

2013

# Borrowed identity: the Tea Party and the ethos of WEB DuBois' "Preacher"

Pamela Jean Holt  
*Iowa State University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/etd>

 Part of the [African American Studies Commons](#), [Political Science Commons](#), and the [Rhetoric Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Holt, Pamela Jean, "Borrowed identity: the Tea Party and the ethos of WEB DuBois' "Preacher"" (2013). *Graduate Theses and Dissertations*. 13146.  
<https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/etd/13146>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Iowa State University Capstones, Theses and Dissertations at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact [digirep@iastate.edu](mailto:digirep@iastate.edu).

**Borrowed identity: The Tea Party and the ethos of WEB DuBois' "Preacher"**

by

**Pamela Jean Holt**

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
MASTER OF ARTS

Major: Rhetoric, Composition, and Professional Communication

Program of Study Committee:  
Richard Benjamin Crosby, Major Professor  
Jean Goodwin  
John Levis

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

2013

Copyright © Pamela Jean Holt, 2013. All rights reserved.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY.....	6
The Black Preacher, in Particular.....	8
Methodology.....	20
CHAPTER 3: THE TEA PARTY, GLENN BECK, AND RESTORING HONOR.....	25
Glenn Beck, Radio Personality and Tea Party “Leadership”.....	33
CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF GLENN BECK AS PREACHER AT THE “RESTORING HONOR TO AMERICA” RALLY .....	38
The Black Jeremiad.....	42
Beck, the Orator.....	48
Beck, the Idealist.....	52
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS.....	60
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	63

**ABSTRACT**

Drawing on WEB Du Bois' notion of the "Preacher," as defined in *The Souls of Black Folk*, this thesis explores the intersection of this traditionally black community figure with the leadership of the Tea Party. Du Bois's "Preacher," a figure characterized by a multiplicity of powerful leadership roles within the black church community, has been largely absent from rhetorical scholarship. I argue that the ethos of the "Preacher" has lately been appropriated by white, middle class political leaders, including Glenn Beck, Sarah Palin, and Michele Bachmann in an effort to form spiritual, charismatic relationships with their audiences. Through close textual analysis of a representative artifact—namely, Glenn Beck's "Restoring Honor" rally at the Lincoln Memorial—this thesis illuminates these connections and suggests important implications for future criticism.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

During the end of President George W. Bush's second term (and the 2008 Presidential election campaign), there was a housing market crash during which the financial sector of the economy seemed to teeter on the brink of a second Great Depression. Senator John McCain "suspended" his presidential campaign to go to Washington and vote to "bail out" the financial sector with a mammoth infusion of cash called the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP). TARP was intended to prevent the bankruptcy of financial investment houses that had made bad investments predicated on the notion that the United States' boom economy would continue indefinitely. After the election and President Obama had been sworn into office, a second bailout of the financial and automotive sectors was approved, prompting protests in locations as varied as Seattle, Washington, and Fort Meyers, Florida.

A financial reporter, Rick Santelli, let a rant loose from the floor of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, exclaiming, "We're thinking of having a Tea Party, all you capitalists! I'm organizing" (Armey and Kibbe ). With that, the unease and spirit of protest that had been growing was given a name, and the movement began to grow. The Tea Party Movement resulted in demonstrations on Tax Day, the Fourth of July, and other significant dates through 2009 and 2010. There was a Tea Party Express bus tour that wound its way across the country and culminated in a September 12 March on Washington. Although leaders of the growing movement began to emerge by this time,

reporters found the lack of official leadership at the head of a specific organization bothered some (Baker; Barreto et al.; Beck; Fodrowski; Khan “Religious Movement”; “Tea Party Movement”), but people were drawn to Tea Party events nonetheless. Former Vice-Presidential Candidate and Alaska Governor Sarah Palin began showing up and speaking at Tea Party events. Representative Steve King from Iowa began making public appearances in favor of the Tea Party movement. In July of 2010, Congresswoman Michele Bachmann of Minnesota launched and chaired the Tea Party Caucus in the United States House of Representatives.

Glenn Beck rocketed to popularity at about this time as an early evening host of a cable television news commentary show. His style included a wide variety of visual and verbal stunts, ranging from the “slightly weird” (using a chalk board as a prop) to the “incredibly bizarre” (dressing in costumes to make a point) (Gale Biography; Gillis; Stelter and Carter). Despite the protests of Tea Partiers, President Obama’s signature legislation, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), also known as “Obamacare,” passed in March, leaving many protesters feeling as if they had failed in their mission to reign in national debt and spending. Other protesters felt that their freedoms were at stake, insisting that Obamacare would bankrupt a nation already struggling with debt, bailouts, the fall of the housing market, and international financial uncertainty.

Into this climate, Glenn Beck issued his call to rally—not around a particular policy or set of policies, but around a moral ideal. Glenn Beck, a conservative television and radio host known for his apocalyptic predictions of the nation’s future, proposed a march on the capitol. He called his event the Restoring Honor to America Rally, and promised that the event would not be political (828 Press Kit; Stewart). As the time grew closer, the Rally became a fundraiser for the Special Operations Warrior Foundation, a group that “provides full scholarship grants and educational and family counseling to the surviving children of special operations personnel who die in operational or training missions and [offers] immediate financial assistance to severely wounded special operations personnel and their families” (*SpecialOps.org*). In this thesis, I argue that Beck’s actions in this climate identify him as a unique public figure because his goals seem to advance a moral agenda as much as a political agenda. His style mixes religion and politics freely and intentionally, though his political beliefs are frequently criticized as strange, apocalyptic, and out-of-touch. Beck’s insistence on virtuous behavior tends to overshadow his political rhetoric at times, causing his audience to question whether he is interested in politics or preaching. Some journalists saw both Beck and the Tea Party as having confusing intentions where politics and religion are concerned (Gillis; Stelter and Carter), but this thesis will focus only on the rhetoric used by Glenn Beck himself.

The rhetoric Beck uses is unusual for public figures, but not unheard of. Mike Huckabee is another example that leaps to mind as a public figure using this kind of conflated political and religious rhetoric, along with Michele Bachmann and Sarah Palin, who are mentioned later in this document. However, Beck's role is much more visible on this score, making him the best choice for this initial argument regarding the ethos of the Preacher. His conflation of political and religious, moral leadership qualities are reminiscent of a figure first described by WEB DuBois as:

[a] leader, a politician, an orator, a 'boss,' an intriguer, an idealist, --all these he is, and ever, too, the center of a group of men, now twenty, now a thousand in number. The combination of a certain adroitness with deep-seated earnestness, of tact with consummate ability, gave him his preeminence, and helps him maintain it.

The Tea Party movement has received surprisingly little attention from rhetoricians, as has the Preacher described here by DuBois. In this thesis, I argue that the ethos of the "Preacher," while important in the black community and its churches, has lately been appropriated by white, middle class political leaders including Glenn Beck, Sarah Palin, and Michele Bachmann in an effort to form spiritual, charismatic relationships with their audiences. By using the one to analyze the other, we can gain a more complete understanding of both. Through a conceptually oriented analysis of a representative artifact—namely, Glenn Beck's Restoring Honor keynote address at the Lincoln Memorial—this thesis illuminates these connections and suggests important implications for future criticism.

Chapter 2 will explore and define the ethos of the Preacher as first described by WEB Du Bois in his 1903 work, *The Souls of Black Folk*. In addition, Chapter 2 solidifies the unique place of the Preacher in American history so the concept is useful for the analysis that follows in Chapter 4. Before the analysis, however, chapter 3 must first situate the speaker and the artifact. Therefore, Chapter 3 is an exploration of the artifact and its context, including the Tea Party Movement, Glenn Beck, and the Restoring Honor to America Rally.

In Chapter 4, I will offer an applied analysis of the Preacher ethos to Glenn Beck's keynote speech from the Restoring Honor Rally. As I tease out the threads of argument offered by Beck, I compare the activities of the Preacher to those of Beck in his Keynote address at that event. The ethos of the Preacher is embodied by Beck, both in the speech (as observed by others and illustrated within the speech), and in his daily activities and interactions with his audience. Because the Preacher is an ethos, it is evidenced in this particular speech act, but also is necessarily built over the course of time. I will close with my conclusions and suggestions for further study in Chapter 5.

## CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

Before proceeding with a discussion of the ethos of the Preacher, a working definition of *ethos* is necessary. Rhetoricians since Aristotle have considered different appeals, or proofs, that contribute to a speaker's persuasiveness. The big three—logos, pathos, and ethos—are taught in First Year Composition and public speaking courses as central to the planning of a successful persuasive essay or speech. As I have taught these courses, the hardest concept of the three for students to grasp has been ethos. Dale L. Sullivan illustrates the complicated nature of ethos in his article, "The Ethos of Epideictic Encounter," by pointing out that ethos comes from two closely linked ideas, which I will explore in more detail in a moment. The problem lies in the fact that Aristotle's definition is not easily condensed into an efficient, accurate phrase or sentence rhetoricians agree upon. One reason for the confusion regarding the source and definition for ethos is the two very closely related words that are involved in its definition: ethos is both the character (*heythos*) and the habits (*ethos*) of a man (Sullivan). James Jasinski, in his *Sourcebook on Rhetoric*, notes that the field of rhetoric is deeply divided on whether a speaker's ethos is derived from the individual speech act or whether it should be considered to be a part of the speaker's whole person. Aristotle experienced no such conflict because his work regarded persuasion in the public forum and assumed that ethos was built solely within the speech act in the context of that forum.

Because ethos is a notoriously difficult concept to define (Jasinski calls it “at once relatively simple and exceedingly complex”), it has elicited considerable discussion among scholars regarding what is or is not included in the concept. Tita French Baumlin explains that ethos is more than the English Renaissance “sense of a person speaking to other people” (quoting Thomas O. Sloan in her essay “A good (wo)man skilled in speaking”) and using whatever impression is formed during that speech act as an additional appeal. A speaker’s ethos exists as part of his or her character and habits, so “We believe a good man” more readily, says Aristotle (quoted in Sullivan). Although Aristotle’s definition of ethos specifies a particular speech act, Sullivan notes the near homonyms of “heythos,” or character, and “ethos,” or habit, illustrating the intertwining of a speaker’s habits with his or her speech acts. Ethos can be either built up (for example, a car salesman’s knowledge of the vehicle’s specifications) or broken down (a CEO who cannot accurately relate her company’s sales figures) by a speaker’s words and actions because it is a part of the whole existence as a “sovereign individual” (J. Baumlin *xx*), who combines “custom or habit” (Jasinski) and the speech act to build an ethos (Sullivan). Ethos, then, is built in both circumstances—over time, as an audience comes to know the speaker’s habits—and in a particular speech act, as the speaker confirms his or her character as being what the audience believes it to be. In the case of the Preacher, the congregants have an expectation of a particular ethos before a first introduction is made.

## The Black Preacher, in Particular

In Black churches, the ethos of “the Preacher” is built on historical as well as religious foundations. Although I will provide a more detailed definition in the following paragraphs, WEB Du Bois provides the definition I will be using for the initial consideration of the concept. I will use other scholars’ contributions to thicken the concept and develop an understanding of the Preacher’s ethos, but for now, it is important to affirm that Du Bois’ concept of “the Preacher” encompasses multitudes. It is not merely a nominal title given to one who preaches in a church. It is a reflection of a complex, wide-ranging community in the persona of single leader. The small “p” concept of the preacher may seem too common in society to merit extended rhetorical consideration. However, the Preacher I am examining is described by Du Bois as “the *most unique* personality developed by the Negro on American soil” (*Souls*, emphasis added).

The ethos of the Preacher, though originally exclusive to the black community, has recently been successfully adopted by another community. This new Preacher’s community is not black and not inherently religious in nature (though, as I will demonstrate later, American politics often takes a religious color). Because I’m arguing that a largely white, middle class, *political* movement has successfully appropriated this ethos, one may object that if this ethos is available to members of other communities — and especially if Margaret D. Zulick is right in saying that a prophetic ethos is the result

of “social invention” — then Du Bois’ description is not useful for this study. Yet the process of social invention is exactly the process that created space for the figure of the Preacher to exist in the black community. This thesis will argue that the recent social and political climate has created a vacuum for leadership that has been filled by predominately white, middle-class people successfully borrowing this ethos. The Preacher, though varying “according to time and place” (Du Bois), remains a constant figure. He embodies a prophetic ethos in that he is an idealist for the community where he is found. Zulick asserts that “[t]here is no prototype” for the prophetic persona—nor is there a prototype for the Preacher.

He<sup>1</sup> is “a product of social invention,” which is a public and rhetorical act. I will explore this process of social invention further later in this chapter when I look at the historical events that opened the rhetorical space the Preacher occupies. For now, it is important to affirm that the importance of this social production of a prophetic ethos cannot be overlooked.

In order to understand the ethos under discussion, one must approach the notion of the black Preacher by examining the work of scholars who have previously considered the figure. WEB Du Bois first defined the Preacher in his noted work on the

---

<sup>1</sup> It is not my intention to use sexist language in this thesis. I will use the masculine pronoun in speaking about the Preacher because the simple reality is that most small-p and big-P preachers are male, including the subject of my analysis, Glenn Beck.

lives and culture of black Americans, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), in which he discusses many aspects of black culture in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Though there is a wealth of scholarship surrounding *The Souls of Black Folk*, very little consideration has been given to Du Bois' description of "the Preacher." For Du Bois, the Preacher is a figure who is uniquely invested with authority and, as such, plays a central role in the broader black community, even for those who do not attend church<sup>2</sup>. Nevertheless, the place of the "Preacher" as a unique ethos has remained largely unstudied by rhetoricians. Perhaps this omission is the result of the social and scholarly ambivalence that prevailed regarding black cultural institutions until the black consciousness movement of the 1950s and 60s.

Black consciousness was first defined by C. Eric Lincoln in "The Black Church Since Frazier," an essay response to E. Franklin Frazier's *The Negro Church in America* (1974). Lincoln used the term extensively to refer to the birth of a new phase of Black self-consciousness during the 1950s and 1960s, a consciousness larger than any one movement or denomination. Mary R. Sawyer highlights how this self-consciousness

---

<sup>2</sup> Mention should be made of the negative relationship that Du Bois had with European-originating organized religion. Though Du Bois was deeply suspicious and even antagonistic toward organized religion, he respected its place and importance in the black community. His work reflects a deeply religious man, however, and his characterizations of the Preacher have been reiterated by a variety of sources discussed in this thesis.

gave rise to the Black Arts Movement, authors like James Baldwin, the ecumenical Civil Rights Movement, the Nation of Islam, and political activism (e.g., the 'March on Washington' movement). Before the Black community developed this self-consciousness and the self-awareness of the Black community gained broader scholarly notice, however, Du Bois described the "Preacher" in 1903 as:

...the most unique personality developed by the Negro on American soil. A leader, a politician, an orator, a 'boss,' an intriguer, an idealist, --all these he is, and ever, too, the center of a group of men, now twenty, now a thousand in number. The combination of a certain adroitness with deep-seated earnestness, of tact with consummate ability, gave him his preeminence, and helps him maintain it.

We see that, first, the "personality" of the Preacher is one of many "unique personalit[ies]" established by Black Americans. Though other community figures may have used some of these characteristics, only the Preacher has developed this unique blend of leadership characteristics that make him a social, political, and religious leader in the community. Understanding Black leadership as a "blend" of multiple religious and civic roles begins the process of understanding the Preacher ethos. DuBois's definition represents an ethos that allows the Preacher to lead his community and aids him as he persuades his people to achieve individual greatness despite the difficulties each one may face (Resner, qtd. in Minifee).

The "social construction" of ethos Margaret D. Zulick discusses leads us to attempt to locate the source of the space for the Preacher's emergence. The answer lies

in the socio-political climate of the United States in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Nathan O. Hatch's *The Democratization of American Christianity* traces the history of populist religious movements in America, discussing the transition, specifically, from the straight-laced, top-down organizations of the Presbyterian and Anglican churches to the evangelical, democratically organized churches, such as the Baptist and Methodist churches. As the Baptists, Methodists, and other new denominations gained membership, especially in the times of social and political upheaval brought by the Civil War, the struggle for women's rights, and voting rights movements in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the black population—slave and free—saw an explosion of Christian adherents. Hatch's primary discussion is of white democratic church movements, including the Baptist, Disciples of Christ, Methodist, Mormon, and Quaker movements, demonstrates how the democratization factor primarily influenced *who* was allowed to preach and what education was required before an individual was granted that right. The shift from required formal training to a "call" to preach, combined with the social and political emphasis on expanding freedom, opened the path for the Preacher to emerge in the black community.

Charles V. Hamilton, one of the few scholars to take up Du Bois' Preacher concept, argues that the Preacher's place in the community is ensured through this unique ability to preach, to lead, and to assume a role as a reflection of his people. Hamilton points out that the Preacher has "always epitomized" the community he

serves in that “what they were, he reflected most.” As a “super”-reflection of the people he leads, the Preacher’s ethos is a continuous, habitual representation of what the congregants have the potential to be. As the leader of a people longing for freedom, the Preacher took on the role of spokesman against slavery, then of racial oppression at the ballot box and segregation in public life. The Preacher’s place as a leader in his community put him in a place to intercede for his people with those perceived to have greater power (Hamilton). As I have indicated, The Preacher takes on a variety of roles to ensure survival of the community, from the man behind the pulpit to the man running the barbershop on the corner. The Preacher not only leads his own congregation and community, he also acts as intercessor for his people with those who are outside that special group (Hamilton). As the prophets interceded between God and man, thus the Preacher fits with the prophetic ethos advanced in Zulick’s work by interceding between his people and those who are “other”. The prophetic ethos is the space the Preacher fills as he delivers the promises of God and reaffirms the positive relationship between Him and His people.

Du Bois’ interest in the Preacher’s place in the culture of black Americans is not limited to *The Souls of Black Folk* alone, however. In 1903, he edited “The Negro Church: Report of a Social Study made under the Direction of Atlanta University; together with the Proceedings of the Eighth Conference for the Study of the Negro Problems, held at Atlanta University, May 26, 1903” (hereafter, “The Report”), a 212-page treatment of the

then-current situation of black religion in America, which included primarily Christian denominations and a discussion that ranged from 1890 to 1903. Later, as editor of *The Crisis: A Record of the Darker Races*, the official publication of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Persons (NAACP), he compiled an informative treatise on the condition of the main black denominations and their leadership (1912). What these activities reveal is that Du Bois did not hold a merely tangential, combative, or literary interest in the culture and status of black religion. In fact, they reveal that he was an expert on the topic, saw the importance of religion for the black community, and was interested in collaborating with other experts.

One such collaboration is revealed through the work Du Bois did on "The Report." John W. Cromwell, one of the contributors to Du Bois's volume, discusses some of the earliest preachers in the black churches. Cromwell highlights Richard Allen, a leader of the Free African Society. He claims that "From the members of this body came the leaders, almost the organization itself, both of the Bethel Methodist and the St. Thomas Episcopal Churches in the city of Philadelphia." Allen is a perfect example of the Preacher ethos defined by Du Bois, with his success attributed to his "talents as an organizer of the highest order," and his character as "a born leader." Allen is described as "an almost infallible judge of human nature" (Cromwell). He stands as a "leader, a politician, an orator, a 'boss,' an intriguer, an idealist" (Du Bois) who was "actively identified with every forward movement among the colored people, irrespective of

denomination” until his death (Cromwell), which made him “the center of a group of men, now twenty, now a thousand in number” (Du Bois). Richard Allen was not the only member of the black churches’ clergy to assume the ethos of the Preacher, however. Nor was Cromwell the only author to note the importance an impact of a man fulfilling the role.

Cromwell’s discussion in the 1903 “Report” is extended by Henry J. Young’s 1972 discussion of 12 important black preachers in his book *Major Black Religious Leaders: 1755-1940*. The men he discusses range from leaders of rebellions to men whose wish was for their congregants to simply recognize their own greatness as God’s people and right to freedom because of that special relationship. Young’s work features the repeated motif of liberation speech used by many Preachers who were important in the black community as time progressed. Dwight N. Hopkins defines black liberation theology as that which enables oppressed blacks to fulfill their calling to be fully human by being free. “It came out of the effort to affirm God’s positive relation to poor African American people” and serves to transform the personal and systemic power-relations in American society. The specific form used Biblical stories of liberation and were told in a way that allowed hearers to see themselves “in the story,” both as the oppressed and the subsequently freed children of God.

As the preachers in the black populations began to call for a move away from slavery and toward individual and collective responsibility, a theology developed as a

response for those who had the “feeling of being at home but not at home” (Hopkins). That is, they felt as if they had a place in the political and cultural climate, but that the place was not entirely comfortable. The solution that black Preachers were calling for involved the liberation of the people to worship God in their own way. The bodily liberation the Preachers advocated, however, could not come without a spiritual conversion. The conversion experience was important in developing many preachers’ spiritual positions and the experience was often the impetus that caused them to become leaders in their communities. The conversion experience of Richard Allen (the Preacher highlighted in Cromwell) is the first point identified in his life where he “synthesized spiritualization and social transformation” (Young). “Allen’s theological suppositions served as the foundation of his social activism” and helped him to “humanize the inhumanity in America” (Young). The importance of the humanity Allen preached was paramount to developing black liberation theology (Hopkins).

There have been many great, influential, small-p preachers in American religious history. John and Charles Wesley and George Whitefield are names that surface readily in this vein. Despite their national influence, however, their presence in the local community was often limited by their status as itinerant preachers. These men had great impact from their local actions, but then they moved on to another place rather than becoming an ongoing part of the local community’s fabric, eliminating their ability to take on the important ongoing relationship role of the Preacher. Charles V. Hamilton

explains that black preachers often have an extension of their presence in the community because the economic exigencies of the community necessitate taking jobs to support himself and his mission. Hamilton goes on to say, "Indeed, what the Catholic Church and the saloon have been traditionally to Irish-Americans, the church (either Baptist or Methodist) and the barbershop have been to black Americans. In the latter instance, there is the added impact of having only one person serve as leader (proprietor) in both situations." So the Preacher is extended from Sunday worship to daily civil, civic, communal public life with and among his people. As a man with a message from God (Costen), the Preacher is "always looked upon as 'Reverend'," so his daily presence enhances his relationships with God and the community (Hamilton).

Young's work interrogates the importance of the Preacher's position in the community. He questions whether the characteristics that are so essential to the ethos of the Preacher exist elsewhere in the black community or whether they would come to be adopted by others as the black community developed its own schools, legal community, and other public institutions. Hamilton is ambivalent about the prospect. He speculates that the characteristics (including some religious or social leadership) may come to be shared by the other leaders Young discusses, but that they will never gain the preeminence in the community that the black preacher holds. As the institutions that were previously unavailable to blacks opened up, Hamilton suggested in 1972 that the church's decentralization would cause Preachers to lose some of their influence. The

new men who would hold positions of leadership—the lawyers, politicians, storekeepers, deacons—might gain a small contingent, but the Preacher’s position would remain secure because he leads both socially and spiritually. The Preacher’s influence derives partially from his eschatology—his view of the relationship between the present life and the life lived after death. His eschatology depends on the notion that, although men’s souls matter for the afterlife, so do their present circumstances.

One of the leaders highlighted by Young’s work—Nathaniel Paul—illustrates the importance of physical liberation for the physical well-being of the men under his ministry. Paul “did not separate spiritual liberation from physical liberation. He integrated the religious questions with the social questions” (Young). It is worth noting here that Glenn Beck and other de facto leaders of the Tea Party tend to equate what they consider to be excessive government spending and the taxes that come with that spending to be either theft from future generations or current and future bondage. The parallel is important, because it suggests that the Tea Party tends to define its exigencies in ways similar to those of the black religious community. Henry J. Young’s work demonstrates an important feature of Du Bois’ Preacher. Men such as Nathaniel Paul, Richard Allen, Henry Highland Garnet, and Samuel Ringgold Ward equated freedom of the body with freedom of the soul. They served as the “dreamers”—the visionaries—of the black religious community before the Civil War, looking to a time when black men and women could “serve God honestly” (Young). Henry Highland Garnet asserted

that “one cannot be a Christian and a slave at the same time,” while Ward remained “as concerned with the transformation of social, political, economic, and educational phenomena as he was with spirituality.”

While not all Preachers attempted to advance the physical well-being of their flocks, it is clear that this conflation of material conditions, community concerns, and spiritual principles prevailed. One of the leaders whose work is accentuated by Young’s discussion—Nathaniel Paul—illustrates the importance of physical liberation for the spiritual well-being of the men he ministers to. Paul’s “eschatology was this-worldly” and his ministry was “concerned with the totality of man’s existence” (Young). Though it cannot be assumed that the Tea Party attempts to regain freedom for the advancement of spiritual concerns, the keynote address given by Glenn Beck at the Restoring Honor to America Rally performs the same type of blending of spiritual and physical concerns that are observable in the historical Preacher. Paul A. Minifee also describes a “preacher” who “shares his personality” with an audience in order to build his ethos, but Du Bois’ Preacher goes farther by being more than just a multi-tasking minister, he is a “Boss.” That is, he is positioned in a way that allows him to not just minister to his community, but to *lead*, to pull the people along, and to intercede for them in the larger community.

While I have spent considerable time detailing the history and features of the black “Preacher,” I have done so only because these features are relevant to the analysis

that follows. As the next chapter will demonstrate, the rich, spiritually driven, community oriented, and materially concerned contours of the black religious tradition in America are tellingly reflected in the current Tea Party movement. Specifically, the de facto leaders of the Tea Party have demonstrated some remarkable rhetorical similarities to the “Preachers” of the American black church.

This thesis will employ a form of close textual analysis that James Jasinski and Stephanie Houston Grey call “conceptually oriented criticism” to examine how Glenn Beck uses his keynote speech at the Restoring Honor to America Rally to embody the ethos of the Preacher.

### **Methodology**

As the last century unfolded, rhetoricians found themselves discussing the fate and progress of the field of rhetorical study. At the heart of the discussion was the question that has been the source of much rhetorical writing since Alexander Pope’s *Essay on Criticism*: what does rhetoric *do*? The answers to the question have ranged from creating perfectly persuasive speeches to a formulaic analysis of speeches already written or performed. Questions have also arisen regarding the purpose of the analysis conducted. Is the purpose to apply a formula to see whether the speech meets some predetermined measure of excellence?

Several articles attempted to answer these questions over the course of the century, especially beginning in 1965 with Edwin Black’s *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in*

*Method.* The clamor that swelled through the course of the century was reflected on in 1980 by G.P. Mohrmann's "Elegy in a Critical Graveyard." He notes that Black's observation that traditional criticism was falling by the wayside was hardly original—indeed, traditional criticism had hardly been practiced since at least the beginning of the 1960s. Despite Mohrmann's observation that recent history had produced little in the way of traditional criticism, he admitted that the "new" criticism seemed only to be a list of new terms used to disguise traditional practices tied to the five canons of rhetoric. Of nine hundred articles evaluated, Mohrmann claimed "only fifty or sixty qualif[ied] as traditional critiques." The remainder offered what Jim A. Kuypers calls ideological (or concept-oriented) criticism. The new criticism, instead of requiring a rhetorical critic to narcissistically perform for the reader, produces new knowledge—and new theory—for the reader (Kuypers). The new criticism seeks to take an active role in producing knowledge from artifacts rather than simply observing what others have put into them. This second form of criticism is called "Close Textual Analysis," among other things. In essence, close textual analysis allows the rhetor—rather than imposing a theory on the text—to produce a theory from the text by looking closely at the phrases, sentences, and paragraphs that make up discourses, usually in the form of public speeches. Black described this form of criticism as allowing rhetors to "see texts as they really are" (qtd in Jasinski "Status"). The traditional form of criticism required a rhetor to produce a piece of criticism that applied an existing model to a speech,

demonstrating his or her mastery of the method. Rather than being a methodological approach, close textual analysis is a conceptual approach to rhetorical analysis, allowing studies to be related to one another by conceptual framework, rather than the specific method used for the analysis. A close reading does not simply allow a rhetor to look at a text and make a determination of belief about the hidden meaning of the text. Instead, a rhetor “must ground the rhetorical text in a context...[in order to] sustain a balance between the intrinsic and extrinsic dimension of the critical process” (Leff and Sachs).

Clifford Geertz makes an analogy with ethnography, saying that rather than beginning “with a set of observations and attempt[ing]...to subsume them under a governing law, [ethnography]...begins with a set of (presumptive) signifiers and attempts to place them within an intelligible frame” (*The Interpretation of Cultures*). The intelligible frame in rhetoric is made up of the concepts foundational to the study of rhetoric, such as *ethos*, *pathos*, *decorum*, etc., and it is that group of concepts that modern rhetorical practice is based upon. The problem with method-based criticism, according to Robert Hariman, is that formal satisfaction with rhetorical structure causes the artifact to lose touch with larger problems the artifact addresses. Paying attention to those things the artifact addresses in addition to the rhetorical structure of the artifact allows a rhetorical critic a much richer reading of the artifact.

Conceptually-oriented criticism “allow[s] texts...to suggest interesting conceptual questions” to the rhetor (Grey). Those questions are arrived at by vibrating a

concept and an artifact together to produce a deeper understanding of the artifact. Like Close Textual Analysis, Concept-Oriented Criticism achieves its purposes through examining the text in depth to discover the rhetorical forces in a text, recognizing that “consciousness is shaped by a host of social, epistemic, and aesthetic frameworks that mark society.” James Jasinski, in “The Status of Theory and Method in Rhetorical Criticism,” describes the activity of producing conceptually-oriented criticism as proceeding “through a process of abduction which might be thought of as a back and forth tacking movement between text and the concept or concepts that are being investigated simultaneously.”

This thesis searches for a “rhetorical imprint,” defined by Carl R. Burghardt as “an integrated set of rhetorical features.” These features I search for and identify are based on the concept of the Preacher as a separate, distinguishable ethos and vibrated together with the artifact, Glenn Beck’s keynote speech at the Restoring Honor to America Rally from 2010. Conceptually-oriented criticism is the best method for analyzing these two things—an artifact and a concept—because the method allows a critic to take a speech that is not technically “excellent” and derive rhetorical meaning from it. Wrage notes that a particular speaker’s strategies in the particular combination used by the speaker tend to fall from use when the speaker himself passes from speaking, but that the ideas he uses are what continue to be used. Wrage continues, saying that it is the smaller, less rhetorically rich speeches that are overlooked by critics

that often have the longer-reaching impact on public thought. For that reason, Beck's speech, with its seemingly random rambling from point to point and from one aside to another, may not merit the attention of a more traditional method of criticism. It is, however, a powerful speech by a man with a career in public speaking that has not diminished because of his style.

### **CHAPTER 3: THE TEA PARTY, GLENN BECK, AND RESTORING HONOR**

Just as a Preacher is necessary to his community and just as that community provides the space for the Preacher to exist, a political leader requires a community to construct his or her ethos and place as a community icon. The sense of community that is important to a Preacher's following is also important in the case of political movements. In his important work, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, Nathan O. Hatch described the Presbyterian and Anglican churches as unreachable to the common man because of their emphasis on their hierarchical, historical structure, while the democratic tenor of the evangelical denominations such as the Baptists and Methodists, traditions which provided the seed bed for the Black church movement, contributed to their broad popular appeal and success in America. In modern-day America, many people, including the Tea Party supporters described "elected officials as self-centered, irresponsible, and out of touch" with what "most Americans" believe. In each case (the early American religious and modern American political), the separation between the beliefs of the traditional leadership and the individuals they were supposed to be leading were perceived to be so great that populist movements began in response.

In the last decade, two of the movements that have arisen from this political and social distance between the so-called "common" man and the "elite" politicians have been the Tea Party and the Occupy Wall Street movements. Each movement is characterized both by the differences they have with the political class and by the community each builds around its basic beliefs about the role of government in everyday life.

The Tea Party movement's community is often what has drawn new people to join (Zernike). Jennifer Stefano came to the Tea Party movement by accident. After unsuccessfully trying to become involved during the 2008 election campaign, she was left feeling that "No one was representing me," neither the Republicans nor the Democrats. She stumbled onto a Tea Party event in a local park in April of 2009 and found others who had the same concerns about government size and spending that she did. In the interview recorded in Zernike's book, she said, "I don't think ten minutes before I walked to that park I knew what a Tea Party was," she said. But "at that moment, I was like, this is where I belong" (Zernike). Charles C. Lemert's "Defining Non-church Religion" explains how a political movement can be a religion led by Preachers, as defined in the previous chapter. "A religion is to be found where persons take it for granted that their own ethos corresponds to the meaning of the cosmos," he writes. In this case, Stefano's beliefs about the way her political cosmos (America) works altered her habits (attempts to be involved) with regard to representative government. Stefano is not unique in this form of political religion. A close observation of the Tea Party Movement's history will demonstrate how the Tea Party's supporters equate their beliefs with the ultimate meaning of America.

The Tea Party emerged in early 2009 as a response to the impending passing of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (aka "Obamacare"), the housing market crash, and the bank bailouts (TARP, which was a product of George W. Bush's presidency, and subsequent infusions of cash into the economy by Barack Obama's administration). Individuals and small groups began setting up protests against "out-of-control spending" (Armey and Kibbe; Bentley;

Donatelli; Zernike) in various cities, including Fort Meyers, Florida and Seattle, Washington (Armev and Kibbe; Zernike). These groups and individuals doing the organizing were apparently independent of one another, but it quickly became apparent that a grassroots movement was emerging. A financial reporter for CNBC, Rick Santelli, gave the movement its name by exclaiming, "It's time for another Tea Party... We're thinking of having a Chicago Tea Party in July, all you capitalists. I'm organizing" (Armev and Kibbe).

While Santelli was busy organizing his big Tea Party, other financial and political reporters expressed a lack of surprise at the "counter-reaction" the Tea Party represented, saying that the Obama Administration had simply misunderstood the meaning of the 2008 election, reading it as a mandate for more spending and programs "when all voters were really saying was that they were dissatisfied with George W. Bush" (Fodrowski). The Administration's actions following the 2008 election produced a situation in which an unhappy electorate felt powerless to change what the government was doing in response to the continuing financial crisis, but needed a way to express their frustration. The answer became the organization of rallies and protests. The Tea Party offered one option for protesters, beginning early in 2009. Occupy Wall Street offered another option beginning in 2011. The 2010 Multi-State Survey of Race & Politics found in February and March of 2010 that about 63 million adult Americans "strongly approve[d]" of the Tea Party and approximately 300 thousand had officially joined a Tea Party organization (Barreto *et al*; Parker). Considering that the movement was still only about a year old, and not yet at the height of its popularity (that came in November, when Tea Party candidates won a significant number of contested seats in the

House of Representatives (Fodrowski), such a high approval and participation rate seems significant. By comparison, Occupy Wall Street, the other recent major protest movement, didn't manage to maintain even a public presence for more than about five and a half months (Enten). The most that could be said for the impact of the Occupy Movement in October of 2011 (the year of its inception) was that it had gotten "the issue of economic opportunity" on the political agenda for the 2012 election season (Cohen); but by May of 2012, pollsters were "not even bother[ing] to survey Americans on their views" of the movement (Enten).

Kate Zernike, a reporter for *The New York Times* dismissed those early days of Tea Party popularity in her 2009 book *Boiling Mad: Inside Tea Party America*, because the demographics of the people at the protests didn't fit the usual profile for an American revolutionary movement. She claimed that the Tea Party's appeal for "[o]lder people like those in the audience" was only a response "to the patriotism inherent in the talk of 'liberty'." In addition, she believed, the youth involvement in Tea Party organizations was likely only a reaction to the success of liberal-leaning organizations like MoveOn.org. She argued that the young Tea Partiers' adoption of the leftist organizational strategies and the adoption of the movement by older people was nothing more than an unsustainable "May-to-September marriage of convenience" for the movement. The problem was, according to Zernike, that the Tea Party did nothing more than reflect "the confusion of a country that was more dependent than ever on government but at the same time more distrustful of it." Despite Zernike's claims, however, the movement continued to grow.

As the movement grew, a Taxpayer March on Washington was organized for September 12, 2009, and saw a turnout of at least 87,000 (Markman; “Tea Party Movement”). This September 12 Taxpayer March on Washington followed in the footsteps of other great Marches on Washington, such as Martin Luther King’s March in 1963, in which civil rights activists demanded equal opportunity under the law for black people, and Louis Farrakhan’s Million Man March where Black men were encouraged to “stand up and accept responsibility for all that goes on in the black family” (Boyer). The September 12 March mimicked other marches with specific demands from the government, including the return of individual rights and reduced government interference in everyday life, such as the healthcare decisions made by individuals (FOXNews.com). In addition, the September 12 march encouraged individuals to take more responsibility for their own lives and families.

It is important to note that the great marches led by black leaders were examples of their embodiment of the Preacher ethos. In each case, the leaders used their appeal as communal figures to draw men and women to the nation’s capital to make claims for freedom and redemption. In the case of Martin Luther King’s March, the demand was that the American government should intercede on behalf of blacks so they could attain the American promise of equality. King’s “I Have a Dream” speech, given at the March on Washington, conflated politics and religion in the style of the Preacher, while using the Black jeremiadic form—a sermon form in use by American Preachers since Frederick Douglass that adapts the classic jeremiad to condemn white hypocrisy, pointing to the unequal treatment or racism present and promising redemption with repentance (Howard-Pitney “Wars”; “Enduring”). I will discuss this genre in

greater detail in the following section. For now, however, it is sufficient to affirm that Farrakhan's Million Man March used the traditional jeremiadic form to insist that black men should stop relying on the government, seeing the ongoing governmental intervention in their lives as a problem rather than a solution to the inequalities faced by blacks (Boyer). In each case, the black leaders were embodying the ethos of the Preacher as they each used their "consummate" abilities as a "leader, a politician, an orator, [and] a 'boss,'" to guide their people to a better life.

The Tea Party Movement's leaders use the same abilities as the Preacher to guide decisions and actions that are intended to improve the lives of Americans. The Tea Party is usually identified as a sect of the Republican Party, but an April 2010 *New York Times*/CBS Poll showed Democrats and Independents to be about 41% of people who consider themselves supporters of the Tea Party Movement—and believers in what Matt Kibbe wrote was Americans' "genetic opposition to socialism" (Armev and Kibbe). The Reason Foundation's *Reason.TV* went to the September 12 March on Washington and created a *YouTube* segment of interviews to see who the kinds of people that went might be. Many of the interviewees identified themselves as politically "independent," even though one protester followed his claim by saying, "I turned in my Republican card" ("Tea Party Confidential").

As a movement, the Tea Party has struck a chord with a "disaffected" group of voters who mainly identify as Republicans—or former Republicans (Donatelli; Zernike)—but the message also has resonated with those who identify themselves as Independent and Democratic voters, who make up more than 40% of the Tea Party's membership. The message of the Tea

Party Movement has been simple: cut spending, eliminate the deficit, and reduce the government's infringement on personal liberties—specifically by keeping the government out of healthcare decisions (Zernike). They were, as Foster and Smith say, struggling “against the forces, or structures of” excessive government intervention in their lives. The Tea Party's beginnings were the result of individuals deciding that “Enough [was] enough” (Armey and Kibbe) and seeking out like-minded individuals to share the protest. In fact, even authors who disapprove of the Tea Party movement, such as Kate Zernike, author of *Boiling Mad: Inside Tea Party America*, pointed out that many of the Tea Party movement's activists “had been drawn to the Tea Party movement for its patriotism, for the sense of community.”

The influence of the rhetoric used by the de facto leadership, then, is very important. Zernike says that the appeal of the Tea Party to a broad audience is the result of “the patriotism inherent in the talk of ‘liberty’ and the pledge to be more faithful to the intentions of the Founding Fathers.” She disparagingly compares the recruitment and education efforts of the Tea Party with “religious zeal.” Despite the implication that the Tea Party is merely a response to politics as a religious pursuit, the survey Zernike's book is based on found that Tea Partiers were only 11% more likely than the general population to attend church on a weekly basis, and most did not consider themselves to be evangelical or born-again Christians. This lack of distinct difference in religiosity from the general population allows us to entertain another reason for the Tea Party's popular appeal: the adoption of the Preacher ethos by the leaders of the loosely connected organizations that now form the movement. I will explore and support this claim through analysis in the following chapter, but for now it is important to affirm that

the success of the Tea Party cannot be reduced entirely to some nebulous assumptions about the religious character or political ideology of what is in fact a rather diverse group.

Zernike's pejorative characterizations of the Tea Partiers notwithstanding, the "religious zeal" Tea Partiers show for their cause adds to the sense of community felt by those who participate in the Tea Party's events. The Libertarian-leaning Reason Foundation's Nick Gillespie began his interviews with people at the September 12 March by saying, "We weren't sure whether we would run into 50 people from a Reason [Foundation] happy hour or an actual nationwide movement" ("Tea Party Confidential"). The results of Gillespie's informal survey indicated a nationwide movement, as the people in attendance were from all over the country, from California to Tennessee to Ohio and Indiana. Another of the movement's organizations, FreedomWorks, intentionally builds a sense of community. Adam Brandon, FreedomWorks' press secretary, said that they "want people to think, when you join FreedomWorks, you're joining a community—this is fun, man, we like each other" (Zernike). This sense of community, of people in the trenches together fighting for a good cause opens a space for the Preacher to begin developing a presence.

The national appeal of the movement would seem to indicate powerful centralized leadership, but the Tea Party claims to have no "leaders"—that is, they have no "man in charge" that can be spoken to, reviled, or asked to account for the goals or policies of the organization. According to Armev and Kibbe, the Tea Party Movement is a "movement of ideas, not leaders". The ideas that formed the movement—especially the spirit of protest against the policies the politically powerful were trying to accomplish—had reporters wondering

whether the 2010 election results would be anything more than a “potent source of volunteers, activists and contributors” (Fodrowski). However, a number of *de facto* leaders rose through the ranks of the Tea Party, including politicians such as Sarah Palin, Marco Rubio, Steve King, and radio personalities such as Mark Williams, Roger Hedgecock, and Glenn Beck. These leaders embody the ethos of the Preacher. Du Bois’ description is apt when considering these public figures; each is “a leader, a politician, an orator, a ‘boss,’ an intriguer, an idealist” in their own right. Through their organizing activities and constant availability to their Tea Party communities, each of these leaders connect to the community on a long-term, intimate basis. Because of the limitations of time and space associated with a study of this type, I have chosen only one of these leaders for analysis here.

### **Glenn Beck, Radio Personality and Tea Party “Leadership”**

Glenn Beck makes for an ideal rhetorical artifact for a number of reasons. Beck has served as a voice of the “disaffected voters” that Frank Donatelli of *The Washington Times* identified as participants in the Tea Party Movement’s protests. Zernike credits Beck with being a “well-connected supporter” of the Tea Party movement who “brought the message of the Tea Party” to the public. Through his regular television and radio programs, publications, online Beck University, and public appearances, Beck has built a trust with his audience that Charlie Gillis of *Macleans* compared to that of the “most trusted newscasters,” of past and present, including Tom Brokaw and Dan Rather. This trust factor can’t be ignored when considering Beck’s relationship with the Tea Party Movement, nor can the factor of a relationship built over time be ignored.

According to Charles V. Hamilton, a congregant in a black church will cite the pastor in everyday conversation, use what he has said to settle disputes, tell others what he has done for them, all because of the ongoing relationship between the Preacher and the congregation. There is a “feeling of trust and mutual loyalty” between the Preacher and his people, and this is what we see when we observe the relationship Beck has with his audience. Some readers may object that Beck’s audience is constantly shifting, but for evidence of the audience’s consistency, consider that his audience today is more trackable than ever before because the audience is made up of subscribers to his online television station, *GBTV.com*, which was estimated to have 230 thousand paying subscriptions before going live in August 2011 (Shaw). Before the Restoring Honor Rally, his FOX News audience was estimated to be 10 times that size, in addition to his radio audience. By contrast, others in the de facto leadership of the Tea Party, such as Sarah Palin, only have regular contact with their audiences when they make public appearances at rallies that are usually organized by others.

Beck’s connections to his audience go beyond a simple broadcaster-listener relationship, however. Beck reaches to his audience—his “congregation”—as a common man who also has struggled with the demons he discusses (*GALE Biography*). Beck’s identification of himself as flawed has helped his listeners relate to him. His openness about his history as a drug addict and alcoholic leaves his audience feeling that he is a man with nothing to hide, who can be trusted. His television, Internet, and radio presences contribute to his success as an author, and the relationship’s many points of connection make Beck accessible, quotable, and present in daily life. His continual, growing media presence and financial acuity also has led to observers

positively comparing him to Oprah Winfrey (Coppins; Del Ray). This “consummate ability” in business and the relationship with an audience are two more places where it can be seen that Beck is adopting the ethos of the Preacher.

Beck is overtly religious in his appeals to his audience, as well. The costumes he wore on his television appearances on FOX News were designed to invoke both the traditionally religious and America’s politically religious characters, ranging from George Washington (whom he even invoked in his 2012 book titled *Being George Washington*) to Moses. Washington and Moses then “speak” through Beck, applying the themes that Beck has introduced as himself.

Despite vocal opposition to the idea that the group has “leaders,” some public figures have emerged as “leadership” of the Tea Party. Of the Tea Party’s *de facto* leaders, Glenn Beck is a logical choice for rhetorical consideration. Beck has a self-named radio program and a subscription-based internet television station, *GBTV* (which has over 230,000 subscribers), with both mediums reaching a national—yet intimate—audience on a daily basis rather than just at special events as many of the other leaders do (Del Ray). Beck’s connection to his audience exists in his radio and television popularity, as well as his efforts with populist events such as the “Restoring Honor to America Rally” he organized in 2010. Other major Tea Party figures also have adopted the Preacher ethos, such as Sarah Palin, who came from near anonymity as governor of Alaska to wide recognition on the national stage as John McCain’s Vice Presidential

running mate. She has since written books, gone on book signing and speaking tours, and been the subject of a reality television program.

Michele Bachmann also came from near obscurity. She was the first female Republican representative from Minnesota to be elected to the US House of Representatives. According to her campaign rhetoric, she has “small-town roots,” coming from Eastern Iowa. She very quickly gained notoriety in the House by creating the Tea Party Caucus, then running in the Republican Presidential Primary in 2011. A *Washington Times* article titled “Something Just Tells Me to Follow Her” speaks to the seemingly inexplicable draw of Michele Bachmann. Her populist rhetoric combines religion, personal responsibility, and political beliefs to imitate the rhetoric used by Preachers since the days of slavery. Bachmann and the other leaders of the movement use this ethos to be “the center of a group of men, now twenty, now a thousand in number” (Du Bois *Souls*). Bachmann uses “[t]he combination of a certain adroitness with deep-seated earnestness, of tact with consummate ability,” to maintain her position of leadership. Bachmann, Palin, and Beck have successfully incorporated this conflation of religion and politics to embody the ethos of the Preacher.

Neither of these women nor their male Tea Party counterparts, however, seems to have gained the same popularity, recognition, and access to “the people” as Glenn Beck has. Although Palin, Bachmann, and others are nationally recognized as leading speakers for the movement, have a strong impact on the Tea Party’s rhetoric, and are

often found at Tea Party events, they don't have the same daily impact as Beck. He represents a "sinner," one who has been redeemed from a life of drugs and alcohol to become—because of his rhetoric and persona—a widely recognized and respected public figure. His story mirrors the values claimed by the members of the Tea Party movement, which is a key to his popularity, but he's also very vocal about his political and religious views, even when they diverge from those of the Tea Party.

In Chapter 4, I will explore these views further, particularly as they relate to Beck's employment of the Preacher ethos, by vibrating Beck's keynote speech at the Restoring Honor to America Rally together with the concept. This vibration will allow us both to thicken our understanding of the ethos of the Preacher and to examine the central claim of this thesis—that at least some of the Tea Party's success can be attributed to the employment of the Preacher ethos.

## **CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF GLENN BECK AS PREACHER AT THE “RESTORING HONOR TO AMERICA” RALLY**

In chapter 2, I provided a detailed definition of the “Preacher,” and in chapter 3, I provided the context for the artifact to be examined in this chapter, Glenn Beck’s Restoring Honor to America Rally. In this Chapter, I will identify key features of Beck’s keynote address and use conceptually-oriented criticism to discover whether Beck effectively appropriates the ethos of the Preacher. The analysis is organized by first providing a more detailed context for the event, second, providing a more detailed discussion of the “black jeremiad” and its role in the Preacher ethos, and finally, considering Beck’s inhabitation of some of the Preacher’s roles as established by DuBois.

By 2010, the Tea Party had developed a high level of visibility on the national stage. Following the April 15 Tax Day Tea Parties and the September 12 March on Washington the year before, there was a sense among Tea Partiers that more needed to be done to object to government spending and increasing government debt. The fight to prevent the passage of “Obamacare” was over, the spending deficits faced by the country were growing, and the demonstrators had experienced a perpetual feeling of being left behind by the actions and attitudes of those in Congress and the White House (Donatelli). Glenn Beck and other super-conservative commentators were gaining listenership on the radio and viewership on TV with their messages of reigning in the

spending of the political elites<sup>3</sup>. In this climate, Glenn Beck decided to organize a “non-political, non-partisan” rally on the National Mall in Washington, DC (Press Kit). The rally was intended to bring the nation to a place of repentance and remind attendees that the most important way they could effect changes in Washington was to lead lives of honor at home and to offer support to men and women in the military, who are assumed to always lead lives of honor. Without this socio-political climate, Beck’s status as a Preacher would not be possible. In other words, it is the same kind of socio-political unrest that gave DuBois’ Preachers a stable cultural authority and allowed new Preachers an opportunity to emerge.

The Preacher’s rise to prominence has been attributed to his importance in bridging transitional periods—from Africa to America, slavery to freedom, political outsider to full citizen—for people whose lives have become chaotic. Beck, Palin, and others have fulfilled this role for Americans (especially Conservatives) faced with overwhelming changes in the socio-political landscape. The fall of financial and housing markets combined with the passing of—for Tea Partiers—the fear-inducing healthcare reform bill acted as the disruption, while the responding Tea Party movement offered

---

<sup>3</sup> See Barreto, *et al.* for more on the Tea Party’s sense of being outsiders in the American political landscape, including an analysis of their status as members of a dominant group losing their place in the society. Barreto, *et al.* makes the claim that Tea Partiers are reacting as “pseudo-conservatives” rather than “real” conservatives based on an analysis of websites and Glenn Beck’s radio program segments.

the stability they needed. Because Tea Partiers see themselves as existing in a continuum that begins with the Revolutionary era rather than as a new perspective, the stability comes from the ideas that the group promotes rather than from the name of the movement. In fact, most Tea Partiers consider themselves to have either retained their original party affiliation, whether that affiliation was Republican, Democrat, or Independent (Zernike). The nearly half of supporters who retained their original non-Republican affiliation create the space that allows participants to continue to deny that the “Tea Party” is a political party rather than a movement.

The Restoring Honor Rally’s scheduling for the 47<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King’s March on Washington and “I Have a Dream” speech caused some critics to cite Beck for disrespecting the great man’s achievements (e.g., Stewart, Zernike). Sarah Palin, a vocal supporter of the Tea Party, insists that events like Beck’s Restoring Honor Rally honor King—even when those events are on the anniversary of his most memorable speech. She writes that at the time of Martin Luther King’s March, “We weren’t [to a place of racial equality] yet, but the fact that his dream was coming closer to a reality made us so proud to be Americans. It made us want that dream for ourselves...[W]hat made Dr. King a great and effective leader was that he appealed to our better angels” (*America By Heart*). Beck’s Rally follows the same kind of motivational principle as King and Farrakhan’s rallies, in that all three called for redemption. This is an important feature of the Preacher as he seeks to encourage his

flock to be better than they are. Palin goes on to say that King's famous speech discussed the character and the meaning of each American's creed. Beck, while embodying the ethos of the Preacher, tried to avoid divisive politics as part of his Restoring Honor Rally's advertising, being quick to assert that the rally was offered as a "non-political and non-partisan event" (Press Kit), yet the call for public redemption lent the Rally an overtly religious tone, and the Tea Party is often regarded as a religious movement.

Charles C. Lemert's "Defining Non-church religion" establishes that when characteristics of religion find their way into public practice, they create churches out of traditionally non-religious sectors of society. Lemert situates non-church religion by pointing out that "the first and *necessary component* of a religion [is] that it manifest itself in observable characterizations of social order" (emphasis original). He continues by offering a complete definition: "A religion is to be found where persons take it for granted that their own ethos corresponds to the meaning of the cosmos." If we take the cosmos to be the United States, and politics as the ethical outlook, we see that the Tea Party movement represents a religion. The people involved in the movement certainly see their political beliefs (smaller government, reduced spending, greater freedom, and closer adherence to the intentions of the Founding Fathers) as related to a cosmic order established by the Puritans and the Founders.

Even without this supplementary definition of the Tea Party as a religious movement, the Restoring Honor to America Rally was unambiguously religious, both because of the messages of the speakers and because a point was made of including the explicit support of at least 240 ministers from the world's major religions. Beck worked to make the Rally an opportunity for Americans to turn "our face back to the values and principles that made us great" (Press Kit). This isn't the first March on Washington that had religious aims. Martin Luther King's March is noted today for the jeremiadic sermon that he gave that day, and Louis Farrakhan's Million Man March is remembered for its appeals to black men to participate in a "day of atonement," a distinctly religious notion. Beck's rally was likewise organized around distinctly spiritual and ethical appeals.

### **The Black Jeremiad**

The tone of Beck's discourse mimics the jeremiad that is common in American public discourse. "We as individuals," he says, "must be good so America can be great." Sacvan Bercovitch defined the American jeremiad in his book of the same name as "a ritual designed to join social criticism to spiritual renewal, public to private identity..." The public, civil sermons that make up the American jeremiad identify a sin in the society, identify that sin as the cause of problems the society faces, and offer a chance at renewal if the society will repent and, as Beck puts it, "be good" (Keynote). The American jeremiadic form was developed by the Puritans, and was intended to

correct the sin of the society by correcting the individuals, promising that America would achieve “ultimate success” by fulfilling God’s mission for the country (Bercovitch). David Howard-Pitney identifies the source of the American jeremiadic form to have originated in the notion that “American Puritans interpreted their calamities...as confirmation of their chosenness (sic)” (“Wars”).

The black church community has adopted and used the jeremiad in a unique way since the fight for abolition of slavery. The black jeremiad is “a valuable tool for protesting not just slavery, but *all* forms of American racial injustice” (Howard-Pitney “Enduring”), including slavery, segregation, and the other social ills that beset black America. As the Preacher ethos was developed through the existence of social circumstances on American soil, so also did the black jeremiad. It allowed the Preacher to address the ills besetting the congregation and place the blame on those believed to be causing the problems. Beck’s adaptation of the black jeremiad places the cause of the national debt crisis squarely on the irresponsible actions of the political leadership—moving the blame from whites to politicians.

It is Beck’s expertise at using this unique form of jeremiad that also allows him to draw on the history he shares with the audience, embodying the ethos of the Preacher. The Preacher’s origination in the culture of slavery and forced servitude makes the

Biblical story of Moses a significant shared myth for the Preacher and his audience<sup>4</sup>. Beck capitalizes on that theme, both by using Moses and by discussing the history of America's liberators—the Founders and Abraham Lincoln. The theme of his speech, in fact, is one of Restoring—not Honor, as the event's advertising suggests—but Liberty and Freedom, the rhetorical keys to the Tea Party's success as a movement. The embodiment of the Tea Party's core values allows Beck to “reflect” the audience—to be what they are, but more so, as the Preacher himself is described by Hamilton (see chapter 2). Beck reminds his audience of the latent potential they hold for freedom by saying:

It happens the same way. It has since the burning bush, Moses, freedom, and then they forget. They wander until they remember that God is the answer. He always has been and then they begin to trust. Do you know what kind of trust there must have been if you were in bondage in ancient Egypt, and you were crying out to the Almighty, send us, send us someone to free us? And a man shows up with a stick. Don't you think they said, "You got to be kidding me?" The All Powerful, the Almighty and he sends a man slow of speech with a stick. But look what that stick and that man did.

Have trust in the Lord and recognize that Moses and Abraham Lincoln and George Washington, they were men. They were just like you. They just picked up their stick.

---

<sup>4</sup> The Black theology of liberation I discussed early in this thesis is important to note here. Beck lays the blame for the problems he discusses on the political class, but he also employs liberation theology to engage the promise of a better future if the problems are dealt with in the manner he prescribes.

Beck not only asks the community to remember the shared history, enhancing the sense of community felt as all nod to acknowledge their memory of the same things, he also uses a narrative that allows the members of the audience to embody the disbelief of the Israelites as they considered Moses's call to join him in the wilderness. "You got to be kidding me?" he asks, and as he asks, the audience is allowed to consider their own leader—he isn't particularly eloquent nor is his delivery the exalted delivery they are accustomed to for public speakers. By allowing the audience to assume the role of the enslaved Israelites, Beck employs the theology of the Preacher as liberator (e.g., Richard Allen, Nathaniel Paul, Henry Highland Garnet, Samuel Ringgold Ward), and the audience's trust is reaffirmed.

The Tea Party, as I have shown, conflates politics and religion, and Beck is no exception. For him, there is no separation of the two. The place where the meeting is taking place is "hallowed," the call to freedom is like that of Moses, the audience is "asleep" just as the disciples were in the Garden of Gethsemane and their "spirit is willing" and "flesh is weak," just as the disciples' were. Beck's refusal to separate religion and politics provides the opportunity for him to issue a "non-political, non-partisan" call to action for his audience. Rather than coming to the altar, however, the audience is urged to "pick up your stick," allowing them to also adopt the Mosaic role of the suffering leader. This particular metaphor also underscores Beck's appropriation of ethos as a Preacher in the black tradition. The notion of picking up "your stick" is

grounded implicitly the relationship between Preacher and audience. Beck's call is not for an abstract spiritual atonement, but it is an injunction for participation in culture and community. More to the point, it is an image that blends spiritual purification with social action, a way of seeing the world as an amalgam of spheres, just as Beck presents himself as an amalgam of leaders.

Beck's goal, then, is to enhance the community's sense of a shared existence, history, and purpose vis a vis the ills and opportunities of present-day society. He does this by quoting shared history, historical documents, and referring to Scripture. The first of these quotations comes from the Lincoln Memorial, the steps of which he is standing on as he makes this speech.

The words are alive. Our documents, our most famous speeches are American scripture and they are alive today just as any other scripture is. It speaks to us from the past. If I may share with you the Gettysburg Address...

Beck continues by quoting the entirety of the Gettysburg Address, interrupting only for a note on the composition of *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*, which was crafted in the same place as the "I Have a Dream" speech that was given on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial and where Beck was staying during preparations for the Restoring Honor Rally. The quotation of this significant piece of American speechwriting allows Beck to use the ethos of the Preacher to offer an eternal promise—even when using others' words (in this case, Abraham Lincoln's), the Preacher's message is one of eternal results. Beck's use of the Gettysburg Address allows him to use the community experience of a

shared national history to offer that promise to his audience. It is not eternal life in heaven or a better life in a promised land that he promises, however; instead, he offers an eternal existence—through the same promise made by Lincoln—for the nation the audience members share.

I invite you today to go in and read The Second Inaugural. Abraham Lincoln found God in the scars of Gettysburg. He was baptized and gave the Second Inaugural. He looked to God and set men free. America awakens again.

Gettysburg serves as a type for Beck. The freedom from oppression his movement seeks (for the Tea Party rallied around cries of “No taxation without representation” and “Don’t tread on me”<sup>5</sup>) was granted to the slaves by Lincoln, and is now demanded by the Tea Party. The Tea Party must also “look to God and set men free” because Lincoln did. Martin Luther King did. And it is time for the people in the audience to stand and take the role of emancipators both in their own lives and on the political scene. The conflation of religion and politics so typical to the Preacher’s message is brought forward here. The Tea Party’s rallying cries and the historical record do not end their influence here, however. Beck continues:

---

<sup>5</sup> This anachronism is intentional. The rallying cries of the Tea Party are from the Revolution rather than the Civil War. However, this blend of Revolutionary and Civil War ideas serves to enhance the continuum that members of the Tea Party see themselves living in.

It happens the same way. It has since the burning bush, Moses, freedom, and then they forget. They wander until they remember that God is the answer. He always has been and then they begin to trust.

The slave narrative—the narrative that opened the space for the Preacher to exist on American soil—rises again. Beck takes the role of Moses as he stands before his people and reminds them that they can have freedom, if only they will trust God to get them out of their bondage.

The admixture of religious appeals and perceptual historical stability allows Beck to combine these Biblical images with shared historical perspective to create a promise of national salvation, using the altered black jeremiad and liberation theology to embody the ethos of the Preacher as orator. In the remaining paragraphs, I consider Beck's discourse according to the various roles established by DuBois. My purpose in doing so is partly to show how Beck inhabits each role, but I also want to underscore how fluid these roles are. The Preacher, after all, is not just a leader who can move from one role to the next, inhabiting each one discretely and strategically. The Preacher is also a leader who can inhabit all of these roles at once, thus creating a new identity almost entirely.

### **Beck, the Orator**

One of the Preacher's defining characteristics is that he is an orator. In addition to his sermons having layers of meaning, he also spends his time speaking in a way that is enjoyable to listen to. Not only did Beck stand and give his oration without notes,

pacing across the stage (AmericanRhetoric.com) and speaking into a hands-free microphone, he engaged in an oratorical style that invokes the multiple-layers of meaning employed by black preachers, as previously demonstrated in Cone, Evans, Hatch, and Pipes. Beck says:

We are standing amongst giants and in between [is] the Reflecting Pool. Why? Is it so we can say wow, look how dirty it is? No, it's not just to reflect the monument. It is intended for us to reflect...on what that man meant and those men meant and the man who stood down on those stairs and gave his life for everyone's right to have a dream....That's what the reflection is all about.

As he speaks, Beck points to the monuments that are reflected in the pool, the places where the people he refers to stood, and reminds the audience overtly that reflection is both literal and figurative, as the "giants" were. Literally, the memorials can be seen in the Reflecting Pool and onlookers can also see themselves. Figuratively, there is the comparison of oneself to the monumental figure of Lincoln and the thought process necessary for a complete experience of the place. Beck provides an example of what reflection should produce, telling the story of George Washington.

Washington asked, "Have I not yet done enough for my country?" He closed the door. He reflected, mounted his horse and gave yet another part of his life, because it was the right thing to do.

Beck uses Washington's decision to return to service as the reason that the audience members should choose to imitate a Biblical hero's response.

Beck continues to embody the Preacher ethos by imitating the Black American preaching style, which involves the use of Biblical stories in such a way that the

audience identifies themselves as embodying the roles of the Biblical characters (Cone; Evans; Hamilton; Hatch; Pipes). Beck adapts this style, beginning with American heroes rather than Biblical, though he relates the story and the heroes to the people in attendance:

Do you know what kind of trust there must have been if you were in bondage in ancient Egypt, and you were crying out to the Almighty, send us, send us someone to free us? And a man shows up with a stick. Don't you think they said, "You got to be kidding me?" The All Powerful. The Almighty. And he sends a man slow of speech with a stick. But look what that stick and that man did. Have trust in the Lord and recognize that Moses and Abraham Lincoln and George Washington, they were men. They were just like you. They just picked up their stick.

The eloquent retelling of Washington's decision to attend the Constitutional Convention allows Beck to use the florid phrasing of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, "have I not yet done enough," then to contrast that with the modern phrasing, "You got to be kidding me?" This contrast makes the decision to imitate the people of another time seem natural. The anachronistic juxtaposition makes the audience feel that their decision to continue to act with honor in the public sphere is exactly what God would have them do in order to rectify the problems the country faces. This continued use of black liberation theology imitates the style of the black preacher, in addition to the adopted ethos. As the audience acts on the exhortations of the Preacher, they take Moses' mantle, bringing their own anachronisms into daily life.

It is not only the auditors who have erred in their previous lethargy, however. Nor is it only the President and Democrat politicians who have stumbled into naïve

misapprehension regarding the country's policies. Beck doesn't give room for error among Conservative politicians, either. The blame for the out-of-control debt and spending should be shared equally, Beck says. "[God] has been sending us wake up call, after wake up call, after wake up call. And it has been through the Republicans and the Democrats. It's all of us, all of us." After invoking the Old Testament prophet, Moses, Beck offers an oblique reference to the Hebrew nation's errors—they were only reawakened to honor when a prophet would come forward. The orator lays out only as much in his message as is necessary—the omission of the recounting of Israelite history again reminds the audience of the shared historical perspective and of the warning Beck offers. He compares the "sleep" of the American people to that of the apostles on the night Jesus was taken by the Jews before His crucifixion. No more is needed. The reminder is enough. The audience knows what happened when the apostles finally woke up. Beck's use of Jesus' wakeup call reminds the audience of more similarities to another American who embodied the ethos of the Preacher.

Beck's use of the Preacher ethos offers a new insight into the way that Martin Luther King, Jr. embodied the role of the Preacher. In his last Sunday sermon, "Remaining Awake through a Great Revolution," King deliberated about Rip Van Winkle, the man who slept through a revolution. Van Winkle, he says, fell asleep with King George III on the wall of the tavern and woke up with George Washington's picture hanging there. "One of the great liabilities of life is that all too many people

find themselves living amid a great period of social change, and yet they fail to develop the new attitudes, the new mental responses, that the new situation demands. They end up sleeping through a revolution” (Congressional Record). King offers, as both a big “P” and a small “p” Preacher, the call to the audience in the form of a literary narrative. King uses a narrative that the audience can relate to in order to offer the auditors a comfortable place to occupy in order to do the difficult thing. Rather than sleep through a revolution like Rip Van Winkle (King), the audience should take the role of Moses, who “picked up his stick” (Beck). The Preacher, as a combined leader, orator, “Boss,” asks the audience to reflect and repent through the use of the American jeremiad in order to fix what ails the community (Du Bois). It is the use of the ethos of the Preacher that gives both men a place to begin speaking in order to revive the sleeping community’s sensibilities so the people can restore the community to a more orderly, honorable, and righteous place. The ability to use the particular oratorical style I have described here is essential for the Preacher to imagine his community as an ideal place of order, honor, and greater righteousness. Clearly, Beck’s rhetorical style is designed with these same ends in mind.

### **Beck, the Idealist**

In his famous speech, “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop,” Martin Luther King Jr. offers the scenario in which he can live in any period of history. He replies by tracing the world’s history and finishes by saying:

Strangely enough, I would turn to the Almighty, and say, 'If you allow me to live just a few years in the second half of the 20th century, I will be happy.' Now that's a strange statement to make, because the world is all messed up. The nation is sick. Trouble is in the land; confusion all around. That's a strange statement. But I know, somehow, that only when it is dark enough can you see the stars. And I see God working in this period of the twentieth century in a way that men, in some strange way, are responding.

As one who is intimately acquainted with the trouble of the nation, King offers up encouragement that the people can be "better than they are." This theme of betterment is consistent with the jeremiadic qualities of the Preacher ethos as I have described it. Accordingly, a major theme of Beck's speech is encouraging the "church" to be "better than we've allowed ourselves to become." He's saying that the members of his "congregation" are no different than their heroes—they just have to make the decision to not be held back by whatever struggles they face, including the hatred that seems to pervade American politics. "The media will tell you that there was [sic] only a bunch of Tea Partiers" at the Restoring Honor to America Rally. Beck counters this notion with examples of the variety of religious and political leaders who went to stand on the stage in solidarity at the event. The answer to hatred, according to Beck, is honor and integrity and a dream to go sustain men moving into the future. The symbolic representation of that honor is "[picking] up your stick." Beck's place as the Preacher allows him to remind the listeners of the dreams of the past that have come true and the dreams that are currently being pursued, in addition to the dreams he has for the people. "We went West and then we went up. We're going down into the oceans. The

time to explore is changing.” Hatred, according to Beck the Preacher, is what will keep the audience from growing and achieving greater dreams. Beck, then, like all jeremiadic rhetors, is pursuing an ideal.

His goals are not modest. One dream Beck holds is for men and women to stand up and “change the world. And I share with you an equal testimony, that man or woman is you. You make the difference. Do not stand and look to someone else. Look to yourself.” Beck stands as an example to his audience on this count. Beck visited an international group of Tea Party groups early in 2012 and was interviewed about it on *The O’Reilly Factor*. When asked whether he was the leader of the International Tea Party, Beck said, “No. I’m just a -- I’m a dad and a guy who believes in what I say, and I’m tired of waiting for somebody to lead.” During the keynote speech, Beck’s encouragement was that people do exactly what he’s been doing. “Pick up your stick and stand.” He reminds the audience that they don’t need to be great political figures to do what needs doing to redeem the nation.

What is it Abraham Lincoln, the American Indian, Frederick Douglass, the moonshot, the pioneers...have that you don’t have? The answer is nothing. They are exactly like you. They just did the hard thing...We as individuals must be good so America can be great. As a Preacher, it is essential that Beck lead in the way he is asking the audience to step forward. Beck does an especially strong imitation of Martin Luther King’s rhetoric here.

In his last Sunday sermon, King said,

It is an unhappy truth that racism is a way of life for the vast majority of white Americans... —the disease of racism permeates and poisons a whole body politic...Something positive must be done. Everyone must share in the guilt as individuals and as institutions. The government must certainly share the guilt; individuals must share the guilt; even the church must share the guilt.

King's message points out that even preachers in the church were not innocent of spreading "the disease of racism" and asserted throughout his public career that the preachers should be the leaders in the changes he advocated. In the same way, Beck offers to intercede for his audience with the men and women of the government. As he organized this event, then provided a keynote address, Beck offers himself as an intercessory figure who will help resolve the conflict between Governmental services and spending. The Tea Party's people feel they have been downtrodden because the community's values have been rejected by those in political office. Those rejections have come in the form of legislation and increased governmental control, including the passage of massive bailouts for banks, car companies, and investment houses. His daily radio program also does some of this work, but the Restoring Honor to America Rally allows Beck and his "congregation" to occupy the same physical space while he affirms the community's values and provides a format for them to both express their awareness of the injustices they are facing as well as the beliefs that the group shares.

The prophetic ethos of the Preacher that Beck is occupying allows him to bring up the scars of past sins (like slavery, war, racism, and profligate spending) that the

group would rather not face, but he offers a way for them to acknowledge the scars without having them cast a pall of shame over the group. The scars of the American people can “crush us or redeem us,” Beck says, affirming that the audience knows that the scars exist, but that they can be used for the good of those present. Lincoln’s Second Inaugural is cited as an important moment in American history when the scars of the nation could have crushed or redeemed America as a nation. The Second Inaugural represented Lincoln’s choice of redemption.

“Here Abraham Lincoln, a giant of an American,” Lincoln serves as both a literal giant—the statue Beck stands before is 19 feet tall (if Lincoln were standing, he’d be 28 feet tall)—and a figurative giant as the president who abolished slavery and presided over the Civil War. Lincoln’s presence is not the only one of a man who was a “giant,” the nearby Washington Monument is also a memorial to a giant. “If you look at the Washington Monument, alone, tall, straight...you might notice its scars, but nobody talks about that.” The scars are important—even to the Washington Memorial—but they are there as a subtext to the real meaning of the Memorial’s existence. “We see what it stands for” because what it stands for—the sacrifices of a Founding Father of our nation—are more important than the faults he had and more important than the scars that the nation overcame after the Civil War to finish building the Monument. As the Preacher goes through his discussion of the struggles of his people, he cannot help but invoke the importance of God as ultimately the one who needs to be praised. As on

the Washington Monument, “*Laus Deo,*” praise be to God, the gathering acknowledges His greatness in the midst of the troubles they are experiencing.

Although Beck dwells on the theme of giants, this aside mimics the black preaching style that is less organized than white, mainline Protestant sermons usually are. One reporter said that the style was messy and hard-to-follow (Khan). Beck has several of these asides and, as expected, they are strewn throughout his discourse rather than in one long aside. But it is important to acknowledge that within the messiness of the discourse, Beck is calling forth a powerful ideal. By directing his audience’s attention to the monuments, he both visually and verbally imposes a model for his listeners, and it is a model that resides in a kind of timeless perfection. Americans may not be perfect in and of themselves, but they can achieve a perfection through imitation of these ideals.

The Tea Party movement is engaged in a war for the history of America—not to preserve it, but to establish their interpretation of that history. Palin quotes Clinton, JFK, Reagan, Obama, and others in her book, *America by Heart*, along with interpretations of what those quotes mean. Beck offers his own interpretation of history by asking,

So, what did these great people give their lives for? They gave it for the American experiment. And that's what this is, an experiment. It's not just a country. It's an idea that man can rule himself. That's the American experiment.

The Tea Party Movement holds this particular phrasing as foundational. One book on the subject even refers to “the battle over American history” because the author

(Lepore) regards the Tea Party's view of history as completely outside the norm. The Tea Party's objection to the passage and implementation of so-called "healthcare reform" was not just about what they believed was irresponsible spending; it was also based on the notion that the passage of this legislation restricted Americans' freedom to choose their own way—restricting man's ability to rule himself and inhibiting the path to a personal and communal ideal. This phrasing is extended in Tea Party discourse to mean that men *ought* to be allowed to rule themselves because the right is an essential gift from God. They often make this argument by quoting the Declaration of Independence: "that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." As a Preacher, Beck calls forth this spiritual connection to the Founding Generation's beliefs through his phrasing that echoes the writings of those men, as well as the concentration on the physical representations commemorating the Founders and the others memorialized at the national mall (Lincoln, veterans, etc.)

America's honor comes from its people choosing to do "the right thing" and stand against evil, as the WWII and Vietnam generations did. Beck cites the "right thing to do" nearly as often as he cites God's will in things. For Beck and the Tea Party, God's will is roughly equivalent to the will of the Founding Fathers, and the Founding Fathers' will is based on the will of God. In effect, the actions of the Founders serve as parables for us to live by as the prophets used parables to convince the people to turn

back to God. It is turning back that is the ultimate ideal Beck offers his audience.

Turning back to God is the only way that the audience will be able to revive a national honor and the only way that the audience will be able to achieve the dream of “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness” that was originally offered by the Founders.

While the roles of orator and idealist have been given their own headings, Beck also inhabits the other characteristics of the Preacher in his keynote speech and daily interactions with his audience. I have discussed, in the context of these two roles, how he also takes on the role of a boss and incorporates the political sphere into his ongoing, habitual talk with his audience. His leadership has been discussed at length as a reason for examining him in this role of the Preacher. Therefore, I end my analysis of Beck’s speech here, and turn to the implications of the Preacher ethos for rhetors.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Christianity isn't new to American politics, nor is American history devoid of popular religious figures. Men (and sometimes women) have moved freely and frequently between the church house and City Hall. One example is William Jennings Bryan, who declared, "All the ills from which America suffers can be traced back to the teaching of evolution. It would be better to destroy every other book ever written, and save just the first three verses of Genesis" (qtd. in Kater). Bryan led the charge in the famed Scopes "Monkey Trial" because he believed that "social problems are essentially moral—that is to say, religious" (qtd. in Kater). This conflation of religious and civic values is the same pattern that can be seen in the Tea Party movement.

The importance of these conflated values cannot be underestimated. A speaker's intention for a private commitment to be made public is an important component to the ethical practice of rhetoric. Weisser defines public rhetoric "as that where speakers not only address matters commonly identified to be of public concern, but also make 'through their sustained discursive contestation' issues formerly considered private 'a matter of common concern'" (qtd in Couture). We can see this definition borne out in Beck's discourse as he spends much of his time on air discussing personal religious beliefs and those of his listening audience.

Classical friendship required the exclusion of those outside the group of one's familiars and the limitation of the number of friends one claimed, for fear that there

would not be enough love to continue too many close friendships effectively — the one with too many friends was regarded to be of loose morals. In contrast, a democracy requires friendship's definition to be broadened and allowing those outside the close circle of familiars to judge the beliefs of the group. Those on the outside see those beliefs by making those private commitments a "public responsibility to others who [...] have the potential to be our friends" (Couture). Beck makes this kind of commitment by making the special relationship he has with his "private" audience of Tea Partiers public, both in his radio show and at the Restoring Honor to America Rally. The Rally's opening comes through the pre-event publicity, the event's public broadcast, and the post-event availability of information.

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s March on Washington in 1963 saw an approximate 300,000 people, and Louis Farrakhan's Million Man March in 1996 had, according to Hopkins, over two million African American men pledging "to work for atonement, accountability, and individual and collective" freedom. In each case, the rhetoric was intended to build on the liberation theology the Preachers had come to embody in their everyday lives. Blacks in America have "consistently voted in higher numbers than other racial and ethnic groups, often providing the winning margins in presidential elections," so it makes sense that political groups would desire — either consciously or unconsciously — to imitate the rhetoric of the Preacher in an effort to gain similar results. Beck's Rally had wildly variant estimations of how many people attended, ranging

from 300,000 to 800,000, which adds credence to the notion that the Tea Party's politicians are using a new kind of rhetoric to draw in their crowds and "convert" others to their system of belief.

This thesis has examined the ethos of the Preacher, beginning with Du Bois' definition and moving through other respected scholars such as Young and Hamilton. I have used Close Textual Analysis to determine whether the Tea Party politicians, specifically Glenn Beck in his keynote address at the Restoring Honor to America Rally, have adopted that ethos and whether that ethos may be responsible for some of the Tea Party's public success. Scholars may wish to examine whether this analysis holds up by using CTA on other texts from the Tea Party or other political movements to see whether the ethos of the Preach can truly be adopted by those outside the black church community.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Armey, Dick and Matt Kibbe. *Give Us Liberty: A Tea Party Manifesto*. New York: William Morrow. 2011. Print.
- Aspinall, Neal. "Restoring Honor 8-28-10." 2010.
- Attendees, September 12 March on Washington. *Tea Party Confidential: Live From the September 12 Taxpayer March on Washington*. Nick Gillespie. Washington, D.C.: The Reason Foundation, 12 September 2009. Video. 17 March 2012. <<http://youtu.be/VzUrv3SdJdo>>.
- Baker, Brent. "ABC Hypes NAACP Indictment of Tea Party as Racist, a Smear the Network Stoked." 13 July 2010. *Newsbusters*. Blog. 5 April 2012. <<http://newsbusters.org/blogs/brent-baker/2010/07/13/abc-hypes-naacp-indictment-tea-party-racist-smear-network-stoked>>.
- Barreto, Matt A., et al. "The Tea Party in the Age of Obama: Mainstream Conservatism or Out-Group Anxiety?" *Political Power and Social Theory* 2011. Web. 12 March 2012. <[http://faculty.washington.edu/mbarreto/papers/teaparty\\_PPST.pdf](http://faculty.washington.edu/mbarreto/papers/teaparty_PPST.pdf)>.
- Baumlin, James S. "Introduction: Positioning Ethos in Historical and Contemporary Theory." *Ethos: New Essays in Rhetorical Criticism*. Ed. James S. Baumlin and Tita French Baumlin. Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1994. Print.
- Baumlin, Tita French. "A Good (Wo)man Speaking Well." *Ethos: New Essays in Rhetorical and Critical Theory*. Ed. James S. Baumlin and Tita French Baumlin. Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1994. 213-28. Print.
- Beck, Glenn. "Reigniting the Tea Party Movement" with Bill O'Reilley. The O'Reilley Factor. FoxNews. 21 February 2012. Web. 26 March 2012. <<http://video.foxnews.com/v/1465132857001/reigniting-the-tea-party-movement>>.
- Bentley, Chuck. "Don't feed the lazy." *The Washington Times* 18 November 2011. Web. 15 March 2012. <[www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/nov/18/dont-feed-the-lazy/print](http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/nov/18/dont-feed-the-lazy/print)>.
- Bercovitch, Sacvan. *The American Jeremiad*. The University of Wisconsin Press, 1978. Print.

- Black, Edwin. *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method*. New York: Macmillan, 1965, rpt.: Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978.
- Boyer, Edward J. "'Million Man March' draws support and concerns: Rally: Many back the focus on males, but others remain wary." *Los Angeles Times* 16 September 1995. Web.
- Browne, Stephen Howard. "Close Textual Analysis: Approaches and Applications." *Rhetorical Criticism: Perspectives in Action*. Ed. Jim A. Kuypers. n.d. 63-76.
- Burghardt, Carl R. "Discovering Rhetorical Imprints: La Follette, 'Iago,' and the Melodramatic Scenario." *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 71 (1985); 441-2, 449.
- Cohen, Steven. "The Political Impact of Occupy Wall Street." *HuffingtonPost.com*. 17 Oct 2011. Accessed 12 Oct 2012. <[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/steven-cohen/the-political-impact-of-o\\_b\\_1015253.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/steven-cohen/the-political-impact-of-o_b_1015253.html)>
- Cone, James H. "Black Consciousness and the Black Church: A Historical-Theological Interpretation." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 387 (1970): 49-55. Document.
- . "Black Theology in American Religion." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 53.4 (1985): 755-771. Web. 23 January 2012. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1464274>>.
- Coppins, McKay. "The Next Oprah?" *The Daily Beast* 27 September 2011. Web. 17 February 2012.
- Costen, Melva Wilson. *African American Christian Worship*. 2nd. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007. Print.
- Couture, Barbara. "Private Commitments and Public Rhetoric: Implications for Ethical Practice." *Rhetorical Agendas: Political, Ethical, Spiritual*. Ed. Patricia Bizzell. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2006. 123-9. Print.
- Del Ray, Jason. "Glenn Beck Tries to Build a Multimedia Network of His Own." *Advertising Age* 7 November 2011. Web.
- Donatelli, Frank. "GOP has edge with disaffected voters." *The Washington Times* 2 November 2011. Web.

- Enten, Harry J. "Occupy Wall Street's People Power Loses Popularity." *The Guardian*. 14 May 2012. Accessed 12 Oct 2012.  
<<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2012/may/14/occupy-wall-street-people-power-popularity>>
- Evans, Tony. *Oneness Embraced: Through the Eyes of Tony Evans*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2011. Print.
- Fodrowski, Samantha. "Professor Assesses Tea Party's Impact." *news@Northeastern* 5 October 2010. Web.
- Foster, Charles R, and Fred Smith. *Black Religious Experience: Conversations on Double Consciousness and the Work of Grant Shockley*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003. Print.
- FOXNews.com. "Tea Party Express Takes Washington by Storm." 12 September 2009. FOXNews.com. Web. 5 April 2012.  
<<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2009/09/12/tea-party-express-takes-washington-storm/>>.
- Gale Biography in Context. "Glenn Beck." 1 November 2009. *Gale Biography in Context*. Web. 5 February 2012.
- Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures* (NY: Basic Books, 1973), 25-27.
- Gillis, Charlie. "In Glenn We Trust." *MacLeans.ca* 8 November 2010. Web.
- "Glenn Beck." 9 March 2012. *Wikipedia*. Web. 29 March 2012.  
<[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glenn\\_Beck](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glenn_Beck)>.
- Grey, Stephanie Houston. "Conceptually-Oriented Criticism." *Rhetorical Criticism: Perspectives in Action*. Lexington Books, 2009. 341-62. Print.
- Hamilton, Charles V. *The Black Preacher in America*. New York: William Morrow and Company, 1972. Print.
- Hariman, Robert. "Decorum, Power, and the Courtly Style." *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. 78 (1992): 149-72. Print.
- Hatch, Nathan O. "Thundering Legions: Black Preachers and the Flowering of African-American Christianity." *The Democratization of American Christianity*. Yale University Press, 1991. 102-113, 271-275. Print.

- "How Newspapers Covered the 8/28 Restoring Honor Event." *GlennBeck.com*. Mercury Radio Arts, 29 August 2010. Web. 4 February 2012.  
<<http://www.glennbeck.com/content/articles/article/198/44912>>.
- Howard-Pitney, David. "The Enduring Black Jeremiad: The American Jeremiad and Black Protest Rhetoric, from Frederick Douglass to W. E. B. Du Bois, 1841-1919." *American Quarterly*, 38:3, 481-92. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2712678>>.
- . "Wars, White America, and the Afro-American Jeremiad: Frederick Douglass and Martin Luther King, Jr." *The Journal of Negro History*, 71:1, 23-37.  
< <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2717649>>.
- Jasinski, James (2001) "The Status of Theory and Method in Rhetorical Criticism." *Western Journal of Communication*, 65: 3, 249-70.  
<<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10570310109374705>>.
- John L. Kater, Jr. *Christians on the Right: the Moral Majority in Perspective*. New York: The Seabury Press, 1982. Print.
- Jones, Jeffrey M. "Americans See Positive, Negative Effects of Tea Party Movement." Princeton, NJ: Gallup, 4 November 2010. Web. 7 March 2012.
- Kaminer, Wendy. "The Tea Party's Religious Inspiration." *The Atlantic* February 2011. Web. 6 April 2012. <<http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2011/02/the-tea-partys-religious-inspiration/71679/>>.
- Khan, Huma. "Glenn Beck's 'Restoring Honor' Rally Draws Tea Party Activists." 27 August 2010. *ABCNews.go.com*. Web. 6 April 2012.  
<<http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/glenn-becks-rally-feature-sarah-palin-coincides-civil/story?id=11491130#.T35vDqsfQeo>>.
- . "Is the Tea Party a Religious Movement? 'Anthem' Invokes God, Judgment Day." 18 October 2011. *ABCNews.go.com*. Web. 6 April 2012.  
<<http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/politics/2011/10/is-the-tea-party-a-religious-movement-anthem-invokes-god-judgment-day/>>.
- Kuypers, Jim A. (Ed) *Rhetorical Criticism: Perspectives in Action*. New York: Lexington Books, 2009. Print.
- Lemert, Charles C. "Defining Non-Church Religion." *Review of Religious Research* 16.3 (1975): 186-197. Web. 2 February 2012. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3510356>>.

- Lepore, Jill. *The Whites of Their Eyes: The Tea Party's Revolution and the Battle over American History*. 3rd ed. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2010. Print.
- Lincoln, C. Eric. "The Black Church Since Frazier." Frazier, E. Franklin. *The Negro Church in America*. New York: Schocken Books, 1974. Print.
- Markman, Joe. "Crowd Estimates Vary Wildly for Capitol March." *Los Angeles Times*. 15 September 2009. Web. 17 March 2012. <[articles.latimes.com/print/2009/sep/15/nation/na-crowd15](http://articles.latimes.com/print/2009/sep/15/nation/na-crowd15)>.
- "Media Coverage of 8-28 Restoring Honor." *GlennBeck.com*. 28 August 2010. Web. 4 February 2012. <<http://www.glennbeck.com/content/articles/article/198/44901/>>.
- Miller, Emily. "The Palin Factor." *The Washington Times* 22 August 2011. Web. 15 March 2012. <<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/aug/22/the-palin-factor/>>.
- Mohrmann, G. P. "Elegy in a Critical Grave-yard." *Western Journal of Communication*. 44:4, 265-74. Print.
- "Black Culture and Black Churches--The Quest for an Autonomous Identity." Moore, Lawrence R. *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986. 173-235. Print.
- Palin, Sarah. *America by Heart: Reflections on Family, Faith, and Flag*. New York: Harper Collins, 2010. Print.
- Parker, Christopher S. "2010 Multi-State Survey of Race & Politics." Survey Results. University of Washington Institute for the Study of Ethnicity, Race & Sexuality, 2010. Web. 5 April 2012. <<http://depts.washington.edu/uwiser/racepolitics.html>>.
- Pitcher, Alvin and Gibson Winter. "Perspectives in Religious Social Ethics." *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 5.1 (1977): 69-89. Web. 2 February 2012. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40020364>>.
- Prospect Magazine. "Forget Palin: Beck is the Republican to Watch." 18 October 2010. *Prospect Magazine*. Web. 5 April 2012. <<http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/2010/10/forget-palin-beck-is-the-republican-to-watch/>>.

- Roberts, J. Deotis Sr. "Black Theological Ethics: A Bibliographical Essay." *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 3.1 (1975): 69-109. Web. 23 January 2012. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40017719>>.
- Sawyer, Mary R. "Black Ecumenical Movements: Proponents of Social Change." *Review of Religious Research* 30.2 (1988): 151-161. Web. 7 February 2012. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3511352>>.
- Stelter, Brian and Bill Carter. "Fox News's mad, Apocalyptic, Tearful Rising Star." *The New York Times* 30 March 2009. Web. 26 March 2012. <[www.nytimes.com/2009/03/30/business/media/30beck.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/30/business/media/30beck.html)>.
- Stewart, Jon. "I Have a Scheme." *The Daily Show*. 26 August 2010. Web. 4 February 2012. <<http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/thu-august-26-2010/i-have-a-scheme>>.
- Sullivan, Dale L. "The Ethos of Epideictic Encounter." *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 26.2 (1993): 113-133. Web. 9 March 2012. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40237759>>.
- Syeed, Nafeesa and Philip Elliot. "Beck: Help Us Restore Traditional Values." *The Washington Times* 28 August 2010. Web. 15 January 2012.
- "Tea Party Movement." 23 February 2012. *Wikipedia*. Web. 2 March 2012.
- The Economist. "Politics this week." *The Economist* 17 September 2009. Web.
- Wrage, Ernest T. "Public Address: A Study in Social and Intellectual History." *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. 451-7. Print.
- Young, Henry J. *Major Black Religious Leaders: 1755-1940*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1977. Print.
- Zulick, Margaret D. "The Agon of Jeremiah: On the Dialogic Invention of Prophetic Ethos." *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 78.2 (1992): 125-148. Print.