

CHAPTER THREE

RELIGION, POWER AND PUBLIC SELF-REPRESENTATION

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Introduction

On November 30, 2013, three hundred delegates to an electoral Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada made history by electing Reverend Canon Melissa M. Skelton to become both the first woman bishop of the Diocese of New Westminster and the first female diocesan bishop in British Columbia, Canada. Thus, Skelton joined a handful of Anglican women bishops worldwide, simultaneously entering the fray of international debates around gender, religion and power. While this event may represent a highlight in the history of Anglicanism, it is also a moment of interest for discourse analysts. For, although numerous studies explore questions of gender and language (see, for example, Cameron, 1998; Weatherall, 2002; Wodak, 1997), fewer examine intersections of gender, language and religion (Green & Searle-Chatterjee, 2008; Jule, 2005, 2006). Fewer still interrogate the interplay of gender, language, religion, identity and power (Goldman, 2000; Walsh, 2001).

In light of this deficit, I will analyse the personal statement provided by Bishop Skelton as part of her candidature, with a view to describing one powerful religious woman's self-representation in a significant ecclesiastical election. In particular, I will critically draw on and compare three discourse analytic approaches—namely, Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA) (Schegloff, 2007b), the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009), and Positive Discourse Analysis (PDA) (Martin, 2004b)—in order to map the discursive construal of a situated, rather than stereotypical, identity. In doing so, I will also argue that MCA, DHA and PDA can be complementary analytical frameworks for investigating discursive representations of religious identifications.

Identity: Categorization & Self-Representation

Rather than being conceived as a “pre-discursive construct” (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p. 26), *identity* is now more commonly thought to be constructed as individuals negotiating their own and others’ category memberships in various contexts, via linguistic and other social practices (Triandafyllidou & Wodak, 2003). In Baron’s (2004) analysis of evangelical discourse in Mexico, for example, a socially disadvantaged Protestant woman increased her social influence by drawing on evangelical discourse: talking to and about God, she highlighted her religious identity, rather than her gender—and, through this action, succeeded both in overcoming “gender as a factor of primary relevance” (p. 253) and materially improving conditions for her family.

Two points are worth noting here, however. First, as Jenkins ([1996] 2004, pp. 19-20) observes, “It is not enough to assert an identity. That identity must also be validated (or not) by those with whom we have dealings.” For identity can be both a “label” assigned by individuals to themselves, as well as a label assigned to them by others (Wetherell, 1996, p. 34). Godlove (2000, p. 165) notes, for example, that scholarly and media commentators often purport to know better than religious individuals what the latter mean when they recount experiences with “invisible, intelligent powers”—and, in doing so, “deny [religious] persons their usual ‘first person authority’” with respect to identity construction. Second, the word *identity* itself has become so widely overused in recent years that alternate categories of analysis now seem preferable (Grad & Martín Rojo, 2008). In this chapter, I use the terms “categorization” and “self-representation” (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000) to connote specific discursive acts of identification performed by recognisable human agents. I choose these specifically because of their purchase within both Membership Categorization Analysis and Discourse Historical Analysis.

Electing a Woman Bishop

The ordination of women within Christian denominations was one of the key changes in North American religion during the twentieth century, paralleling the increasing number of women in professions

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such as medicine and law since 1970—with the qualification that the role of women within the church “is less an indicator of women’s literal status within the denomination [in question] and more a ritual enactment of its position vis-à-vis the liberal and modern agenda of institutionalizing individual rights” (Chaves, 1996, p. 869).

The previous Bishop of New Westminster, Michael Ingham, was a high profile and controversial religious figure, being one of the first Anglican leaders internationally to approve the blessing of same-sex relationships in 2001. That decision initiated a split within the Diocese, with seven dissenting congregations quitting the fold and four pursuing litigation against both the Bishop and the Diocese (“New Westminster diocese court case hearings end,” 2009). After approximately twenty years in the position—during which time the Diocese saw a 48 percent decline in average Sunday church attendance (“1993 Statistical Report for Parishes and Dioceses of the Anglican Church of Canada,”)(“1993 Statistical Report for Parishes and Dioceses of the Anglican Church of Canada,”)—Bishop Ingham announced his retirement on April 2, 2013, to become effective on August 31, 2013.

A Search & Nominations Committee (SNC) comprising five ordained and five laity was elected on June 11, 2013; a call for nominations was issued on September 20, 2013; and eight candidates, identified by a combination of search and nomination were interviewed by the SNC on October 10, 19 and 26, 2013. Prior to the interviews, each candidate had been provided with a Diocesan Profile (“A profile of the Anglican Diocese of New Westminster,” 2013) and “asked to provide a comprehensive CV, along with a statement as to why they felt called to the Office of Bishop” (Cadman, 2013, p. 1). On the basis of roughly forty-five minute interviews, the SNC recommended all eight candidates to the Electoral Synod responsible for selecting a new bishop, and tasked candidates with preparing video messages outlining both their understanding of Anglican ethos and Sacramental life, and their view of the episcopate in the Diocese of New Westminster. Confidential guidelines for these messages were provided to candidates, along with the videography services of the Diocesan Communications Officer. All of the candidates’ materials were then posted to both the Electoral Synod and Diocesan websites and displayed in churches around the Diocese.

On Saturday, November 30, 2013—barely three weeks after the candidates’ names had become public and their materials posted online—the Electoral Synod met at Christ Church Cathedral, Vancouver. Voting was conducted via electronic ballot, with the

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results of each round displayed before the next round and a majority vote required among both clergy and laity required. As indicated in Table 1 below, it became clear from the first round of voting that Rev. Canon Melissa M. Skelton was the favourite.

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Table 3-1: Episcopal Election Results, November 30, 2013

	Round 1				Round 2				Round 3			
	Clergy	Lay	Total	%	Clergy	Lay	Total	%	Clergy	Lay	Total	%
Skelton	38	56	94	32	54	86	140	48	81	126	207	71
Clark-King	17	24	41	14	16	24	40	14	-	-	-	-
McNaughton	16	20	36	12	17	16	33	11	25	21	46	16
Oakes	12	24	36	12	12	23	35	12	12	24	36	12
Davis	8	20	28	10	3	11	14	5	-	-	-	-
Stephens	11	13	24	8	5	6	11	4	-	-	-	-
Leggett	12	11	23	8	10	6	16	5	-	-	-	-
Hebenton	4	6	10	3	2	1	3	1	1	2	3	1
TOTAL	118	174	292	100	119	173	292	100	119	173	292	100

Theoretical Framework and Method

In this chapter, I examine Skelton's personal statement, drawing critically on three discourse analytic approaches, with a view to identifying how one religious woman discursively positioned herself as the preferred candidate for the position of Bishop of New Westminster.

Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA)

Building on Sacks's (1979) early work, Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA) is an ethnomethodological approach which examines situated categorizations in "talk-in-interaction" (Schegloff, 1987, p. 207). As such, it explores how and to what ends parties employ "the resources of membership categorization" (Baker, 2004, p. 174), in particular:

- "members' categories" (Sacks, 1992, p. 40), that is "classifications or social types that may be used to describe persons and nonpersonal objects" (Hester, 1992, p. 157)—although what constitutes such a category can be difficult to pin down.
- "membership categorization devices," or the pairing of sets of members' categories with population members, according to specific "rules of application" (Sacks, 1992, p. 246). Here again, however, the MCA literature does not deal with how membership categorization devices are identified or named—although this can be a central concern in religious identifications.
- "category-bound activities" (Sacks, [1972] 1986, p. 335) and "predicates" (Watson, 1983, p. 41), including "knowledge, belief[s], entitlements, obligations and other characteristics" (Wovk & Carlin, 2004, p. 72), through which individuals seemingly display their "common-sense knowledge" (Schegloff, 2007a, p. 476) about particular categories and/or devices. It is important to note, however, that individuals both can and do reproduce category- and device-bound predicates which they neither believe nor endorse, simply because they expect their interlocutors to believe or endorse them.

In sum, the chief interest of Membership Categorization Analysis is categorization by *members*, not analysts. That is, like Conversation Analysis, MCA prioritises what conversationalists "demonstrably

orient to as relevant (as best we can establish it, to be sure)” (Schegloff, 1999a, p. 579).

Discourse Historical Approach (DHA)

The first two questions addressed by the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) to Critical Discourse Analysis investigate (i) how “persons, objects, phenomena/events, processes and actions [are] named and referred to linguistically,” and (ii) “[w]hat characteristics, qualities and features are attributed to social actors, objects, phenomena/events and processes” (Wodak, 2001a, p. 93). The DHA thus covers similar territory to that traversed by Membership Categorization Analysis—although it does so from a different perspective. First, it investigates the wider discursive context within which texts are produced. Second, it explicitly thematises argumentation (as noted by KhosraviNik, 2010), or the “topoi” (Wodak, 2001a, p. 74) according to which positions are warranted. Third, its characteristic focus on *power*, *history* and *ideology* (Wodak, 2001b) typically involves analysing how “social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (Van Dijk, 1995, p. 19)—with a particular focus on prejudiced discourses.

As has been well-documented elsewhere (Billig, 1999a, 1999b; Schegloff, 1997, 1998, 1999a, 1999b; Wetherell, 1998), the first of these characteristics cuts to the heart of a dispute between Conversation Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) over the admissibility of contextual information to linguistic analysis, on the one hand, and the possibility (even desirability) of “taking seriously the object of inquiry in its own terms” (Schegloff, 1997, p. 171), on the other. CDA itself has also come under considerable critique, not only for allowing ideological precommitments to bias its linguistic analysis (Widdowson, 1998), but also for failing to prescribe discursive remedies for the social problems it identifies (Toolan, 1997).

Positive Discourse Analysis (PDA)

In light of critiques such as those mentioned above, Martin (2004b, p. 184) has proposed that CDA’s characteristic focus on hegemony should be complemented by the analysis of discourses in the service of

a better world—without which (he argues) “when we come to design better futures we simply don’t have enough information to move forward.” To this end, Martin and others have adopted a “positive” discourse analytic approach, studying *inter alia* a number of topics: the use of evaluative language to promote reconciliation (Martin, 2002, 2004a; Martin & Stenglin, 2006); the privileging of indigenous voices in government reports (Martin, 2003); popular discourses of peace (Martin, 2006); multi-modal playfulness in environmental journalism (Bednarek & Caple, 2010); racial literacy in children’s literature book clubs (Mosley & Rogers, 2011); and civil discourses of solidarity (Agustin, 2012).

Macgilchrist (2007, p. 74) summarises the Positive Discourse Analysis (PDA) agenda as analysing “the discourse[s] we like rather than the discourse[s] we wish to criticize,” but Agustin (2012) argues that this simplistic conceptualisation relinquishes the critical dimension necessary to work for and explain social change. Wodak (2007, p. 3) also notes that it betrays a misunderstanding of the term “critical,” which is less a matter of negativity than of skepticism: that is, of “not taking things for granted, opening up complexity, challenging reductionism, dogmatism and dichotomies, being self-reflective in my research, and through these processes, making opaque structures of power relations and ideologies manifest.”

Martin (2007, pp. 85-86) offers a somewhat more sophisticated depiction of PDA, however, as “taking a stand, and positively valuing some aspect of social change,” with a view to realising the transformative potential of Critical Discourse Analysis by combining “deconstruction” with “productive activity” (Martin, 2004b, p. 183) or “design” (Kress, 2000). From this point of view, *positive* is complementary to—indeed, a hitherto largely unrealised element of—*critique*.

Discussion

MCA: Religious Self-categorization

Drawing on MCA, I turn now to an examination of Bishop Skelton’s self-categorization—including both the membership categorization devices within which she positions herself and the predicates she binds not only to herself, but also to the category of “Bishop.”

Religious Membership Categories

Skelton uses a number of category “labels” (Moerman, 1988, p. 90) to identify herself in terms of religion. Following Hester (1992, p. 158)—who observed that speakers commonly categorize others as “deviant” using “deviant membership categories” such as “bully,” “slow learner,” “nuisance,” “menace,” and “thief”—I call these categories “*religious membership categories*” (RMCs). Perhaps the most obvious RMCs are those that depict individuals as members of specific forms of institutional religion. For example, Skelton repeatedly self-categorizes using RMCs drawn from a membership categorization device that might be called “religious job descriptions:”

- “Canon for Congregational Development and Leadership”
- “Rector, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Diocese of Olympia, TEC”
- “Director of the new Diocesan School for Leadership”
- “Rector at St. Paul’s, Seattle”

By their specificity—particularly when post-modified in terms of their object or range—these RMCs suggest a particular flavour of religious affiliation, namely: *Christian*, and (more specifically) either *Roman Catholic* (which cannot be the case, owing to Skelton’s gender) or *Anglican / Episcopalian*. Strikingly, however—unlike Canada’s *Globe and Mail* newspaper (Bailey, 2014)—Skelton does not use the following categories for herself in her speech: gender (i.e., *woman*); nationality (i.e., *American*), except insofar as she specifies the range of the RMC *rector as the Diocese of Olympia and Seattle*; or previous professional background (i.e., *business executive*), except insofar as she includes *MBA* among her list of qualifications at the top of her statement. Indeed, the only time Skelton overtly categorizes herself other than in terms of her religious job descriptions is as “essentially a relational being.”

Religious Category Predicates

More characteristic of Skelton’s self-representation is her identification of predicates which she associates with the religious membership category *Bishop*. First, Skelton identifies several “gifts for the episcopacy”—thus explicitly binding them to the “office of Bishop”—

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which she claims *others* claim *she* possesses, including: “prayerfulness and . . . grounding in Christ,” “natural and engaging leadership style” and “gifts of preaching, teaching, and relationship building.” Notably, she uses the reported speech of others to assign these attributes to herself, thereby avoiding explicit self-praise (Clark & Gerrig, 1990), which might undermine her self-representation as a model Bishop.

Second, Skelton identifies predicates, which she explicitly owns but only implicitly binds to “the Office of Bishop in New Westminster,” including:

- “life lived in response to the loving initiative of God . . . faithful in prayer and worship”
- “proven experience in working in a congregational setting to deepen its life and to grow its attendance”
- “an engaged, energetic and relational leadership style”
- “think systemically and have experience creating a diocesan system that focuses on priorities . . .”

Here again, she avoids seeming to boast by downgrading her claim to possess these attributes with the hedge “I believe.”

In both cases, Skelton first mentions overtly religious predicates, with the remaining attributes and behaviours being just as readily bound to categories such as *teacher* (“gifts of . . . teaching”), *leader* (“leadership style”), *consultant* (“proven experience . . . grow its attendance”), or *change manager* (“think systematically . . . create a system”)—in short, to categories within the membership categorization device “secular” or “professional” occupations.

DHA: Power and Agency, in Context

In this section, I will concentrate on the concept of *power*, beginning with how Skelton assigns different levels of power to various social actors (van Leeuwen, 1996).

Textual Analysis

First, like successful women in other professional contexts (Wagner & Wodak, 2006), Skelton downplays her own power, representing herself as a relatively passive participant in her career trajectory. For example, she draws on the Christian concept of *calling*, implicitly attributing her

episcopal candidature to God's will, rather than to her own ("My call to the Episcopacy," "I believe myself to be called . . ."). In doing so, however, Skelton hedges her claim to be in direct communication with God and thus displays awareness that such a claim may not be acceptable to all of her audience. She also thereby avoids seeming to boast, since—in some Christian circles—claiming to hear God can be a strategy for increasing one's "spiritual capital" (Lambert Graham, 2005, p. 85).

Second, Skelton downplays her own power by assigning agency to various others, whether *aggregated* ("many in my life"), *functionalised* ("my own bishop") or *objectivated* ("this willingness") (van Leeuwen, 1996). She also suppresses her own agency, using agentless passive verbs ("I have accepted being nominated"). And her choice of process type is important, with even a cursory transitivity analysis signalling that she represents herself more often as either a "senser" (Halliday, 1994, p. 117) or a "carrier" (120) of attributes than as an "actor" (109). She thus demonstrates her own claim to be "essentially a relational being," while her selective use of "mental processes" (114) serves both to perspectivise and to hedge her claim to the position of Bishop. For example, she "believes"—rather than "knows"—that she is "called to the traditional roles of Bishop."

Third, the following five topoi seem to be at work in Skelton's personal statement, each of which hails from Biblical or church traditions: the impetus for moving into a position of leadership should come from God and / or the wider religious community; an individual's sense of God's will should be endorsed by others; a sense of "calling" is more likely to be valid if it is longstanding; an occupation that makes use of one's "gifts" and draws on all of one's previous experiences is more likely to be God's will; and deriving joy from what one does, and the location in which one does it, is consonant with God's will.

I will not address either *perspectivisation* or *intensification/mitigation* (Wodak, 2001a) here, because—as KhosraviNik (2010) rightly points out—these are elements that influence the other three levels of analysis, and I have already briefly mentioned both in passing. I turn now therefore to contextual analysis of Skelton's statement.

Intertextuality/Interdiscursivity

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The DHA's first level of context, beyond the text in question, situates textual analysis in relation to intertextual and interdiscursive relations. In this section, therefore, I briefly consider Skelton's use of one section of the *Profile of the Anglican Diocese of New Westminster*, in which the Diocesan Office spelled out the election process and the leadership qualities sought by Members of Synod.

As illustrated in Table 2 below, Skelton's statement draws directly on both "macro-topics" (Wodak, 2001a, p. 66) and specific lexicalisations used in the Diocesan profile to represent her approach to the election process as both "deep" and accompanied by "the [Holy] Spirit." Her repeated self-representation as a "leader" also mirrors the construal of the Bishop by the Diocesan Profile—as do her self-representations as a "pastor" who understands the spirituality of the Pacific Northwest region and is "essentially a relational being."

Table 3-2: Intertextuality in Skelton's Personal Statement

Diocesan Profile	Skelton's Personal Statement
<p>Guided by the Spirit, we proceed with a deep desire for transformation and wellbeing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I pray for the companionship of the Holy Spirit in all that we do in this election process. • listening deeply . . . support the unity that deep listening often discloses. • I am deeply grateful to be able to engage in this discernment process . . .
<p>Members of Synod were asked what leadership qualities are important to them in a new Bishop.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canon for Congregational Development & Leadership • engaging leadership • Director of the new Diocesan School for Leadership • leadership . . . programs I have • relational leadership style • I created. . . . The Dioces[an] Leadership School
<p>The responses included pastoral, spiritual, compassionate and relational qualities . . .</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • called to the traditional roles of Bishop as pastor • the "spiritual . . . not religious" character of the region • relational leadership

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creating and sustaining relationships • I am essentially a relational being
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Context of Situation

The DHA next considers the “context of situation” (Wodak, 2001a, p. 67), including *mode*, *field* and *tenor* (Halliday, 1994). *Mode* here concerns the three texts produced by each candidate. *Field* refers to the nature of the election, first, as a hiring process; second, as an election; and third (at least ostensibly), as a spiritual discernment process. Finally, *tenor* signifies both relations between the participants and the physical location in which Skelton’s statement was produced and received. In this case, with the departure of Bishop Ingham—described as “A champion of the advancement of homosexuals, women and aboriginals” (Todd, 2013b)—the scene was set not only for a theologically and socially liberal Bishop, but also for a woman. Seven of the eight candidates fit the first criterion; four, the second—and three of these were considered “frontrunners” (Todd, 2013a).

But why was Skelton favoured when she was categorised prominently in local media as an “American” (Todd, 2013c) even while some were claiming that Canadians should vote for “a bishop with Canadian roots” as a matter of “self-pride” (Grayston, as cited in Todd, 2013a), and other candidates self-categorized not only as “Canadian,” but as “born-and-bred-Vancouverites”? This is clearly a complex question, but a partial answer may be found in Skelton’s representation of place: First, she downplays national (in contrast with local and regional) identifications; second, she foregrounds “(the diocese of) New Westminster,” thus focusing on her intended (rather than present) location. Third, she conflates her American location in “Seattle” with the Canadian location of “this diocese,” by three times using the designation “Cascadia”—which refers to the bioregion encompassing British Columbia, Washington State and Oregon, more typically known as “the Pacific Northwest.” Interestingly, she was consequently one of only two candidates—the other a Vancouver “local”—to draw intertextually on the Diocesan profile’s categorization of this same region. Even more interesting, however, is the use of this category within the Diocesan profile, which might be interpreted as paving the way for Skelton’s own elision of her American nationality.

Socio-political / Historical Background

It is noteworthy that—after decades of debate within the Anglican Communion around the ordination of women—Skelton elected not to foreground her gender when representing herself as an episcopal candidate. Nevertheless, her gender was portrayed as newsworthy by the Canadian press; and opposition to the ordination of female bishops remains strident elsewhere in the Anglican Communion. It would seem, then, that Skelton’s elision of her gender may have been strategically intended to downplay a potentially disadvantageous identification.

Similarly, notwithstanding the fact that the blessing of same-sex marriages has been one of the chief concerns faced by the Anglican Communion in recent years, Skelton did not directly address this issue in her personal statement—although she did put her support for same-sex blessings on public record *after* her electoral success (Todd, 2014). In this way, she represented herself as a theological liberal—endorsement of same-sex relationships being widely bound to liberal forms of Christianity (Young, 2010). Yet, within her campaign materials, Skelton appears to have strategically avoided this issue—like a politician seeking to “protect and further [her] own [career]” (Obeng, 1997, p. 49)—signalling her stance on same-sex relationships only indirectly via the following “conversational implicature” (Grice, 1975): “a love of being with . . . *a diversity of individuals and groups (many cultures, many ages, diverse styles of life and life circumstances . . .)*.”

PDA: Critically Celebrating Social Change

Positive Discourse Analysis contributes to this study by motivating the selection of Skelton’s campaign materials as a research site and serving as a vehicle for reflexivity on the part of the analyst. It is important to clarify, however, that—unlike Macgilchrist’s (2007) simplistic conceptualisation of the term “positive”—I use this term to refer, in the first instance, to the moment of social change represented by Skelton’s election (and pre-empted by her electoral campaign). For many in New Westminster (and elsewhere)—particularly women and members of the LGBTQ community—Skelton’s success represents a cause for celebration. It signifies the continued triumph of Bishop Ingham’s

liberal, egalitarian legacy over more conservative theological discourses, the latter of which are often perceived to operate “in the service of abusive power” (Martin, 2004b, p. 197) because of their opposition to same-sex unions and women assuming ecclesiastical leadership roles. Consequently, as the harbinger of liberating social change, Skelton’s election materials warrant discourse analytic attention.

Second, “positive” here indicates the analyst’s evaluation of the social change foreshadowed in Skelton’s statement. Because PDA requires analysts to “put our values on the line” (Martin, 2004b, p. 184), it provides both an imperative and an opportunity to focus reflexivity on the ideas, events and social structures that they positively evaluate. In this case, affirming Skelton’s election as “positive” implicitly positions the analyst as endorsing a theologically liberal—or, at least, liberal humanist—agenda. For, as Elinor Ochs (1993) has observed, particular attitudinal stances can be *indirectly constitutive* of particular social identities, within specific communities. I would argue further, however, that adopting a Positive Discourse Analytic approach also demands greater specification and justification of the analyst’s stance than is often seen in Critical Discourse Analysis, where left-leaning commitments are commonly presupposed (if not *de rigueur*). To wit, I maintain that an analyst affirming Skelton’s election ought to explain both what precisely is positive about Skelton’s success, and why.

Only in the third instance—and then only potentially, from my perspective—might “positive” denote discursive characteristics that could assist Critical Discourse Analysis to make good on its goal of contributing to the design and production of more liberating texts. Skelton’s construal of episcopal power in terms of “listening,” “openness,” “relationship” and “love,” for example, suggests a liberating alternative to the notorious abuses of ecclesiastical power by which so many have been hurt.

Complementary Approaches

I have sought here to show that Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA), the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) and Positive Discourse Analysis (PDA) represent complementary frameworks for analysing discursive construals of religious identity. First, I consider MCA to be a fruitful starting point because I concur with Schegloff

(1997, p. 184) that “serious critical discourse analysis presupposes serious formal analysis, and is addressed to its product.” MCA focuses attention on fine-grained elements of language often overlooked by Critical Discourse Analysis and reminds us not to “deny [religious] persons their usual ‘first person authority’” (Godlove, 2000, p. 165). For, as Sacks (1992) observes, all people can be categorized *accurately* in multiple ways, but not all categorizations are *relevant* in particular situations.

Second, DHA expands on the territory traversed by MCA by addressing argumentation strategies and contextual factors, both of which shed additional light on religious self-categorization—which is not typically prioritised in everyday life. On the contrary, people routinely bring to religion diverse “category knowledges” (Baker, 2004, p. 167), with which they “organize [their] characterizations of what [they] see or hear” (p. 164). Consequently, familiarity with the context in which religious texts are produced is essential to analysing religious discourse—and I have therefore allowed myself the analytical “self-indulgence” (Schegloff, 1999a, p. 579) here of using my own knowledge of Canadian Anglicanism to interpret Skelton’s self-representation.

Third, one of the key critiques of Critical Discourse Analysis—from which MCA is not immune—is that “very few studies . . . display much interest in . . . explaining the protocol according to which [the texts in question] were gathered” (Haig, 2004, p. 144). By contrast, Positive Discourse Analysis provides an explicit rationale for text selection. Moreover, from my perspective, it also demands greater reflexivity from analysts than do either MCA or DHA because “put[ting] our values on the line” (Martin, 2004b, p. 184) invites justification—rather than merely declaration—of value judgments. Finally, I would argue that, by viewing PDA as an opportunity to value positively *moments of social change*, rather than discourses, and by allowing PDA to focus DHA, one is better able both to avoid falling prey to the naïve self-congratulation for which PDA has been rightly critiqued, and to recognise not only positive developments, but also areas in which it remains important to continue working for change.

Conclusion

The election of Melissa Skelton as Bishop of the Diocese of New Westminster represents an important moment in Canadian religious

life: a competition for ecclesiastical power; a decisive chapter in the precarious unfolding of liberal and conservative interests within the Anglican Church of Canada; and a melee of theological and gendered presuppositions and priorities. It was also a forum in which eight religious leaders represented themselves to—and thus opened themselves to evaluation by—a highly diverse audience. The analysis of Skelton's self-representation in this forum requires both an awareness that individuals have limited control over how others interpret "the signals about themselves which they send to others" (Jenkins, [1996] 2004, p. 20), and a concerted effort to distinguish between the religious identities assigned by individuals to themselves and those assigned to them by others. This chapter argues that critically combining Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA), the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) to Critical Discourse Analysis and Positive Discourse Analysis (PDA) is one fruitful way of satisfying both of these requirements.

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