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# Introduction

## *The Narrative Shape of Emotion*

John Chrysostom was a passionate man. Zealous, courageous, and capable of great affection, according to the ancient church historians, he could also be sharp and prone to anger, even in the eyes of his friends and admirers. His enemies condemned him outright as “a harsh, irascible, obtuse, and arrogant man.”<sup>1</sup> But whatever his personality, he understood the power of emotion. Gibbon, although hardly given to praising Christian authors, noted his skill in engaging the feelings of his listeners and summarized the elements that, in the eyes of earlier critics, had contributed to the fourth-century preacher’s “genuine merit”: “They unanimously attribute to the Christian orator the free command of an elegant and copious language, the judgment to conceal the advantages which he derived from the knowledge of rhetoric and philosophy, an inexhaustible fund of metaphors and similitudes, of ideas and images to vary and illustrate the most familiar topics, *the happy art of engaging the passions in the service of virtue*, and of exposing the folly as well as the turpitude of vice, almost with the truth and spirit of a dramatic representation.”<sup>2</sup> It may seem odd, then, that so little attention has been devoted

1. Socrates notes his “zeal for temperance” (ζῆλον σωφροσύνης), as well as his tendency toward sharpness and irritability (πικρότερος . . . θυμῷ . . . ἐχαρίζετο (*Hist. eccl.* 6.3 [SC 505.268]); Sozomen concurs that his enemies described him as harsh and disagreeable, maladroit, and arrogant (χαλεπὸν καὶ ὀργίλον, σκαιὸν τε καὶ ὑπερήφανον (*Hist. eccl.* 8.9 [SC 516.276]). Palladius counters accusations that he was haughty (ὑπερήφανον) and gave evidence of disdain and pride (ὑπεροψίας καὶ τύφου), protesting rather that his friends found him “temperate, gentle, . . . and courageous” (σωφροσύνης, πραῦτητός, . . . ἀνδρείας), and citing the affection that he showed toward his fellow bishops and women friends at the time of his exile (*Dialogus de vita Joannis Chrysostomi* 19, 12, 10 [SC 341.378, 230, 206–8]).

2. Gibbon, *History of the Decline and Fall*, 3.396 (italics added).

to the role of emotions in his preaching. In a series of pioneering articles, Francis Leduc directed attention to Chrysostom's understanding of anger, grief, and vain-glory, but did not articulate a unified theory.<sup>3</sup> Other scholars have built strongly on this work, but none has produced a monograph.<sup>4</sup>

The rising interest in the study of the emotions across the humanities has created a hospitable environment in which to pursue this topic. Nuanced analyses, stemming especially from the fields of classics and medieval studies, have heightened awareness of the integral role of emotion in the art of persuasion and the pursuit of virtue,<sup>5</sup> even as an outpouring of neurological studies has enriched our understanding of the biochemical basis of affect and offered tantalizing connections to the ancient world.<sup>6</sup> Investigating emotion in another, distant culture, however, is not without its challenges. For if the universality of at least some emotions seems guaranteed by their basis in biology and neurology, other evidence points compellingly to their socially constructed nature.<sup>7</sup> We know that emotional terminology in one language cannot be mapped neatly onto another, that translation always involves gaps and distortions. To refer to *emotions* in the writings of John Chrysostom is then to beg the question of whether, or to what degree, our sense of the meaning of that word can be attributed to his understanding of the Greek term *pathē*. The fit is far from perfect, but *emotions* nevertheless seems preferable to the archaic and rather misleading language of the *passions*.<sup>8</sup> To settle upon a translation, however, is not to plumb the interpretative dilemma. Even within a given culture, people must learn from others when to feel a particular emotion and how to express it. Every emotion thus depends upon a prior act of interpretation, an ability

3. Leduc, "Gérer l'agressivité"; "Penthos et larmes"; "Thème de la vaine gloire." Leduc's work is notable in that it explores multiple emotions. Other scholars, around the same time, were exploring individual *pathē*: Bardolle, "Tristesse (athumia) et thérapeutique spirituelle"; de Durand, "Colère chez S. Jean Chrysostome." Edward Nowak's analysis of Chrysostom's view of suffering is also germane, although his focus is broader than an analysis of sorrow (*Chrétien devant la souffrance*).

4. See, for example: Brottier, "Jeu de mots intraduisible"; Zincone, "Voi ridete"; Blackburn, "Let the Men Be Ashamed"; Blowers, "Pity, Empathy"; de Wet, "John Chrysostom on Envy"; Papadogiannakis, *Emotions*; "Prescribing Emotions"; "Homiletics and the History of Emotions."

5. The bibliography is now very large. Most relevant are: Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire*; *Upheavals of Thought*; Graver, *Stoicism and Emotion*; Harris, *Restraining Rage*; Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind*; Kaster, *Emotion, Restraint and Community*; Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*; Konstan, *Emotions*; "Rhetoric and Emotion"; Fitzgerald, *Passions and Moral Progress*; Chaniotis, *Unveiling Emotions*; Chaniotis and Ducrey, *Unveiling Emotions II*.

6. As Andrea Scarantino observes, "Many of the questions . . . philosophers ask about emotions overlap with questions asked by affective scientists" ("Philosophy of Emotions," 4). Wendy Mayer has applied some of these neural-cognitive findings to her analysis of Chrysostom's writings ("Preaching Hatred?" 58–136).

7. For an overview, see Plamper, *History of Emotions*.

8. As will become clear, *emotion* accurately captures Chrysostom's confidence in the arousing properties of feeling.

and willingness to size up a situation in a particular way. Because these judgments reveal underlying, socially encoded values, emotions are of lively interest not only to the historian but also to the preacher. It is this link to ethical formation that makes emotions so central to the preaching John Chrysostom.

Thanks to the work of Wendy Mayer, in particular, a new consensus has been emerging that John should be understood as a “medico-philosophical psychic preacher.”<sup>9</sup> His homiletic efforts were directed toward a practical and largely therapeutic goal. He aimed to heal and correct the mindset (or *gnōmē*) of his listeners.<sup>10</sup> Because he believed, like many philosophically inclined thinkers of his time, that uncontrolled emotion led to vice and unhappiness, emotional regulation was very much part of his psychagogic project.<sup>11</sup> He consistently sought to diminish some feelings and to strengthen or redirect others. His understanding of the particular emotions—their origin and exacerbating factors—derives largely from Aristotle’s influential formulation.<sup>12</sup> But for his regulatory strategies, he relied on a variety of contemporary therapeutic techniques, many of which were drawn from the Stoics. These include forms of behavioral modification, but privilege rational argument. In order to modify the feelings of his listeners, he most often focuses on changing their thinking.<sup>13</sup>

His goal, however, differed in significant ways from that of the philosophers. Unlike the Stoics, he did not aim at the eradication of emotion.<sup>14</sup> To the contrary, he insists again and again on its utility. This conviction springs from his

9. Mayer, “Shaping the Sick Soul,” 140–64; “Persistence in Late Antiquity,” 337–51. See also Rylaarsdam, *John Chrysostom on Divine Pedagogy*.

10. Laird, *Mindset*.

11. For the philosophic background of this idea, see Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 83; Fitzgerald, *Passions and Moral Progress*. For Chrysostom as a preacher and psychagogue, see Rylaarsdam, *John Chrysostom on Divine Pedagogy*; Maxwell, *Christianization and Communication*, esp. 88–94; Cook, *Preaching*, 84–104.

12. Reliance on Aristotle’s definitions was widespread. As Harris notes of anger, in particular, “All or most of the many definitions of *orgē* which later writers offer are more or less simplified versions of the one in Aristotle’s Rhetoric” (*Restraining Rage*, 61). Aristotle’s insistence on virtue as “a disposition to act” in a situation based on reason rather than emotional reflex stimulus would have resonated with Chrysostom. See Fortenbaugh, “Aristotle and Theophrastus on Emotions,” 41–44. Frijda agrees that at the core of emotion, is a change of readiness for action (*Emotions*). Nowak, while sensitive to the multiple philosophical influences on Chrysostom, asserts the importance of Stoicism to his thought (*Chrétien devant la Souffrance*, esp. 57–88).

13. All philosophical schools shared the assumption that adults can regulate their emotions through reason and that this process was the goal of philosophical therapy. See Gill, “Philosophical Therapy,” 350–51. Mayer has drawn attention to the multiple audiences to which Chrysostom spoke (“Audiences for Patristic Social Teaching,” 89–94; Mayer and Allen, *Churches of Syrian Antioch*).

14. Cook agrees that Chrysostom’s goal differentiates him from classical medico-philosophical therapists, but attributes this difference to the impact of theological doctrine: “the theocentric and eschatological dimensions of Christian thought are a key part of what distinguished early Christianity

commitment to scripture, with its implicit endorsement of a wide range of feelings and a great intensity in their expression, but it also derives from his analysis of the human condition and, in particular, its besetting weakness. Hampered by indifference and arrested by inertia, humans often lack motivation to make progress in virtue. They must be spurred into action, and emotion can reliably provide this goad. Thus, in order to prompt caring and stimulate action, Chrysostom deliberately arouses feelings, especially uncomfortable ones. Another profound difference from contemporary philosophers lies in his temporal orientation.<sup>15</sup> The happiness that he hopes his listeners will achieve lies not in the here and now, but in the future life of heaven. He is not primarily focused on alleviating their present distress. Indeed, in order to ensure future bliss, he often deliberately sharpens their sense of fear.<sup>16</sup>

The most characteristic aspect of Chrysostom's method, moreover, is his pervasive reliance on narrative. He draws on stories to illustrate both good and bad emotional control. These allow him to analyze social triggers as well as the cognitive processes that typically prompt certain behaviors. They provide a means of exploring the interpersonal dynamics that exacerbate or mitigate reactions. And they serve as mnemonic devices by fleshing out theoretical propositions; they give a face and a plot to philosophical maxims. But John relied on stories not only to explain feelings but also to arouse them. He used narrative to elicit from his listeners indignation or admiration at the actions of others as well as immediate strong sensations of fear, pleasure, disgust, anger, and desire.<sup>17</sup>

Although typical of Chrysostom, this interest in stories is not unique to him. Stories were central to Hellenistic philosophy in general, as Martha Nussbaum observes, but especially to Stoicism, precisely because of that school's concern with emotions. Stoic philosophers understood that stories appealed to the emotions in a way that arguments and precepts did not. This was not because emotions sprang from "natural" or instinctual reactions, but rather because they arose from beliefs and values that had been internalized at a very early age primarily by listening to stories. In Nussbaum's words:

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from classical philosophy, and these dimensions have a profound impact upon Chrysostom's understanding of the cure of souls" (*Preaching*, 84–104, on 89)

15. The goal of philosophy, as Hadot writes, "was to allow people to free themselves from the past and the future, so that they could live within the present" (*Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 221–22). Sorabji objects that the Epicureans and Stoics did not find value only in the present, but does acknowledge that both schools aimed to release people from fear of the future (*Emotion and Peace of Mind*, 238–40).

16. A large part of philosophers' efforts toward the cure of souls was directed at releasing people from their fear of death (Gill, "Philosophical Therapy," 343).

17. Dolf Zillman's notion of disposition theory suggests that we acquire a disposition to like characters who behave well and to dislike those who behave badly ("Psychology of Suspense").

We learn emotions in the same way that we learn our beliefs—from our society. But emotions, unlike many of our beliefs, are not taught to us directly through propositional claims about the world, either abstract or concrete. They are taught, above all, through stories. Stories express their structure and teach us their dynamics. These stories are constructed by others and, then, taught, and learned. But once internalized, they shape the way life feels and looks. . . . Indeed, it seems right to say . . . not only that a certain sort of story shows or represents emotion but also that emotion itself is the acceptance of, the assent to live according to, a certain sort of story. Stories, in short, contain and teach forms of feeling, forms of life.<sup>18</sup>

To effect lasting cognitive change, the Stoics knew that they had to begin with emotions, and if with emotions, then with stories, since it is through stories that emotions are taught most deeply.<sup>19</sup>

The narratives on which Chrysostom dwells are typically drawn from scripture, and thus form part of the expected subject matter of any homilist, but the extent to which Chrysostom focuses on exploring their emotional tenor is truly striking. He consistently draws attention to characters' feelings, highlights their rational underpinnings, and traces their outcomes. Although this aspect is seldom noted in the secondary literature, it is the backbone of his preaching.<sup>20</sup>

A brief example, drawn from one of his homilies on Genesis, illustrates the point.<sup>21</sup> In the midst of the story of Noah and the flood, he comes to the phrase, "and the Lord God shut the ark from the outside" (Gn 7:16). The use of anthropomorphizing language to describe the work of the deity is interesting, but the passage seems otherwise rather unpromising for emotional development. But this is not how Chrysostom sees it. He passes quickly over the verb, noting simply that it is an instance of divine accommodation to human ways of speaking, and zeroes in on the final words: "from the outside" (*exōthen autou*). This simple adverbial expression launches him into a vivid evocation of Noah's emotional experience inside the ark. Through a string of questions and contemporary parallels, he compels his listeners to imagine how Noah felt, locked into a closed box, tossed on surging waters:

How would he have been able, tell me, to bear being locked in there like that, as though in some prison or awful jail? Where did he find the strength, tell me, to

18. Nussbaum, "Narrative Emotions," 287; *Therapy of Desire*, 339–41, 508.

19. Turpin, "Tacitus, Stoic *exempla*," esp. 363–71. Graver, *Stoicism and Emotion*, esp. 149–51. See also Reydams-Schils, *Roman Stoics*, 18–24.

20. Amirav's commentary forms a case in point. Her outlines of Chrysostom's homilies on Noah summarize the propositional content, but never mention the emotional focus (*Rhetoric and Tradition*, 157, 189).

21. For a consideration of the context and dating of these homilies, see Amirav, *Rhetoric and Tradition*, esp. 50–57. Her study does not include homily 25.

withstand the awful crashing of the waves? For if people, who happen to be in a boat driven by sail, see the pilot sitting at the helm, pitting his own skill against the onslaught of the winds, fear for their own safety and, as we say, die of fright when they see the vehemence of the waves, what could one say about this righteous man? For finding himself in the ark, as I was just saying, as though in a prison, he was forced to remain inside, and tossed from side to side, he was unable to see the sky or lift up his eyes to anywhere else, having nothing at all to look at that could bring him any comfort.<sup>22</sup>

With the taste of fear still in their mouths, Chrysostom then invites his listeners to envisage the deprivation that Noah experienced and nudges them steadily toward disgust, by conjuring up the fetid stench of confined animal bodies:

For a whole year, he lived in this strange and novel prison, unable even to breath fresh air—for how could he, when the ark was closed in on all sides? Tell me: how did he put up with it? How did he endure it? Even if their bodies had been made of iron and steel, how could they have survived without having the benefit of fresh air, or of the breeze—which no less than fresh air, exists to restore our bodies—or being able to feast their eyes on the sight of the sky or the variety of flowers growing on land? How was it that their eyes did not grow blind, living like this for so long? . . . How was this righteous man, with his sons and their wives, able to endure living with the animals and the beasts and all the other feathered creatures? How did he bear the stench? How did he put up with living with them?<sup>23</sup>

Finally, he confronts them with Noah's grief and despair. The patriarch's anguish stemmed not only from his perception of his own situation as precarious and protracted, but also from his imagination of what others were suffering outside:

What would he not have suffered, at seeing, so to speak, with his imagination, and engraving on his mind the bodies of human beings and domestic animals—both clean and unclean—undergoing the same death, jumbled altogether without any distinction being made? And on top of this, when reflecting on the loneliness, the isolation, that painful way of life, the utter lack of any consolation from any quarter, from social contact or from sight, or from knowing precisely how long he was destined to endure existence in that prison. For as long as there was the beating and crashing of the waves, fear was sent daily surging through him. For what was the likelihood that he would suspect a good outcome, when he saw the waters staying the same for a hundred and fifty days: rising higher and not diminishing at all?<sup>24</sup>

These quotations are lengthy, but even so represent only a fraction of the extended homily. From three words, Chrysostom evokes worlds of feeling into which he

22. *Hom. Gen. 25.4* (PG 53.223). All translations are my own, unless otherwise attributed.

23. *Hom. Gen. 25.4* (PG 53.224).

24. *Hom. Gen. 25.6* (PG 53.227).

not so much invites as plunges his listeners. He does not allow them to maintain their distance. His words compel them to feel what Noah felt.

Any study of Chrysostom's thought on the emotions must begin therefore with his commitment to narrative. Why does he rely so heavily on stories? Why did he devote so much attention to the emotional reactions of biblical characters? And what did he hope to achieve through this program? These are large questions, but in a small treatise directed at parents on how to raise their children, he provides some preliminary answers.

### CHRYSOSTOM'S PROGRAM

The circumstances in which he composed *On Vainglory; or, How to Raise Your Children* remain obscure. We do not know the date of its composition or how it was disseminated. But the nature of its intended audience seems somewhat clearer. Like Chrysostom's usual congregations, the families he addresses are secular. He speaks to fathers who expect that their sons and daughters will marry, who assume that their boys will grow up to pursue a career and their girls to manage a household.<sup>25</sup> The program he presents conforms in important respects to traditional parental desires: children are raised to be respectful of their parents and self-controlled in their appetites. But his larger agenda is distinctly counter-cultural. As the double title of the treatise suggests, he aims to form children who reject the dominant cultural value of the pursuit of civic honor.<sup>26</sup> To this end, he prescribes a variety of practical measures and expedients, but stresses above all the necessity of raising children with a different set of narratives. They should not be told traditional mythic tales based on the kinds of plots in which "[a] certain man loved a certain woman," or "[t]he king's son and younger daughter did the following."<sup>27</sup> Heroes like Achilles were not to be held up for emulation, lest they learn to admire men who were "slaves to their passions and cowardly towards death."<sup>28</sup> Instead of recounting "myths about sheep with golden fleeces," fathers

25. The date and location of the treatise remain disputed. Its impact is even less certain. As a treatise rather than a homily, we do not know how it was diffused or any specific details about its intended audience. As a child-rearing manual written by a cleric who had no children, moreover, the work is frankly hortatory. We do not know its effect or whether anyone followed any of the advice he so urgently outlines.

26. Roskam, "John Chrysostom on Pagan Euergetism."

27. *Inan. glor.* 38.476–47 (SC 188.128). Johnston stresses the foundational role of myths—as well-told, gripping stories—in creating and sustaining belief in the Greek gods (*Story of Myth*, esp. 7–22).

28. θαυμαζομένους ἥρωας, παθῶν δούλους ὄντας καὶ δειλοῦς πρὸς θάνατον (*Hom. in Ephes.* 21.1 [PG 62.150]). Plato warned against the dangers of mythological stories (*Resp.* 378a–b, *Leg.* 663d–664b). The Stoics agreed that "poetry has a powerful and in some respects dangerous effect on the passions of the soul" (Nussbaum, "Poetry and the Passions," 98).

should tell their sons biblical stories.<sup>29</sup> And he proceeds to demonstrate exactly how this should be done.

From the outset, he endorses the close tie between effective narration and the arousal of emotion. Fathers must take care to make their recital as pleasurable as possible for their young listeners. Instead of rushing through a tale, they must slow down and insert pauses. He illustrates the proper tempo with the very first story he recommends, which is that of Cain and Abel: “When the boy is relaxing from his studies . . . [s]peak to him and tell him this story: ‘In ancient times, there were two children, born of a single father, two brothers.’ Then, after inserting a pause, continue, ‘And they had both been born from the same womb. One was elder, the other younger.’”<sup>30</sup> By lingering over the account, the father allows the child to savor it. The story of Cain and Abel is, of course, quite short, but even so, one can still sharpen suspense—and thus increase satisfaction—by interrupting the narration to ask, “And then what happened?”<sup>31</sup> Longer tales, like that of Jacob and Esau, should be broken into installments.<sup>32</sup> The break should not be made carelessly, but intentionally positioned to increase narrative tension. Nor should this state of pleasurable suspense be cut short. Only after the lapse of several days, should the father “spin the sequel.”<sup>33</sup>

A deliberately slowed narrative pace also creates opportunities for narrative amplification. This can take the form of repetition with variation, as in the passage cited above, where Cain and Abel’s relationship is expressed in five different ways.<sup>34</sup> Or one can insert new material. Chrysostom illustrates this technique by adding a brief gloss to the biblical description of Abel as a shepherd: “and he led his flocks out to wooded valleys and lakes.” In addition to lengthening the narration, such scenic details are also intended to increase pleasure: “to sweeten” the account so that it “delights” the listener.<sup>35</sup>

29. *Inan. glor.* 39.505–7 (SC 188.132). In his first homily on David, he seems to echo this advice. After urging his listeners to “stir up” biblical stories “continually with their wives and children,” he presents the accounts as similar but superior to the old tales: “If you want to talk about a king—look, here’s a king; if about soldiers, or family matters, or political deeds, you will see a great abundance of these in the scriptures” (*Dav.* 1.7 [CCGS 70.24]).

30. *Inan. glor.* 39.496–99 (SC 188.130–32).

31. Τί δὴ οὖν μετὰ τοῦτο γίνεται (*Inan. glor.* 39.500–501 [SC 188.132.519–20]).

32. *Inan. glor.* 44.610–11 (SC 188.142). Johnston’s work on ancient myth also identifies the powerful impact of episodic narration: breaking a longer narrative into installments “whetted listeners’ appetites to hear more about them [i.e., the Greek heroes] and encouraged them to think about those characters . . . during the intervals in between” (*Story of Myth*, 91–96, on 96).

33. [Π]ροσύφαινε τὰ ἐξῆς (*Inan. glor.* 45.628 [SC 188.144]).

34. Deliberate pacing and redundancy are highly appreciated aspects of oral recitation (Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, esp. 36–42). For Chrysostom’s use of repetition, see Maxwell, *Christianization and Communication*, 104–7.

35. [Ε]ξήγε τὰ ποίμνια ἐπὶ πάσας καὶ λίμνας (*Inan. glor.* 39.500–501 [SC 188.132]). “Make the stories sweet (καταγλύκαινε τὰ διηγήματα)” (*ibid.*, 501–2).



Another kind of amplification consists of exploring the feelings of characters and their consequences.<sup>36</sup> Thus, John supplies an explanation for why Cain's sacrifice was rejected (he had reserved the best produce for himself and offered inferior goods to God), and explains why he reacted as he did (he felt angry at being dishonored and passed over for another).<sup>37</sup> An especially clear instance of insertion concerns Abel's fate. Although the biblical account tells us nothing about what happened to him, beyond the fact that his spilled blood cried out from the ground, Chrysostom knows that there is more to say. The father must continue the story: "What happened after this? God received the younger son into heaven: although he died, he is above."<sup>38</sup> This outcome is so patent to Chrysostom that he is perhaps unaware that he is supplying it. By doing so, he reduces the ambiguity of the story: it now conveys a straightforward moral that good things happen to people who behave well and bad things to people who behave badly. To our eyes, all of these additions look like interpolations. But Chrysostom would not agree. He prefaces these examples with the explicit directive that, although fathers should make every effort to sharpen their child's interest in the story, they must "introduce nothing untrue, but only what can be drawn from scripture."<sup>39</sup> To his way of thinking, he is not importing material, but simply surfacing the implicit meaning of scripture.

A final kind of amplification is straightforwardly extra-biblical. It consists of drawing contemporary analogies. These have a clearly explanatory function. For example, John suggests a comparison with rural patronage practices as a means of contextualizing or even normalizing God's preference for one brother over the other. "It happens just this way among overseers in the country: the master honors one of those bringing his dues and welcomes him inside, but leaves the other one standing outside. Thus it happened here too."<sup>40</sup> When a story contains elements that transcend a child's experience, analogies are especially helpful. Because no child can appreciate the emotional toll of exile, Jacob's sense of desolation can only be brought home to him by the use of comparison. "The profound meaning surpasses the child's understanding; but with adjustment

36. Stories, according to Brian Boyd, offer important evolutionary advantages precisely because they allow us to evaluate characters and situations at one remove (*On the Origin of Stories*, 1–16, 191–96).

37. *Inan. glor.* 39.512–14, 520–21 [SC 188.132].

38. *Inan. glor.* 39.537–38 [SC 188.134].

39. Εἶτα αὐτὸν καὶ διανάστησον—ἔχει γὰρ τι καὶ ἡ διήγησις—μηδὲν ψευδὲς ἐπιφέρων, ἀλλὰ τὰ ἀπὸ τῆς Γραφῆς (*Inan. glor.* 39.507–9 [SC 188.132]). For a summary of Chrysostom's exegetical approach, see Hill, "Chrysostom as Old Testament Commentator," esp. 67–69. As Kecskeméti has shown, Chrysostom often inserts fictional elements into his exegesis, not to introduce new aspects, but "to make the meaning of the text clearer, and to highlight the emotions that animate the characters" ("Exégèse chrysostomienne," 137).

40. *Inan. glor.* 39.516–19 [SC 188.132].

(*meta sunkatabaseōs*),<sup>41</sup> it can be implanted in his tender childish understanding, if we know how to handle the story. We shall speak to him thus: “This brother went away and came to another place. And he had no one with him: no slave, no foster-father, no pedagogue, no other person at all.”<sup>42</sup> This gloss translates adult experience into terms that a child can understand, but at the same time, it is designed to speak to the young person’s sympathies, to invite him to feel what the biblical figure felt.<sup>43</sup> This aim emerges clearly at the end of Chrysostom’s tutorial on how to tell the story of Cain and Abel. The father should conclude:

“And so [God] took the one [namely, Abel] up to heaven immediately, but the other, the murderer, lived for many years in unceasing misery. Living in a state of fear and trembling, he suffered ten thousand terrible things and was punished every day.” Lay stress on the punishment. Do not simply say, “He heard from God, ‘Groaning and trembling you will be on the earth.’” For the young boy does not yet know what this means, but tell him, “Just as when you are standing before your teacher and are in agony over whether you are about to be whipped, you tremble and are afraid, just so did this man live all his days, because he had offended God.”<sup>44</sup>

The analogy, once again, serves a cognitive function: it effectively conveys the terror in which Cain lived in terms appropriate to a child’s understanding. But equally clearly it does more: it is designed to get the child to feel Cain’s fear. And to this end, Chrysostom urges fathers to conjure up a paradigmatic scene of childhood fear.<sup>45</sup>

Deliberately eliciting uncomfortable feelings, such as fear and loneliness, might seem at odds with the stated goal of promoting narrative pleasure. But this is not the case. John recognized that people enjoy the vicarious experience of difficult emotions. His frequent comments on his congregations’ response suggest that many came to church to be moved and that the homily was the high point of this experience. They clapped and shouted aloud their approval.<sup>46</sup> Although he expresses ambivalence over applause, worrying that people come for pleasure

41. For the important concept of “accommodation” in Chrysostom, see Rylaarsdam, *John Chrysostom on Divine Pedagogy*; Hill, “On Looking Again at Synkatabasis.”

42. *Inan. glor.* 46.632–38 (SC 188.144).

43. For this reason, examples are to be drawn from the child’s home (*Inan. glor.* 52.704–5 ([SC 188.152])). The list of absent figures suggests a boy of relatively high social status, as I have argued elsewhere (“Appealing to Children.”).

44. *Inan. glor.* 39.545–54 (SC 188.136).

45. *Inan. glor.* 40.565–68 (SC 188.138). This aim, as we will see more clearly in later chapters, has a strongly inhibitory aspect, but is not exhausted by that agenda.

46. [X]θὲς . . . μέγα ἀνακεκράγετε, δηλοῦντες τὴν ἠδονὴν (*Serm. Gen.* 7.1 [SC 433.302]); see also *Serm. Gen.* 4.3 (SC 433.248); *Hom. 1 Cor.* 4.11, 13.3 (PG 61.39–40, 110). As soon as the homilist stood up to speak, they rushed forward, pushing and jostling to get closer to him (*Proph. obscurit.* 2.1 [PG 56.176]).