Herein can be traced the lineaments of the dialectic of lack and fulfilment previously mentioned. In passages like these, which abound throughout the sermons, Pusey seems to be writing miniature "Divine Comedies", illustrating an ascent from chaos and confusion (the inferno), through purgative struggle (purgatory), to the Divine vision (paradise and Dante's celestial rose). As Liddon writes concerning Pusey's *Sermons on Solemn Subjects*: "The penitent is conducted from the abyss of humiliation and defilement ... to the Presence Chamber of heaven" (2: 497). The significance of penitential suffering for Pusey's preaching – which for Pusey is participation in the crucifixion of Christ – will be made clear in the following discussion.

Having outlined some of the important contextual influences on Pusey's *Sermons on Solemn Subjects* preached at St. Saviour's, Leeds, I will now turn to consider the sermons themselves, keeping in mind what has been said about Pusey's emphasis on penitence and on the ascent to the Divine.

II. THE *SERMONS ON SOLEMN SUBJECTS*

I have argued that the sermon provides the ideal literary genre in which to examine the vision of the Oxford Movement, a Movement primarily concerned with personal sanctity and devotion. It is an ideal genre because in its aesthetic form meets doctrinal principle and pedagogical intent, thus taking up three central foci of the Catholic Revival in the Church of England (aesthetics, dogma and teaching). In Pusey's sermons we encounter the most articulate expression of aspects of the Movement. The centrality of the Cross, the mystical language, the emphasis on the Sacraments and penitence, are all powerfully presented by Pusey, and in them one can discern the Movement's Coleridgean and Wordsworthian heritage, particularly in Pusey's assertion of the priority of God in the constitution of the human subject and in his discussions of nature as symbolic of the Divine, respectively. And in all of this the peculiar characteristics of the Tractarian aesthetic are present: the doctrines of Reserve, Typology and Analogy.

But it is perhaps the intensity of Pusey's language, his run-on sentences, the tendency to pile image upon image without a clearly discernible meta-structure, that most characterize Pusey's sermons. This has led Yngve Brilioth, in his history of Tractarianism, to refer to Pusey as the "*doctor mysticus*" of the Movement, and Owen Chadwick to write that Pusey's

language is more mystical ... than the language of any other Tractarian, and in its dwelling upon the participation of the Christian in the divinity of Christ, the union of the soul with its Redeemer, can rise to heights of beauty ... Never would you use the word *ecstatic* of the published writings of Keble or Newman ... The word springs naturally to the mind of one reading the sermons of Pusey. (39)

If there is a central theme in the sermons under consideration here, it is certainly the one Chadwick mentions: the soul's participation in Christ, or Christ's indwelling in the soul. What I wish to accomplish in this reading of Pusey's *Sermons on Solemn Subjects* is less an exhaustive reading of the text, than a "diagnostic" one. I will examine the dialectic of lack and fulfilment that characterizes Wordsworth's and Coleridge's incarnational poetics as it is re-articulated in Pusey's preaching. I will also revisit the "three deaths" I outlined in the previous chapter: the death of the word, of the preacher and of the auditor or reader. I will begin, however, with more comments on the main characteristics of Pusey's homilies.

In her "Introductory essay" to *The Evangelical and Oxford Movements*, Elizabeth Jay notes the similarities between the Evangelical revival in the Church of England and the Catholic revival. Both felt that religion "appealed first to the heart", and both wanted to rectify (though in different ways) traditional High Churchmanship (Jay 10). But for the Tractarians there was a limitation in the doctrinal position of the Evangelicals. The Evangelical insistence on the "assurance" of the true believer (that he or she can know his- or herself to be saved), allowed too much subjectivity in the realm of faith. It gave unwarranted scope to the feelings to determine for individuals whether or not they were saved and, according to the Tractarians, led too easily into the same pitfalls that marked rationalism and liberalism – self-contemplation and pride. The Tractarians, on the

other hand, redressed the perceived imbalance in Evangelicalism by emphasizing the objective activities of God that can lead to the reformation of the soul. They insisted that God himself acts for the conversion of souls in and through the ordinances of the Church and its Sacraments, and that Evangelicalism made too much of the individual's decision to "accept Christ" at the disparagement of the Church's divinely ordered guidance and means of grace (Jay 10). Citing Newman's *Lectures on Justification*, Andrew Louth points out this tension: "[Evangelical Protestants] consider that Christ's Sacrifice saves by the mind's contemplating it. This is what they call casting themselves upon Christ ... Surely we ought so to *come* to Christ ... But the question is, in what form and manner He *gives* Himself to us" ("Manhood" 78). Or, as Pusey says more emphatically, "...not the doctrine of the Cross alone, nor Its preaching, nor gazing on It, nor bearing It, but He Himself Who for us hung thereon must impart Its virtue to us" (*Sermons* 181). Nevertheless, Pusey's preaching is stylistically indebted to Evangelicalism and the late eighteenth-century preaching of the Wesleys, with their characteristic Methodist "enthusiasm" that at times manifests itself in Pusey's ecstatic prose.

But if the Tractarians rejected Evangelical claims concerning the personal assurance of salvation, which is to say that they turned their attention away from a simple opposition between the states of regeneracy and unregeneracy (or the predestined and the not-predestined; the elect and the non-elect), precisely this tension remains characteristic of Pusey's preaching. The Tractarians were preoccupied with the process of sanctification, which sees conversion as a life-long activity of prayer and devotion (Jay 12). But Pusey's representation of the process of sanctification (and Yngve Brilioth wonders if this may be true of the

Movement in its entirety) often relies upon a dialectic of assurance/non-assurance for its articulation. As Pusey himself writes in a sermon from the collection *Sermons during the Season from Advent to Whitsuntide*, “There is not safety, brethren, but never to think ourselves safe” (212). Brilioth correctly identifies the fruit of this tension in the Tractarian insistence on the soul’s striving towards God, and especially in Pusey’s emphasis on the role of the will in the Christian life – the “fear and trembling” that must accompany the working-out of one’s salvation, as St. Paul says (257-58). Its worthwhile citing Brilioth’s comments at length:

Should the idea of predestination combined with the denial of the possibility of security ... have contributed to shape this *Via Media* of the religious temperament between the Lutheran confidence in God’s promise accepted by faith, and the Roman security in the *barca di San Pietro*? The characteristic feature of this *Via Media* then would be ... a feeling of unrest, an anxious striving after a maximum as the best possible guarantee for the election of its possessor – a maximum of holiness of living and self-sacrifice, a maximum of doctrine in mystical response to a maximum of life.... (257)

It is perhaps most useful to think of this tension less as one that is bound strictly to the theological categories employed by Brilioth, than in terms of a general tension between lack and fulfilment. I have already suggested that this tension manifests itself in the gulf that Pusey fixes between the sins of the penitent and the promise of forgiveness, in such a way as to forcefully highlight the benevolence of God’s condescension to humanity in Christ.⁷ Constantly tempering such binaries, however, Pusey’s presentation of heaven employs the rhetoric of need *and* satisfaction, impoverishment *and* fulfilment:

⁷ In a sermon included in the *Sermons on Solemn Subjects*, Keble helpfully expresses this tension when he writes: “And try to have the two last words, ‘Come ye blessed of my Father’, and ‘Depart from Me ye cursed,’ forever ringing in your ears, that walking in humble fear and love, you may make sure of the one, and forever be safe from the other” (“Hell” 103).

Where shall be an end of loving, where love is endless, infinite? or of gazing on Beauty Infinite, where that very Beauty by our longing and its Sight shall draw us more into Itself; where is no weariness, no satiety, but a blessed union of thirst and satisfying fullness; where desire shall have no pang or void, and fulness shall but uphold desire; for both shall be Perfect, Unfailing, Love, unfailing through God's Gift, as the Very Essence of God, Who is Love.⁸ (*Sermons* 280-81)

In this vision of Heaven, Pusey employs characteristic rhetorical devices. He layers image upon image in an attempt to articulate a single truth – or, perhaps more appropriately, to persuade the auditor or reader to a single *vision*. What Stanley Fish writes elsewhere concerning St. Augustine is equally applicable to Pusey – that he strives less to “validate propositions” concerning theological principles, than to bring the participating subject to a vision in which the *divisions* occasioned by discursive reasoning are reconciled (41, 75).

Pusey pursues his end through a rhetorical style that is both similar to and diverges from that of other eminent Tractarians. Though he preaches “from the heart and to the heart”, he does not employ the conversational tone favoured by most nineteenth-century preachers. His prose-style, rather, makes it difficult for “readers and listeners alike” to trace the “intellectual lines of the argument” of his sermons; “instead they have to submit themselves to the tenor of thought and feeling which is established as parallel clauses and phrases are piled one upon another to offer different pictures of one truth” (Jay 188). As Jay further points out, Pusey’s use of archaic grammar, syntax and vocabulary, all gesture towards

⁸ Pusey’s comments here bear a striking resemblance to those of the Greek Church Father, St. Gregory of Nyssa, an influential figure for the Oxford Movement. St. Gregory writes: “And this is the real meaning of seeing God: never to have this desire satisfied. But fixing our eyes on those things which help us to see, we must ever keep alive in us the desire to see more and more” (233). And elsewhere: “...for the true vision of God consists rather in this, that the soul that looks up to God never ceases to desire Him” (239).

the “world of Biblical and liturgical translation with which his own work had familiarized him”, while at the same time distancing him from the simplicity of style favoured by many pulpiteers in the nineteenth-century (188). His use of ostensibly abstract terminology, however, by no means undermined the effectiveness of his preaching. On the contrary,

The choice of a style so wholly remote from contemporary speech or prose as a channel for a personally ecstatic vision of God’s mysteries undoubtedly went far to create the sense of timeless spirituality attested to by this listener: ‘He is certainly, to my feelings, more impressive than any one else in the pulpit, though he has not one of the graces of oratory. His discourse is generally a rhapsody, describing, with infinite repetition and accumulateness, the wickedness of sin, the worthlessness of earth, and the blessedness of heaven. He is still as a statue all the time he is uttering it, looks as white as a sheet, and it as monotonous in delivery as possible. While listening to him you do not seem to see and hear a *preacher*, but to have visible before you a most earnest and devout spirit, striving to carry out in this world a high religious theory.’ (Jay 188)

According to this spectator, Pusey’s oratorical peculiarities and use of biblical archaisms align him with the spiritual order and evince an earnestness that lends authority to the spoken word.

The tension that I am outlining in Pusey’s sermons is, in fact, largely responsible for the persuasiveness of Pusey’s preaching. From it he gathers a “rhetorical momentum” characterized by an oscillation between opposing factors in a dialectic. A prime example of this is his 1843 sermon “The Holy Eucharist, a Comfort to the Penitent”. What is striking about this example is not only how it elucidates Pusey’s oratorical style, but that it offers hints concerning the nature of the dialectic of impoverishment/fulfilment that I have been tracing. Simply put, this dialectic finds articulation in a reconciling vision (such as the vision of heaven cited above) inasmuch as, for Pusey, the moment of impoverishment is

“always already” a divine moment since it parallels the crucifixion of Christ. We might extend this argument to Wordsworth’s incarnational poetics, as does David Haney. For Wordsworth, language must be an incarnation of thought, and he fears its lapse into a purely representational discourse that figures words as mere “clothing”. But both of these aspects of language can be accounted for within an incarnational poetics that extends to language the mortality that attended Christ’s incarnation. If words that signify symbolically (*à la* Coleridge) are traced with divine meaning, then words that fail to signify properly (Wordsworth’s “counterspirits”) can be read as moments of mortality – but within the economy of the incarnation (and by extension, the resurrection) these moments refer back to the symbolic. The “failed” word (or the word that dies), then, is laden with meaning. It is helpful to think of the status of the word that fails to signify properly *vis-à-vis* symbolic signification in relation to the penitent’s apparent distance from God in Pusey sermons occasioned by his or her suffering. The penitent’s suffering is simultaneously a sign of God’s infinite proximity inasmuch as it is perceived as conforming to Christ’s suffering. If the heavenly vision is one of participation in the Godhead, then Pusey argues that even in our suffering and sorrow we are already participants therein. Likewise, the word that dies always, in and through that death, gestures towards – even participates in – the plenitude of symbolic signification. This dialectic’s reconciliation, however, is in some sense “negative” – that is, it always relies upon terms of opposition to articulate it, thereby implying a perpetually deferred realization (Pusey’s heaven is “thirst *and* satisfying fulfilment”; Wordsworth’s and Coleridge’s affirmative theorizations are *always* attended by anxieties). But it is important to note how

nothing falls outside this dialectic, especially for Pusey.⁹ Suffering is taken up in the vision of heaven, weakness perfected – the suffering and weakness are not simply superceded, but *transfigured* in Pusey’s vision. As he writes in the 1843 sermon:

Our One Lord is to us, in varied forms, all, yea more than all, His disciples dare ask or think. All are His Life, flowing through all His members, and in all, as it is admitted, effacing death, enlarging life. As blind, He is our Wisdom; as sinful, our Righteousness; as hallowed, our Sanctification; as recovered from Satan, our Redemption; as sick, our Physician; as weak, our Strength; as unclean, our Fountain; as darkness, our Light; as daily fainting, our daily Bread; as dying, Life Eternal; as asleep in Him, our Resurrection. (“Holy” 189)

As every moment of impoverishment becomes an avenue of grace for Pusey, so likewise for an incarnational poetics.

Pusey’s emphasis on the participation of the soul in the life of God is the most significant moment for Pusey’s homiletics, the explication of which demands a return to Fish’s “self-consuming artifacts”, as well as to the Tractarian homiletic theory derived from J.M. Neale in chapter two. As I have suggested, Pusey’s idea of participation in the Godhead begins in penitence (when the life of the penitent is conformed to that of the crucified Christ) and continues in heaven, but always employs a rhetoric of lack and fulfilment. It is noteworthy that Pusey’s and the Tractarian’s vision of God is characterized by a sense of awe and mystery, and that the “realities of religion form a *mysterium tremendum*” for them (Brilioth 216). This characterization inflects the vision of union with God

⁹ Brilioth notes that it is with Pusey that such an intense devotion to the “theology and mysticism of the Cross” first appears in the Movement (249).

expounded by Pusey.¹⁰ Pusey discusses it in terms of God's unimaginable condescension, the extremity of human unworthiness and the magnanimity of God.¹¹ God's willingness to allow human beings to participate in the Divine life constitutes a threshold at which language fails, or at least the language of Pusey's preaching. As he notes in the Preface to the sermons, for the exposition of the great mysteries of the faith he has chosen to rely on the "words and thoughts of holy writers, rather than his own" (*Sermons* iv). And throughout the sermons he characteristically defers to the words of the saints, as when commenting on Christ's assertion that he will dwell with the person who keeps his commandments he writes: "... on so great a mystery I had rather give the comment of the holy Augustine than my own" (*Sermons* 222). But the "lack" in Pusey's preaching is not simply filled by words from the Church Fathers, and here I want to suggest that Pusey's preaching begins to correspond with Fish's theorizations. Rather, for Pusey the enterprise of preaching is plagued with insufficiencies. As Pusey explicitly states:

¹⁰ The doctrine that Pusey relies on for the articulation of this process by which God having become human in Christ allows for human beings to become divine (while maintaining the ontological distinction between the created and the Creator) is called "deification", and its primary expositors are the Greek Church Fathers, most famously in St. Athanasius's dictum "God became man that man might become God". For an exposition of its significance in the Anglican tradition see A.M. Allchin's *Participation in God: A Forgotten Strand in Anglican Tradition* and Andrew Louth's essay "Manhood into God: the Oxford Movement, the Fathers and the Deification of Man". One should note that Allchin's treatment of the issue is insufficiently attentive to the presence of this doctrine in the Prayer Book liturgy of the Anglican Church, and is less "forgotten" or foreign to the English Church than he might lead one to believe. Indeed, one might argue that it is constitutive of Anglican spirituality and devotional theology.

¹¹ It is interesting to note the rhetoric employed by Andrew Louth to describe this process of union with God in his essay. He captures the intensity of the Tractarian vision of God (the *mysterium tremendum*) with his use of terms such as "alarming" and "painful" to describe the process. As he writes: "To receive the fruits of Christ's sacrifice in ourselves is, then, a costly and painful process: as costly and painful as the transformation of our warped and wounded nature into the purity and power of God"; and again, "Alarming, then, and costly and painful, this doctrine of the indwelling Christ, this doctrine of deification!" ("Manhood" 78, 79).

Whoever would meditate, speak, preach, on the Passion of our Lord, thinking that It alone could touch men's consciences, would act, as if man could give himself love, or that unloving hearts must melt at once at the hearing of so great love ... Yet not the doctrine of the Cross alone, nor its preaching, nor gazing on it, nor bearing it, but He Himself Who for us hung thereon must impart Its virtue to us.... (*Sermons* 180; 181)

And again:

My brethren, who might not dwell forever on these words? *and yet I have told you, as yet, nothing of their reality; nor can I tell you*; for what have I been speaking of? the Wisdom, Holiness, Power, Glory, Beauty, Love of God. *And to know these we must see Himself*. The ear cannot catch them; *the tongue cannot speak of them*.... (*Sermons* 269; my emphasis)

For Pusey, language fails, but therein achieves its proper and most effective end.

How language and the sermon achieve this end differs for Fish and Pusey.

As Fish notes, the "weak words" of the human sermon are far from ineffective (69). But as I suggested in the previous chapter, the death of the word for the Tractarians is less a simple gesturing away from itself (or a consumption of itself as with Fish), than a gesturing *into* itself, the word figured as a gateway, or symbol (*à la* Coleridge) for encounter with God. That is to say, the temporality of the word as event is wedded to the eternal image it signifies. Even if it fails to signify adequately (which is to say symbolically), the word of the sermon, by its very poverty, manifests the mysterious condescension of God in the Incarnation, and so participates in the dialectic of incarnational poetics that I have been tracing. As such, Pusey is able to speak of sermons as a means of grace, as quasi-sacramental (Liddon 2: 487). Pusey corroborates this in his final sermon, in which he imbues the very *subjects* of the sermons preached with mystical significance:

The deadliness of sin, the sinner's death, final judgement, eternal woe, penitence, the Cross, the Sight of God, the bliss of Eternity, surely the very names might startle us from our listlessness, and bid us gird ourselves to more devoted service? Are they not the very Voice of Christ to wake the dead? (*Sermons* 342)

If, then, lack and fulfilment characterize the rhetoric of Pusey's sermonizing, they also characterize his homiletic theory, which both disparages the efficaciousness of the sermon, highlighting its insufficiencies, *and* valorizes the mystical presence of Christ in the sermon. Sermons open avenues for the reader or auditor to encounter Christ.

As Pusey emphasizes throughout his sermons, God must *of himself* impart himself to the auditor. For the Tractarians this is achieved principally in two ways: the Sacraments and Scripture. Bound up with these are the two other "deaths" I want to locate in Pusey's sermons: of the preacher and of the auditor. Pusey's account of Scripture in his *Sermons on Solemn Subjects* is striking. It resonates deeply with what has been said of the Tractarian relationship to language thus far, and with Neale's homiletic theory. For Neale, one of the distinguishing features of the great preacher is a familiarity with Scripture in which the very words and images of the Bible become characteristic of the preacher's own vocabulary. Pusey's long and arduous Old Testament studies deeply imbued his written and spoken work with the tenor of Scripture. Of more significance, however, is the way he discusses Scripture in the sermons. For Pusey, Scripture is the means of breaching the wall of sin that separates humanity from God, and he discerns in it a sacramental character. Keble, in a sermon collected in *Sermons on Solemn Subjects* but preached by Pusey, clearly expresses this vision of Scripture when he comments that

every one of the kind words, gracious looks, and most merciful and bountiful actions of our Lord, performed while he was here on earth, *and written for our comfort in the holy Gospels*, becomes a sort of token, or pledge, or *sacrament*, of His perfect absolution and blessing, to be pronounced at the last Day. (“The Last Judgement” 77; my emphasis)

So Scripture contains the promise of grace to come, according to Keble, and communicates this promise through the images of Christ’s life. What is striking, however, is how the images of Christ’s life in Scripture become effective for Pusey precisely through their ability to make *present* the life of Christ and the words of God. This efficacy depends upon their ability to do more than simply conjure past events, in the same sense that the Holy Communion does not simply memorialize the death of Christ. Both make him and his life present in a similar manner: the “materials” of each (language; bread and wine) participate symbolically in the realities they denote. As Pusey writes, Scripture actively pierces the “heavy cloud . . . which man’s sins have spread between him and his God” (*Sermons* 242). Moreover, Scripture is, like the Incarnation, an “unutterable condescension of our God, Who thus deigns to shadow out His love to us sinners under the words of the deepest love which He hath given us” (Pusey 245). Pusey presents Scripture as an inexhaustible mystery, communicating to the faithful the mystery of God’s love. Pusey elevates Scripture above the preacher’s words and gestures towards it as the “spirit which informs them” (Fish 69). As Isaac Williams, the friend of Pusey and fellow Tractarian, writes concerning the relationship of Scripture to the individual: “Holy Scripture holds up to his eyes, as it were in a glass, both his own heart and also the world around him; holds it up to his view as it is in God’s sight” (“Temper” 133). Scripture is figured as an interpretive key. In the mirror of Scripture the divine signification of things is revealed. Scripture is the means of locating God in the world. This view of

Scripture, coupled with the death of the word articulated thus far, entails a second death: of the preacher. As Fish points out, the celebration of Scripture as the discursive form *par excellence* places both the auditor and preacher in subjection to it; and the interpretive power of Scripture, and its manifold significations, acquire a priority over the words of the preacher. Moreover, as in St. Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*, Scripture is revealed as the "spirit" informing the words of the preacher, and the preacher's task is at the same time the "setting forth" of Scripture – Scripture as the beginning and the end of preaching. In this sense Pusey recapitulates the dialectic of orality and literacy discussed in chapter two. Pulpit oratory is always attended by a literary "proof". Scripture guides and confirms the words of the preacher.

The "contemporaneity" of Scripture parallels that given to the structure of the Church year by Neale, and there is an interesting relationship between the two. The intent of the Church year and its various Feasts and Fasts is to reproduce annually, to borrow from Keble, the "kind words and gracious looks" of Christ's life recorded in the Scriptures. In this way, the events of Scripture are actively made present in the life of the Church – they are "incarnated" through the series of commemorations that mark the Christian year. But for this to be effective, according to Neale, the preacher must insist that the events commemorated have as much claim on the emotions of contemporary congregations as on those to whom the events first occurred. This points strikingly to the sacramental and symbolic character both of the words of the preacher (his words stand as gates through which the mysteries of the Church can be entered), and of Scripture (whose images cease to be strictly narrative accounts of past events and become, instead, symbols through which individuals actually and

actively participate in the events detailed). Pusey states this strongly and strikingly in his comments on the Church year. In them he emphasizes its sacramental character and gives it, and by extension the Scriptures, the ability to incorporate the faithful into the life of Christ. He writes:

In the holy season of expectation of His Coming, or His actual Birth in the Flesh, or the blessed austere days of penitence, or the Passion or Resurrection or Ascension, or the Descent of the Holy Ghost, the wonders of old time are again renewed. He Whom we look for again cometh. He is born in the faithful heart which watches and longs for Him; their 'eyes see their salvation;' the Virtue of His Fasting hallows theirs, and shields their soul from temptation; they die anew in His Death; rise in His Resurrection; ascend with Him, from Him receive the Promise of the Father. *Such mysterious efficacy has His Incarnation, that the very seasons of His precious Acts and Sufferings are full of Blessing.* (Sermons 341-42; my emphasis)

This is a significant moment in which the symbolic nature of the Church year and the Scriptures implies that they not simply refer to, but participate in, the mysteries they represent; and like the Sacraments, they extend to people the possibility of participating in those same events.

But Scripture is not the only means by which people may encounter God. Along with it are the Sacraments, and sermons assist individuals' approach to the Divine through their emphasis on the Sacraments.¹² Its worth keeping in mind Keble's comments in response to the centrality of the sermon in Evangelical worship. He argues that the sermon should refer people to the sacraments. More generally, one may say that the Tractarians see the sermon (the preaching of the word) and the Holy Communion (the administration of the Word) as intimately

¹² It should be noted, however, that the Sacraments are always bound to Scripture. The words of institution at the Holy Communion, for example, are necessary for the Sacrament to be effected.

connected with one another. It is perhaps possible to excavate something of this mutuality between the preached word and the administered Word in the Prayer Book Intercessions read by the Priest at Holy Communion services, in which he prays: “And to all thy people give thy heavenly grace, and specially to this congregation here present, that, with meek heart and due reverence, they may *hear* and *receive* thy holy Word” (76; my emphasis). It is possible to read a double signification in the “hear and receive” of this prayer. The congregation is to hear and receive the words of Scripture read in the lessons¹³ as well as expounded in the sermon; and more particularly, the congregation is to *hear* the lessons and sermon, but *receive* the Word in the Sacrament. Pusey no less than the other Tractarians (indeed, perhaps more so) emphasizes the importance of the Sacraments as a means of union with God. Indeed, his rhetoric seems always to be *implying* the Sacraments even when not explicitly mentioning them given its insistence on the condescending moment of Christ in his Incarnation, and on the need for Christ himself to take possession of the soul (hence his concern about the limitations of sermons). And for Pusey, within the economy of his preaching, the indwelling of Christ necessitates a third death: of the auditor. It might be argued that it is at the threshold of the sermon, at the limit where it both makes possible entry into the mysteries of Christ and where it simultaneously acknowledges its own limitations (the sermon as “lack” and “fulfilment”), that the auditor’s death arises. It is, to return to Fish, that moment in the dialectical experience of the sermon at which the auditor or reader is forced to abandon both any misplaced trust in the efficacy of the preached word, and any trust in the competence of him- or herself to actualize a union with God. But unlike Fish, who seems to envision

¹³ There are two Lessons appointed for the Communion service in the Prayer Book. They differ according to the occasion in the Church year.

a single moment of conversion, Pusey offers a vision of conversion without consummation. According to Pusey, conversion is a steady progression of the soul through an infinite number of conversions – and so it is for Coleridge as well (Zemka 65). Increased charity, devotion and prayer all demonstrate the movement of conversion, but without any definite “assurance” of one’s salvation. Conversion is a movement from self-dependency to dependency on God in which the self dies, but is at the same time revived by the claim of Christ on the soul (the condition of possibility for that claim is the eradication of the individual’s conceit of self-sufficiency): “While we trusted in ourselves we went astray” (Pusey, *Sermons* 205). Pusey’s sermons are permeated with images of death and re-birth in Christ. Characteristic of his writing concerning this is his attempt to radically “unwrite” traces of the old-self and to thereby indicate the “newness” of the self possessed by Christ:

In one word, we ... shall see Whom we now see not, and we who shall see, shall be other selves, and have other powers wherewith to see, even His, Whom we shall see, God ... We shall still be, for it is said, He ‘shall be in all;’ all then shall still be: we shall be ourselves and yet shall be other selves; because ‘God shall be All things in us’ ... We shall not cease to be; but God being All things in us, we shall be other selves, and, as St. John says, ‘like Him;’ our powers of mind shall be ours; our substance, ours; but all, full of God ... God shall be All in all, so that in each we can but love God. (*Sermons* 275-77)

The converted soul becomes a symbol of Christ to the world, a participant in the reality he or she attests to. Note that Pusey represents this sacramentally. Selfhood is not obliterated in God, but transfigured. The “material” of the individual is maintained, but perfected by grace (just as the elements in the Holy Communion remain after the consecration, but are perfected by grace).

Having traced the deaths of the word, preacher and auditor/reader in Pusey's sermons, I want to consider briefly Pusey and Tractarian aesthetics. Particularly, I want to note the way in which the Tractarian vision of nature and Analogy is articulated in Pusey's sermons. I have contended thus far that the Tractarian vision of nature, following Wordsworth and Coleridge, "reads" it as a textual site evidencing the hidden mysteries of God. The created world, for Pusey, is a divine alphabet, shadowing forth God's will and purpose, if we could but read his imprint thereon. In the *Sermons on Solemn Subjects*, no less than elsewhere, Pusey pursues this vision of nature and its analogical relationship to, and symbolic participation in, God:

... each blade of grass, each herb of the field, every leaf of every tree, has its own separate history; no two unfold themselves alike; yet thus manifold as are God's workings, and countless His works, all by one viewless harmony join together to set forth their Maker's praise. (331)

In his final sermon of the series he uses vegetative growth and decay as metaphors for the Christian life (339). What is striking about this use is that for Pusey and the Tractarians such analogies are not simply the product of the perceiving mind, or the creative impulse. Rather, God has hidden the meaning of his words in his works, and all of nature speaks implicitly of the mysteries of the faith. Its theological significance inheres in it. The significance of this is best elucidated in a sermon that Isaac Williams contributed to the collection. In it he parallels decay and illness in the natural world with the Cross:

In nature also is God ever speaking to us from the Cross, and inviting to the Cross, but ever covering that His Cross with unspeakable love. What does decay and death and sickness, and 'the whole creation groaning and travailing in pain together,' teach us but the Cross? But in decays of

Autumn and in setting suns, and in pains of all suffering creation, and in sick beds and death, the Cross is blended with loving-kindness, with gleams of beauty, and consolations, and peaceful hopes; and the darkness of night brings forth the unspeakable and hidden glories of the heavens that encircle us, and like love itself, when appearing most dark, embrace and enfold us most distinctly and lovingly. No calm and peace is so exquisite as that which is connected with sickness and affliction; so that the meanest flower after the sick room is, says the poet, as an 'opening Paradise.' For Gethsemane has become to us now in the place of Eden. ("Virtue" 161)

Williams conflates the "lack" of Gethsemane with the plenitude of Eden, recapitulating the dialectic of lack and fulfilment. Gethsemane, the garden of suffering, opens the way to Paradise.

What is most striking about Pusey's use of Analogy is his departure from normal Tractarian use thereof. Pusey's extends his use of Analogy to the poor. I have noted already that St. Saviour's was a model in many ways for nineteenth-century "slum" ministry. For Pusey, however, if his sermons are concerned with preaching the Gospel to the poor in a Church built for the poor (as he notes in his Preface), it is *ultimately* the poor who stand as the greatest religious teachers (*Sermons* i, vi). Pusey extends to the poor the prophetic character of nature and of Scripture, and they become, in a sense, living words of God:

But love of God cannot co-exist with self-love, or want of love to man. And therefore true penitents have ever sought ... to shew love to Christ's poor, in order in them to shew love to Him. We cannot now wash His Feet, nor wipe them with our hair, nor anoint them, but He, when He withdrew His bodily Presence, left us those in whom to minister to Himself. 'The poor ye have always with you.' (*Sermons* 17)

If there are uncomfortable notes of paternalism in Pusey's approach to the poor, it is important to note their subversion. On the one hand, within the economy of Pusey's vision of the world, poverty may have material particularity in the poor,

but every soul is impoverished. To serve the poor, for Pusey, is in a sense to recognize externally the condition of one's own soul. But more importantly, Pusey at times actually displaces the authority of the preached word from himself to the poor, figuring them as archetypal preachers: "... such, though the poorest and most ignorant, with no other gifts of nature, no speech, nor utterance beyond the simple confession of Christ's mercies through the Cross, becomes, by his very being, a preacher of Christ crucified" (*Sermons* 170). And he states it more emphatically elsewhere, extending to the poor the task of converting the world, and making the poor models of the Christian life (much as he represents Christ as the Pattern for our salvation):

If we would see Him in His Sacraments, we must see Him also, wherever He has declared Himself to be, especially in His poor ... Real love to Christ must issue in love to all who are Christ's, and real love to Christ's poor must issue in self-denying acts of love towards them. Casual almsgiving is not Christian charity ... *the poor, rich in faith, have been the converters of the world; and we ..., if we are wise, must seek to be like them*, to empty ourselves, at least, of our abundance; to empty ourselves, rather, of our self-conceit, our notions of station, our costliness of dress, our jewelry, our luxuries, our self-love, even as He ... emptied Himself of the glory which He had with the Father, the Brightness of His Majesty, the worship of the Hosts of Heaven, and made Himself poor, to make us rich. (*Advent* 58-9; my emphasis)

For Pusey, the poor are Sacraments who en-flesh the words of God. Like the Sacraments, God has "declared Himself" to be in them. The sermon strives after identification with the word of God, and is both successful (inasmuch as it allows others to participate in the hidden mysteries of God) and a failure (it must always acknowledge its limitations). The poor, on the other hand, are perfect embodiments of the Word. They are God's own utterances (his declarations, as it were).

Having examined Pusey's *Sermons on Solemn Subjects* and situated them in relation to both the homiletic theory discussed in chapter two and the aesthetic theory of chapter one, it is useful to conclude these thoughts with a return to the initial claim of this thesis concerning the intent of the Oxford Movement. The Oxford Movement was primarily a Movement of devotion which attempted to restore to the Church of England a forgotten, or languishing, tradition of sacramental and devotional theology. The first and last concern of the Tractarians, and particularly of Pusey, was with the health and sanctity of individual souls, and by extension, of the Church. The final reflection on Pusey's sermons must emphasize this aspect of his ministry. Pusey wrote extensively and with great perspicacity on the possible re-union of Christendom.¹⁴ It is striking to note how the theological acumen of these treatises is re-placed in the sermons with a sense of patient waiting-on-God. The theological rigour by which he analyzes the claims of the Roman Catholic Church over against those of the Anglican gives way to a deep and abiding sense that prayer and obedience are the only solutions to the rents in the fabric of the Church (in the same sense in which he wrote to W.F. Hook concerning Newman's departure, that it was the result of a lack of love):

Thus alone, my brethren, may we hope that in doctrine our manifold divisions will cease. They must cease; for, He has said, "God will reveal it unto thee." Not by disputing, not by teaching alone, not by learning, not by reading Holy Scripture only, shalt thou know the truth; but by gaining, through God's grace, a childlike mind; by cleansing the eye of the soul; by obedience. (*Sermons* 322)

¹⁴ Pusey felt deeply the divisions in the Church, a feeling greatly aggravated by the departure of Newman to the Roman communion. He gave much of his time to producing texts outlining the conditions of re-union between the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church, believing that union between the two Catholic bodies of the Western Church would facilitate re-union with the Eastern Orthodox Church.

And herein we find Pusey's final comments in the sermons on language. Language can be properly and improperly employed. To use it properly is to exercise it in works of devotion, such that language is always, as it were, attentive to the very mysteries of God it contains and reveals. This is to speak prayerfully. To use language improperly is to employ it to further dispute and rivalry. The first way is marked by the prints of the Cross. It is at times a patient suffering, a willingness to await clarification and to abide misunderstanding – ultimately, it is contentment with God's "reserved" means of communicating himself to the world. The latter is marked by self-will (Pusey, *Sermons* 322). The former, à la Stanley Fish, embraces the disconfirmation of dialectical experiences that lead to conversion; the latter, the self-validation of rhetorical experiences. And it is the former disposition to language that allows one, according to Pusey, to read in it the mysteries of God. With the former disposition language becomes a Sacrament *in* which we participate. The multiple divisions that arise with discursive reasoning and arguing give way to a vision, in which all points find their proper interpretation, source and meaning:

Words have a different meaning, when tossed to and fro in argument, and when prayed in the Communion of Saints, the voice of the one Dove, moaning to its Lord. The full heart, then, stints not the meaning of the words; thinks not how little they *may* say, but how much; a ray of light falls upon them from above; we stand not without them, as judges, but within them as worshippers; He Who has taught the Church her prayers is present in our souls; and with His 'Blessed Unction from above, Comfort, Life, and Fire of love,' anoints both them and us. Disputing divides, devotion knits in one; for in it we pray to One, through One, by One. (Pusey, *Sermons* 323-24)

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The Romantic discourses of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth have had an abiding influence on nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature. To confirm this one need only refer to the voluminous yearly publications that engage with their work. No less significant, though less well researched, is the importance of their thought for the discourses of nineteenth-century religion, particularly for the Oxford Movement. I have attempted to redress this imbalance in current scholarship by focusing on the importance of British Romanticism for nineteenth-century religion, particularly in the sermons of E.B. Pusey. Uniting Coleridgean and Wordsworthian themes with their study of the early Anglican Divines and the Church Fathers, the Tractarians produced a theological vision primarily concerned with the question of personal and ecclesiastical sanctity. They were indebted to nineteenth-century British Romanticism because it provided a language in which to articulate their sacramental vision of the world. For the Tractarians the entire world is a legible, if mysterious, manifestation of God's will. As they learned from Wordsworth, the natural works of God reveal his mind. And Coleridge's theory of the symbol assisted the articulation of both their sacramental theology and their theory of religious language. The ability of the symbol to mediate between the eternal and the temporal and to indicate the participation of the finite in the infinite suited the Tractarians' desire to extend to religious discourse (Scripture and sermons) the power to effectively communicate God. This was pursued in the second chapter's discussion of Tractarian homiletic theory. Following David Haney's discussion

of William Wordsworth, I have called the Tractarians' aesthetic theory an "incarnational poetics."

But as I explored at length in the second chapter, for a poetics to be properly incarnational it must acknowledge that Christ's incarnation led to his violent death. And in this tension between the word as communicative of God (symbolic signification) and as a dying word (failed symbolic signification), can be discerned a dialectic that informs the aesthetics of Coleridge, Wordsworth and Pusey. I have broadly defined this as a dialectic between lack and fulfilment. In Coleridge and Wordsworth this dialectic is manifested primarily as an anxiety over words that fail to signify properly. If words function symbolically, they are still subject to the vagaries of subjective interpretation. How can orthodox interpretations of Scripture and sermons be ensured, even given a symbolic theory of language? Wordsworth was concerned that language functioned too often as a purely representational discourse, neglecting the traces of the divine that marked it. To temper language's susceptibility to an over abundance of competing interpretations Coleridge increasingly employed theological dogma as a means of circumscribing it. But, as I demonstrated in the third chapter's reading of Pusey's sermons, the dialectic of lack and fulfilment in a properly incarnational poetics can accommodate language's seemingly incommensurable aspects (its symbolic and non-symbolic functions). The moments at which language seems farthest from the idealistic impulse that informs Coleridge's and the Tractarians' theories, is a moment of the word's death. But precisely in this death the word closely conforms to the life of Christ (his crucifixion), which is the poetic's model, and so is re-invested with profound signification. This movement from lack to fulfilment is recapitulated in Pusey's theory of the devotional life, which is a progress from

impoverishment (lack) to holiness (fulfilment). His discussion of the soul's ascent to God continually employs terms such as thirst and satisfaction, hunger and repletion.

Arguably the most important of the Oxford Fathers, Pusey has been consistently overlooked in studies of Tractarian aesthetics, most likely because his involved theological treatises do not readily lend themselves to aesthetic readings and because he did not engage in explicitly aesthetic writing as did the Movement's other leaders. Historians and theologians engaged with Pusey often neglect the influence of nineteenth-century aesthetics on his work (most notably his works on Typology and his sermons). Moreover, the nineteenth-century sermon, though an object of mass consumption throughout the Victorian period, has only rarely been treated as an important literary and aesthetic artifact. Available scholarship is either too brief in its analysis or inattentive to the cultural contexts of sermons. As a genre both "performed" publicly and read privately, the sermon constituted one of the primary literary experiences of the nineteenth century. It was also caught between tensions that have become increasingly important for contemporary literary theory: the relationship between orality and literacy; the ability or inability of texts to communicate interiority; the question of performativity. Focusing on Pusey's *Sermons on Solemn Subjects*, composed and delivered during a period of extreme personal and ecclesiastical upheaval, I have contributed to the body of scholarship that deals with the aesthetics of pulpit oratory in the Victorian age, and have redressed the absence of detailed study of Pusey's homiletics.

This reading of one course of nineteenth-century sermons by E.B. Pusey has articulated the sermons' aesthetic heritage and influence in an attempt to show the

coinherence of theological and aesthetic concerns for both the Romanticism of Wordsworth and Coleridge and the theological vision of the Oxford Movement. Both were concerned with tracing the word of God in the world and with delineating the possibilities and impossibilities of language attesting to God's hidden mysteries. And both affirmed the priority of God in the formation of individual consciousness. They would have concurred with the sentiments of the Anglican priest and poet George Herbert in the poem "The Flower" which articulates the desire to locate God's word in his manifold works: "Thy word is all, if we could spell" (l. 21).