SINCERELY, PENN:
THE USE OF STYLE IN THE ARGUMENTS OF PENN JILLETTE

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THE USE OF STYLE IN THE ARGUMENTS OF PENN JILLETTE

A Thesis

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Abstract

of

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This thesis rhetorically analyzes two artifacts from Penn Jillette on the topic of atheism using the methodology laid out in On Types of Style by Hermogenes. By examining two artifacts from the same general timeframe, by the same author on the same subject this thesis highlights the differences in style in order to draw conclusions about how the variations offered by a single author provide insight into the rhetor’s purpose.

All of these conclusions help describe how style is used in argumentation to emphasize and even create arguments. Secondarily this thesis suggests that the Hermogenic method could be used more broadly in the discipline to offer a broad based unifying methodology for further examinations of style in rhetoric and argumentation.

Approved by:

____________________________, Committee Chair
Mark A.E. Williams
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Chapter 1

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

Style has generally been relegated to some sort of metaphorical icing on the cake of a good argument. This thesis will explore how stylistic decisions are more central to argument than is often thought. This can be done best by comparing two artifacts that differ in stylistic decisions and then examining how these decisions affect the overall argument.

1.1. Artifacts for Analysis

The two artifacts this thesis will discuss are from Penn Jillette. It is important to note that Penn Jillette’s work is of importance in and of itself. His influence on pop culture is unmistakable. His work with the comedy/magic duo Penn & Teller has been a staple of American magic since the 1980’s. Penn & Teller continue to work as a team on Penn & Teller: Bullshit! as well as having a successful stage show in Las Vegas. Jillette has been involved in over a dozen movies either as an actor or producer since 1985 including Penn & Teller Are Dead and his most recent film The Aristocrats (“Penn Jillette”). Penn has appeared in primetime television shows like Friends, Sabrina the Teenage Witch, Babylon 5 and most recently Dancing with the Stars. (Hollywood.com)

Regardless of whether people consider him to be an illusionist, comedian, actor, or game show host, it is hard to argue with his presence as a popular culture icon.

Jillette is the H.L. Mencken research fellow at the CATO Institute (CATO.org). He is also listed as having lectured at MIT and Oxford lecturing on both his work as an
illusionist as well as his debunking of religion (Allison and Gediman; Dubner). He is also the bestselling author of Sock and Cruel Tricks for Dear Friends and How to Cheat Your Friends at Poker. Jillette also wrote for PC-Computing, Regulation magazine, and Excite(Pennandteller.com). Jillette is also the patent holder for a “Hydro Therapeutic Stimulator” (Jillette).

The two artifacts exampled in this study highlight the academically interesting balance of popular culture and atheistic apologia. This thesis will example how a single author can in fact make two artifacts on the same topic but, by using differing styles, have very distinctive and essentially different arguments. It is by having a single author, and a single topic that it is easiest to example how style interacts with argument.

Artifact 1 appeared first as a radio essay for NPR’s This I believe on November 21, 2005. Jillette entitles the essay “There is no God.” His essay has also been included as one of the essays in the 2007 book This I Believe: The Personal Philosophies of Remarkable Men and Women (Allison and Gediman) and remains on the NPR website in both written and recorded form (Jilette). Between the radio audience at the time, the people who purchased the book and those people who visit the website, a sizeable audience is possible.

This I Believe as a program is clearly geared toward the educated demographic. The NPR website for the program has pre-made curriculum for adding the radio show to Elementary, High School and University educational programs. Their coursework can be seen in a number of classrooms around the country including those at CSU Sacramento. The process of creating a credo and being able to construct an essay defending that credo
is part of the essential skills for critical thinking and argumentation. The recognition of this and the conscious attempt to include scholars and schools in the process examples the difference between This I Believe and Jillette’s Showtime Program Bullshit!

Jillette’s importance here is that he is functioning as someone arguing for a skeptical atheism along the lines of men like Dawkins, Sagan and Shermer. The choices he makes here are going to be thoroughly considered by a spectrum of people who have vested interests in the issue but also in understanding the argument. This communication context is typified by scientific discussions existing alongside more humanities based discourse. Jillette as an author is clearly going to have different expectations from this audience than one would have in other communication contexts.

Artifact 2 is from the Showtime series Penn & Teller: Bullshit! in an episode called “The Bible: Fact or Fiction?” This artifact is certainly more populist as it is a television show and expected to draw in a viewing audience. From the title alone one can discern differences in style between Bullshit! And This I Believe, one is designed to be inflammatory and confrontational while the other is meant to be far more explanatory and less inflammatory. That is not to say however that people are going to be more or less critical, only that there are two distinct audiences.

Bullshit! Is a well-received show having an 8.8/10 on IMDB and having been renewed by Showtime for seven seasons(IMDB "Penn & Teller: Bullshit!" (2003)). Bullshit has been nominated for 13 primetime Emmys, 4 Writer’s Guild of America Awards, and 1 Director’s Guild of America award (IMDB "Penn & Teller: Bullshit!" (2003)). Unlike a single radio address the show has more time to develop a
particular “character” with the audience and set expectations, and the style of the show is
developed over time but also vital to how the audience responds. For example if the tone
were to change between seasons there would likely be ratings changes (for better or
worse) based on the audience’s reception of the new style.

Given the differences between Bullshit! and This I Believe it is reasonable to
assume there would be stylistic changes. These artifacts appear on two very different
mediums, of course there will be differing contextual concerns. While there are
significant differences both pieces share a common timeframe (2004/2005), both are
mediated, they share a common author (Penn Jillette) and they both share a common
claim; that the claims of religion are false

By removing as many variables as possible from the equation it is hoped the style
used should be more obvious and therefore easier to analyze. Because the timeframe is
similar there will not be conflicting social movements taking place in either piece. By
narrowing the topic the audience is reduced to only those people wishing to participate in
a particular discussion. By having only a single author, while particular motivations may
change the worldview, public persona, and other personal variables are largely removed
from contention. Also by having both artifacts mediated they can be more easily
compared. The similarity of these two pieces will function as a baseline from which
stylistic shifts can be more thoughtfully analyzed.
1.2. **Purpose of Thesis**

This thesis will not only build on the current body of work dealing with style as argument but will employ a methodological framework that will reveal how style creates specific arguments. It will do so by using a Hermogenic model. Hermogenes, who flourished in the second century developed a robust stylistic system used as an educational tool into the late 1500’s (Corbett and Connors). This system shows how, by combining particular stylistic elements in a particular manner, an author then creates a very specific set of audience responses (Williams "How Style Works: The System of Hermogenes of Tarsus"). By controlling these responses stylistically, different arguments for the same claim can be made. This thesis relies on these Hermogenic concepts of style in order to identify the ways in which Jillette creates different arguments through his stylistic choices.

1.3. **Rhetoric and Argumentation**

Rhetoric has been paired with persuasion since the ancient world. Indeed the original genres of rhetoric as described by Aristotle dealt largely with decision-making and persuasion. These genres example the indivisible nature of rhetoric and argument, that in order to make an argument one must present it in a persuasive fashion. While it’s clear by the division between our journals that argumentation is a particular area of emphasis, it is also clear that all rhetoricians consider the impact of rhetoric on the audience as primary to our work.
One quite reasonable starting point to example the relationship between rhetoric and argument is Thomas Conley’s “The Enthymeme in Perspective.” His work to describe enthymemetic arguments is seminal in understanding the relationship of argument in rhetoric. He goes back to Aristotle and begins to explicitly relate how enthymemes work to how rhetoric functions.

Almost everyone seems to agree, to start, that an enthymeme, if it is anything, is a "rhetorical syllogism." Now since "enthymeme" is not something that one can point to or hold up for inspection, but only what rhetoricians have said it is, it is important that anyone who cares to talk authoritatively about enthymemes be aware of how complex the history of the term is. Yet most of what we read about enthymemes is alarmingly casual about the tangled history of disagreements about just what an enthymeme is. (Conley "The Enthymeme in Perspective")

By clearly drawing forward the rhetorical elements of syllogisms and enthymemes Conley describes the rhetorical source for a argumentative construct. This link is important in allowing the use of rhetorical ideas in the field of argument. Without this kind of work the rhetorical ideas of style could never be introduced into a discussion about argumentation.

Another seminal work in creating this relationship between rhetoric and argumentation is Joseph P. Wenzel’s “The Rhetorical View of Argumentation: Exploring a Paradigm” where he draws out the discussion of how rhetoric and argument interact. Wenzel describes several author’s views of argument as well as drawing from rhetorical sources, but through his description of a “rhetorical paradigm” draws in clear focus the ways in which rhetorical analysis helps us to understand argumentative tropes, forms and structures by turning them into rhetorical events.
In attempting to clarify the different roles of logic and rhetoric in the study of argumentation, I recently claimed that rhetoric is a perspective we take to examine all the ways by which meaning is created symbolically among people, that the business of rhetoric is to figure out how arguments get themselves made, and that within a rhetorical perspective, "argument" is an open-ended construct. Hence, studies of argumentative discourse that yield new insights into the ways in which understanding is created among speakers and listeners (and writers and readers) should be valued highly. (Wenzel)

Here we can see exactly how Wenzel believes that rhetoric and argumentation serve to inform one another’s perspectives on a given dialogue. This relationship is vital to making rhetorical tools useful to argumentation theory.

Even those authors who are not trying to draw a particular line between rhetoric and argumentations do so almost by accident. The original sources for logic and structure are all classical rhetoricians. The use of Aristotle’s system of syllogisms and enthymemes is at the heart of any discussion on logic that appears in an argumentation setting. In fact, many argument scholars refer to enthymemes as “rhetorical syllogisms” which draws an inexorable link between the two studies (Hitchcock).

By clarifying the root level conjunction of the two disciplines we understand that rhetorical tools are at their essence argumentative tools. In particular, arguments that are put before the public for decision-making are either deliberative or forensic in their nature and part of the rhetorical division of genres. But in truth there is an even stronger relationship between rhetorical genre and argumentation, even the epidictic genre, which is thought to be celebratory, can be used as a tool to forward a more implicit social argument.

Williams discusses the connection between the epidictic genre and the moral.
While it is easy to see how deliberative or forensic speaking would seek to argue the truth of something or the best present path for action, it is less easy to see how celebratory speaking would affect argument. However, as Williams notes, there is a strong tie to morality in this genre. His work to historically tie this genre to classical ideals of truth beauty and goodness allows for epidictic rhetoric to function less as a direct argument and more as an agenda setting argument (Williams "A Short Rope and a High Limb: What Epideictic Style Teaches Us"). While such epidictic agenda setting may not be as explicit as the Toulmin “data-warrant-claim” model, it tells us what we should be arguing about.

So here we see that even the least argumentative genre of rhetoric still invites people to celebrate some things and speak against others. By setting such a contrast between ideas it can be said that even a celebratory speech argues for how the world should be maintained, making a passive argument for beliefs and policies.

1.4. Style as a Rhetorical Cannon

Style has had a clear place in the study and practice of rhetoric since it’s classical inception. As early as Theophrastus and Socrates we can see stylistic instruction for use in oratory. The idea of things like word choice as an element of style are clearly laid out in classical texts such as Aristotle’s Rhetoric and Quintilian: “Those words are the most satisfactory which give the best expression to the thoughts of our mind and produce the effect which we desire upon the minds of the judges” (Quintilian).

When we consider classical rhetoric there is a clear emphasis on five overall principles: invention, style, memory, arrangement and delivery. While the central focus
of many authors is on invention there is a great deal of classical literature dealing with the rhetorical cannon of style. Classical texts like Rhetorica ad Herennium and Intitutio Oratoria are seminal in the study of Rhetoric even in modern studies. These texts however focus on basic principles and developing an overarching taxonomy of tropes and devices. There are later texts from Hermogenes, Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Longinus that deal with style even in the classical sense as something more generalized into types of style not simply a collection of devices.

Rhetorical studies related to genre in fact borrow heavily from the identification of stylistic devices and choices and working to organize communication based on common stylistic elements. There are numerous examples of generic criticism focusing on identifying typical forms or tropes and then using those groupings to classify a particular artifact into a “genre” (Zyskind; Campbell and Jamieson; Fisher). With this kind of trope gathering technique, style has become more about generic classification than about a conscious series of choices that influence the persuasion that takes place.

Perleman & Tytecha have a clear vision of the style of argument not only producing argumentative effects, but also creating a relationship between the speaker and the audience.

The form in which data are presented, besides aiming at producing argumentative effects in relation to the object of discourse, may also exhibit a set of characteristics connected with communion with the audience (Perelman and Olbrects-Tyteca).

This Theme of social communion is echoed when, examining social structures and discourse. Perelman says “… to recognize that to each social structure there correspond particular modes of expressing social communion.” But this does not give us a system of
how to create such communion; it simply opens the conversation to determining some
kind of method or system. Simply describing that form has an effect on the outcome
doesn’t discuss how form creates this effect. That how is central to the current discussion
about style and argument.

Several times in A Rhetoric of Motives Kenneth Burke discusses classical
tropes, however, he also says:

“It is not our purpose here to analyze the lot in detail. We need but say enough to
establish the principle, and to indicate why the expressing of a proposition in one or
another of these rhetorical forms would involve “Identification,” first by inducing
the auditor to participate in the form, as a “universal” locus of appeal, and next by
trying to include a partisan statement within the same pale of assent.” (Burke)

Burke is clearly a seminal author in rhetoric, and his discussion of how authors craft
language to invite identification is central to the entire field of Dramatism in Rhetoric.
Ranging from his work with the Dramatic Pentad to his work on consubstantiation he
spends a good deal of time and effort discussing elements closely related to style.
However his treatment of style is more as a social construct, something different enough
from the classical description that his work can be seen as peripheral to a directed
discussion of how authors use style. Burke and Perelman do provide clear examples of
authors who recognize a connection between style and argument. In fact they invite
rhetoricians to explore this connection more deeply by touching on style without
providing a particular framework devoted to style. This invitation in recent years has been
taken up by a number of authors dealing with the subject of style and its relationship to
argumentation. For example, some argue that the inherent asymmetry that exists in the
Perlemanian construct of the Pseudo-Argument can be stylistically employed rather than
implying hypocrisy on the part of the rhetor (Danblon). Other authors have built on Burke’s description by discussing the importance of linguistic forms in dialectical-rhetorical transcendence.

This process of linguistic transformation depends not only upon the abstractive and transformative power of language, as in the Grammar, but also upon the power of the poetic imagination. (Zappen).

Zappen is working with the deeply conceptual terms of Burke to work toward how language itself can create a stylistic effect.

When trying to set up formal propriety as a rhetorical norm, Manolescu clearly sets Burke forward as not only a reason to engage in the discussion but as a starting point for method.

I propose that we use Burke’s (1968) conception of form as a starting point for understanding formal propriety. In ‘Psychology and Form’ Burke is primarily concerned with artistic form and aesthetic judgment, but his analysis of form has important implications for the analysis and evaluation of argumentation. Burke describes form as ‘the creation of an appetite in the mind of the auditor, and the adequate satisfying of that appetite’ (31). In his analysis of form, Burke describes a work as having form ‘in so far as one part of it leads a reader to anticipate another part, to be gratified by the sequence’ (124). The audience participates in argumentation by means of expectation and fulfillment; argumentation offers the potential for audience participation insofar as it involves formal appeals. (Manolescu "Formal Propriety as Rhetorical Norm")

Burke as a starting point allows for authors to build on his work and delve more into how one Constructs their style. This piece begins with the poetic and artistic ideals of burke to develop her concepts of formal propriety. Manolescu is not alone in looking for connections between style and argument.

A number of other scholars have taken this rhetorical cannon and tried to use it in a more argumentative format. While not particularly doing this as argument theory, it is
using style to discuss argumentative rhetoric. There simply isn’t a unified way of dealing with rhetorical devices in argumentative settings. This is exactly what Conley hints at when he says “Occasionally, one runs across a discussion of style in a textbook on practical argumentation or rhetorical criticism; but style in such books is usually conceived of as a variable”("The Enthymeme in Perspective" 181). It is also what Jeanne Fahnestock is talking about when she writes “But the connections between rhetorical stylistics and dialectic were made especially transparent in the 16th century…”(Fahnestock). For her this discussion was at one time fused but has been severed somewhere along the way. David Hitchcock touches on the issue when he says “The revised conception can then be naturally extended to include also what we might call ‘enthymematic consequence’”(Hitchcock). Manolescu continues to get to the heart of it when she says “After overviewing a normative pragmatic perspective on appealing to emotions in argumentation, I present answers to these questions from pragma-dialectical, informal logical, and rhetorical perspectives..”(Manolescu "A Normative Pragmatic Perspective on Appealing to Emotions in Argumentation") Most recently Mark A.E. Williams presents that it is necessary to understand how style and argument interact “in order to shed light on those complex relationships between ideas of the Good and the Beautiful and between style and argument that are necessary to grasp the nature and significance of the epideictic enterprise in the classical world, and perhaps our own as well”("A Short Rope and a High Limb: What Epideictic Style Teaches Us" 1).

Rhetoricians deal with various contexts surrounding the rhetoric they study. Because of this variety they have many ways of trying to access any particular artifact.
Some try to use a regimented social science while others try for a far more artful approach. Zulick (1998) describes poetic figures as creating sublimation:

Too often in argumentation studies, an emphasis on argumentative norms fails to give adequate weight to elements of emotion and style that are essential to public speech at its best, not only in ordinary practice but especially in those rare moments where public speech arrives at the sublime. In this paper we examine the coordination of argument with figurative and emotive language whose combination yields sublime effects in the poetry of the Hebrew prophets as well as in examples of modern discourse. It is shown that poetic figures, while not fully reducible to argumentative norms, nor rational in the sense commonly applied to argumentation, do in fact contribute in propriety in public discourse; moreover, they surpass mere propriety to generate moments of the sublime.(481)

Zulick does not, however, describe a method for how these figures create a sublime style. She is dealing with argumentative discourse but he attempts to access it through an artistic composition. This is similar to Burke in Grammar of Motives and Zappen who deals with linguistic transformation. These approaches while all similar still lack a coherent common methodology.

Some authors try instead to follow figures of speech and try to categorize and identify these in order to access rhetorical style in argumentation theory.

This paper deals with the treatment of figures of speech in Perelman’s and Olbrechts-Tyteca’s Treatise on Argumentation (TA), and, more broadly, with the place of figures in argumentation theory. The contrast between two conceptions (or two domains) of rhetoric, “a rhetoric of figures” and “a rhetoric of argument” can be traced back to Ramus, and it has been revived in the seventies through the perception of an incommensurability between Perelman’s “New Rhetoric” and the École de Liége’s “General Rhetoric”(325).

Plantin shows the directness with which some authors link style and argumentation theory. Plantin also refers back to Pereleman’s call toward accessing style through this identification of tropes and figures. This categorization is another method that some use
to access style. The issue continues that it is not a unified method, but an adaptation of a previous idea.

There are a number of authors dealing with subjects outside Rhetoric who have begun to equate style with a form of argument. Their work borrows heavily from Rhetoric in an attempt to get at style. Chris Anderson’s book “Style as Argument: Contemporary American Nonfiction” is an example of such a tie between literary style derived from rhetoric and the ideas of argumentation. In it Anderson takes a number of modern American authors as case studies in order to draw out the relationship between their styles and their implied arguments.

I will also try to develop another, more important claim about genre in the course of the interpretations that follow. In my view nonfiction reportage is more than informative: it is an effort to persuade us to attitudes, interpretations, opinions, even actions. The rhetoric of reportage is subtle – it must be interpreted, the texts read carefully for nuances of imagery and tone – but it is there, powerful and persuasive. Hollowell, Weber, and Hellman have demonstrated the use of point of view, symbolism and other literary techniques makes the New Journalism inherently and consciously “fictive.” Only a naïve reader, they suggest, ever regarded The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test or In Cold Blood as literally true or free of the author’s shaping attitudes and perceptions. The argument I will make is that theses broadly “literary” devices are perhaps more importantly rhetorical strategies for shaping the reader’s attitudes and perceptions. At least since Wayne Booth’s Rhetoric of Fiction, we have known that everything an author “shows” will serve to “tell,” which is to say that the dramatic presentations of contemporary prose tacitly argue for values and attempt to persuade us to adopt those values. (Anderson)

Literary criticism has long relied on rhetorical concepts of style to analyze various artifacts (McAlindon; Butler; Graff; Merrow; McIntosh). They have used stylistic tools to discuss humor and wit (Skouen). They even discussed reportage in the classical world (Fortenbaugh). They also discussed the elements of style as they related to more
inflammatory artifacts that in many ways border on argumentation. As Conley says “If you want to pick a fight with someone, making a few insulting remarks is usually a good way to start.” ("No Way to Pick a Fight: A Note on J. C. Scaliger’s First Oratio Contra Erasmus")

In other fields, such as law, authors are employing rhetorical tools in a similar way. For example, in “Argument as Character” Frug argues that by using rhetoric one may look at how one combines elements in order to create an audience response, these elements are strikingly similar to style, though the vocabulary Frug uses is less specific.

I suggest, in other words, that we look at legal argument as an example of rhetoric. A rhetorical analysis of legal argument involves examining its elements, such as facts, precedents and principles, not in terms of how they support the argument’s conclusion but in terms of how they form attitudes or induce actions in others... It doesn't matter, from a rhetorical point of view, that each of these elements of legal argument is contestable; what matters is how these elements are combined to constitute an appeal to an audience—how they present a view of the world which others are asked to share. Traditional legal analysis, by emphasizing the search for the sources of law, discounts its evangelical element; rhetorical analysis, by contrast, makes this aspect its focus. (Frug)

However Frug is also quick to note that “Rhetorical analysis, however, is not a methodology; rhetoricians employ an enormous variety of techniques to analyze the phenomenon of persuasion” (Frug). Which again leads to the need for a clear method of analysis for stylistic devices. Without a clear “how to” manual on style, rhetoric, and by extension argumentation, will continue to have this difficulty. Other legal authors however have dealt with topics of rhetoric as they relate to things like Supreme Court decisions (Danisch).
Drama, and more recently film and television, have also long discussed style as being integral to how persuasion and argument are formulated.

There is no question that the so-called "Aristotelian unities of time, place and action" were, for several centuries, of primary importance in theatrical theory and criticism. At present, however, creative and critical reliance on these unities is slight or non-existent…There is a theatrical unity, however, that is still aesthetically omnipresent and critically decisive. As the Aristotelian unities once were… It is almost universally accepted by playwrights, directors and audiences. There is no doubt that this unity, which also existed when the others were at full strength, has been and is now the most powerful of all. It is the unity of style.(Kirby)

Even in 1971, the field of drama was dealing with style as being central to their work in persuasion. They were also using a rhetorician to do so, reaching all the way back to Aristotle. While it would be difficult to call dramatic persuasion argument, the forms of style, particularly a visual style were important to their work in making fictional situations believable to their audience. That has evolved over time into more modern examples dealing with reality television, cinematography and marketing (Lieberman and Hegarty; Jeong; Lauerbach; Milford).

By highlighting Stewart and Colbert’s comic strategies, I will demonstrate the sociopolitical functions of their critical discourses. In other words, how Stewart and Colbert do what they do tells us much about whether what they do is very useful. (Waisanen)

Papers like Waisanen’s highlight the ways in which theatre and media are now being considered part of the public argument on political issues and studies like this, which highlight how they go about blending comedy and criticism, are clear examples of how argument and style are intersecting.

The difficulty with all of these examples (theatrical, legal, literary, and even argumentative and rhetorical) is that no two studies seem to have the same methodology.
for identifying how style functions in their artifacts. This paper explores a method for
finding how rhetors use elements of style to create audience responses.

1.5. **Methodology**

Hermogenes of Tarsus is one of the most important later Greek writers on the
subject of rhetoric (Sloane). In fact Hermogenes’ On Ideas is considered to be one of the
most extensive pieces of criticism to escape the second sophistic (Rutherford "Inverting
the Canon: Hermogenes on Literature"). The pyrogymnasmata of Hermogenes continued
to be used as an educational tool about how to write well into the sixteenth century
(Corbett and Connors). In fact the Hermogenic works on style and rhetoric were also
widely referenced in academic discourse into the 1500’s (Rebhorn).

Hermogenes influence extends far beyond the 1500’s though. His work has
influenced rhetoricians like Perleman & Tytech, Conley, Manlecu, LeRoux and
Fahnestock all of whom are cited earlier in this thesis. Williams also directly uses
Hermogenes, though his focus is on Hermogenes On Invention more than On Ideas of
Style. Michel Patillon argues that Hermogenes is not only relevant to the contemporary
discussion but is forward thinking and anticipates the upcoming changes in the field
(Patillon). Patillon is referenced by George Kennedy as being one of the most
distinguished scholars on antiquity, particularly later antiquity (Kennedy). Further
Rutherford says that the particular claim of Patillon that Hermogenes is at least on par
with or exceeds the modern theories of style “is important and should meet with general
acceptance”(Rutherford "Hermogenes and Linguistics").
The most reliable source for Hermogenes’ biography comes from a second sophistic author Flavius Philostratus who describes Hermogenes in his work Lives of the Sophists.

Hermogenes who was born at Tarsus, by the time he was fifteen had attained such a reputation as a sophist that even the Emperor Marcus became eager to hear him. At any rate Marcus made the journey to hear him declaim, and was delighted with his formal discourse, but marveled at him when he declaimed extempore, and gave him splendid presents. But when Hermogenes arrive at manhood his powers suddenly deserted him, though this was not due to any apparent disease, and this provided the envious with and occasion for their wit… He died at a ripe old age, but accounted as one of the rank and file, for he became despised when his skill in his art deserted him.(Philostratus and Eunapius)

This history at least confirms that Hermogene’s was thought to be a great speaker, though for reference about his written works we refer to the Suda, a tenth century encyclopedic compilation. The Suda lists his works as “On Issues (1 book), On Types of Style (2 books); On Coele Syria (2 Books)” (Whitehead). The suda also lists other authors written commentaries on this works as far back as the fifth century (Whitehead).

And yet, over the course of twelve centuries, in strikingly different specific historical situations, cultures, and even languages, this text informed the rhetorical critic, and the orator, and the poet on the intricacies of style.(Williams "How Style Works: The System of Hermognes of Tarsus")

Taken as a whole we can see an author who as a fifteen-year-old boy wrote volumes about rhetoric that are still being translated and included in scholarly work today.

Of the five texts that are sometimes attributed to Hermogenes only two are certain, one of those is On the Ideas Types of Style. The only complete modern translation of On types of Style is by Cecil Wooten (1987). As Wooten himself notes, On Types of Style is a difficult text to translate and Wooten admits to paraphrasing and
reordering some things in order to preserve clarity at the expense of literal accuracy
(Wooten xvii).

This thesis will also prefer its own labels for some technical terms in Wooten’s
translation in order to avoid confusion with other rhetorical meanings. This thesis will
also capitalize the Secondary Constructs and Tertiary Styles (Beauty, Rapidity,
Character, Sincerity, etc.) in order to distinguish between the technical and common
usage of those words. This capitalization is a liberty taken to increase clarity in what
might otherwise be a confusing text, it is not a device Wooten employs. In a similar
effort this thesis will italicize the six Primary Elements in order to distinguish them from
other meanings but also to distinguish them from the Secondary Constructs as well as the
Tertiary Styles that they help construct.

Hermogenes describes his system as being used not only for the critic, which is
how we intend to use it, but also for orators. Hermogenes’ On Types of Style, like his
Progymnasmata lasted for hundreds of years as lessons on how to craft language, and his
particular emphasis on making manuals of teaching makes his work of particular value.
However it is the ability of his work to provide the tools for construction, and as a critic
de-construction, that provides us with clear methodology.

This knowledge would be indispensable to anyone who wanted to be able to
evaluate the style of others, either of the older writers or of those who have lived
more recently, with reference to what is excellent and accurate, and what is not. And if someone wished to be the craftsman of fine and noble speeches himself,
speeches such as the ancients produced, an acquaintance with this theory is also
indispensable, unless he is going to stray far from what is accurate. (Wooten 1)

He also notes the duality of his system while discussing its necessary complexity.
And so, the Ideas of style being so especially necessary both to those who will employ them and to those wishing to know how to be a critic… it cannot surprise us when we find that this is neither an easy subject, nor one requiring simple treatment. (Wooten 2)

1.6. The Hermogenic System of Style

This section contains a cursory overview of the system of Hermogenes. Contemporary sources that discuss the overall system are very limited and much of what follows here is taken from Williams’ “How Style Works,” which is currently under scholastic review (Williams "How Style Works: The System of Hermogones of Tarsus"). Earlier versions of this summary were discusses and employed in papers at a number of conferences including the International Communication Convention, Southern States Communication Conference, National Communication Conference and most recently, the World Communication Conference in Maynooth, Ireland. Unfortunately there is no single chart that can truly draw out the depth of the Hermogenic system, the Figure 1 below, is a significantly oversimplified visualization adapted from Williams (2010) and should help by providing an overview.

The Hermogenic system is a layered system consisting of three parts. In this system all rhetoric begins with the Primary Elements. These concepts contain: thoughts, approaches, composition, diction, cadence and figures and are designed to be the building blocks of how a rhetor begins the process of taking ideas and making them into rhetoric. These Primary Elements are then combined and blended in order to create Secondary Constructs. These secondary Constructs (being built out of the primary elements) serve
as basic ideas of style. While some of these can very directly influence audience perceptions these secondary Constructs are generally a middle ground.

For example, one of these secondary Constructs is Solemnity. Being solemn is a stylistic choice but alone it is not enough to create a strong shift in the audience. However Solemnity doesn’t simply appear in one’s rhetoric, it must be created. Solemnity is created with the thoughts of abstract ideas, things like goodness, truth or justice. One then approaches the subject directly, without over qualifying one’s statements. When one is composing the language Hermogenes notes that Solemn speech has more nouns and less verbs while focusing on short clauses. The diction of the speech should use long syllables and diphthongs in order to increase the dignity of the speech. In all of these cases, we are blending different uses of the Primary elements (diction, composition, thoughts, etc.) in order to create a Solemn effect in the speech.

Solemnity is only one secondary construct out of fifteen described by Hermogenes. These secondary Constructs are often grouped together and combined again into a Tertiary Style. Tertiary styles are defined by the idea that they are the refined forms of style, which are used in combination to influence the audience directly. Secondary Constructs can create a response but they are more powerful when they are combined into the Tertiary Styles. In some cases, as with the Secondary Construct of Indignation and the Tertiary Style of Sincerity, the Secondary Construct functions more as tint or shade. By including more or less indignation the tone of the Sincerity changes. Some sets of Secondary Constructs like those found in the Tertiary Style of Character are more central. Modesty, Simplicity, Sweetness and Subtlety combine to create the
Tertiary Style of Character and without any one of them, the resulting Style would lack something essential.

Another complicating factor is that Beauty and Rapidity serve as both a Secondary construct and a Tertiary Style. This is because one creates Rapidity directly from the Primary elements, thus making it a secondary construct, but Rapidity also can be used to directly influence the audience, making it a Tertiary Style.

Going back to the previous example of Solemnity, we saw how the Primary Elements were blended to create a Secondary construct. Solemnity is combined with Asperity, Vehemence, Brilliance, Florescence and Abundance to create the Tertiary Style of Grandeur. So if we began our speech with a solemn passage about a abstract concept, we might then want to balance that with a passage dealing with Brilliance. Brilliance is a similar Construct to Solemnity but it is less concerned with the large abstractions and focused on a smaller example. When using these examples we may wish to use Abundance in order to amplify the particular importance of one example, while using Asperity to denounce another group. Abundance and Asperity both are used when trying to deal with a person, group or event that is larger than the speaker, and they serve as opposing ends of a spectrum where one praises or blames that larger event or group. In a similar way Vehemence is used to condemn someone of lower standing than the rhetor while Florescence is designed to speak sweetly of someone lower than the rhetor.

The Tertiary Style of Grandeur, then, is created by six elements that tend to fall into three continuums. There is a dichotomy between Solemnity and Brilliance dealing with the scope of events and ideas that one speaks about, there is the dichotomy between
Abundance and Asperity dealing with how one amplifies or denounces those who are more important than the rhetor, and lastly the dichotomy between Vehemence and Florescence which speaks to how one treats those less important than the rhetor.

That intimate and complex relationship between Primary Elements and Secondary Constructs is then mirrored in the relationship between Constructs and Tertiary Styles. These layers of style represent a calculated effort to create rhetoric that then moves the audience in a particular way. That result is referred to by Hermogenes as Forcefulness. This forcefulness is the ultimate goal of rhetoric and the use of style in Hermogenes’ view. Therefore his system seeks to describe for both authors and critics how one Constructs that movement in the audience through the combination and use of stylistic elements.

Pictured at the top of Figure 1 (on the following page) are what will be referred to as the Primary Elements from which all rhetorical style is formed (Shown in black with white text). When those Elements are combined they create Secondary Constructs, more complicated than a particular element but not enough to create change in the audience (Shown at 50% gray with white text, also with truncated corners). Those Secondary Constructs are grouped together and again combined to create Tertiary Styles in the artifact (Shown at 25% gray with black text and a double outline). Two objects in the figure, Beauty and Rapidity, have two colors. They serve in Hermogenes’ view as both a Construct and a Style (which will be explained in more detail later). At the bottom of the figure is Forcefulness (Shown as a white oval with black text), which is the movement that is created in the audience by a well-styled artifact.
Beginning at the top of the figure there are Primary Elements. These are the foundational building blocks of Style. In order to understand the system as a whole one must first deal with the complexity encapsulated in these Elements. The first problem one encounters with this system is to try and discern exactly how many of these Primary Elements exist. There are eight named in the primary text: thought, approach, diction,
figures, clauses, composition, cadence, and rhythm. However there are a number of textual issues with this. When Hermogenes first introduces these Elements he lists three and subdivides the third.

Every speech has some thought or thoughts, an approach to the thought, and an expression that is adapted to these. Furthermore, the expression has, each one, individual elements, namely there are both figures and clauses, as well as composition and cadences, with the rhythm being organized from these two. (Williams "How Style Works: The System of Hermognes of Tarsus")

It is important to note that expression has figures and clauses, composition and cadence and even rhythms as subdivisions. Hermogenes also uses this classification in discussing Beauty later in the text and if this were the only way he referenced the Primary Elements then there would not be an issue.

Hermogenes however does not use this classification as his only model. In the same section dealing with the Primary Elements, he seems to discuss the Primary Elements as eight autonomous, equally important Elements. Williams notes that there is forcefulness in his tone when describing the Elements as eight separate threads. Williams describe Hermogenes very accurately as not using cadence, rhythm or composition in isolation very often.

In fact, of the more than 350 examples of stylistic virtues that he takes from Demosthenes, only a dozen or so solicit autonomous commentary on any single one of these three Elements. In about ten additional cases, composition, cadence, and rhythm are treated as a single effect (cf., e.g., Rabe 309-311) brought on by their interaction. These numbers stand in contrast to, say, figures (Hermogenes’ favorite Primary Element), which he discusses, autonomously, over a 130 times within those same examples from Demosthenes. He isolates approach in his discussion about 60 times; thoughts about 55. (Williams "How Style Works: The System of Hermognes of Tarsus" 9)
This thesis will then classify six Primary elements: thought, approach, diction, figures, clauses and composition. This compromise appears in the original source material when Hermogenes describes the interconnectivity of composition, cadence and rhythm (Rabe 218 & 34; Wooten 3 & 13) as well as in Hermogenes’ usage when describing how these Elements are employed, which seems to be closest to how Hermogenes intended. These primary elements are the direct ways in which an author creates Styles. By using varying combinations and variations of these Primary elements an author then creates what are called Secondary Constructs.

Interestingly Hermogenes does not seem interested in a strict reading of taxonomy. He in places refuses to defend the way in which he orders these Primary Elements, instead wishing to focus on how to use the system to create audience response.

They may provoke us about all these points, but we shall not quarrel with them. Put rhythm first or last in importance or in the middle as you wish. I shall be content to show what rhythms are appropriate to each type of style and to what extent rhythm can be applied to prose without turning it into song. If rhythm is as important in prose style as it is in music, let it be put first in importance. If not, it will be put in the order of importance that seems suitable to me. (Wooten 6)

Without digressing too far into the ordering of the Primary Elements it is worth noting that Hermogenes does describe taxonomy but is unwilling to discuss it further than to assert it and allow it to be used or dismissed. Hermogenes seems instead to be interested in the outcome of using his system. The Primary elements according to this do not need to be ordered in terms of importance, they are simply Constructs that help the author and critic understand the ways in which the audience is affected by resulting rhetoric.
The Primary Elements are designed not to be an end in and of themselves; instead they are simple Constructs. By using these elements to create a Secondary Construct and by using those Constructs in concert, one creates a Tertiary Style that will (if created correctly) direct the emotional state of the audience in a particular diction.

Hermogenes’ willingness to bend the rules in order to more clearly focus on the resulting audience state is not uncommon in the text itself. For example when discussing direct address:

Direct address seems in a way to be an approach as in “They turned to you, Aeschines, and you received them” ([Demosthenes] 18.82), but it appears to me to be more a figure than an approach. But whether it is a figure or an approach, it is one of those elements that create Rapidity in a speech, especially if it is used frequently. (Wooten 66)

This willingness to allow direct address to fall under either one of the Primary Elements shows that the interest here is more about the resulting audience response to the Tertiary Style of Rapidity than the discussion of taxonomy. There are several examples of this throughout Hermogenes’ writing but these examples should serve to solidify the ideas about Hermogenes being both a tool for critics to analyze rhetoric as well as for authors to use these Elements to craft it.

Hermogenes is very clear about the interaction of elements to create audience effects. He works very hard to describe that no Primary Element, nor any Secondary Construct or even Tertiary Style operates in isolation to create what he refers to as Forcefulness (Wooten 6-7). Forcefulness is created by the interaction of these parts, the balance of some the obvious inequity in others. This dynamic interaction creates the
ultimate goal of his rhetoric, which is to control and create a particular emotional or spiritual effect in the audience.

Hermogenes uses the metaphor of painting to describe his system in some very basic terms saying “to understand gray we must first understand black and white.” (Wooten 6) That metaphor however can be useful in understanding how the system functions as a whole. Beginning with the Primary Elements we have our primary colors. By mixing these in a particular balance one is able to create a Secondary Construct. If someone painted a canvas with only Red Blue and Yellow without any changes in hue or tint the resulting piece would be awkward and unsophisticated. However by combining these Primary elements to create Secondary Constructs like Orange, Green and Purple there are already more options.

Secondary Constructs are defined as being created directly from the primary elements. There are fifteen of these: Purity, Distinctness, Vehemence, Asperity, Florescence, Brilliance, Solemnity, Abundance, Beauty, Rapidity, Simplicity, Sweetness, Subtlety, Moderation and Indignation. Of these fifteen there are two, which are Tertiary Styles in and of themselves; meaning that they can be used to directly influence the emotions of the audience. The remaining thirteen Constructs are then rebalanced and used to create Tertiary Styles. These Constructs are the hues and tints that one mixes in order to get more complex shades of color. One can mix orange and green rather than having to calculate a particular balance of red, yellow and blue.

From these secondary colors the resulting shades and hues are akin to Tertiary Styles. These heavily nuanced rhetorical devices are not only made of the primary
elements but they represent larger structures than a particular figure or approach. They are particular uses of these primary elements, which then have become secondary Constructs.

An example offered by Hermogenes revolves around the secondary construct of Sweetness. To create Sweetness one first should deal with the Primary Element of thoughts. Thoughts that are characteristic of sweetness according to Hermogenes are related to the gods and mythology. Having those thoughts, one should think of approach. Approaches that convey sweetness are to deal with the topic as the primary theme in a narrative. If one wanted to include figures in creating sweetness they would need to involve straightforward grammar and no interruptions. (Wooten 4).

So we take primary colors like approach and thoughts, and combine them in various particular amounts to create the secondary color of Sweetness. Then if we used Sweetness in combination with Simplicity, Moderation and Subtlety we would have an element of Character in our rhetoric, Character being a Tertiary Style composed of the Secondary Constructs of Sweetness, Simplicity, Moderation and Subtlety.

The reason we have these distinctions is that while there are very specific parts used to make a Secondary construct, those need to be blended in order to create a style, which will then affect our audience (Wooten 3-6). Hermogenes is clear in pointing out that Sweetness and Simplicity are neither isolated nor enough to create a particular response in the audience. All artifacts contain all of these Constructs to varying degrees in varying ways. All artifacts therefore also contain all of the Primary Elements in varying combinations and types. One can use a number of figures in a particular speech, some of them might be clear, short, and precise, and others might be abstract and complicated. Those varied uses of the same Element would create different instances of
varying Constructs, which would then lead to varied applications of the six Tertiary Styles.

This system while precise is often immensely complicated. Just as in painting no one element can be described as the sole cause of an audience’s response. Even if you were to take something like Beauty, which is both a Secondary Construct (it is created directly from the Primary Elements) and a Tertiary Style (it is used to move the audiences emotions) you still cannot say the entire piece is created by any one Element.

Even Picasso during his blue period created images that while predominantly cool were still incredibly varied. While it is called his “blue” period it is not because he used only one tint of blue, or even one hue of blue. Each brush stroke while similar has some tiny variation. In that same way even a letter or speech while predominantly Beautiful still has literary swaths of Clarity, Grandeur, Rapidity, Character and Sincerity. Each sentence or word contains dabs of the Primary Elements, which combine to create a myriad of Secondary Construct strokes that when placed together or even too far apart tend to create these Tertiary Styles, which result in moving the audience one way or another.

Now, realizing the interdependence of the Elements, Constructs and Styles does not mean that we should not notice that particular stroke of cerulean that, when paired with the aquamarine, creates such a moment of calm. Neither stroke by itself could create that effect, but not recognizing them both is an incomplete assessment of the effect. If we can use such a tool as this system to be able to do analysis on the order that
is suggested here, we have a powerful method capable of dealing with incredibly diverse artifacts.

This method allows for at least three significant results:

1. Identification of particular Tertiary Styles, their compositional Secondary Constructs and the Primary Elements, which make them up.

2. Explanation how these particular Styles were constructed from the Elemental level to create an audience response

3. Critique how these aspects of style contribute to dialectical argument.

Understanding some of the relationships between these composite parts we can now briefly discuss the six Tertiary Styles. Each of these (including Beauty and Rapidity) is designed to create a particular response in the audience if properly constructed. By crafting a speech that has particular Styles which are woven together throughout the speech that rhetor can create certain points to drive an audience to anger and then soothe them with an offered solution, they can drive the audience to sorrow or rise them to jubilation. The rhetor may choose to emphasize particular styles at different times in the speech in order to take the audience through a journey, the rhetor might instead spend the entire speech driving toward a particular goal by strongly emphasizing a particular style the entire time. These choices are what make style such a powerful tool to rhetors and offer such a bountiful critical space.

To understand this idea more fully, here is a very brief discussion of one of the Tertiary Styles, with a passing overview of the other five. This will conclude the
discussion of methodology and allow for a more detailed explanation of the Style this 
Thesis will examine in the following chapter.

Clarity is one of the most straightforward Styles discussed and is the first Style that 
Hermogenes takes up. Clarity as a Tertiary Style is made up of two Secondary 

Constructs: Purity and Distinctness.

Unusual syntax and word order undermine clarity (231.26-232.2). Clarity can be 
increased by adding simple explanations to expressions that might otherwise be 
obscure (229.15-19). Furthermore, enumeration of points (236.21-237.2), 
previewing, and division of an idea into its causes or components (merismovV) 
all enhance clarity (238.17-22). Figures that create internal summaries (which 
Hermogenes labels ejpanalhvyeiV [239]), and rhetorical questions answered by 
the speaker (239.7-11) lead to Clarity. Simple, appropriate context and 
background can be helpful under the right circumstances, as well (236.16-21). 
(Williams "How Style Works: The System of Hermogones of Tarsus" 19)

What we begin to see with all of these particular pieces is that the overarching style 
draws out clearly enumerated and ordered sets of information. By answering questions, 
organizing information into clearly delineated parts where there are tidy beginnings and 
endings, these are all ways in which the style of Clarity brings things into focus for the 
audience. The audience is given the chance to find the conclusions of the author as 
clearly following or obvious.

What this means for an author is that through use of this style one can push the 
audience to find the conclusion to be fitting and obvious. There is a sense of ease in the 
mind of the audience because the conclusion feels natural and as though they have 
reasoned the subject through. When a critic sees this style being used they can see that 
the author is trying to create an “of course” moment in the audience and is forwarding a 
claim to which they wish to gain the audiences assent. Even when Hermogenes describes
those elements which undermine Clarity like unusual word order, he is describing that the mind of the audience may become confused trying to sort through the language and may be distracted from the ordered reasoning and sense of obviousness that is required for the clear style to function.

It is worth noting that not every passage that utilizes clarity will function the same way, Clarity can be juxtaposed against other styles in nearby passages to create other more layered effects and not every use of clarity will be particularly telling to the critic. Some speakers, particularly well-trained ones are often taught that introductions and conclusions, internal summaries and signposting are all requirements for speaking well. These are all elements of clarity that when used are not particularly indicative of the author trying to craft a particular style of speech. However these details can be very telling in other circumstances.

Take for example a speech given by a professor to a group of students about a particularly difficult and intricate subject. Rhetoric that has a developed sense of clarity will invite the students to identify with the professor as someone who is willing to break things down into easily agreeable parts. Students would be likely to think of this as reasonable and worth studying. However rhetoric that was steeped in complicated terminology or in depth analysis that required numerous metaphors or other complex forms of explanation would have very different goals than trying to attain student buy in.

Having briefly explored the scope of Clarity we can see that it is designed to bring the audience to an intuitive moment of understanding, to grant an “of course” sentiment to a given conclusion. In contrast to that idea is Grandeur, which seems to draw forth an
idea that there is a greater purpose to the rhetoric, often implying that someone or something has failed to live up to this timeless concept of how the world is or “should be.” The Style of Beauty is designed to show the world in a sense of symmetry and harmony, to bring a sense of calm to the situation where the audience can then be invited to emotionally move without threat into a new paradigm. Rapidity is designed to provide something that is textured and complicated but with a sense of authenticity in a world that seems full of stimuli. Character as a style is designed to invite the audience to embrace the author as worthy of their admiration or sympathy.

Sincerity is the Construct with which this Thesis will concern itself. The following chapter will delve more specifically into how Jillette uses the various Elements and Constructs to create two very distinct types of Sincerity and how these differences impact his arguments. Sincerity is generally designed to offer a voyeuristic insight into the author and lay bare their passions so that the audience can identify with the author and share their judgment on the topic.

1.6.1. *Sincerity as a construct*

Having completed the overview, there will be a more thorough explanation of the Secondary Construct that this thesis will focus upon. Sincerity is a unique Construct within the Hermogenic system. In order to best describe it a number of things need to happen. First and foremost among these is an exploration of exactly what Hermogenes was describing when he wrote about Sincerity. This affords the opportunity to look at Sincerity and break it down into its component elements. The way in which Sincerity
and Indignation are constructed is interesting because of the interplay Sincerity shares with a number of other Constructs and Styles. That is the first goal of our exploration, to come to understand what creates Sincerity as a style.

Having then discussed the intricate interplay of elements used to create Sincere speech, there can be a further exploration of the style. This exploration will consist of a discussion of how one can craft a seemingly un-crafted portion in an artifact. Simplicity is considered an unaffected style, it is largely spontaneous, and yet it is still something that is prepared in advance. That element of Sincerity is vital to understanding the style as a whole. Understanding how this style is created will then lead into a further discussion of the desired results of this style.

If every Style is designed to create an emotional response in the audience no discussion of style could be complete without a similar discussion. In this case that discussion will be about how the style of sincerity functions in inviting a particular response from the audience. While it’s impossible to determine the outcome of any speech beforehand, this thesis will examine how Sincerity attempts to create particular responses in the minds of the audience. This discussion will include examples provided by Hermogenes to explain the elements of Sincerity and their results. In offering both a discussion and examples of the Sincere style, the methodology this thesis will employ should become clear.

Sincerity is described by Hermogenes as both an unaffected and animated style. Hermogenes describes Sincerity as sharing thoughts with Simplicity and Modesty (Wooten 89-90). Hermogenes uses the term sincerity almost synonymously with the
term “spontaneous,” using spontaneous well over a dozen times in roughly 12 pages of text (Wooten 89-101). Also closely tied to this concept of spontaneity is the concept of character also mentioned more than a dozen times. The idea here is that Sincerity is a style wherein the audience sees the underlying passion of the rhetor. This passion is best seen in brief, spontaneous passages where it seems the crafted speech breaks down.

This style offers moments where the audience feels they have seen through the façade of the speech to glimpse the passion or motivation of the rhetor. In that moment the rhetor shows the audience something they desire without giving any advance notice. This allows the audience to be swept up in the moment of revelation and causes them to be moved by the rhetor. This can move an audience on either a grand scale or a very particular scale. By showing the audience a flash of their inspiration, the rhetor allows the audience to see a passion they wish to have in their own lives and which they can have by sharing the rhetor’s perspective.

In all spontaneous or sincere passages Hermogenes describes a sort of “show don’t tell” approach. This means that a rhetor who wants build a sincere style should not give any advance notice of using a sincere Style. If a rhetor wishes to for instance break the narrative flow of their speech in order to offer an aside to the audience, warning the audience of this in advance dilutes the effectiveness. This approach is used in all sincere passages but there are three other approaches that are more specific.

The first of these approaches is a very spontaneous outburst. These are generally simple statements that range from the inclusion of an oath or prayer to an angry rant or remark. With any kind of oath or outburst setting it up beforehand ruins it; these need to
be seemingly spontaneous. The second type of approach is to move through a passage without developing an introduction or using connective phrases. Examples of this would be moving between examples without summarizing or connecting the two. Public speaking classes often explain that authors need to signpost and add that connective language to help the audience open and close. Again with this approach it cannot be set up beforehand, it must appear to the audience to be something “off the cuff.” The third specific approach is to go back and fix something earlier in the passage. This breaks the natural sequence of the speech and again allows the audience to see the character of the author. By going back the author stops the forward momentum and allows the audience to see that the author is working to be honest and forthright by correcting or emphasizing something. This can be anything ranging from re-wording a passage because it was in error to clarifying a term in order to emphasize that idea in the audience’s mind. This cannot be set up beforehand but should be crafted by the rhetor. A rhetor cannot tell the audience they plan to fix a specific remark later but they can certainly craft a moment later in the speech to re-describe that idea in particular in order to create a link to a second instance or to re-enforce that idea as central to the overall theme.

In looking at these approaches to Sincerity it is even more apparent that there are strong ties between Sincerity and Character. All of these approaches are designed to offer the audience an unannounced look into the motives of the rhetor. The audience can see how central an idea is to the rhetor by a correction or emphasis, or they can see a moment of passion break through the rhetor’s composure, they can even sometimes witness the
author moving from idea to idea in a stream of consciousness. In all of these examples
the rhetor is presenting the audience a place to spontaneously identify with the rhetor.

Hermogenes goes on to describe the thoughts associated with Sincerity to be
simple and modest in nature (Wooten 90). It is worth noting that both Simplicity and
Modesty are also Secondary Constructs of Character as well. Hermogenes also notes that
angry complaints are even more common in Sincerity, he considers Sincerity essentially
straightforward (Wooten 90; Williams "How Style Works: The System of Hermognes of
Tarsus" 21). Indeed it is the simplicity and clarity of a piece that help it gain an
unaffected quality. This straightforward thought pattern is then paired with an approach
that is as Hermogenes himself says “certainly obvious and not difficult to understand” but
also ”almost impossible to describe” (Wooten 90). Hermogenes often describes the
approach as being spontaneous; he also describes it as sharing qualities of Rapidity.
Hermogenes also pairs elements of Sincerity with Character, Vehemence, Asperity,
Sweetness and Purity. Combine with that the fact we have a unique relationship between
Indignation and Sincerity and the difficulty becomes clear.

Sincerity is a construct of Character but it is also heavily interrelated
with Grandeur. One of the clearest ways this is exampled is when Hermogenes says “the
clauses and the word order and the cadence and the rhythm that result from these and
every other similar aspect of (the Sincere)style are like those that were typical of
Asperity” (Wooten 97). Asperity is a Secondary Construct of Grandeur that deals with
the admonishing of those of a higher social order than you. When looking at how
Hermogenes describes the thoughts of Sincerity as being commonly “angry complaints” it makes sense that Asperity would play a role in creating Sincerity.

When discussing the elements of cadence and rhythm in Asperity, Hermogenes says “In a harsh style words should be put together in such a way that sounds clash and are dissimilar to those that precede and follow and form metrical patterns that are inconsistent so that there will be no hint of meter…” (Wooten 30). These seem very much in keeping with a Sincere “breakdown” of style. He also describes the figures of Sincerity as tied to another rebuking Secondary construct, Vehemence. Vehemence is a Construct also associated with Grandeur and is a rebuke for those who are lower in station than the author. When looking at the similarity to two Constructs designed to rebuke, it becomes clearer that Sincerity could be seen as a flustered style of speaking. That same flustered angry style shares a number of elements with Rapidity unsurprisingly.

Simplicity is synonymous with spontaneity. The entire audience appeal is that they can see through the regulated style of the speaking to something more essential. How then is Simplicity a style at all? It is important to realize that this audience response is created by the use of Primary elements. The rhetor is creating the sense that there is a lack of control, while still keeping themselves regimented. When Hermogenes discusses the way in which the Primary Elements of Simplicity are related to Asperity, Vehemence, Rapidity and Character, he is in essence describing how the rhetor purposefully prepares to look like he hasn’t prepared (Wooten 92-93).
The crux of Sincerity is the appearance of spontaneity. By combining Elements also found in the Style of Grandeur with Elements found in Rapidity one can create a highly animated outburst. There is however another way to treat this spontaneous outburst. Hermogenes discusses rather than having an angry outburst one is able to employ Purity or Sweetness to create a more sympathetic spontaneous moment (Wooten 94). In both cases the rhetor seems to speak out of turn using words he seems to have made up or diction that seems broken or out of place, but the emotional motivator can shift depending on the topic.

Hermogenes talks about specific figures, like direct address, which are characteristic of Sincerity. He also speaks of more general approaches “not to indicate in advance that you have any emotion in your heart… but to introduce the point in such a way that you thus reveal the emotion that you feel… as the occasion demands” (Wooten 92). Both of these are in fact uses of Primary elements that are directly creating a Tertiary Style instead of a Secondary Construct. Nevertheless they do speak directly to how one prepares to appear unprepared.

Hermogenes is clear that this is not in fact a breakdown of style. A rhetoric employing this method will craft areas in their speech where they are specifically viewed as not being in control, while in reality, they have pre-determined this moment. What occurs then is that the rhetor should “not preserve the natural sequence of the thought but to seem to lose control of his emotions” (Wooten 93). In these instances, the audience will see only the loss of control, not the prescribed nature of this loss. This gives the
audience the opportunity to identify and share the motivations of the speaker and then to further identify with their viewpoint.

There are examples in Hermogenes of this Style being used to move audiences on topics both broad and specific. Hermogenes in nearly all of these examples uses pieces from the late Greek rhetor, Demosthenes. In one such example Hermogenes discusses how the addition of an angry outburst helped Demosthenes create Sincerity. Hermogenes uses the following example from Demosthenes’ *Against Androtion*: “But Androition is the one who repairs the vessels that you use in solemn processions: Androition – O Earth and Gods!” (Wooten 90) This example, in particular the phrase “O Earth and Gods!” is the sort of angry exclamation that creates a spontaneous moment for the audience. The speech, originally composed in 355 BC, is a forensic speech delivered against Androition an Athenian politician (Goold). In this context Demothenes should be speaking in a very metered, very prescribed manner. However this break where he exclaims an oath to the Gods allows for the audience to glimpse how strongly he believes in the immorality of Androition. When Demosthenes says “Androition who repairs the vessels that you use in solemn processions” he is describing the sacred nature of Androition’s work and implies that Androition should be pious in order to perform such a job. While that is a reasonable argument the break from civility offered by his exclamation allows the audience to feel a personal sense of injustice and invites them to share Demothenes’ view of Androition.

Another example Hermogenes uses has to do with a large political battle between Demosthenes and Aeschines. In this dispute each accused the other of having committed treason against Athens by colluding with Phillip of Macedonia. The passage used by
Hermogenes deals with Demosthenes explaining why he joined the embassy that was sent to Philip in order to ratify peace. It was this embassy that provides the title for Demosthenes’ work De Falsa Legatione (Goold). Demosthenes is again speaking before a jury in a forensic setting, this time the jury is over 1500 people and is very important to the careers of both Demosthenes and Aschines and so should be very tightly controlled as to avoid slanderous speaking (Goold). Demosthenes says he joined the embassy in order to ransom a number of Athenians who were being held by Philip at the time the embassy was sent to ratify peace.

The quotation from Hermogenes is “Unless it was only out of a desire to rescue those men, may I utterly perish from the face of the earth if any amount of money would have persuaded me to go on an embassy with these men” (Wooten 91). Here we can see the use of an oath does, and which does not itself create sincerity, but the spontaneous delivery of the oath, that invites the audience to see the passionate motivations of Demosthenes. Here, by taking what could have been effectively delivered as a reasoned response Demosthenes has become passionate and seemingly spontaneous when Demosthenes says “may I utterly perish from the earth if any amount of money would have persuaded me.” Particularly when he says “any amount” he is creating the passionate and spontaneous opening for the audience to “see through” the speech into his passion. In this instance the audience seeing how strongly Demosthenes felt about helping his fellow Athenians will desire to be similar and will seek to align themselves with Demosthenes’ point of view.
These two examples from Demosthenes also example how this style can apply to a specific person, as is the case with Androtion, or a more abstract concept like civitas, as is the case with De Falsa Legatione. In the first example the passion offered by Demosthenes serves to help the audience feel it with him and then come to the same conclusions about Androtion. In the second example the passion is revealed in order to expose the character of the speaker himself and to invite the audience to want to identify with his actions because he has exampled his adherence to a shared virtue. In both cases Demosthenes is creating the appearance of spontaneous outbursts, not losing control overall. Neither example then degrades into an angry rant. Instead they regain their composure and continue with the argument.

It is also possible to show emotions other than anger or disgust in the Sincere style. Hermogenes uses another example from De Falsa Legatione to demonstrate this point. Hermogenes notes Demosthenes referencing the “miserable Phocians” which at first blush might seem like an angry rebuke but later he cites “But the miserable man has been dishonored and insulted.” In both cases these are meant to evoke sympathy for the people being spoken about. In both cases the audience is allowed to see past a historical retelling, even if for a single word, and to see how Demosthenes feels about the subject. This glimpse into Demosthenes’ motives allows the audience to believe them as sincere and to align themselves with his way of thinking.

When discussing a Sincere and spontaneous style it is clear that appearing to have said something impromptu is a key element to that style. Hermogenes discusses this seemingly surprised utterance by exampleing De Corona, another speech from
Demosthenes. This speech was again a large scale forensic speech given before some 500 jurors over a political decision made on Demosthenes’ behalf (Goold). In this case Hermogenes uses the quotation “Indeed I have gone into arguments that it will be more appropriate to use later” (Wooten 94). In this example the interjection does not need to be angry. As with the example where Demosthenes describes the “miserable Phocians” this passage does not have to be a rebuke. In this passage Demosthenes has offered a far less passionate but no less significant example of allowing the audience to connect with him. This kind of example allows the audience to see the humanity of Demosthenes and aspire to his honesty. Some examples of sincerity are tied to larger virtues, some are tied to particular events and in this case the ties are to the ethos of the speaker.

This sort of example is also similar to another concept that at first might seem to be a mistake but is in fact a planned moment. Hermogenes describes correcting a previous statement in order to amplify it. While what the audience will see is that the author breaks for a moment to ponder, however the author is purposefully using this moment. Hermogenes again refers to De Corona “For recently – Do I say recently? Indeed yesterday or the day before” (Wooten 96). Again Demosthenes seems to break the veneer of preparation and the audience can see his personal ethos, he is doing a sort of “fact-checking” on the spot, which adds veracity to his claim and allow the audience to believe him. He allows the audience to see his goodwill as well as amplifying the importance of a particular phrase or idea by seeming to break for a moment.

Doubting, or being perplexed is also characteristic of Sincerity. Hermogenes again uses a reference to De Corona where Demosthenes says “Then, O – What can one
call you to give you the right name?" (Wooten 95). This example does two things; firstly it is an angry rebuke of Aeschines, a political rival, secondly it examples a stylistic device of perplexity. The rebuke is at one level exampling the passion of Demosthenes but the perplexity adds to the spontaneous nature of the outburst. Not only does this allow the audience to perceive how strongly Demosthenes feels it allows the audience to share his confusion as to how to deal with the anger he feels. Hermogenes doesn’t offer additional examples of this particular concept but the confusion with how the world works is an excellent transition into Indignation.

1.6.2 Indignation

Wooten describes Indignation as a Secondary construct to the Tertiary style of Sincerity (Wooten). Williams describes it more as a species of Sincerity. In both cases there is a very interdependent relationship between Indignation and Sincerity (Williams "How Style Works: The System of Hermogones of Tarsus"), the particular nature of which is not of particular value. Hermogenes, as was described earlier focused more on the audience outcomes more than a strict taxonomy.

Hermogenes describes Indignation as reproachful in thought, first and foremost (Wooten 97). Indignation is a style that is utilized when the speaker wants to describe his good character for which he has not received appropriate credit. Hermogenes points out this becomes particularly indignant when the author has received scorn for something he believes merits praise (Wooten 97). With that overarching idea in mind, there are a few ways in which one creates this style.
Thoughts that Hermogenes describes in connection with indignation are modest in nature. While the author may be angry or displeased there is an element of modesty to indignation. The rhetor in these cases starts off by being humble, by saying they are not asking for something other than what they have earned. This modesty is often ironic in nature; the author begins with a statement decrying how they are worthy of scorn for what sound like good deeds. Regardless of the authenticity of the modesty, it is a characteristic element of indignation.

An example of this modesty is found when Hermogenes discusses Demosthenes. The example he uses is from a letter Demosthenes writes concerning his own restoration after exile from Athens. Being that he has already been exiled he is beginning from a modest and humbled position. Hermogenes quotes “I used to think that because of my accomplishments in politics I would surely not suffer such things, since I have never wronged you in any way” (Wooten 98). The thoughts here are similar to the confusion one would find in sincerity but the focus here is that Demosthenes says “…since I have never wronged you in any way.” That phrase is where the tone shifts from sincerity to indignation. Demosthenes can be modest in requesting that he be restored but he is indignant in that he does not feel his exile justified.

This use of indignation is what allows the author to show they are a person of good character and that they recognize a moment of injustice without having an angry outburst. Where Sincerity would have the author break the stylistic form in order to draw the audience into their emotional state, the use of indignation allows for a more crafted rhetoric while layering smaller amounts of insight into the motives of the rhetor. Where
Sincerity is designed to appear out of control, Indignation is designed to focus on a sense of tension just under the surface that allows the audience to understand the motives of the rhetor in a similar way but over time and numerous examples.

This delicate layering is one of the key places irony becomes important in Indignation. Hermogenes describes the subtle nature of irony when he says “not every ironic statement is equally indignant” (Wooten 99). For instance he suggests that self-referential irony is a more pure form of the style. In contrast using irony against your opponents it is less indignant but more revealing of character (Wooten 99). Irony then is something that can build Indignation in small amounts or in large doses depending on how it is used and who is the subject of the irony. This concept is important in contemporary discourse because irony plays a prominent role how rhetors craft messages.

Irony is not the only element used in the creation of indignation however. Much of what Hermogenes describes as typical of Indignation is a sense of confusion about the world. Indignant styles question the things that the audience assumes to be rational and normal. In doing this, the rhetor seems to be modest and human. This humanity and normalcy allows the audience to share the rhetor’s questions because the rhetor seems so relatable. Over time these appeals layer together to show a pattern of frustration or dissatisfaction with the status quo that the audience feels is very grounded. The layering of these elements allows the audience to be incrementally invited to challenge something they may have simply assumed beforehand.

Another way to deal with this sort of Indignant style is somewhat similar to Sincerity. The rhetor starts of by hesitating, something that breaks up the natural
rhythms, and then posits a strong opinion. This sort of stop and start element seems more akin to Sincerity but it is Indignant in that it involves a modest element followed by a challenge to the worldview as it is presumed. Many of these elements seem to be similar to Sincerity, because of that similarity there are differing thoughts on the particular relationship between Indignation, Sincerity and Character. What is clear is that there is an interconnection between them, regardless of taxonomy.

This thesis will examine the ways that Penn Jillette uses both Sincerity and Indignation. The discussion will focus on how Jillette uses the Primary Elements to create both styles. Both of these styles are designed to show Character, and Character is important to both artifacts. It is important to understand how Character is revealed in these artifacts and that how is the focus of the analysis of this thesis.

1.7 Technical Terms and Appendices

In this thesis there are a number of words, which are given operational definitions. All of the Primary Elements, Secondary Constructs and Tertiary Styles are words that have separate, common non-technical, definitions. It must always be held in mind that these words are being used quite differently in this thesis. These terms may be very close to their common usage definition as is the case with rhythm, or they can be very different as is the case with pity, which may mean something like “appealing” or “Sympathy” or even “dread”. There will be times when the results of a particular use of style may arouse “pity” in an audience – which is not that same emotional response we have to an injured animal. One aspect of pity, for example, is described by Aristotle in The Rhetoric as “…
a feeling of pain caused by the sight of some evil, destructive or painful, which befalls one who does not deserve it, and which we might expect to befall ourselves or some friend of ours, and moreover to befall us soon” (Aristotle). Clearly this definition is somewhat removed from our common usage when we refer to a “pitiful person.” Also so, in this thesis, it is important to remember that such words are used as they relate to Hermogenes’ concepts of style.

Some of the most commonly used technical terms are Character, Grandeur, Simplicity, Vehemence, Asperity, Pity, Modesty and Purity. With the exception of Pity these are all either Secondary Constructs or Tertiary Styles as shown on Figure 1. Thoughts, approaches, Figures, Clauses, Cadence and Rhythm will also be in constant use, though the technical use of these terms is fairly close to the common use, with the exception of “approach” which, for Hermogenes, suggests a sort of shaping up of the thoughts, a movement from a raw knowledge or insight toward something that can be expressed and taught to others. These are all Primary Elements and so they will be far more contextually understandable. These terms are also discussed in sections 1.5. and 1.6.

There are also 3 appendices at the end of this thesis. Appendix A is a breakdown of the first artifact There is no god, by sentence and paragraph. This will be used in the text when a particular sentence is referenced. Appendix B has the text of There is no god layered over a waveform of the audio as read by Jillette on the NPR website. Divisions are added to this text in 1-second intervals, and the words are spaced and sometimes
divided to give a more accurate depiction of how the essay was read. This is used in conjunction with descriptions about cadence and rhythm.

1.8 **Contextualizing New Atheism**

Penn Jillette is one of the faces of what Wired Magazine called the “New Atheism” in 2006 (Wolf). In fact Penn & Teller are featured in that article as “Faces of the New Atheism.” Penn Jillette is far from alone in his crusade against god he is part of a new and important movement. New atheism is also referred to in much of the popular press as militant atheism and has had resurgence in recent years (Johnson; Darwin and the Case for 'Militant Atheism'; Douthat).

This particular movement is tied to a series of books published between 2004 and 2008. Among the seminal texts are works from Sam Harris, Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens. All three of these authors received national attention and media coverage for their Atheistic works and helped coalesce other writers and public figures around them (Stenger). While most New Atheists suggest that their arguments are not new, they claim the newness is the addition of Astronomical, Geological, and Evolutionary scientific findings that have been continuing to build since the late 1800’s. In essence they have adopted science as a closed system of natural causes and a way to disprove God.

One of the seminal books to build the relationship between the scientific community and the Atheistic community is The Demon Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark in which astrophysicist Carl Sagan describes what will be the
hallmark ideology of the New Atheism. Sagan covers the ways in which science can be used to develop a naturalist philosophy. Sagan’s book deals with pseudoscience in the chapter “The Fine Art of Baloney Detection” as well as the concepts of morality in “When Scientists Know Sin” and even politics in “Real Patriots Ask Questions” (Sagan). While Sagan himself is not considered to be a New Atheist, forerunners of the movement often use his work.

One of the most outspoken leaders of the New Atheist movement is Richard Dawkins. Dawkins is a scientist of some renown from his 1976 book The Selfish Gene to his most recent work 2009’s The Greatest Show on Earth. He has dealt with science at it’s highest levels. Dawkins is currently the Charles Simonyi Professor of the Public Understanding of Science at Oxford University and engages in numerous public debates. In specific the work Dawkins has done with evolutionary biology has had a deep effect on Science as well as in the development of sociobiology (Grafen and Ridley).

Another major voice in the New Atheist movement is Michael Shermer. Shermer builds on the Sociobiology pioneered by men like Dawkins and attempts to make these ideas more accessible to a wider audience. Shermer is the Publisher of Skeptic Magazine and the founder and director of the Skeptic Society. Shermer has also been a monthly columnist for Scientific American as well as writing six books including his most famous work The Science of Good & Evil(Shermer). Shermer has made numerous television appearances promoting his works and philosophy. Shermer is, in fact, a guest on the Bullshit! Episode highlighted in this thesis.
One of the people most often associated with Penn Jillette and his debunking and Atheism is James Randi. James Randi had professional contact with a young Penn Jillette as a fellow stage magician. The Amazing Randi was largely a performer during the 1960’s and 70’s though he continues to perform at special functions today. Randi performed in front of Penn Jillette when Jillette was only 18 and Jillette has mentioned the significance of this show in various media including passing comments on his now defunct radio series “Penn Radio.”

Randi and his educational foundation are close to Jillette’s heart and Jillette has consistently done charity works (particularly on TV game shows) that benefit the James Randi Education Foundation (JREF). The JREF has for more than 25 years offered an unclaimed one million dollar prize to any person who can prove “under proper observing conditions” that they have any supernatural ability. The foundation keeps an updated site with a list of those who have tried as well as proof that they do in fact have the one million dollars available as payment.

Also important about the JREF is “The Amazing Meeting” which has been going on for the past eight years annually in Las Vegas. This event is designed to bring skeptics together. The currently scheduled 2010 event includes appearances by Dawkins, Shermer, Jillette, Adam Savage of Mythbusters fame, Geologist Donald Prothero and Mathematician Martin Gardener among others. Meetings like this are the gatherings where Freethinking, Skepticism and New Atheism gain cohesion as social movements.

It is the inclusion of media figures like Jillette and Adam Savage that have begun to popularize the freethinking and New Atheism movements. Jillette in particular with
his numerous media outlet appearances has been instrumental in bringing the New Atheist movement to the popular arena for discussion. By having had radio and television shows of his own as well as appearances on other programs like Larry King and even Game shows Jillette has placed himself in the spotlight as a populist spokesman for New Atheism. While men like Shermer, Dawkins and Sagan may be the PhD minds behind the ideology Jillette is the loud and amusing face of the movement.
Chapter 2

THIS I BELIEVE

In chapter one the current literature was laid out as well as both a general and a specific overview of the Hermogenic system of style. This chapter will discuss the first artifact from Penn Jillette. This piece comes from the NPR radio program “This I Believe” and aired November 2005. Both Appendix A and Appendix B are resources cited in this chapter. Appendix A has each sentence in “There is no god” numbered for easy reference. Appendix B has the text of “There is no god” broken up to match a waveform of the audio from the broadcast.

2.1 Jillette as a Believer (Paragraphs 1-3)

2.1.1 Paragraph One

“I believe that there is no god. I'm beyond Atheism. Atheism is not believing in god. Not believing in god is easy, you can't prove a negative, so there's no work to do. You can't prove that there isn't an elephant inside the trunk of my car. You sure? How about now? Maybe he was just hiding before. Check again. Did I mention that my personal heartfelt definition of the word "elephant" includes mystery, order, goodness, love, and a spare tire?”

Beginning with the first paragraph there is a great deal to discuss in terms of style. This is the longest paragraph in the piece consisting of 10 sentences, which is roughly 27% of the entire piece. It is also notable in that it has the shortest median sentence length as well as the shortest sentence in the piece consisting of only two words.

This is important because it addresses several of the primary elements that come together to create Sincerity. Hermogenes describes the thoughts associated with Sincerity as Simple and Modest (Wooten 90). Hermogenes goes on in his discussion of Simplicity
to describe those thoughts, as being common with Purity, in particular he says there
should be no need for elaboration. Having simple and pure thoughts provide for the
creation of succinct language. Hermogenes describes the clauses one should use in
Sincerity in this way “The clauses and the word order and the cadence and the rhythm
that result from these and every other similar aspect of style are like those that were
typical of Asperity…” (Wooten 97). Asperity, connected to Grandeur, is generally a
rebuking style associated with anger and passion. However the clauses, diction and
cadence described in Asperity do not have to be angry per se. Hermogenes describes the
clauses as short - so short in fact, that he describes them more as phrases than clauses
(Wooten 29). While these are described in an angrier style they pair well with simple
thoughts, which do not need elaboration. By having a long or elaborate sentence trying
to express a simple thought, the simplicity of the thought is lost in the complexity of the
clauses. While the pairing of elaborate clauses with simple ideas might produce other
stylistic effects it does not produce Sincerity.

The cadence and rhythm of Sincerity are also connected to Asperity. Hermogenes
describes the diction and cadence of Asperity as using dissimilar and rough sounds.
While many speakers think of speaking as an almost poetic exercise in creating a pleasing
meter, Hermogenes says that Asperity and Sincerity are served better by a clashing,
metrically damaged style.

“In a harsh style words should be put together in such a way that sounds clash and
are dissimilar to those that precede and follow, and from metrical patterns that are
inconsistent, so that there will be no hint of meter and no charm produced by the order of
the words and no appearance of harmony.” (Wooten 30)
Hermogenes goes on to describe the cadence for this kind of presentation as follows.

“The cadences used in Asperity, like the arrangement of the words, should be formed from inconsistent metrical patterns, with the clauses ending sometimes in one kind of foot and sometimes in another. Thus the rhythm that is appropriate to Asperity is cacophonous, as though there were no rhythm at all.” (Wooten 30)

Now if we combine all of these elements: Cadence, Clauses, and Thoughts together we have a model of short irregular sentences that lack a particular meter but are generally simple both in construction and content. Indeed these should be short and choppy so that they can deliver these simple thoughts in a way a common person might understand. Using too much adornment would seem over constructed and lacking Character.

With this in mind examine the first paragraph of “There is no god,” giving particular attention to sentences 1-4.

“I believe there is no god. I’m beyond Atheism. Atheism is not believing in god. Not believing in god is easy, you can’t prove a negative so there’s no work to do.” (Jillette 1)

The first three sentences in particular are short, succinct statements of presumable truth. They are simple ideas certainly. In fact to some they might border on tautologies. Hermogenes describes simple thoughts as those which “border on trivial” (Wooten 71) which is a label reasonably applied to the idea that Atheism is not believing in god. These are not particularly rapid sentences when spoken. They seem paced normally though there is a significant pause between sentence one and two, while there is far less
of a pause between sentence two and three (see Appendix B, Line 1). Form the very outset this piece seems to have the cadence and clauses of Sincerity. The thoughts are also simple and in keeping with a Sincere style. That alone is significant but what is also worth noting is the approach used here.

When approaches were discussed in chapter one an overarching approach of “show don’t tell” was described as well as an approach that dealt with things being out of order in some way, prompting the rhetor to go back and fix something. These are the first words of the piece so clearly there was no foreshadowing but also important is how Jillette deals with Atheism. He first tells us he has conviction that there is no god, this is important because it represents an affirmative belief. Then he says he is beyond Atheism, which is important because we consider Atheism to be non-belief. In the third sentence he has to go back and describe Atheism. He has already gotten ahead of himself.

This passage also has an element of correction that is less about the approach and more about his use of figures. Hermogenes describes a figure wherein the rhetor corrects a previous statement in order to amplify it (Wooten 96). By going back in sentence three to describe Atheism he is able to amplify how he has an affirmative belief in the non-existence of god, rather than simply having a lack of faith which he describes as Atheism.

This separation becomes important to his piece as a whole and in that sentence, by using a Sincere approach he has already set the stage for a future argument while making it appear as though he was simply an everyman who Sincerely forgot to add something to his previous statement.
Seeing all of these primary elements working together it becomes clearer how one creates style. In this case Jillette has taken a set of thoughts, which are simple and pure and understandable by a common man and he has described them using short clauses in an uneven pattern. That alone gives the appearance of a “plain folks” appeal that humanizes Jillette and shows his good Character as someone not trying to bamboozle his audience with fancy talk and big ideas. Pair that with the figure and approach of going back as though he had somehow gotten ahead of himself. This not only gives the appearance of Jillette being an everyday person but it allows him the chance to amplify his position without having to set anything up in advance.

This exemplifies how one takes the primary elements and uses them in conjunction to create a secondary construct. By combining thought, figure approach, clauses and cadence Jillette creates a passage, which seems spontaneous and unaffected. Having identified the elements and how they have come together to form an example of Sincerity, what value is there in such identification? The value in this is to see how the content is made into an argument via style.

Even in the first three sentences, in just a few words Jillette has crafted something so tightly that he has associated all of this meaning to it. At the same time the crafting is so well done that it appears to the audience as if it were somehow “off the cuff.” The same content spoken in a more flamboyant or esoteric manner would have made people less able or willing to listen to Jillette. However by correcting himself and speaking in a way that does not seem overtly crafted the audience is allowed at the very outset to deal with Jillette as a human being, a person who is expressing simple ideas simply.
Jillette is in essence breaking the rules taught in public speaking. A student speech which began by correcting itself and having a long short long sentence structure with pauses of differing lengths (see Appendix B, Line 1) as this speech does would seem to many public speaking teachers to be almost self-effacing and lacking credibility. Particularly in a persuasive speech a common practice is to emphasize confidence and assuredness in speaking. Many professors will tell students not to acknowledge mistakes out loud because it damages credibility. In this case Jillette broke that rule very specifically for two reasons. First he wanted to set up “Atheism” as those who lack belief, secondly he wanted to build his Character as a normal person.

If Jillette had taken time to create something with a more metered, lyrical quality it might have been pleasing to the ear but seemed like it was crafted. If he had tried to encapsulate a more complex argument in the opening statements of his essay he might have started by confusing people. Had he had everything logically formed and placed with no hint of needing correction it would have seemed more colder, less accessible and more formal. While all of those approaches are possible, the Sincere approach allows Jillette to get his foot in the door and begin a conversation rather than a lecture.

That explains the use of Sincerity in the first three sentences but the use of Sincerity is also important in the fourth sentence. There is a shift in how Sincerity is used here however. In the first three sentences the thoughts are simple and the approach goes back to correct itself, as though it were somehow out of order. This is not necessarily the case with the fourth sentence.
“Not believing in god is easy, you can’t prove a negative so there’s no work to do” (Jillette 1). There is a sense of rapidity in this sentence as well as a choppy feeling with the pauses. “Not believing in god is easy” takes Jillette about one second to complete then there is nearly a quarter second pause followed by another burst of rapid speech taking less than a second then another quarter second pause followed by almost five words in one second at the end of the sentence (Appendix B Line 2). It certainly has the cadence of something that is Sincere, the sentence is broken up so often it also has the clauses of a Sincere passage. The shift here is that of thought and approach. The first clause in the sentence is very judgmental saying that what Atheists do is easy. This accusation is clear in the way that Jillette stretches out the word “easy.” If he spoke at the same tempo of the previous 5 words in that sentence easy would take roughly 0.2 seconds. However the word easy takes roughly 0.39 seconds, almost twice as long (Appendix B Line 2). The implication is that not only does Jillette not belong in this category but that he has achieved something difficult.

This passage may then be more Indignant than Sincere. When discussing Indignation Hermogenes notes:

“Indignation is found in all reproachful thoughts whenever the speaker who is discussing his own benefactions says by way of criticism that he has received little to no gratitude for them…” (Wooten 97)

Jillette in this passage seems to be reproachful of the “ease” of non-belief. He said in sentence two that he is “beyond Atheism” and now he is saying “Atheism is easy.” Jillette seems to be creating a split in Atheism at this point. It was first expressed when he said he was beyond Atheism. In popular thought Atheism is an endpoint in a
spectrum that moves from Theism to Atheism. Atheists are defined by “not believing” on this sort of chart (see Figure 2). Jillette however wants to have questioning and non-belief set aside into this sort of logically safe middle ground. In many ways Jillette conflates the non-believing Atheist with the Agnostic. He places both parties in what he calls a “questioning stage.” This new paradigm places Jillette and the New Atheists on the spectrum as believers who directly oppose the beliefs of Theists, labeled here as Heretics (see Figure 3).

![Figure 2 The Current Dichotomy](image)

Jillette wishes to be seen as more than a simple non-believer he wants to be seen as something more akin to a heretic. He has a belief in the non-existence of God. If Atheism is a simple lack of faith he wishes to move into the realm of heresy and speak for a belief in the negative. The term heretic is chosen for a very specific reason, while it is a loaded word it seems to have been embraced by thinkers outside the bounds of religion before. Two immediate reference points are Walter Kaufmann who wrote *The Faith of a Heretic* in 1961 and the authors of *Killing the Buddha: a Heretic’s Bible*, Peter Manseau, and Jeff Sharlet (Kaufmann; Manseau and Sharlet). According to the Oxford English Dictionary a heretic is “One who maintains theological or religious opinions at variance with the ‘catholic’ or orthodox doctrine of the Christian Church, or, by extension, that of any church or religious system, considered as orthodox. Also transf. with reference to non-Christian religions.” While this definition seems inappropriately
broad, as many Theists would also fall into this category there is a secondary definition “By extension, One who maintains opinions upon any subject at variance with those generally received or considered authoritative (heretic).” This term seems to work well in either definition for the belief that Jillette is claiming to have. That term seems to be a good fit for what Jillette is postulating here, he has a belief that the teachings of Monotheism are wrong and there is in fact no divine world at all.

![Figure 3: Jillette’s Proposed Paradigm](image)

In order to move non-believers to the middle of the spectrum Jillette has to distance himself from them and the method he uses here is to imply that they have stopped thinking too soon. The formation of this reproach however seems more in line with indignation. Chapter One deals with the concepts of Indignation as being a species of Sincerity. The references to Indignation are also clear in Wooten (xii, 100-101). The particular focus here is the thought in which Jillette believes he has done something worthy of praise (moved past non-belief) and he has received no credit for the fullness and depth of his belief.

The issue remains in question though because many of the elements are more reminiscent of Sincerity than anything described as Indignation. Indignation is often characterized by a use of irony or questioning of assumed truth, this passage however contains neither of these.
It would be just as fitting to describe the thoughts here in the fourth sentence as common and the figure as judgmental. In that case, we would have simple thought that employs judgmental figures and short clauses. The cadence as we already discussed is choppy (Appendix B Line 2). What of the approach? The approach certainly does not have much foreshadowing being so early in the piece. This also seems to border on an aside or a sudden outburst, another approach used in Sincerity (Wooten 90-91). While Jillette does not seem out of control, many audience members likely thought of him as an atheist, simply assuming he was a non-believer. His sudden attack on non-belief (atheism) and his transition to heresy is generally jarring.

Jillette’s association with Atheism comes largely from his ties to people like Richard Dawkins and Michael Shermer, both of whom have appeared on his television and radio shows expressing their rejection of god and religion and as well as his long standing friendship and support of James Randi and the James Randi Educational Foundation. Many people associate these names with atheism and may never have considered the position that Jillette espouses. To the layperson there may not have been a distinction between non-belief and belief in the non-existence of god.

In just a few sentences, Jillette has set the tenor of the piece as a whole. Though using the Sincere style both directly and infused with an Indignant tone he has opened a conversation up between himself and his audience. In the opening four sentences, he has already very purposefully constructed his words to remove a number of audience conceptions about him. Those people only casually aware of him as the “bigger one who talks” in the magic and comedy duo of Penn & Teller might know very little about him.
They might have seen his magic bit where they put a rabbit in a wood chipper, they might have seen him on Glenn Beck, they might have heard that his Showtime show is known for nudity and bashing religion. All of that is true, but this opening does not seem to match with that image.

By having such a Sincere style in the opening, Jillette breaks down the wall of mediated image and invites the audience to identify with him as a reasonable person. In fact, the use of style here is what makes it possible for him to define Atheism as non-belief and move himself out of that category. Because he has used a Sincere style to assert his positive belief in the non-existence of God, he has defined himself as a Heretic.

However, changing categories is only part of the verbal sleight of hand this stylistic choice has allowed Jillette. While he has re-drawn the spectrum placing himself as a polar opposite to theists he has done so while avoiding a direct confrontation. Among those who simply do not believe (atheists) it is common to call any belief hokum. Even among New Atheists like Randi, Shermer and Stenger the idea of belief is simply shoved aside.

Jillette has used this forum (This I Believe) to try to enter the discussion as a believer. He has somehow been able to place himself on both sides of the fence at once. Not only is he “beyond Atheism,” but also he is now a Heretical believer. Therefore, he can compare his belief system apples to apples with that of Theists while still being somehow more Atheistic than Atheists. All of this was accomplished because of the Sincerity he has employed in speaking. He sets himself as a layperson who is expressing
a very simple sort of thought in a way that seems less prepared and more heartfelt. Yet, the result of that speech has been profound.

There is a particularly important shift in the later part of paragraph one. Where Sincerity was vitally important to understanding the first four sentences, the remainder of the first paragraph (sentences 5-10) has a noticeable shift in style.

“You can’t prove that there isn't an elephant inside the trunk of my car.
You sure?
How about now?
Maybe he was just hiding before.
Check again.
Did I mention that my personal heartfelt definition of the word "elephant" includes mystery, order, goodness, love, and a spare tire?” (Jillette 1)
The fifth sentence (beginning with, “you can’t prove…”) marks the shift in style by changing from the topic of Atheism per se to discuss the logical problem of proving a negative. Nothing here is particularly laden with one style or another but it is important to mention the shift in topic. The thought here is no longer as simple or pure as describing Atheism, instead it is a more complicated discussion.

What is important here is the example used in sentence five. While this discussion could become very precise or abstract, the example Jillette chooses here is an elephant in the trunk of a car. Both elephants and car trunks are things that exist in the common vernacular and are common enough ideas that the audience should have a good frame of reference for both. All audience members can reasonably be assumed to know an elephant cannot fit into the trunk of a car unless some particularly unorthodox conditions are met (ex: it is a baby elephant, the elephant is dead and cremated, etc.)
Finally, there is also a common series of jokes that involve elephants. We tend to think of elephants as almost comical in many ways.

What passes from this point is a mocking of something we already seemingly understand. The audience is clear that an elephant cannot fit into the trunk of a car and none of the following discussion points to that being a real option. “Maybe he was just hiding before…” is clearly designed to emphasize this sort of ironic juxtaposition of something outlandish and serious argument. This particular stylistic approach is perfectly in line with a species of Simplicity, Indignation.

Indignation as a construct is largely a sub-type of Sincerity (Wooten xii, 100-101). In clauses, diction and rhythm it is essentially the same. Where it differs is in thought, approach and figure. The thoughts of Indignation are reproachful but they are also Modest in that they generally agree to give some advantage to the opposing camp.

“Indignant thoughts are created even out of those that seem to be Modest, whenever they are approached in such a way that the speaker willingly give up some of his own advantages or agrees to yield an advantage to his opponent or, from what he says in his speech, obliviously deems himself or his opponent worthy of deeds or words that are the opposite of those stated” (Wooten 98).

Here the rhetor either agrees to play by someone else’s rules, agrees they are in the minority, etc. The essence here is that the show of Character is based in being willing to be amiable even though there is a reproachful nature to the speech. The key to this passage is that particular thought. Jillette as a Heretic can classify himself as a believer and reject the formal trope that Atheists use to defend their non-belief. Instead he assents to use a formal proof in order to example the two camps he does not belong to as being worthy of scorn rather than of praise.
It is clear that Jillette thinks that this logical argument is a dodge; he has already said this is easy. But he is willing to offer an example of Atheistic logic in order to show his work. That concession coupled with his clear dislike of their position is the essence of indignation. He thinks of himself as working harder than Atheists do and he feels he is being lumped in with them when he deserves better treatment. He has moved past simple non-belief into the realm of believing in the negative, a position that can be assailed as belief rather than being couched in a logical proof that removes non-believers from the discussion and by extension attack. Clearly these thoughts are in line with Indignation but as Hermogenes himself says “the thought in and of itself does not exhibit any element of Indignation” (Wooten 98). However, the irony used in the example is also Characteristic of an indignant approach.

In the example offered by Hermogenes irony has two places it can be directed, at oneself or at one’s opponent (Wooten 99). However in this case it seems Jillette is pointing it at the audience by using the phrase “you” rather than providing a third party. By increasingly pushing the audience to deal with the juxtaposition of an elephant and a car trunk he continues to push the audience toward dealing with the juxtaposition offered in the example. This approach employs the figure of calling into question something the audience already knows to be true. If we did not already know an elephant could not fit into a car trunk, we might not see the irony here.

The last sentence here is what really caps the argument and employs a second figure of Indignation. Jillette uses the phrase “personal, heartfelt definition” to describe the connotative nature of theistic definitions. Jillette emphasizes how deeply connotative
these definitions can become when he describes elephant as being “mystery, order, goodness, love and a spare tire.” Jillette here is using irony, as described in Indignation to point out the absurdity of religious claims that leave the realm of reason when they abandon the clear denotative meaning of some terms in order to use “heartfelt” connotative meanings that are so personal they limit intelligent discourse.

This is also reminiscent of an approach discussed by Hermogenes in connection to indignation. Hermogenes says that coupling a hesitation with a strong opinion can add to the Indignation of a passage (Wooten 100). For example should someone start with a hesitant expression like “Personally, I just think” and follow it up with a strong opinion like “…all pedophiles should be castrated.” That communicates a sense of indignation. In Jillette’s example the “did I mention” functions as hesitation, a sort of “oops” moment. Then the following definition is so forceful that the audience is stunned for a moment.

The end result here is that not only does Jillette show the mental laziness of Atheists hiding behind such a simplistic logical trope, but he also suggests the ways in which believers misappropriate language to make the tenants of logical and perhaps even reasonable thinking impossible. This leaves only those people who have a set belief in something more logical as the only reasonable group in the discussion. Jillette is more than happy to use logic and he is willing to state an affirmative belief that God does not exist, somehow he provides us both the love of reason we want from atheism, but he pairs it with a willingness to stand for what he believes in, the quality we respect in theists.

Jillette has used indignant thoughts when he assents to using the Atheistic logical proof. Jillette uses irony in his example; he even pairs hesitation with strong opinions.
He has used thoughts, approaches, and figures all commonly found in Indignation. There is a sense of rapidity when he asks the question of there being an elephant in his car (Appendix B, Line 3). Then there are more spaced out bursts of questioning that seem so oscillate between loud and quiet sounds making them jarring and sudden (Appendix B, Lines 3-4). This use of cadence tied to Sincerity allows for even Indignant statements to have a very human underpinning. By choosing something, as trivial as an elephant in the trunk of a car he also introduces the thoughts of Sincerity as a thematic undercurrent to the Indignation. This kind of discourse feels more like a common person arguing for a common sense approach to the issue rather than an overly crafted presentation of a logical series of interconnected statements describing a defined proposition.

2.1.2 Paragraph Two

Paragraph two while not particularly rich in Sincerity continues to draw out this issue about the borders between believers and non-believers. Jillette interestingly enough starts off any good person at Atheism. This clearly denotes that while Atheists have not gone far enough in their thinking they at least seem to “have a love for truth outside themselves.”

Jillette also says he actively has discussions with a number of people at this “searching stage” as he calls it. He talks about writing e-mails to these people who are according to him at the beginning of their search for truth. The implication here being
that those who believe in God simply have a love of truth inside themselves, which many
might consider selfish or dogmatic.

2.1.3 Paragraph Three

The third paragraph picks back up the ideas of Sincerity to a degree. Discussing
degrees of Sincerity is also important to understanding how style functions. Some
passages may blend styles together or may only include some of the elements of a given
style in order to create a more muted effect. This third paragraph is an excellent example
of how Jillette uses parts of Sincerity to revel his Character but omits elements in order to
appear neither angry nor flustered.

Hermogenes notes that Sincerity has multiple forms. The normal unaffected
style, as noted in previous examples, uses the cadence and rhythm from Asperity and
Vehemence. Asperity and Vehemence are both secondary constructs of the Tertiary
Style of Grandeur There is a second type of Sincerity that uses the cadence or rhythm of
Simplicity (a secondary construct of Character) instead (Wooten 97). In that case,
clauses, diction, and rhythm should borrow from Simplicity. Figure 4 examples how
these elements all come together to create two distinct species of Sincerity. It should be
emphasized that Sincerity and Simplicity are both secondary constructs of Character. By
using cadence and rhythm that are shared with simplicity (A secondary construct of
Character) instead of cadence that is shared with Vehemence or Asperity (which are
secondary constructs of Grandeur) the species of Sincerity created is entirely focused on
the formation of Character rather than being shared between Character and Grandeur.
Figure 4: Species of Sincerity

Jillette’s third paragraph reads:

“But, this "This I Believe" thing seems to demand something more personal, some leap of faith that helps one see life's big picture, some rules to live by. So, I'm saying, "This I believe—I believe there is no god."” (Jillette 1)

This passage has a feeling of Sincerity that is more tangible than other passages. That is not because it is more passionate but because the elements here are balanced differently. Rather than being indignant or out of control or moved by a particular passion, the elements have come together in a way that is more focused on reveling the inner thoughts and Character of the rhetor. While this is not the same species of Sincerity
we have considered in our discussions of paragraph 1, above, it does have the elements of Sincerity at play.

The thoughts in this citation do not seem particularly difficult, the idea here being a statement of purpose and a reflection on the mission statement of “This I Believe” as a source for the essay. They are simple and Modest, easy to comprehend and relate to. In fact every author likely asks the same question before they craft an essay for this venue. Jillette however is exposing this thought process to his audience.

The approach used here is also tied to Sincerity. When approaches were discussed in chapter one an overarching approach of “show don’t tell” was described as well as an approach that dealt with things being out of order in some way, prompting the rhetor to go back and fix something. We did not see this shift in idea coming in the previous paragraphs, and it seems that Jillette is going back because he has gotten ahead of himself. This is similar to the movement in the beginning of the first paragraph where he has to go back to explain Atheism. The first line in the paragraph “But, this "This I Believe" thing seems to demand something more personal…” seems from the outset to stop and remember that he has forgotten something. It is as though he has forgotten that he is not making a large argument about Atheism and belief and now needs to correct that and get back on to his original thought.

There is also the use of a figure connected to Abundance that Jillette uses very effectively in this passage. Abundance is a secondary construct of Grandeur, however it is not like Asperity and Vehemence, it is associated with creating importance. In this passage Jillette uses abundance when he continues to amplify the definition for
“something more personal.” He moves from “something more personal” to “some leap of faith” and then to “something that helps one see life’s big picture” finally to “some rules to live by.” He begins by saying that what is required is something personal which he then moves to being something to help one see life’s big picture, then he corrects the big picture into some rules to live by. With each step here he is amplifying the importance of what he is doing here. He has effectively been able to start by saying “something personal” and moved to a “rule to live by” at the end.

The diction and cadence here create a simple or pure rhythm, which Hermogenes describes as slightly lyrical but mainly conversational (Wooten 12-13). This is in comparison to Vehement short phrases that are choppy and almost grating with clashing sounds and odd movements. Here we see a very forthright, simple conversational cadence. The cadence here is more even, about 2-3 words a second nothing seems to rush and those places where there are fewer words there are natural pauses which do not break the flow of the speech (Appendix B Lines 11-13). While the passion of the author and an apparent breakdown of style might be more in line with Asperity, this construct, by contrast, is more focused on Character or arousing sympathy for the author.

All of these elements are vital to understanding what Jillette does in this passage. He is changing gears on his audience and the style that he employs has also shifted. The style has transitioned from being shared with Grandeur and the secondary constructs of Asperity and Vehemence to a more Character oriented Sincerity that employs Simplicity. That change in this paragraph naturally helps the audience to understand that there is a
change in Jillette’s focus. The first two paragraphs were laying out an argument about belief and atheism and the third paragraph is now leading them into a new argument.

Jillette has continued to discuss his belief that God does not exist. That element ties this into the preceding paragraphs, but his style has changed from indignant and angry to something more human. By maintaining continuity of content but shifting the stylistic choices, Jillette is making a tonal change from a negative attacking sort of Sincerity into something more positive, which shows his good Character as a speaker. Sincerity and Indignation while secondary constructs of Character also share a great deal with Grandeur. By using elements that blend Character and Grandeur Jillette has layered a secondary effect into his speaking. To understand that secondary effect it is important to understand what the Tertiary Style of Grandeur is used to create. Williams very effectively describes Grandeur here:

“The Effective Idea of Grandeur stands in contrast to Clarity, and establishes a psychological border around a state of being that grasps an element of the transcendent, an element of something beyond mere data, some touch of a larger world hidden in the small life of the self, a timelessness in the present; it may frequently involve direct or implied accusations of a failure to live up to that grander vision.” (Williams 23-24)

Grandeur is designed to help draw clear divisions between things. While many use this, as Williams notes, to grasp at an eternal element, Jillette uses these divisions to separate all parties from the divine. In his language so far, no group seems to be transcendent: Non-believing atheists are lazy, theists are sentimental and linguistically sloppy and only his heretical views seem to have a chance to transcend the current debate. However, his use of Grandeur does not yet function to say he has actually transcended, largely because he has not been using Grandeur alone, he has been using it in conjunction with Sincerity.
The shift in paragraph three is to stop using such divisive language and shift his style away from Asperity and Vehemence. The elements of Grandeur that appear in this paragraph (Abundance, mostly) are far more amenable to the transcendent rather than the accusatory aspects of Grandeur. They are the softer, gentler side of Grandeur. That rebuking tone of Grandeur was useful in the first two paragraphs, when Jillette needed to delineate groups, but now he no longer needs to draw divisions between the groups; his focus has shifted away from that discussion into a more personal one. Now that the audience has been made aware of Jillette as a believer, he needs to establish his convictions as a target for his audience’s empathy – as being essentially tied to his good character, and his style in this paragraph clearly reflects that shift. He is no longer going to try to make an argument about the nature of Atheism, but instead he intends to show us why his belief constitutes “rules to live by.” That is to say: he is about to discuss the consequences of his belief.

Again, the stylistic shift is what creates the space for his argument. This entire passage is not part of a formally logical argument. The entire focus of this pair of sentences is to point out the humanity of the author, something impractical and personal. Jillette is part of the New Atheism movement, which is normally labeled by the media as “militant atheism” (Wikipedia, Trask, Fehringer). This means that when people like Shermer attack Religion using scientific evidence as a proof for their convictions they are ejected from the conversation. Jillette then focuses on setting himself up as a heretic first, while he believes in something very different from theists he spends time to set it up as a belief, which keeps him from being ejected from the conversation as a non-believer.
That is the argument laid out in the first paragraphs.

The shift here is designed to set Jillette up as a believer of good Character. Character is irrelevant in a scientific argument, adherence to the scientific method and full disclosure are far more central to an argument about scientific findings. In a discussion about beliefs, however depend highly on the good Character of the rhetor. Because there is no absolute proof in the realm of belief having good reasons is balance by being a good person. The problem Jillette faces here is that he is not likely to ever prove himself a more moral person than the central figure of a religion. This means that he is not aiming at scientific believers, nor is he really aiming at the religiously devoted. Instead, he is aiming at the “middle ground.”

The members of this “middle ground” are people who cannot find what they need in either organized religion or scientific belief. This group desires divine things like truth, beauty, and goodness that science cannot deal with, but also finds organized religion lacking answers to these important issues. This group believes in something that science cannot explain, yet it also finds fault with the systems of belief that exist in the mainstream. Some examples of people who might fall into this “middle ground” are agnostics, disenfranchised Christians, or modern pagans. All of these groups may be seeking a way to balance a belief in scientific truth with a belief in something beyond scientific understanding.

This middle ground is only accessible to someone who makes this claim of having good Character. Their argument can be reasonable but it is never going to be certain. An argument made to this group is not about a physical or scientifically provable premise;
therefore, one cannot use science to show the truth. The argument however cannot be tied to a single religious text because no text has any inherent epistemic privilege to this group. This means that the arguments must be made in a reasonable space where universal claims can be argued based on a balance of personal experience and shared reasoning. For that reason Jillette cannot rely simply on a logical proof, he must make himself a speaker this audience can believe in.

2.2 Consequences of Belief (Paragraphs 4-7)

The fourth paragraph continues to build Character in the first two sentences. While the third paragraph seemed to be an abrupt change of pace the fourth paragraph moves to a style more akin to Sweetness and Simplicity than Sincerity. Both of these constructs are designed to exhibit Character, which is the exact change that Jillette set up in the previous paragraph. The return to Indignation that occurs in the second half of the paragraph however is important.

“It seems just rude to beg the invisible for more. Just the love of my family that raised me and the family I'm raising now is enough that I don't need heaven. I won the huge genetic lottery, and I get joy every day.” (Jillette 1)

This is the beginning of a much longer attack on theism. The primary focus here is in Jillette exhibiting his good Character by highlighting his own humility. However, he highlights his own goodness in order to impeach others. In Indignation it is common for the speaker to discuss his own good traits while implying he has not been given appropriate credit (Wooten 97). In This case, he balances his own goodness in comparison to theists who “seem rude.”
The thoughts presented here are very simple; they seem to almost be trivial. Everyone has love in their life and yet people still believe in the divine. In fact, the simple nature of these thoughts is what makes this such a powerfully Sincere passage. The movement here is very sudden. We just moved into the setup of Jillette as a good person, and for him to suddenly attack people of faith is designed to take the audience by surprise. He moved from Hallmark Cards to calling the divine creator “the invisible” in a matter of two sentences. This seems very much like an outburst in the middle of something as though he just could not help himself.

There are a couple of figures that are appropriate here. The first and most apparent is that of judgment. When Jillette says “It seems just rude to beg the invisible for more.” He is judging believers in the audience as being rude people for expecting that their god would, could, or should provide them with something other than the very ordinary pleasure of everyday life. If you have blue skies, rainbows and Hallmark cards then you have everything you should want, and anything beyond this is selfish. Those are hard judgments and very typical of the passionate and spontaneous style of Sincerity. The other figure used here is calling something agreed upon into question. This is a far more subtle inference but recognizing it is important to understanding the level to which the elements are being used in this piece.

Most people think that having a loving family is a sort of given. While people will often describe their family as hectic or crazy, they will also confess a deep and abiding love for them. This is best exampled by the maxim “home is the place where when you go there, they have to take you in.” We just assume our families are safe places with
people who love us. Jillette calls into question that this loving family is in fact automatic, he equates his family with winning the lottery.

“Just the love of my family that raised me and the family I'm raising now is enough that I don't need heaven. I won the huge genetic lottery, and I get joy every day.” (Jillette 1)

Here Jillette says that having this thing, this family, is really a gift. It is such a gift in fact it is like winning the lottery. While some people might pray to god to be the one lucky person to win a lottery, we tend to take our family for granted. The use of this particular figure is something very subtle but it serves a very important purpose.

The diction and rhythm here are not particularly Sincere, they lack the stop and start quality or the clashing sort of sounds that Hermogenes describes. These two sentences take about 11 seconds and have an average of roughly three words a second. There is not a lot of variance in volume, though there are some words that have emphasis. The peaks and valleys of the wave are not generally sharp, so there is no indication of anything choppy or excited (Appendix B, Lines 18-19). In fact, they seem to follow well with the cadence and rhythm of the previous sentences that are focused on Modesty and Sweetness. This may be an intentional choice to soften the attack here and make it blend better with the surrounding material.

One intensely interesting effect with this particular attack on believers is that it is both dismissive of their position setting Jillette as a reasonable person, a rhetor of real Character. The way he does this is through the muted rhythm and cadence mixed with the use of the figure of doubting an obvious assumption about the image of a loving family. Jillette takes something that the audience takes for granted and claims that he is
in fact very gratified to have this. He starts out by giving us simple joys and then goes a step deeper saying that he is “blessed” by having a family to love and one that loves him in return. This shows an immense amount of Character and seems for a moment to give the audience a glimpse into how Modest Jillette really is. The thought here is so simple it is thought by most of us to be trivial, and yet he takes great solace in this, he compares being loved to being a lottery winner, something his audience likely never considered.

Trying to explain to an audience that you are a person of good Character by listing good deeds only goes so far. Listing too many good deeds moves from being a person of good character into becoming a braggart. But by crafting a moment where you have an outburst of anger guided by a passion for your family, creates that same effect while allowing the audience to think they have witnessed something you may not have intended. It is that point where the audience glimpses something they think of as normally obfuscated by eloquence that they create an argument inside themselves for why the rhetor is believable, something no external argument can do. This use of style allows Jillette not only to make an external argument about his Character but gives the audience a moment to internalize and create their own argument about his Character.

2.2.1. Paragraphs five and six

The fifth paragraph and the beginning of the sixth paragraph continue to build upon this emotional momentum and work with sweetness and Modesty. This is not designed to arouse pity but instead to amplify Jillette’s argument. Jillette takes a moment here to tell people how he continues to use his belief to maintain a moral lifestyle. While
there are some elements one might tie to Sincerity here they are better connected with Modesty and are generally designed to exhibit Character than show an underlying passion or motivation.

It is in the fifth sentence of paragraph six that we see Sincerity implemented again. Jillette again takes believers to task over how they speak.

“I don't travel in circles where people say, “I have faith, I believe this in my heart, and nothing you can say or do can shake my faith.” That's just a long-winded religious way to say, "shut up!" or another two words that the FCC likes less. But, all obscenity is less insulting than, "How I was brought up and my imaginary friend means more to me than anything you can ever say or do!" (Jillette 2)

The thoughts here are certainly judgmental and this may be the first time where we see genuine anger in Jillette. He comes close in the remark about begging the invisible for more but in this comment there is a different tone, less suggestive mocking and more direct anger. His frustration is easy to see and his thoughts are not complicated but they are also far from trivial. The Sincerity here gives way to open Vehemence where there is an angry rebuke of someone the rhetor feels they are more important than.

The approach here is again unheralded by the previous discussion, where only a sentence ago Jillette was Modestly discussing how “we” can keep adjusting and aiming at real communication he is now attacking the way believers speak. There is no more we, there is now an “us versus them” sort of discourse.

Rhythm and cadence become very important here as well. Jillette has a lot of what communications students learn as “vocal variety” in these short sentences (Appendix B Lines 26-30). The first portion where he says “I Don’t travel in circles where people say…” is very lively there are large peaks and the then small areas the pace is constant
though not rapid. In contrast Jillette’s reading of the believer saying "I have faith, I believe this in my heart, and nothing you can say or do can shake my faith." is very quiet compared to his normal volume level, it has a very uneven presentation as well. There is a long pause between the words “faith” and “I” as well as between “heart” and “and.” He also speeds up when he says “…and nothing you can say or do can shake my faith.” Making the sentence stand out from being alien compared to Jillette’s normal rate, rhythm and volume. Also worthy of note is that he takes a pause before and after “shut up” and they are louder than anything else in the passage. In contrast to the first place where Jillette quotes his imaginary believer the second quotation is choppier and has more volume in the beginning.

There is a vocal emphasis on “How I was brought up” as well as “anything“ that are very pointed when listened to. Having this interspersed with Jillette’s normal mode of speaking make these several sentences have a great deal of rough cadence and off putting rhythm. In particular there is a marked difference between the slow and quiet first believer and the loud and choppy second believer (Appendix B Lines 26-30). This inconsistency in the quotations from the believers makes them sound disjointed and not like a cohesive group of people with a single message. It also makes them seem very different from Jillette.

This example is a place where it seems to the audience that style has truly broken down. Jillette though his use of different voices for his believers and interspersing his own thoughts makes a passage where he appears to be ruled by his passions. The person who was so recently discussing ways that people could come together and begin a
dialogue has now seemingly realized that we cannot even talk to believers because they are unreasonable and splintered in their views. Whether they are stoically denying our right to have a reasonable dialogue or angrily saying that our views are futile, Jillette’s style has painted them as patently unreasonable.

The use of the Sincere style here allows Jillette to make an argument that would normally seem counter to his previous statements. By creating a “we” there needs to be a hope for all parties to come together and be reasonable. If he were to draw that out and then reason that it is impossible because belief in religion causes solipsism then there is no more space for discussion, the argument is now over because no movement is possible.

However Jillette uses a Sincerity here that allows his anger to drive him to saying something contrary to his previously sweet and Modest discourse. What this does is show that he has a hope for open discourse but he has been denied the opportunity by outsiders whose solipsism causes them to deny his right to even argue for his convictions. He is then able to have it both ways in essence saying he wants something he is internally unsure can ever really happen.

Further his use of Sincerity here allows that his hope for reconciliation can be heralded as furtherance of his goodwill. His outburst of frustration shows his internal struggle against being silenced. The style choice allows that to be counterbalanced by his wish for the differing parties to come together. He has not only painted himself as a human being who is prone to doubts and frustration; and therefore the audience can identify with him. He also paints himself as an ambassador of goodwill trying to open a
reasonable discourse where everyone can be heard and no one needs to be silenced.

The last sentence in the paragraph serves as a bookend to bracket off the attack on believers and helps bring the audience back to the idea of Jillette’s humanity. He admits he can be proven wrong and seems to even embrace the idea. This examples how purposefully constructed that outburst really was. Jillette realizes that direct attack like this can damage his credibility and so directly afterward he goes back to rebuild and strengthen his Character. For those who thought style was not really a choice but simply the manner of speaking this shows that even a seeming loss of control can be purposefully placed in a piece in order to move an audience in a particular fashion. It is not random, it is not simply ornament it is a constructed manner of speaking designed to forward and in some cases create an argument one cannot make otherwise.

2.2.2 Paragraph seven

The seventh paragraph continues to rebuild the ethos of Jillette and to provide a reasoning why the audience should want to join him at the table. He says that if you believe the way he does you have a greater chance to change the future. This is not presented or styled in a Sincere way instead it employs the style of Beauty. “The Effective Idea of Beauty consists of the display of the qualities of psychological harmony and symmetry that put one at ease and thus make psychological movement – decision – possible” (Williams 24). This makes perfect sense given that Jillette is trying to entice people to his way of thinking in order to create or foster change.
2.3. **The Good Life (Paragraph Eight)**

The final paragraph is a prime example of building Character. The thoughts here are simple and everyday. These types of thoughts are shared by Simplicity, Sincerity, and Modesty all of which are parts of Character. The approach here is a simple and Modest presentation which links it with things like Simplicity, Modesty, Purity and Sincerity many of which are linked to Character. The figures and cadence are also simple and pure which means that this is largely a balance of Clarity and Character. All of the elements are those common elements between a number of secondary constructs which all seem interwoven with these two larger Styles.

In essence, Jillette moves to end with a summary of his good Character, which is simple to understand and clear. This should not be surprising given the efforts here to emphasize his good Character throughout the entire piece. His continued use of Sincerity and Indignation continued to point to his honesty in challenging the idea that there must be a divine being to provide us with happiness.

Throughout the piece Jillette has used Sincerity, at times to attack those he felt were not being honest, at times to promote his own good Character. He also did both at times attack others while promoting himself as a beacon of the middle ground. His work to define a conviction that is beyond Atheism but also in the realm of belief forces a degree of dimension into what many treat as a two dimensional discussion.
2.4. **Summary**

This chapter has examined how Jillette uses style in “There is no god” and how that use of style has helped to advance his argument and perhaps even helped create his argument in places. The next chapter will perform a similar analysis using a second artifact in order to directly compare the use of style in each artifact.
Chapter 3

MERDE DU TAUREAU

In the previous chapter we analyzed Penn Jillette’s “There is no god”. That analysis was done using the Hermogenic method described in On Types of Style. The analysis found a number of ways in which style supported or in places created an argument for Jillette. The same kind of analysis will take place in this chapter. The analysis will again focus on how Jillette uses the Primary Elements of style in order to create two Secondary Constructs. These constructs will again be Sincerity and Indignation. These Constructs share common elements with other Constructs and Styles but the discussion here will focus on those two.

This analysis will examine an episode of Penn & Teller’s Bullshit! from the show’s third season. The episode is titled “The Bible: Fact or Fiction?” and aired in 2005. The episode runs approximately 30 minutes and includes soundstage vignettes, news footage, street interviews, movie footage and footage from two interviews. This chapter will discuss the soundstage vignettes, guest speakers and street interviews separately beginning with the most important aspect to this analysis the soundstage vignettes.

3.1. Soundstage Vignettes

There are 17 total scenes where Penn & Teller are on a soundstage. These scenes represent the most direct speech from Jillette in the episode because it contains both his vocals and his presence with Teller as the main focus for the visual image. These scenes
range in length from 2 minutes and 30 seconds at the longest to 4 seconds at the shortest. While there is no scenery, there are often props and setups for magic tricks that will be pictured at the beginning of the section they are discussed in. Of the shows total 30 minute running time, 13 minutes and 48 seconds are comprised of these vignettes. This constitutes more than a third of the show.

3.1.1 *Introduction*

The first vignette is at the very start of the show. The scene starts with a white soundstage with their iconic red ampersand (pictured below) and quickly turns to focus on Penn and Teller. In the scene Teller performs a magic trick of turning one fish and dinner roll into the loaves and fishes (pictured below). Penn meanwhile asks the audience to get their family Bible so they can “follow along” with the episode. Teller continues by pouring water between wine glasses turning water into wine (pictured below) as Jillette discusses the content of the episode saying they will be debunking the accuracy of the Bible.
Figure 5  Vignette 1

We’re Penn & Teller and tonight’s show is interactive. We’re told that 4/5’s of American homes… have a Bible. So chances are ya got one. So go get it. Really, no kiddin’. Go get your goddamn Bible. If you don’t read right along with us tonight, you’re going to think we’re makin’ this shit up. So go get it, I’ll yap and Teller will do a few cheesy magic tricks to keep you amused while we’re all waiting. Go ahead we’re told the Damn Bible is an important guide to live by and the same folks say it’s the best selling book of all time. Yet it never seems to crack the Amazon top 100 list. When you count everything, starting at Guttenberg, Johannes not Steve, it’s a best seller. THANK YOU JESUS. Of course all time best seller #2 is Quotations from Chairman Mao Se Tung and #10 is Valley of the Dolls, so you can decide how much stock you want to but in best sellers. THANK YOU JESUS. Um, no thank you Teller.

Tonight we’re going to take you through the Damn Bible and show you that it’s full of inaccuracies, inconsistencies, and outright impossibilities, that it’s more fiction than fact. And that, ain’t bullshit. Go, go, you still have a few seconds left during our award nominated title sequence. Go find your Bible.
The thoughts expressed in this vignette are quite simple. Nothing here seems
difficult for a common person to grasp. These thoughts deal with how people think of the
Bible as an important book to live by, that the Bible is in most households and lastly that
the Bible is fictive in nature. The last thought, that the Bible is fictitious, might seem to
be more complex but when Hermogenes describes simple, pure thoughts he describes
them as not needing elaboration (Wooten 8, 71). When Penn says “it’s (The Bible is) full
of inaccuracies, inconsistencies, and outright impossibilities, that it’s more fiction than
fact.” He doesn’t elaborate on it. That sentence is really the only description of his thesis
for the episode.

Other thoughts that are typical of Sincerity are angry complaints. There is no
shortage of those in this vignette. The constant references to the “Damn Bible” are
enough to show that the thoughts are disrespectful and angry. Then there are the magic
tricks, which emulate the miracles of Jesus followed by a mocking outcry of “Thank you
Jesus!” from Penn. All of this elaborates on the angry thought process behind this
speech.

When looking to the approach there is one main way in which sincerity is
exampled here and that is though the movement from one topic to another with no real
connective tissue in the speech. Penn moves from getting your Bible to bestsellers to his
thesis all in one rather seamless flow of language. While there seems to be a break in
topic area there is no preview or review of any changes that are occurring. To be clear,
the preview being discussed here is an internal preview. In public speaking classes
students are taught to signpost as they go from point to point. While this entire vignette
is a preview for the show, it lacks internal signposting. Even between the discussion about bestsellers and the thesis of the episode there is a pause but nothing to signal the movement from idea to idea.

This is a television show; it’s pre-recorded and likely took several takes to get the particular audience response they wanted. It’s written beforehand as well, the magic tricks are staged and prepared all well in advance of shooting. The bottle (pictured above) had to have a specialized label made for it, they had to test colors of the wine and of the Bible to make sure they looked good on film. All of the pre-planning points to the fact non of what Jillette is saying could be truly spontaneous even though the style tries to make it appear spontaneous.

How would an audience ever feel this is somehow unaffected? Because the use of the sincere style is so powerfully employed here that the audience is allowed to see this less as a pre-determined television show and more as an angry rant. Jillette however cannot do this with thought and approach alone, nor does he.

The Diction here is also very important. The use of “Damn Bible” shows not only anger but it makes the word itself stand out in a sentence. This would certainly meet the standard of “rough and vehement” Diction used by Hermogenes (Wooten 94). The way Jillette talks about the “Damn Bible” makes it into two words one of which is slanderous the other of which is a holy word. The use of this particular word commits blasphemy every time it is said. It also takes longer to say it this way and his volume changes when he does say it. He pauses around it often and emphasizes how he says it.
The word choice here is also interesting when he refers to the magic tricks he and Teller are performing as cheesy. He says he will yap instead of talk as well. This language seems to make the whole situation less important. This self-effacing language is interesting for two reasons, in one way it works to show character by being humble. This is not deep or abiding humility really but it does serve the function of showing that Jillette does not take himself too seriously. The second function of this choice is that the magic tricks are called cheesy and what they do is replicate biblical miracles. By a somewhat obvious extension, the miracles are being called cheesy as well. If two rowdy stage magicians can do it, then what Jesus did seems less spectacular.

Looking at cadence and clauses together we can see that Jillette uses a number of very short phrases like “go get your Damn Bible” and “Thank you Jesus!” When Hermogenes discusses clauses he describes them as being very short, and in fact re-names phrases them to emphasize this (Wooten 29). Jillette here uses outbursts of the short phrases to make the cadence more in line with the short and choppy nature of Vehemence (Wooten 30, 32). In this passage, that technique creates forcible stops in the middle of longer ideas. In some ways they bookend larger sentences, but mainly they serve to add spaces where the language gets very short and choppy. These areas are commonly angry commands or mocking praise to a God the author seems determined to be disrespectful toward. None of the language here is particularly charming; none of the way it is spoken is lyrical or particularly even. The pacing and cadence are very staccato and uneven, making the whole piece audibly jarring.
Though the heavy use of short phrases and the resulting uneven cadence Jillette is able to present something that feels far more spontaneous than the medium would suggest. He has chosen words that are purposefully crude and insulting and he acts in a taunting way to make the insult is more pronounced. He has taken angry and judgmental thoughts and presented them as a stream of consciousness in such a way that they seem to be the ranting of someone driven by a deeper passion than one would expect from either a comedian, or a magician. Neither profession seems to lend itself to ranting outbursts about religion. However, the thoughts while angry are not hard to understand. These thoughts are not complex thoughts, instead they seem to be the thoughts of an “everyman” who thinks that religion is, for lack of a better word, bullshit.

Looking at the clauses, cadence, figures, and thoughts clearly communicates the anger Jillette is feeling toward religion. For those who are equally upset with the claims of religion this is a rallying cry. However to those who are already opposed to his view, this closes the conversation immediately. All believers would have a hard time dealing with this kind of language. Certainly no one who believes in the inerrancy of the Bible could listen to Jillette after this. In particular, the use of “Damn Bible” and the mocking performance of biblical miracles make it difficult if not impossible for a Christian to participate here. Jillette has in essence used style to close the argument off.

This “closing off” has another implication, namely that Jillette is perhaps not trying to have an argument at all. One way to frame this argument is to say that Jillette wants to make a space for New Atheists to come together, celebrate their logical argument, and laugh at believers. This framing however goes against what Jillette
himself has already said and seems to run counter to the format of the show. Jillette seems in several ways to be trying to maintain a façade of fairness. Jillette says in the next vignette that he cannot challenge someone who believes in the Bible because of faith. Jillette also seems to be allowing dissenting opinions in the street interviews, and he does have a well-educated speaker for the opposing view.

Jillette’s language and style undercut the opposition in ways that are far from fair. The editing on the show will be discussed later, but it also is designed to “stack the deck” against the view of Biblical inerrancy. Jillette is only presenting a straw man of fairness. However the straw man is well dressed and looks very official. Because Jillette has put so much effort into creating this façade of fairness it should be considered in the overall view of the style he employs.

If Jillette had not employed the stylistic elements that he did, this could have been a far more open argument. Discussing book sales using a more modern metric isn’t offensive by its nature. Discussing the historical claims of the Bible is a topic that many people engage in regularly. There are a number of biblical and historical scholars who discuss the issue of historical claims in the Bible in some depth. However, the ranting style of Jillette combined with the slanderous word choice and dismissive magic tricks in the background mean that only those people who have been disenchanted with religion can participate. While some people who question their faith without being Atheistic might continue the style shuts the door to anyone who has a deep seated belief in the truth of the Bible.
3.1.2  Facts, history and pizza

This scene begins with Penn “preaching” about television ministers. He gesticulates heavily and mocks the shouting style many adopt. He explains that this feels natural for him and that he feels good doing it. He then continues to explain that he and Teller are evangelical as well and describes all evangelism as spreading your own worldview. The scene pans down and we see Teller walking on water in a child’s pool (pictured below). During this magic trick Jillette talks about how if you believe in the Bible based on faith he cannot argue with you but as we see the trick exposed (the platform sandals pictured below) Jillette begins to explain that unless you want to believe something “nutty” then you cannot believe in the historicity of the Bible.
You know! Being on TV in a suit and yelling with this Damn book in my hand… feels very natural, look at the monitor Teller, I look good like that don’t I? I look just like one of those evangelical assholes; the fact is we are two evangelical assholes. Bullshit is an evangelical show; TV preachers are doing exactly what we’re doing. They’re telling the truth as they see it. They just don’t have the crack research team we have at Bullshit! If you’re religious and you believe the Bible is real because of faith, we can’t touch ya, it’s an automatic tie. No one can bust ya. Bible nuts pride themselves on believing in things that are hard to believe in. They think God will bless them for that. But if Faith isn’t enough, if you want history or fact in your Bible, you are so screwed. It’s fair to say the Bible contains equal amounts of fact, history, and pizza.

The thoughts in this vignette are quite a bit more complicated than the first vignette. Jillette is trying to distinguish between belief and knowledge. This is an epistemological argument that most common people do not deal with in their everyday life. It certainly does not fall into the concepts of simple or trivial laid out by Hermogenes and for many needs a good deal of elaboration (Wooten 90). The idea itself is hard for some to grasp.

The approach used here however is quite sincere. In the first vignette Jillette seems very insulting and yet in the second vignette he seems to be perfectly willing to “call it a draw” for those people who believe based on faith rather than fact. He starts by calling televised Ministers “evangelical Assholes” but suddenly he is willing to label himself the same way. He then says that he is evangelizing based on his worldview the same way believers do, but not without insulting them by saying they don’t have the research team he does.

There is clearly judgment here, which Hermogenes himself is unsure about. Hermogenes says “Perhaps a judgment should not be considered a figure but a thought, but at least we have described what effect it produces” (Wooten 96). In this case it may
qualify as both, the thoughts in this vignette are clearly judgmental, the figures used here exhibit judgment as well. In this instance, it does seem more appropriate to measure it not by taxonomy but by effect as Hermogenes does.

The figures employed in this scene, like direct address and judgment are key figures in Sincerity. There are moments where he addresses the audience directly, saying “If you’re religious and you believe the Bible is real because of faith, we can’t touch ya, it’s an automatic tie.” Direct address is a figure often connected with sincerity though generally used when attacking (Wooten 95). The attack that Jillette uses is later where he addresses believers and says “you’re so screwed.” This is mixed with the continued judgments leveled against believers. Jillette continues to disparage their beliefs as seemingly illogical and unreasonable. Talking about how they “pride themselves on believing in things that are hard to believe in.”

The diction here plays a similarly interesting role. The use of “Evangelical Assholes” and “Bible Nuts” are very judgmental labels, which both add to the figure of judgment described above. While Jillette is fine with self-identifying as an evangelical asshole the label itself is still an insulting one. The diction here is creating a serious division that needs to be described in more detail.

Jillette is using a lot of labels to gather all believers into one group. He hasn’t used terms like inerrancy or fundamentalist at all. He has used labels like “Bible nuts” and “Evangelical Assholes” which are far more general. His choice in wording here has a serious impact. Many believers do not take the Bible as a literal, historical document. Many believers find the Bible to be full of homily and parable. However, these
reasonable believers are also excluded from the conversation not because they believe something crazy but because they are being constantly lumped in with another group.

This straw man fallacy is common in contemporary American media. One does not need to look very hard to find people being quoted in the media saying things like “the earth is 6000 years old” or “the Ten Commandments are the basis for all modern legal systems.” The presence of these believers in media is disproportional to their presence in the body of Christianity. Jillette takes a cue from this and knowingly conflates these fundamentalists with all believers in how he labels people. This conflation is a major way Jillette invites those already disenfranchised with religion to join him. He is in essence giving them a rhetorical permission to lump all religion in with these crazy people and leave religion in favor of reason. If Jillette were being honest and dealing with this as a fringe belief system many audience members would still have to contend with religion instead of simply calling it all crazy.

The diction continues to be rough when he tells people they are “so screwed.” A final interesting choice of words is when Jillette says the Bible contains the same amount of “facts, history and pizza.” Choosing pizza in that case serves just fine to insultingly say that the Bible contains no facts or history, but it also has a certain modesty to it. Pizza is a common thing, it is a food item most Americans are familiar with, and it seems almost lighthearted. A common audience when trying to deal with epistemology can attach well to the sentence “It’s fair to say the Bible contains equal amounts of fact, history, and pizza.”
Pizza also serves very specifically to re-state the thesis of the argument in this case. While Jillette says in the first vignette that “it’s full of inaccuracies, inconsistencies, and outright impossibilities, that it’s more fiction than fact.” He makes a bolder claim when he says “the Bible contains equal amounts of fact, history, and pizza.” This means he has moved from saying that the Bible is in places inaccurate but may still contain historically verifiable accounts to saying there is no history or fact in the Bible whatsoever. The stylistic choice here helps audiences hear that and identify with it while not being critical of it. The two claims however are materially different.

The clauses and cadence here bear more similarity to Simplicity or Modesty than they do with Sincerity or Vehemence (Wooten 75). The sentences are even and not clashing, the meter while not consistent is not discordant. Jillette clearly wants the audience to be comfortable here, he realizes the ideas are difficult and has chosen a cadence that is easier to follow.

There is a definite shift in style between the first scene and this scene. The visual element of Teller doing biblical magic tricks continues (in this vignette he walks on water with the aid of platform sandals). However there are no exclamations of “Thank you Jesus!” heard in this vignette. The ideas here are more complex as well and the clauses and cadence are easier to follow. However the sincerity has not left it has simply shifted forms. The thoughts rather than being simple rely on their judgmental nature. The judgmental nature of this scene is infused into thoughts, figures, and even the diction. The approach is not about the moving between points as it was in the first scene. The approach has become about how the conversation is suddenly about epistemology and
how worldviews are expressed when just a moment ago the discussion was about the Bible being a poorly selling book of lies.

The figures here are what stand out as the most sincere moments. The direct address of the audience is not all that odd for a narrator, however when Jillette starts talking to “you” in particular saying he can’t touch you or that you’re screwed he breaks down the inherent division of rhetor and audience that television inherently creates. The judgments here may be as much a thought as they are a figure, though the figure is certainly at play here. Labeling someone a nut or an asshole is passing a very clear very pronounced judgment on that person. Jillette in this vignette does that to particular effect.

Choosing phrases like “Bible nut” and “Damn book” continue to create a very tense sort of feeling in the piece. There is antagonism here that Jillette is not only failing to hide but through his directed choice of words he is highlighting. Even though there are moments where Jillette purports to almost agree with Television Ministers, that sense of camaraderie is lost when you call their holy book names and you label them as assholes. The words here are pronounced attacks on believers as showmen and illusionists, regardless of any claims to the contrary.

If what Jillette wanted was to exhibit his willingness to open a dialogue he would need to choose different labels. His overall approach of including Dr. Maier and allowing for the street interviews to express dissenting convictions continues to decorate this straw man of religion that he has constructed. He has some interest in maintaining this appearance of fairness. Continuing to have fake miracles and begin name-calling believers isn’t going to let them come into the conversation. However shifting things
around so that you look as though you’re ready to talk does increase your good character with some audience members and especially those mentioned earlier, who might feel uneasy and disenfranchises with religion but who have not yet moves to outright rejection.

3.1.3  *Genesis*

This is a relatively short scene lasting only about 30 seconds. The scene begins with Penn asking if the audience has their Bibles and then asks them to turn to Genesis. He briefly recaps what occurs in this book and introduces that as the first topic of conversation. He invites the audience to read to themselves during the upcoming segment with Shermer and Maier.

Figure 7  Vignette 3

Did you people finally get your good books? Great. Put those books down and open your Damn Bible to Genesis. We’ll start right at the beginning. Genesis, chapters one and two. Once upon a time God created heaven and earth in six days and then napped on the seventh. Adam, Eve, The Garden of Eden, Snakey, all in Genesis. Go ahead, you can read it to yourself while Michael and the Doctor are talkin’, they won’t be offended, they’re on TV.
This vignette has an interesting use of sincerity contained within it. It has stopped being angry per se and started simply seeking to antagonize without the appearance of antagonism. There is no shouting there is far less outright anger and more humorous mocking. While this can clearly be antagonistic, it is more derisive than attacking.

Beginning with the thoughts expressed here, they seem to revert to simplicity. Nothing being discussed here is particularly heady and it’s really more designed, if taken from a narrative perspective, to break up the other vignettes. This piece is bookended by vignettes where they have two competing speakers talking about the Bible with some short voiceovers. During this vignette Penn is simply stopping to narrate and to set the audience up to discuss Genesis. Because the ideas and thoughts are so simple it seems Penn is able to talk to the audience in a casual “off the cuff” manner.

The approach here is more in line with Simplicity or Purity. Hermogenes describes this approach as it “narrates a simple fact… and does not add anything that is extraneous to the topic” (Wooten 9). The tone of this passage might be considered more of an aside, particularly at the end where he says the other speakers will not be offended if you are reading while they talk. But the approach here even if it is somewhat of an aside is less about the appearance of sincerity and more about being clear.

The figures in this vignette however point to a sincere approach in a very definite fashion. Breaking off a sentence assuming the audience is following along is very typical of a sincere approach (Wooten 95). The whole listing of the portions within Genesis is a perfect example of this sort of element being used to create a sincere feeling. By “hitting the high notes” of Genesis in the way he does, Jillette creates a very informal personal
feeling with the audience, as if he has had such a long relationship with the audience he knows that they don’t need him to spell things out. It’s far more conversational than most logical arguments should allow for, while argument theory would say this kind of discourse is fallacious when examining the figures of style it explains a different approach to the argument.

The language here is designed to build Jillette’s character among the audience through the continued insulting of religion as a whole. The insult comes when he finally uses the phrase “good book” and then tells them to put that down and open their “Damn Bible.” While Jillette has been using Damn Bible before now it becomes even more pronounced as he uses another label for it only to revoke the “good book” status and re-enforce his denigration of the Bible. The insult continues as Jillette uses very informal language to deal with the contents of Genesis one and two. Saying that god “napped” and referring to the serpent as “Snakey” while possibly amusing to non-believers are insulting to those for whom this is an important work of literature.

While Jillette uses these phrases enthusiastically, they function in highlighting how unaffected the speech really is. By this point it seems as though Jillette has no concern for decorum or creating anything with a crafted style. He has been constantly picking a fight with believers and closing them out of the conversation. What is most interesting here is the cadence and clauses used in this vignette. Hermogenes describes sincere cadence as sharing qualities with Vehemence. This cadence would therefore be being choppy and discordant (Wooten 29). While this passage does use short clauses, particularly in the listing of Genesis, it does not sound Vehement. While the cadence
here is choppy, it might be better described as bouncy. The sounds are not discordant but they do stop and start quite a bit. Overall, the clauses and cadence are fitting Sincerity but they do not seem to have a vehement tone.

Something of note is that while the amused tone of Jillette is evident in this scene, because we are looking through the lens of Hermogenes we can see how the real disdain Jillette seems to have for believers is still present. While most casual watchers would not think of his amused tone and magic tricks as particularly mean we can see the same cadence of Asperity is at play even though the tone is different. While many people would think of the good book comment as humor, we can see the inherent judgment that continues here. Where most would see the short list of Genesis as a sort of shorthand we can see how those one word phrases show clauses more in line with Asperity and Vehemence than a normal audience could see.

3.1.4 The “king of kings”

This scene begins with Penn and Teller in cardinal’s robes. They quickly strip the robes off in favor of bright red sequined Elvis costumes. Jillette spends the scene discussing how in a mere 25 years the stories of Elvis’ life and death have been greatly muddled while some believe he is still alive. This is highlighted through the discussion of fried chicken recipes. They compare the recipes found in two different Elvis books and find glaring differences. They suggest that if only 25 years later we cannot agree on fried chicken how can anyone agree on the life of Christ over 2,000 years ago when most people were illiterate.
Let’s take a moment to consider the important relevant lessons Teller and I have learned from the king of kings. Elvis Aaron Presley died in 1977 he was born and lived at a time when most people in his land were literate we have many first hand reports about Elvis’ life. We have many reliable records, medical, musical and otherwise. Even so there are people lots of people who insist Elvis is not really dead. Sound familiar? Even the dozens of books written by people who actually knew Elvis contain conflicting stories of his life. Sound familiar? There are people who insist Elvis didn’t take drugs. Sound Familiar? Yeah that one doesn’t to us either. We have photographs of Elvis in the morgue dead as a fuckin’ doornail and in just 25 years, there are stories that he’s not dead.

In Fit for a King an important work delving into the Elvis eating habits the author suggests that in order to make Elvis’ beloved fried chicken you need: 3/4 cup of flour, salt, paprika and pepper. In Are You Hungry Tonight a definitive look into Elvis’ favorite foods the king’s beloved fried chicken recipe calls for: 1/2 cup of flour, salt and pepper. Glaring differences. 1/4 cup less flour? No Paprika?
Fucking Heretics! Now imagine trying to figure, which is the true Elvis chicken 2000 years from now. Elvis never did no drugs.

This vignette does not heavily rely on sincerity. Instead the ideas and analogy offered here are clearly too complex to fit with the thoughts of a Sincere passage. The figures here have more to do with examples that focus on leading the audience to a revelation based on reasoning that has been carefully crafted.

There are indignant elements in the use of satire to tie Elvis to the Bible. Referring to “the king of kings” as being Elvis both continues to show irreverence for religious terms and ideas and entertains the audience. But that alone is not enough to call this passage Indignant or Sincere.

3.1.5 The great flood

This scene begins with Penn alone onscreen. Penn makes some introductory retort to Dr. Maier who was in the scene before talking about Noah and the flood. Maier explains the early chapters in Genesis being a sort of encapsulated set-up for the coming story. Maier uses an analogy from the Saturday Evening Post. In this analogy, later parts of a serialized fiction would have a summary above in italics. Maier claims the story of the Ark is that kind of italics. Jillette then offers an alternate explanation of the flood from historical accounts and as he is describing those events he and the camera move to show Teller playing with a boat in a child swimming pool. The shot closes in on the boat which has a toy Moses and toy Jesus with a number of animals. Meanwhile Penn finishes his version of the flood and talks about how that version has scientific evidence
and chastises believers for pseudo-science. Teller continues to add animals and the boat tips over a number of times as Jillette concludes his discussion.

Figure 9  Vignette 5

So God wrote the Saturday Evening Post too. Well Meyer is partially correct, the Noah thing is probably a mixture of stories about a flood that really happened on the Euphrates river about 125 miles southeast of present day Baghdad. Every spring the Euphrates floods but according to archeologists one June around 2900 BC there was this 6-day storm and the river rose another 22 feet. The river overflowed the levees and a lot of people got killed. One of the survivors was a local Sumerian king named Zuisudra he resourcefully commandeered a commercial barge loaded with merchandise and rode the flood downstream into the Persian Gulf where he eventually ran aground. Thankful to be alive Zuisudra offered a sacrifice on a hilltop temple.

That’s it. Big Flood. Boat full of goods. Happy landing on a hilltop. And we have geologic and archaeological evidence to support that. No surprise that at least six other cultures in the region have flood stories like Noah. But see what happens when you abandon the faith world and pretend to use science to prove your bullshit
myths? There’s always a real scientist willing to check your facts. Elvis didn’t do no drugs!

Again we see that Jillette is making use of the style of Clarity as much as he is using Sincerity in this vignette. Clarity is a Tertiary Style composed of two Secondary constructs, Purity and Distinction. However this piece contains more than simple Clarity, it contains some important elements of Sincerity, which help example how these styles can be used to accomplish a particular goal. Clarity is designed to offer data in a way that the audience is led enthymematically through it so that they come to an almost intuitive moment of understanding the conclusions of the rhetor as obvious or common sense. Sincerity on the other hand allows the audience to identify with the author and their motives so they come to intuitively follow the author’s thinking, and align themselves with the rhetor’s viewpoint. The two work well together an in this case they are used to substantiate one another.

Jillette’s claim about the Bible being fictitious is based in scientific reasoning. The evidence he offers in support of his claim is largely historical though he also discusses how even that historical evidence is verified by archaeological and geological findings. An argument like this seems to be a natural fit for using a clear style. However he isn’t presenting the evidence itself, he is telling the audience it exists. He is also a stage magician with a television show. Simply employing a clear style would not entertain his audience, nor would it seem in character for him to be presenting such evidence instead of someone like Richard Dawkins or Jillette’s guest speaker on the episode, Michael Shermer. Since Jillette cannot use Clarity here, he uses Sincerity.
Jillette builds himself as a person the audience can identify with and align themselves with because he is more like them. Jillette has also processed all this higher order evidence from other sources for the audience. He is building a sort of “Reader’s Digest” ethos.

When we look at the elements that create Clarity we see that simple thoughts are commonalities between Purity and Sincerity (Wooten 8, 90). The thoughts here are not complicated, there exist two explanations for the story of Noah and the Ark, Jillette favors one over the other. The story he prefers certainly needs explanation but the thought as to why he prefers that story is very basic. The reason actually helps build his thesis, his story has scientific evidence behind it. This thought actually helps build both Clarity and Sincerity and helps establish not only that the concept is not complicated but that Jillette is honestly doing what any “reasonable” person would do. His version of “reasonable” however closes the door to believers.

One of the figures Hermogenes describes as being used in Sincerity is doubting or perplexity (Wooten 95). For Hermogenes this is best when the author does not give advance notice of his perplexity but simply says it as a sort of outburst (Wooten 92, 95). This lack of advance notice is also an approach Hermogenes describes in his discussion of Sincerity (Wooten 92). This combination of approach and figure is exactly what Jillette uses in the beginning of this scene. Jillette’s first response to Dr. Maier is one of perplexity. Jillette’s only response to Maier’s claims of the ark being “italics” that would appear at the beginning of a serialized story to describe the story so far is “So God wrote the Saturday Evening Post too. “ This uses of sarcasm is there to denote the absurdity of
such culturally important stories being likened to summary script at the beginning of a serialized fiction.

The approach in this sentence is clearly that of an aside. Jillette, while responding to Meyer, is making a comment that doesn’t add anything to the conversation. The same judgmental dismissiveness he employs as a figure seems to push this comment out of the stream of topical conversation into being an aside. It also seems inconsistent with the very next sentence where he says Dr. Maier is half right. This first sentence feels like a gut reaction, an unplanned sort of narrative aside Penn could not hold back.

After this aside Penn begins to lay out his version of events very clearly. He makes distinctions when he needs to, as he does with explaining the flood patterns of the Euphrates. He also includes just the right amount of data, giving enough information that the audience can check his facts, but not so much that it bogs down the vignette. That paragraph seems to be quite well laid out to example purity of ideas and distinctness in structure.

The second paragraph is where we see both Sincerity and Clarity really come together. Penn gives us a very short summary of the previous story, something that examples clarity. He is giving the audience a roadmap to come to that internal “a-ha” moment of agreement if the story he just told didn’t connect well enough to being an alternative to the story of Noah. The way in which he words this summary however is where he comes across as someone who has let the pretense of a constructed style fall aside. For example when Jillette says “That’s it. Big Flood. Boat full of goods. Happy landing on a hilltop.” He has taken a normal pattern of speaking and chopped it up
causing the cadence to shift. The phrases he uses are short and the pattern sort of jumbled. When Jillette uses “big flood” or “happy landing on a hilltop” as whole ideas, he takes the whole story and simplifies it down to a childlike simplicity. This also serves as a shorthand that the audience should readily understand, which is an aspect of Sincerity.

This blending of Clarity and Sincerity is a key to understanding how Jillette has composed this entire episode. He started by closing the door to those who would not be satisfied by science alone. Then he offers clear evidence balanced with a sincere style. He also continues to attack religious believers in order to constantly re-establish his ethos.

If Jillette were making a simple argument in a more formalized context he couldn’t get away with this kind of talk. Jillette isn’t engaging in debate though. He has built a message that uses the context of entertainment where he is expected to entertain his audience. To be entertaining encourages the use of style more than it encourages the development of content. He balances the delivery of some second hand evidence with a healthy dose of Character in order to give the audience someone they can trust offering them information they can follow along. Because he has also made certain he is mainly talking to those who share his views he can supply them with particular arguments without needing to persuade them of the veracity of the facts used. The audience believes in Penn enough through his use of Character to believe that he has done the fact checking on his scientific evidence. Had Jillette not closed the door to believers or had he used a more convincing speaker for the believer’s perspective, he might be required to show his
work more. But because he has used Sincerity to drive off believers who would question
him and only speak to an audience that shares his views, he can stand unchallenged.

3.1.6 *The wrath of an angry magician*

This scene begins with Penn alone speaking about the lack of historical evendece
for the existence of Moses or the 40 year trek through the desert. He then transitions to
sitting at a table with Teller and talking about the ten plagues of Egypt. Each plague is
followed by some kind of comment as well as either a magic trick, sight gag or sound. A
glass of water is passed behind a bible and turns to blood. The plagues in order receive
the following treatment. A glass of water is turned to a glass of blood. A frog appears
from behind the bible. For the plague of lice Teller simply pretends to itch and scratches
himself. For the fourth plague Teller puts a lit match into a small dish, this ignites the
dish, which is then covered. When the cover is removed, the dish is now full of
mealworms. Next, a toy cow is brought forward and a bible waved over it, the cow then
moos and rolls over as if dead. For the sixth plague, Teller opens the bible and applies
fake boils to his face. For the seventh plague (thunder, hail and fire), the bible Teller is
holding lights on fire with no visible source. For the plague of locusts, there is simply a
sound effect and Teller looks around as if they are off in the distance. For the ninth
plague (darkness), the lights go out and the two magicians are lit only by the burning
bible. When the lights come back on Teller closes the bible in a clap of burnt paper and
there is a sound effect of a baby for the tenth plague. Penn finishes the story while trying
to get a mealworm out of his sleeve, which crawled in during the ninth plague.
The second image below shows the wine glass of blood at Penn’s elbow, the frog is sitting at the base of the glass and the dish, which will be full of mealworms, is currently on fire. The third image depicts the dish now full of mealworms, the frog has hopped to the bottom of the screen and Teller is waving the bible over the toy cow. In the final image the cow is now dead at the base of Teller’s Bible, Teller is covered in boils though that is hard to make out and the bible is on fire. Images of the lights being out were not included here because the image would be unrecognizable in this format.

Figure10  Vignette 6

Thousands of Jews are supposedly enslaved by the Egyptian Pharaoh. I don’t wanna sound like Mel Gibson’s dad here but we can’t find any evidence of that. None. Really, none. Floods we find but enslaved Jews in Egypt nowhere outside of
the Damn Bible. So Moses, we have no evidence of Moses outside of the Damn Bible either. None. Comes to Pharaoh and says “Let my people go!” No note from God, nothing. Pharaoh says “No.” Now why wouldn’t God just appear to Pharaoh and say it himself? Because God works in mysterious, inefficient and breathtakingly cruel ways.

Pharaoh says no so God releases a set of 10 plagues upon Egypt. Number one, all waters in Egypt turn to blood and all of the fish die. See, so all of the fish who got a pass in Noah’s flood get fucked in the blood water, maybe the fish were gloating and God hates gloaters. Number two, frogs infest Egypt. Ick. I’ve been to Egypt, this is not good for the frogs either. Number three, lice cover every man and beast. Normal for that period so not that big a deal. Number four, a cloud of insects attack the people. Ick again. Yeah God get the insects to fight your fuckin’ battles for ya. Number five, a severe pestilence strikes the livestock. Well they’re already covered in lice and frogs and bugs, they wanna die. God as Kevorkian finally shows some mercy. Number six, all Egyptians are covered in boils. Again, who can tell the fuckin difference at this point. Number seven, thunder hail and fire. Hail and frogs, just a fuckin mess. Number eight, locusts. Yeah whatever God bring it on, this is just food for any frogs not smooshed by the hail. Number nine, darkness for three days. At least you can’t see the gross out. Number 10, first born Egyptian child dies. There’s a kind God.

Now free Moses leads the Jews to the red sea then he parts the water as neatly as George W. Bush parts his hair and they dance through the sea corridor. Literal fucking story. You people crack me up. Elvis didn’t do no drugs. And I have a mealworm up my sleeve.

This vignette continues to blend information with sincerity but here the balance is tipped far more on the side of sincerity. The attack on God here is an impeachment of God’s character. Jillette has abandoned even the appearance of being fair and he and Teller directly impeach the goodness of God. This is Sincerity at it’s most angry. The interesting turn here happens between the first and second paragraphs where Jillette abandons the argument about evidence and begins to impeach God directly. Vehemence is a secondary construct of Grandeur, and the only thing keeping this passage from slipping into Vehemence alone is the seemingly unrestrained nature of it. Hermogenes notes when he discusses the fusion of Vehemence and Sincerity “Someone who speaks
spontaneously seems to be very convinced of what he is saying but someone who seems to have planned out his remarks is not equally convincing” (Wooten 94). Jillette has to employ sincerity in this attack because if he had a measured and prepared style here he would seem far less convincing.

This first paragraph is an interesting approach to Indignation. Jillette says something very telling when he says “I don’t want to sound like Mel Gibson’s dad here.” Mel Gibson’s father is known for having denied the holocaust. Jillette realizes that making claims like those he is about to make would earn him the ire of society at large. Though it is less clear that Jillette equates denying exodus with denying the holocaust. Jillette clearly sees the questions he is about to express as being a service to his audience. What he may be doing here is a “mock” indignation where he tries to avoid criticism through a sort of humbling language. While Indignation normally assumes the rhetor has already been punished Jillette is afraid of future punishment.

The moment of hesitation here followed by a strong opinion is a common tool in Indignation (Wooten 100). Another common tool here is to call into question something that is agreed upon (Wooten 100-01). However Hermogenes describes this as being perplexed whereas Jillette has moved to disbelief. He realizes that this is not a socially acceptable position and so he hesitates, but once he says that there isn’t any evidence for the enslavement of the Jews he picks up a great deal of strength as he continues to call things into question.

The transition into open Sincerity begins with the discussion of Pharaoh. There is no longer any concern over getting in trouble. Jillette continues to use mocking
perplexity when he discusses why God does not simply tell Pharaoh himself. Jillette’s language is perplexed but his tone is more accusatory in nature. He uses rude language and diction when he says “no note from God” and he is clearly making an angry complaint. The approach here in the transition from Indignation to Sincerity is also interesting. Jillette provides an example in the previous statement about not wanting to sound like Mel Gibson’s father that he is capable of couching his language in a way that is not as offensive. When he talks about there being no evidence for the Jews in the desert he did so reasonably, but suddenly we are right back to the insulting language. In fact, the attack is shifting from the Bible itself to the character of God.

That shift happens when we hear that “God works in mysterious, inefficient and breathtakingly cruel ways.” That is strong language and it is not directed at the factual claims of the Bible. This is a direct attack on God (not to be confused with direct address, a figure which produces sincerity but a directed attack). Here you have the figure of judgment in a very pure form. Penn Jillette in this sentence has passed judgment on the God of Abraham. There’s no other way to read this

Jillette is clearly angry. In fact, he seems to be saying whatever enters his mind without any concern for how it is being said. This is not that case in previous scenes. He has blasphemed many times, he has called people assholes, and he has been very flippant with many topics. He has never lost control like this though. There is clear Vehemence here, and that Vehemence is vital to making the passage sound sincere. Jillette breaks into his own discussion with phrases like “Bring it on God” and “Whatever” as though he was too disgusted to finish what he was saying.
The species of Sincerity we see here is heavy in it’s association with Vehemence. Vehemence reproaches those who occupy a social position that is below the rhetor. Here we see something very common in New Atheist rhetoric, which is the direct impeachment of god. This is Vehement because Jillette is placing himself socially above god. However, these are aspects of Sincerity and not Grandeur. Grandeur attempts to draw a border around something and grasp at the transcendent. While this may be a side effect of what happens here it is not the only outcome that Jillette wants. He is instead trying to assert his character exceeds the character of God.

Each reply to one of the plagues of Egypt feels very much like an angry outburst. They function as retorts to how God has dealt with Egypt. The diction here is full of profanity and rough language entirely lacking any polish and often emphasizing the profanity to emphasize the disgust Jillette has for God. Jillette even likens God to Jack Kevorkian when he discusses the pestilence of the fifth plague.

During this entire process Teller is trying to keep up by doing magic trick reenactments, which often feel rushed. When trying to get a lit match into a pan it sticks to his fingers, when trying to apply boils to his face from inside a Bible he can’t seem to get them to stick right, all of this feels very much like two guys who have lost their composure and have allowed the audience to realize their passion is the thing that is moving them forward. The approach where an author rolls from point to point without connection is very apparent here, they are just driving forward without concern for preparation or decorum. Teller’s magic is clearly not polished and it feels like he is always unprepared. Clearly everything in this scene was set up before hand but the
rapidity and anger of Jillette’s speaking makes teller look as though he is struggling to keep up with an out of control partner.

The style here takes the anger of Asperity and Vehemence and uses it to draw a direct comparison between the divine and the mortal. The approach here is also common between Vehemence and Sincerity it is an angry outburst, which is reproachful of God. Hearing passages like “Yeah God get the insects to fight your fuckin’ battles for ya.” Is a clear indictment of God’s honor. There is no language here that tones down the severity of Penn’s disdain for God at this point. He is attacking directly and without any appearance of concern for decorum.

There are points at which there is even a direct address to God challenging him. Jillette says in response to the Locusts of plague eight “Yeah whatever God bring it on…” This sort of directed address is again shared between Vehemence and Sincerity. The idea that Jillette feels God is on or below his level allows him the ability to call God by name and challenge him. The level of blasphemy at this point has eliminated any hope of rational discourse with a believer, the argument is in essence over.

This vignette is at roughly the halfway point in the show and as far as argumentation is concerned Jillette has fallen off the spectrum. Whether you consider him a zealot who is artificially promoting himself as equal to God or you classify him as a skeptic who will accept nothing less than absolute proof he has removed himself from rational discourse. Most argument theory would stop here as the argument has broke down into name-calling and cannot continue at a civil level.
3.2 After the Tipping Point

The argument continues after this vignette but the style remains a generally static mix of Sincerity and Clarity. Jillette discusses the historical claim of Jesus and the resurrection. The argument mainly being that Jesus was one of numerous people at that time claiming to be the messiah. The continued use of doubting and perplexity coupled with simple thoughts and judgments is consistent throughout the piece. The diction continues with the themes of the “Damn Bible” and labeling believers as “nuts.” This is sometimes coupled with paragraphs of clarity where other explanations are offered. The end result is the same, believers are verbally marginalized while Jillette continues to focus on offering arguments and evidence to those people who are already in alignment with his views.

The argument then takes an odd shift into the use of Biblical examples and ideas as a basis for moral law and justice. This instance in particular is worthy of discussion because of the way Jillette uses a news footage clip to introduce one of his vignettes. There is a portion of news footage dealing with the 2003 case of removing a monument to the 10 Commandments from the Alabama State Supreme Courthouse. The clip includes a protester who says the following in a loud and angry voice: “You ain’t takin’ my 10 commandments, you ain’t takin’ my Bible, and you ain’t touchin’ my faith. It’s part of the constitution of this country”
Penn’s response to this is the following:

“We is taking you commandments out of our courthouse. We isn’t taking you Bible or you faith. The constitution guarantees us freedom from you Bible and you faith while promising you can keep you Bible and you faith. Elvis didn’t do no drugs!”

The thought here is clearly simple and direct. There are strong elements of Vehemence here as well. The cadence here is choppy and the diction used lends a sense of discord in how the audience listens to the response. The judgment here is palpable and the way in which that is brought about is through the diction. The use of “you” in the place of “your” and the use of “isn’t” instead of “aren’t” functions in two ways. It presents a very clear example of how the sounds of words can clash, the audience hearing the wrong word knows something is wrong. It sounds incorrect and the incorrect nature of the word choice breaks the thought up and it also is audibly disturbing. These elements fight clarity and in fact make the passage feel even angrier.

Second, many people when hearing this are likely to associate it with the poor language of the believer who was just shown. While that believer does speak in a very
informal way he is not so blatantly misusing words. The original speaker does use “ain’t” instead of “aren’t” which is a Jillette also does in his retort. He however doesn’t say “isn’t” and he certainly doesn’t say “me Bible” or “me faith.” Jillette at once creates a seemingly angry outburst while at the same time using the language to impeach the intellect of the original speaker. It is this level of anger and disrespect that have broken the lines of discussion down and made this only appeal to an already indoctrinated group. In essence the level of Vehemence infused into the style at this point has made even a Sincere style useful only to like minded audience members.

For that indoctrinated group this is character building. By painting the opposition as buffoonish and unable to speak properly Jillette is building his standing as an evangelical heretic. To a New Athiest audience this is very in line with Christopher Hutchins and Richard Dawkins. It serves the purpose of getting the audience to ascent to the points Jillette is making because he is a good group member rather than because he has a logically solid argument.

For those people who entered the conversation as something other than heretics the conversation is continuing to draw down the audience. An agnostic who might have been following along at first is going to have to make a decision to listen on as a heretic or to leave the conversation. Similarly those who were unsure about their belief either have to shed it completely or reject Jillette as going too far.
3.3 Guest Speakers

This use of other speakers is a consistent element throughout the episode. Jillette as a writer on the show has carefully selected whom to include as the voice of either side of this issue. In this instance he has chosen Dr. Michael Shermer and Dr. Paul L. Maier. Jillette makes a particular mention of the fact both men are PhDs noting that Dr. Maier prefers to be called Doctor while Shermer prefers being addressed by his name rather than his title. This speaks to the continued use of Sincerity, even extending to building sincerity for one of the guest speakers. Jillette also mentions having a good feeling about Shermer saying he seems sincere. The use of the particular word sincere is a perfect example of how seriously Jillette is considering the building of this particular species of Character.

Shermer was discussed briefly in the first chapter as being one of the most recognizable names in the New Atheist movement. Shermer being the mind behind Skeptic magazine and the Skeptic Society again echoes Jillette’s decision in this show to use stylistic choices, including choosing others to share the stage, that close the door to conversation. The arguments and style contained in this television episode were designed to build cohesion between members of the New Atheist movement and offer them clear arguments to level against Theists.

With this goal in mind the choice of Paul Maier is not surprising. Maier is a well-published academic who also holds a prominent position in a church, which supports biblical inerrancy ("Paul L. Maier"). Maier is the second vice president of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, a church that believes that the Bible is the inspired word of
God and is without error ("Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod"). Inerrancy is a term that is somewhat broad. The most loose definition of the term seems to say the Bible is without error in its purpose, more strict readings of inerrancy say that every word of the text is entirely without error. The implications are astounding but for this context it seems clear that Maier is reasonably willing to accept that translation issues exist as well as some “editorializing.” Maier does not discuss his own religious beliefs on the show but obviously the producers and writers of Bullshit! Were aware of Maier’s faith before selecting him.

Figure12  Shermer and Maier

Shermer is presented in a home, there is a fireplace behind him and two small busts on a low shelf nearby. He is shown in a jacket but with a black t-shirt instead of a dress shirt. Maier in contrast is in a more formal jacket with a dress shirt and striped tie. He appears to be in his office with a computer behind him and a series of bookshelves beside him containing dozens of books many of which are stacked at varying angles. There seems to be a classical bust among the books as well. When introducing Maier to the audience Penn says “Dr. Maier is a well known Biblical scholar who has written
books on ancient history, he’s got a PhD and calls himself Doctor.” This is in contrast to what Jillette says about Shermer “Michael Shemer has written books on religion and skepticism and he has a PhD. So he could call himself Doctor, if he wanted to. But he calls himself Michael Shermer.” Maier is obviously older and appears in a far more formalized environment. While that formality might at first face seem to be a way of building his credibility in this instance it works against Maier. The entire point of Maier’s presentation is to make him appear insincere.

Because of the heavy influence of Sincerity in the overall episode, the formality of Maier seems to point to someone who is less sincere and more prepared. Shermer is contrastingly portrayed as being at home and generally less formalized. The visual cues with Shermer point to a man who is friendlier, and more likely to be conversing rather than presenting a formal argument. Penn even plays both sides of the fence when discussing Shermer. Early in the episode, he says “Michael Shemer has written books on religion and skepticism and he has a PhD. So he could call himself Doctor, if he wanted to. But he calls himself Michael Shermer.” Then he later says “We just get a warm feeling about this Doctor Shermer. He seems so sincere, smart, and good lookin’ too.” Maier on the other hand seems to be someone who is presenting a pre-formatted lecture.

What is presented in these scenes is a younger, more sincere looking man who is at his home using a more sincere style of speaking set against an older more formal looking man in his office using a more polished style of speaking. Because this analysis focuses on style some important things become clear. First, Shermer is designed to appear more like Penn & Teller. Second, Maier is made to purposefully look less like
Penn & Teller. Third, the whole episode has been about Penn building his ethos with the audience. Fourth, the episode has also continued to insult any believer, particularly anyone who would defend the historical claims of the bible. What becomes clear is that Maier is an unwitting punching bag. His interview was taped well in advance of the editing and so everything about the show was designed to make him look bad.

3.4 Street Interviews

The street interviews in the episode do not tie logically to any of the arguments being offered, the people in them do not offer any reasoning behind their thoughts or opinions. However they do add a great deal stylistically. The simple inclusion of everyday people offering their thoughts on the issue seems to go back to the very idea Hermogenes discusses about the thoughts which are common to Sincerity, Clarity and Simplicity should be everyday thoughts or thoughts a common person would have. The inclusion of everyday people here seems to be a direct tie to that element of style.
Some people appear in more than one segment and in general there is an even balance between believers and non-believers. Everyone asked about the existence of Jesus seemed to believe that there was at least a historical Jesus though it is unclear how many believe that person had any divine connection. Of the people asked to recite the 10 commandments, none named all ten, two of them said nothing at all but looked puzzled (the second picture above is an example). However it is worth noting 3 people recited some commandments but were edited, meaning we did not see their entire response.

There isn’t a particular bias shown in these segments that leads one to reasonably believe they are important to the argument. It is far more likely adding everyday people to the mix was meant to enhance the existing Style. There is not a significant argument against the historical existence of Jesus, though there is argument over the historical claims of the resurrection, which does not receive a street interview segment. The only clear editing here was with the 10 commandments segment, while none of the interviewed people seemed to be reciting the commandments in rapid order, thus suggesting a complete knowledge of the set, some people might have gotten far closer than the editing showed.

3.5 Summary

From the outset of this artifact Jillette is using language that betrays his personal bias. The title of the show alone is enough to tell that Jillette believes that the Bible is not a historically accurate book. However, his continued use of diction which belittles the claims and beliefs of his opposition creates something that is not so much an argument as
it is New Atheist propaganda. The elements of sincerity used in this show example an angry reproach toward religious belief even beyond the scope of denying historical accuracy.

The thoughts and approaches which example a Sincere style in this show are also very common in Vehement discourse. This lends an angry tone to much of the piece. The continued mocking of believers judgmental diction and figures continue to drive believers out of the conversation and into the margins. In fact, Jillette through the use of an especially Vehement species of Sincerity makes it difficult for anyone who is not willing to move from non-belief into heresy to follow the conversation. It is unclear if he intended to force such a decision but it becomes a condition of being in the conversation near the end.

What the style does best here is to draw divisions. By using elements of Sincerity strongly tied to Vehemence (and by extension Grandeur) Jillette is able to define the group he is speaking to very strongly. Jillette here avoids having to have actual discourse because anyone who would not agree with him is slandered and mocked past reason. While he at times seems to want to build something that looks like an argument, by the end of the piece there is simply no way to look at what he has presented as anything other than a thinly veiled attack on Theists as a whole.

He attacks theists as a whole even though his topic is tied to Biblical inerrancy. He has used stylistic choices like labels and diction this time to remove a division. While there are many believers who do not believe in the historical accuracy of the bible but till have deep convictions Jillette has used style in this piece to conflate them with those who
believe in Biblical inerrancy. By removing the natural division between these two groups Jillette brackets off the audience to remove anyone who could have reasonable objections to his claims.

This however seems to clearly be the outcome Jillette wanted. The continuous reinforcement of this sort of in-grouping seems to make clear the intention of the author to leave reasonable discourse at the door and instead focus on building social cohesion in his chosen audience while offering them talking points to be used against the opposing believers. In that instance style here is essential in keeping the enemy out, by insulting and denigrating them at every opportunity it makes it much harder for them to respond to your arguments and so affords you a place in the mass media where you can communicate to only those people who already share your views.
Chapter 4

PENN JILLETTE’S MAGIC WORDS

Style is an indispensable part of any rhetoric; it is as essential as audience or context. This thesis has suggested that style was also a part of argumentation. While Style is not generally included in argumentation theory, the application of rhetorical tools in the understanding of arguments is not new. Many theorists have dealt with persuasive or argumentative rhetoric and applied a number of differing theories to it. This thesis was designed to take the methodology presented in Hermogenes’ On Types of Style and example not only the distinct relationship between style and argument, but to explore how that style works to enhance and create arguments in particular.

By exploring the intersection of argument and style, this thesis has attempted to shed light on that relationship. Further, it hoped to show how the specific vision of style Hermogenes outlined created a particularly useful methodology for examining this relationship. Because Hermogenes wrote his method specifically for authors and critics to understand how to use the elements of style to eventually create a forceful message, it was hoped that this methodology would serve the discipline as a starting place for critics to gather and begin developing a more regulated form of criticism for looking at how people craft the language of their argumentation. While many approaches might have use in examining style and argument, forwarding a well defined methodology for critics to use in a standardized way might well have distinct benefits for the discipline.

Being able to rely on a standard set of tools to discuss style means rhetoricians can create a baseline of common understanding in order to compare critical visions and
perhaps enhance theory. The current literature is fragmented by the multitude of theoretical perspectives without a unifying method. By presenting a methodology which can be used for many different kinds of artifacts, and one with such a long history of service, it is possible to build a wealth of understanding about how style functions before exploring particular theories. By having a “universal” set of tools that can be used, any rhetorician may perform a standard kind of criticism and then supplement those findings with particular theories or practices designed to access particular areas of particular kinds of artifacts.

4.1 Hermogenic Benefits

The Hermogenic model in these examples has provided clear insight into how style was used and what benefits the stylistic choices afforded an author who was attempting to persuade. These examples focused on the creation of Character, mainly through Sincerity and Indignation. Other aspects of the Hermogenic system might provide other insights into these artifacts. One of the benefits of this system is that because it is foundational to all speaking, it can be applied to a myriad of artifacts. It is also complex enough and nuanced enough to allow a great deal to be learned from any artifact. In fact, the complexity might be seen by some as an obstacle. However, this complexity allows even the most delicately constructed rhetoric to be accessed from a number of differing vantage points.

The most advantageous part of the Hermogenic system is that it is a system. Because it was written to be an instruction manual on creation and analysis of style, it
does something very useful. This method develops the how-to of building rhetoric, particularly persuasive rhetoric. The system is designed to allow rhetors to begin by imagining their desired outcome and then develop interplay of style to accomplish their goals. For a critic it allows them to take the elements of style that are present and see how they are used in conjunction to create a style. Once they know what the elements are and how they play against one another, it becomes clear what the desired outcome was.

Going back to the painting analogy from Chapter One, it allows critics to deconstruct a painting down to the most basic forms of color and stroke. Other systems might help a critic classify a painting as impressionist; they might even offer evaluative tools to say if it was a well executed impressionist work. Some systems might help critics to identify a particular type of stroke or color choice, but these tropes only tell you that they were used, they offer little else. This means most critics when trying to do good criticism must begin with a system and then either elaborate or combine it with something else in order to have a complete picture. In contrast, by using the Hermogenic methodology, a critic can take each trope or stylistic choice and disassemble it further to see how that particular mix of elements works and what effect would it normally create.

This means that even if someone wanted to use the light colors and light touches of pointillism in conjunction with the shapes and forms of cubism it would still be accessible to a Hermogenic analysis, while it would not cleanly be described by either a trope or genre based analysis. There may be other models that have similar breadth but none seem to be prevalent in the literature. That lack of a clear unifying analytical tool suggested the use and promotion of Hermogenes to fill that space.
4.2 There is no god

Style here was an invaluable resource for Jillette. The success of his persuasion depended on his ability to enter a discussion where the camps were so polarized that there seemed to be no room for discussion. Jillette clearly wanted to evangelize his heretical beliefs to a larger audience. Other New Atheists had made a very logical, often scientifically well-founded case for science as a proof of Religion’s failings. Sagan and Dawkins in particular are well-respected scientific minds, however they are often dismissed entirely by people of faith. Jillette seems keenly aware that in order to speak to believers he must exist as a believer.

That is where style comes in. Making strictly logical arguments alone is not a way to engage the opposition in this discussion. Jillette therefore does a number of things entirely outside the realm of argument theory in order to open the conversation. First, he chooses NPR’s “This I Believe” which already means he is going to talk about his personal beliefs. This audience is going to be interested in faith and belief as a way to understand and deal with their world.

Jillette does not try to logically define his terms and lay out a clear denotative difference between himself and non-believers. Instead, he uses a sincere style to re-organize what was once a Theist/Atheist continuum into something new. This is not done by describing the qualitative difference between Atheistic non-belief and Heretical belief that God is not real. This is done by saying that it is easy to be agnostic or Atheistic because it does not require belief. However if he had not used the stylistic devices and choices he did here the point might have been lost or seem too aggressive.
and lost the audience. By using a sincere style however he engaged the audience by positioning himself as a person of character.

Throughout the piece, he continues to position himself as an everyman. The analysis in Chapter 2 examples several times where everything about his essay from his cadence to his ideas is built to engage the audience on a very personal level so that Jillette is able to make the argument that his beliefs allow him the same happiness and same joy that a belief in God allows. He uses a simple and sincere style to elevate the mundane pleasure of everyday life to the transcendent joys of religious life. This is done through his style, not through a direct comparison of Hallmark cards to the Eucharist. Jillette does not make a directed argument. Instead he elevates himself as a person who is happy and joyous and moral without having to believe in God.

If one were to look at “There is no god” simply from, say, a pragma-dialectic perspective there would be a number errors of logic and uses of the opposition that would violate the rules of good argument. Using the Toulmin model one might be able to map out the first few logical statements but as the piece continued you would lose more and more of the content because the essay doesn’t seek to build a logical argument as much as it is trying to connect to the audience’s life experience. The style here is doing far more than supporting the argument. In fact it is making the argument.

It is only because it is so thoroughly invested with style that the argument becomes something quite persuasive. Not only does Jillette open the conversation by presenting himself as a believer, he spends the rest of the essay explaining how his belief somehow makes the ordinary world something extraordinary. In abandoning a
“hereafter” the “here and now” become exceptional, unique. By exemplifying simple pleasures and continuing to describe positive values that he says stem from his beliefs, he is able to create a sense in the audience that his views might provide them with a world where they could be much happier than they are now.

This positive spin is made more accessible because he uses sincerity to show his good character. If he were to focus his attention on another style, say Rapidity he might get a very different audience outcome. His use of style here may not be enough to move a believer. Certainly he doesn’t seem to offer them anything they don’t already have. He also on a few occasions describes believers as solipsistic and selfish so they are likely not going to be moved to his way of thinking. They may, however at least hear him out, something that Dawkins and Shermer seem to have difficulty with in public discourse. The harsher style employed by Shermer and Dawkins is indicative of the “militant atheist” label.

What Jillette does very successfully is sound a call to the non-believer. Someone who may still be in that “searching stage” as Jillette refers to it. While he does place Atheists in the “searching” category and they might be less than happy about it. Jillette then spends the rest of the essay explaining why it is Atheists need to stop searching and come over to his way of thinking. He offers them happiness and morality without having to join a religion. In fact he offers them the chance to denounce religion more fully in order to become more honest about convictions they may already have.

It is not a stretch to think of Atheists and Agnostics as having a desire to separate themselves from religion. They already done this to some extent through their
questioning or non-belief. Jillette starts by pointing out non-believers are taking the easy way out. However, Jillette allows them a chance to join him and in some ways redeem themselves in a way not unlike religious redemption. They are able to admit wrongdoing and then be accepted by a group of moral people who will forgive their indiscretion because of their new or renewed faith. Jillette doesn’t even have to explicitly offer any sort of redemption, he can simply imply it when he discusses being able to change his world for the better in paragraph seven (Appendix A Lines 36-37).

The entire piece builds to that at the end, in essence using style to create a sort of narrative. Jillette begins by starting the audience off in non-belief, then he discusses how anyone with a love for truth should begin a quest for truth. Then he places himself as an example and guides the audience through his beliefs and how those beliefs have created for him a world where he is happy, has access to many ideas, and is still able to live a good life. At the end of the story instead of having a deity provide a reward the reward becomes that the audience is now empowered to enact change in their own lives. While they started the narrative as someone unable to really choose, they end the narrative as someone who can now change their world.

Because the idea of the whole piece centers around belief, Jillette is allowed to use personal experience, narrative, and style to create a shift in the audience. If he were restricted to logical statements made about the physical world or something that could be empirically shown or verified his argument would likely not reach the same audience in such a positive way.
4.3 Bullshit!

Jillette continues to use style very effectively in Bullshit! In this instance he focuses on building his very public persona as the “taller, louder half of the magic and comedy act Penn & Teller” (Allison 131). Jillette uses a loudly sincere style in this piece to define his audience and then speak directly to that group. From the opening of the episode Jillette uses language that bifurcates people into the camps of “believers” and “rational people.” Jillette then continues to not only debunk historical inaccuracy in the Bible but also building his ethos among those people who share his views on religion.

Jillette says that his argument is meaningless to people of faith because he “cannot touch them” and that if you believe in the Bible based on faith this argument is ”an automatic tie.” This would seem to be conciliatory language and has an outward appearance of even-handedness yet the style used here is pointedly designed to drive people of faith out of the conversation. If Jillette were not able to craft this in his own chosen style, then the argument might have been far more even in tone. Had Jillette not used this particular kind of Sincerity in the episode both sides might have been more able to communicate about substantive points.

What is also vital to the success of this piece is the choice of Michael Shermer as the guest speaker who is making the claim that the Bible is historically false. Shermer in many cases exhibit the same flabbergasted style that Jillette does. Even when Jillette seems to be making a gesture of letting two prominent academics present their cases he has chosen them with every intention of making one appear to be more “like us” and one as a more abstracted caricature. Jillette at one point even uses the term “sincere” when
referring to Shermer to emphasize this point. The show has stylistically designed
everything to present one side as a sincere and earnest question and the other side as
dogmatic, disconnected, and foolish.

Without this use of style, this piece could not have functioned in the same way.
The same thesis could be forwarded using a different series of stylistic choice. However,
the way that the persuasion worked would have changed. The audience for the argument
would have also changed if the style had shifted. There are a number of very logical
arguments here that might well have been presented even without the use of sincerity and
indignation. It is the anger and passion that Jillette uses in the piece that constrains the
audience and pushes forward his ethos. Without such an angry style, the same content
would have had a far different effect.

Historical claims and evidence can be compelling but they run the risk of
confusing an audience. Public speaking classes often tell students to support their
arguments with evidence but to present it carefully. Audiences can get lost in dense
information, particularly if it is new. In public speaking Clarity is a key component and
there are several places where Jillette balances Clarity with Sincerity in order to present
data to his audience in addition to building his own ethos.

Jillette also focuses his attacks on some very foundational passages in the Bible.
This means that his audience can have little to no familiarity with the text and still make
use of his arguments when echoing them to others. There are some biblical stories that
have become culturally known even without being raised in a home or community that
holds the Christian faith. These are largely the stories Jillette references when making
this argument. Jilette is “picking the low hanging fruit” as the maxim goes. This means that he does not have to complicate his presentation with explanations of the Biblical passages. This simplicity of thought is one of the key elements in his presentation and one of the elements that helps maintain a sincere style.

Jillette is also very ware of the use of humor. Jillette often oversimplifies Biblical stories to the point of insult. Jillette pairs this oversimplification with magic tricks designed to mimic and mock the miracles of the Bible. Jillette continues to attack the opposition both through the language (oversimplification), he uses and the flippancy he gives the subject (magic tricks). This serves dual purposes of driving off Theists and presenting himself as likable to Atheists, Agnostics, and other Heretics. Anyone disenfranchised by the historical claims of Christianity (though this applies to any Abrahamic tradition) can be take the chance to find similarities with Jillette and choose to accept his explanations.

One of the other key functions of style in this argument is obfuscation. Jillette is able to misdirect the audience when he uses phrasing that seems incredibly simple but hides a more complex argument. For example, Jillette claims the Bible has equal amounts of “Fact, history, and pizza” which clearly means no fact, no history and no pizza. If he makes such an all or nothing argument he destroys his own case when Michael Shermer admits there was likely a historical Jesus. The way in which Jillette phrased his comment allowed most people to ignore the “all or nothing” nature of his assertion. While many of the miracles Jesus performed are historically unprovable, the existence of such a man, his trial, crucifixion and subsequent disappearance from his
tomb might reasonably be taken as having some historical backing. However the sincerity of the style employed here allows for it to be celebrated among those who already believe as Jillette believes. For those in the audience who are wary or questioning of religion this serves as permission for them to abandon religion. These audience reactions are in stark contrast to the logical analysis of such an argument. It is style in this instance that allows for such a logical analysis to be overrun by other interpretations.

His style is used to make the claim that because certain portions of the Bible are either unproven or unprovable then the entire text should be deemed “fiction” as the show’s title suggests. However science, the source Jillette himself holds up as his source of truth, does not work like that. Portions of a theory may be disproven while others are supported. Theories shift and change based on new or additional findings all the time. The evolutionary theory developed by Lamarck and expanded by Darwin and improved over the years since, is a perfect example of this scientific process changing, tweaking, and improving theory over the years.

The claim Jillette is presenting is based not on a scientific theory, it is based on a tenant of believers, specifically Biblical inerrancy. If God is infallible and the bible is the inspired word of God then it would need to be thrown out if it is ever in error. This argument however is often only held by a narrow minority of Christians: those fundamentalists who believe in Biblical inerrancy. That belief is not universal among Christians and even among those who believe in biblical inerrancy, there are varied thoughts on it. Some believe that the bible cannot be in error in its purpose, while others
believe it must be an entirely accurate and true work in every particular: chronology, biology, cosmology…

Jillette glosses over any of this nuance in his conversation, and while that may be something that would place him outside the camp of the clearly logical, or even outside the idealized visions of a perfect citizen rhetor, it is a stylistically effective move.

Jillette is able to bypass this nuance within his argument because he is excluding those people who would be most likely to bring it up as a challenge to his evidence. The audience that Jillette forms through his use of style is less likely to worry about this difference until it becomes an issue when they challenge a believer. If they never actually debate anyone on the subject, Jillette’s argument may simply help them to form their beliefs without ever needing to examine those beliefs fully.

In this case what has happened is that Jillette has used style to narrow the audience, and therefore bypass some problems he would have with his arguments. His use of style also helps to entertain his audience and simplify some otherwise complicated issues. All of these aid his argumentation and without them the arguments might not stand on their own. The arguments in this episode, while clearly focused on logical appeals, are far more open to criticism if exposed to an audience that is interested in dissecting them.

Some of the arguments in this episode are better formed than others, some of them even receive reasonable explanations from Dr. Maier. What style does in this context is keep the episode from being a real debate. While it looks like there is opposition, while there is a base level of concession all of that is moved aside by the
continued use of blasphemous language. The angry assaults on belief also help build ethos with Non-believers and Heretics while angering Theists and trying to make them feel unwelcome in the conversation. The spokesman from the Theistic camp is also stylistically hamstrung and made to look disconnected and foolish through the show’s editing.

This argument might have functioned without the use of a sincere style. It would have functioned in a different manner and would likely have been less effective if criticized. Therefore, the use of style was key to the functionality of the argument both as an entertainment piece and as a way to present a particular audience with pre-packaged arguments. The element of this argument that could not have functioned without the use of a sincere style was the social element. Jillette sets himself as something between iconic leader and credible speaker depending on how effective his sincerity was. He also created a rallying point for his audience, a piece of media they can share in order to build a shared set of arguments that have the potential to become shared cultural artifacts. It is not at all clear how effective that cohesion has been it is however an implication of this kind of rhetoric.

4.4 Comparisons and Conclusions

It is clear through the discussion in chapters two and three that style does provide a clear insight into argumentative rhetoric. Those chapters go through how the Primary Elements of style are used to create the Secondary Constructs of Sincerity and Indignation. While this is far from a complete use of the methods laid out in On Types of
Style, even a limited analysis provides a wealth of information and insight. The previous chapters have focused on how those Primary elements are combined to create secondary constructs. In essence, the previous chapters provide a sort of “exploded view” of how Jillette combined thoughts, figures, approaches, etc. in order to create Sincerity and Indignation.

What is also clear now, having seen both of those examples is that the use of any given construct varies by artifact. Even with the same author and generally the same thesis in roughly the same time period, two messages can vary dramatically in terms of style. This difference is a good way to examine what the stylistic choices are actually doing.

4.4.1 Style and audience

One of the most vibrant differences in these two pieces is the difference in audience. Showtime doesn’t make a habit of releasing any customer or viewer data. Showtime also doesn’t participate in Nielsen ratings, so any discussion of their demographics would be mainly speculative. This makes any comparison of demographic data impossible. However there is a great deal of information contained in the artifacts themselves about whom Jillette was targeting.

In “There is no god” it becomes clear that Jillette really wants to target the non-believer. His descriptions of believers seems to paint them as dogmatic and unyielding which means he likely does not think they are going to move toward his way of thinking. However, his argument works well for indoctrinating those who are either unsure or
questioning. It is easy to see that he wants to interact with people who are looking for change in their spiritual life. Jillette even talks about how he deals with people “stuck at this searching stage (Appendix A, Line 13).”

Non-believers may be allowed into the discussion in “The Bible: Fact or Fiction?” but they are certainly not the target audience. IN “There is no god” Jillette offers non-believers a better world through the conviction that god does not exist. In “The Bible: Fact or Fiction?” Jillette is speaking to heretics mainly, and he offers the audience pre-packaged arguments to attack Christianity. The whole focus of “There is no god” is using Sincerity to provide non-believers someone to believe in. The focus in “The Bible: Fact or Fiction?” is to use Sincerity to rally heretics around ways to attack religion. Because the audience has shifted, so has the purpose behind the argument.

Jillette does use Sincerity in both pieces. However, he uses it in one instance to broaden his argument to include non-believers and uses it for the constriction of the audience down to heretics in the other. This finding alone is worthy of further exploration. Public speaking and argumentation have long been concerned with the relationship between rhetorician and audience as well as the relationship between the rhetoric itself and the audience it attempts to persuade or influence. The idea that style can be used to broaden or constrict this audience is worth noting. It is even more interesting that the author can use the same style in different ways to accomplish different outcomes. It would be of interest to show that Sincerity helped broaden the audience. It is even more interesting that Sincerity when used in particular ways can either expand or contract the audience of a given message.
4.4.2  Argument and division

Division is not something people normally associate with style. If you want to divide a group into subgroups, this can easily be accomplished by defining the groups and then explaining how particular members belong in each group. This is the basis of generic criticism, dividing things into genres and then using the common elements therein as an evaluative tool. It is also the basis of all critical theory, which focuses on the creation of in-groups and out-groups.

The in-group/out-group division that Jillette sets up on the same topic is different in each artifact. In “There is no god” piece he creates a spectrum where he stands on one end opposing the belief of theists. Jillette then places non-believers (agnostics and atheists) in the middle (see figure 5). In “The Bible: Fact or Fiction?” he makes a dichotomy of people who believe in science (and by extension reason) and those who believe in the historical claims of the Bible. The way in which he does this is where rhetoricians take interest.

The way Jillette draws these boundaries using stylistic tools is different from how many arguers would make formalized definitional arguments trying to accomplish the same end result. Jillette is able to take the audience’s existing conditions and then use sincerity to show himself as either a part of that group or apart from it. In There is no god he distances himself from Atheism by implying that they have stopped too soon at a non-belief. His confessions of faith are designed to create a whole new in-group without ever having to define, in anything approaching formally logical terms, the parameters of
the group. In that same essay, he then distances himself from Theists by saying they are solipsistic and dogmatic and so stylistically defines himself into a third camp.

This stands in sharp contrast to the simpler in-group / out-group setup that Jillette employs in “The Bible: Fact or Fiction?” There he simply uses sincerity to attack belief in both god and the Bible in order to position them as unreasonable. This allows him to include in his audience anyone who disbelieves the historical claims of the Bible. So where he was once targeting his persuasion to non-believers, trying to bring them into his heretical belief system, now he simply assumes them as members of his in-group and he doesn’t distinguish between heretics and non-believers.

Style here allows something else which logical partitioning does not allow. Jillette is able to continue to partition his in-group as he continues. In the opening scenes of “The Bible: Fact or Fiction?” many people who are simply disenfranchised may tune in and sense that they are being allowed to discard religion because it is inherently stupid. However, the longer they listen the more blasphemous Jillette becomes. This continues to draw new lines, which the audience has to be willing to cross. The most important line is when Jillette begins to challenge God in “The Bible: Fact or Fiction?” during his discussion of the plagues of Egypt. An agnostic who was willing to listen in the beginning might well see the open hostility presented there and no longer be willing to participate. For others, this tirade might resonate and crystalize their own perspective, giving them permission to make a final step into (or at least another step toward) rejection of all religious faith. In short, the style gives reasons to embrace the claim.
Trying to continue to carve down your in-group using definitions is going to be arduous work, open to nuance and gradations, and the work will often invite challenge, call attention to premises, and be poorly received. Arguably doing so with style may not be well received by your out-group. In this case, the strategic values may well outweigh the ethical difficulties this raises. Whereas the continued creation of logical subgroups is likely to upset everyone involved and not just those who are left out at some point.

In both, “There is no god” and “The Bible: Fact or Fiction?” it is the use of Sincerity that allows Jillette to push some people away and lure others in. Most people who want to create divisions use language that defines groups or genres. By using the push and pull of audience identification, Jillette creates fluid groups with his use of sincerity. By changing whom he pushes away, he moves the boundaries of his in-group, then through the use of Sincerity he pulls his audience toward him. This sets up emotional boundaries that can be far more easily overcome than using definitional boundaries that require more formal language.

4.4.3 Grouping with Style

Just as Jillette is able to create divisions with his use of Sincerity he is also skillful at combining groups though his use of style. When Jillette wants to level criticism at believers, he tends to level it at theists. This is a linguistic illusion not unlike the work he does on stage. He is able to create a group without most people realizing this is a composite of numerous other (frequently dissimilar) groups. Further, he creates
composites made up of individual members who would not consciously assent to being groups.

An example occurs in “There is no god.” Jillette never separates out any subgroup of believers. He simply says that all believers are the way he describes. When he gives us two examples of things believers say he does not add any qualifiers. The closest he gets to letting anyone off the hook is “I don’t travel in circles where…” (Appendix A Line 31). This might mean that he has friends who are believers but do not fit his example (Some X’s are Y’s. X’s that are Y’s are not Z’s: Some believers are narrow minded. Narrow minded believers are not my friends). Stylistically though his examples seem to offer a different situation. Because he doesn’t qualify his language it seems he is applying his label to all believers. His language would seem to indicate more that he doesn’t have believers in his circle because all believers are narrow minded. Believers are a large group with a diverse population. It is not hard to think of someone who is religiously devout who is perfectly willing to openly accept criticism or questioning of their beliefs. His seeming intolerance of believers based on his broad labeling could be read by believers as the exact kind of narrow minded thinking his is supposedly against.

How then is he able to get away with that kind of blanket stereotyping? Through the sincerity of his style. By spending time building himself as an honest person and a person speaking from their heart, he is able to have the audience adjust his language for him. By virtue of the fact that it feels unpolished and off the cuff, people are able to and willing to read into it and fill the gaps with something that works for them. If the speech
had the appearance of being carefully crafted, the audience is less likely to “fill in” the places where the argument is lacking, less willing to be partners in the enthymematic process.

Jillette does the same thing in “The Bible: Fact or Fiction?” Jillette takes a page out of the media playbook and conflates all believers with fundamentalists. Most believers arguably do not view the Bible as without error. Even in Christianity where Biblical inerrancy is most common, it is not a majority opinion. Yet Jillette intentionally conflates all believers early in the piece. He discusses only momentarily that he cannot attack those people who have faith in the bible. Even when he does this, he does not separate these people from “Bible Nuts” or “Evangelical Assholes.” In fact Evangelism is not a part of every sect of Christianity and there are some who believe in inerrancy who do not evangelize and yet Jillette portrays all believers as both inerrancy followers and evangelicals. Because he has used his stylistic tools to drive all believers away, they don’t stick around to have the argument about being unfairly conflated with other kinds of believers with whom they do not agree.

Trying to make such a broad grouping through definition would be much harder if not impossible. However, because this is done stylistically it can be entirely implicit. While some people will catch this conflation, at least some will not. This method of grouping also works better for Jillette because as he uses Sincerity to build Character, he is more likely to have audience members either forgive or stop noticing the grouping he has made. If it remained as a logical argument it would be far more pronounced in the memories of the audience, because it is obfuscated by style, and that same style continues
to work at building Jillette as a person of character. He is more likely to get away with this kind of broad grouping.

4.4.4 Character and criticism

This thesis focused on two Secondary Constructs and one Tertiary style. These Constructs and Style were chosen for a particular reason. While there are elements of other Constructs and Styles mentioned in this thesis, the focus was on building Character. One of the most tangible ways that stylistic analysis helps both rhetors and critics understand rhetoric is through the lens of character. Frequently scholars will deal with Credibility instead of Character. There are other situations where scholars will use Charisma to deal with parts of Character. Neither term however does exactly what character does.

Wooten, in his introduction to On Type of Style says that Character is ”really a type of argument more than a style” (Wooten xv). He goes on to talk about how it is designed to win over the goodwill of the audience and yet that is one of the cornerstones of all persuasion. Wooten tells us that Character is designed to give us what Aristotle calls an “ethical appeal” (Wooten xv). It is no surprise then that Grandeur and Character are the two most complex Tertiary Styles in the Hermogenic system. In those two Styles, one accesses the divine (Grandeur) and conveys goodwill toward the audience (Character).

Argumentation is in essence a human endeavor and it infuses all types of communication. The classical definitions of Forensic, Epidictic, and Deliberative are all
in essence persuasive. If you find someone worthy of praise you will have to convince others to praise them; if you want to prove truth then you have to convince others of what the truth is; if you want to suggest a course of action the you must provide reasoning why that is the correct course. All of these involve persuasion or argument at some level. Unless there is some unassailable material truth that no person, when confronted with the evidence, can object to then everything else is about convincing people.

Given the importance of the human being in this equation the development of character is as important if not more important than the development of logic. If one were to use the basic forms of persuasion from Aristotle (ethos, pathos and logos) then ethos is central to these. If you can develop ethos, then people are more likely to accept your reasoning (logos) and be more moved by your passions (pathos). In essence, it is the construction of Character that makes human communication work.

If Character is so important, then finding a systematic way to assess the creation of character in speaking is vitally important to the work that critics do. This thesis has given an example of how one might systematically access the creation of character and look at the movement this style creates in the audience. This thesis has used Hermogenes’ model twice on two artifacts that have a number of similarities. The purpose of that approach was to suggest how style created or affected argument. What this thesis has shown is that the same tools used in different ways can create character in both instances while also creating a number of other effects within the particular artifacts.

Jillette’s focus in both pieces was to present himself as a person of excellent character. He consistently used the thoughts, approaches, figures, clauses and cadence of
Sincerity as described by Hermogenes. He didn’t do this because he read and followed Hermogenes’ manual on style he did so by using his own understanding and intuition of Character. What this shows is that even though not all rhetors are using Hermogenes this method is still a highly effective tool at tool for critics today as they examine any rhetorical situation, including argumentative rhetoric. This thesis has exampled how Sincerity and Indignation are used to create a perception of character.

Given that Character is central to human persuasion and that style can create Character, it seems very reasonable to do stylistic analyses of argumentative artifacts. It seems equally reasonable to use a methodology that is standardized among critics when is has been shown that such a method is effective at deconstructing how Character is created. This thesis has used Hermogenes to convincingly deconstruct character in two pieces. Both of these pieces exhibited very different uses of Sincerity to create their individual Character and yet both types were accessible.

Any argument about faith is going to need this kind of analysis. The use of character in these arguments is something that a logical or pragmatic approach is ill suited to access. Stylistic analysis and in particular Hermogenes’ method is clearly able to get to Character and not only identify its existence but show where and how it was created. Given the changeable nature of Character, this requires a system which can use a standard set of tools to identify Character in all of it’s aspects and this thesis has exampled exactly how this system might serve that purpose.
4.4.5  *Attacking with style*

One of the commonalities in both artifacts was the use of attacking language. Jillette is clearly forwarding his own views but he is also clearly attacking the views that are different than his. One of the areas where this thesis made the most use of Hermogenes was through the analysis of those attacks.

In the “Bullshit!” episode Jillette is very direct with his attacks and they increase in their Vehemence until the idea of argument effectively shuts down. There is a lot of this attacking language in modern media particularly in areas of faith and politics. In recent years the media climate has become more focused on the presentation of direct attacks than in recent history. With the advent of media outlets like Fox News and Air America Radio there is no shortage of direct political attacks at any given point. Criticism and attacking language seem to be proliferating.

In this attacking age, it is interesting to see the same author level attacks in two very different ways. While the “Bullshit!” episode, and perhaps the series in general seem very in line with this new era of direct attacks being leveled in the media, “There is no god” is far more subtle about making the same kinds of claims. Jillette clearly attacks theists in “There is no god,” but the attack feels less vicious somehow. The reason the attack feels less vicious is because of the type of Sincerity used and the way that Sincere approach developed Jillette’s Character.

The analysis offered in this thesis draws a perfect example of how the use of style, particularly the use of Sincerity, can affect the Character of an attack. Jillette’s extensive development of character in “There is no god” allows him to level criticism of Theism
while appearing to be honest and earnest. Jillette’s use of more Vehement sincerity in “The Bible: Fact or Fiction?” creates attacks that are angry but not villainous in nature. The use of Sincerity in those attacks makes them seem to be somehow passionate rather than vicious and that difference, while at times slight, is enough to tip the scales in the minds of some audience members. For example, some people think of the attacks of Rush Limbaugh as being mean spirited while Glenn Beck can come off as sympathetic. It is likely a similar stylistic analysis of their arguments would find a different use of Character and Sincerity in Beck and Limbaugh.

4.5 Future Research

In terms of the artifacts contained in this thesis, another analysis focusing on Grandeur would likely have very interesting findings, as well. How Jillette balances the elements of Vehemence and Asperity with Solemnity and Brilliance for example could provide a great deal of insight into how Jillette deals with the divine world. Also the use of Rapidity in either or both of these artifacts could reveal some interesting stylistic choices on how Jillette creates the texture of his speaking. Regarding “There is no god,” an analysis of his use of Beauty could be immensely revealing about how Jillette soothes the audience and broadens that audience to bring more people in.

This kind of stylistic work could benefit the field of rhetoric greatly. It has even larger benefits for the particular study of argumentation. So much of what argumentation does now is deal with how the arguments are structured. While this research and theory is important, it is incomplete. While the structure of an argument, as the structure of a
building is vital to make something lasting and useful, the style and ornamentation are more than baubles added to the outside. They can influence the reaction people have to the work and whether it is accepted or dismissed.

This methodology as a standard could bring together a great deal of future research. By having many critics using the same methods, the results could be compared more easily and additional information through such comparisons could be possible. Right now with a myriad of methods competing for journal space, there is no real comparison possible and therefore a second layer of information is being lost. Even if Hermogenes is not the chosen method, a unifying methodology seems as though it could enhance the current discussion. This thesis has shown a number of benefits of Hermogenes in hopes of presenting it as such a unifying methodology.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

There is no god

Penn Jillette

Paragraph 1

1. I believe that there is no god.

2. I'm beyond Atheism.

3. Atheism is not believing in god.

4. Not believing in god is easy, you can't prove a negative, so there's no work to do.

5. You can't prove that there isn't an elephant inside the trunk of my car.

6. You sure?

7. How about now?

8. Maybe he was just hiding before.

9. Check again.

10. Did I mention that my personal heartfelt definition of the word "elephant" includes mystery, order, goodness, love, and a spare tire?

Paragraph 2

11. So, anyone with a love for truth outside of herself has to start with no belief in god and then look for evidence of god.

12. She needs to search for some objective evidence of a supernatural power.

13. All the people I write e-mails to often are still stuck at this searching stage.

14. The Atheism part is easy.
Paragraph 3

15. But, this "This I Believe" thing seems to demand something more personal, some leap of faith that helps one see life's big picture, some rules to live by.

16. So, I'm saying, "This I believe-I believe there is no god."

Paragraph 4

17. Having taken that step, it informs every moment of my life.

18. I'm not greedy.

19. I have love, blue skies, rainbows, and Hallmark cards, and that has to be enough.

20. It has to be enough, but it's everything in the world, and everything in the world is plenty for me.

21. It seems just rude to beg the invisible for more.

22. Just the love of my family that raised me and the family I'm raising now is enough that I don't need heaven.

23. I won the huge genetic lottery, and I get joy every day.

Paragraph 5

24. Believing there's no god means I can't really be forgiven except by kindness and faulty memories.

25. That's good; it makes me want to be more thoughtful.

26. I have to try to treat people right the first time around.

Paragraph 6

27. Believing there's no god stops me from being solipsistic.

28. I can read ideas from all different people from all different cultures.
29. Without god, we can agree on reality, and I can keep learning where I'm wrong.
30. We can all keep adjusting, so we can really communicate.
31. I don't travel in circles where people say, "I have faith, I believe this in my heart, and nothing you can say or do can shake my faith."
32. That's just a long-winded religious way to say, 'shut up!' or another two words that the FCC likes less.
33. But, all obscenity is less insulting than, "How I was brought up and my imaginary friend means more to me than anything you can ever say or do.'
34. So, believing there is no god lets me be proven wrong and that's always fun.
35. It means I'm learning something.

Paragraph 7

36. Believing there is no god means the suffering I've seen in my family, and indeed all the suffering in the world, isn't caused by an omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent force that isn't bothered to help or is just testing us, but rather something we all may be able to help others with in the future.
37. No god means the possibility of less suffering in the future.

Paragraph 8

38. Believing there is no god gives me more room for belief in family, people, love, truth, beauty, sex, Jell-O, and all the other things I can prove and that make this life the best life I will ever have.
APPENDIX B

There is no god

Penn Jillette

1. I believe there is no god. I'm beyond Athe-|ism. Atheism isn't believing in god.

2. Not believing in god is easy, you can't prove a negative, so there's no work to do.

3. You can't prove that there isn't an elephant inside the trunk of my car. You sure?
8. and then look for evidence of god. She needs to search for some objective evidence

9. of a supernatural power. All the people I write e-mails to often are still stuck at this

10. searching stage. The atheism part is easy.

11. But this "This I believe" thing seems to demand something more personal,
12. some leap of faith that helps one see life’s big picture, some rules to live by.

13. So, I’m saying, “This believe I believe there is no good.”

14. Having taken that step, it informs every moment of my life, I’m not greedy. I have love.

15. -ve blue skies, rainbows, and Hallmark cards, and that has to be enough.
16. has to be enough.

17. is plenty for me.

18. Just the love of my family that raised me and the family I'm raising now is enough that I don't need heaven. I won the huge genetic lottery, and I get joy every day.
20. Believing there's no god means I can't really be forgiven except by kindness and

21. faulty memories. That's good it makes me want to be more thoughtful. I have to

22. try to treat people right the first time around.

238 Believing there's no god stops me from being solitary. I can read ideas from all
28. just a long-winded religious way to say, "shut up" or another two words that the FCC likes

29. less. But, all obscenity is less insulting than. "How I was brought up and my imagination

30. -ary friend means more to me than anything you can ever say or do." So, believe

31. -ing there is no god lets me be proven wrong and that's always fun. It means I'm
I will ever have.

surprising in the future.

Believing there is no good gives me more room for belief in family, people, love, truth.

beauty, sex and all the other things I can prove and that makes the life...
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