The Epistemic Power of Metaphor: A Rhetorical Model for Homiletics.

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The epistemic power of metaphor: A rhetorical model for homiletics

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THE EPISTEMIC POWER OF METAPHOR:
A RHETORICAL MODEL FOR HOMILETICS

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by
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To

JOHNELLE WALLACE KENNEDY
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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the symbiotic relationship between rhetoric and homiletics. The proposed interface between the two disciplines is metaphor. Contemporary research on metaphor in philosophy, rhetoric, sociology, and theology is employed to produce a rhetorical/metaphorical homiletics.

A deconstruction of classical homiletics traces the basic preaching model to a Cartesian philosophical starting point. The nature of the Christian scriptures as metaphorical and of Christian liturgy as symbolic is alien to the rational, objective homiletics. An examination of Christian worship as a rhetorical event includes the elements of the theory of rhetoric developed by Michel Foucault: discursive practices, rules, roles, knowledge, and power.

Through a new reading of classical sources, implicitly or explicitly impacting the homiletic tradition, a different, more positive role is suggested for rhetoric. Instead of viewing rhetoric as a tool of evil, the preacher is encouraged to accept the rhetorical nature of all preaching. On this reading homiletics is defined as a type of rhetoric and the preacher becomes a rhetor. Rhetoric is defined as contingency and probability in opposition to traditional Christian dogmas of certainty.
In an extension of the rhetorical theories of Ernesto Grassi and Richard H. Brown, a rhetoric of folly is developed. By juxtaposing the views of Grassi and St. Paul concerning folly, a common goal of Christians and secularists is discovered. Both, while despairing of the rational paradigm, suggest folly as a way of survival. The characteristics of a rhetoric of folly are: identification, semantic speech, empathic communication, dialectical irony, and metaphor.

Metaphor, as a creative power, is presented as the major component in a rhetoric of folly. Rather than view metaphor as an element of style, this study resituates metaphor as an element of rhetorical invention. Metaphor is capable of redescribing reality, producing a new world, and creating credibility, community, and concepts by which Christians and secularists structure reality.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Christian preaching faces a perpetual crisis.¹ According to Cardinal Newman² and Matthew Arnold³ preaching can be seen as an attempted synthesis of two rival moral and intellectual traditions: the secular or "Hellenic" tradition, and the sacred or "Hebraic" tradition. Throughout the history of preaching the convergence of these two traditions has been almost impossible to accomplish. Tertullian prescribed the polarities in his blunt question: "What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem?"⁴ Arnold complains that there ought to be a happy balance between the two, "though it never is."⁵

Perhaps the most significant response to the crisis of the rival cultures embedded in Christian preaching was that of St. Augustine. Floyd Anderson argues that Augustine produced a synthesis of sacred doctrine and pagan knowledge, representing "probably the most successful synthesis of Hebraism and Hellenism in Western history."⁶ Augustine joins eloquence to religion and provides in De doctrina christiana two texts for the present study. The first text would eliminate existing differences between the sacred and the secular: "Every good and worthy Christian should understand that wherever they may find truth, it emanates
from their Lord."7 In the second text, Augustine urges preachers to "... despoil pagan thought of the gold of wisdom and the silver of eloquence, as by God's command the Hebrews despoiled the Egyptians."8

Unfortunately, the Augustinian synthesis has not survived into the twentieth century. The most notable reconstruction of Augustine's rhetorical homiletics was that of Fenelon. Subsequent homiletic theorists have attempted to combine disparate elements of Hebraism and Hellenism without achieving the "happy balance" that Matthew Arnold thought desirable.

A partial result for contemporary preachers, saddled with the oral culture of the Hebrew prophets as well as the literate culture of Athens, is a crisis of rationality. I am using the term "rationality" in the sense that the autonomous consciousness of the thinker could account for any reality by the strict application of the methods of science and logic. The classical critiques of rationality have been expressed in the works of the "masters of suspicion," Nietzsche, Freud, and Marx. They called into serious question the naive rationalist claims of the Age of Enlightenment. Homiletic methodology, content in its own illusion of rationality, has failed to challenge or assimilate the charges made by the hermeneutics of suspicion.
The most frequent and most damaging charge by Nietzsche, Marx, and Freud has been expressed in a variety of ways: in Marxist terms, by the bourgeois intellectual's refusal to struggle against oppressive economic conditions; in Freudian terms, by the disclosure of subterranean forces of the unconscious motivating our supposed rationality; in the charges of Nietzsche that our primary task is not the development of a sincere rationalism, but the becoming of individuals.

A contemporary critique of the crisis of rationality by Richard J. Bernstein centers in what he calls "Cartesian anxiety." Cartesian anxiety is the assumption that only two options are available for those who inquire into matters of knowledge and action: either some ultimate ground for knowledge and action exists, some objective foundation, or we are beset by relativistic skepticism which ends in befuddled plurality. This opposition, argues Bernstein, includes the crisis of "rationality versus irrationality." Homiletic methodology has remained oblivious to the dilemma by choosing either a dogmatic rationalism or a charismatic irrationality.

An example of the impact of the Cartesian anxiety upon preaching can be seen in the way the literate world in which preachers perform has diluted the impact of oral communication. As W. Lance Haynes argues, "Focusing on
rhetoric solely through literate frameworks has long since led us to treat oral rhetoric as if it were written and performed— as if the rhetorical processes at work in oral composition and interaction differ little, if at all, from those of written thought and indeed, to then attempt the promulgation of an orally-performed version of literate rhetoric. Classic homiletic theory, with its insistence on the use of propositional statements to be developed and defended, has produced a literate framework.

The rhetoric of oral literacy dominates theological study, at least that of the homiletics department, in the modern seminary. The preoccupation of homileticians with constructing sermons from a stock homiletic design (introduction, text, propositional topic, categorical points, and conclusion) suggests a dependency upon the technical restraints of literacy.

While homiletical methods are Hellenistic in nature, this very dependence upon literacy raises an additional problem. Haynes, drawing on the models of Walter Ong, suggests that we are experiencing the advent of the age of video literacy; he argues, "Video is impregnating modern civilization with rhetorical processes that cannot be optimally studied, taught, or used by traditional literate means." Applied to homiletics this suggests that aspects
of oral culture are reintroduced to traditional literate homiletic methodology.

After all, classical rhetoric is the content of the Hellenism imbibed by preaching. The propositional sermon, so characteristic of homiletic design, involves the painstaking construction of proofs intended for sequential critical digestion. The whole process is that of classical rhetoric, and homiletics shows little inclination to change its ancient foundations. Sermon textbooks often employ edifice metaphors, for example, to indicate that sermons are built or constructed in a logical fashion.\textsuperscript{12} The process appears like gothic architecture, leading the audience through cognitive labor to construct cathedrals of definitional precision, decorated with pathos and ethos, and cemented with the mortar of linear logic. As Leland Griffin has shown, such metaphors are nineteenth century relics.\textsuperscript{13}

In a survey of 120 preaching textbooks I discovered a preponderance of classical Greek and Latin rhetorical theory. For example, the foundational homiletical text of the twentieth century is \textit{On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons}, by John A. Broadus. A synopsis of Broadus' work demonstrates an adaptation of the Aristotelian theory of rhetoric and the Ciceronian canons of rhetoric--invention, disposition, delivery, style, and memory--to the particular needs of Christian preaching. Broadus includes a section on
argument which borrows extensively from Richard Whately, but
cites no rhetorical theorists after him.

Since 1970 there have been some attempts to move beyond
the old preaching method, but even the new models have
ignored potential contributions by rhetorical theorists.
Some homileticians have adapted superficial elements of
communication theory to preaching. Others suggest a
story-telling model without including narrative theory in
their methods.

Two contemporary homileticians are possible exceptions
to this critique: Fred Craddock, who starts from an
existentialist position and argues for an inductive model of
preaching, and David Buttrick, who presents what he calls
a "patchwork phenomenological" approach. Craddock and
Buttrick attempt to move preaching away from dependence on
classical rhetoric. Their works are a step in the right
direction, but still fall short of a synthesis of
contemporary rhetoric and homiletics.

In general while rhetorical theory has moved beyond its
classical roots and the study of knowledge and reality has
revealed the shortcomings of a Cartesian dualism, preaching
has continued to live in an isolated intellectual tower. It
is as if the art of preaching has become a still-frame
picture from the eighteenth century. Even as other
disciplines have experienced reconstruction, now homiletic
theory is called to a similar task. I began by noting the dichotomy that prevails in homiletics. Perhaps a synthesis can be formed, a synthesis of wisdom and eloquence, a synthesis of orality and literacy, a synthesis of rhetoric and homiletics.

In this study I attempt a reconstruction of the Augustinian synthesis. My purpose is to begin developing a rhetorical homiletics: a union of form and content, wisdom and eloquence, sacred and secular. The major emphasis will be on contemporary rhetorical theory because rhetoric and homiletics are part of the same basic discipline. The need for a rhetorically-based homiletics arises in part from such historical and interpretative considerations already expressed, but at least one other rationale supports my attempt.

This rationale comes from what I consider common goals of preachers and rhetoricians; for example, solving human problems, preventing nuclear war, averting ecological disaster, or any one of dozens of other issues of public interest. The vital issues confronting our existence are of such magnitude that all potential alliances and syntheses for effecting a global community of peace and well-being demand consideration. As Haynes asserts, "Recognizing the extent to which humane behavior, once learned, need not be preceded by conscious deliberation paves the way toward
creation of a truly humane world society." From such a rhetorical base may rise "not a global village--after all, the prospect of village life thrills us not--but a global community." I am suggesting that the secular rhetorician and Christian preacher have in common a fundamental attitude which affirms the ultimate significance and final worth of our lives, here and now, in nature and in history. As David Tracy makes explicit, this common faith of "secularist and modern Christian is perhaps the most important insight needed. . . ." 

Central to my argument is the contention that traditional homiletical methods have been influenced by science and reason. It is no accident that a rational, objective homiletic arose at the same time as scientific method inspired by Descarte's *A Discourse on Method*. Rational homiletics parodies scientific procedure in which an object is isolated for study and a general deduction is followed by descriptive statements. Such a strictly rational method of preaching clashes with the metaphorical nature of religious thought and language. In other words, a rational method, based on a hermeneutics of God-given certain truth cannot cope with biblical language which is often figural, poetic, or narrative in form. As Hans Frei has demonstrated, the idea that texts contain themes, propositions, or principles was a response to skeptical
rationalism's charge that the Bible was a collection of irrational, embarrassing myths.\textsuperscript{21}

To be clear, my objective is not to reject all traditional homiletical theory, much of which has been of practical import to preachers. I seek instead a deconstruction of homiletical methods and the potential for a new model. The theoretical content of my model will be that of contemporary rhetorical theory. As Cherwitz and Hikins point out, "homiletics is a subspecies of rhetoric.\textsuperscript{22}

Adopting rhetoric as a pivotal starting point and major content contributor to a theory of homiletics will not authorize rhetoric with the power to replace historical concerns of preachers, such as the inspiration of the Bible, revelation from God, and questions of authority.\textsuperscript{23} These issues are better pursued in theological studies. I intend to apply contemporary rhetorical theory to homiletics with the goal of producing theoretical as well as pragmatic implications for preaching.

There are numerous perspectives in contemporary rhetorical theory which could contribute to homiletics: the epistemic, the argumentative, the fantasy-theme, the speech-act, the performative, and the narrative. Any of these perspectives are possible starting points for a rhetorical homiletics. Given the need to refute the rational paradigm
of homiletics, and given the rhetorical, symbolic nature of religious thought and language, however, I offer an epistemic and metaphorical perspective. This perspective was chosen because it projects rhetoric as a way of knowing,\textsuperscript{24} presupposes that reality is "socially constructed,"\textsuperscript{25} and offers metaphor as the "boundary-violater," by which the unknown can become known and thus expand what counts as knowledge.

Rhetoric as epistemic departs from the traditional point of view of homiletics--that truth is certain, knowable, and communicable. Applied to homiletics, the epistemic nature of rhetoric offers potential for challenging the rational, objective method of preaching. Rhetoric as epistemic also elevates the art of preaching from its traditional managerial role of passing the truth from one person to another, and allows preaching to recreate reality through metaphor.

The Statement of the Problem

The increase in scholarly interest in metaphor has led to an immense explosion of meanings for the term metaphor. The purpose of this dissertation is to examine critically the concept of metaphor as it is used in rhetoric and philosophy, and apply these theories to a homiletical model. Since a comprehensive survey of all of twentieth century
rhetoric, philosophy, and homiletics is impossible within the parameters of my study, I will concentrate on studies of metaphor in rhetoric and philosophy that consider the epistemic value of metaphor.

In this study I attempt to resituate metaphor from its status as a mere ornament of style to an essential role in the creation of knowledge. A survey of representative homiletics texts shows that metaphor has been primarily treated as a part of style. E. Eugene Hall and James L. Heflin surveyed many of the treatments of preaching and concluded, "Attention to figures of speech in treatments of preaching are less than extensive." The problem is to see the preacher, not as a user of pretty words, but as a maker of new worlds through metaphor. The preacher comes to the arena of public debate to present his/her metaphorical worlds, not as the only reality, but as one way of defining the community, within the bounds of his/her religious commitments and interpretations.

Questions, therefore, need to be asked and answers attempted in a systematic way. Among the central questions related to the problem of metaphor in homiletics are: 1) What is the nature of the basic relationship between rhetoric and homiletics? 2) What is the theory of metaphor utilized in traditional homiletics? 3) What characteristics of rhetoric and philosophy will be most helpful in
maintaining the assertion, "Metaphor has epistemic value for preaching"? 4) What insights from theories of metaphor can be applied to a homiletical model? 5) Can metaphor function as the thought of the sermon rather than the decoration of the sermon? While these questions suggest the parameters of the research problem, further explication of certain related problems is needed.

The Subproblems

The first subproblem is to examine the complex inter-relationship of rhetoric with homiletics. Any preaching model proposing a dependence upon rhetorical theories will of necessity have to deal with the natural antipathy of Christian scholars to rhetoric. There has been little effort to bridge systematically the concern of homiletics and rhetoric or to explore fully and directly the way metaphor makes possible at least one interface between homiletics and rhetoric.

The second subproblem is to examine the concept of metaphor in representative rhetorical and philosophical studies of the twentieth century. The third subproblem is to examine the concept of metaphor in representative homiletics texts of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While theologians have incorporated much rhetorical theory of metaphor into their discussions of
faith, little scholarly work has been done on metaphor in the area of homiletics. The fourth subproblem is to produce a rhetorical model for homiletics that has epistemological and practical value. The model includes contributions of rhetorical scholars in research other than that of metaphor.

The Delimitations

The concept of metaphor, especially in its rhetorical nature, controls the investigation. No attempt is made to include every treatment of metaphor, because metaphor pervades discussion not only in the humanities but the sciences as well. Therefore, representative treatments of metaphor are selected; specifically the works of Ernesto Grassi, Paul Ricoeur, Max Black, Wayne Booth, Mark Johnson, and Richard H. Brown.

Further, no attempt is made to deal with every major homiletician of the twentieth century. In this study I evaluate the basic paradigms of homiletics. Certain works have been recognized by scholars in the history of preaching as the most influential homiletic textbooks. Specifically, the work of John A. Broadus, Andrew Blackwood, James W. Cox, and John Killinger will be studied as representatives of the classical homiletics paradigm.
The Definition of Terms

The term "epistemology" is used in the broad sense to refer to how knowledge is acquired. Questions about the nature of epistemology depend on some stable notion of what it is. As I use the term it means a way of knowing, a way that extends the boundaries of religious knowing. The relationship between rhetoric and epistemology has been of interest to rhetorical theorists at least since Robert L. Scott's seminal article. Scott asserts, "In human affairs, then, rhetoric, perceived in the frame herein discussed, is a way of knowing; it is epistemic."27 Elaine Ognibene argues, "rhetoric can no longer be seen simply as a means of persuasion. It becomes instead the medium in which selves grow."28

From a religious perspective, Wayne Booth's book, Modern Dogma and the Rhetoric of Assent, recognizes that when belief is taken as dogma, there is no role for rhetoric, except the manipulative use by the superior, and argues for the creative role of assent.29 For rhetoric to be a rhetoric of assent, it must be viewed as epistemic. Given this definition of epistemic, preachers are asked to abandon certainty for ambiguity. Giving rhetoric a place of honor in the isolated kingdom of preaching can open homiletics to a demystification of its perceived task and help the preacher's advocacy of Christianity become more
morally responsible. Then he might be able to have a positive role in fostering community and a viable civic life.

"Metaphor" refers to two active thoughts that remain in permanent tension with one another. As Paul Ricoeur insists, metaphor belongs to the semantics not the syntax of language. Rather than being defined as a figure of speech, a decorative use of language, metaphor is original language, prior to rational language; metaphor creates thought, redescribes reality, and remains always open-ended, indirect, ambiguous, and revolutionary. The distinctive features of metaphor can be summarized in the following way: a metaphor is an assertion or judgment of similarity and difference between two thoughts in permanent tension with one another, which redescribes reality in an open-ended way, but has structural as well as epistemic and effective power.

"Rhetoric" gets poor reviews from the homileticians. Among those unfamiliar with the history of preaching there exist a number of misconceptions about rhetoric. In homiletic textbooks one finds warnings against the dangers of rhetoric and rhetoric defined as style or oratory.

The lack of a careful definition of rhetoric by homileticians is further evidence that preaching has failed to assimilate the resources of contemporary rhetoric. A typical definition of rhetoric from a popular homiletical
work will indicate the seriousness of the definitional problem: "Rhetoric taught him to use his abilities . . . by instructing him in the art of extemporization, appropriate expression, and moving appeal." 32

Witness, in contrast, the following definitions of rhetoric offered by serious scholars across the centuries. Aristotle's definition still stands as paradigmatic for rhetorical theorists: "Rhetoric is the faculty of finding in any given situation the available means of persuasion." 33 Francis Bacon gave a psychological perspective in defining rhetoric as the "application of reason to the imagination for the better moving of the will." 34 For Kenneth Burke rhetoric is "the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols." 35 I. A. Richards, in an idealistic fervor assigns rhetoric to "... the study of misunderstanding and its remedies." 36 Cherwitz and Hikins offer the following definition: "Rhetoric is the art of describing reality through language." 37 All of these authors, and others who could be cited, agree that rhetoric is a serious philosophical subject that has evolved from a managerial role in the transmission of knowledge to a creative role in the generation of knowledge. In other words, there is an emergent consensus that rhetoric is epistemic.
In this study I am adopting and extending the definition of Gerard A. Hauser that rhetoric is "the management of symbols in order to coordinate social action." According to Hauser, "Rhetoric exists in the realm of the contingent not the certain." Because I am interested in how the study of rhetoric and of homiletics can be mutually informing, I have concentrated on the kind of language by which the preacher describes the world as it exists and redescribes a new world invaded by the presence of the kingdom of God.

"Homiletics" may be defined as the science of preparing and delivering a discourse based on scripture. In this study I work toward a homiletics which adapts contemporary rhetoric to the particular ends and demands of preaching. By homiletics I mean an ongoing conversation within which religious beliefs are advanced and supported, but which never attain the status of certainty. Contemporary rhetorical theory can clarify the communicative dimensions of homiletic discourse and establish new philosophical starting points for homiletics. Contemporary rhetorical theory can also demonstrate distinctive features of metaphor little explored by today's homiletical theorists.
The Significance of the Study

The concept of metaphor has emerged within the past four decades as a key category in rhetoric and philosophy, as well as other disciplines. One contribution of these studies is a developing consensus that metaphor can create a changed world-view or perspective. Metaphor can open avenues for multiple meanings of texts as well as alternative solutions to public problems. Such creative possibilities are significant for any preaching attempting to contribute to our survival. As Booth argues "... the quality of any culture is in large part the quality of the metaphorists that it creates and sustains." Preaching which narrowly shuts out public debate by Christians deserves the criticism it often receives.

Among those unfamiliar with the history of homiletics there exists a host of criticisms about the subject and the phenomena associated with it. Not since Charles Dickens was giving preachers such a hard time in Pickwick Papers have Christian ministers appeared in sorrier plight. Is it because (as the Wakefield Master put it, c.1425) "Are we all hand-tamed by these gentry?" Preachers have often had a hard time of it. Jesus was called a devil, a drunkard, and considered crazy. Epicurean and Stoic philosophers in Athens called St. Paul a "cock sparrow." Augustine complained of his clergy as "a couple of unpretentious sheep
dogs." Charlemagne sent for Alcuin to give ignorant preachers something worth hearing to say. Chaucer has a line on "shitey shepherds and their shitey sheep." Jonathan Swift flailed out at the Scottish divines for delivering "oracular belches to . . . panting disciples." Yet, that Charles Dickens version of Methodist preachers: unctuous, mewling, greedy; across two centuries it stings.

A second significance for this study lies in the observation of David Tracy that "... all major religions are grounded in certain root metaphors." These root metaphors are frameworks for creating new meaning. The preacher's search for a hermeneutic of metaphor is "a groping, a tatonment: or one who is seeking to find one's way, to establish a sense of direction." In common with artists and scientists, preachers can use root metaphors to make experience significant.

A third significance for this study is the expansion of rhetorical theories of knowing and metaphor to another discipline--homiletics. Traditional homiletics has promoted a religious positivism which views the lexicon of Christian truth as certain and literal. In this fictive kingdom, the preaching of the Bible is factual and literal. While the presence of metaphor is not denied, biblical figures of speech are sacrificed on the altar of explanation and literal paraphrase. Under the reign of literalism, there is
little wonder that metaphor has been banished from the kingdom. I believe that the truncated art of homiletics can be restored to a place of honor in our society. "All serious study is, no doubt, life-justifying," but there is potential for significance in a study that searches for the survival of the human race in the spoken arts of rhetoric and homiletics.

The Review of Related Literature

Two major bibliographical works, Warren A. Shibles' Metaphor: An Annotated Bibliography and History and volume 17 of the Amsterdam Studies in the Theory and History of Linguistic Science, provide the basic introductory resources for the study of metaphor. These two sources list over 9,500 entries. By necessity then only major writers in major periods who have exerted either a direct or indirect influence upon homiletical theory will be considered. The major portion of the review focuses on periodical literature relating to metaphor and to dissertations relevant to the epistemic nature of metaphor.

Due to the dependence of homiletics upon classical rhetoric, the theory of metaphor as developed by Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian will be considered. These foundational studies inform most theories of metaphor. Although Plato never formulated a theory of metaphor, his
negative assessment of rhetoric holds just as true for metaphor. Plato's attitude concerning metaphor has often been mirrored by homileticians. By this assertion I am not claiming a direct line from Plato to Christian writers, but I am saying that preachers have often produced a similar negative evaluation of rhetoric and metaphor. (This thesis will be developed in the discussion of the complex interface between rhetoric and homiletics.) The writing of Plato most pertinent to this study is Gorgias. In Gorgias, Plato denounces rhetoric as "The generic name I should give it is pandering; it has many subdivisions, one of which is cookery, an occupation which masquerades as an art but in my opinion is not more than a knack acquired by routine." A3

Aristotle's views, developed in the Rhetoric and in the Poetics, provide the foundation for almost all succeeding theories of metaphor. His definition of metaphor remains as the classical paradigm: "Metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else; the transference being either from genus to species, or from species to grounds, or from species to species, or on grounds of analogy." A4 Basing metaphor in both rhetoric and philosophy was Aristotle's positive rebuttal to Plato's earlier negative evaluation of metaphor. Aristotle's treatment of metaphor can be summarized as follows: 1) as something which happens to the noun, metaphor is attached to
the word rather than to discourse in general; 2) As something that displaces meaning away from or toward another meaning, metaphor always borrows from another field of meanings; 3) Metaphor has some sense different from ordinary language; 4) Metaphor plays across several typologies.

While Aristotle did emphasize the creative aspect of metaphor, the basic result of his theory was to place metaphor under the rubric of style.

Cicero, in the De Oratore, also perceived metaphor as an ornament of language. Cicero's view of metaphor is important in homiletics because of his close connection to the later work of Augustine, De Doctrina Christiana. "A metaphor is a short form of simile, contracted into one word." Thus metaphor is seen as playing a cosmetic role "with respect to ordinary language . . . in order to produce a pleasing effect."46

Quintilian's significance lies in his summation of rhetorical theories of metaphor that came before him, a kind of restatement of classicism. A trope consists of "the artistic alteration of a word or phrase from its proper meaning to another," and "the commonest and by far the most beautiful of tropes" is the metaphor. Metaphor is for Quintilian the "supreme ornament of style."47

George Campbell, in The Philosophy of Rhetoric, introduces a rhetorical framework vastly different from the
classical system. In place of the five canons, Campbell reduces the goals of speaking to four: enlighten the understanding, please the imagination, move the passions, or influence the will. The significance of Campbell for this study can be traced to current homiletics textbooks which still utilize Campbell's framework. In addition, his treatment of metaphor as an occurrence in the mind, as an act of the imagination, is relevant to the proposed model developed in this study. The major tasks of metaphor, according to Campbell, are fixing attention and interest, moving the passions, and inducing belief. The role of metaphor in inducing belief has particular relevance for the preacher. Campbell argues that "lively ideas have a stronger influence than faint ideas to induce belief. . . ." Also, Campbell insists that metaphor is basically argument by analogy.

Hugh Blair's Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres were first published in 1783. Blair, a popular Scottish preacher, develops a rather complete conception of metaphor as linguistic expression. His remarks on metaphor betray a negative concept of metaphor as ornaments; they are "artificial embellishments of rhetoric" or "laboured refinements of art" or "pompous." Thus Blair insists that metaphor is to be used to embellish and to decorate speech. His work carries this now obsolete concept of
metaphor to its culmination. Blair defines metaphor as "a sort of picture." This definition is used in prescriptive preaching texts which encourage inspiring preachers to paint pictures with words.

Pierre Fontanier treated metaphor as a mere ornament to plain thought and only one of many figures of speech. The important task of the interpreter is paraphrase. Metaphor is a mere accident in naming and rhetoric is the art of pleasing not persuading. Metaphor is understood as the substitution of one noun for another. This approach to metaphor, dominant from Plato through part of the twentieth century, has been expressed and taught in homiletical text books through the present time. For Fontanier rhetoric is reduced to the study of figures of style, which he defines as "the more or less remarkable traits and forms, the phrases with a more or less happy turn, by which the expression of ideas, thoughts, and feelings remove the discourse more or less far away from what would have been its simple common expression."

I. A. Richards, in The Philosophy of Rhetoric, represents a major shift in the direction of metaphor theory. His definition of metaphor, his nomenclature for the elements involved in metaphor, and his theory of meaning constitute his major contributions to the study of metaphor. For example, his definition of metaphor has been
paradigmatic for most ensuing studies of metaphor: "When we use a metaphor we have two thoughts of different things active together and supported by a single word, or phrase, whose meaning is a resultant of their interaction."\(^5\) For Richards metaphor is basic to our thought process.

In *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* Richards makes several claims that in one form or another remain basic to the study of metaphor. Metaphor is not a trope dealing only with words, nor is it a matter of style alone. Instead, it is an omnipresent principle of thought. "Thought is metaphoric, and proceeds by comparison, and the metaphors of language derive therefrom."\(^5\) Metaphor permeates all discourse. Because homileticians have missed or ignored these claims, they have taken metaphor as a stylistic ornament dealing with the matter of choosing visual words to enforce logical points in the sermon. Richards discounts this traditional or received view of metaphor and suggests that metaphor involves metaphysical and epistemological issues.

Homiletics has much to gain from the insights of Richards. The idea that thought is essentially metaphoric fits well with the concept that Judaic-Christian scriptures and religious languages are basically metaphoric. If, as Richards argues, metaphors are cognitively irreducible and indispensable, then homiletics can dispense with the futile attempt to merely repeat Christian traditions and attempt to
expand them with new metaphoric formulations. Also, any adequate account of meaning and truth must give a central place to metaphor.

One of the attempts to explore the epistemological character of metaphor is the work of Susanne Langer. Her *Philosophy in a New Key* extends Kant's critique of reason, explores the power of metaphor, and explicates epistemology as all that is left to the philosophical heritage. Langer perceives metaphor as the principle by which new words are born. "One might say that metaphor is the law of life. It is the force that makes it essentially relational, intellectual, forever showing up new, abstractable forms in reality, forever laying down a deposit of old, abstracted concepts in an increasing treasure of general words." In a profession, such as preaching, which suffers from a loss of confidence in language as well as from the crippling weight of a whole pantheon of dead "god" metaphors, Langer's insistence on broadening the philosophy of meaning to include metaphor as new meaning offers potential.

Philip Wheelwright, in *The Burning Foundation*, discusses the relationship between metaphor and reality and the function of metaphor in religion. He proposed a double-language theory--literal and metaphorical. As language that is "alive," "fluid," "vital," "open," and "resonant," metaphor has for Wheelwright an ontological character.
While Wheelwright's language theory may perpetuate the dichotomy of rhetoric and homiletics (since rhetoric is traditionally seen as poetic and homiletics as persuasive discourse), his description of metaphoric language acts to counteract the positivism and literalness in linguistic analysis as well as in homiletics.

A philosophical approach to the theory of metaphor is used by Max Black in his *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy*. Black summarizes theories of metaphor, dividing them into substitution views, comparison views, and interaction views. The interaction view is the relevant theory in this study. Black relied on I. A. Richard's theory in which two different expressions act together to result in another meaning. Although Black fails to explain the significance of metaphor for philosophy, he does argue for the nonparaphrasable quality of interactive metaphors. "Up to a point, we may succeed in stating a number of the relevant relations between the two elements of a metaphor . . . But the set of literal statements so obtained will not have the same power . . . The loss in such cases is a loss in cognitive content . . . The literal translation . . . fails to give the insight that the metaphor did."58 Metaphor is a filter, according to Black, which links a system of associated meanings to a principal subject, its focus.
Perhaps the most comprehensive theory of metaphor is that of Paul Ricoeur. In his *Rule of Metaphor*, Ricoeur insists that metaphor contains the power to redescribe reality. The work progresses from a rhetorical to a semantical, to a hermeneutical study. He rejects common understandings of metaphor as word, as phrase, as sentence and argues for metaphor as discourse. Metaphor, notes Ricoeur, is a momentous creation of language. The metaphoric process involves more than mere expression. Indeed, it is "knowledge-in-process." The hearer/reader of metaphor is invited to discover more implications of metaphors. This discovery requires, according to Ricoeur, the ability to express or redescribe reality. Ricoeur argues that the metaphoric function of language impels human discourse not only toward new meanings, but toward an appropriate philosophical language to understand them. According to Ricoeur, the function of metaphor is to present "in an open fashion, by means of a conflict between identity and difference, the process that, in a covert manner generates semantic grids by fusion into identity." Another prominent theorist associated with the metaphor debate is Ernesto Grassi. In his *Rhetoric as Philosophy* Grassi sees metaphor as prior to scientific thought. In fact, he insists that metaphor is the basis of human thought. His concept of *ingenium* (ingenuity) suggests that
metaphor has the capacity to create and transform reality. In short, metaphor—the power of the word—is epistemic. The primal, original power of words suggests that rhetoric is the evolutionary movement from chaos to cosmos, from darkness to light, from destructive tendencies to constructive ones. Metaphor is more than a figure of speech because it embodies the basic process by which humans think, know, and process the events of their world. Grassi argues that "philosophy itself becomes possible only on the basis of metaphors, on the basis of the ingenuity which supplies the foundation of every rational, derivative process."61

Kenneth Burke brings a sociological perspective to the study of metaphor. Burke defines metaphor in functional terms:

> Metaphor is a device for seeing something in terms of something else. It brings out the thisness of a that, or the thatness of a this . . . metaphor tells us something about one character as considered from the point of view of another character. And to consider A from the point of view of B is, of course, to use B as a perspective upon A.62

In *Permanence and Change* Burke asserts, "It is precisely through metaphor that our perspectives, or analogical extensions, are made . . . a world without metaphor would be a world without purpose."63 Burke develops from his definition an institutionalized view of metaphor. An entire system of thought is dominated by its metaphor or perspective. In order to gain a perspective on our
perspectives we must be able to imaginatively transcend the parameters of our perspective. This would enable one to view the subject from as many diverse metaphoric perspectives as his/her own power of invention would permit. For his part, Burke claims priority for one metaphor--poetic metaphor--as the ruling perspective: "Man is an actor." There are five ingredients of "man is an actor": Act, Scene, Agent, Agency, and Purpose. Through the Pentad Burke is telling us how to interpret the poetic metaphor. Thus we have a new system of invention, and in this case, perhaps a fresh prescription for the thought processes of the discipline of homiletics.

At least two dissertations deserve consideration here. Michael M. Osborn's 1963 dissertation attempts to trace the historical development of the theory of metaphor from Aristotle to the twentieth century. His theory rejects the notion that metaphor's tradition is a matter of pure word-change. Instead Osborn argues that "the shift of emphasis from metaphor as an occurrence in language to metaphor as an occurrence in thought is not an abrupt change. . . ." Metaphor, according to Osborn, may be defined as:

both communicative stimulus and response to stimulus. As stimulus, metaphor is the identifying of an idea or object through a sign which generally denotes an entirely different idea or object. As a response, metaphor is an interaction of interpretants which spring from the stimulus sign's usual denotation and from its special denotation in this context. This
interaction of interpretants provides the basis for the meaning of the particular stimulus-response cycle which is metaphor.  

Osborn concludes his work with suggestions for future research in metaphor that served as the catalyst for this dissertation.

Representative of studies in the cognitive nature of metaphor is Eva Feder Kittay's dissertation, "The Cognitive Force of Metaphor: A Theory of Metaphoric Meaning." Building on the work of Richards, Black, Burke, Goodman, and others, Kittay suggests that the cognitive force of metaphor be sought in its perspectival character. Three propositions make up this perspectival nature of metaphor: 1) There are two identifiable components in every metaphor; 2) The components interact so that one is the "lens" by which we view the second; 3) There is a relation of tension between the two components. Kittay suggests that each component of the metaphor is an element in a semantic field from which terms in our language acquire their meaning. "The meaning of a metaphor involves the cross over from the semantic field of one of the components to the semantic field of the other."  

Rhetorical scholars have explored the theoretical implications of metaphor in numerous articles. For example, Franklin Fearing suggests that metaphor, at a different level, performs the same function as the "physiognomic
perception" of primitive oral societies, in which the object is endowed with dynamic-affective qualities. To allege such close parallels between metaphor and perception in oral cultures, could have significant bearing on a rhetorical model of homiletics based on elements of orality.68

An assumption guiding much rhetorical research on metaphor is that the use of metaphor is a significant tool for rhetorical criticism. Kathleen Hall Jamieson, in "The Metaphoric Cluster in the Rhetoric of Pope Paul VI and Edmund G. Brown, Jr.," studies the recurring metaphors of Pope Paul and Governor Brown. Jamieson argues, "By isolating a rhetor's range of metaphors and comparing them with other habitual rhetorical behaviors, critics can minimize the likelihood that they are generalizing from aberrant rhetorical cues."69

Wayne Booth claims even greater critical power for the study of metaphor. Booth argues for an ethical criticism based on the quality of the characters and cultures built by metaphor.70 Some of the consequences of taking Booth seriously would include the study of metaphor as the solving of a puzzle, "taking literally Aristotle's statement that metaphors are like enigmas or riddles;"71 and the study of metaphor as "a quest for ways to improve my culture and myself; that is, a search for a cure."72
Herman G. Stelzner, operating on the assumption that an age or an institution can be known by its metaphors, examines the figurative language "used in contemporary discussion of oral communication, emphasizing the organizing power that has been demonstrated by mechanical, evolutionary or biological, and military concepts." According to Stelzner, mechanistic metaphors, inspired by Newton, dominated nineteenth century speech pedagogy. The works of Darwin, however, provided the impetus for biological metaphors as paradigms in the twentieth century. Mechanical metaphors still govern homiletical methodology as a part of its rational, objective base.

In a related article, "Rhetoric and the Science of History: The Debate Between Evolutionism and Empiricism as a Conflict of Metaphors," Richard H. Brown argues that "both evolutionists and empiricists are engaged in poetic construction--albeit with different root metaphors." Brown extols the value of metaphor as being indispensable to science, as our fundamental way of noting similarity and difference. "All discourse is poetic," insists Brown, "in that it uses metaphors and other tropes. . . ." Of particular significance to my study are Brown's claims that we make worlds through the use of metaphors, and that we should engage in a rhetoric which fosters civic life.
The role of metaphor in persuasion has been studied by, among others, John W. Bowers and Michael M. Osborn. Utilizing empirical research, Bowers and Osborn pursued the question, "Are metaphorical conclusions more effective in changing attitudes than literal conclusions?" The study provided some initial empirical evidence that metaphorical conclusions have greater effects on audience attitudes.

Michael Osborn's study of "light-dark" archetypal metaphors has religious meanings important in preaching. Osborn lists the major variations of the light-dark family as light-dark, the sun, fire, and the cycle of the seasons. One of Osborn's more interesting suggestions is that "Archetypal images may be especially crucial not only when a society is in upheaval, but also in its formative stages before it has achieved a certain national identity."

Philosophers have turned their attention to the topic of metaphor increasingly during the last twenty years. Because of the explosion of studies of metaphor in philosophy, only sample views can be mentioned here. Binkley has argued that the truth value of a metaphor is assessed the same as that for literal expressions. His point is that metaphor is not cognitively inferior to literal statements. He argues that metaphorical claims function as argument "which has more or less determinate
criteria evaluation, which can be supported and weakened with evidence and so on."79

A growing number of philosophers are irreducible theorists. Mark Johnson, for example, asserts that "a consensus is beginning to emerge about the nature of the cognitivity issue. . . ."80 From the perspective of Johnson, metaphor is "an omnipresent principle of cognition;"81 metaphor cannot be reduced to a literal paraphrase; and metaphor alters our conceptual structures as well as recreates our world.82

Strong support for the epistemic value of metaphor also comes from literature on the essentiality of metaphor in science.83 Metaphor can no longer be dismissed as a mere ornament, a simple comparison, or a matter of word usage. If metaphor is indispensable in rhetoric, philosophy, and science, homiletics comes to this party hat in hand. From the realization that metaphor is essential even in science comes an assumption of the pervasiveness of metaphor in all language. As Lakoff and Johnson argue, "no account of meaning and truth can be adequate unless it recognizes and deals with the way in which conventional metaphors structure our conceptual system.84

In summary, then, metaphor is indispensable to our thought, to our ways of coming-to-know, to the making of our world, and potentially, to the evolving of global community.
In science, in religion, in philosophy metaphor provides access to the unknown through describing the known. The literature related to metaphor suggests a consensus among rhetoricians and philosophers that metaphor has cognitive value, that it is not reducible to a literal paraphrase, and that it produces new insights not possible in literal language.

**The Data, Their Treatment, and Their Interpretation**

The primary data for this study are the writings of representative twentieth century rhetoricians, philosophers, theologians, and homileticians. The literary and critical data are contained in the journal articles and monographs of the major theorists listed above. Secondary data will include the material which helps to set the historical background and interpretation of the interest in metaphor. The unpublished dissertations dealing with metaphor are another type of secondary data.

**The Research Methodology**

This research study stresses historical and rhetorical criticism of major treatments in rhetoric, philosophy, and homiletics. Osborn's 1963 paradigm of the functions and significance of metaphor is not entirely adequate for critical application to the proposed rhetorical model for
homiletics. Recent research in metaphor by rhetoricians, philosophers, and homileticians needs to supplement Osborn's theory; and a rhetorical model for homiletics centered in metaphor needs to be created. In addition, most other theories of metaphor fail to make any systematic application of the rhetorical significance of metaphor in preaching. The primary research methodology will be qualitative. The historical method will be utilized, along with a descriptive survey of the data, and interpretation and application of its significance.

The Treatment of the Data

Chapter one attempts a rationale for the study of metaphor as the key in a reconstruction of the Augustinian synthesis. The aim of the initial phase of the research is a historical perspective on metaphor.

Chapter two of this dissertation consists of a critique of homiletical methodology. Working from the notion of Michel Foucault's concept of discursive formation, I will attempt to show how the traditional methodology of preaching, and its liturgical context has precluded an epistemic role for metaphor.

In chapter three, using a historical review of attitudes toward rhetoric by homileticians, I attempt to show how rhetoric has been systematically divorced from
homiletics. As revealed by a critique of historical attitudes toward rhetoric, I demonstrate that the divorce is one of ideology not praxis. I then argue from work done by Richard Weaver and Richard Kinneavy that rhetoric deserves a new reading in application to homiletics. On this basis, I propose a philosophy of homiletics and a rhetoric of homiletics which utilizes metaphor as the creation of knowledge. An additional purpose in Chapter Three is to demonstrate rhetorical criticism of preaching through an alternative method.

Chapter four will review theories of metaphor as a starting point for formulation of a tentative model for a rhetorical homiletics, i.e., a rhetoric of folly. The originating power of metaphorical language, the process of ingenuity, the irony of "folly," and the identification of significant components of a rhetoric of folly will provide the basic presuppositions of the rhetorical-theory-content in the proposed model. Crucial to the development of the model will be an introductory conception of a philosophy of homiletics. The pragmatic application of preaching cannot be other than a sophistic handbook without a philosophical, axiological, and epistemological base.

Chapter five describes and defines the significance of metaphor for preaching. An extension of the theories of I.A. Richards and Paul Ricoeur is utilized to develop the
base of a metaphorical epistemology defined as the creation of reality.

Chapter six discusses and evaluates the creative power of metaphor in terms of authority, community, and concepts. Chapter Six extends the discussion of metaphor's epistemic value.

The Conclusion consists of summaries and evaluations of the rhetorical research. Suggestions for additional study are included.
1. The crisis of preaching has been expressed as secularism vs. supernaturalism, liberalism vs. conservatism, science vs. poetry, concept vs. symbol, rationality vs. irrationality, and secular vs. sacred. I have chosen to emphasize rhetorical aspects of the crisis of preaching. The depth of the crisis can be discerned by noting that while theology has made four dominant responses to the crisis of rationality; the liberal model, the neo-orthodox model, the radical model, and the revisionist model, there has remained only one basic homiletical model.


4. Tertullian, De praescriptione (PL II, Col. 20a-b), 7. Gregory the Great expressed a similar view: "The same mouth singeth not the praises of Jove and the praises of Christ." R.L. Poole, Illustrations in the History of Medieval Thought, (London, 1884), 8. The dichotomy has been expressed in preaching as sacred vs. secular, eloquence vs. wisdom, religion vs. science and spirit vs. flesh among others. See H. Richard Niebuhr, Christ and Culture, for four models of the Christian relation to culture.

5. Arnold, 130.


will be taken from this translation. Elevating a passage to the level of "text" indicates a vigorous engagement with Augustine's suggestions, and allows them to serve as thought provokers and new reflection and practice.

8. De doctrina christiana.


11. Haynes, 98.


14. A number of homileticians utilize communication theory in their methodology, among them are M.R. Chartier, Preaching As Communication: An Interpersonal Perspective (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981); G.R. Fitzgerald, A Practical Guide to Preaching (New York: Paulist Press, 1980); J. Randall Nicholls, Building the Word (San


16. Fred B. Craddock, in As One Without Authority: Essays on Inductive Preaching (Enid, Oklahoma: Phillips University Press, 1971), is important for his rejection of the rational-deductive methodologies of the pulpit. See also Overhearing the Gospel (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1978), which starts from Kierkegaard and develops an "indirect" communication of the gospel; and Preaching (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985).


20. David Tracy, Blessed Rage for Order: The New Pluralism in Theology (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975), 8. The goal of creating a better society through rhetoric is not a new idea. Cicero, in De inventione, gave the challenge to rhetoric: "Men ought none the less devote themselves to the study of eloquence although some misuse it in private and in public affairs; and they should study it more ardently in order that evil men may not gain great power to the detriment of good citizens and the common disaster of the community." (Cicero, De inventione, 1.2.5.).


23. The whole postmodern movement in rhetorical theory, starting with Nietzsche, presents homiletics with a crisis of authority. Many would question the need to preach at all. Preaching has, from the beginning, received poor reviews, but the religious nature of life and the limit-situations in everyday life call for a continuing conversation which Christians call preaching. The crisis of authority presents preachers with a series of challenges; i.e., the claims of the hermeneutics of suspicion, the positivism which reduces religious language to nonsense, and the attempt to analyze the limit-questions of both religion and science.


27. Scott, 16.


37. Cherwitz and Hikins, 62.


42. Booth, "Metaphor in Rhetoric," 72.


49. Campbell, Book I, Ch. VII, Sec. ii, 73.

50. Campbell, 74.


54. Richards, 93.

55. Richards, 94.


60. Ricoeur, 252, 380.


64. Burke, *Permanence and Change*, 263.


68. Franklin Fearing, "The Problem of Metaphor," *Southern Speech Journal* XXIX (Fall 1963):52. Fearing's article is an early attempt by a rhetorical scholar to claim epistemic value for metaphor. Fearing concludes that metaphor has cognitive value, and thus "becomes man's most important tool in control and interpretation of his world" (54). Metaphor may even be indispensable for survival in our kind of world.
69. Kathleen Hall Jamieson, "The Metaphoric Cluster in Pope Paul VI and Edmund G. Brown, Jr.," Quarterly Journal of Speech 66 (February 1980):51. Jamieson's study of religious metaphors used by the most recognized preacher in the world has stimulated much of my interest in rhetorical homiletics. Rhetorical theorists have produced a significant body of literature on preaching that has been given scant treatment by scholars in the discipline of homiletics.


71. Booth, 64.

72. Booth, 64. A related consequence of metaphor as cure would be the axiological consideration of choice: "To understand a metaphor is by its very nature to decide whether to join the metaphorist or reject him, and that is simultaneously to decide either to be shaped in the shape that the metaphor requires or to resist" (65). Booth's concept of metaphor as a redemptive force has rich homiletical possibilities.


80. Johnson, Philosophical Perspectives on Metaphor, 41.


A symbiotic relationship exists between rhetoric and homiletics despite the historical divorce of the two disciplines, a divorce maintained mostly by homiletics. In Chapter One, I argued for an Augustinian synthesis of the rhetoric/homiletics mix. An additional problem now requires our attention. Not only has homiletics historically perpetuated a divorce from rhetoric, but even more telling, homiletics has ignored the potential contributions of contemporary rhetoric. Outside of bibliographic mention of some modern rhetoricians, homiletics textbooks are void of any rhetorical theory content beyond George Campbell and Richard Whately. For example, James W. Cox, in Preaching: A Comprehensive Approach to the Design and Delivery of Sermons, a 1985 preaching textbook, suggests the following rhetoricians for study by students of preaching: Kenneth Burke, George Campbell, Cicero, Lane Cooper, Edward P. J. Corbett, Quintilian, I.A. Richards and Richard Whately. Cox does not, however, utilize any contemporary rhetorical theory in this book.

From a homiletician's perspective, we seem to have come to the end of rhetoric. Classical homiletics, lured by the
philosophy of Descartes, has sold out to the gods of epistemological certainty and foundationalism. With philosophy and metaphysics providing one leg, homiletics added a romanticized theory of the inspiration of the Bible as the second leg, and proceeded with the task of providing the root principles of all knowledge, human and divine. The resulting metaphor is a three-legged stool with one leg missing. Combine the metaphor of the medieval preaching tree and the architectural metaphor of correct homiletical structure and one has arrogance of power suggesting that Christian knowledge is the only true knowledge. The Christian preacher postures as the possessor of privileged knowing, thus becoming not only a Sophist from a rhetorical perspective, but a Gnostic as well, from a theological perspective.²

Homiletics, however, is in a precarious position because of the attack on philosophy and the attack on religion by scholars of the lineage of end of philosophy thinking. From Nietzsche to Heidegger to Derrida there has been a radical deconstruction of philosophy. These voices have been joined by those of Wittgenstein, John Dewey, Richard Rorty, and Calvin O. Schrag.³ The destiny of the epistemological paradigm—the search for certainty and the foundations of knowledge—has been outlined by Rorty in his *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. According to Rorty,
the epistemological project was ill-fated from the start, designed to provide a "knowledge of knowledge." There comes a time, says Rorty, when it is a mark of wisdom to set aside this futile quest for incorrigible givens, elusive mental structures, and to situate ourselves in the ongoing "conversation of mankind." As put in one of Mannheim's lucid sentences: "That is why unambiguousness, too great clarity is not an unqualified social value. . . ."

According to Calvin Schrag, "Philosophy is dismantled as a collection of necessary conditions for knowledge and descends into the contingency of social practices and the conversational voice of mankind."

What does philosophy have to do with homiletics? Homiletics, like other kinds of rhetorical practice, is based on a certain philosophical starting point. In the case of traditional homiletics, the philosophical starting point is Cartesian. Since the basis of the end of philosophical argument is a deconstruction of Descartes, homiletics based on Descartes is subject to the same criticisms as systematic philosophy. Schrag suggests "that when philosophy comes to its end, it becomes rhetoric."

On the positive side, the end of philosophy results in a posture of hermeneutical retrieval: "... having to do with the reclamation of a hermeneutical space that provides a new beginning." Schrag combines the hermeneutical space
with praxis, "the imbeddedness of interpretation in the conversation and social practices of mankind," to create a new rhetoric. Schrag then defines rhetoric as "... the interaction of self and other in dialogue and public encounter." I argue, therefore, that rhetoric within Schrag's hermeneutic space of communicative practice has the potential to give a new starting point for homiletics, a starting point not grounded in Cartesian certainty, sophistic rhetoric, or gnostic heresy. I do not, however, embrace the ontological claims of the so-called rhetoric of inquiry. My specific interest here is in the challenge to the Cartesian starting point, not a total abandoning of a possible objective reality.

In short, I appeal for a remarriage of homiletics to rhetoric, classical as well as contemporary. I say classical because rhetoric was the first love of homiletics. Aristotle and Cicero were essential to homiletics long before preaching went "whoring" after the illusive gods of philosophy. Concern for a return of homiletics to rhetoric is part of my attempted Augustinian synthesis. As Thomas Farrell reminds us, "Augustine loved rhetoric. . . ."

The superficial rhetoric of homiletics cannot be equated with the Aristotelian notion of "techne". Schrag maintains, "Far from being a simple routine guided by
means-end coefficient, rhetoric as the art of persuasion was viewed as a collaborative and creative activity of deliberation and discourse against the backcloth of the common good of the polis. As Paul Ricoeur admonishes all who reflect upon the nature of rhetoric, "Rhetoric cannot become an empty and formal technique."

That homiletics has suffered from its divorce from rhetoric, can perhaps best be demonstrated by a deconstruction of the classical model of preaching. Such a critique is justified by the obsolescence of the old rational homiletics. In the last century every aspect of homiletics--language, theology, and the liturgical context--has changed radically, yet the same model of topics, propositions, and points remains the central staple of the preacher. The rational Cartesian method of classical preaching no longer seems to fit the symbolism of Christian worship and scriptures. A new homiletic model is needed.

The question is how do we proceed with a deconstruction of homiletics? The choice of a critical tool has been influenced by the dominance in homiletical criticism of the study of "great preachers." The emphasis of scholars in the discipline of preaching has been on the history of great preachers. This approach has led to an inordinate number of personality studies focusing on biographical facts and psychology. Rod Hart in a critique of rhetorical
scholarship (applicable to homiletics) insists, "Such a history becomes an intellectual version of People magazine and we, its readers, become voyeurs or worse yet, idolaters."\(^{17}\)

The overall nature of preaching has been overlooked or neglected by studies that concentrate on a few great preachers. Stereotypical conclusions have been drawn on entire generations of preachers. These generalizations, based upon small samples, ignore many possibilities. Perhaps, as Michel Foucault argues, we have missed a whole universe of issues, situations, arguments, and discourses constituting the rhetorical experience of preaching.\(^{18}\)

Preaching lives at least as much by the popular proclamation of ordinary people, "anonymous," away-from-the-spotlight preachers, leading ordinary religious lives, as by the "big-church" hero-preachers of the famous pulpits. From the viewpoint of Foucault, we cannot ignore or dismiss the importance of ordinary examples of preaching.

There is, perhaps, no option more important for an understanding of preaching than reflection upon the ordinary ways of preaching practiced by thousands of unknown "reverends" in sweat-box country churches of thirty-two or more flavors. The paradigm for homiletic critique so far has been the extraordinary preachers--the gifted, the well-
educated, the big-time stars. This approach will not suffice for interpreting preaching.

Therefore, the rhetoric-content of Foucault's work seems suited to a deconstruction of traditional homiletics. Foucault is a discourse analyst, an interpreter of the power of pervasive, anonymous discourses, especially of the complex relations between power and truth in all discourses.

Consider, for example, Michel Foucault's analyses of different discourses in our history: the discourses of penology, medicine, law, sexuality, madness, and reason, indeed the discourse on discourse itself in the modern development of disciplines and specialization.19 What these analyses show is that every discourse bears within itself the anonymous and repressed actuality of highly particular arrangements of power and knowledge. Every discourse, by operating under certain assumptions, necessarily excludes other assumptions. Above all, our discourses exclude those others who might disrupt the established hierarchies or challenge the prevailing hegemony of power.

Foucault's elaboration of what he terms an "episteme" or "discursive formation" specifies units that are applicable to the criticism of a given culture or institution. Those units are: discursive practices, rules, roles, power, and knowledge. Since these units are
characteristic of a social institution such as the church, and since preaching exists primarily within the context of the church, Foucault's theory opens the possibility for a critique of traditional homiletics within a different framework than is typical of preaching histories. Foucault's concepts of discourse as an event and rhetoric as epistemic also offer an opening for a rhetorical model for preaching that gives a major role to metaphor.

The Theoretical Units of Foucault

The relevance of Foucault to problems in rhetoric has been demonstrated by a number of scholars. Foss and Gill use Foucault's notion of the discursive formation as a basic tool for construction of a middle-level theory of an epistemic rhetoric. Their model is adapted for use in my critique of the classical homiletical model.

Martha Cooper suggests that Foucault's archaeological theory of discourse conforms to the outlines of an interpretive rhetorical criticism. In a subsequent work Cooper expands upon Foucault's theories of the eventfulness of discourse and the incorporeal nature of discourse. Gaonkar contends that Foucault's work is applicable to contemporary studies of argument. Foss, Foss, and Trapp devote a full chapter to Foucault in their Contemporary Perspectives on Rhetoric.
My point here is that since homiletics is a type of rhetoric, Foucault's theory of discourse has the same relevance for homiletics as it does for rhetorical practice in general. The church, in which preaching usually takes place, is a social institution, is a part of culture, and in some cases it has been difficult to distinguish church from culture. (The culture of the South and the Protestant churches of the South come to mind.) The church as discussed throughout this chapter is the church/churches of the South, in particular the Southern Baptists and the United Methodists.25

Toward that end, I propose to focus upon the church and churchly discursive formations. My approach rests upon the conviction that the liturgical event, as a whole, with all its constitutive elements, is an event. It both does and says something. As such the worship event of a Christian church with its verbal elements of praying, singing, reading Scriptures, and preaching, along with its powerful nonverbal rituals, practices, and symbols, constitutes a discursive formation. When the backdrop of southern culture, so much a part of the church in the South, is added, there is a mixture of symbols; i.e., the cross of Christ is draped in magnolia blossoms and the dying Christ asks for grits and gin rather than water.
The Episteme (Discursive Formation)

An episteme is "the total set of relations that unite, at a given period, the discursive practices that give rise to epistemological figures, sciences, and possibly formalized systems."\(^{26}\) It is the code of a culture that governs "its language, its schemas of perception, its exchanges, its techniques, its values, the hierarchy of its practices,"\(^{27}\) and it imposes on all branches of knowledge "the same norms and postulates, a general stage of reason, a certain structure of thought that the men of a particular period cannot escape."\(^{28}\). An episteme is the sum total of the discourse of a particular period. Applied to homiletics, a discursive formation may be defined as the characteristic system, i.e., the church and all its related educational institutions, that defines the conditions for the possibility of knowledge. The episteme is the world view of a given Christian church. "It is a kind of period style for the organization of knowledge that functions automatically in the church."\(^{29}\)

In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault substitutes the term "discursive formation" for "episteme." The two terms can be used interchangeably. Discursive formation, however, further emphasizes the central role of discourse in the creation of knowledge. For Foucault, "all that about which it is possible to speak within any given discursive
formation is called savior or knowledge."30 He describes his project as the "pure description of discursive events."31

The discovery of discursive formations, according to Foucault, is called archaeological analysis. The goal of such analysis is to examine human experiences and/or institutions and cultures as particular domains of knowledge, exercises of power, and acting out of rules and roles. The basic material of archaeological analysis is the statement. The archaeological examination of statements explores the nature of discursive transformation: "Rather than refer to the living force of change . . . archaeology seeks to establish the transformations that constitute 'change'."32 So Foucault seeks to identify and isolate discursive formations based upon statements, rules, roles, and strategic functions. "For Foucault, then, knowledge and these discursive practices are inseparable. Everything about which we can speak in a discursive formation is knowledge; knowledge is generated by discursive practice."33

For example, conservative leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention have been able to control the denomination through the creation of "knowledge of the inerrancy" of the Bible. That such an outmoded relic of Fundamentalist theology could count as knowledge in the
nation's largest Protestant body is evidence of a particular discursive formation or closed institution in which only certain statements can be accepted as knowledge. A framework for acceptable knowledge has been constituted among Southern Baptists: pietistic Puritanism, revivalistic emotionalism, and narrow sectarianism. These are by no means the only tentpoles of Baptist faith and ecclesiology, but they now dominate the Southern Baptist Convention. Preaching that falls outside the prescribed rules and definitions of the present discursive formation is rejected as knowledge and labeled as heretical. Morris H. Chapman, SBC President, says he will not give up inerrancy requirements. "My commitment is to pursue the perpetuation of allegiance to the perfect word from the perfect God. My heart's desire is to encompass all who do believe in perpetuating allegiance to the perfect word."34

The application of Foucault's concept of the discursive formation to the history of preaching reveals tendencies of previous discursive formations to exert continuing influence on preaching in the twentieth century. Since only one episteme can be present at any one time, carry-over from one period to the next can take place only at superficial, imitative levels. Considering the voices of a given episteme as the authentic voices of that era suggests that the imitators of these voices are mere echoes.35 When the
authentic, originating voices of a given discursive formation have departed, the Christian church still contends with the echoes. The imitators of a preceding episteme copy the methods, the structures, and the style of their predecessors.

Every Churchly discursive formation produces numerous echoes for every authentic voice. The result is an artificial imitation deserving the epitaph of sophistry in the best tradition of Plato. A brief survey of the discursive formations characteristic of Christian preaching since the Reformation illustrates the problem with echoes of previous epistemes.

The episteme of the sixteenth century, according to Foucault, was based on the idea of resemblance or similitude. For the Reformation Church, however, the episteme was the Word. The word of preaching constituted the foundation and origin of the church. Reformation preachers placed the Word over the images and symbols of the medieval church. Luther went so far as to insist that "there is a sacrament of the word." Proclamation assumed the mantle of superiority as icons and rituals were disregarded. The oral nature of preaching and the exposition of the Scripture were more important then any other aspect of church life. Yngve Brilioth, evaluating
Luther, underscores the significance of the change wrought by the Reformation:

To present the word in this way is a terrifying responsibility since this word according to Luther is quietly reverenced by the whole creation. No person, before or since, has so exalted the word, not only the written word, but the living word on the lips of the preacher.37

While the Reformers produced an almost magical conception of the word, the Seventeenth century witnessed echoes of an older episteme, that of the Medieval Age. "The resemblance between the Dominican 'art of preaching' and much of the methodology of the seventeenth century is in many respects striking.38 The deceptive echoes of the reformed tradition crystallized the form of the Word into a new legalism. A scribal emphasis upon words replaced the dynamic emphasis on the power of the word. The end result was Protestant formalism. The word became less living unity and more of an inexhaustible storehouse of proof texts. The exegetical technique became an exaggerated, virtuoso's juggling of passages. The expository context and the scrupulously organized sermon became a straitjacket in which the preacher slowly strangled on the meaning of every Greek word in forty-eight verses of scripture.

In the episteme of the nineteenth century, language became an object to be known. This episteme was concerned with "the analysis of meaning and signification."39 In
the church, however, preaching reached a zenith of power. The sweet prince of the pulpit became the favorite metaphor to describe the masters of religious discourse. These preachers turned the sermon into a literary production. The power of the church, however, was but an illusion. It was the calm before the storm. The attempted duplication of the nineteenth century preachers traps the church in a methodology no longer adequate. In the interpretative framework of Richard Harvey Brown, community and communication by the church is no longer possible in the current age of Modernity.

In the current age of Modernity, human beings, in gaining supremacy over language, have replaced it as the organizing principle of knowledge. For the church this results in disastrous consequences. God is replaced by humans as the origin of life. Truth is no longer inspired of God. Language has no particular power. Prophecy is ended. Humans are in control but also out of control. The Church has responded with the method of the nineteenth century discursive formation. The once proud and mighty church seems blithely unaware that when the rules and roles and knowledge change the source of power also changes. My point is that the classical homiletics speaks from an authoritative role, one the church and her preachers no longer enjoy.
Foucault's theory serves as a critical tool for analyzing and understanding the system in which religious discourse is produced and functions. That system is the church and its related institutions. From a Foucaultian perspective of the church we can better understand the discursive production of preaching and the kinds of knowledge it has produced.

Discursive Practices

By discursive practices Foucault means discourse that follows particular rules and is understood to be true in a given culture. Written and spoken discourse as well as non-discursive acts make up discursive practices. He includes as discursive practices in his own writings such phenomena as architectural forms, use of space, institutional practices, and social relations. In Discipline and Punish, for example, Foucault discusses the use of the architectural figure of the panopticon to induce particular effects on inmates. Rhetoric as symbolicity seems to me the equivalent of Foucault's discursive practices. The multiplicity of symbols and forms which constitute the church certainly appears to qualify the church as a discursive formation.

Within the church, discursive practices include architectural forms, use of space, ritual and symbolic
practices, music, the reception of visitors, the image of
the preacher, and the persuasive appeals built into the
fabric of the worship event. All of these practices follow
recognizable rules and count as knowledge in the public
known as church.

The design elements of the church that make up
discursive practices include the architecture of the church,
both externally and internally. One such element is the
actual shape of the buildings. Even a novice church
observer soon learns to distinguish a charismatic fellowship
with its pre-fab steel structure, brick facade, and glowing
neon sign from the First United Methodist Church, Anywhere,
U.S.A. From huge white columns, to high steeples, to
stained-glass windows, to bronze crosses, the architecture
of the church speaks of sacred ground, solemnity, grandness,
and power. Often perched on a hill in the center of town,
the church appears as the ruling entity. The First United
Methodist Church of Shreveport, for example, sits on a hill
at the head of Texas Avenue, presiding over a downtown area
of dilapidated, closed businesses. Perhaps here is a
metaphor of the church's problem: a king without subjects.

Inside the church, the pulpit constitutes a major
mechanism of discourse. In Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*,
there is a description of the pulpit that is a metaphor for
the reverence of the church. The pulpit was shaped like the
of a ship. Of this Melville says, "What could be more full of meaning?--for the pulpit is ever this earth's foremost part; all the rest comes in its rear; the pulpit leads the world . . . Yes, the world's a ship on its passage out, and not a voyage complete; and the pulpit is its prow." This is the image of the pulpit designed for the homiletic method of the nineteenth century. As much as I want to affirm this image, the age of Modernity scoffs at such arrogance. A more fitting image would be Norman Rockwell's painting of the preacher putting up a sign that reads, "Lift up thine eyes." while a crowd of people walk by, heads down, ignoring the message of the church.

The arrangement of the pews is another design element used in the church. A church designed as a lecture hall constitutes different discursive practices from a church in-the-round. The former is for educational purposes where the preacher is the authorized, recognized professor. The goal is to pass along information. The worshipers bring their Bibles and notepads to take notes on first century New Testament "trivia." A flat-minded literalism pervades the verse by verse exposition of the text. The worship event becomes almost exclusively a process of conveying information. The very arrangement of the pews thus supports an image of worshipers trapped in the straitjacket of literal language.
On the other hand, the church-in-the-round projects the image of the stage where the preacher is the actor—the paid professional. The goal is to entertain a passive audience. The worshipers' involvement is at the critical level as they judge how the choir sounded and symbolically hold up cards numbered 1-10 to express their evaluation of the sermon.

Music is another important part of the church's worship. A choir, at times with professional soloists, performs at Sunday worship. Music begins and completes the worship event. The musical style identifies the discursive nature of a given church. The high church anthem built around an arrangement of Bach creates a far different impression than a jazzed up version of "On Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand."

Various discursive practices can be seen in the images created by the professional staff of a church. The ministers often wear robes and use symbolic paraments which match the altar and pulpit paraments. The choir wears matching robes. Again, different churches project different images. A Southern Baptist seminary course in pastoral work, for example, stresses the importance of a particular physical image for preachers. Ministers are encouraged to wear conservative suits and ties, well-shined shoes, short hair, and no facial hair. The mercurial shifts of faces and fashions, along with controversial styles, are to be avoided.
as they give evidence of conformity to a secular culture. The preacher, members of the staff, and other worship participants conduct themselves in a particular manner that suggests a certain solemn, dignified, humble person.

Another dominant feature of some contemporary Christian worship is the synthetic and thus inauthentic nature of many elements in the worship setting. Some churches have been influenced by the artificial environment and entertainment motif of the television evangelists. After watching the televised worship services of Jimmy Swaggart, Oral Roberts, Robert Schuller, and Jerry Falwell, I devised a composite of the synthetic image being projected: Red-White-and Blue spangled sets mixing the old-time religion with patriotism; clean, freshly scrubbed young men and women singing religiously erotic music, an endless parade of religious celebrities, and the stylishly tailored star preachers with dental caps and artfully styled coiffures. Their production of Jesus is that of a plastic Jesus, with no sense of reality. He is an antiseptic Jesus huckstered like cars and deodorant soaps. Robert Schuller, for example, replaces the doctrine of sin with the mild concept of "low self-esteem." The message is upbeat. Possibility for happiness, good fortune, and riches is offered along with the 800 numbers for phoning in donations. The whole production is a carefully planned event which omits any
natural, spontaneous acts of worship which might otherwise occur.

Finally, the role worshipers are assigned in church constitutes a discursive practice. The congregation sits passively through the service, responding as programmed by years of ritual to speed through the Apostles Creed as if in pursuit of a spot in the Guiness Book of World Records; nothing is required of them. While the minister encourages participation, the actual involvement is limited to repetition of known prayers and singing of familiar hymns. Even the "Amen" is scheduled. One violates the programmed roles of worship only at the risk of personal embarrassment. As Carlyle Marney explains, "At Highland Park Methodist in Dallas, a little girl in a choir once when I was preaching forgot herself and said, 'Amen'. It was so devastating I don't think she came back all week."47

Rules

Rules, according to Foucault, are principles that govern a discursive formation. Mostly unconscious and difficult to articulate, rules determine the possibilities for the content and form of discourse: "the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized, and redistributed according to a certain number of proce-
dures." Foucault suggests three categories of rules that govern various aspects of the discursive formation.

One category of rules controls what can and cannot be talked about in the discursive formation. One example would be the lack of a concept of the injustice of slavery in the first century church. The New Testament includes admonitions for slaves to obey their masters, and St. Paul's Epistle to Philemon urges a slave owner to take back his slave. Opposition to slavery was not known as a concept in the first century church. In a different way, opposition to slavery would not have been an object of discourse in Southern pulpits of the nineteenth century because the congregation would not have permitted such a concept.

A second category of rules determines who is allowed to speak in a discursive formation. The rules of the United Methodist Church, for example, are quite specific about who is and who is not allowed to speak. "An elder is an ordained minister who has met the requirements of paragraph 424 and therefore has full authority for the ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Order. . . ." Only speakers accepted as qualified may engage in the practice of preaching in the church. Again, these rules may be carefully spelled out by a church hierarchy, or on the other extreme, may be left to the discretion of individual
churches. Preachers in the United Methodist Church, for example, must meet numerous conditions in order to serve as an elder of the church in full connection.\textsuperscript{52} The Board of Ordained Ministry is responsible to enforce these conditions.

There are also rules, usually unwritten, concerning the gestures, behaviors, language, delivery that are deemed appropriate for the preacher. Religious discourse in the Pentecostal church, for example, must be accompanied by an enthusiastic, emotional, loud delivery, if it is to be viewed as holy and thus legitimate for that role. In other churches, the sermon must be accompanied by the wearing of robes if it is to be considered legitimate for the role of the clergy person.

A third group of rules concerns the form that concepts and theories must assume to be accepted as knowledge in the discourse. "Such rules govern the arrangement of statements, style, and terminology used in discourse."\textsuperscript{53} In the churchly discursive formation, for example, the use of obscene words would not be recognized as appropriate. Rules, therefore, deal with what is accepted as appropriate in the discursive formation. Even though these rules may appear vague, the rules determine what is appropriate to the very nature of an occasion, of a relationship, of an event, of the truth. Members of the discursive formation recognize
the appropriateness of discourse when it is present, and are so aware of its absence that they may stomp out of the room to protest the insult. There is such a thing as appropriateness in Christian discourse, a method of communicating accepted as congenial to the nature of the churchly discursive formation.

Those who wish to speak in the church, for example, must produce certain types of statements and use certain forms before they will be heard. The infamous "holy whine" of frontier revivalists has persisted to the present in some Protestant churches, and can be attributed to the unwritten rule that a preacher must sound like a preacher. Southern Baptists are expected to give allegiance on four points according to Chapman: "Adam and Eve were real people. The historical narratives of the Bible are accurate. Miracles of the Bible were supernatural events. The authors stated by all the books were the authors of the books."54

The worship of the church involves specific rituals that require those participating to engage in certain behaviors and convey a particular image. At a basic level, this point can be demonstrated by the look of confusion on the face of an evangelical Protestant attempting to worship in a high-church Episcopalian chapel. The behaviors appear odd, the language foreign, and the rituals complex. As Richard Brown asserts, "... each group's world appears an
impenetrable mystery to members of other groups, even to people of good will who are seeking to help or to form alliances."55

The place from which church discourse must originate makes up other conditions imposed on speakers. The pulpit is designated as the appropriate place from which to speak. In the United Methodist Church, the lay reader's pulpit is for reading the Scripture and making announcements, not for proclaiming the sermon. For preachers to speak while walking up and down the aisle of the sanctuary, for example, would not be appropriate in mainstream Christian churches. The congregation would think such a performer mad and would not accord him/her the status given to the preacher in the pulpit.

Often churches engage in vigorous debate over which terms will be recognized as valid and which will be invalid. Certain terms often become catch words for defining an entire denomination; "inerrancy" for the Baptists, "pluralism" for the United Methodists. Baptists have a code-word for inerrancy--"Bible-believing preaching"--that suggests other churches do not really believe or preach the Bible.

Rules also govern the process of the generation of knowledge in that they allow only certain individuals to be involved in the formulation of concepts, theories, and
general church resolutions. Theological discourses, for example, generally are not discourses to which everyone has access and in which everyone can generate new knowledge. Only a duly elected representative of a United Methodist Conference, for example, may propose changes in the general church's policy on abortion. And these proposed changes can only be considered legitimate when the General Conference is in session. Rules are, without question, a major factor in the structure of the churchly discursive formation.

Rules concerning religious discourse have a historic succession within the church. The preaching legacy has been passed from generation to generation. The rules are prescribed in great detail concerning the art of preaching. As a result, a rational homiletic design evolved: an introduction was followed by the text, which was reduced to a propositional topic, developed in a series of points (three being the favorite number), and concluded with a summary. Most homiletic texts contain these well-defined and oft-repeated rules. These rules produced the homiletic model based on certainty, propositions, and authority. The homiletic model contradicts the symbolic nature of the churchly discursive formation, as this Foucaultian analysis attempts to demonstrate. In these texts we see the emergence of a pattern that has contributed to the continued relative unimportance of metaphor:
rhetoric is a manual of style and metaphor becomes a stylistic device. The congregation, without being trained in homiletics, clearly understands the rules. These rules are carefully monitored and unconsciously followed.

Roles

The role of the preacher as rhetor and minister has changed in each succeeding episteme. The preacher has been perceived as everything from a royal herald to a prince of the pulpit. As already noted, such authority roles no longer accrue to the preacher, the person once known as the "parson." 58

Particular roles have been created for the preacher. These roles are constrained by the discursive practices and their rules. In the church, the discursive practices create a consistent role for preachers - one that is authoritative, moralistic, and dogmatic. Richard Brown argues that "Any person who claims a right to alter societal processes on behalf of others [this applies to preachers] thereby presupposes some talent or knowledge superior to that of the person he presumes to help." 59 This very assumption, however, seems to turn clients into objects upon which the expert exercises his technique. Such an approach is arbitrary, dogmatic, and smacks of an autocratic system of control.
The role that is established for the preacher by traditional homiletics can be a basic means of imposing and maintaining relationships of domination. The nineteenth century model of preaching clings to the theological rationality of the Middle Ages which served cognitive and political requirements of a transnational clerisy that monopolized literacy and revelation.\textsuperscript{60}

Traditional roles for the preacher have been stereotyped to an inordinate degree. The preacher, however, struggles with his/her role between two polarities: the public and the private persona. Rod Hart has attempted to make this point when commenting on politicians, but the point is relevant to preachers as well. Hart argues that politicians are best treated as public persons and not as private individuals.

Rather than viewing the political leader as a small, independent actor playing rather nakedly on a large stage, we might conceive of an alternative metaphor. Indeed, since political actors are so heavily costumed and so expertly coached, natural, revealing, spontaneous speech is all but extinguished in them. From a phenomenological perspective, politicians are, above all, public people. In that sense, they are not "persons" as the average voter is a person. Unlike the voter, they eat with elan and sleep strategically. They feel pain bravely, and for all the voter knows, they do not make love. When angry they do not scream, they grimace. When happy they do not guffaw, they grin carefully.

As citizens, we invite politicians into our lives at only certain points during the day--often at 6:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m.--and actively think about them only during certain months of the year--often, November.
During the remainder of our waking hours, we concentrate upon the "real people," the private people, with whom we have daily commerce. What is being suggested, then, is that political figures are psychic projections that citizens create out of a very partial, perhaps undimensional, set of stimuli. Public people do not provide rounded-out psychological profiles of themselves. They occupy less space and time than do private persons and they permit us to see less of their emotional range than do our everyday associates. They gesture grandly and they pontificate vehemently, but because of their emotional and physical distance from us they never really attain fully human status, never ring completely true. . . .

The role of the preacher is a public one. His or her congregation often has complex spiritualized expectations that make no room for the preacher as a real person. He or she represents God and must be pleasant, sanitized, holy, and humble.

In preaching, the minister projects this public persona. He or she is well organized and rational. He lives against the backdrop of a highly romanticized role, and in many cases, may be unaware that the minister's status in society may be as one without authority. Preacher and congregation may not note the incongruity between experience and the well-organized sermon. Life lacks the very things sermon method includes: order, coherence, clarity. "The clearly wrought sermon seems to imply that truth is rational, consistent, and reducible to a limited number of points." The result is an aura of unreality that makes
worship seem artificial and the preacher's role a holy masquerade. In one respect, Foucault's conception of roles diverges from the utilization of roles in the church. To Foucault, the individual rhetors in a discursive formation are unimportant. Instead, he sees rhetors simply as playing roles and filling vacant spaces in a discursive formation. Foucault's emphasis is on roles that receive power and position from discursive practices rather than individual qualities of individual rhetors. Foucault, then, is not interested in the individual gifts that enable a specific preacher to pastor a large congregation. In the church, however, the cult of the individual superstar assumes primacy. Churches are often built on the charisma of the preacher. The individual becomes more significant than the collective community of believers. Foucault's emphasis on the collective activity of a discursive formation needs a hearing in the modern church where individualism has superseded the corporateness of the church.

Knowledge and Power

Finally, the knowledge/truth of the church that is produced by discursive practices, rules, and roles can be identified. The highest truth in the church resides in God, Scripture, tradition, and the church's interpreters. When
truth is defined in such a way and the discursive practices create these elements of the definition, there is little room to question the knowledge of the discourse that is the church.

The discursive formation of the church possesses a power that controls the conduct of its members during worship. The printed order of worship discourages the congregation from thinking. All that is required is to follow the printed instructions: stand, sit, pray, sing, be silent. The worship leaders follow predictable patterns Sunday after Sunday, and thus worshipers are controlled in unconscious ways. The power of the church is one of calling people back to the way life ought to be, even though that is not the way real life is. The power embodied in the system dictates acceptance of a rather simple view of life where Jesus has all the answers.

The church, then, is a powerful discursive system that has succeeded in creating a body of discourse that is accepted as truth by believers. It has also made people repress aspects of themselves and led them to not question what they normally would. It projects an image of a spiritual world far removed from the material world. The churchly discursive formation projects an arbitrary, dogmatic, and autocratic system of control reified in the traditional homiletic method.
This analysis of the church by means of the theory of Foucault presents a composite of the discursive formation responsible for the nineteenth century homiletic method. The constant pressure to simplify, clarify and conceptualize has led to a radical denigration of the complexity of the search for truth. The restraints of the churchly episteme have saddled homiletic method with a number of methodological liabilities.

1. Failure to accept the basic rhetorical nature of preaching;

2. Failure to recognize the loss of authority since the church is no longer supported by infallible scriptural interpretation or the cultural ethos;

3. Failure to change a discursive style and language which divorces the preacher from the figurative and symbolic language of the Bible and from the everyday language of real persons;

4. Presupposing that the rational-scientific paradigm is ideally suited to preaching;

5. Exhibiting a reductionist approach to textual interpretations;

6. Failure to address the advent of a new discursive formation thus precipitating a crisis in methodology and language;

7. Failure to break loose from a three centuries old rationalist bind, with its attendant insistence upon Cartesian certainty, the original meaning illusion, and the literal truth paradigm.

I have attempted to question much of what preachers have often taken for granted in our study of homiletics. Also, I have examined the larger framework in which
homiletical processes occur. There seems to be a direct relationship between the discursive formation of the church and the negative effects of it on the homiletical practices that occur within it.

According to Foucault's concept of discourse as event, preaching is seen as epistemic since it is a type of rhetoric—a malleable rhetoric influenced by the cultural, social milieu of which it is a part. Preaching creates rhetorically a version or versions of truth rather than disseminating pre-conceived absolute knowledge. This view of preaching as rhetorical practice opens the way for consideration for an epistemic role for metaphor; and development of a rhetorical/metaphorical model of preaching.

Now I can say what I have only hinted at previously: Rhetoric provides the foundation, the boundaries, and the methodology for the discipline of homiletics.

What is needed is the ability to imagine an alternative method as well as the invention of an alternative model for preaching. As preachers we are concerned with preaching Jesus here and now. Preaching, as an event, means relating the Gospel to a particular social mind in a particular place and time. I have attempted to demonstrate that the churchly discursive formation, with its attendant nineteenth century homiletic method, cannot communicate the gospel in late twentieth century America. Now our task is the discovery of
a method and a language, contradistinctive of the rational paradigm, with which to preach. Therefore, in the next chapter, I suggest a more positive role for rhetoric in the preaching event.

2. While a study of gnosticism lies outside the scope of this study, it should be noted that gnosticism was an early heresy of Christianity claiming to have access to secret knowledge that must be possessed in order to be a Christian. That gnosticism persists in various forms is my contention.


7. Schrag, 166.

8. Schrag, 166.


10. Schrag, 170.

11. Schrag, 170.

12. The argument can be made that much preaching is guilty of all three; Cartesian certainty when preaching masquerades dogmatic propositions as the whole truth, sophistic rhetoric when homiletic manuals reproduce a truncated rhetoric more akin to the Sophists, and gnostic heresy when the lust for certain knowledge ignores the probability of even our most cherished beliefs.


15. Schrag, 169.


25. Any critique of a social and religious institution as complex as the Church must idealize some model type as its object. The present study is no exception. Thus what I have to say about the Church applies to Southern Baptists and United Methodists more than Roman Catholics, to rural expressions of religious faith more than urban, to anti-intellectual expressions of Baptist and Methodist versions of Christianity more than the more educated and sophisticated models of the same churches. I realize that my idealized types always are in danger of becoming caricatures.


27. Quoted in Foss, Foss, and Trapp, 193.


29. Paraphrased from Foss, Foss, Trapp, 194.


33. Foss, Foss, and Trapp, 195.

34. Quoted in *Morning Advocate* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Saturday, August 4, 1990), 12A.


36. Fant, 63.


39. Foss, Foss, and Trapp, 199.

40. David H. C. Read, *Sent From God* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974), 61. "Once upon a time there was a prince of the pulpit. His throne was one of those massive, heavily decorated platforms, centrally placed with a vast wilderness of surrounding pews."

41. Richard Harvey Brown, *Society as Text: Essays on Rhetoric, Reason and Reality* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 1. The question of why people with different backgrounds, even if they share certain notions about better worlds, can't seem to communicate with each other could be asked with reference to Catholics and Protestants. The difficulties are probably linguistic and cultural as well as based on inequalities of power.


44. The Rockwell painting to which I refer was given to me by my wife as a present. The print hangs in my office as a daily reminder of the status of the preacher in our society.
45. "The scientific mode of knowledge is popularly considered the only way to the real. This cultural mood induces a flatminded literalism, where religious symbols are not allowed to flourish symbolically, but are frozen into statements about some ontological deity. They do not configure and mobilize human experience, but are considered solely as independent entities susceptible to a detached scrutiny." John Shea, "The Second Naivete: Approach to a Pastoral Problem," Concilium 81 (1973):110.


49. See Ephesians 6:5.

50. Philemon 12, "I am sending him back to you, and parting with my very heart."

51. The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, Sec. 424, 231.


54. Morning Advocate, (Saturday, August 4, 1990), 12A.

55. Brown, Society as Text, 1.

56. See Yngve Brilioth, A Brief History of Preaching, for an excellent survey of the development of the sermon from its Jewish and Greek origins to the nineteenth century model which now dominates preaching. Nineteenth century homiletic theory insisted on the use of a propositional statement to be developed and defended. The resultant rational, objective homiletic parallels and parodies the scientific method inspired by Descartes. The homiletic model is reductionistic, literalistic, and out-of-place in the symbolism of the worship event and the metaphorical language of the Bible. Preachers using the rational method are forcing square pegs into round holes.
57. One of the justifications for a Foucaultian analysis is the metaphorical nature of Foucault's archaeology. Homiletics can be enriched through the critical apparatus of the rhetorical elements in Foucault's theory. By showing the literalism of traditional homiletics against the backdrop of the churchly discursive formation, I attempt to show how ill-equipped such a preaching is in the late twentieth century.

58. In colonial America and into the nineteenth century, "parson" referred to "the person" i.e., the most important person in the community. Now the preacher is more likely to be treated as an old grandmother whose presence at the family table is tolerated, but whose opinions are dismissed or ignored.

59. Brown, Society as Text. 6.

60. Brown, Society as Text, 2.


64. Foucault, The Order of Things, xiv.
CHAPTER THREE

THE RHETORIC/HOMILETICS RELATIONSHIP

In the last chapter I utilized the rhetorical theory of Michel Foucault to deconstruct the classical homiletic model. At least part of my purpose was to demonstrate the need of homiletics for a rhetorical base. One of the assumptions of this study is that a symbiotic relationship exists between rhetoric and homiletics. This implies that there are qualities in virtue of which the two concepts are related. Yet in spite of what seems to be an obvious relationship, the rhetoric/homiletics mixture has, from the first, been at best an uneasy alliance, and at worst, an open antagonism. On the one hand, homiletics have considered rhetoric as an unnecessary, pagan art, while at the same time studying rhetoric and utilizing rhetoric in homiletical handbooks. Rhetoricians have, on the other hand, devoted extensive studies to preaching; studies which have contributed to a better understanding of the rhetorical nature of preaching. To explain the rhetoric-homiletics relationship I will examine the historical interaction of the two disciplines. To do so is practical as well as theoretical. For example, any homiletics proposing a dependence upon rhetorical theory will have to attempt an
amelioration of any differences and attitudes presently separating rhetoric and homiletics.

As a prerequisite to formulating a rhetorical homiletics, at least two issues must be resolved. The first issue concerns the historical relationship between rhetoric and homiletics. This issue will be addressed by a review of the paradoxical treatment of rhetoric by Christian preachers. The second issue, conscious of the classical roots of the antipathy of homiletics toward rhetoric, concerns sources for a more positive view of rhetoric in homiletics. In arguing for what I consider to be the proper relationship between rhetoric and homiletics, I believe the potential for rhetorical/homiletical synthesis will have the necessary historical antecedents. Therefore, the first question posed in the introduction, "What is the nature of the relationship between rhetoric and homiletics?," is probably the most essential question requiring attention.

Fictions and Misuse of Rhetoric in Homiletics

Among those familiar with the history of homiletics there exists an extensive tradition of treating rhetoric as a "devil" term. As far back as St. Paul there exists among preachers a basic mistrust of rhetoric. "And my speech and my message was not in the plausible words of [human] wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power."¹ In the
Christian literature of the first five centuries numerous theologians and preachers extended Paul's negative assessment of rhetoric. Cyprian, a teacher of rhetoric prior to his conversion to Christianity, renounced all pagan literature and rhetoric. Titian attacked rhetoric in particular: "You have invented rhetoric for injustice and calumny. . . ."2

From this initial negative assessment of rhetoric, at least four fictions concerning rhetoric have gained credibility in the discipline of homiletics. These fictions parallel misapprehensions of rhetoric common in Western thought. Rhetoric, like preaching, has always played to poor reviews.

From Plato's insistence that rhetoric is not a true art to conceptions of rhetoric as "artificial eloquence, embellishment, ornament, and elaboration in language and literary style," rhetoric has suffered from reductiveness, fragmentation, and misapplication. Preachers, finding in rhetoric a convenient scapegoat for packaging their anti-pagan culture attitudes, have attacked rhetoric perhaps even more vehemently than other critics.

First, rhetoric, according to many homileticians, is a pagan art which defiles the gospel of Jesus Christ. Tertullian has a famous passage representative of this view: "What concord is there between the Academy and the church?
What between heretics and Christians?"3 Those who like Tertullian continue to treat rhetoric as a "devil" term are not likely to grant rhetoric a significant place in modern homiletics. In colonial America, the Puritan preacher Cotton Mather advised young ministers to avoid "squandering away your time on the RHETORIC. . . ."4 The paradox is that the charge against rhetoric is made by persons trained in rhetoric. In Tertullian's day, many Christian preachers were teachers of rhetoric prior to their conversion. In Mather's Puritan America, the study of Petrus Ramus was required of all ministers.

Second, rhetoric, it is argued, deals with style and ornamental language whereas preaching deals with the simple truth of Jesus Christ. Cyprian speaks for this view as early as the third century: "... in speaking of the Lord God, a pure simplicity of expression (vocis pura sinceritas non eloquentiae) which is convincing depends upon the substance of the argument rather than upon the forcefulness of eloquence."5

In the ensuing history of preaching many critics have sounded the trumpet for the "simple gospel." Savonarola, arguing against the popular rhetoric of Friar Mariano, says, "These verbal elegances and ornaments will have to give way to sound doctrine simply preached."6 The dramatic thrust was given to the simple Gospel by what William Muehl calls
the "vulgarized Reformation."7 Luther's and Calvin's insistence on simplicity became perverted into a radical denigration of the complexity of the truth, an elimination of mystery from life, a loss of creative energies, and later, a "literal-truth" paradigm of expository preaching by conservative Christians.

Reinhold Niebuhr asserts that "the judgment of God is always partly revealed in the effect of the structure of reality upon the vitalities of history which defy that structure."8 Applied to preaching, this means that the imposition of the fiction of simplicity imposed upon homiletics a reductionistic, arbitrary structure from which it has yet to escape. In the twentieth century, the most anti-rhetorical of all preachers, Karl Barth, deprecates the value of rhetoric and insists upon the virtues of simplicity.

Nor are we required to display the truth of God in an artistic form by the use of vain images or by presenting Jesus Christ in outpourings of sentimental eloquence. When Paul told the Galatians that he had portrayed before their eyes Jesus Christ crucified, he was not referring to speeches in which he had used every device of artistry to capture the imagination of his hearers. For him, to portray Christ was to show him forth in plain truth without embellishments.9

The attempt to reduce Christianity and Christian proclamation to a "simple Gospel" has exercised a debilitating influence on homiletics. Rooted in the mistrust of Rhetoric by early Church Fathers and cultivated
by the "Vulgarized Reformation," the "simple Gospel" fiction has been a force in the "anti-intellectualism" of American revivalism as well as the arbitrary theology of Fundamentalism and the neo-Pentecostal movement.

Third, parallel with the association of rhetoric with ornamentation and preaching with "simple truth" is the assertion that rhetoric is appearance and not reality. For example, John Calvin insists that in preaching there should be "nothing for appearance . . . everything . . . for substantial reality." Fred Craddock, discussing the current state of preaching, complains that "We are still haunted by the ancient fear that . . . attention to artistic form, compromises truth and morality." Further, Craddock argues that the fiction of appearance only in rhetoric prescribes that attention to rhetorical matters "shall be in inverse ratio to the importance of the subject matter;" "that content and form are separate considerations," i.e., content is essential and form is accessory; and "that style is at best unnecessary embroidery upon the truth and at worst subversion of it."

Fourth, homiletics, it is implied, is a spiritual art with different intentions, motives, and methods from rhetoric. In other words, homiletics is not rhetoric. Most homiletics textbooks define preaching as different from other kinds of public speaking. Several scholars in the
discipline of homiletics have taken the position of Yngve Brilioth that rhetoric is a secondary cultural motif. "In our frame of reference," Brilioth asserts, "rhetoric has a poor connotation."¹³

The homiletical textbook which has set the standard for subsequent works is that of John A. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*. Broadus, despite his respect for the use of rhetorical theory, provides warnings against rhetoric that remain an essential part of the homiletical tradition: "Attention must be called to the fact that in the adoption of rhetorical methods all was not gain." Broadus delineates three dangers of rhetoric for the preacher: 1) overemphasis on rules and forms (ironically this is a criticism of most homiletics textbooks), 2) imitation, and 3) artificiality.¹⁴ James Earl Massey contends, ". . . the sermon is quite unlike other speech forms in terms of its motive, setting, spirit, and substance."¹⁵

Other homiletic texts consider rhetoric in less than positive ways. For example, H. C. Brown, Jr. has a truncated definition of rhetoric that is implied in many homiletics: "The accent has fallen loud and clear on the view that rhetoric or form is the chief element in preaching. Preaching never has been, is not now, and never will be a one-dimensional emphasis on rhetoric or form."¹⁶
At best rhetoric is perceived as only one of the many influences on the development of the sermon.

The discussion of the relationship between rhetoric and homiletics reveals confusion concerning the proper role of rhetoric, the definition of rhetoric, and whether or not rhetoric can be equated with homiletics. From the vantage point of the above perspectives, it is my contention that the four fictions concerning the nature of rhetoric must be systematically challenged.

Since we are the inheritors of the preaching legacy of each preceding age, it seems imperative that the attempt to establish a more positive role for rhetoric (and by implication, for metaphor) should be grounded in the classical tradition which first produced the complex relationship between rhetoric and homiletics. James J. Murphy has written at length of the Christian dilemma over rhetoric in the fourth century. "The basic issue was whether the church should adopt in toto the contemporary culture which Rome had taken over from Greece. The fate of Rhetoric was involved ..." 17 Was the Hebraic to be subjugated to the Hellenic? Murphy surveys the literature of the early church and documents its ambiguous attitude toward rhetoric. He also contends that Augustine wrote the De Doctrina Christiana, not only as a rejection of the Second Sophistic, but also to "urge the union of both matter
and form in Christian preaching.\textsuperscript{18} Augustine, according to Murphy, was attacking the rhetorical heresy "that the man possessed of truth will ipso facto be able to communicate the truth to others."\textsuperscript{19} An intriguing comparison is made by Murphy between Plato and the ecclesiastical writers of the fourth century. While acknowledging that Christian writers did not look to \textit{Gorgias} for a theory of communication, Murphy does argue that they did adopt a parallel attitude toward rhetoric, an attitude he dubs the "Platonic rhetorical heresy."\textsuperscript{20}

Murphy agrees with the scholarly consensus that Plato was no friend of rhetoric. In fact, Plato's attitude toward rhetoric can be considered the historical breeding grounds for the four fictions described earlier. I believe, however, that Plato produced a much higher concept of rhetoric than that allowed by Murphy. This theory of rhetoric appears in the \textit{Phaedrus}, and has been defended by Richard Weaver and James W. Hikins.\textsuperscript{21}

\textbf{Overcoming the Platonic Rhetorical Heresy}

Agreeing with Weaver, I assume that the \textit{Phaedrus} "... is consistently, and from beginning to end, about one thing, which is the nature of rhetoric."\textsuperscript{22} Weaver argues that the Socratic dialogue is an example of transcendence, and that calls for the use of metaphor and the analogical
mode. In addition, he cautions readers against a literal reading of the Phaedrus; a warning that he deduces from the myth of Boreas and Oreithyia mentioned by Phaedrus.

Phaedrus: "I haven't noticed it. But seriously, Socrates, do you believe this legend?"

Socrates: "... though I find such explanations very attractive, Phaedrus, they are too ingenious and laboured, it seems to me, and I don't altogether envy the man who devotes himself to this sort of work. ..." 23

Socrates dismisses the question of Phaedrus as irrelevant. According to Weaver, "It is a limitation to suppose that the truth of the story lies in its historicity." 24 For students of homiletics, the suggestion that the search for the "literal truth" is irrelevant, will be of significance later in this proposal. For now, it is enough to note Socrates is satisfied with the parable, "and we infer from numerous other passages that he believed some things are best told by parable and some perhaps discoverable only by parable. Real investigation goes forward by analogy." 25 Thus early on, there is an admission by Plato of the utility of rhetoric.

The dialogue proceeds with three speeches: the non-lover, the evil lover, and the noble lover. The first speech, in praise of the non-lover, is symbolic of neuter discourse. In homiletics, this would be the rational-
A deductive model that dominates most theories of preaching. The language is literal and prosaic and maintains point-by-point contact with objective reality. Also, this is the language of prudence which does not excite public opinion: "It is a circumspect kind of [language], which is preferred by all men who wish to do well in the world and avoid tempestuous courses." Therefore, I think it safe to assume that Plato condemns neuter discourse.

I have compared the detachment of such literal language to the dominant homiletical model. In practical terms, such language from the pulpit reveals an ambivalence toward the biblical criticism that has uncovered the literary nature of the Bible—myths, fables, metaphors, stories, and narratives. Rather than formulating a homiletical model analogous to the literature and its form, preachers tend to perpetuate the old rational-deductive model in spite of the revolutionary theory modifications that have taken place in theological and biblical studies. What results is a "self-interested" rationalization by the preacher who claims his congregation could not handle the truth about biblical criticism. Plato's condemnation of such literal-language rhetoric is thus the first piece of evidence in a discounting of the so-called "Platonic rhetorical heresy."

The second major speech of the Phaedrus is delivered by Socrates in praise of the evil lover. The theme of the
speech centers on the point that the lover is an exploiter. By analogy, Plato condemns base rhetoric in the speech by Socrates. The evil lover represents a speaker exercising a mystic-dogmatic authority over the beloved. Persons who yield themselves to mystic-dogmatic authority enter into a dependency mode that emasculates them. Such authority is obeyed without question, and in a sense, those in authority play God with the lives of others. Examples of this kind of emotional manipulation occur in preaching, e.g., witness the demagoguery of Jim Bakker, Jimmy Swaggart, and other television preachers (although this type of rhetoric is not unique to media preachers or the twentieth century). Once again it is important to focus on Plato's rejection of rhetoric that never permits an honest examination of alternatives. As Weaver points out, the base rhetorician is of profound danger today ". . . with his vastly augmented power of propagation," with provisions of "means of deluding which no ancient rhetor . . . could have imagined.27

The third speech, in praise of love, represents the noble speaker. Its theme is types of divine madness. A crucial argument in the speech occurs in the opening lines: "If it were true without qualification that madness is an evil, that would be all very well, but in fact, madness, provided it comes as the gift of heaven, is the channel by which we receive the greatest blessings."28 (I will return
to these remarks in discussing preaching and the concept of "folly".) As Weaver suggests, "Mere sanity, which is of human origin, is inferior to that madness which is inspired by the gods and which is a condition for the highest kind of achievement." Prophecy and poetry fall within the realm of the inspiration of divine madness. The noble speaker, then, is possessed of creative love. C. S. Lewis, in *The Four Loves*, defines such agape as a gift-love, love which gives without asking for anything in return. Thus, the third speech celebrates the poet and the rhetorician, each of which "is trying to advance the borders of the imaginative world." There are elements of rhetoric, approved it seems by Plato, that are positive and essential to my proposed model; among these elements are passion, creativity, imagination, and transformation through figurative language.

The problem of rhetoric, as far as Plato was concerned in the *Gorgias*, was its inability to lead to truth. Plato maintains in the *Phaedrus* that truth needs rhetoric. In a personification of Rhetoric, Plato allows Rhetoric to speak: "I do not insist on ignorance of truth as an essential qualification for the would-be speaker; for what my advice is worth I suggest that he should acquire that knowledge before embarking on me. I do emphatically assert, however, that without my assistance the man who knows the truth will
make no progress in the art of persuasion." And again:
"Come forward, noble creatures, and persuade Phaedrus, who
begets such lovely children, that unless he becomes an
adequate philosopher, he will never be an adequate speaker
either on any subject." Now, rhetoric, according to
Plato, consists of truth plus its imaginative presentation,
and this presentation makes use of metaphor. As Weaver
contends, "It is by bringing out these resemblances that the
good rhetorician leads those who listen in the direction of
what is good. In effect, he performs a cure of souls, by
giving impulse, chiefly through figuration, toward an ideal
good." The culmination of Plato's conception of rhetoric
comes in the conclusion of the Phaedrus:

Our whole previous discussion has proved that speeches,
whether their aim is to instruct or to persuade, cannot
be scientifically constructed, in so far as their
nature allows of scientific treatment at all, unless
the following conditions are fulfilled. In the first
place a man must know the truth about any subject that
he deals with, either in speech or writing; he must be
able to define it generically, and having defined it to
divide it into its various specific kinds until he
reaches the limit of divisibility. Next, he must
analyze on the same principles the nature of soul, and
discover what type of speech is suitable for each type
of soul. Finally, he must arrange and organize his
speech accordingly, addressing a simple speech to a
simple soul, but to those which are more complex
something of greater complexity which embraces the
whole range of tones.

The picture, then, of the true rhetorician is that of a
noble lover of good, who works though philosophical and
anallogical association. Sophistry is condemned while noble,
philosophical rhetoric is praised. Weaver applies a positive conclusion to Plato's portrayal when he says, "So rhetoric at its truest seeks to perfect men by showing them better versions of themselves. . . ." 35 I contend homiletics will benefit from such a perspective of rhetoric.

Plato makes other contributions that, I believe, can be interpreted as having positive rhetorical value for homiletics. These contributions may be summarized as follows:

First, he shows that the speaker should know the truth of what he is going to say. In other words, the rhetorician must initially be a philosopher. Applied to homiletics, the preacher must first be a hermeneutician. "All the great arts need to be supplemented by philosophical chatter and daring speculation about the nature of things." 36 Second, the rhetorician is like a physician—a "doctor of souls." 37 Third, the function of rhetoric is "to influence the soul." The central task, then, of the rhetorician is to match his speech with a particular kind of soul. For the preacher, there is here a hint of twentieth century studies in moral development. Of more significance, however, is Plato's insistence upon the rhetorician doing a life-time of homework; in the sense of studying human beings. Carlyle Marney, noted Baptist preacher, explains homework as:
that decades-long process of inquiry, hat in hand . . . addressed to competent psychology, psychiatry, sociology, history, drama, art, daily affairs, interpreted by a growing Biblical memory, contemporary experience, theological acumen.

Fourth, for Plato an oral rhetoric is to be preferred to the art of writing. Those who depend on writing will lose their memory, forfeit wisdom for a source of quantitative information, and defeat the dynamic impact that only orality can bring to discourse. Writing, says Plato, is like a painting. Still-life is all you get as spontaneity and open-endness are forfeited. The value of oral communication has been recognized both by public speaking instructors and homiletics professors. For example, Clyde Fant's Preaching for Today, argues for an "oral manuscript." Fant pleads for what he defines as "incarnational preaching" which is neither culturally accommodative nor an uninterpreted biblicism. He seems to argue, in the end, for a free-form sermon that at its best may overcome the impersonal written sermon manuscript, but at its worst may lack focus. In any event, Plato's passionate defense of the spoken word has relevance for preaching, especially in light of the potency of oral language described in Walter Ong's The Presence of the Word. Finally, the noble rhetorician, argues Plato, will seek to know the will of God. This gives an ethical base to rhetoric that has always been part of the preaching tradition. The ethos of the preacher, his/her
character and credibility, is an important subject for homiletics.

Another perspective that suggests a positive role for rhetoric is to project Plato's Socrates as a rhetorician. Socrates' own kind of rhetoric involved a highly sophisticated semiotic machinery in which rhetoric plays a first-order role. His attack of rhetoric is itself a rhetorical strategy. In short, Socrates is a rhetorician. The analysis of Socrates' conversational patterns, however, has come under such headings as Method, Irony, Maieutic, Dialectic, or Dialogue. What seems to be overlooked is the obvious rhetorical nature of Socrates' methods.

One reason for the neglect of the rhetorical side of Socrates is tied with the prevailing fiction of rhetoric as mere embellishment. In other words, having accepted what appears as Socrates' rejection of all rhetoric, it has been assumed that Socrates himself could not possibly employ rhetorical techniques. I believe that this carte blanche acceptance of the Socratic status quo overlooks the rhetorical devices of Socrates. The protests of Socrates serve as a weapon of concealing his art; and that art is the art of rhetoric.

For example, Socrates frequently complains that he is not a good speaker. In Plato's Apology Socrates claims to be unable to produce "speeches finely tricked out with words
and phrases, carefully arranged" (17B9-C1). By stressing his harmlessness, Socrates defuses the possible defenses of his listeners.

A second rhetorical strategy of Socrates is to appear as a person involved in a casual conversation rather than as a speech-maker. The strategy allows Socrates to reach a rhetorical goal despite what appears as a meandering conversation. Socrates succeeds, it seems to me, in establishing a credible ethos by insinuating that the listener has nothing to fear, that Socrates has no manipulative, evil goals, that he is benevolent, can be trusted, that he desires only to help the listener achieve noble goals, and that his is the voice of truth. Socrates sets up his listeners and moves them slowly toward his own rhetorical goals.

The very existence of these goals marks Socrates as a rhetorician. "Socrates . . . was, in fact, aware of having a certain mission to accomplish and felt himself engaged in accomplishing it; and if he understood this mission as an attempt to make other people aware of how badly they needed to submit their behavior to radical change, it is likely that he realized both how difficult it is to convince other people that they behave in a radically improper way."40

What we discover here is a new rhetoric. Socrates rejects the long-winded speeches of the Sophists for a
different approach: the indirect, the unassuming tone, the shorter speech, simple remarks, questions, and analogies. Socrates hammers away at the same message: "no danger, no suspicions, no need for being on guard."

The rhetoric of Socrates can be understood in terms of rhetorical means toward noble ends. Socrates attempts to establish a rhetorical or communicative atmosphere. He tries to establish a sense of relevance of intimacy, of confidence, of communication in depth. To accomplish these goals requires taking care to avoid what may be felt as disturbing, to concentrate only upon certain sides of the subject-matter, and to select what one has to say in order to give a coherent picture of the state of affairs.

In "The Rhetoric of Socrates," Livio Rossetti lists additional rhetorical devices employed by Socrates: 1) getting a bystander to open a conversation rather than opening it himself, or concealing himself under the mask of a third person who is said to be much less compliant when submitting a concept to careful analysis; 2) concentrating upon a question of detail; 3) giving the impression of abandoning a particular subject and of wishing to turn to quite another kind of question; 4) saying something without assuming the responsibility for having said it; 5) making extensive use of examples and analogies; 6) offering two obvious analogies before passing to a much more
controversial one in order to elicit from the interlocutor
the same answer to the third; and 7) contriving a pseudo-
analogical inferential formula. Rossetti gives no
example, but the rhetorical devices listed could be amply
illustrated from passages of the Phaedrus.

The foregoing analysis can be summarized as follows:
Socrates' rhetoric does exist, may be described in positive
terms, plays an important role in the dialectic interaction,
may be taken as the beginning of a new kind of rhetoric, and
is strongly marked by a rhetoric of anti-rhetoric.

Rhetoric and Christian Origins

A second source for formulating a more positive role
for rhetoric in homiletics is the Greek language. The New
Testament documents were written in KOINE Greek. Two
assumptions of biblical scholars have been that 1) the
concept of the Christian faith is unique, and 2) the origin
of Christian faith is neither in the Old Testament nor in
Greek thought. With the first of these assumptions, I
agree. However, the second assumption has been called into
question from a variety of perspectives. For example, James
L. Kinneavy has proposed an origin of the Christian concept
of faith in classical rhetoric. His hypothesis is "that a
substantial part of the concept of faith found in the New
Testament can be found in the rhetorical concept of
persuasion, which was a major meaning of the noun *pistis* (faith or persuasion) and the verb *pisteuein* (to believe) in the Greek language at the period the New Testament was written." Kinneavy supports his hypothesis with three arguments:

1. The semantic concept. Persuasion and faith are similar semantically, and this establishes the potential of a mutual historical influence.

2. The social, linguistic, and educational background of the first century, A.D., when the New Testament books were written. Especially significant were the Greek language and the awareness of Greek rhetoric in Palestine.

3. An analysis of the 491 occurrences of *pistis* and its related cognates in their New Testament contexts.

Kinneavy could have strengthened his case with a study of *pistis* from the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. For example, Rudolph Bultmann, in his analysis of *pistis*, in Volume VI of Kittel, points out "In particular a word (Σιδός, ρημα, or λογος) can be called *pistos*, also the *glossa* (tongue), so that in philosophy the *logos* (Plato, *Tim.* 49b), the *μοθεσις* (Plato, *Phaedrus*, 207b), or the *αποθετις* (Plato, *Phaedrus* 245c) is *πιστος* or *πιστη*, and *πιστις* can be combined with *αποθετικος* (Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, II, 1, p. 1377b, 23). Bultmann goes on to say, "From a purely formal standpoint there is nothing very distinctive in the usage of the New Testament and early Christian writings as compared with Greek usage."
A more detailed study of *pistis* reveals parallels between rhetorical persuasion and Christian faith. Πιστός means trusting, reliable, or certain. By contrast, ἀμιστός means unfaithful, distrustful, and unreliable (see Plato *Phaedrus* 245c—"untrustworthy speech"). Πίστις means confidence or trust. In so far as it contains an element of uncertainty, trust can be contrasted with knowledge, especially in Plato (See Resp. VI 511 d-e, where νοησις (insight), διανοια (understanding), πίστις (belief), and εἰκασία (probability) are listed in their graded relation to ἀληθεία (truth). Another meaning of πίστις can be conviction or certainty as in "trust in what is real." In Resp. VI, 505e, Plato speaks of πίστις μονόμος (firm belief). Also πίστις became a catchword for those religions which engaged in propaganda. "This did not apply to Christianity alone. All missionary preaching demanded faith in the deity proclaimed by it." Preachers engaged in rhetoric designed to persuade people to trust in Christ. Faith thus can mean to be persuaded. The author of the New Testament Epistle to the Hebrews associates other rhetorical terms with πίστις. "Now faith is the evidence of things not seen, the substance of things hoped for." (Hebrews 11:1, emphasis mine.)

Through his analysis of *pistis*, Kinneavy shows that the Christian faith is already a part of its Greek culture and
Greek rhetoric. Of course, there are other significant rhetorical terms with New Testament parallels (not discussed by Kinneavy): λόγος, ἐκκλησία, and καιρός (Gorgias and the opportune time). For example, the λόγος is the means of the πιστις. The two concepts clearly belong together as interacting signs in the emergence of Christian thought.

Augustine's Relation to Rhetoric and Homiletics

Augustine stands in a dialectical relation to the rhetorical tradition of which he was part. In his background lie rhetorical studies and experience as a teacher of sophistic rhetoric. After his conversion to Christianity, Augustine sought to reconcile rhetoric and homiletics. The fourth book in the essay De Doctrina Christiana, considered in the history of preaching as the first homiletical text, is the classic work on the relation between rhetoric and preaching. While the first book articulates the relation between thing and sign, and the second and third books contain a summary of the principles of biblical interpretation, the fourth develops rules for the use of eloquence in preaching.

For Augustine there are reasons to incorporate rhetoric into preaching. The seemingly contradictory remarks about rhetoric which appear in De Doctrina can be attributed to Augustine's uneasiness about Christian spokespersons who
viewed rhetoric as a pagan art. Still Augustine states clearly his belief in the usefulness of rhetoric. For example, in Book 2.40.60, (one of the two texts inspiring the present study) Augustine advises Christians to "despoil pagan thought of the gold of wisdom and the silver of eloquence, as by God's command the Hebrews despoiled the Egyptians." Augustine takes his own advice by despoiling the rhetoric of Cicero, particularly Orator, from which he borrows extensively. While Cicero is never mentioned by name, Augustine refers to him as "the master of Roman eloquence," (4.3.4); "those who thought to teach the art of rhetoric" (4.5.7): "a certain author," (4.10.24); "a certain eloquent man," (4.11.26); and "the author of Roman eloquence." (4.17.34). Some scholars have concluded from their reading of De Doctrina that Augustine opposed the study of rhetoric by the Christian preacher, but the consensus, with a few notable exceptions, is that Augustine produced a synthesis of rhetoric and preaching.47

Several scholars have defended the position that, for Augustine, rhetoric was a positive force in Christian preaching. For example, Floyd Anderson observes that Augustine "joins eloquence to wisdom, proclaims the value of secular and profane learning, and seeks to embrace both sacred truths and secular knowledge within the unified grasp of wisdom." Keith V. Erickson affirms this judgment by
classifying *De Doctrina* as "a homiletic rhetoric" and "a neoclassical rhetoric designed to serve the Christian Paideria." Thus, Augustine argues that rhetoric is not secular paganism but a legitimate means by which the Gospel could be preached. In short, Augustine re-established Ciceronian rhetorical concepts, and should be viewed as the last of the classical rhetoricians. The argument is that while Augustine's Ciceronian rhetoric is well known by rhetorical scholars, homileticians have long since restored the separation between rhetoric and homiletics. The significance of *De Doctrina* for the present study lies, not in a summary of its well-known rhetorical rules, but in its ability to serve as a positive model for a new marriage of rhetoric and homiletics. As John H. Patton concludes, "In the final analysis, it is surely Augustine's lasting contribution that his treatment of exegesis and rhetoric supplies a valuable means of uniting content with form."  

**Conclusions and Assessments**

I have examined the complex relationship between rhetoric and homiletics, giving special attention to representative preachers who have condemned rhetoric as a pagan art. There is evidence that this condemnation, dubbed the "Platonic Rhetorical heresy," has suffered from imprecise definitions of rhetoric. What seems condemned in
homiletics is not so much rhetoric but sophistic rhetoric. Though homiletical textbooks are saturated with rhetorical principles and techniques, we have seen a long history of warnings against the use of rhetoric. The result has been a negative assessment of rhetoric, leading to a divorce between rhetoric and homiletics that still exists.

In an attempt to reclaim a positive role for rhetoric in homiletics, a return to two primary classical sources was undertaken. Since I believe the refusal of homiletics to come to grips with its basic rhetorical nature is deeply rooted in history, a new reading of Plato's *Phaedrus* was suggested. The result of this evaluation of the *Phaedrus* was the conclusion that while Plato did condemn sophistic rhetoric, he created a noble or philosophical rhetoric. This philosophical rhetoric was shown to be a positive and ethical theory of speaking which can be applied to homiletics. The second classical source, Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*, took the argument one step further by suggesting, not only a positive value for rhetoric, but the union of rhetoric and homiletics.

The major conclusion of this historical prelude to a rhetorical homiletics is that preaching is rhetoric. This modest claim opens the door to a homiletics based on rhetorical principles. The way is now clear to utilize
rhetoric and metaphor as the bridge in a positive interface of rhetoric and preaching.
ENDNOTES

1. I Corinthians 2:3-4 (RSV).


3. Tertullian, De Praescriptione (PL II, Col. 20 a-b), 7.


5. Cyprian, Ad Donatus, quoted in Ellspermann, 51.


12. Craddock, 16.


18. Murphy, 409. For a discussion of this same issue see Fred Craddock, Overhearing the Gospel, esp. Chapter 1.

19. Murphy, 409.

20. Murphy, 411.


23. Pato, Phaedrus, 229.

24. Weaver, 59.

25. Weaver, 59.

26. Weaver, 64.

27. Weaver, 67.

28. Plato, Phaedrus, 244.

29. Weaver, 68.

30. Weaver, 70.

33. Weaver, 74.
35. Weaver, 82.

38. Carlyle Marney, "Fundamentals of a Competent Ministry," unpublished lecture. No date or place could be found for this address.


44. Bultmann, 203.

45. Bultmann, 181.


CHAPTER FOUR

A RHETORIC OF HOMILETICS OR

THE RHETORIC OF "FOLLY"

Based on the preceding application of Foucault's discursive formation in Chapter Two, and a positive attribution of the rhetoric/homiletic mix, I am now prepared to suggest a new rhetorical model for homiletics. The first step in the proposed process is the substitution of the philosophical starting point of the classical homiletics with a different starting point. Therefore, I have jettisoned Descartes and the rational certainty starting point for what I call "Christian humanism." My "Christian humanism" combines the humanistic studies of Ernesto Grassi with the Christian philosophy of proclamation exemplified in the writings of St. Paul. In both of these thinkers the notion of "folly" can be interpreted as the way of seeing the world that allows us to move beyond the rational paradigm.

In addition, A. Cheree Carlson suggests a "comic frame" as an option to the tragic interpretation of movements. She argues that the comic frame enables persons to transcend themselves by noting their own foibles. "The end of a movement from this perspective is to free society by creating a consciousness of the system as a system,
revealing its inherent weaknesses, and preparing an aware populace to deal with them."¹ Elements of the comic frame will be incorporated into my understanding of folly. I shall argue that 1) a comic movement requires a "spiritual element in its rhetoric, one emphasizing identification with humanity through some unifying force; and 2) a comic movement must assume that the individuals in the social order are inherently moral beings.²

There is ample precedent in the history of the Church for a rhetoric of folly. In the ritual irony of the medieval church, celebrations such as the Feast of Fools, Easter Humor, or the Feast of the Ass during which a carved donkey was carried in procession, indicate that church leaders recognized the need for the comic, i.e., the ability to laugh at themselves.³ M. M. Bakhtin notes that "Carnival celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchial rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions. Carnival was the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change, and renewal."⁴ What the Church considered "folly"—a pretension, a comedy to release tension once a year will now be interpreted in my evaluation of St. Paul and Grassi as the norm all the time. The function of folly in the medieval church, especially the ability to make the church laugh at its own foibles and
uncertainties, and the inversion of class structure, is now the function of a rhetoric of folly.

Grassi's thesis is that rhetoric is at the basis of philosophy. "Rhetoric is identified, notes Donald Verene, "with the power" of language and human speech to generate a basis for human thought."\(^5\) This view of rhetoric contradicts Cartesian philosophy. Grassi counters the rational paradigm with a recovery of senses of language and thought. As Verene claims, "Grassi sees the humanist tradition and the ancient notions of metaphor, imagination, memory, and ingenuity as culminating in the thought of Giambattista Vico."\(^6\)

Much of Grassi's thesis can be grasped by a cursory examination of Vico's central ideas. According to Vico, certainty has nothing to do with politics, military science, medicine, jurisprudence, history, and religion. The formal logic approach of Descartes runs counter to nature in two ways: First, it deemphasizes the faculty of memory, and second, it ignores imagination. The result is a reduction of our genius for invention. In addition, Descartes rejects rhetoric as being beneath the level of philosophy, placing undue stress on pathos, and not possessing epistemic value. Vico disagrees with all of these criticisms and counters by insisting that rhetoric is rooted in a probability-based
reality. Through rhetoric knowledge is created and we can communicate our ideas and impressions to others.\textsuperscript{7}

Grassi's thesis asks us to choose Vico over Descartes as our philosophical starting point. From such a perspective we may be able to recover the power of the word as connected to and based in the creative imagination. "Creative imagination means the prophetic power of the word to ground thought in the real order."\textsuperscript{8} The fundamental power of the word is the metaphor. The ability of metaphor to make a beginning point for thought is thus deemed more fundamental than the logical power of the word.

The significance of Grassi's move to choose the humanities over science, the imagination over the rational paradigm, can be supported by numerous contemporary conceptions of rhetoric.\textsuperscript{9} For example, Henry Johnstone considers rhetoric the art of evocation. "A successful argument," according to Johnstone, "is intended to evoke, and does evoke, a response of a certain kind in the man to whom it is addressed."\textsuperscript{10} Michael Hyde and Craig Smith suggest that the primary function of rhetoric is "... to 'make-known' meaning both in oneself and to others. Meaning is derived by a human being in and through the interpretive understanding of reality."\textsuperscript{11} Robert Scott asks us to see rhetoric "more broadly as a human potentiality to understand the human condition."\textsuperscript{12} Walter R. Fisher offers his
"narrative paradigm as an alternative to the rational world paradigm."\textsuperscript{13}

The common thread in these conceptions of rhetoric is a shift from a Cartesian-based epistemology to a broader rhetorical space of probabilities and beliefs. I am not suggesting, however, that Christian belief should be disregarded. On the contrary, I ask that beliefs be rhetorically constructed and compete for their place in the "ongoing conversation" among all other beliefs, practices, and knowledge systems as part of the adventure of being-in-the-world.

The Christian aspect of my "Christian humanism" can be represented in the word of St. Paul: "Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe."\textsuperscript{14} To connect the power of God with the weakness of a cross equates weakness as power and folly as wisdom. God, according to St. Paul, has made the wisdom of the world a folly. He means that Christianity involves a contradiction, what J. Kellenberger calls the "absolute paradox." The cross is a supreme paradox, an objective uncertainty of the greatest magnitude that is an absurdity to reason.\textsuperscript{15} As a result, the world is perishing with its wisdom.
Folly, not the rational world paradigm, is the appropriate stance for the human world according to Grassi and St. Paul. As Grassi says, "To live in folly is the profound reason for existence." Thus the weight shifts from an epistemological notion of rationality to a broadened concept of praxis that encompasses not only the redirection of the course of modern times but a potential for our very survival.

Part of the stated purpose of my study concerns the rhetorician's and the preacher's goal of human survival. While such a construct sounds somewhat naive, I am more convinced than ever of the need for the effort. I do, however, feel obligated to insert a caveat. Any mention of humanism in a Christian context should not be equated with the social gospel of nineteenth century American Christian liberalism. Evil was considered, not a matter for individuals, but a non-transcendental matter of institutions. Good (God) was constructed through social consensus. The social gospel became a liberal version of the simple gospel of the fundamentalists. According to Carlyle Marney, noted Baptist preacher, "The error of our nineteenth century liberalism was its use of human powers, human obligations, human concepts, and human work to produce an 'arrived-at' kingdom of God."
Notice, for example, the naive view of human nature: "If the people were free, they would stop exploitation," says Walter Rauschenbusch. In the sermon, "The Social Problem, Our Problem," Rauschenbusch claims that his generation is solving the problem of poverty. Does not this view of human nature require the illusion that humans could build a new society through education and moral persuasion? Are not nineteenth century liberals participants in a middle-class, American-dream optimism?

Perhaps the most damaging blow to nineteenth century liberalism was the loss of the doctrine of God. Nowhere were the footsteps of God heard. The nineteenth century liberals were unable to come to grips with God as creator; even the possibility of a transcendental being faded before the new physics, the new universe, the new glorification of man. The loss of the divine awaited a correction and a chastened humanism. By humanism I mean the willful turning away from preoccupation with knowledge we are not equipped to expand and the devoted acceptance of our place where we are, as we are, with the strength that is already in our hands, to be committed to the social, personal, and redemptive tasks that confront us.

I suggest that the road to a chastened humanism that maintains connections to Christian theology is a "rhetoric of folly." I wish to juxtapose the views of Grassi and St.
Paul concerning folly as a base for a rhetorical homiletics. The fact of their widely disparate ontological positions serves only to enhance the widespread acceptance of the common goal of survival among atheists and Christians.

The Concept of Folly According to St. Paul

A review of the original meaning of folly will establish its significance in the writings of St. Paul. The Greek word μωρία and cognates denote a physical or intellectual deficiency of persons in their conduct and actions. The word refers to dullness, stupidity, and sloth, but its main reference is to the intellectual life. Grassi asserts, "The word is usually used psychologically and mentally in a deprecatory manner. It refers to a general inferiority in thinking and behaving. By μωρία, man falls under a ruling power which confuses his mind and induces him to 'crazy' or 'insane' actions." According to Georg Bertram, "The word implies censure on man himself; his acts, his thoughts, counsels, and words are not as they should be." Examples of folly in classical Greek imply a kind of madness as well as an external control by a power which confuses individuals.

In the Greek Old Testament and the corresponding Hebrew originals, μωρία is used almost exclusively for the fool. However, in Deuteronomy 32:6 and Jeremiah 5:21, μωρία means
not possessing a true knowledge of God. The folly of man is seen as apostasy from God.

Philo uses the term as a criticism of all worldly wisdom. Man is ensnared in folly. He cannot escape by means of his own reason. There is here an echo of the pessimism of Greek philosophy. Philo addresses as a fool the person who has no understanding of the world.

In the writings of St. Paul, µωρία acquires a theological meaning. The theological background revolves around the death of Christ. Paul uses the term "crucifixion" most often in connection with µωρία. "To crucify" is a pregnant metaphor for the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. "The preaching of Christ crucified cannot be done with the instruments of human wisdom because the λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ (I Cor. 1:18) is regarded neither by the world nor by Christian believers as σοφία τοῦ κόσμου".

In his own work Paul came under the judgment of folly. According to Luke, the philosophers at Athens mocked him (Acts 17:18); Gallio regarded the dispute between Paul and the Jews as foolishness (Acts 18:25); Festus declared Paul to be out of his mind (Acts 26:24). The dispute could be interpreted as an example of the conflict between philosophical rationalism and religious irrationalism. Numerous texts, however, demonstrate that the Greek search
for wisdom often resulted in theological conclusions. In the thought world of the first and second centuries A.D., in which an academic-peripatetic mixture formed the basis of general education, the interest in the afterlife is worth noting. Perhaps the polarities between Greek philosophical rationalism and supposed Christian irrationalism are not as severe as scholarly cliches indicate.

Paul gives μωρία a metaphorical and metamorphic function. The metaphorical character results from the transferring of the usual negative meaning of folly to a positive meaning. In I Corinthians 4:10, for example, Paul is proud to be "a fool for Christ's sake." The metamorphic transformation takes place with Paul's assigning to folly the meaning of true, original knowledge. "What is rejected as μωρία in the opinion of the Greek scholars is raised by Paul to the sign of true knowledge." The transvaluation of values in the Gospel is the basis of the use of the word group by Paul." An example of this transformation and transvaluation occurs in I Corinthians 1:11--"For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. . . ."

Preaching is depicted as foolishness, a certain kind of folly. As noted previously, homiletical methods have attempted to be the opposite of such folly. The perennial attempt to eliminate the folly of the cross from Christian
faith appears in the very method used for the proclamation of the cross. In what sense, however, does preaching the word of the cross constitute folly? According to St. Paul, the word of the cross is diametrically opposed to human wisdom—the latter being condemned by that word of the cross. The issue for Paul is that the Jews demand a sign from above and the Greeks expect wisdom. What Paul offers each is the same: the word of the cross. Thus, the Jewish expectations of signs is met by the kerygma of the cross. The Jews get their sign, but where they demanded power, God has answered in weakness, and therefore, the word of the cross is a σκανδαλον. God with the cross is both folly and scandal.

The word of the cross to the Greeks is analogous to the word Paul offered the Jews. Since the Greeks search for wisdom, the Christian offers them wisdom—Christ and him crucified (I Cor. 1:23,24), but this wisdom is a reversal of what the Greeks expected. This is not wisdom; it is folly. God is thus a fool in human eyes (I Cor. 1:25). The Greeks get wisdom, but their expectation of wisdom is met in a way that paradoxically falls short of that expectation. Where worldly wisdom was expected, the foolish word of the cross is offered. The Greek search for wisdom has no categories for salvation effected by means of a despised cross.
Folly, according to Paul, is a complete reversal of human standards, expectations, and conventional wisdom. There is, to use Paul Tournier's term, a "great reversal." The world's values are turned upside down since power now resides in weakness, and wisdom comes from folly. God's power is not demonstrated with forceful signs from above; it shows its strength in the word of a weak cross. God's wisdom is not displayed with scientific certainty or absolute dogmas; it shows its knowledge in the word of a foolish cross. Reversal of human values, of human ways of being-in-the-world, therefore constitutes the folly of Christianity.

In summary, the word about the cross as the power and wisdom of God is fundamentally critical for human knowledge and expectations; in this word an alternative rhetoric is offered as hope for survival. The rhetoric about God cannot be absolute. Any theological language faces a crisis by its own subject for discussion--God. Thus the preacher is shown to be what all claimers of knowledge turn out to be--rhetoricians. What Herb Simons says of science is just as valid for homiletics: "Like rhetoric, [science] [or homiletics] is rooted in unprovable belief and value premises; 'undetermined' rules; shackled by the constraints of language; inspired by personal passions and ambitions; made credible by stylistic devices; and strongly influenced
by political, cultural, and marketplace factors." In a later article, Simons asserts, "Scientific theories are rhetorical constructions and their key terms are ineliminably metaphorical . . . scientists [and preachers] appear to be stuck with metaphor." The preacher possesses no absolute dogmas or certain proofs but tenuous metaphors suggestive of a whole new way of living. For him, truth is not a static point revealed through scriptural reading but an emerging interpretation. The preacher stands ready for constant revision of her images, aware that she may have to start from scratch time and again and that no amount of dogmatism permits her to get beyond probabilities and beliefs, i.e., rhetoric. When one preaches God, the message is always rhetorical in nature and content. Of such is the folly of the kingdom of God.

After all, what recourse is there for the preacher who knows himself/herself to be made of ambiguities and probabilities, who sees himself/herself as a collective consensus of reality, and yet who dares to speak for the love and the despair of the Christian folly? I think the choices are three. She may confine her voice to the monotone of the nineteenth century rational methods, and so alienate herself from the world. Or she may choose what George Steiner called "the suicidal rhetoric of silence," in the tradition of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. As a Nazi prisoner
during World War II, he preached to his fellow prisoners, but on the morning of his execution, said his prayers and went silently to his death. Or she may choose the folly of St. Paul and the title, "fool for Christ's sake." In what respect, however, can St. Paul's concept of folly have commonalities with Ernesto Grassi's concept of folly? To attempt an answer, I will survey Grassi's theory of folly.

The Concept of Folly According to Ernesto Grassi

In Contemporary Perspectives on Rhetoric, Karen A. Foss describes Grassi's understanding of folly as "the basic process of ingenium, which allows the human world to emerge. . . . Only in the framework of folly--and not in rational thought--do the meanings of history reveal themselves." There is, however, more to Grassi's concern for the "problem of folly" than this summary view. This section illustrates how a fuller understanding of the role of folly helps explain Grassi's concerns about the dominance of the scientific-rational paradigm in Western culture. The explication of Grassi's views will focus on a brief review of Grassi's concepts of rhetoric, ingenium, and metaphor, before turning to a more detailed discussion of his concept of folly.
Rhetoric

Simply put, Grassi argues that rhetorical speech is the primary and original form of speech. Rhetoric, in Grassi's view, is tied to the act wherein the premises of thought are created. "It is this original, prophetic sense of the word, the word that connects the world to a transcendent order of reality that is at the basis of rhetoric..." Rhetoric is not a mere act of persuasion, a language of the emotions, or a way of communicating truth established by logical thought. Rhetoric connects with imaginative speech and ingenuity to disclose the reality signified in terms of constantly new situations.

Rhetoric is essential to philosophy. For one thing, rhetoric is the first step in the process of philosophical thought. Or to put it another way, "Rhetoric is the first and primordial form of thought from which philosophy flows." Rhetoric involves dialogue, metaphor, imagination, and ingenium.

In "Why Rhetoric Is Philosophy," Grassi insists that philosophizing can only be rhetorical. Using the metaphor of the "game" Grassi builds on the ideas that language is a game, that language does not occur for the determination of beings, and that authentic language is pure word-play. The games we play with language have three essential characteristics: 1) subjectivity, 2) possibility of winning
or losing, and 3) matches reveal the possibilities of the players as well as their personality and passions.37

Why do we play the game? "The stake we are playing for is our world."38 We play as actors and spectators in an uninterrupted game which reveals the metaphorical nature of reality. Grassi's metaphor of the game is relevant to the concern for survival. "Having identified rational language as the preeminent language--as happens in the Western world--and having played our era by means of it, we have lost and we are still losing the 'match' of the Western world. Our hope for winning (i.e., surviving) is in the 'vulgar' language of rhetoric . . . because it is by means of it that we 'uncover' the various worlds . . ."39 At stake is our own kosmos.

Grassi's concept of rhetoric has its detractors. One more or less representative attack of Grassi's rhetoric helps illustrate the tenuous nature of rhetoric's invitation to the academic party. The case in point is Thomas B. Farrell's "Rhetorical Resemblance: Paradoxes of a Practical Art."40 Farrell argues that Grassi attempts to do away with rational speech. "Where rational speech has failed . . . we must now have recourse to a privileged speech of the muses, a mythic speech of pure emotion, a speech that points us toward primordial truth itself."41 Rhetoric is reduced to a privileged language of inspired passion.
While Farrell admits there is some merit in Grassi's rendering, he insists that Grassi's expressivist, mythical speech cannot be the foundation of society. As Farrell counters:

But what cannot be countenanced is the subordination of all these issues to a privileged aesthetic of expression--a vision that runs counter to the very thinkers it invokes as authorities, a vision that entices us to abandon reflection itself. The impulse, such as it is, should be resisted.  

I believe Farrell overstates Grassi's attack on the impotence of rational language. It would be inappropriate to associate the visionary language of the muses with irrationality or mysticism. Grassi's interpretations indicate that the origins of rational speech lie in semantic speech, that rational knowledge results from insight into the non-rational character of archaic principles, not that rational speech should be excluded from culture. What is offered is a correction to overdependence on the rational paradigm and the unceremonious ouster of rhetoric from the house of respectable disciplines. Rhetoric, as queen of the sciences, simply wants to reclaim her place at the table in the kingdom. Rhetoric has not, as Farrell suggests, gone begging, like ancient King Saul of Israel, to the cave of Endor's witch, desperately searching for a mystical speech as key to finding again the tree of knowledge.
In short, Farrell's argument rests upon a restatement of Cartesian dualism, as if one must choose rhetoric over reason or vice versa. Grassi reminds us that St. Augustine, in De Trinitate for example, draws attention to the limitations of reason:

It is impossible for human beings either to search for what he knows because that he knows already and no further search is necessary; nor can he search for what he does not know because he does not know what to search for (80e 2).

Grassi is not opposing the realms of cognition and pathos but is attempting to show their unity. He speaks for a sense of historical order: first comes rhetorical speech, then rational speech. In either event, both modes of speaking are experienced as the content of a faith (pistis).

Ingenium

Along with the rest of the Humanistic tradition, ingenium has been rejected in scientific and philosophical disciplines. Usually ingenium is interpreted solely as an artistic and literary faculty or as a "psychological concept."43 For Grassi, however, ingenium plays a central role as the inventive power in the creative shaping of the world. "Ingenium, in other words, refers to a basic capacity to grasp what is common or similar in things--to see relationships or make connections."44 Common synonyms for ingenium are ingenuity, mental cleverness, wit, or
insight. Yet it is much more than a mere mental feat; it is a way of knowing that Grassi describes as a "grasping."45

Foss summarizes *ingenium* as the key term embodying the "process by which humans move from the natural realm to the human one . . . Ingenium allows humans to deal with the changing situations of nature and thus make the transference from the world of senses to the world of intellect and interpretation."46 In short, ingenium's task is to decipher the world in order to discover reality. In the discovery of reality, ingenium becomes, for Grassi, the origin of community.

I believe there is a strong link between ingenium and Peter Berger's concept of ecstasy (Εκσογαινώ).47 The experience of ecstasy involves the risk of stepping outside the taken-for-granted rules. There is an element of risk in the attempt to grasp, to find, to know, to get outside the status quo. Perhaps Berger is on target: "Acting out the social drama we keep pretending that these precarious conventions are eternal verities."48 Ingenium and ecstasy can act in concert to help the preacher gain a perspective on his/her perspective.

Grassi, working from his profession of atheism, describes Being as the original force in nature, or that which makes the demands to which humans must respond. Only through language and the process of ingenium can humans
conffront Being. I, in contrast, operate from a confession of faith: "In beginning was the Word and the Word was God . . ." Being, for me, is the God of the Jewish-Christian scriptures. Since Jesus was/is the Word, the Christian responds to Him. Jesus, as metaphor of God, is open to numerous imaginative interpretations. No one or all of these interpretations constitute the only way of being in relationship with Being. Through ingenium the preacher constantly creates new images of Being. For example, Jesus as liberator or friend may be more understandable than traditional images like Redeemer or Savior.

Metaphor

Metaphor, in Grassi's view, provides for the operation of ingenium and allows for the transfer of meaning and for connection between the world of nature and the human realm. "Thus metaphor, as a process of transfer, has the ability to transform things--to create new relationships." In other words, metaphor is the most important figure of speech.

Throughout Rhetoric As Philosophy, Grassi insists upon the significance of metaphor. A review of Grassi's basic ideas concerning metaphor seems necessary before moving on. The metaphor is the original form of the interpretative act itself. The metaphor lies at the root of our human world. "The metaphorical, pictorial nature of every original
insight links insight with pathos, content with the form of the speech." Metaphor makes philosophy possible because the archaic assertions on which rational proofs depend have a metaphorical character. Metaphor is more than a figure of speech because it embodies the basic process by which humans come to know.

Grassi’s concept of metaphor supports the theory that language is the medium of hermeneutic experience. But more than this, since metaphor produces light, i.e., knowledge, then we are released from the illusion that rational truth is the only truth. The preacher then can be concerned not so much with describing facts as with creating images. As Jacob Bronowski says, "... all our ways of picturing the invisible are metaphors, likenesses that we snatch from the larger world of eye and ear and touch." Folly

However, Western culture has been dominated by reliance on science. Choosing rhetoric over the scientific paradigm would be considered folly. Grassi reverses this understanding:

The reasonable world into which the analytic philosophy puts us today turns out to be a purely "formal" one, and only as such is it "sound," "unbroken," "formal" and "firmly" within the frame of quite special limits. In this case . . . must we not argue that purely formal activity without "an ultimate reason," i.e., "formal
thinking" of the analytic philosophy, is itself nothing but a "folly"?53

Folly, for Grassi, requires an act of ingenium, or seeing beyond things as they are to the meaning of Being. Under this definition of folly contemporary society is seen as laboring under the illusion that rational knowledge is true knowledge. In such a system, man is dehumanized and perhaps ends up committing technological suicide. For example, even if science were to solve all problems, answer all questions, and verify every hypothesis, there is still no guarantee that humanity could survive. Rudolph Carnap warns that "the mastery of life requires an effort of all our various powers; we should be wary of the shortsighted belief that the demands of life can all be met with the power of conceptual thinking alone."54

Grassi develops his concept more fully in *Folly and Insanity in Renaissance Literature*. Written with Maristella Lorch, this book deals extensively with the theme of folly. Of special significance is the critique of Erasmus's *Praise of Folly*, where Grassi's understanding of folly can be grasped more completely.

For Erasmus, as for St. Paul, the term "folly" acquires new meaning. Grassi explains this change:

Moria for Erasmus has a fundamental meaning which holds not only for the range of the human world, as it would if we understood μορία only as a human condition . . . He affirms that moria is the deeper root of the
unveiling of all beings and, by its undeductibility and nonrationality, an abysmal folly which has nothing to do with a subjective insanity. Through its power the world appears.\textsuperscript{55}

Moria, as separate entity, is divine. In fact, Moria claims divinity for herself:

Now, lest my claim to divinity should seem unsubstantiated, listen carefully and I will show you how many benefits I bestow on gods and men alike and how widely my divine power extends... The essence of divinity is to give aid to mortals.\textsuperscript{56}

The power of Moria opens up the immense stage of the world with the unfolding of its paradoxical play of comedy/tragedy. The principal actors are humans; folly is the divine director; and the outcome of the play depends upon the actors' willingness to embrace the claim of folly.

Two kinds of folly present themselves to the actors: one is the folly of insanity, the other folly is viewed as a god. Insanity results when man loses his sense of the value of life. The theme of the play concerns man's attempt to cope with his environment. As long as he remains under the spell of divine folly, he survives. In fact, Grassi claims divinity for the power of the word, a metaphorical and metamorphic power. "Only in the word can I find myself again in that I recover my world from nature."\textsuperscript{57} The word possesses a prophetic power to ground thought in the real world. The fundamental power of the word is the metaphor,
especially its ability to create a beginning point for thought.

The power of the word grants new insights and the hope of eternity to the actors. However, the tragic element now comes into play. As Grassi notes, "We are actors in an uninterrupted game which bears witness to the metaphorical nature of reality. Not only the different eras but also the different languages are born, exist, and perish." However, the illusion is maintained by the spell of folly. In other terms, a deep spiritual identification with the common community of humanity casts its spell of survival over the actors. Only in this way can humans avoid insanity.

Folly from Grassi's perspective is a necessary illusion. Folly enables man to survive, to change, to cope, and to realize his existence, because it produces a mirror which enables people to be observers of themselves as actors. Folly produces a consciousness of human frailty which allows people to transcend themselves.

By this I do not mean that humans are led to despair or to a feeling of being "nobody" in the larger scheme of life. In contrast, folly allows an opposite interpretation, i.e., an act of ingenium, an act in which one sees the ironic dimension of life. No longer do we have to labor under the illusion that rational knowledge is all there is because
folly reveals the significance of humans in the world. Folly enables us to see beyond the restricted boundaries of rationality to the opposite truth.

In order to explain what Grassi means, Erasmus's three negative judgments about the claim of folly are summarized: 1) Life is a ludicrous comedy because the actors do not realize that they have submitted to the spell of Moria. 2) Since life is an empty masquerade, history becomes the highest tragedy. 3) Unmasking the actors would prove to be insanity. Man's only hope is to remain under the spell of folly. Any attempt to arrive at the truth will lead to insanity. This awareness of the tragic interpretation of life and human history is the basic theme of Erasmus. Grassi adopts Erasmus's view and sees folly as man's only hope for coping with the threat of the scientific-rational paradigm. The argument against the scientific-rational paradigm is not an attempt to dismiss the legitimate advances made by science. The threat lies in an over-dependence on the rational paradigm, a convenient forgetting that science is itself metaphorical. The threat is manifested in an attitude of superiority and arrogance on the part of those who believe in the primacy of rationality and technology to solve all problems.

The correlation between St. Paul and Grassi lies in their paradoxical definitions of μωρία and their common
concerns for the salvation of society. Both concepts of folly are important for contemporary rhetorical theory because they demonstrate that rhetoric has the power to effect transformation through its metaphorical and metamorphic powers, and the alliance of rhetoric with homiletics will benefit preaching. Both St. Paul and Grassi offer a consistent guide for action, action that gives humans choices about the claims being made on it. People have ultimate significance within the world and can rhetorically structure that world. Both St. Paul and Grassi offer an alternative to the rational paradigm for contemporary society. Those who choose "folly" can discover values that can unify their lives, values that are fundamental to human existence. Both St. Paul and Grassi are evangelists in the sense that their language is indicative, declarative, inventive, imaginative, and pathetic in character.

The Bankrupt Cartesian-Rational World Paradigm

The threat of an attitude of superiority on the part of those who believe in the scientific-rational paradigm is a common concern for all rhetors, Christian and secular. Grassi suggests some of the consequences for a society which over-values the rational paradigm: First, he argues that the premise of rationality allows humans to abuse the environment by upsetting the delicate balance of the ecological
system. He also notes that the premise of rationality produces a lust for power and control without concern for the implications for the common good of our world. Third, the premise of rationality, suggests Grassi, puts roadblocks in front of building a global community. The dominance of the rational paradigm also results in the excessive consumption ethic of our culture. Finally, for Grassi, the attitude of the primacy of technology raises the prospect of the destruction of the planet.\textsuperscript{59}

In a quite different context, the ancient church fathers of Christianity demonstrated similar concerns. Their labels, gathered around the central concept of "cardinal sins," listed greed, pride, envy, acedia, and lust as our greatest problems. While nineteenth century American liberalism played a major role in a reductionistic theology of sin, changes in meta-vocabularies from religious terms to market-place terms aided the decline of the church. Conscience was replaced by interests and the cure of souls became a technique of psychological science. "Likewise, the seven deadly sins became lively capitalist virtues: avarice became acumen; sloth, leisure; and pride, ambition . . . A religious vocabulary of passions had been replaced by a commercial vocabulary of interests."\textsuperscript{60}

I am more interested in making like an Old Testament prophet than a nineteenth century liberal. In the folly of
prophetic reproach there may be a viable hope for our future. The task, against an entrenched refusal even to speak of sin, will be extremely hazardous. Recognition of the difficulty led to Karl Menninger to write Whatever Became of Sin? Menninger does not fear being prophetic. He preaches with more fervor than most liberals and with more intelligence than most fundamentalists. He exhorts preachers to get on with the task of helping our world be more humane by insisting that we have far more intelligence and power than we need already at hand.61

The Rhetoric of Folly

Thus far I have emphasized the primacy of rhetoric for preaching and suggested that the method of folly is our opportunity for redirecting and recreating our world. And in accepting these premises, I want to outline the characteristics of a rhetoric of folly. My vehicle for this is the previous discussion of Grassi and Paul. But it also draws from other sources—for example, Carlyle Marney's fundamentals of a competent ministry,62 and Richard Harvey Brown's concept of emancipatory rhetoric.63 All of these theorists have concerns for the moral evolution and well-being of humans. By uniting the various concepts of these scholars we can achieve a rhetoric in which ethical
responsibility for the global community is accepted and embraced.

What then do I mean by a rhetoric of folly? Such a rhetoric entails that strange dialectic of power through weakness, strength through vulnerability; it embodies discontinuity from the criteria of our culture. The rhetoric of folly goes against the status quo of the culture without surrendering the meaning of the central Christian event of Jesus Christ. "I will," claims Paul, "all the more gladly boast of my weakness that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Having defined a rhetoric of folly, I will now discuss its major characteristics.

Identification

The first characteristic of a rhetoric of folly is identification. Two biblical examples--one from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament--can serve as models for the concept of identification. The prophet Ezekiel, in captivity with his fellow Jews, "sat where they sat for seven days and wept." Jesus' entire ministry is a metaphor of identification: a baptism with sinners, meals and weddings with tax collectors and prostitutes, and death on a cross are but a few of the possible examples.

Our identification with those we address puts us beneath the shadow of a cross. We take up the cross--a
metaphor for the dehumanization of human life--and we work to make and keep humanity human. Such an incarnational identification is derived from the Christ--the true, best of the breed, human. As Marney puts it, "Here emerges the Christian advantage--ours is a genuinely nameable and recognizable identity . . . Our "I" as Christian is derived from . . . Jesus the Christ."

Personal identity presupposes moral agency, and moral agency is the capacity to create culture. "Indeed, to be a person as opposed to an object means to be able to symbolically construct reality." Identification, however, means that society is the proper field for the realization of individuality. The self can be best served in community as the Christian ideal of community has demonstrated. We are asked to create through ingenium and metaphor public community, not an ideology that legitimates privatization and lack of community.

Only in community, a nourishing communion and communication, can social isolation, psychological narcissism, lack of commitment to others, and a mindless conformism be avoided. True identification is within a community that redeems society from atomization: By identifying ourselves fully with the human race, we may be able to create a morally deeper conception of ourselves and a safer world. Such identification will always involve risk.
Direct Semantic Speech

A second characteristic of a rhetoric of folly is what Grassi calls rhetorical, vulgar language or direct, semantic speech. Grassi distinguishes between three kinds of speech: external rhetorical speech, rational speech, and true rhetorical speech. External rhetoric is purely emotive, false speech. Metaphor has, in this form of rhetoric, only a decorative purpose, and is considered capable of affecting only the passions. Rational speech arises exclusively from the formulation of first principles. Rational language is dialectical, mediating, demonstrative, apodictic, and without pathetic character. True rhetorical speech, however, springs from the archai, the nondeducible and indicative. Rather than the rational language of dogma and concepts, the preacher, as rhetor, is asked to embrace the language of conversation. The Greek New Testament was first written in the common street language of the first century—koine Greek. The lively, conversational metaphors have been taken literally and have crystallized into narrow ways of viewing the Christian experience. For example, the metaphor, "born again," has in its literal interpretation produced a cult of "born-again Christians." Since born again is a metaphor for Christian, the born-again Christian is a redundancy.
Direct, semantic speech has its roots in the prophets and poets and muses. Primary orality and dialogical communication combine in such spokespersons in a formidable partnership. Here the preacher's task is not to lecture, but to rhetorically create possible new ways of being-in-the-world. The main source of creating new worlds of meaning and being is metaphor. "Through metaphor, we come to see the similarity that exists between being and Being. . . ." For the Christian this means apprehending God. For the secularist this means discovering the ultimate worthwhileness of human existence.

Trembling and fear would be the correct attitude of direct, semantic speech. The preacher does not possess absolute, certain truths, but stands, hat in hand, ready for constant revision and discussion. The Christian rhetor is aware that even twenty centuries of gospel preaching do not permit one to know anything definitive. The tree of knowledge remains hidden. As we never find our way again to the Garden of Eden, so speech about God cannot be absolute.

Empathic Communication

The third characteristic of a rhetoric of folly is emphatic communication. By emphatic I mean the ability to understand and integrate our basic nature as humans. Grassi insists that our lives are divorced from our social,
corporate selves: "Contemporary men feel the need for values that can unify their lives. But the source of this need lies in man's original nature as a human being and not in his momentary situation." Richard Harvey Brown interprets the need for emphatic discourse as a result of the bifurcation of the private sphere of the individual and the public sphere of society. He laments the lack of bridges between groups and the lack of communication. Brown also argues that we have systematically "failed to discover the kinds of role relations necessary for communicating with adults or children who realize different orders of meaning."

In order for our communication to be emphatic, we must set outside the sociological tent poles of sex, family, race, region, religion, class, and economics. If the Gospel is to offer compassion, it will put every one of these values under judgment and "bless or damn each, on the basis of what its faithful service does to persons." In terms of these considerations, the questions, What is our culture?, and What is the relationship of our preaching to our culture?, become crucial. Are our concepts of Christianity grounded in a religious imperialism? Have we regarded middle-class moralism as the criteria for being accepted as a Christian? Have we immersed ourselves so
deeply in our culture as to be unable to discover a proper mixture of Christ and culture?\textsuperscript{74}

Emphatic communication is dialogical in nature (Grassi, Brown, and Marney). For the Christian rhetor, however, no dialogical being-in-the-world is possible without knowing the words of consolation. The name comes from Martin Luther's \textit{Fourteen on Consolation}.\textsuperscript{75} Without a proper empathy, the consolations cannot console. The words of consolation may be summarized:

1. No rhetor may give a word of consolation he/she has not yet heard. We represent our truths as fellow strugglers and listeners.

2. There is no consolation unless the words spoken are received (dialogical nature). Perhaps this is the meaning of Jesus' "shake the dust" metaphor in St. Luke 10. The disciple took back the offered blessing not received--the implication being that the blesser may need the word before the journey is done. Also, the metaphor encourages the preacher/rhetor that while responsible for how he/she tells the truth, he/she is not responsible for the results.

3. There is no consolation for any rhetor who cannot bless his/her own origins. The word is always personal, spoken by one who has come to terms with one's history and tradition.

4. The speaker of the word is always caught in the dis-ease and problem-situation and contradiction of the hearer. This insight lies behind the magnificent poem of the servant in Isaiah 53: "Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions . . . and with his stripes we are healed." C. C. Jung says, "The doctor is effective only when he himself is affected." Only the wounded
can heal.\textsuperscript{76} (This is the insight behind the healing rhetoric of Alcoholics Anonymous.)

5. The word of consolation cannot rest on certainty for faith never knows--it just bets its life. This means that the preacher of folly risks everything when she speaks. What she has at her disposal is the experience of a common humanity, a cross of Christ, and a rhetoric of folly: pathetic, indirect, metaphorical, and always and everywhere intimate, loving, trusting, and personal.

\textbf{Dialectical Irony}

The fourth characteristic of a rhetoric of folly is dialectical irony. Richard Brown argues that we may turn to the rhetorical trope and the logical method of dialectical irony as a potential discourse for humanizing political practice. He defines irony as "... a metaphor of opposites, a point of view that distances and derealizes what is taken as real in order to permit the realization of new meanings and forms"\textsuperscript{77} I believe such irony has potential for the preacher as an act of subversion against religious regimes "that presume they have an absolute right to define reality."\textsuperscript{78}

Dialectical irony requires the ability to imagine things as other than they are. Brown observes, "To summon forth the contrary of that which is through the power of dialectical irony is the basis of moral freedom and imagination",\textsuperscript{79} and "Dialectical irony lifts us above the view we are given of what the world is or must be."\textsuperscript{80}
Brown contrasts the ritual ironist to the free ironist. According to Brown, "Whereas ritual irony shakes us out of conventional rules and assumptions only to allow us to wryly reign them, a mastered dialectical irony shows that any role or assumption is reversible."\textsuperscript{81} Whereas Brown insists that the preacher is a ritual ironist who uses irony to serve his notion of morality, I argue that the preacher may use "irony in order to liberate us from moralism of any stripe."\textsuperscript{82} The preacher as free ironist offers his/her congregation the opportunity to experience and resolve ambiguity and contradictions.

How, then, might dialectical irony help the preacher and his/her congregation realign humane values and contemporary Christian practice? Ironic awareness can safeguard religious authority against arrogant presumption of certainty, infallibility, and dogmatism. The preacher does not, as an ironist, set himself up as the authority who dispenses the simple gospel to a willing group of followers. The audience must participate in his ironic speech acts or performances in order for him to succeed. Rather than passive adherence to a simple gospel, the congregation becomes an active audience struggling with the ambiguity and complexity of life.

Brown's dialectical irony appears to parallel Farrell's comic discourse. Farrell, for example, argues that "Comic
discourse is immersed in the crowd, with persons not much better, and perhaps a bit worse, than ourselves." In addition, comedic discourse is concerned with contingency and possibility. As such, the rhetoric of comedy is limited and perishable discourse. There remains, however, the comic hope of a happy ending, the hope of renewal and survival as well as the recurrent hope that everything will turn out all right after all.

Ironic awareness also reveals all modes of Christian theology/proclamation to be processes of symbolic construction, all to be historical, and none to be superior to others. Brown suggests that "irony teaches that nothing is known absolutely, and that everything is reversed when overextended. An awareness of this would encourage humility in those wishing to shape human affairs." Farrell also reminds us that rhetoric is tenuous: "This is because rhetoric is the only art responsible for the imitation and expression of human thought. And nothing is more tenuous than that." Such attitudes would reduce the dogmatic certainty of socially-constructed religious movements like the negative, hopeless vision of the modern apocalypticists, the romantic version of reality in fundamentalists such as Jerry Falwell, and the emotional, subjective reality of the Charismatics. Perhaps more importantly, the attitude of humility would ally Christian preaching with humanism, not
only in their common goal of survival, but also in their acknowledgement of human freedom and frailty as well as their recognition of moral responsibility and tolerance.

Conclusion

As I attempt to develop a theory of communication with the goal of survival, the preacher should realize that he is involved in a "folly" likely to be rejected by those who see this as just one more warmed over by-product of the social gospel and nineteenth century liberalism. Those who preach are also likely to be ostracized by the conservative bastions of resurgent frontier pietism with its individualistic salvation. And in accepting this we must recognize that the rhetoric of folly can be useful only if we become in a radical sense participants in the ongoing communication process. We must establish a communication process that is conversational. We must be ready to take risks (what else does cross-bearing mean for the Christian?). We have to present our truths as witnesses and fellow-strugglers. To meet these requirements would be to make our sermons acts of political and moral courage. It would liberate us from unreflective pietism and put us to the work of freeing persons to be fully human.86

I have examined the concept of folly and proposed a "rhetoric of folly" for those who engage in a particular
kind of rhetorical practice—preaching. I suggested that the concerns for the survival of humanity are rhetorically-based concerns. I have proposed to define rhetoric as an event of folly through which people are confronted with ethical choices. I contend that a "rhetoric of folly" solves or avoids the problems not resolved by previous homiletical methodology. In general, a rhetoric of folly:

1. Accommodates not only the preacher but the congregation as well;

2. Recognizes that rhetoric includes the entire discourse of the church, verbal as well as nonverbal;

3. Makes clear that there are alternative methods of truth telling thus negating the dependence upon the Cartesian paradigm;

4. Makes clear that the preacher is ethically responsible for his/her discourse;

5. Identifies the preacher, not as the subject, but as a fellow struggler and witness with the congregation in the journey toward a Christian way of being in the world;

6. Presumes that the use of metaphor offers the most promising model for producing truth-claims or knowledge in the Christian community;

7. Recognizes that the preacher will have to take risks.

8. Puts a high premium on empathic communication, based on love and trust;

9. Insists that the congregation reach its own conclusions and make its own choices; and/or

10. Releases the preacher from the role of church bureaucrat to the role of prophet through the use of irony.
ENDNOTES


2. Carlson, 446-455.

3. Brown, Society as Text, 185-186.


8. Verene, 281.

9. Studies that insist that science is rhetorical are all useful to the point I am trying to make. If science is rhetorical, then the arrogance of the rational-scientific position is undermined. See Bronowski, Polanyi, Kuhn, Overington, Weimer, Campbell, McGee, and Simons among others. As Herb Simons says, "Like rhetoric [science] is rooted in unprovable belief and value premises; undetermined by rules; shackled by the constraints of language; inspired by personal passions and ambitions; made credible by stylistic devices; and strongly influenced by political, cultural, and marketplace factors."


16. Quoted in Foss, Foss, and Trapp, 150.


18. Quoted in Marney, 43.


20. Marney, 42. Marney argues that the error of nineteenth-century liberalism was that it rested on an open bottom, no ground for beginning, just a continuity without base. God was a value at which we would arrive, rather than a source from which we begin. Unable to keep the doctrine of God which should have remained from the Reformation, the liberals could not bring off their new world.


23. TDNT, 4:832.

24. TDNT, 4:834.

25. TDNT, 4:837.


28. TDNT, 4:845.


32. Brown, Society as Text, 173. The rhetoric of silence is one recourse for the rhetor who knows himself to be made of signs, who sees society as a collective syntax, and yet who fears to speak for the love and despair of language. This is not a viable option for the preacher who needs to recover the power of the Word.


34. Foss, Foss, and Trapp, 149.
35. Verene, 279.


41. Farrell, 4.

42. Farrell, 4.


44. Foss, Foss, and Trapp, 135.

45. Foss, Foss, and Trapp, 135.

46. Foss, Foss, and Trapp, 140.


48. Berger, "Sociological Perspectives-Society as Drama," 54. "State, theater, circus, and even carnival--here we have the imagery of our dramatic model, with a conception of society as precarious, uncertain, often unpredictable." Christians, however, often act as if there were no other appropriate way to be a religious devotee.


50. Foss, Foss, and Trapp, 140.


55. Grassi and Lorch, *Folly and Insanity*, 44.

56. Grassi and Lorch, *Folly and Insanity*, 44.

57. Grassi quoting Soren Kierkegaard in *Rhetoric as Philosophy*, 112.


61. Karl Menninger, *Whatever Became of Sin?* One can also state the gap between religion and technology in Arnold Toynbee's metaphor, "the morality gap." "There is great inequality in the degree of man's giftedness for science and technology on the one hand and for religion and sociality on the other, and this is, to my mind, one of man's chief discords. . . . Human nature is out of balance. There has always been a 'morality gap,' like the 'credibility gap' of which some politicians have been accused. We could justly accuse the whole human race. . . . of a 'morality gap' and this gap has been growing wider as technology has been
making cumulative progress while morality has been stagnating." Arnold Toynbee, Surviving the Future (London: University of Oxford Press, 1971).


63. Richard Harvey Brown, Society as Text.

64. II Corinthians 12:9 (RSV).

65. Ezekiel 3:15, (RSV). I am indebted to Henry H. Mitchell for the understanding of the significance of identification: [See The Recovery of Preaching, (New York: Harper and Row, 1978)]. Mitchell, along with Gardner Taylor, has helped me discover the power of the Black preaching tradition. Mitchell asserts, "The recovery of preaching in American is heavily dependent on the willingness and ability of preachers to sit where their people sit, existentially and culturally." (The Recovery of Preaching, 11). Also, Mitchell ties the American version of white Christianity to a war metaphor, the significance of which I will explore in a later chapter. "The greatest weakness of Euro-American Christianity today may very well be the fact that it is unconsciously built on the worst of the fierce paganism of Northern Europe" (29).


69. Grassi, Rhetoric as Philosophy, Ch. 2.

70. Foss, Foss, and Trapp, 140. "Interpreting beings as a metaphor of Being requires that we regard each as a . . . 'veil' under which Being is 'concealed' and at the same time becomes 'unconcealed.'" (Grassi, Heidegger and the Question of Renaissance Humanism, 65-66).


76. Quoted in Marney, "Fundaments of Competent Ministry," 10. The insight of Jung has been developed rhetorically in the conversion rhetoric of Alcoholics Anonymous.


78. Brown, *Society as Text*, 188.


83. Farrell, 14.


85. Farrell, 17.

CHAPTER FIVE

TOWARD A METAPHORICAL HOMILETICS

In Chapter Four, a nonauthoritarian status for the preacher was developed. Without the epistemology of certainty, the preacher turns to a rhetoric of folly. The most significant rhetorical component of the rhetoric of folly is the metaphor. The purpose of this chapter is to show the relevance and applicability of metaphor to a homiletical model based on the "rhetoric of folly."

Metaphor is the indispensable language of the rhetoric of folly. Preaching by its very nature is metaphorical. I do not argue, however, that all instances of preaching are necessarily metaphoric. I shall provide a summary of the status of metaphor in philosophy, theology, and homiletics in order to ground my proposed metaphorical homiletics in previous scholarship. I will evaluate problems relating to metaphor that require some adjudication in terms of homiletical relevance. Finally, I will extend the philosophical and rhetorical studies of metaphor by applying the thought of I. A. Richards, Max Black, and Paul Ricoeur to specific homiletical purposes.

Metaphor in Contemporary Philosophy

The last four decades have witnessed an increasing philosophical interest in metaphor. Philosophers have
explored the nature of metaphor, the definition of metaphor, the pragmatics of metaphor, and the cognitive status of metaphor. The present state of the study of metaphor may be summarized as follows:

1. Metaphor is a part of all disciplines in the sense that thought is metaphoric.

2. Metaphor is best understood within the parameters of some kind of tension or interaction theory.

3. Context is essential to any understanding of metaphor.

4. Metaphors are neither necessarily literally false nor semantically deviant.

5. A variety of "metaphors" have been proposed as being descriptive of what happens in the metaphoric process and its resultant tension: "clash of literal meanings,"1 "transgression,"2 "metaphorical twist,"3 "category-mistake,"4 "redescription of reality,"5 "experiential gestalts,"6 "semantically deviant and non-deviant sentences,"7 and "world-structuring disclosure."8

6. Metaphor is not reducible to a literal meaning or paraphrase.9 (Davidson disagrees)

7. Metaphor has the potential to redescribe our world, restructure our concepts and categories, and reshape our experience of reality.10

In short, metaphor is pervasive, indispensable, irreducible, creative, and resistant to definition.

The philosophical and rhetorical study of metaphor has produced at least two problems that impact any metaphorical homiletics. Both of these problems are associated with the language and "metaphors" historically employed to discuss metaphor. The first problem relates to the way metaphors
have been perceived as being violations of normal, literal language. Metaphors from theology, for example, like "transgression," "violation," and "mistake" have been used to define what happens in a metaphorical utterance.

"Transgression" belongs to the biblical word-group that includes "sin," "iniquity," and "trespasses." The literal definition of "transgression" is to walk beside or pass by. It refers to not following the original, true direction as well as to a violation of the standard or the norm. To transgress is to violate the law. Applied to language, metaphor becomes criminalized as a law-breaker. Arbitrarily, then, a supposed literal meaning becomes the norm or standard for all language use.

Contemporary studies of metaphor have basically dropped this prejudice against metaphor. When metaphor was shown to not always involve a transgression of linguistic laws, the distinction of law-breaker no longer held. As Timothy Binkley insists, "Once we recognize that there is no pure core of literal meaning, we lose the inclination to set up the literal as an ideal against which figurative language is to be measured." To accept metaphor in this fashion is a positive step toward a metaphorical homiletics. With Grassi, the preacher can set up the metaphoric as the creator of the literal. In this sense, metaphor claims an ontological status superior to literal language.
A related metaphor often used to explain what happens in a metaphorical utterance is "deviance," a sociological metaphor. Deviant behaviors were once considered the prime rhetorical responsibility of preachers. Almost any person with a family tree containing eight or more generations of Protestant preachers can conjure up a caricature of the minister blasting away at immoral, sinful behavior. In American society, however, there has been a transformation of definitions of deviance from "badness" to "sickness," i.e., the "medicalization of deviance."\(^\text{13}\) This change of perspectives has met continued resistance from certain fundamentalist churches. I can recall, for example, hearing numerous preachers insist that alcoholism was a sin not a sickness (my childhood church was in the midst of the Bible Belt of Baptist North Louisiana).

Applied to metaphor, deviance refers to an explicit moral judgment that metaphor is a "sin" against literal language. In the etymology of sin, such an assumption about metaphor would mean that metaphor "misses the mark."\(^\text{14}\) As demonstrated in chapter three, the typical charges against metaphor by homileticians have been its danger and its seductive power; i.e., "deviance."

To explain metaphor as the deviant behavior of language is a typical positivist approach. This approach assumes that there is an "undevant" use of language--an ideal, pure
language, and that it exists in an objective and expressible form. Deviance, according to the logic of the positivist or literalist, is the usage of words not within conformity to literal language norms. In other terms, deviant is "bad," literal is good.

To approach metaphor as a type of deviance is to take the traditional philosophical approach to metaphor: "A metaphor is an elliptical simile useful for stylistic, rhetorical, and didactic purposes, but which can be translated into a literal paraphrase without any loss of cognitive content." Metaphor has for centuries suffered from one reductionistic attack after another. A request for historical witnesses to testify against metaphor would be a "Broadway cattle call" for a bit part. Two most often cited opponents of metaphor, however, are Thomas Hobbes and John Locke.

Hobbes thought that metaphors impeded thought and served only to deceive people. Hobbes attacks speech that undermines proper reasoning. Included in his displeasure are four abuses of speech: "First, when men register their thoughts wrong, by the inconstancy of the signification of their words; by which they register for their conception, that which they never conceived, and so deceive themselves. Secondly, when they use words metaphorically; that is, in other senses than that they are ordained for; and thereby
deceive others . . . And therefore such [inconstant] names can never be true grounds of any ratiocination. No more can metaphors, and tropes of speech: but these are less dangerous, because they profess their inconstancy; which the others do not."\textsuperscript{16}

Mark Johnson, discussing the peculiarities of Hobbes's linguistic theory, enumerates the characteristics of what he calls the "literal-truth paradigm":

1. The human conceptual system is essentially literal--literal language ("words proper") is the only adequate vehicle for (a) expressing one's meaning precisely, and (b) making truth claims, which together make possible correct reasoning by the philosopher.

2. Metaphor is a deviant use of words in other than their proper senses, which accounts for its tendency to confuse and to deceive.

3. The meaning and truth claims of a metaphor (if there are any) are just those of its literal paraphrase.\textsuperscript{17}

The literal-truth paradigm goes hand-in-hand with the homiletical association of metaphor with rhetoric. This connection assumes that metaphor, like rhetoric, has a negative connotation in preaching. Metaphor, according to this view, has little value for preaching other than making "pretty" sermons, and even this is countered by metaphor's deviance.

Reference to metaphor as "transgression" and "deviance" raises an interesting religious question. If metaphor
really is a misuse of language, are those who insist on using metaphor guilty of sin? Just such a moral charge is implied by biblical literalists. Christians, for example, who reject the metaphor "inerrancy" as descriptive of the Bible are labelled by James Draper, former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, as those who have "started over the edge. They have abandoned divine revelation . . . It is also extremely likely that those to whom they minister or those whom they teach will go a lot farther down than they do."\(^{18}\) Again Draper warns: "Once we depart from divine revelation, we have at least opened the door to whatever deviation a person chooses to engage in,"\(^{19}\) and "Ultimately, historic, biblical christianity will be in shambles."\(^{20}\)

The question of metaphor in preaching thus becomes a question of credibility in the rhetorical sense of ethos. Wayne Booth, for example, suggests that "the deliberate use of a recognizable metaphor . . . inevitably invites judgments of the speaker's character."\(^{21}\) In the more generalized discussion of whether or not metaphor should be used at all Booth's assertion becomes particularly apropos. A homiletical tradition that reduces metaphor to a deviant use of language has now been transferred to a mistrust of persons who use metaphors, especially by literalists.
A second problem related to the language employed to discuss metaphor can be interpreted as relevant to preaching. I refer particularly to the slow but steady transformation in the language used to talk about metaphors as "figures of speech," which are described as a "pretty," "fickle," "merely emotional," and generally weaker form of language. Such language, I believe, can be traced to what Jacques Derrida calls the logocentric, phonocentric, and phallocentric prejudices of our Greek forebears. If Derrida has become the Trojan horse within the walls of the structuralists, he is a very un-Greek horse. In any event, I will argue that the language used to talk about rhetoric in general, and metaphor in particular, expresses a masculine prejudice which I shall call the "feminization of metaphor." The current transformation of metaphor's status and language I shall label the "defeminization of metaphor." This transformation is certainly not complete and has not been universally accepted.

These changes have not occurred by themselves nor have they been the result of a "natural" evolution of society. The roots of these changes lie deep in our social, cultural, and religious understandings of the role and place of women. I believe that, aside from its technical and intellectual aspect, this change parallels the significant gains, made in our time, for the equality of women. In short, metaphor has
gained in status as women have gained in status. The suggested parallel is by no means considered causative or derivative, simply a way of seeing or connecting two different ideas.

The traditional positivist approach to the study of metaphor assumes that metaphor is feminine in nature. Let me explain what I mean. This assumption rests on a second assumption, namely, that metaphor is definable in a straight-forward manner as language-use not within permissible conformity to rational thoughts. Metaphor, in other words, if admitted any status at all, must be kept in its place. As Paul deMan, in his analysis of Locke’s denunciation of eloquence, points out,

It is clear that rhetoric is something one can decorously indulge in as long as one knows where it belongs. Like a woman, which it resembles ('like the fair sex'), it is a fine thing as long as it is kept in its own proper place. Out of place, among the serious affairs of men, it is a disruptive scandal-like the appearance of a real woman in a gentleman's club where it would only be tolerated as a picture, preferably naked, framed, and hung on the wall."

As the entire history of Western civilization is a story of the oppression and subjugation of women, so is the treatment of metaphor as a mere figure of speech to be kept in its proper place. Those religious positivists, usually Protestants and fundamentalists, who still deny equality to women with their crude literal interpretations of Saint Paul, also have a very low regard for metaphor. Perhaps the
positivistic literalism of these groups has more than a casual relationship to their refusal to grant ordination to women. According to the assumption of the feminization of metaphor, I suggest the following list for comparison, equating literalism with masculinity and metaphor with femininity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MASCULINE</th>
<th>FEMININE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rational</td>
<td>rhetoric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>science</td>
<td>figures of speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>technology</td>
<td>imagination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>literal</td>
<td>Myth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>Eastern</td>
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<tr>
<td>repressive</td>
<td>inferior</td>
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<tr>
<td>strength</td>
<td>weakness</td>
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<tr>
<td>objective</td>
<td>inappropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant reformation</td>
<td>Renaissance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fundamentalism</td>
<td>liberal</td>
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<tr>
<td>superior</td>
<td>merely emotional</td>
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<tr>
<td>proper</td>
<td>pleasure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam</td>
<td>seductive (&quot;Eve&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>style and grace</td>
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<tr>
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Following the model projected here, homiletics would benefit from 1) a defeminization of its traditional treatment of metaphor and 2) an acceptance of the powerful positive feminine qualities suggested here.

As concerns for inclusive language claim an increased and deserved attention in the various Christian denominations, the defeminization of metaphor becomes a small part of a far larger crusade. While my rhetorical concern is with changing perspectives of metaphor and the consequences
of these for homiletics, this is also a study of ethics, especially as related to the treatment of women and other oppressed, powerless persons.

I have briefly examined philosophical treatment of metaphor and delineated two problems within the parameters of such study. I summarized leading assumptions about metaphor. I suggested there has been a general failure of the traditional homiletical model to participate in the transformation of thought concerning metaphor. I have proposed that metaphor not be considered a deviant use of some ideal literal language, and that literalist Christian interpreters have an inherent prejudice against rhetoric and metaphor. Based on consideration of contemporary studies in metaphor, I suggest that a metaphorical homiletic:

1. Recognizes that metaphor is not a deviant use of language, but a different use of language.

2. Presumes that metaphor requires invention activity because to describe metaphor as a mere device of style is to fall back into our phallocentric prejudice.

3. Recognizes the role of metaphor in all human thought and disciplines.

4. Makes clear that metaphor involves ethical power in the sense of ethos as well as logos and pathos.

5. Assumes that metaphor is indispensable to the preacher and irreducible to a literal paraphrase.

6. Insists that we preach by metaphors that create Christian community as a way of being-in-the-world.
Each of these assumptions of metaphor's potential value for preaching could be elaborated in great detail. In order, however, to attend to the modest goal of pragmatism, i.e., the practical rhetorical/metaphorical model of preaching, it will be necessary to concentrate on particular aspects of metaphorical theory of representative scholars' thoughts on metaphor. This section shall concentrate upon two representative analysts of metaphor: I. A. Richards, and Paul Ricoeur. At the same time these theorists must be understood in the context of the wider discussion of language by philosophers and rhetoricians. Richards and Ricoeur represent a view of metaphor different from the received homiletical and philosophical theory of substitution.

I. A. Richards

I. A. Richards sets forth his central understanding of metaphor in his book *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*. As the title indicates, Richards is principally concerned with rhetoric. He defines rhetoric as a "study of misunderstanding and its remedies." Richards contended that through examination of language and its use we can comprehend the nature of communication and improve communicative enterprises. He hoped to decrease misunderstanding by an analysis of meaning and how it changes as discourse occurs.
Richards' definition of metaphor has impacted all succeeding treatments of metaphor: "In the simplest formulation, when we use a metaphor, we have two thoughts of different things active together and supported by a single word or phrase, whose meaning is a resultant of their interaction."²⁵

One of the ways Richards suggests for communicators to work at preventing misunderstandings is the use of metaphor. He sees metaphor as the heart of our language systems. The metaphor "is a borrowing between and intercourse of thoughts, a transaction between contexts. Thought is metaphoric, and proceeds by comparison, and the metaphors of language derive therefrom."²⁶ Daniel Fogarty summarizes the importance Richards delegated to metaphor:

Richards' most emphatic contention about metaphor, thus explained, is that language is naturally metaphoric. Since metaphor is just abstraction for the purpose of clearer and more vivid communication, since it seems to be the nature of our thinking to be perpetually busy with sorting and classifying references and comparing contexts and their parts, and since our language symbolizes this thinking, it seems to Richards that our language must be highly, habitually, and even naturally metaphoric.²⁷

The concepts of metaphor worked out by I. A. Richards continue to influence new explorations of metaphor:

1. Metaphor is an omnipresent principle of thought.

2. Metaphor permeates all discourse.

3. Metaphors work through the tension created by the tenor and the vehicle.
4. Metaphor is cognitively irreducible.

5. Any account of meaning and truth must give a central place to metaphor.\(^{28}\)

In at least two ways, Richards' study of metaphor can be extended to the discipline of homiletics. First, his insistence that metaphor as the essence of thought permeates all discourse parallels similar conclusions by theologians. The language of the Bible is seen to be as essentially metaphoric in nature. According to Sallie McFague, "Metaphor is the way we think, and it is the way the parables--a central form of expression in the New Testament--work. These are related assertions, for the power of the parables stems, in part, from that basic movement by indirection from the known to the unknown--the heart of metaphor."\(^{29}\) Theologians have extended the linguistic conclusion of Richards to an assertion that religious reality is metaphoric. Some theologians agree with McFague that Jesus is the metaphor of God.\(^{30}\) Therefore, metaphors not only move to the center of New Testament discussion, but become crucial to the preaching of the New Testament.

While homileticians have, with few exceptions, ignored contemporary scholarship on metaphor, theologians have incorporated metaphor into much of their work. Theologians
seem to have reached an emergent consensus on the study of metaphor:


2. Literary genres are seen as productive of meanings. Metaphor, therefore, is no longer interpreted on the rhetorical model of decoration.

3. Original intention and meaning of a biblical writer (finds meaning of the text behind the text) is being replaced with a hermeneutics locating meaning in front of the text.

4. Interpreters seek to analyze the production of the sense of the text and the production of the referent of the text. That referent is a possible mode of being-in-the-world.

5. The major candidate for the central root metaphors of Christianity is the group of stories known as the parables of Jesus.\(^{31}\)

A second way Richards' study of language and metaphor impacts homiletics concerns what Richards labels the "Proper Meaning Superstition."\(^{32}\) The history of homiletics is a history of the attempt to avoid the excesses of allegorical and spiritualistic interpretation of the scriptures e.g., (Origen). In the attempt at discovering a realistic, historical interpretation, preachers and theologians have searched diligently for the original meaning and the literal meaning of the biblical text.

As long as biblical texts are considered to have an original meaning, a literal meaning, and a literal application, the essential metaphorical nature of the Bible
remains an unexamined presupposition. At this point, I. A. Richards can shed some light on this particular homiletical problem. "A chief cause of misunderstanding . . . is the Proper Meaning Superstition. That is, the common belief--encouraged officially by what lingers on in the school manuals as Rhetoric--that a word has a meaning of its own (ideally, only one) independent of and controlling its use and the purpose for which it should be uttered."33

The proper meaning view belongs to the school of literal language interpreters, whether philosophers or preachers. The literalist insistence upon univocal meaning I have labelled the Literal Truth Superstition and the Original Meaning Fallacy. These two terms are somewhat parallel to the proper meaning superstition of Richards: "It is only a superstition when it forgets (as it commonly does) that the stability of the meaning of a word comes from the constancy of the contexts that give it its meanings."34

The problem with the literalist is that only one way of interpreting words, phrases, and texts is allowed; all others are heresies. Stephen Brown claims, "Literalism is a view of representation that has forgotten its own dependence on a sociohistorical, and hence relative, community of discourse."35 It eventually collapses into authoritarianism. In the light of the worldwide conservative resurgence, an insistence on the plurality of meanings within religious
texts is an ethical and religious responsibility. No peremptory decrees from the Pope, and no threats from Jerry Falwell should be allowed to destroy such an insistence.

Developments in the theory of metaphor have shown that the literalist hope for a language of univocal meaning and precision was doomed to fail. We are now, more than ever, aware that metaphor is indispensable to science, religion, theology, everyday life, and preaching.\textsuperscript{36} As Tracy notes:

The central theological concern with metaphor is to analyze the root metaphors which disclose a distinctly religious form of life in the major religions. In descriptions of God in Judaism and Christianity, for example, one finds a whole cluster of metaphors ranging from father, lord, shepherd, and king to more elusive and subtle choices like light, truth, love, and wisdom. If metaphors are purely and simply defined as decorative substitutions for real, literal, ideational meanings, then the relative lack of concern among many theologians with most biblical metaphors for God is completely justified. If, however, metaphors are more properly understood to function by means of some theory of tension or interaction (on the three levels of the word, the phrase, and the text), then the move to replace these decorative images with concepts seems a precipitate one.\textsuperscript{37}

This view of metaphor, first illuminated by Richards, reverses the traditional literalist view that a word or text has only one meaning. Metaphor is by nature symbolic, ambiguous, and polysemous.\textsuperscript{38} If multiple and excess meanings for words and texts within multiple contexts is the correct way of viewing language, if the interpreter is influenced by the culture of which he/she is a part, if the interpreter is conscious of his/her responsibility within a
highly ambiguous history and society, then literalism is but a superstition. As David Tracy affirms:

We may continue to try to persuade ourselves of our autonomy, our innocence, and our idealism. Our theories can become exercises in passive contemplation of mere possibilities, or deceptively hard exercises excluding anything not fitting an already determined model. Our theories and our conversations can become, however, what they in fact always were: limited, fragile, necessary exercises in reaching relatively adequate knowledge of language and history alike.\(^{39}\)

Any attempt at an autonomy so pure that it is unaffected by the plurality of religious meanings in which we stand is the final form of the general privatization which plagues our culture.\(^{40}\)

Maintaining the literal truth superstition leaves few alternatives. We may embrace the increasing privatization of the autonomous self, loosed on the world, according to William Muehl, by the forces of the vulgar Reformation.\(^{41}\) We may run for security to the heteronomous privatization in which once proud traditions harden into ideologies. (Witness the ideological turn within the Southern Baptist Convention). Or we may risk interpreting our sacred texts in order to discover new, multiple meanings.

In our pluralistic present, we may risk concentration on the polysemous nature of biblical texts, symbols, images, and metaphors. Tracy, from a theological perspective, and Brown, from a sociological perspective, offer just such a risk as "one hope for a move forward into publicness."\(^{42}\)
In a recent essay, Allen Scult considered the use of an interpretive approach to elucidate sacred texts which is in accord with the polysemous nature of religious language. In Scult's account, the critic is an interpreter—a surrogate for the audience—whose recounting of the process of textual encounter helps others to gain access to textual meaning. Noting that certain texts have the power to speak beyond themselves via a medium which he labels "textuality," Scult describes the process of critical interpretation: "Textuality draws rhetorician-interpreters to the text as the source for what might be known or said. The interpreter's audience shares in the textuality and helps direct the inventional process toward the text. The shared textuality is what gives the text the force of testimony, to use Ricoeur's phrase... The events and experiences described in the text might remain within the bounds of a spatial-temporal moment, but their meaning reaches beyond that moment."[43]

In a more obvious rebuttal of original meaning, Scult observes that "if the interpreter tries to understand the text in terms of the original rhetorical situation which gave rise to it, to which it was a fitting response, then the more adequate the interpretation becomes, the more circumscribed the epistemological range of the text also becomes. If the direction of the interpretation is backward
in time, toward the original rhetorical situation in which the text was uttered, its original meaning might become clear; but its capacity to transcend the original rhetorical situation and speak to a contemporary audience is muted."44

Scult also argues persuasively against the significance of original authorial intent when he observes that "in order for a text to be interpreted in a way that provides a fitting response to a new rhetorical situation, its meaningfulness in the original rhetorical situation must somehow be overcome . . ."45

To summarize, I am making an appeal for a pluralistic attitude on the part of the preacher as rhetorician. It is an attitude I trust. I am not, however, suggesting a limp pluralism that becomes simply a passive response to more and more possibilities. Such a liberal pluralism is never practiced. That kind is the perfect ideology for the modern bourgeois mind. "Such a pluralism masks a genial confusion in which one tries to enjoy the pleasures of difference without ever committing oneself to any particular vision. . . ."46 My position is thus a paradox. The preacher embraces pluralism, but at the same time, commits herself to a particular interpretation.

Such a preacher will allow the speaker-immediate audience relationship to move off center stage. The new stage star will be the text, and, in particular, the text
interpreted not backward but forward. To understand the biblical text is to open oneself to a search for original intent as well as an interpretation different from how the original authors and their first audiences may have understood them. Thus the preacher struggles upstream against cultural distance and historical alienation (like the creature in Richard Bach's *Illusions of a Reluctant Messiah*). Instead of a precise, good-for-all-time, pedestrian meaning, the preacher strives toward identification, toward Burke's "consubstantiality," toward Gadamer's "fusion of horizons," toward Tracy's "analogical imagination."

Numerous substantive definitions have been proposed for religion: Friedrich Schleiermacher's "the feeling of absolute dependence," Rudolph Otto's *mysterium fascinans et tremendum,* Paul Tillich's "ultimate concern," Bernard Lonergan's "being-in-love-in-an-unrestricted-fashion," and David Tracy's "limit-experience." In my analysis of the significance of metaphor for preaching, I have adopted Tracy's definition of a distinguishing characteristic of religion. Tracy argues that there is a presence of an implicit religious dimension in our ordinary experience and the presence of religious-as-limit use of language in Christianity. He then argues for a limit-language in the form of metaphors, images, symbols, and myths as adequate
for interpreting the experiences of life. At a certain limit-point or boundary, the language of rationality falters. Then the human spirit searches for metaphors expressive of the positive and negative limit experiences of life. Examples include death, guilt, and anxiety as well as creativity, joy, and fundamental trust.\textsuperscript{50}

Limit-situations allow, even demand, reflection upon the boundaries of our existence. These are self-transcending moments, and they are more than "emotional M and M's" or "warm fuzzies" or pious statements. We touch upon a dimension of experience which cannot be stated adequately in ordinary language. We experience, in short, a reality simply given. Life is seen as gift-love. Authentic love, both erotic and agapic, puts us in touch with a reality whose power we cannot deny.\textsuperscript{51} Such experiences disclose the possible existence of a limit, a religious dimension or horizon to our lives. I am arguing that life has a religious dimension due to limit-situations. The preacher can describe the reality of these limit-situations through metaphor. In summary, three assertions about the significance of homiletics of metaphor are made:

1. All authentic limit-language seems to be initially and irretrievably a symbolic and a metaphorical one.

2. Insofar as the hidden dimension of an ultimate limit is not merely hidden but not even expressible in the language of everyday (as no-thing), that
language retains the linguistic structure of metaphor and symbol.

3. The language of the scriptures is intrinsically symbolic and metaphorical limit-language.\textsuperscript{52}

Paul Ricoeur

Metaphor rises from a kind of discourse Paul Ricoeur labels as "ontological" where the task is to reveal a "mode of being." Ontological discourse, in opposition to a univocal language, "is at best a kind of broken discourse, full of ambiguity . . . ."\textsuperscript{53} This is significant for our purpose because metaphor has a privileged position in ontological discourse.

Two important characteristics of ontological language are polysemy and ambiguity. Ricoeur defines polysemy as "... a feature of words, several senses for one name." Ambiguity, however, "means that for one string of words we have more than one way of interpreting it."\textsuperscript{54}

Ricoeur develops his theory of metaphor on three levels: the word, the sentence, and the discourse. He produces a series of polarities with each pair in tension: word/sentence, semiotics/semantics, substitution/tension, and deviant denomination/impertinent predication. While insisting that metaphor's ties to the noun must be cut, and that the sentence takes priority over the word, Ricoeur does not dispense with the word. "The place of metaphor is
neither the name, nor the sentence, nor even discourse, but
the copula of the verb to be. The metaphorical 'is' at once
signifies both 'is not' and 'is like'."55 Also, he argues
that "... the function of the word within discourse is to
embody the semantic identity."56

Contrary to the view of literalists, Ricoeur praises
the positive value of polysemy and metaphor. Ambiguity, for
example, is the source of the creativity of all language.57
Metaphor has a direct relationship to polysemy's creative
capacity. Ricoeur asserts, "I shall treat metaphor as a
creative use of polysemy and in that way as a specific
strategy of language."58

The creativity of metaphor contradicts the classical
view of metaphor. In Study One of the Rule of Metaphor
Ricoeur sets his own view of metaphor against the classical
view of Aristotle. According to Aristotle, metaphor is a
matter of denomination, words, and in particular nouns.
Recall Aristotle's definition of metaphor as "... giving
the thing a name that belongs to something else."59

According to Ricoeur, when metaphor is connected to the
noun, its destiny is sealed for centuries to come. In fact,
as we have seen, the word remained the essential metaphoric
unit until I. A. Richards' argument that metaphor is "the
omnipresent principle of language."60 As Ricoeur notes,
"It is important for the theory of metaphor that its link to the noun can be cut . . ."\(^{61}\)

Ricoeur characterizes Aristotle's definition of metaphor as follows:

1. Metaphor is something that happens to the noun.

2. Metaphor is defined in terms of movement "from . . . to", "For Aristotle the word metaphor applies to every transposition of terms."\(^{62}\)

3. Metaphor is the transposition of a name that Aristotle calls "alien" (αλλοτριος) as opposed to "ordinary" (Κριον). Metaphor is thus defined as deviation. As Ricoeur warns, "In these characteristics of opposition or deviation and kinship are the seeds of important developments regarding rhetoric and metaphor."\(^{63}\) Ricoeur offers a summary of Aristotle's idea of αλλοτριος: deviation, borrowing, and substitution. As Ricoeur correctly points out, "It is the idea of substitution that appears to bear the greatest consequences: for if the metaphorical term is really a substituted term, it carries no new information, since the absent term (if one exists) can be brought back in; and if there is no new information conveyed, then metaphor has only an ornamental, decorative value."\(^{64}\)

Ricoeur proposes a theory of metaphor that counters the classical understanding. His theory begins with the word, progresses to the sentence, and culminates in metaphor as discourse. Ricoeur traces the route of his proposed theory: "At the same time each forms part of a unique path which begins with classical rhetoric, passes through semiotics and semantics, and finally reaches hermeneutics."\(^{65}\)

Ricoeur declares as his "most important theme . . .
that metaphor is the rhetorical process by which discourse
unleashes the power that certain fictions have to redescribe reality." In examining the nature of metaphor Ricoeur proposes three interpretive hypotheses to counter the classical tradition of metaphor:

1. It always takes two ideas to make a metaphor. If metaphor always . . . involves taking one thing for another by a sort of calculated error, then metaphor is essentially a discursive phenomenon. To affect just one word, the metaphor has to disturb a whole network by means of an aberrant attribution.

2. A second line of reflection seems to be suggested by the idea of categorical transgression . . . should we not say that metaphor destroys an order to invent a new one; and that the category-mistake is nothing but the complement of a logic of discovery? . . . One must say that metaphor bears information because it 'redescribes reality'.

3. A third more venturesome hypothesis arises on the fringe of the second . . . metaphor does not produce a new order except by creating rifts in an old order. Nevertheless, could we not imagine that the order itself is born in the same way that it changes? Is there not, in Gadamer's terms, a 'metaphoric' at work at the origin of logical thought, at the root of all classification? . . . The idea of an initial metaphorical impulse destroys these oppositions between proper and figurative, ordinary and strange, order and transgression. It suggests the idea that order itself proceeds from the metaphorical constitution of semantic fields, which themselves give rise to genus and species.

My thesis, adapted from Ricoeur, is that what we mean by metaphor is that here we recognize the disclosure of a reality which we cannot but name truth. We find here something valuable, something meaningful, some disclosure of a reality in a moment that can be called one of recognition
which surprises, provokes, challenges, shocks, and potentially transforms us; an experience that upsets conventional opinions and expands the sense of the possible. The presence of metaphors in every culture is undeniable. Their effects in our lives endure and await new translations, new interpretations, new imagined worlds. The power of metaphor to produce such changes may be explained as the tension or interaction aspect of metaphor. Since Ricoeur adopts the concept of interaction, an explanation of his method is necessary.

Interaction Theory

Ricoeur's theory of metaphor is centered in the tension or interaction theory of English-language scholars such as I. A. Richards, Max Black, Monroe Beardsley, and Philip Wheelwright. Ricoeur critiques Richard's and Black's interaction theories of metaphor. Having already discussed Richards, I will present a brief summary of Black's contributions to metaphor theory in general and of Ricoeur's theory of metaphor in particular.

Black's work advances the theory of metaphor in at least three ways. First, metaphor is a matter of the whole statement, but attention focuses on a particular word. Black replaces "tenor" and "vehicle" with "focus" and "frame." The "focus" is the metaphorical word, while the
"frame" is the rest of the sentence. "The advantage of this terminology," according to Ricoeur, "is that it directly expresses the phenomenon of focusing on a word, yet without returning to the illusion that words have meanings in themselves, . . . Black's more precise vocabulary allows us to get closer to the interaction that takes place between the undivided meaning of the statement and the focused meaning of the word."70

Black's second advance is the distinction between the interaction theory and the substitution and comparison theories. In the interaction theory the frame (as the new context) creates a new meaning, an extended metaphorical meaning. The interaction is between systems of associated commonplaces which characterize each subject. The nature of this interaction is that the two parts of the metaphor combine to organize our view of the subjects of the metaphor. Ricoeur observes that the distinction between the interaction theory and the substitution theory is the same as the dichotomy between semiology and semantics.71

One of the problems with Black's theory, is the vagueness and open-endedness of the "associated systems of commonplaces." Preachers have used such a method, in different guise, to handle metaphorical language in Scripture. For example, the metaphor, "You are the light of the world," was unpacked by John Claypool as follows: "Put
into simple terms, this means that light performs two important functions: it warms and it illumines. . . . "72

What criteria are used to select only these two characteristics of light? Michael Osborn, in "Archetypal Metaphor in Rhetoric," suggests three characteristics of "light": "Light . . . relates to the fundamental struggle for survival and development. Light is a condition for sight . . . Light also means the warmth and engendering power of the sun. . . . "73 The method appears to be somewhat reductionistic, and, in the case of the preacher, seems to be an attempt to paraphrase the metaphor by eliminating the tension.

Ricoeur applies the concept of tension in three ways: First, the internal tension of the metaphorical term and the rest of the statement takes place "between tenor and vehicle, between focus and frame, between principal subject and secondary subject"; second, external tension occurs "between a literal interpretation that perishes at the hands of semantic impertinence and a metaphorical interpretation whose sense emerges through non-sense"; and third, relational tension exists "between identity and difference in the interplay of resemblance."74

In taking into account both the metaphor-maker and the metaphor-interpreter, Ricoeur's tension theory is superior to those which fail to account for the structural and the
phenomenological aspects of metaphor. Ricoeur wrestles with both the production of the metaphor and the product of metaphor. In this sense his theory is interactional because an interpreting subject and an interpreting object are present. Otherwise a hermeneutics of metaphor would be impossible.

Imagination

A second major aspect of Ricoeur's theory is his more fully developed account of the role of imagination in metaphor. Ricoeur, by combining a semantic theory of metaphor with a psychological theory of imagination and feeling, explains how metaphor works. He defines a semantic theory as "an inquiry into the capacity of metaphor to provide untranslatable information and, accordingly, into metaphor's claim to yield some true insight about reality." To this theory Ricoeur adds a concept of imagination and feeling, arguing that metaphors with truth value are partly constituted by images and feelings. Ricoeur explains his purpose: "I want . . . to show that the kind of theory of metaphor initiated by I. A. Richards . . . Max Black . . . Beardsley, Berggren, and others cannot achieve its own goal without including imagining and feeling . . ."
There are three steps in the process of connecting the iconic moment to the work of resemblance. Ricoeur draws on Kant's theory of imagination, "specifically on Kant's concept of productive imagination as schematizing a synthetic operation." In the first step, imagination is the "seeing" which effects the shift in logical distance. The role of imagination is insight into likeness. "This insight into likeness is both a thinking and a seeing." Ricoeur calls this act of thinking/seeing, "the instantaneous grasping of the combinatory possibilities." He calls this productive character of insight "predicative assimilation." Mark Johnson explains the synthesis as "the imaginative leap in which we see how two previously unassociated systems of implications fit together to reveal an underlying unity."

The second step is the "pictorial" dimension. It is this aspect which is at stake in the figurative character of metaphor. Ricoeur argues that the pictorial dimension of metaphor was intended by I. A. Richards' technical terms, tenor and vehicle. He draws a distinction between Richards' terms and Black's frame and focus: "Frame and focus designate only the contextual settings, say, the sentence as a whole--and the term which is the bearer of the shift of meaning, whereas tenor and vehicle designate the conceptual import and its pictorial envelope." In short, the first
function of imagination is an imaginative leap and the second is a picture of the semantic innovation. Ricoeur borrows Paul Henle's concept of the iconic signification of metaphor: "If there is an iconic element in metaphor, it is equally clear that the icon is not presented, but merely described." As Johnson points out, "... the claim that the iconic element provides a rule for reflecting on some object or situation constitutes a preliminary account of how imaginative metaphoric insight is possible."

To imagine, according to Ricoeur, "is the concrete milieu in which and through which we see similarities. To imagine, then, is not to have a mental picture of something, but to display relations in a depicting mode." Ricoeur ties his concept of imagining to the Wittgensteinian concept of "seeing as," even though Wittgenstein himself did not extend his analysis beyond the field of perception. Ricoeur extends the "seeing-as" notion by reference to Marcus B. Hester and his *The Meaning of Poetic Metaphor*. Hester attempts to relate the concept of "seeing-as" to the functioning of poetic images. He distinguishes between "wild" poetic images, which divert the reader, and "bound images," by which he means concrete representations aroused by the verbal element and controlled by it. Poetic language, according to Hester, not only merges sense and sound, but sense and senses, meaning by that the flow of
bound images displayed by the sense. These images, Ricoeur argues, "... bring to concrete completion the metaphorical process ... The metaphorical sense is generated in the thickness of the imagining scene displayed by the verbal structure of the poem. Such is, to my mind, the functioning of the intuitive grasp of a predicative connection."86 Moreover, Ricoeur locates the second stage of his theory of imagination on the borderline between pure semantics and psychology. The metaphorical meaning thus compels an exploration of the borderline between the verbal and the non-verbal. "The process of schematization and that of the bound images aroused and controlled by schematization obtain precisely on that borderline between a semantics of metaphorical utterances and a psychology of imagination."87

The third step in imagination is the moment of suspension, or "the moment of negativity brought by the image in the metaphorical process."88 This crucial step makes possible a remaking of reality. "A metaphor may be seen as a model for changing our way of looking at things, of perceiving the world."89 The contrast between the everyday, ordinary world and the possibility of a new world created by metaphor is a crucial development in the present study. There is a suspension of the ordinary, and there is an invasion of the extraordinary. The ordinary, however, is not destroyed, but is held in tension with the new.
Ricoeur sums up the three-fold movement of imagination:

My contention now is that one of the functions of imagination is to give a concrete dimension to the suspension or *epoche* proper to split reference. Imagination does not merely *schematize* the predicative assimilation between terms by its synthetic insight into similarities nor does it merely picture the sense thanks to the display of images aroused and controlled by the cognitive process. Rather, it contributes concretely to the *epoche* of ordinary reference and to the projection of new possibilities of redescribing the world.\(^9\)

Based on Ricoeur's theory of imagination, we can project the metaphors of the New Testament as disclosers of possibilities for human existence which seem and are beyond the limit of what our ordinary language and experience might imagine. I do not mean that religious metaphors present a new, supernatural world wherein we may escape the world in which we live. I do mean that metaphor *redescribes* ordinary reality in order to *disclose* a new, an extraordinary possibility for our lives. The New Testament contains a parable of Jesus that suggests an additional "text" for this entire study. "Therefore, every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."\(^{91}\) I will attempt such a new metaphorical reading of a biblical genre known as apocalypse.
A Rhetoric of Apocalyptic Consciousness

I want to show the relationship between Ricoeur's theory of imagination and metaphor and what I call a rhetoric of "apocalyptic consciousness." The connection can be made because metaphor is such an essential ingredient in all apocalyptic rhetoric. Also, Ricoeur's definition of metaphor as a redescription of reality coincides with a type of apocalypticism that I consider essential to any proper Christian preaching. Apocalyptic texts are frequent in the Bible, and I will argue for a different reality that is created by the metaphor of apocalyptic. What I attempt is a positive hope rather than the usual negative despair characteristic of much apocalypticism.

"Apocalypse" is a central New Testament genre. Whether apocalyptic demands demythologizing with Bultmann and Dodd, or compels recognition as "the mother of all Christian theology" with Kasemann, or the prophetic protest and sense for the struggle for historical justice sensed in apocalyptic by the liberation theologians, apocalypse remains a central New Testament genre. I will not attempt in this discussion to answer historical-critical questions on the characteristic of New Testament apocalyptic. Rather, I will abstract an "apocalyptic consciousness" which I consider necessary for metaphorical preaching. Note that any association of apocalyptic with
Ricoeur's definition is itself a metaphorical move, i.e., the asserting of similarity in dissimilarity.

In any event, a minimum "apocalyptic consciousness" rooted in metaphor will include apocalyptic's challenge to the status quo, explosive intensification, negativity, and hope for a new "not-yet" future. The tension of metaphor is matched with the intensity of apocalyptic to form the preacher's "apocalyptic consciousness." Such a consciousness is a challenge to any purely "individualized" understanding of the Christian event. The suggested view of salvation is far more than "saving your soul" or "getting to heaven." The "privatization" of salvation is a leftover from primitive, frontier revivalism that, while still providing impetus for evangelism, allows the preacher to escape, avoid, or ignore the genuinely public nature of Christianity as well as the oppressed, poor, suffering marginalized majority in the world.

To refuse an "apocalyptic consciousness" and to claim success as "God's chosen people" by baptizing thousands of converts into a culturally accommodated religion of the status quo is to evade responsibility as surely as those who court an end-of-the-world literal apocalypse are attempting to escape responsibility. Either move—to save the world one individual at a time or to devise cataclysmic schemes to
destroy the world--is to deny the public, corporate, communal nature of Christianity.

An apocalyptic consciousness serves as one corrective to any slackening of intensity for publicness, for the "not-yet" future, for the power of the negative, and for the power of the metaphorical "is/is not." Moreover, the presence of an "apocalyptic consciousness" negates the pretense of the arrogant certainty of all claims to total adequacy. In short, apocalyptic consciousness challenges all wisdom and all principles of order as a correlative to a "rhetoric of folly."

Apocalyptic rhetoric flourishes in times of crisis. "Terms like 'anomie' and 'aporia' recur in descriptions of the apocalyptic situation. Everything is lost. Not only answers but questions, meaning, and categories of meaning are all forfeit." In times of crisis, the old ways of understanding and practice no longer work. David Tracy argues that "... the larger crisis is likely to be ... in a tradition, a culture, or a language that can no longer simply move forward by means of its usual ways of experiencing, understanding, acting, or interpreting." Stephen Brown carries Tracy's argument even further: "Yet when sufficient anomalies arise, or when competing perspectives or root metaphors challenge the dominant one,
both old and new paradigms appear as metaphors until the old world image is reaffirmed or the new one replaces it."95

We live in such a crisis age. Our culture qualifies as one in which old and new paradigms struggle to define reality. We face something that is systemically awry in our culture, i.e., systemic distortion. To try to escape this reality either by romantic hyperbole or positivist fiat is to find oneself bound to old metaphors, and "trapped in two intellectually spent but culturally powerful languages, romantic expressivism and positivist scientism."96 I realize that many scholars are not prepared to invite any kind of Christian preacher to the conversation about our survival. Some do not want to think any longer about theology, for the religions seem to be spent forces. Some may want, like Richard Rorty, simply "to change the subject." Others have too many unhappy childhood memories of a moralistic religion. Still others are unable to overlook the appalling history of Christianity, with its litany of murder, inquisitions, political expediency, holy wars, obscurantisms, persecutions, and exclusivisms. While these ethical charges have to be taken seriously, the explicitly Christian offer of an authentic existence within community deserves a hearing.

We simply need to appropriate the warning of David Tracy:
Whoever comes to speak in favor of religion and its possibilities of enlightenment and emancipation does not come with clean hands nor with a clear conscience. If interpreters of religion come with any pretense to purity, they should not be listened to. If religious thinkers will not combat the obscurantism, exclusivisms, and moral fanaticisms within their own religious tradition, how can the rest of us take them seriously as providing new strategies for resistance?97

The proposal of fundamentalist Christianity that the hope for survival lies in the past and in the old seems to me false and illusory. The Garden of Eden cannot be re-entered for we are not innocent. Rather, as Abraham Joshua Heschel insisted: "Not all are guilty, but all are responsible."98 Responsible in this case means "responsible."

Crisis times call for rhetorical homiletics more radical than the secure and tamed rhetoric of the fundamentalists. In light of the failure of the reduction of religion to the revelational positivism called fundamentalism, which proclaims intellectually untenable tenets, I ask for a different strategy. In particular I argue for a Christian proclamation that has the potential to create a new world, i.e., a rhetoric of apocalyptic consciousness.

While rejecting fundamentalism with its traditional apocalyptic mindset, there is a sense in which any relevant preaching will have an apocalyptic consciousness. Such a
consciousness, as described within the parameters of a rhetoric of folly, does not share all the characteristics of biblical or secular apocalypticism. Much of the excess baggage of the apocalypticism of intertestamental Judaism is thrown out. For example, the element of determinism is not included in the apocalyptic consciousness. Mixon and Hopkins define biblical apocalyptic as "a narrative text reporting a vision of the end of things - all things - and the vision of a new world to come. The texts, appearing in times of crisis for the writers' people and containing allegorical symbols meaningful to the people but not to their oppressors, offer hope to the intended readers. Their message is that doom is certain for the existing system. God will effect the change; the oppressed need only await God's replacement of the present world."99

The proposed apocalyptic consciousness considers the preaching of Jesus as an appropriate model. Jesus was not a thoroughgoing apocalypticist, but he did display some features of apocalyptic thought: Notably, his idea of a new age about to break into the old reality. As Barry Brummett reminds us, "Apocalyptic predicts an impending change (the arrival of the Jewish Messiah or the return of Christ, nuclear war, ecological catastrophe, or civil disintegration) . . ."100 In addition, apocalyptic presages the reversal of the values of the status quo. (For
a clear example of the rhetoric of reversal, see the Beatitudes in Matthew 5). Finally, apocalyptic demonstrates that the old age is passing away. In David Buttrick's words, "The new eon of the Spirit will inevitably displace institutional securities of the present age."

In summary, apocalyptic consciousness proclaims that a new social reality is being created. There are no cosmic favorites, no atonement of violence, no Satan, no end-of-the-world doom and gloom. These traditional elements of apocalypticism are discarded. In place of apocalyptic gloom there is a radical hope. There is a rhetoric of reversal, resistance, and radicalism. The sacred cows are all swept away: national identity, religious affiliation, sexual pride, and racial make-up.

To proclaim a new social order means to abandon ecclesiastical accommodation in favor of a more radical ekklesia, a new-order, being-saved community in the world. Such a community is by no means an easy one to form. As Richard R. Niebuhr observes, we are all "radial" people; we internalize the slogans, images, attitudes, advertisements around us, and build a social world in which to live."

Apocalyptic consciousness and Gospel metaphors are both in tension with this present age: "Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand." The message of Christ is not the promotion of death, destruction, violence, and hatred, but an explicit
faith, a complete trust, and an unrestricted love. The future is still hope. The future is still open. There is much we can do.

Apocalyptic consciousness thrives on the old age/new age paradox. The open, uncertain future, known only by the Abba, sets persons free to engage in whatever conversation is taking place, and to propose a new social order or reality in place of the old one. The old order will not expire or be destroyed in apocalyptic splendor, but the audacity of the proclamation puts the "powers that be" on notice. We preach a gospel of new reality.

Apocalyptic consciousness, without blinking in the face of corporate evil, accepts a bold, fearless responsibility for the world. Such a proclamation counters the gnostic escapism of much biblical/secular apocalypticism, as well as the feeling of powerlessness that such apocalypticism promotes. Walker Percy's Lancelot and The Second Coming, for example, depict an out of control society in which nothing can be done. In contrast, the preacher of folly and apocalyptic consciousness is not caught in the illusion of power and success, nor deluded by the myths of the superhero so prevalent in American society, nor deluded by our frontier metaphors and myths, secular as well as religious.
Finally, apocalyptic consciousness projects a theme of reversal. In the words of Jesus: "Some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last." The radical inversion of values and understanding and status is perhaps the most prominent feature of the New Testament. Jesus made as much clear in the paradigmatic text of his ministry: "For the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed." Paul echoes the same reversal: "For consider your call, brethren; not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth; but God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong, God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are."

Foucault's concept of power and knowledge seems to indicate that the discourse of others, such as the poor and the oppressed, has been systematically excluded. And yet we live in an age when the voices of the others multiply: the hysterics and mystics speaking through Lacan; the mad and the criminals allowed to speak by Foucault; the primal peoples defended and interpreted by Eliade; the dead
whose story the victors still presume to tell; the repressed suffering of peoples cheated of their own experience by modern mass media; the poor, the oppressed, and the marginalized—all those considered "nonpersons" by the powerful but declared by a great reversal to be God's own special children.

At the very least, the rhetoric of apocalyptic consciousness involves all persons in the struggle for individual, social, political, and religious liberation. Flannery O'Connor's short stories illustrate the apocalyptic consciousness of reversal. For example, both "Everything That Rises Must Converge" and "Revelation" reverse and transgress our ordinary world of values.\footnote{110} The vulnerability of O'Connor offers a stark contrast to the secular apocalypticism of Walker Percy; an atonement of love not of violence. It is an apocalyptic consciousness of this kind that I advocate in a rhetorical homiletics of folly.

Metaphorical Sermons

The combining of Paul Ricoeur's definition of rhetoric as the redescription of reality with a stripped-down apocalyptic consciousness suggests a rhetorical/metaphorical model for preaching. For example, the history of Western Christianity requires an acceptance of responsibility for the subjugation of women. The patriarchal metaphors of the
Bible and the Church indicate the depth of the oppression. The preacher can suggest an entirely different way of perceiving the world, and a whole new world, a world where women are equal, by changing the dominant metaphor for God from father to mother.

From this perspective I develop a metaphorical sermon combining the metaphor of Jesus as a mother hen with apocalyptic consciousness. For example, in Luke 13:31-35, Jesus refers to himself as a mother hen, but he calls Herod an "old fox." I have juxtaposed antithetical metaphors to set up a contrast between powerlessness and power:

Oh, how easy it is to pin all our hopes on the power we can see. Maybe that's the attraction of television preachers. The rich, powerful, charismatic preacher exudes power to people without power. Or, perhaps, that's why we donate so much money to political candidates because we believe POLITICS IS POWER. Even in church we buy the illusions that MONEY IS POWER or POLITICS IS POWER or STATUS IS POWER. Even in the church we choose the FOX over the HEN. Move over old fox: There's some more folks wanting in the hen house. And with all the power-grabbing and oppression going on, we fail to see a different-order reality; a reality of Jesus that claims Herod power is not power at all.131

The sermon evokes metaphors that structure our everyday concepts as well as metaphors that violate our status quo. For example, MONEY IS POWER is a metaphorical concept structuring the consumption ethic of our culture.

The metaphorical concept, MONEY IS POWER, is expressed in such everyday sayings as "money talks" and "he who has
the gold makes the rules." Brown maintains, "The decline of the Church relative to the marketplace involved a decline of religious vocabularies in favor of commercial ones." Likewise, greed has become, not a deadly sin, but a capitalist virtue, so much so that the antagonist in the movie *Wall Street* tells a meeting of his corporation's stockholders, "Greed is good."

Another example of a metaphor capable of structuring everyday concepts is the metaphorical concept POLITICS IS POWER. One common expression indicative of the POLITICS IS POWER metaphor: "It's not what you know but who you know." A more involved acting out of the POLITICS IS POWER metaphor is the Church's frequent forays into the political arena, liberals and fundamentalists alike. Current political debates enlivened by religious political involvements include abortion, school prayer, creationism, nuclear disarmament, and pornography. As I suggest in my sermon sample, "Even in the Church we choose the FOX over the HEN."

The metaphor which violates the status quo and offers a new description of the reality is the JESUS IS A MOTHER HEN metaphorical concept. The preacher offers a metaphor of folly, the powerlessness of a hen overcoming the power of Herod. The preacher offers hope through the vision of a different-order world.
A variation on the power vs. powerlessness model is the contrast between the Pharaoh of Egypt and two unknown, low-status Hebrew midwives (Exodus 1:6-19 and 1:22-2:10). When the opportunity came to disclose opposition to the oppressive power of Pharaoh, the no-status, no-power women step forward. A sample paragraph from one of my sermons suggests the metaphorical treatment of the text:

Of all things, the Hebrew nannies stood up to the oppressor. Not the Hebrew army. Not some biblical Rambo or Terminator. Not even Dick Tracy or Superman. But two slave women refused to bow down and cave in to Pharaoh. Face it, somebody has to stand up. Funny thing about power-brokers. Sometimes it doesn't take much to back them down. And there have always been those brave souls from the past who have stood tall. There's Shiprah and Puah, our Hebrew nannies; and Gideon, the poor man who thought he was the least person in the least tribe of all Israel; and Rahab, the whore of Jericho who helped the spies. And there are others. Dietrich Bonhoeffer praying before his execution by the Gestapo, and Gandhi in India, and Rosa Parks in Birmingham (Actually she sat down but her act caused a whole people to stand tall).\textsuperscript{113}

The deliberate choice of the contemporary metaphor, "nannies," to describe the Hebrew midwives, accentuates the awful gap between the powers that be in our own racist society and the treatment that blacks receive. Perhaps remembering that to be a white American is also to belong to a history that nearly destroyed one people (the North American Indians), and enslaved and discriminated against another people (the blacks) will be a disturbing metaphor that remakes a whole new world, i.e., a world free of racial
prejudice. This is not, however, a denial of the "is" and "is not" tension of the metaphor, or the harshness of the status quo.

Conclusion

I have identified the principal language of a "rhetoric of folly" as metaphor. I have also applied selected theories and sub-theories of metaphor to the preaching event. I have argued that the distinction of literal language or truth is an illusion, and that metaphor is not reducible to some literal paraphrase. I have accepted the concept of "limit", and in particular the limit-language of metaphor as a way of redescribing reality. In the sense of disclosing new worlds and new meanings, we consider metaphor to have epistemic value. Using these premises, we can now demonstrate how metaphor conceptualizes the Christian view of the world, and how the preacher proclaims his/her message metaphorically.
ENDNOTES


10. Lakoff and Johnson, Metaphors We Live By; Paul Ricoeur, The Rule of Metaphor; and Richard Harvey Brown, Society as Text.

12. Timothy Binkley, "On the Truth and Probity of Metaphor," in Johnson, Philosophical Perspectives on Metaphor, 140. Contrary to traditional understandings of metaphor as a perversion of literal language, some metaphors: a) need not involve false or nonsensical uses of language, b) can be used to state propositions, and c) can have their truth-value discerned the same way truth-value is discerned for literal claims. Metaphor though often considered parasitic on literal language, is not inferior or substandard or incapable of having truth value. Literal language is not more precise than metaphorical language. As a matter of fact, precision is not a quality of expression but of explanation. Neither is literal language a more exact way of describing reality (147).

13. Peter Conrad and Joseph W. Schneider, Deviance and Medicalization: From Badness to Sickness (St. Louis: The C. V. Mosby Company, 1980), 1. Conrad and Schneider present "an analysis of the historical transformations of definitions of deviance from 'badness' to 'sickness'" and discuss "the consequences of these changes" (1).


17. Johnson, Philosophical Perspectives on Metaphor, 12.


20. Draper, Authority, 22.

21. Wayne C. Booth, "Ten Literal 'Theses,'" Critical Inquiry 5 (1978):176. Booth argues for ten theses about metaphor: 1. What metaphor is can never be answered with a single answer. 2. Context is essential to what metaphor says or means or does. 3. The listener's participation in the metaphor is part of what is communicated. 4. The meaning of most metaphors is far richer than previously acknowledged. 5. While context is essential to metaphor, context is itself open to multiple meanings. 6. Judgments of value are a necessary part of metaphoric meaning. 7. Metaphor elicits judgments of the speaker's character. 8. Metaphors involve questions of intent, judgments of character, and judgment of cultures. Thus, metaphor goes far beyond matters of rhetorical craft. 9. The creation of alternative metaphoric visions to rival and improve upon existing visions is a healthy exercise in our culture. 10. Resources available to the critic who would judge characters and cultures is far richer than just literary criticism.

22. Cited by David Tracy, Plurality and Ambiguity, 57.


26. Richards, The Philosophy of Rhetoric, 94.


29. Sallie McFague, Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 31. McFague's metaphorical theology opposes literalism of all kinds. She suggests eight characteristics of metaphorical thinking: ordinariness, incongruity, indirection, skepticism, judgment, unconventionality, surprise, and transformation or revolution. McFague also is representative of a theological consensus which regards the parables of Jesus as metaphors. Other scholars who have basically the same view include Amos N. Wilder, Robert W.

30. Among theologians who consider Jesus as a parable of God are John Dominic Crossan, Paul Ricoeur, and Leander Keck. Crossan asserts, "Jesus proclaimed God in parables, but the primitive church proclaimed Jesus as the Parable of God." [In Parables: The Challenge of the Historical Jesus (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), xiv]. Ricoeur suggests a similar conclusion: "As soon as the preaching of Jesus as the 'Crucified' is interwoven with the narratives of his 'deeds' and his 'sayings,' a specific possibility of interpretation is opened up, by what I call the establishment of a 'space' of intersignification; by a specific possibility, I mean the suggestion to read the proclamation of Jesus as 'the parable of God' into the proclamation by Jesus of God 'in parables.' To entirely disregard this possibility would require that we disconnect the parables from the Gospel." ["Biblical Hermeneutics," Semenia 4 (1975):105].


34. Richards, The Philosophy of Rhetoric, 91.

35. Brown, Society as Text, 97.

36. For the significance of metaphor in religion and theology, see notes 29, 30, and 31. For literature on the pervasiveness of metaphor in science, see Mary B. Hesse, Models and Analogies in Science (Notre Dame: University of


38. See Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, trans. Everson Buchanan (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), 8. Ricoeur defines 'polysemy' as "the property of words in natural language of having more than one meaning," and 'ambiguity,' as "the character of the discourse itself as opened to several interpretations." Symbols are rooted in reality at a cosmic, prelinguistic level, and symbols give roots in the cosmos and lived world to metaphor. See also R. H. Brown, *Society as Text*, Ernesto Grassi, *Rhetoric as Philosophy*, and David Tracy, *Plurality and Ambiguity*.


40. See Richard Harvey Brown for a detailed analysis of the public/private polarization and the effects of privatization on the political realm. Also see Tracy's discussion of Derrida in *Plurality and Ambiguity*, 56-60.

41. William Meuhl, "The Pulpit's Lost Dimensions," The Mullins Lectures on Preaching (unpublished lectures, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, n.d.). Meuhl argues that preaching suffers from a loss of creativity. In an attempt to make the gospel literal and simple, preachers lost the complexity of truth. Meuhl's insistence on combining creativity with judgment has interesting parallels to Richard Rorty's "agents of love" and "agents of judgment."


44. Scult, 225.

45. Scult, 225.

46. David Tracy, Plurality and Ambiguity, 90.


50. Tracy, The Analogical Imagination.

51. David Tracy, Blessed Rage for Order, 105-106.

52. Sallie McFague, Metaphorical Theology and David Tracy, "Metaphor and Religion."


54. Paul Ricoeur, "From Existentialism to the Philosophy of Language," Philosophy Today 17 (Summer, 1973):102. The entire issue is devoted to Ricoeur's articles.


57. Ambiguity is not a weapon of Satan, but a powerful, positive value for the preacher. See William Meuhl's Mullins' Lectures for an extension of the human tendency to treat creativity and productivity as elements of evil. See also I. A. Richard's The Philosophy of Rhetoric, 40.

58. Ricoeur, "From Existentialism to the Philosophy of Language," 105.


60. Richards, The Philosophy of Rhetoric, 93.


70. Ricoeur, The Rule of Metaphor, 85.


77. Ricoeur, The Rule of Metaphor, 147. See also Mark Johnson, Philosophical Perspectives on Metaphor, 39-41.


80. Johnson, Philosophical Perspectives on Metaphor, 40.

81. Ricoeur, The Rule of Metaphor, 149.


83. Johnson, Philosophical Perspectives on Metaphor, 25.


94. Tracy, Plurality and Ambiguity, 7.
95. Brown, Society as Text, 115.

96. Tracy, Plurality and Ambiguity, 50.

97. Tracy, Plurality and Ambiguity, 85-86.

98. Tracy, Plurality and Ambiguity, 69. William Sloane Coffin makes the same connection: "If it's hell to be guilty, it's certainly scarier to be responsible--responsible, able to respond to God's visionary, creative love." [The Courage to Love, (3)]. Responsible is defined as capable of responding: capable of facing the interruptions in our history; capable of discarding any scenarios of innocent triumph written, as always, by victors; capable of identification with whole peoples who have been oppressed,--capable of maintaining a positive apocalyptic consciousness in the midst of the war drums.


103. Walker Percy, Lancelot: A Novel (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1977); and The Second Coming (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1980). See especially Lancelot, 178f. Lancelot tells his priest, Percival, that when the revolution comes, "We'll take the grail you didn't find but we'll keep the broadsword and the great warrior Archangel of Mont-Saint-Michel and our Christ will be the stern Christ of the Sistine. And as for your sweet Jesus . . . and your love feasts and peace kisses: there is no peace . . . Don't talk to me of love until we shovel out the shit."


CHAPTER SIX

THE CREATIVE POWER OF METAPHOR IN HOMILETICS

Thus far I have argued that a rhetoric for homiletics should be a "rhetoric of folly." Also, I have insisted that metaphor, as a redescription of reality, is one possible language for a "rhetoric of folly." There remains one step in the movement toward a rhetorical/metaphorical model for homiletics: a discussion of the possible epistemic value of metaphor. Therefore, in Chapter Six I shall examine recent philosophical and rhetorical discussions concerning the cognitive force of metaphor. The basis of my work is a chastened homiletic realism that combines aspects of Richard Rorty's pragmatism with James W. Hikins and Kenneth Zagacki's "minimal objectivism." I then make three basic claims: 1) Metaphor creates character and authority, 2) Metaphor creates community, and 3) Metaphor creates concepts by which we live. The work of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson will be extended to the discipline of homiletics in the discussion of claim number three.

The philosophical and rhetorical research on metaphor has asserted that there is a certain tension involved in metaphor, that metaphor is indispensable to all disciplines, that metaphor occurs in the relation of the utterance to the total speech situation in which it occurs, that metaphor
"permeates all discourse," that metaphor is a fundamental principle of thought and action, and that metaphor is irreducible to any supposed literal meaning. I will argue that these assertions concerning metaphor have particular practical value for the preacher as rhetorician.

A number of scholars have insisted on the positive, creative value of metaphor. Binkley maintains that there is no pure core of literal meaning, and, therefore, there is no reason to treat the literal as an ideal against which the metaphor is to be measured.¹ R. H. Brown insists that all knowledge is metaphorical.² Gerald W. Casenave claims that metaphor is fundamentally a world-structuring discourse.³ Ted Cohen points to the aesthetic, cognitive, ethical, and intimate values of metaphor. He maintains that community is a necessary precondition for metaphor.⁴ I believe the converse also to be true: metaphor is a necessary condition for community. Loewenberg asserts that metaphor can be creative in changing our world.⁵ Also, metaphor enables us to see old concepts in terms of new insights. Such a concept of metaphor could be valuable for the preacher attempting to resurrect "dead" metaphors in biblical texts. S. I. Hayakawa suggests that language changes and grows through metaphor.⁶ Paul deMan asserts that metaphor can be
seen as operating in the shaping and extending of our understanding.⁷ Earl R. MacCormac, in *Metaphor and Myth in Science and Religion*, argues that both science and religion are erected upon hypothetical root metaphors about the nature of the world and human experience.⁸ Also, both use metaphors to convey ideas about the known, thus science and religion both have metaphorical bases.

In a similar argument, Casenave suggests that the fundamental nature of language is discourse: "The cognitive significance of metaphor is grounded in the cognitive nature of language. In radical metaphor the very fabric of the world order, the rules of comparison and collection, is being reworked . . . Metaphor is a response to an opening of a new vista of what is. It is the holding open of a different perspective which has been discovered."⁹ A similar view of metaphor as perspective or point-of-view has been argued by R. H. Brown, in his *A Poetics for Sociology*.¹⁰

C. O. Hartman, in "Cognitive Metaphor," poses the question, "How does the bric-a-brac of things we call 'the world' become a world, a cosmos, a system?"; and suggests the answer, "that our minds, our senses, and our language create that system by a process one ought to call metaphorical."¹¹ Hartman bases his conclusion on Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* and the work of gestalt psychol-
ogists: "Cognitive metaphor is analogical . . . Metaphor not only lets us know, it helps us know what we know: to understand."\(^{12}\)

The epistemological issue of metaphor is due partly to the enduring influence of Max Black's "Metaphor." Black argued that there were insights expressible metaphorically but not literally, and that interaction metaphors are not reducible to literal language without loss of cognitive content. He also claimed that "It would be more illuminating in some of these cases to say that the metaphor creates the similarity rather than to say that it formulates some similarity antecedently existing."\(^{13}\)

Given this account of metaphor, scholars have attributed creative power to metaphor as it appears in science, philosophy, religion, sociology, or other forms of discourse. Black's claim that metaphor is not reducible to literal speech means there must be a distinctive cognitive function for metaphor beyond mere representation. In this sense metaphor allows us to see what previously was not seen, and to say what previously could not be said. Metaphor's "is/is not" quality shows remarkable affinity to the rhetorical qualities of secrecy/disclosure.\(^{14}\) Metaphor creates a new organization among our concepts by bringing together what has not previously been associated. "Speech is creative in its metaphorical aspect, by virtue of
metaphor's power to restructure our conceptual framework.\textsuperscript{15}

Take an example. Suppose I am asked to describe preaching in words drawn as much as possible from the vocabulary of agriculture. These latter terms determine a system of implications which will proceed to control my description of preaching the gospel. To paraphrase Black, the agriculture vocabulary filters and transforms: it not only selects, it brings forward aspects of preaching that might not be seen at all through another medium.\textsuperscript{16} To describe preaching as if it were the planting of a crop is to exclude, by the choice of metaphor, all the more negative understandings of preaching as "harangue" or "manipulation" or "emotionalism."

In sum, every version of the irreducibility and creative, cognitive value of metaphor claims that metaphor performs a unique function, and, therefore, cannot be replaced by a paraphrase, literal language or conceptual language without losing the distinctive cognitive content. There is, however, a problem rooted in the epistemology and ontology of language. The background for this problem, at least in rhetoric, has been the debates revolving around the claim, "rhetoric is epistemic." Neither the objectivists nor the relativists have made much genuine progress in this inconclusive debate. In reviewing the literature that has
made up the debate about the nature of knowledge, reality, and truth, I believe the opposite sides are closer than they may appear. I detect a movement toward a middle ground. Indeed, a number of scholars, among them Richard Crable, Richard J. Bernstein, Stanley Deetz, Mark Johnson, Keith Erickson, and Walter Fisher, have proposed alternatives to the current deadlock within the system of Cartesian dualism.\textsuperscript{17} While some have attempted to solve the problem by not dealing with epistemology at all, others have tried to move beyond objectivism and subjectivism, and Rorty has put forth an anti-epistemology. I will argue, however, for a third view which incorporates objectivism and relativism. I attempt to combine the insights of both while avoiding the common error of each.

There is something beyond the subject to which language must conform (this is the truth of objectivism). This something is not the objects, because they are within the sway of the subject (the truth of intellectualism). With Johnson and Erickson I argue that metaphors are not merely the product of the ego's power of imagination, but are generated by beings outside the subject.\textsuperscript{18}

The attempt to incorporate portions of objectivism with portions of relativism I have labelled as a "chastened homiletical realism." Chasten is a theological word meaning punishment for wrong doing. I use the term as a metaphor
for the need of homiletics to move away from a belief in possession of certain truth to a less authoritarian position.

A Chastened Homiletic Realism

Earlier, I employed arguments from the "rhetoric of inquiry" to critique the Cartesian starting point of traditional homiletics. I did not, however, accept the ontological claims made by, among others, Rorty and Schrag. While I do reject the literalist, positivist Christian fundamentalism, I support what I label as a "husk theory" of foundationalism. In short, in agreement with James W. Hikins and Kenneth S. Zagacki, I propose "rhetorical realism" as the philosophical base of my homiletical model. As already stressed, I am not authorizing rhetoric with the power of certainty. As Hikins and Zagacki assert: "We . . . contend that aspects of the world exist independent of human knowers and can, at least potentially, be discovered, described accurately, and known through communication."19

Hikins and Zagacki affirm some aspects of the rhetoric of inquiry movement: specifically, "... Nelson and Megill's proclivity to see 'every enterprise of research as a rhetorical project,' and, importantly, Schrag's concern that the new view be sensitive to communicative praxis, to pedestrian affairs as well as specialized concerns, and that it accommodate 'the contingency of social practices and the
conversational voice of mankind." In an extension of the acceptance of these three claims, I want to demonstrate how the rhetorical principles of Richard Rorty, as an example of the rhetoric of inquiry, applies to homiletical realism.

Rorty's attempt to undermine traditional philosophical assumptions has already been employed in this work as part of the attack on rationalist, Cartesian certainty. Now, I want to turn to a more explicit critique of Rorty's anti-epistemological stance. Janet Horne has offered the following summary of Rorty's position:

1. Knowledge is discursive, not absolute.

2. What constitutes knowledge is determined by one's community, rather than by correspondence to truth.

3. Since knowledge is discursive and ethnocentric, it is enhanced by diversity of participation in the conversation.

4. Competing views of knowledge emerge in the form of competing, or alternative vocabularies which gain acceptance in a variety of ways--ways primarily related to their discursive nature.

Knowledge is not absolute. Any revisionist homiletical model will of necessity accept this proposition. Dogmatism, intolerance, claims of certainty, even for objectivists like Hikins and Zagacki, are simply unacceptable. Pluralism is embraced as the only way to move forward. Rorty's "... somebody may come up with a better idea," is matched with Dorothy Van Ghent's "something else might be the case."
Hikins and Zagacki, for example, repeatedly deny that their epistemology is positivist in nature: "... we are not suggesting that one correct perspective can ultimately be determined ..."\(^{24}\) We do not "... authorize rhetoric with the power to determine ultimate, objective truth."\(^{25}\) Again, "... arguers are often guilty of entering debate with the assumption that since they possess objective truth, all disputants should, therefore, defer to their authority. But advocating rhetorical realism does not necessarily commit one to this sort of dogmatism."\(^{26}\) "While making claims to know objectively at least some things [rhetorical realists] recognize that any given item of knowledge may be cast aside tomorrow as better theories and methods for approximating reality develop."\(^{27}\)

Hikins and Zagacki compare favorably in these examples to Rorty's pragmatist position:

From a pragmatist point of view ... there is always room for improved belief, since new evidence, or new hypotheses, or a whole new vocabulary, may come along.\(^{28}\)

To suggest that knowledge is not absolute, however, does not of necessity commit one to a rejection of all objective reality. As David Tracy asserts, "Only the mindless would want to rid our culture of the emancipatory discoveries of Western reason."\(^{29}\) In accord with Hikins and Zagacki, I claim at least a minimal objectivism and
foundationalism even for the rhetorical preacher. To be clear, such a claim is not synonymous with the naive realism of fundamentalists or the positivism of biblical literalists. For example, to continue to hold a literal interpretation of the Genesis account of creation is impossible for anyone who accepts the findings of modern science. By the same token, a literalist theory of scriptural interpretation seems no longer a viable option in light of the results of modern historical study of the scriptures.\textsuperscript{30}

Thus, while granting Rorty's insistence that knowledge is never absolute, I maintain a basic rhetorical realism. I contend that while all knowledge is partial and inadequate, the rhetor discovers as well as creates. Even though all Christian truth-claims, beliefs, attitudes, values, and symbols are indirect and hence relative, reality does exist in objective ways and "is such as to bear description in some ways and not others."\textsuperscript{31}

On this view, an ultimate reality exists independent of human belief or unbelief. Among the various names ascribed to the Christian reality, I choose to use the most common--God. Accordingly I am expressing my belief (not ultimate, dogmatic, certain, or objective truth) that God exists now, existed before there were any humans to debate his/her existence, and will exist long after humans are extinct.
While the rhetoric employed to describe or disclose or mediate God cannot ever be proven to be accurate, "rhetoric is not herein defined by the accuracy of the claims about reality."32 I am asserting claims about reality from a Christian perspective: a pre-existent Being that has not been, and perhaps cannot be adequately explained, accounted for, described, or disclosed by any of the traditional Christian rhetoric. The pre-existent Logos is above and beyond all human words.

I am not, however, suggesting that my beliefs serve as warrants for my arguments. What I am presenting has much in common with the critical rationalism of C. Jack Orr. An important contention of Orr is that knowledge claims are "criticized in the name of absolute truth."33 What Orr offers is the possibility of an objective reality that can be and should be pursued but cannot be comprehended. "Objective reality, then, is beyond human apprehension, but exists in an independent and objective manner and is useful for the critique of socially constructed symbolic universes."34 The paradox of an epistemology based upon contingent knowledge and an ontology predicated on objective truth raises issues that are difficult, but not insurmountable.

To claim that Orr's objective reality is a delusion is of little value when the same criticism can be made of all
knowledge-claims. Besides, Orr also denies the existence of any certain knowledge. To live with doubt does not in and of itself predict or produce chaos. What is at stake here is a Christian limit-experience and limit-language that posits a mode of being-in-the-world with explicit faith in, complete trust in, and unrestricted commitment to the ultimate worthwhileness of human existence. An explicit and full recognition of this faith, trust, and commitment as the common property shared by secularists and modern Christians is perhaps the key to this discussion. In making the connection between secular and Christian faith as the belief in ultimate significance of our lives in this world, I am not attempting to constitute traditional Christian cognitive beliefs as evidence to be endorsed by everyone. Rather, my fundamental attitude toward reality is the same attitude shared implicitly or explicitly by secular contemporaries. No more than they am I insisting on pie-in-the-sky supernaturalism or positivist Christian fundamentalism. I am, however, suggesting that the Christian thinker holds that a proper understanding of the explicitly Christian faith can render intellectually coherent and symbolically powerful that common secular faith in worthwhileness that we share.35

Therefore, I uphold a minimal objectivism based upon the independent reality manifested in the Logos mysticism of St. John. Furthermore, I believe that the Christian
preacher can proclaim a message to Christians and non-
Christians that gives credibility to the meaning and truth
of the central Christian metaphors. In the words of Tracy:

Neither supernaturalism nor pure secularism, neither
classical theism nor atheism, neither an exclusivist
christology nor the rejection of Jesus the Christ can
allow us to reflect appropriately or to represent
adequately our fundamental faith in the ultimate
worthwhileness of our present action.\textsuperscript{36}

More specifically, I wish to deny the secular negation of
any real ground of meaning outside ourselves which assures
that faith is not mere illusion. To deny the truth of
Christianity is not to prove it false. "I have come to
believe," admits Barry Brummett, "that philosophies are not
directly arguable, that they are matters of faith, grounded
in basic premises and belief systems."\textsuperscript{37} On this reading
Christian preaching has the same invitation to the conver-
sation as all other truth-claims.

To summarize this section, I contend that while all
knowledge is partial and inadequate, the rhetor discovers as
well as creates. Metaphor is the principal component in
this creative, inventive process. We are now aware that
metaphors and other tropes are "necessary and not just
nice," since they are indispensable to constituting the
basic subject matter of preaching and to forming theories
about it. Metaphor is our fundamental way of noting
similarity and difference, of illuminating the unknown by
the known. As a minimal objectivist who utilizes metaphor, I claim that while all beliefs, attitudes, values and symbolic interactions are indirect and thus relative, reality does exist in objective ways and can be partially described and structured through metaphor. Now, we can examine specific ways in which metaphor is creative.

**Metaphor Creates Character**

Character as used in this discussion is an extension of the rhetorical concept of ethos, to include the notion of character as well as the concept of character in metaphor. Cal Logue expresses credibility as "speaker status." As Andrew King explains, "Speakers exhibit visual and verbal signs that prompt their listeners to make judgments about their right to communicate." Speaker credibility, I will argue, depends partially upon whether or not the speaker's metaphors are accepted. While members of a congregation tend to share root metaphors as well as common attitudes, beliefs, or expectations, their homogeneity cannot be taken for granted. The preacher still has an ethical responsibility to choose her metaphors with care. Wayne Booth cautions that "to understand a metaphor is by its very nature to decide whether to join the metaphorist or reject him, and that is simultaneously to decide either to be shaped in the shape his metaphor requires or to resist."
A preacher, in the sense of one who tells the story of the gospel through the use of selected metaphors, derives authority in ways different from other kinds of speakers. For example, a preacher who depends for authority upon the "inerrant" Bible is asking his/her congregation to accept his/her proposition or theory that the Bible is inerrant and authoritative. The metaphorist, on the other hand, does not ask for any external authority to provide a prop for his/her proclamation. He/She offers metaphors for the consideration of the audience and wins or loses assent accordingly.

The preacher, on this reading, is not demanding allegiance to a certain proposition, i.e., an inerrant Bible, but inviting participation in a certain vision of life, a metaphor for reality. As Booth maintains:

All the great poets seem to be saying something like this: my vision of what stands for human happiness is itself the activity of sharing pictures of what human life is or can be. Metaphor in this view is not a means to other ends, but one of the main ends of life; sharing metaphors becomes one of the experiences we live for. Booth recognized that the existence of a small group of great religions can be traced to the clash of hundreds of metaphors for the relationship of humans to God. Most of these metaphors "have been tested in the great philosophical--that is, critical--wars and found wanting."
The preacher, therefore, faces the choice of accepting traditional Christian metaphors or the risk of presenting, without any credibility, alternative metaphors. Perhaps I should make a distinction here between initial credibility and derived credibility. Obviously, a preacher has a substantial amount of initial credibility within his/her own denominational structure. This initial credibility is wrapped in twenty centuries of Christianity, the accepted authority of God, the Bible, and the Church. A preacher may decide to always proclaim a message consistent with this tradition. For example, take Kathleen Hall Jamieson's evaluation of the metaphors of Pope Paul VI: "By employing the metaphors in which Christ, the apostles, and nineteen centuries of popes have expressed Catholicism, Paul VI implies that he has preserved the tradition of the Church and, hence, is a legitimate heir of Peter . . . Paul's metaphors endorse ancestral doctrine."⁴⁶

In the example of Pope Paul, we observe a preacher embracing both an established rhetorical repertoire and a pre-existent initial authority. Of course, one could argue that the Pope's credibility is of such a status as to trivialize my distinctions. Place the Pope, however, in the pulpit of a country Baptist church in the deep South, and initial credibility is lost, and only that which he can derive will count.
My major concern in this section is to illustrate that the preacher may derive credibility from his/her choice of metaphors. Even Pope Paul receives additional derived authority by the traditional metaphors he employs. "As a result, it is unlikely," argues Jamieson, "that Paul's metaphors will tantalize with their freshness, but likely that the audience will assign intended referents." For example, Paul's metaphor of the Church as a body will be naturally accepted by a Catholic audience with extended meanings: Christ is the head of the body. The Pope is Christ's vicar; the faithful are members of the body, the faithful, by sinning, can sever themselves from the body.

The metaphor, "the church is the body of Christ " sustains a traditional ethos for the preacher, building and sustaining his character as someone to be trusted. There is, however, a more risky and perhaps potentially more rewarding channel for the preacher: The quest of metaphors that would improve our culture, even at the expense of denominational loyalties. From my perspective the various denominations have each gathered around a favored cluster of metaphors and worship these idols (symbols) as the whole truth. To transcend these metaphorical wars in pursuit of a true ecumenicity and the end of all denominationalism would be a noble goal for any creator of metaphors (as well as a personal risk). The point is, to paraphrase Booth, that the
quality of Christianity will in part be measured both by the quality of the metaphors it induces or allows and the quality of the judges of metaphor that it educates and rewards.48

In Susan Lanser's discussion of the status of a narrator, she suggests that narrators may have both diegetic and mimetic authority.49 Diegetic authority is related to initial credibility in that it refers to the narrator's personality and reputation. Mimetic authority refers to the speaker's ability to tell a story. In other words, the narrator has a derived credibility which rises from the text or speech itself. All preachers "are subject to judgments about their mimetic authority, how well they tell the story."50 I would extend mimetic authority beyond how well the preacher tells the story to how well he/she chooses and employs metaphors. The preacher who does not make the arrogant assumption that everyone accepts the authority of the Church or the Bible, will, of necessity, attend to establishing the right to speak as well as the right to claim our attention.

Richard Sennett outlines two major schools of thought on the nature of authority.51 Max Weber views authority as based on how a person is perceived by subordinates. If a person is perceived as having legitimacy, that person possesses authority. There are three categories of
authority according to Weber: traditional authority, legal-rational authority, and charismatic authority. The second school, based on the thought of Sigmund Freud, emphasizes believability. In other words, people have a need to believe that someone has credibility. Sennett criticizes this approach as making authority static. As Gerard A. Hauser notes, "Rather than thinking of authority as a thing, Sennett suggests it is a social construct. It exists as an event in social time and space, the product of an interaction."

The preacher may profit from Sennett's observation concerning ethos. As a social construct, ethos does not depend on an audience believing that the speaker legitimately possesses certain attributes of character, nor does it rest on the needs of the audience. Ethos is a result of a dialogical partnership formed between the speaker and the audience. "Ethos is not a thing or a quality but an interpretation that is the by-product of speaker-audience interaction."

Hauser suggests that ethos has several significant features: 1) It is developed in the message "... and is the resulting product of choices about what to express and to omit ..." 2) It is dynamic in that ethos changes by the moment, and 3) It is a caused response. In other words,
we can guide interpretations of our credibility by the ways we argue, and this includes the metaphors we use.\textsuperscript{55}

The implications of ethos as a social construct are significant. The preacher is free to create authority within the text of the sermon rather than having total dependence upon an external authority. Also, the preacher has the opportunity to develop trust of his/her vision of reality through the metaphoric worlds he/she creates.

Aristotle's advice still rings true at this point: "... as a rule we trust men of probity more, ... and ... on points outside the realm of exact knowledge, where opinion is divided, we trust them absolutely. This trust, however, should be created by the speech itself, and not left to depend upon an antecedent impression that the speaker is this or that kind of man."\textsuperscript{56}

As I argued in Chapter One, the preacher is not engaged in the stating of propositions of certainty, but in claims that are probable, i.e., outside the realm of exact knowledge. Therefore, the preacher's task is to win allegiance to his metaphoric vision. Unless the audience grants the metaphor, there is no credibility or authority. In this interaction between preacher and congregation, there seems to be an epistemic authority which the audience can grant or refuse. Despite all claims of external authority, charismatic appeal, and the power of tradition, and
position, "the audience may refuse to mobilize its power, to withhold its power, or to extend its mandate to a spokesman."57

I have already noted that the preacher has traditional authority by virtue of a connection with twenty centuries of Christian tradition. Since legal-rational authority is often that of position, the example of the Pope illustrates that the preacher enjoys legal-rational authority. Also, the charisma of the preacher is an important factor. Mary F. Hopkins notes, "We are inclined to heed people we find charming. A narrator who seduces us by the force of his or her personality is likely to win our credence, a narrator we can admire--for honesty, for cheerfulness in adversity, for generous attitudes toward others, for example. Narrators who demonstrate characteristics to which most of us aspire will also succeed in getting us to accept their stories."58

The preacher may also establish credibility with a demonstration of metaphoric competence. When a preacher offers a metaphor, the congregation must judge on the basis of metaphoric authority. No physical evidence is relevant. Metaphorical proclamation offers a new vision, a different reality. There is no certainty based on an examination of the evidence. The audience can only decide whether or not to accept the vision, perspective, or reality of the metaphor, that is, the context that allows the metaphor to
exist. As Booth insists, metaphor can be judged with reference to a context. And as he argues, "The metaphors we care for most are always embedded in metaphorical structures that finally both depend on and constitute selves and societies. . . ."59

The context of the metaphor is the status quo or essential agreement on what constitutes the existing state of affairs or reality and the introduction of the counter status-quo metaphor. Take, for example, one of the parables of Jesus, i.e., the parable of the workers in the field. In utilizing the example of a parable, I am accepting the prevailing view of New Testament scholars that the parables of Jesus are metaphors.60 The parable opens with the world as we know it: workers, wages, jobs, and economics. The foreman agrees to pay the workers a denarius a day. Then other workers are hired to work for nine, six, three, and one hour. When the foreman pays the workers, everyone receives the same pay. The all-day workers received one denarius, and one-hour workers received a denarius. Now a different kind of world is introduced. No longer are we asked to deal in fairness, in a day's work for a day's pay. The new world introduced by Jesus is a free grace world where God is good rather than fair.

In somewhat less religious terms the audience is asked
to choose a world where time is not structured as money but as the generosity of the employer. In any event, what occurs is a reversal of values, a counter-offer to the status quo. A literary development of the story can be seen in C. S. Lewis' *The Great Divorce*. A large ghost from hell is on an excursion to heaven. He is appalled upon meeting a solid person in heaven who had been a murderer on earth. He demands his rights. The solid person tries to explain that it is all a matter of mercy, but the ghost cannot comprehend.

In summary, character and culture are both products of metaphor. The preacher is granted authority by virtue of tradition, position, and charisma. Derived credibility, however, is at least partially determined by the metaphors the preacher employs. The metaphors are context-dependent and the audience must decide whether or not to grant legitimacy and authority to the reality offered by the metaphor. The preacher may choose, like other rhetors, to rely upon traditional and positional authority. She may, on the other hand, risk offering new ways of viewing the world. As I will explore in the next section, the shared risk in offering the metaphor for the audience's unpacking, creates the potential of intimacy and community.
Metaphor Creates Community

Ted Cohen, in "Metaphor and the Cultivation of Intimacy," insists that the proper concern with metaphor has to do with meaning. He agrees with Ricoeur that metaphor has a meaning in addition to the literal meaning. Cohen, however, goes beyond Ricoeur to define metaphor as "peculiarly crystallized works of art." For Cohen the issue is not so much cognitivity but community. He drops the question of metaphor's cognitivity, and introduces what he calls "the achievement of intimacy." There are ways in which a metaphor-maker and a metaphor-appreciator, Cohen claims, are drawn closer to one another: "The speaker issues a kind of concealed invitation; the hearer expends a special effort to accept the invitation; and this transaction constitutes the acknowledgement of a community."

Cohen illustrates his point with an example, "the chairman is a bolshevik." He suggests that the listener, in this case the chairman, has to realize that the statement is a metaphor, and then he has to unpack the figure. "In doing this he moves through a network of assumptions, hypotheses, and inferences, at the core of which is the literal sense of the expression and some part of which overlaps the complex gone through earlier in achieving his realization that the utterance was a metaphor." The rule, according to Cohen,
is that the metaphor-maker and the chairman "become an intimate pair."\textsuperscript{66} "The sense of close community results not only from the shared awareness that a special invitation has been given and accepted, but also from the awareness that not everyone could make that offer or take it up."\textsuperscript{67}

In the dual process of identification and interpretation, the chairman makes assumptions about what the speaker believes and about what the speaker believes about what the listener believes. As Cohen points out, "A figurative use can be inaccessible to all but those who share information about one another's knowledge, beliefs, intentions, and attitudes."\textsuperscript{68} According to this understanding, metaphor functions as a boundary which defines the community.

Cohen also argues that metaphors are much like jokes. The property that jokes share in common with metaphors is the capacity to form or acknowledge community and establish intimacy between the teller and the hearer. The identification and interpretation of a joke is much like the same process in metaphor. "This must be related to the fact that often a paraphrase fails to do the job of its metaphor in much the same way that an explanation fails to replace a joke."\textsuperscript{69}

While Cohen is right to call our attention to the metaphor-joke parallels, I do not believe he is suggesting
that all metaphors are comic in nature. In fact, communication research suggests that on certain occasions the use of humor reduces the credibility or status of a speaker. Cohen does insert a disclaimer in his conclusion: "Do not, therefore, suppose that jokes are always for shared amusement, or metaphors always for communal insight." Despite the modest disclaimer, Cohen comes out in favor of the idea of intimacy by insisting that metaphor creates community.

On the basis of Cohen's concept of metaphorical intimacy, I want to claim that the preacher as metaphor-maker is a primary player in the game which creates a particular church community. The metaphors of the preacher are an invitation for a congregation to enter into community. To demonstrate how completely given churches may embrace offered metaphors, consider applying Erving Goffman's definition of a total institution. Total institutions are those in which "all aspects of life are conducted in the same place and under the same single authority. They are places in which one's activities are always in the company of large batches of similar others, where time is tightly scheduled, where there are explicit rules and a body of officials, all according to a single overall plan."
A church, with an authority centered in the pastor, meets at least some of the criteria of a total institution. For example, the autocratic preacher serves as the basic authority, and like the Puritans of old, often tries to enforce rigid rules upon the church members that cover every aspect of life. While church members are free to come and go, there are explicit rules and a body of officials. It is a narrow and constricted world in which the members of the congregation are uniform. At least part of the reason for such uniformity lies in the mutual acceptance of the preacher's ruling metaphors. Metaphors are central to the preacher's ability to shape and control the reality of his congregation. For example, a charismatic preacher insisting on the metaphor, THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A TONGUE OF FIRE, creates a situation in which the faithful can be validated only by speaking in tongues. The literalizing of the metaphor becomes the sign that a person is a genuine believer. The point is that metaphor helps to create community. Once accepted by the congregation, the metaphors become the reality of the particular community.

Metaphors allow us to know and experience reality by constructing a particular reality for us. Thus metaphors affect our thought and experience of reality. Metaphors prescribe how we are to act. In other words, we act out or perform our metaphors. For example, a Christian who has
accepted the metaphoric concept, THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A WAR, will perform differently from the Christian who perceives the Christian LIFE AS A WEDDING.

Thus, metaphor is a way of knowing. The preacher can use metaphor to construct a different reality for his audience. But the focus is on the invitation to participate: An invitation to intimacy, a shared view of reality, the making of a community. Metaphor possesses the power to form community and intimacy between the preacher and the congregation. A preacher becomes responsible for the metaphors he/she uses, and is given or refused authority on the basis of the audience's response to those metaphors.

Metaphor Creates Concepts

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson claim that metaphor is "pervasive in everyday life . . . thought and action." Also, they claim, "Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature." In homiletical tradition, a preacher always needs a text. Therefore, my text for the last section of Chapter Six is the claim of Lakoff and Johnson: our conceptual system is largely metaphorical. Lakoff and Johnson insist with Ricoeur and Richards and others that all language is essentially metaphoric. It puts into tensional
relationships words and the objects to which those words refer, thereby structuring our world.

Our conceptual system, however, is not usually a part of everyday awareness. In order to create awareness, Lakoff and Johnson offer a series of examples to give some idea of what it means for a concept to be metaphorical. One example is the metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR:

Your claims are indefensible.
He attacked every weak point in my argument.
His criticisms were right on target.77

Lakoff and Johnson are not implying that arguments and wars are the same. "The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another."78 Therefore, argument is partially structured, understood, performed, and talked about in terms of war. Lakoff and Johnson make an important connection about arguments and war at this point: We talk about arguments as wars "because we conceive of them that way--and we act according to the way we conceive of things."79 In short, we perform our metaphors. We are actors and our metaphors are our lines, but as such, our metaphors also structure our performance.

Combining Lakoff and Johnson's claim that human thought processes are largely metaphorical with the consensus that Christianity consists of root and archetypal metaphors, we
arrive at the contention that Christian preaching by its very nature is metaphorical and not literal.

As David Tracy asserts, "That all major religions are grounded in certain root metaphors has become a commonplace in modern religious studies."\(^{80}\) Despite the emphasis on metaphor in theology, however, homiletics has virtually ignored metaphor. This work is a partial beginning toward correcting the oversight in homiletics of the significance of metaphor.

To get an idea of how metaphoric concepts are crucial to preaching, let us consider the metaphorical concept THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A WAR.\(^{81}\) I have chosen the WAR metaphor because violence is so much a part of the everyday life of our planet, and because the metaphor of war is prevalent in the Bible and Christian preaching in general. The metaphor allows us to conceptualize the Christian life in terms of something that we understand more readily, namely, physical conflict.

First, in a general sense fighting and war are commonplace on our planet. Our prospects of survival are partially related to our concepts of fighting and conflict. In a more specific sense, those of us who live in the South are the by-products of a violent spirit. The violent spirit of the South mixed with the military images of the Bible makes for a volatile religious experience.
According to historian Thomas L. Connelly, "Violence appears intrinsic to the Southern soul and the sheer mention of it can produce a host of images." Violence as used in this discussion is passion, strong feeling, the worship of physical force. "All of this is central to the Southern soul--and its religion." Dixie idolizes force and power in many forms: the football mythological hero, Paul "Bear" Bryant; NASCAR race-car drivers; the adoration for a high school football coach in a small Southern town; the proverbial Good Ole Boy with his pick-up truck, 30.06 rifle, NRA membership card, and bumper sticker, "Get your heart in Dixie or get your ass out." In Connelly's words, "It is an idolatry of bigness, strength, force, extremism, and a mild disrespect for authority."

The shaping of the Southern self-image, still trapped in the enigma of losing the Civil War, gravitated toward power, bigness, and showy excess. As Connelly insists, "There is too much bravado in Dixie and its music, too much bluster and reinforcement of the male ego. Violence is an exercise of power." For our purposes, the point of this excursion into the soul of the South is that the religion of the South has imbibed at this same cup of violence. Churches compete with one another to be the biggest as they count their members in the thousands and spend millions of dollars on huge worship centers.
The battle metaphor, then, has deep affinities for Southern Christians rooted as it is in Bible, Gospel music, church, and culture. The performance of this metaphor has far-reaching implications: antagonism toward other Christian groups, dogmatic extremism, combative anti-ecumenical stances, and so forth.

In the second place, the Bible and the language of Christianity are replete with battle metaphors. The Christian experience is conceptualized with words like "war," "fight," "battle," "powers and principalities," "weapons," and "sword." The most obvious New Testament example of a battle metaphor is Ephesians 6:10-17, "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take the whole armor of God . . ." 86

In addition to the language of the Bible, Christian hymns contain numerous WAR metaphors. Examples could be cited in the hundreds, but a few of the more prominent metaphors should suffice:

A mighty fortress is our God.

Though hosts encamp around me,
firm in the fight I stand.

Am I a soldier of the cross?

Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
ye soldiers of the cross.

The Son of God goes forth to war.

Mine eyes have seen the coming of the Lord.87 (You can sing this song in Atlanta, but don't try to take an offering).

The most prominent and controversial of the battle hymns is "Onward Christian Soldiers." When the United Methodist hymnal committee voted to exclude the song from the proposed new hymnal, a holy war was declared. After months of strident rhetoric and threats, the war hymn was restored. "Onward Christian Soldiers" can be found on page 305 of the new United Methodist Hymnal, prominent evidence of the power of the WAR metaphor in Protestant Christianity.

The CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A WAR metaphor crosses theological spectrums. Sermons by mainline Protestant preachers are as likely to employ a cluster of war metaphors as the harangues of a fundamentalist Bible thumper. For example, Bruce W. Thielmann, senior minister of the First Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, concludes his sermon, "Christus Imperator," with apocalyptic imagery from the Bible and an extended WAR metaphor:

How do you see Jesus? I see him as the Book of Revelation sees him, riding on a white horse. His vesture is dipped in blood, and on that vesture . . .
is a name so holy that none of us can know it. And behind him are riding the legions of heaven . . .

They come regiment by regiment and army by army and legion by legion--all behind this One who wears crowns and crowns and whose Word is of such power that it is like a two-edged sword from his mouth.

Christians who accept the war metaphor as their dominant concept do not just talk about Christian living in terms of war. They see certain forces as their enemies, especially Satan. Battles are won or lost against the Evil One. The enemy's positions are attacked while Christian positions are defended. Many of the actions these Christians take are partially structured by the concept of war. Though there is no physical battle, there is a verbal and spiritual battle, and the structure of war reflects this reality.

In this sense the CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A WAR metaphor is one that many Christians live by in this culture; it structures the actions they perform in daily life. It also structures their perception of the world as an evil place dominated by Satan. The rhetoric of Christian apocalypticists can offer an example of how the war metaphor structures reality. Hal Lindsey, in The Liberation of Planet Earth, claims, "Satan calls the shots over this present world system." Lindsey produces a scenario based on the CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A WAR METAPHOR. Satan is the real, literal enemy, while God is the liberator. Lindsey asserts:
"With Satan as the legal ruler of this planet, it became one great big slave market and everyone born into it of Adam's seed is born a slave of Satan. This was clearly taught by Jesus and his disciples."\(^9\)

Another example of the war metaphor is a denominational quarrel. Both sides are trying to get what each of them wants, such as getting the other to accept a certain viewpoint on the Bible. Each sees itself as having something to win or lose, territory to establish and territory to defend. Both sides use whatever verbal means at their disposal—intimidation, threat, invoking authority, insult, belittling, challenging authority, evading issues, and even "rational reasons." But all these tactics are presented as reasons; for example:

Because the Bible says so (authority)

Because if you don't I'll fire you (threat)

Fundamentalist Southern Baptists have won a twelve year "holy war" for control of the denomination through the creation of a powerful symbol that does not even exist. Using biblical metaphors of THE BIBLE IS A SWORD type, the fundamentalists have forged a weapon that has proven unassailable: the inerrant Bible. In the course of the debate, fundamentalists have changed their weapon to an invisible one: only the original autographs are inerrant. According to theologian Martin Marty, "Biblical inerrancy is
not a doctrine, it's a weapon." Since there are no extant originals, the document is a prime example of socially created reality. For moderates who inject inerrancy, the only recourse appears as a frontal assault on the authority of the Bible, and such an attack is likely to be misunderstood or turned against the moderates.

Conservative Baptists have staked their claim to the high and holy ground. In addition, they have surrounded their invisible weapon--the inerrant Bible--with literalized biblical metaphors like substitutionary atonement and creationism. The point here is that not only the conception of the Christian life but also the way certain Christians carry it out is grounded in knowledge and experience of physical combat. In short, when a preacher conceives of, carries out, and describes the Christian life as a battle, his experience is grounded in the CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A WAR metaphor.

In general, then, the metaphor THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A WAR is prevalent in the Bible, Christian hymnody, sermons, and culture. The concept of life as a war structures everyday activity and understanding for those Christians who accept the metaphor. "The concept is metaphorically structured, the activity is metaphorically structured, and, consequently, the language is metaphorically structured."
By no means is THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A WAR the only metaphorical concept available for the preacher. Use of such a metaphor may be less ethical than imagining a church where Christian living is not viewed in terms of war, where there is no great enemy, where no one wins or loses, where there is no call to battle. Imagine alternative metaphorical concepts: THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A PARTY, THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A MARATHON RACE, or the CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A JOURNEY. As with the WAR metaphor there is ample support for each of these metaphorical concepts in Scripture, Christian history, and culture. In each of the metaphors suggested, the Christians would view life differently, experience it differently, and perform it differently. For example, to perform the PARTY metaphor would be far less a paranoid style than the WAR metaphor which perceives of the world under the control of dark and sinister forces. In short, the Christian life becomes a different (and perhaps more expansive and spiritually meaningful) reality in each metaphorical concept. Herein lies at least part of the potential of metaphorical preaching. Also it is possible to imagine contexts in which the WAR metaphor would be as appropriate as it appears to have been for St. Paul.

The preacher as rhetor attempts to structure a particular reality, i.e., a reality considered as "folly" in the real world, a reversal of the status quo. We have
demonstrated that particular metaphors can dramatically change our thought and experience of reality. Now, I would like to consider how the preacher can offer a metaphor that radically alters a given status-quo metaphorical concept. Let us consider the metaphorical concept TIME IS MONEY as it is part of our everyday status-quo.

This metaphor, reflected in our culture by such expressions as, "You're wasting my time," "You're running out of time," and "He's living on borrowed time," has led us to experience the reality of time as MONEY, as a LIMITED RESOURCE, and as a VALUABLE COMMODITY. To perceive of time as something that can be spent, budgeted, wasted, and saved, is the normal status-quo way of conceptualizing time in our culture.

Lakoff and Johnson almost as an aside indicate that "this isn't a necessary way for human beings to conceptualize time; it is tied to our culture. There are cultures where time is none of these things." The preacher, as the maker of a reality counter to the status-quo, has an opening here. In other words, time can be conceptualized in other ways. To consider another alternative, what if the proper Christian understanding of time is the metaphor TIME IS ETERNAL or TIME IS PLAY? Either of these metaphors would create a reality radically different from the usual Christian understanding of time. As a matter of fact, a
The popular Christian concept of time is the same as the concept of time in the TIME IS MONEY metaphor. For example, a major appeal of evangelists who employ conversion rhetoric is "You're running out of time." The preacher, playing on the supposed fear of the congregation, suggests that there is only a limited period of time available for the persons to "be saved" or "accept Jesus Christ." I have often heard revival preachers implore their congregations to make a decision. "This may be your last chance. Do it now." "We are going to sing one last verse of 'Just As I Am' [a typical hymn of invitation]. If no one comes you will close the invitation. Someone coming forward may extend the time that some poor lost sinner has to accept Christ." The urgency and the creation of a reality based on the metaphor TIME IS A LIMITED RESOURCE, supplied for centuries a reliable technique for conversions. An example of a Christian use of the TIME IS A LIMITED RESOURCE is the gospel hymn, "O Why Not To-Night?":

O do not let the Word depart, And close thine eyes against the light; Poor sinner, harden not your heart, Be saved, O to-night.

Tomorrow's sun may never rise To bless thy long deluded sight; This is the time, O then be wise, Be saved, O to-night.  

Other frequently used invitational hymns of the same genre include "Jesus Is Calling," "Let Him In," "Only Trust Him," "Pass Me Not," and "Whosoever Will."
TIME IS A LIMITED RESOURCE is a metaphorical concept. It is metaphorical because the preacher uses everyday experiences with limited resources to conceptualize time. Those who act on the basis of the TIME IS A LIMITED RESOURCE metaphor conceive of time that way. Since those persons "walking the aisle" understand and experience time as the kind of thing that can be wasted or lost, they perform the metaphorical concept. In other words, these converts no longer delay their decision. They come forward to receive the offered salvation because "tomorrow's sun may never rise." The disappearance of this particular evangelistic appeal may be, in part, the result of the gradual realization of church-goers, that no matter how often the preacher warned of their last chance, the sun did come up again the next morning. Thus, the preacher's created metaphorical reality no longer cohered with the experience of the audience. As a result, the preacher lost credibility. When no one in the audience performs the metaphor, the metaphor fails, and the preacher, as metaphor-maker, is not given status or authority. As with most metaphors, the negative extension of the limited time metaphor could be expressed in a positive light.

The preacher can, however, offer different concepts of time. For example, the preacher can turn to the New Testament for a concept of time as ὁ καιρός, i.e., "the
opportune time" or the right time. Now, time is no longer perceived of as a limited resource. The urgency, the sense of time running out is replaced by a more relaxed concept. Time is ongoing and the emphasis changes from a negative threat to a positive opportunity. Time no longer acts as a potential adversary on the verge of snatching away the life of the unbeliever, but now acts as a potential ally. By changing the metaphor from the normal way we conceptualize time, the preacher creates a new reality. The audience is invited to understand and experience time as something other than TIME IS MONEY, TIME IS A LIMITED RESOURCE, or TIME IS A VALUABLE COMMODITY.

An even more radical departure from the usual metaphor TIME IS A LIMITED RESOURCE would be to conceive of time as eternal. In the TIME IS AN UNLIMITED RESOURCE metaphor, the usual Christian understanding of salvation is completely changed. Death does not mean the end of time or of opportunities to be "saved." Death is, on the new reading, a passage to life on a different level. In this new world, the person can and will be "saved." There is thus no hell, no place of eternal punishment. There is no such thing as a person's last chance to relate to God. Life does not end but continues on in new and unexpected ways. The theological concept that attempts to explain the metaphor TIME IS AN UNLIMITED RESOURCE is called "universalism." The point I
am attempting to make is that the preacher can radically alter the concept of time by using different metaphors. The choice of metaphor is a significant part of the preacher's rhetorical task. What I have offered are examples of the way in which metaphors can be used to conceptualize our everyday experience like TIME.

Conclusion

I have identified metaphor as a creative power for the preacher. I have also illustrated three ways in which metaphor is creative and thus has epistemic power in a given Christian community: 1) Metaphor creates character; 2) Metaphor creates community; and 3) Metaphor creates concepts by which we live. I have argued that the preacher can offer alternative worlds, i.e., ways of being-in-the-world through the use of different metaphors. Thus, the preacher as rhetorician becomes a metaphor for Christian communication far different from other metaphors such as the preacher as herald or the preacher as prince of the pulpit. Although the preacher as rhetorician forfeits the security of status quo authority, the irony is that by so risking herself, the preacher may gain an enhanced, derived authority as the maker of a new world.
ENDNOTES


5. Loewenberg, "Truth and Consequences of Metaphor," 30-46. Loewenberg is an irreducibility theorist like Ricoeur, Black, Lakoff, and Johnson.


13. Black, "Metaphor," 285. Johnson elaborates on the significance of Black's claim: "Black may have gotten by with the claim that no literal paraphrase provides the insight of the metaphor, for 'insight' might have been spelled out in psychological terms. But he raised an outcry with his remark about 'creating' similarities." (See Johnson, 36).


16. Black, "Metaphor."


23. Quoted in David Tracy, The Analogical Imagination, 102.

24. Hikins and Zagacki, "Rhetoric, Philosophy, and Objectivism," 220.


27. Hikins and Zagacki, "Rhetoric, Philosophy, and Objectivism," 208.

28. Rorty, "Solidarity or Objectivity?" 5.

29. Tracy, Plurality and Ambiguity, 73.

30. For an excellent discussion of literalism, see Richard H. Brown, Society as Text, 97-100.

31. Sallie McFague, Metaphorical Theology, 132.


35. Tracy, Blessed Rage for Order, 9.

36. Tracy, Blessed Rage for Order, 9.


40. King, Power and Communication, 9.

42. There are two basic approaches to the nature and authority of the Scriptures: the functional approach and the canonical approach. David Tracy, in *The Analogical Imagination* argues for the functional approach. He emphasizes that certain expressions of the human spirit so disclose a compelling truth about our lives that we cannot deny them normative status. The canonical approach stresses the process by which the Scriptures gained status as the norm for Christians. The process of interpretation and reinterpretation and its constant flux are granted authority over the fixed literal text. For an example of the canonical approach see Paul Achtemeier, *The Inspiration of Scripture: Problems and Proposals* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1980). For fundamentalism's insistence on a fixed literal meaning, see James Barr, *Fundamentalism* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1977), who argues that fundamentalism emphasizes inerrancy. See also his *The Scope and Authority of the Bible* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1980).


44. Booth, "Metaphor as Rhetoric," 69.

45. Booth, "Metaphor as Rhetoric," 66. See also Richard H. Brown's deconstruction of the debate between functional evolutionism and experimental empiricism "as a conflict between two different . . . root metaphors." (Society as Text, 2, 97-117).


60. See Chapter Five of the present study.


73. See for example Black's "Secrecy and Disclosure as Rhetorical Forms," for an interpretation of the paranoia characteristic of fundamentalistic churches.


75. Lakoff and Johnson, Metaphors We Live By, 3. See also Stephen Prickett, Words and the Word: Language, Poetics, and Biblical Interpretation (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986). Prickett insists that all language is essentially metaphoric. In other words, metaphor builds 'world.' It depicts the 'new,' the boundary point where the old world ends and a new world begins to emerge. Nelson Goodman is also helpful: "Metaphor permeates all discourse, ordinary and special, and we should have a hard time finding a purely literal paragraph anywhere." ("Languages of Art," in Philosophical Perspectives on Metaphor), 130; and, "Far from being a mere matter of ornament, [metaphor] participates fully in the progress of knowledge: in replacing some stale 'natural' kinds with novel and illuminating categories, in contriving facts, in revising theory, and in bringing us new worlds." ("Metaphor as Moonlighting," in Philosophical Perspectives on Metaphor), 221.

76. The preacher, even in the liberal tradition, feels obligated to have a text. An additional supporting text is Felicity Haynes: "To see metaphor as a fusion of gestalt intuition and systematicity which yields new insights and modifies old conceptual systems is to see it as a model for all learning processes." ["Metaphor as Interactive," Educational Theory 25 (1975):277]. I have incorporated and extended what Haynes calls the heuristic value of metaphor for fostering discovery. For a more complete discussion see Eva Feder Kittay, "The Cognitive Force of Metaphor: Theory of Metaphoric Meaning."
77. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 5.

78. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 5. "Metaphor is our fundamental way of noting similarity and difference and of providing new slants on the primary object of interest by illuminating it through a secondary one." (Brown, *Society as Text*, 98)

79. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 5. Sonja K. Foss claims, "By organizing reality in particular ways, our selected metaphors also prescribe how we are to act. Metaphors contain implicit assumptions, points of view, and evaluations." [*Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice*, (Prospect Heights, Ill.: Waveland Press, Inc., 1989), 189]. See also Brissett and Edgley, *Life as Theater*.


81. The major methodology for this section of the work is pragmatic. From a multiplicity of metaphoric examples in Christian theology, I have chosen to concentrate on only two: WAR and TIME.

82. Thomas L. Connelly, *Will Campbell and the Soul of the South* (New York: Continuum Publishing Company, 1982), 107. From a rhetorical critic's perspective the rhetoric of violence can be detected as much in the preaching of men like Jimmy Swaggart as in the showy antics of screaming professional wrestlers. That professional wrestling, with its celebration of violence, is popular in the South is no accident.


86. Markus Barth defines the principalities and powers as "intangible spiritual entities and concrete historical, social, or psychic structures or institutions of all created things and all created life." (*Ephesians: Translation and Commentary on Chapters 4-6* in *The Anchor Bible*, eds. William Foxwell Albright and David Noel Freedman, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc. 1974), 34A:800-801.)
87. All the examples cited are from *The United Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1989).


90. Lindsey, *The Liberation of Planet Earth*, 57.

91. Martin Marty, *Context: A Commentary on the Interaction of Religion and Culture* 16 (July 1, 1984):3. See also Fred Craddock, *Overhearing the Gospel*: "The certainty of the faith is guaranteed by reminders of inspiration of Scripture, infallibility of dogma, apostolic authority, and indisputable miracles" (30). But these so-called certainties are all rhetorical constructions. Also, Wayne Booth singles out metaphors about weaponry as being particularly dangerous. Such metaphors are "designed to win by destroying an opponent," and "the worst distortions occur when we think we have arrived at absolute truth through univocal, simple, economical clarities." [Wayne C. Booth, *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 300ff.].

92. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 5.


95. These hymns are all in the *Broadman Hymnal*, an old Baptist hymn book. Public invitations to accept Christ are a standard part of Baptist worship. Even non-church persons have probably seen Billy Graham give an invitation for people to come forward.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

After the seas are all cross'd, 
(as they seem already cross'd)
After the great captains and engineers have 
accomplish'd their work,
After the noble inventors, after the scientists, 
the chemist, the geologist, the ethnologist,
Finally shall come the poet worthy that name,
The true son of God shall come singing his songs.

-Walt Whitman

The rhetorical/metaphorical homiletics presented in this study, I am assuming, is a model which outlines the changes which take place in our concept of reality by means of metaphor. These changes, when embraced by a particular community of believers, become the new reality of the community. In the creation of this new reality, one may give meaning to the assertion, "Metaphor is epistemic." The metaphors, offered up by the preacher-rhetorician, may present a better understanding of experience than the status quo metaphoric concepts, and if accepted by the community, be granted epistemic authority.

Throughout this work I have endorsed the view of Richards and others that all language is essentially metaphoric. The preacher, by utilizing rhetoric, may depict a new world for her congregation. In other words, the metaphors of the preacher as rhetorician cross the boundary of the old world and offer a new world. Such an adventure
moves the proclamation of the Christian message beyond rigidism, reductionism, and rationalism.

In arriving at a rhetorical/metaphorical grounding for homiletics, I developed a series of moves. First, I moved rhetoric from its traditional position of exile back into the heart of the homiletical experience. Such a move was a necessary prerequisite to granting epistemic authority to metaphor. By combining the insights of rhetorical theory with the discipline of homiletics, I have attempted to restore the synthesis of Augustine. Without this preliminary move, rhetoric and philosophy would have remained subordinate to theology. Rhetoric would have been merely the art of presenting truths and values already established. Whenever truth is an already established certainty, all disputed alternative methods are attacked as "mere" rhetoric, i.e., mere opinions based on prejudices, passions, and ornamental language. As long as the rhetoric of homiletics was that of sophistic handbooks, it was denigrated as a devil term. The only acceptable task of such a rhetoric was as a technique for presenting ideas and putting them in the proper form. The preacher as rhetorician served only a reductionistic method. He/She presented the truth, organized the truth in three or more propositions, and decorated the truth with appropriate ornaments.
Second, I deconstructed the traditional homiletic method as a copy machine version of Cartesian certainty without the benefit of scientific, empirical verification. The method of homiletics was shown to be antithetical to the metaphoric language of the Bible, the metaphoric nature of everyday language, and the metaphoric nature of the homiletic experience. By taking rhetoric seriously as a context-giving tradition for homiletics, I could no longer embrace certainty or literal truth for the preacher as rhetorician. The move from a supposed certainty to the ambiguity and probabilities of rhetoric made me aware that there are alternative ways of truth telling. No longer hemmed in by the paranoia about certainty, the preacher as rhetorician is free to respond to the Cartesian question, "How can I be certain," with a definite rhetorical response, "You can't." Contrary to the insistence of some Christian thinkers, such a move from certainty to probability does not eliminate Christianity from serious consideration or from the ongoing conversation of humanity. On the contrary, such a move enables the Christian spokesperson to come to the party without the baggage of dogmatism that frequently causes Christianity embarrassment. The preacher as rhetorician thus endorses a pluralistic method.

My third move involved the presentation of an alternative method of homiletics. I labelled this method
the rhetoric of folly. The defining characteristics of the rhetoric of folly are identification, direct semantic speech, empathic communication, dialectical irony, and metaphor. I do not pretend that all public problems will be solved through reliance on the rhetoric of folly and its creative metaphorical power, but I do hope I have demonstrated that such discourse deserves a new hearing in a world where technology and rationality have not produced adequate answers to our problems. I contend further, and perhaps this reveals my hidden agenda, that by accepting the rhetorical/metaphorical nature of Christian preaching, the preacher has a word which offers positive hope for a new humanity and for our survival. The elements of what may be a naive construct are the rhetoric of folly, the creative power of metaphor, a chastened homiletic realism, and an apocalyptic consciousness.

Preaching, by its very nature, is rhetorical. Throughout this work I have tried to present the significance of rhetoric and metaphor to homiletics. Future research could expand the preliminary model of a rhetoric of homiletics. Rhetorical critics could produce a rhetorical history of preaching that concentrates on the dominant metaphors of preachers, churches, and religious movements. Metaphoric criticism could offer insight into the great periods of religious awakening in our world. For example, the
metaphors of Jonathan Edwards and the Puritans may hold clues to a better understanding of the continued influence of these early American Christians upon the American psyche.

In addition, a pragmatic model of homiletics could be developed from this study. Utilizing the model of conversation, imagination, and metaphor, the preacher could create an alternative method for preaching. The potential value of rhetoric for homiletics perhaps awaits the coming of the poet worthy of the name.
VITA

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