

[Essays in Medieval Studies 3](#)

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Chaucer's Inversion of Augustinian Rhetoric in the *Pardoner's Prologue and Tale*

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Coolidge Chapman, George Kittredge, and Nancy Owen devote considerable attention to the *Pardoner's Tale* as a sermon. Chapman comments upon Chaucer's "knowledge of medieval rhetoric" and notes the traditional homiletic divisions of the *Pardoner's Tale*: namely, a statement of the theme in Latin, a prayer in the vulgar tongue, a prelocution or protheme, an exemplum, and recapitulation ("*The Pardoner's Tale*" 506-09).¹ Kittredge also observes the sermonic construction of the *Pardoner's Tale*. In *Chaucer and his Poetry* he writes that "the whole tale ... is one of the Pardoner's sermons, consisting of text ..., brief introduction, illustrative anecdote ..., and application" (21). Owen explains the entire homiletic structure of the *Pardoner's Tale* when she identifies its theme, protheme, restatement of theme, introduction of theme, process, exemplum, conclusion, and benediction (542-48).

Like Chapman, Kittredge, and Owen, Gordon Gerould understands the *Pardoner's Tale* as a sermon; but unlike those critics who appreciate the sermonic structure of the *Pardoner's Tale*, Gerould depreciates it. In *Chaucerian Essays* he contends that the Pardoner's presentation is "drunken buffoonery" (67). Gerould rests his contention on the Pardoner's apparent intoxication, thus arguing that the Pardoner delivers a disorderly sermon (66-67). Gerould fails to grasp the ideas that the appearance of a lack of structure is the sermon's structure and that the shapelessness of the Pardoner's sermon reflects the Pardoner's own shapelessness

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because Chaucer inverts the routine homiletic method of Augustinian rhetoric in the *Pardoner's Prologue and Tale*. In effect, Gerould argues against Chaucer's use of inversion in the *Pardoner's Tale*, a motif which William Toole and Alfred Kellogg consider to be central to the tale.

Unlike Gerould, who ignores Chaucerian irony, Toole and Kellogg recognize Chaucer's employment of inversion in the *Pardoner's Tale*.² Toole detects "inversion motifs" on Christ and the crucifixion as "inversions of the Christian concepts of brotherhood and of the Holy Trinity" (41). Kellogg thinks that the Pardoner's irony stems from "the humor of inversion," a suitable expression for a mind "inverted" by sin (472). Since the Pardoner inverts the sermon from its proper nature, Kellogg finds that Augustinian "order is turned upside down" in the *Pardoner's Tale* (472).

Chaucer expresses an awareness of inversion's dreadful consequences. Like Augustine, Chaucer realizes that 'whan man synneth, al this ordre or ordinaunce is turned up-so-doun' (ParsT 260). Consciously developing an inversion motif in the *Pardoner's Tale*, Chaucer ironically inverts three major precepts of Augustinian rhetoric as expressed in Book IV of *De doctrina Christiana*. When Chaucer inverts Augustinian rhetoric, he emphasizes the Pardoner's depravity and turns the time-honored homiletic order upside down. In the *Pardoner's Prologue and Tale* Chaucer inverts Augustine's insistence that the preacher must pray before he delivers a sermon, Augustine's prescription to the homilist on his *actio* or his voice and gestures, and Augustine's emphasis that the homilist must charitably teach right and correct wrong by providing Christian instruction to his faithful congregation.³

Since divine assistance always accompanies

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the Christian instructor, Augustine suggests that to instruct becomes divine in itself. He implores the Christian instructor, the homilist, to pray for God's guidance before delivering a sermon. In Book IV of *De doctrina Christiana* Augustine advises the preacher: 'When the hour in which he is to speak approaches, before he begins to preach, he should raise his thirsty soul to God in order that he may give forth what he shall drink, or pour out what shall fill him' (15.32). Alluding to Biblical authority (Esther 14:13), Augustine again recommends that the homilist pray for God's help before a sermon:

... Making ready to speak before the people ..., he should pray that God may place a good speech in his mouth. For if Queen Esther prayed ... concerning the temporal welfare of her people, that God would place "a well ordered speech" in her mouth, how much more ought he to pray for such a reward who labors in word and teaching for the eternal salvation of men? (4.30.63)

Augustine realizes that the Christian instructor must pray to God before receiving the homiletic gift from the Holy Spirit, because "every worthwhile gift, every genuine benefit comes from above, descending from the Father of the heavenly luminaries who cannot change and who is never shadowed over" (Jas. 1:17).⁴

In contrast to Augustine's Christian instructor who seeks divine inspiration before his sermon, Chaucer's Pardoner fails to meditate upon spiritual matters before his homily. Since he drinks before he delivers his sermon, the Pardoner inverts Augustine's insistence that the homilist should pray to God for assistance. As Harry Bailly requests, the Pardoner pauses to

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reflect upon "som moral thyng"; but he drinks while he prepares a moral sermon. He remarks: "I graunte, ywis ... but I moot thynk, / Upon som honest thyng while that I drynke" (PardT 327-28). Unlike Augustine's pious homilist who prays for God's help, Chaucer's Pardoner quenches his temporal thirst with beer instead of satisfying the eternal longing of his soul with spiritual inspiration. Inverting an Augustinian rhetorical precept by indulging in gluttony, the Pardoner gratifies his carnal desires before he begins his moral tale rather than appealing to God for assistance: "... heere at this alestake / I wol bothe drynke, and eten of a cake" (PardT 321-22).

After the Pardoner slakes his physical appetites, perhaps even mocking the Eucharist and inverting the order of holy Mass, he commences his sermon: "Now have I dronke a draughte of corny ale.... / A moral tale yet I yow telle kan...." (Pardr 456-60). Unlike the Miller who is obviously drunk, the Pardoner gives no indication that he is overcome by drink.⁵ If, as Gerould asserts, the Pardoner is drunk, he successfully conceals his intoxication.

In fact, the Pardoner is not drunk. Since the Pardoner declares that he 'wol drynke licour of the vyne' (PardT 452), Gerould understands that the Pardoner drinks before he rehearses his tale; nevertheless, Gerould mistakenly assumes that the Pardoner's drinking is the same as the Pardoner's being drunk. As the result of this false assumption, Gerould erroneously reasons that the Pardoner is drunk (*Chaucerian Essays* 61-70). Gerould ignores the Pardoner's inversion of an Augustinian prescription which requires that the homilist pray for God's help before delivering a sermon.

In Book IV of *De doctrina Christiana* Augustine offers advice on the Christian

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instructor's *actio* or the preacher's voice and gestures when he presents a homily. Augustine emphasizes that the homilist should exhibit dignity, restraint, and moderation during his sermon. Augustine suggests that "a man who speaks wisely if he would also speak eloquently ... should so speak that he is heard intelligently, willingly, and obediently...." (4.26.56). Augustine advises that the preacher's voice and gestures must not interfere with the purpose of his sermon, which is Christian instruction. Augustine urges the preacher not to "consider the eloquence of his teaching but the clarity of it" (4.9.23). Augustine believes that the homilist's delivery can undermine the seriousness of Christian instruction. Because the homilist must often refer to sacred scripture, Augustine relates that "caution must be exercised lest, when rhythm is added to divine writings, their gravity be impaired" (20.41). He also prescribes moderation in the employment of the rhetorical ornaments; he recommends that the homilist "use the ornaments ... not ostentatiously but prudently...." (4.25.55). In short, Augustine counsels the homilist to be moderate in his voice and gestures to reflect the seriousness of his sermon and to teach his listeners.

Unlike Augustine's Christian teacher who exercises dignity, restraint, and moderation when he delivers his homily, Chaucer's Pardoner inverts Augustine's precautions on *actio* in his sermon. He speaks in an unpleasant, irritating voice and displays unnecessary, distracting gestures when he presents his moral tale; thus, he inverts Augustine's standards of homiletic decorum. The Pardoner boasts that, when he preaches, his voice rings his sermon "out as round as gooth a belle" (PardT 331); however, he overestimates his sermonic prowess because

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Chaucer earlier ascribes a high, thin voice to the Pardoner: "A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot" (GP 688). The Pardoner exaggerates his homiletic skill to impress his fellow pilgrims and to satisfy his outrageous pride.

The Pardoner not only inverts Augustine's recommendations on dignity, restraint, and moderation as contained in Book IV of *De doctrina Christiana*, but he also violates a precaution expressed in a contemporary homiletic handbook which cautions the preacher to "conduct himself and speak with as great gravity as he should have in speaking of Christ in His presence, and that of princes and king...." (*Late Medieval Tractate* 86). Contrary to the precept cited in a contemporary sermonic tract, contrary to Augustine's precaution to avoid excess, the Pardoner stubbornly believes that when he preaches, his performing tongue and exaggerated gestures enhance his sermonic presentation. He graphically describes his *actio* to the Canterbury pilgrims:

Thanne peyne I me to strecche forthe the nekke,

And est and west upon the peple I bekke,

As dooth a dowve sittynge on a berne.

Myne handes and my tonge goon so yerne

That it is a joye to se my bisynesse. (PardT 395-99)

Like Demosthenes who reportedly stated that delivery is the most important part of rhetoric, the Pardoner thinks that his intense delivery contributes to the success of his preaching; yet he never realizes that his inordinate *actio* actually disrupts his concentration when he preaches a sermon. Like most preachers, the Pardoner memorizes his sermons. He remarks that "for I kan al by rote that I telle" (PardT 332).

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According to a current homiletic manual, the Pardoner should observe restraint in looking about when he delivers his sermon because "objects disturb the senses, and though as the natural memory is scattered and thus the order of memory confused" (*Late Medieval Tractate* 184). While Gerould maintains that the Pardoner is drunk and presents a fragmentary sermon, the Pardoner reflects the confusion of an excessive homiletic delivery.

Despite the evidence which Chapman, Kittredge, and Owen offer in support of the homiletic construction in the *Pardoner's Tale*, Gerould asserts that the Pardoner follows "no plan" or no "satisfactory formal arrangement" (*Chaucerian Essays* 67). Blaming the Pardoner's intoxication for the sermon's lack of order, Gerould contends that the Pardoner "rambles from topic to topic," drops his theme, confesses his own wickedness, and drifts into various denunciations of sin (*Chaucerian Essays* 66-67). Without any concrete evidence whatsoever, Gerould concludes that the Pardoner is drunk. Since all too often drunks talk incoherently, forget what they say, inappropriately expose their human frailty, and chide others for their weaknesses, Gerould illogically reasons that the Pardoner's discreditable sermon is the result of inebriation. Gerould perceives that the *Pardoner's Tale* is "no illustration of medieval sermonizing" (*Chaucerian Essays* 67), but Gerould argues from the wrong premise: he fails to grasp that the Pardoner delivers a disorderly sermon because he inverts Augustine's advice on the preacher's *actio* and becomes confused in the frenzy of his exaggerated delivery without divine inspiration to guide him. Gerould never considers that the Pardoner exhibits homiletic confusion through his inversion of Augustinian rhetoric.

Augustine proposes in Book IV of *De*

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doctrina Christiana that the preacher must charitably teach right and correct wrong. Augustine contends that the end of any sermon must be the promotion of *caritas*, the love of God and neighbor. He writes: "charity ... is the end and fulfillment of the Law...." (4.27.61). Since charity is the greatest good, Augustine asserts that the Christian instructor must teach right and correct wrong.⁶ Augustine explains that the Christian teacher instills charity in his listener's hearts when he instructs them:

... The teacher of the Divine Scripture, the defender of right faith and the enemy of error, should both teach the good and extirpate the evil. He should conciliate those who are opposed, arouse those who are remiss, and teach those

ignorant of his subject.... (4.4.6)

Thus, Augustine underscores the necessity of instruction for the Christian homilist when he delivers his sermon.

Unlike Augustine's Christian instructor who is morally obligated to teach, Chaucer's Pardoner explicitly states that his purpose is not to teach right and to correct wrong but avariciously to gather worldly riches. He proudly proclaims: "For myn entente is nat but for to wynne, / And nothyng for the correccioun of synne" (PardT 403-404). He becomes a caricature of cupidity instead of an ideal Christian instructor. Since the Pardoner neglects to teach right or to correct wrong, he necessarily fails as a homilist. While he provides ample artistic proofs Biblical allusions, references to well-known pagans, and vivid examples of swearing the Pardoner falls

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short of his intended mark because he lacks inspiration, order, and credibility; the Pardoner lacks divine guidance, concentration, and *ethos*. As he reveals his intentions, techniques, and vices to the pilgrims, the Pardoner loses his ethical appeal, perhaps the most important persuasive appeal. In spite of the charismatic quality of his sermon, the Pardoner cannot lure the Canterbury pilgrims into parting with their money, for they know that the Pardoner preaches "japes."⁷

By any homiletic standard, the Pardoner is a preacher to shun. Unlike Augustine's homilist who is good and faithful, Chaucer's Pardoner is a manipulator and a fraud because "with feyned flaterye and japes, / He made the person and the people his apes" (GP 705-06). The Pardoner readily admits his homiletic deception to the Canterbury pilgrims when he proclaims:

I stonde lyk a clerk in my pulpet,

And whan the lewed peple is doun yset,

I preche so as ye han herd befoore,

And telle an hundred false japes moore. (PardT 391-94)

Not only is the Pardoner a liar, contemptuous of the reverent laity, but he is also a malicious dissimulator; he practices evil which he disguises with seemingly holy but empty words. The Pardoner confesses that "thus spitte I out my venym under hewe / Of hoolynesse, to semen hooly and trewe" (PardT 421-22). As Gerould describes the Pardoner, he "is a creature of unexampled effrontery", (*Chaucerian Essays* 66); as Harry Bailly describes him, he is an "angry man" (PardT 959). The Pardoner is an avaricious deviant, a vicious mountebank, a grotesque preacher of cupidity; because he inverts Augustinian homiletic standards, he corrupts the sermon's purpose.

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As a homilist, the godless, confused, and dissimulating Pardoner remains steadfast in his intentions toward the Canterbury pilgrims. He announces that he intends to deliver a sample of his art:

Lordynges ... in chirches whan I preche,

I peyne me to han an hauteyn speche....

My theme is alwey oon, and evere was--

Radix malorum est Cupiditas. (PardT 329-34)

Like Augustine's Christian instructor, Chaucer's Pardoner states his scriptural theme the love of money is the root of all evils.⁸ Stating the theme in Latin, the Pardoner selects a suitable topic (*De doctrina Christiana* 4.6.9 and 4.15.32); yet he divulges that he preaches only to satisfy his own cupidity rather than to illuminate God's truth as contained in Holy Scripture:

I preche of no thyng but for coveityse,

Therefore my theme is yet, and evere was,

Radix malorum est Cupiditas.

Thus kan I preche agayn that same vice

Which that I use, and that is avarice....

I preche nothyng but for coveitise. (PardT 424-33)

As Kellogg points out but as Gerould rejects, the Pardoner inverts the homily from "its proper nature" and preaches "a sermon against avarice ..., gluttony, and lechery ... [which] becomes a sermon in financial support of them...." (472). Instead of seeking to teach right or to correct wrong, the Pardoner sermonizes for his own worldly profit. When he

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finally begins his sermon, he utters a mild oath as an inverted spiritual supplication and declares that he intends to please the pilgrims: "By God, I hope I shal yow telle a thyng / That shal by reson been at youre likyng" (PardT 457-58). Inverting Augustine's emphasis upon Christian instruction, the Pardoner proposes his intention to delight the pilgrims rather than to instruct and to persuade them of God's truth.

Borrowing from Cicero, Augustine affirms in Book IV of *De doctrina Christiana* that the purpose of a homily is to teach, to persuade, and to please (*De Oratore* 2.27.115, 2.28.121, and 2.77.310). "Of the three," writes Augustine, "that which is given first place, ... the necessity of teaching, resides in the things which we have to say...." (4.12.27). Augustine believes in truth or a conversion to truth instead of rhetorical eloquence because the homilist should use eloquence "for the purposes of delight rather than persuasion" (4.23.52). Augustine states that a homily which solely endeavors to please becomes a sermon which neglects to instruct or to persuade and that the usefulness of delight is simply to retain the congregation's attention (4.13.29). He recognizes that a sermon should impart pleasure because God's truth is pleasing in itself, but he stresses that instruction must be the preacher's intention. Augustine thinks that if a preacher desires only to delight his flock, then all he elicits from his faithful congregation is an affirmative acknowledgment of pleasure. Augustine discusses this homiletic problem at length:

How do these [instruction and delight] help a man who ... confesses the truth and praises the eloquence but does not give his assent, on account of ... the speaker [who] ... pays

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careful attention to the things which he is saying? When such things are taught that it is sufficient to know or to believe them, they require no more consent than an acknowledgment that they are true. But when that which is taught must be put into practice and is taught for that reason, the truth of what is said is acknowledged in vain and the eloquence of the discourse pleases in vain unless that which is learned is implemented in action. It is necessary ... for the ecclesiastical orator ... not only to teach that he may instruct and to please that he may hold attention but also to persuade that he may be victorious. (4.13.29)

Since instructive truth or a persuasion to truth is the homilist's ultimate purpose, Augustine cautions that pleasure must not be exercised for its own sake (4.25.55).

In contrast to Augustine's attitude towards sermonical pleasure, the Pardoner inverts the primary instructive and persuasive concerns of ecclesiastical rhetoric and proposes to deliver a homily which pleases the Canterbury pilgrims. Refusing to teach right or to correct wrong, neglecting to offer Christian instruction, never seeking a conversion to divine truth, the Pardoner attempts to satisfy the pilgrims' desire for pleasure. He understands that "youre likyng is that I shal telle a tale" (PardT 455). At the conclusion of the sermon, the Pardoner confirms Augustine's explanation of homiletic pleasure because no pilgrim throws off "hasardrye," swearing, gluttony, avarice, or pride, and the pilgrims' response becomes merely an acknowledgment of vice's destructive nature.

While the sermonic exemplum is exquisitely well-wrought, the Pardoner neither teaches Christian wisdom nor persuades the pilgrims to sin. Since the Pardoner intends to please through his sermon, he necessarily fails to elicit the appropriate reaction from Harry Bailly to "kisse the relikes everychon ...for a grote" because, as Augustine notes, instruction precedes persuasion (4.12.28). The Pardoner means to delight the pilgrims rather than to teach and to persuade them to give up their money. Pleasing the pilgrims by telling a tale to their liking, the Pardoner concretely demonstrates Augustine's notion that the attractive work of a wicked man is not known for its instruction but only for its pleasure (*De doctrina Christiana* 4.14.30).

Augustine suggests in Book IV of *De doctrina Christiana* that the ecclesiastical orator is "a good man speaking wisely" and qualifies this classical ideal by adding "according to the rule of piety and faith" (3.4). Augustine then cautions the faithful against those preachers, like Chaucer's Pardoner, who speak eloquently but unwisely: "... the one to guard against is the man whose eloquence is no more than an abundant flow of empty words" (4.5.7). Augustine realizes that wisdom, not eloquence, benefits the congregation, but he acknowledges that they frequently mistake eloquence for wisdom (4.5.7). Augustine concludes Book IV of *De doctrina Christiana* with a description of the ideal Christian instructor who preaches the Gospel, teaches his congregation, and provides a virtuous example for his flock: "... let him so order his life that he not only prepares a reward for himself, but also so that he offers an example to others, and his way of living may be ... an eloquent speech" (29.61).⁹

Unlike Augustine's ideal Christian teacher,

Chaucer's Pardoner hardly lives a life which could be called a moving sermon. He is not a preacher to imitate. Like one of Langland's wasters in the "fair feld ful of folk," Chaucer's Pardoner wanders in the world.¹⁰ He declares: "I wol preche and begge in sondry landes" (PardT 443). He also refuses to work. He insists that "I wol nat do no labour with myn handes" (PardT 444). More importantly, the Pardoner ignores the apostles' example. Preferring carnal luxury to spiritual hardship, the Pardoner declines to run the race or to keep the faith. He states that "I wol noon of the apostles contrefete" (PardT 447). Unlike the apostles, the Pardoner neglects to teach or to persuade the "lewd peple" of God's good news but endeavors to acquire riches and to enjoy sensual pleasure, without a single concern for the corporal welfare of his fellow human beings or his own soul's eternal well-being. The Pardoner confesses his cupidity to the Canterbury pilgrims:

I wol have moneie, wolle, chese, and whete,

Al were it yeven of the povereste page,

Or of the povereste wydwe in a village,

Al sholde hir children sterve for famyne.

Nay, I wol drynke licour of the vyne,

And have a joly wenche in every toun. (PardT 448-53)

The Pardoner loses his soul in the barren shapelessness of mortal sin and dies a spiritual death.

The Pardoner inverts Augustinian rhetorical ideals to gratify his base desires, thereby corrupting his soul and the homiletic practice. Whereas Augustine's Christian teacher utters a profound expression of faith from his heart's

passionate feelings, Chaucer's Pardoner preaches only to satisfy his cupidity. Even though the Pardoner's sermon expresses truth, the Pardoner maliciously abuses the "lewed peple's" faith, blasphemes from the pulpit when he twists God's words, and inverts Augustinian homiletic precepts. While Gerould interprets the Pardoner as an inebriated "murky figure" (*Chaucerian Essays* 55), the Pardoner clearly reflects the bitter emptiness of sin's illusion. The Pardoner soberly exposes his hollow soul in an eloquent yet discreditable sermon which appears structurally arranged;

the unintoxicated Pardoner bares his shapeless soul in a pleasing yet disorderly sermon which exhibits the conventional homiletic structure. In his sermon he paradoxically succeeds by pleasing the pilgrims and fails by not taking their money. Lacking divine inspiration, confused in his homiletic extravagance, unwilling to teach charity through Christian instruction, and bewildered by his sinfulness, Chaucer's Pardoner inverts the homily, as prescribed by Augustine in Book IV of *De doctrina Christiana*, and putrefies his soul.

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Notes

1. Chapman elsewhere relates the Pardoner, Parson, and Summoner to the homiletic tradition; see "Chaucer on Preachers and Preaching" (178-85).
2. Like Toole and Kellogg, Kenneth Oberembt remarks on the Wife of Bath's "inversion" of misogynist sentiment; see "Chaucer's Anti-Misogynist Wife of Bath" (300).
3. Whether or not Chaucer possessed firsthand knowledge of Book IV of Augustine's *De doctrina Christiana* remains unknown; certainly Chaucer derives his rhetorical knowledge from various common sources and the homiletic craft of his time. See Baldwin (51-73 and 228-57); Manly (95-113); Murphy (43-88 and 269-355); Owst (309-54); and Payne (270-87).
4. Like Augustine, John Capgrave acknowledges the homiletic gift from the Holy Spirit. In *The Life of St. Norbert* Capgrave, an Augustinian monk, describes Norbert's divine homiletic inspiration: He seyde a sermoun, ful sad and ful deuoute. / Vnware to alle man þat he schuld preche, / The holy goost, wech he bare aboute, / Stered him to þis holy, þis deuoute speche. (218-21)
5. MiLT 3120, 3128, 3135, 3138, and 3145. If Chaucer wanted his audience to think that the Pardoner is drunk, why does he neglect to make an explicit statement?
6. Among those things which eternally endure,

as the Apostle Paul suggests, are faith, hope, and love, and love is the greatest virtue: "Nunc autem manent, fides, spes, caritas: tria haec, maior autem horum est caritas" (1 Cor. 13:13).

7. While Chaucer explicitly refuses to depreciate the Pardoner's sermon, John Wycliffe outright challenges those preachers, like the Pardoner, who "jape" instead of teaching Jesus' message. Wycliffe charges that many preachers mouth pleasing nonsense rather than teaching God's holy word:

Freres in here prechinge fordon prechinge of Crist, and prechen lesyngus and japes plesynge to þe peple. O! siþen Seynt Petur techus, þat if a man speke ou3t he schulde schape him for to speke as he spake Goddis wordis, how much more schulde þeise prechours hold þis rewle, and put away japes and lesynges in þer prechynges, and speke wordes of Goddis lawe. (*Selected English Works* 3, 180)

Wycliffe also seems to echo Augustine; see *De doctrina Christiana* (4.30.63).

8. "Radix enim omnium malorum est cupiditas: quam quidam appetentes erraverunt a fide, et inseruerunt se doloribus multis" (1 Tim. 6:10).
9. Whereas the Pardoner consistently inverts Augustinian thought, Chaucer's Parson is the ideal Christian instructor. He is a preacher of "hooly thought and werk": "He was also a lerned man, a clerk, / That Cristes gospel trewely wolde he preche; /

His parisspens devoutely wolde he teche" (GP 480-82). Unlike the Pardoner, the Parson preaches the Gospel and labors to teach his congregation.

Furthermore, in contrast to the Pardoner, the Parson provides a virtuous model for his flock: "This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf.... / Wel oghte a prest ensample for to yive, / By his clenness, how that his sheep sholde lyve" (GP 496-506).

10. In *Piers Plowman* Langland also describes the Pardoner, his methods, and vices; but Langland attacks the pardoner's deceit, avarice, and Voluptuousness: "There prechede a pardoner as he a prest were / And brouth forth a bulle with bischopis selys, / Sayde þat hymself myhte assoylen hem alle / Of falsnesses of fastynges, of vowes ybrokene. / Lewed men leued hym wel and lykede his wordes / And comen and knelede to kysen his bulles; / A bounchede hem with his rageman rynges and broches. / Thus 3e guye 3oure gold glotons to helpe / And leneth hit lorelles þat lecherye haunten" (ProL. 66-74). While Chaucer subtly depict the Pardoner's degeneration through his inversion of Augustinian rhetoric, Langland raises his poetic voice in anger against the pardoner's corruption.