Preaching with a Cupped Ear: Hans-Georg Gadamer's

Philosophical Hermeneutics as Postmodern Wor[l]d

by

Jeffrey Francis Bullock

A dissertation submited in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington

1996

Approved by _____
Chairperson of Supervisory Committee

_____

_____

_____

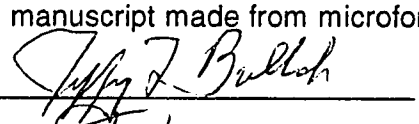
Program Authorized
to Offer Degree SPEECH COMMUNICATION

Date MAY 29, 1996

UMI Number: 9637907

UMI
300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

In presenting this dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctoral degree at the University of Washington, I agree that the Library shall make its copies freely available for inspection. I further agree that extensive copying of this dissertation is allowable only for scholarly purposes, consistent with "fair use" as prescribed in the U.S. Copyright Law. Requests for copying or reproduction of this dissertation may be referred to university Microfilms, 1490 Eisenhower Place, P.O. Box 975, Ann Arbor, MI 48106, to whom the author has granted "the right to reproduce and sell (a) copies of the manuscript in microform and/or (b) printed copies of the manuscript made from microform."

Signature 

Date 5/29/96

University of Washington

Abstract

"Preaching with a Cupped Ear: Hans-Georg Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics as Postmodern Wor[l]d"

by Jeffrey Francis Bullock

Chairperson of Supervisory Committee: Professor John Stewart
Department of Speech Communication

For the last twenty-five years, practitioners of what has come to be known as the New Homiletic have attempted to discover a way through the "crisis" of preaching to a "new effectiveness." A growing cadre of homileticians are speculating that, in order to reach this homiletical promised land, it may be necessary to turn away from the more traditional disciplines of biblical and theological studies and to contemporary rhetorical and hermeneutical theory. More recently, New Homileticians have looked to story, narrative, and semantic imagination as ways to move from a homiletical practice that is based in argument and representational language to one that is more experiential or presentational.

This study contends that New Homileticians continue to locate their efforts in a representational view of language. Consequently, there is a fundamental distinction between the linguistic world and the nonlinguistic world or, as Aristotle said, "Spoken words are the symbols of mental experience and written words are the symbols for spoken words." Because homiletical theorists continue to adhere to a representation view of language, the Second Helvetic Confession's statement, "The preaching of the word of God is the word of God,"

is an epistemological ideal rather than an ontological reality. Whereas the Confession embraces a kind of ontological unity between the spoken word of the preacher and the word of God, the theoretical commitments of those who preach this word imply an ontological separation between the world of the "signifiers" and the world of the "signified."

This study analyzes and evaluates current views of language and preaching and then juxtaposes them with views of language and communication articulated by the contemporary German philosopher, Hans-Georg Gadamer. This revised homiletic moves beyond constraints imposed by contemporary homiletical theory's language commitments to a unique appropriation of conversation (φιλουν) as a means of facilitating an experience (Erfahrung) with the word.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Chapter One: Rationale for This Study 1

The Research Questions 9

Preview of the Remaining Chapters 12

Homiletics and the Rhetorical Tradition 14

Preaching in Ordinary Language: Casuistry as Rabbinic Homileoing 18

Preaching in Post-Classical Language: Another Look at the Traditional Augustine 28

Preaching in Objective Language: Modernity and the Foundations of the Old Homiletic 38

Summary and Conclusion 46

Notes to Chapter One 48

Chapter Two: Old and New Homiletic Theory 66

Trends in Contemporary Homiletical Theory 67

Hermeneutical Foundations in the New Homiletic 78

Kierkegaardian Contemporaneity as a Bridge for Time 83

Summary and Conclusion 92

Notes to Chapter Two 96

Chapter Three: Preaching as Ontological Conversation: Gadamer's Linguisticality as New Homiletic Wor[l]d 106

Philosophical Hermeneutics and the Homiletical Wor[l]d 107
Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics: Preaching
as Ontological Conversation 112
First Summary 132
Preaching as Conversation 139
Summary and Conclusion 148
Notes to Chapter Three 150
Chapter Four: Intimations of Preaching as Homileoing: Two
Sermons and Commentary 167
Sermon: "When You Least Expect It"
Rev. Molly McNelis Dykstra 178
Analysis 200
Sermon: Father Ralph Carskadden 205
Analysis 225
Summary and Conclusion 231
Notes to Chapter Four 234
Chapter Five: Summary and Conclusions 236
The Research Questions 237
Limitations of This Study 246
Implications and Suggestions for Future Research 248
Notes to Chapter Five 252
Works Cited 253

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the fall of 1991, I sat on the steps of Raitt Hall on the campus of the University of Washington, Seattle, WA. sharing my frustration with a fellow student by the name of Robert S. Reid. I had just presented my first seminar paper on the rhetorical thought of Cardinal John Henry Newman and it had not been a good experience. The language and terms of the rhetorical tradition were new and unfamiliar to me. At what was certainly a low point in my intellectual confidence, Bob proved to be both pastor and friend, and I am grateful. At every step along the way, my work in the Department of Speech Communication at the University of Washington has been a marvelous experience. I am especially grateful to my peers who welcomed me into their community, even when I was, at best, a transient member of that community. A special thank-you to Michael L. Brunner, a good friend and colleague, whose books and publications I am looking forward to reading, and to Rev. William L. Roemer, a ministerial colleague, friend, and amazing student of Karl Barth.

From the very beginning of my program, I enjoyed the overwhelming support of many faculty members. I thank my chair, John Stewart, for introducing me to contemporary language theory as well as to the thought of Martin Buber and Hans-Georg Gadamer. As chairs go, you have been one of the best. You know when to affirm, challenge, critique, and praise and, when all else fails, a sailing trip does wonders. I thank Barbara Warnick for her support, enthusiasm, and interest in my professional as well as intellectual

development. You gave me a chance to develop and grow when, I suspect, some others may have been doubtful. I thank Bill Purcell for his wise and gentle council, David McCracken for his willingness to share his passion for Kierkegaard, and Ernst Behler for introducing me to Derrida and Foucault.

Few students could survive a graduate program without the ceaseless support of their family, and I am no exception. My mother, Patricia Bullock, has always encouraged me to be the best that I can be. My adoptive family, Henry and VeNita Fawcett, welcomed me at a critical time in my life. Together, my adoptive dad's preaching and my adoptive mom's editing, helped to get me on the right track, spiritually and academically. To my in-laws, Don and Diane Yannacci, for your interest and support, as well as for your willingness to share your daughter with me. And finally to Dana, my best friend and wife, whose love, patience, faith, and support continue to make me count my blessings every day.

Finally, I would like to thank the members and friends of the Queen Anne Presbyterian Church in Seattle, WA, for your willingness to be a genuine community of faith for me. Although I am technically your pastor, you have been a pastor to me in ways that you will never begin to know. It is because of you, and your commitment to a faith of practice and words, that I am able to offer this project.

Pentecost, 1996

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated with love and affection to Dana Rae Yannacci Bullock, my best friend and companion.

CHAPTER ONE

RATIONALE FOR THIS STUDY

In Christendom, sermons, lectures, and speeches are heard often enough about what is required of an imitator of Christ, about the implications of being an imitator of Christ, what it means to follow Christ, etc. What is heard is generally very correct and true; only by listening more closely does one discover a deeply hidden, un-Christian, basic confusion and dubiousness. The Christian sermon today has become mainly "observations." Let us in this hour consider; I invite my listeners to observations on; the subject for our consideration is, etc. But "to observe" can mean in one sense to come very close to something, namely, to what one wishes to observe; in another sense, it signifies keeping very distant, infinitely distant . . . . In other words, by observing I go into the object (I become objective) but I leave myself or go away from myself (I cease to be subjective). In this manner, by means of its favorite way of observing what is the essentially Christian, which is just by "observation" and "observations," the sermon presentation has abolished what Christianly is decisive in the sermon presentation--the personal: this <u>You and I</u>, the speaker and the one being spoken to; this, that the one who is speaking is himself personally in motion, a striver, and likewise the one

> spoken to, who he therefore stirs up, encourages, admonishes, and warns, but all with respect to a striving, a life; this, that the speaker will continually not go away from himself but come back to himself and will help the listener, not to go away from himself but to come back to himself. In our day, the sermon presentation has itself totally disregarded, and subsequently has contributed to its being totally forgotten, that the Christian truth cannot really be the object of "observations." . . . Therefore, it is a risk to preach . . . .[1]

As these words indicate, Søren Kierkegaard committed a healthy part of his career to chastising the preaching that existed in the Protestant Church of Denmark. Despite the fact that protestantism had traditionally envisioned a kind of holy fusion between the written word and the spoken word, the sermons in Kierkegaard's Christendom were commonly distanced, objective, erudite observations <u>about</u> the written word. A key theme throughout the Kierkegaardian corpus is his concern that the clergy of his day were often <u>lecturing</u> when they should have been preaching. What they said was usually correct enough, but they never encouraged their listeners to <u>reflect</u> upon and <u>observe</u> religious themes, a process that Raymond E. Anderson says, ". . . [implied] an attitude of personal remoteness quite proper for a lecture not for an edifying address. In contrast, the most important thing in the edifying speech is the 'thou and I,' the speaker and the person addressed."[2] Or, to paraphrase

Kierkegaard, knowing about does not necessarily translate into knowing.[3] That is, the Cartesian methodological acquisition and transmission of objective knowledge does not necessarily translate into Christian faith, practice, or action. In Kierkegaard's estimation, there existed in Christendom no shortage of ". . . an everlasting Sunday babbling about Christianity's glorious and priceless truths."[4] Kierkegaard believed that such vestiges of Christendom were abolishing Christianity.

In some respects, Christian homiletical practices have not changed much since Kierkegaard's time. As one homiletician recently put it, "Preaching is in crisis . . . [b]ut the way out, toward new effectiveness in preaching, is not yet clear."[5] This introductory statement from Richard Eslinger's A New Hearing is as pertinent now as it was almost a decade ago. Preaching is in crisis, and for the last twenty-five years homileticians have attempted to discover a way through this "crisis" to "new effectiveness." A growing cadre of homileticians are speculating that, in order to reach this homiletical promised land, it may be necessary to turn away from the more traditional disciplines of biblical and theological studies and to contemporary rhetorical and hermeneutical theory. David Buttrick writes,

> [homiletics] will have to return and be renewed by conversations with contemporary rhetoricians. People are thinking, understanding, and speaking in ways that belie the homiletic textbooks we have inherited from the past. So we need to think

> out the rhetorical ways and means appropriate to contemporary consciousness, a task that ought to keep both homileticians and practicing preachers busy.[6]

As a Presbyterian minister who practices his vocation in a local congregation, I am keenly aware of this crisis in preaching.[7] Even after many years of preparing and delivering a weekly sermon, I am always challenged by the oral/aural event known as preaching. Presbyterians are known for their rich homiletical heritage. From John Calvin to George Campbell, Hugh Blair to Peter Marshall, Calvinists in every generation have lifted up the spoken word as a key element in the reformed worship service. In the words of the Second Helvetic Confession, "The preaching of the word of God is the word of God."[8] And yet, when I survey today's homiletical landscape, there are not many preachers of distinction who seem to be carrying on the legacy of their predecessors. For at least the last twenty-five years, the art of preaching has been relegated to second-class status in theological seminaries or divinity schools. Ministerial candidates quickly learn that the disciplines of biblical studies, theology and ethics are considered to be the most theoretically challenging and, therefore, require the largest investments of time and energy. Homiletics, on the other hand, is perceived as a practical discipline. Few theological institutions require more than one preaching practicum for a Master of Divinity degree. The results are predictable. Local congregations soon discover that their pulpits are filled by men and women who have an

increasingly difficult time making the transition from classroom to sanctuary; from theory to practice. Preaching is in crisis.

In addition to my pastoral responsibilities, I am a human communication scholar. As a communication scholar trained in rhetorical, hermeneutical, and critical theory, I live in a world of words. I am particularly interested in the role language may play in the creation of meaning, conviction and even belief. As a scholar/pastor I am searching for ways that contemporary language theory can assist in the renewal of homiletical practice. For example, as I will later describe, it appears to me that homiletical theorists have for some time been committed to a semiotic view of language, a view of language which embodies ontological commitments with profound theological ramifications. Citing Aristotle's formula, "Spoken words are the symbols of mental experience and written words are the symbols of spoken words," John Stewart argues that those theorists who are working from an ontology first established in Platonic and Aristotelian formulations of the nature of language have adhered to a basic distinction between the linguistic world and the nonlinguistic world.[9] Stewart asserts that this "Janus-faced character of language . . . holds that there is a difference in kind between the linguistic world, or the world of 'signifiers,' and some other world, that of 'things,' 'mental experiences,' 'ideas,' 'concepts,' or some other 'signifieds.'"[10] If, as I will argue, homiletical theorists have subscribed to this "Platonic and Aristotelian formulation" or, as Stewart describes it, this "Janus-faced character of language," it would seem that the

Second Helvetic Confession's statement, "The preaching of the word of God is the word of God," is an epistemological ideal rather than an ontological reality. Whereas the Confession itself embraces a kind of ontological unity between the spoken word of the preacher and the word of God, the theoretical commitments of those who preach this word imply an ontological separation between the world of the "signifiers" and the world of the "signified."

But there may yet be a way to overcome the two-world dichotomy that I believe exists in the homiletic theory that tacitly accepts a semiotic view of language. This revised homiletic will move beyond constraints imposed by contemporary homiletical theory's language commitments to a unique appropriation of conversation as a means of facilitating an experience (Erfahrung) with the word. Or to paraphrase Kierkegaard, this revised homiletic will address "the personal, this You and I" in ways that are more ontologically experiential than epistemologically foundational.

In this dissertation, I analyze and evaluate current views of language and preaching and then juxtapose them with views of language and communication articulated by the contemporary German philosopher, Hans-Georg Gadamer. For the last thirty years, Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics has been a shaping force in contemporary rhetorical, hermeneutical, and critical theory. It has been on the transitional cusp between the modern world of the Enlightenment and what has been elsewhere referred to as the postmodern[11] world of reexamination, reevaluation and critique. A key feature in Gadamer's

philosophy of communication is the concept of linguisticality. Gadamer uses this concept to demonstrate that language is not a tool that human beings manipulate to represent a meaning-full world;[12] rather, language forms or constitutes[13] human reality.

Despite these productive possibilities, Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics has not yet been thoroughly engaged by contemporary homileticians. While a rich cross-disciplinary debate has been generated by Gadamer's theorizing, homileticians have at times listened to, but not yet fully participated in the unfolding conversation.[14] It is therefore the purpose of this dissertation to facilitate a conversation between Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics and the discipline of homiletical theory and practice. I will demonstrate that contemporary homileticians continue to ground their theory in assumptions that can be called into serious question by the postmodern philosophical hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer. I will then begin to develop and apply a new postmodern homiletic of Erfahrung, a Gadamerian-informed homiletic of "homileo-ism" (ὡμίλουν, conversation, talk) which is grounded in praxis.

Readers who are familiar with the work of Richard Bernstein may be able to infer that my term "homileo-ism" has been heavily influenced by Bernstein's term "conversationalism." Informed by Gadamer, Bernstein maintains that we need to "exorcise the Cartesian Anxiety and liberate ourselves from its seductive appeal."[15] In other words, Bernstein attempts to articulate a mode of

philosophizing that moves beyond the Enlightenment quest for an Archimedean point to a dialogic community in which "phronesis, judgment, and practical discourse become concretely embodied in every day practices."[16] I believe that approaching preaching as conversation is a way to move homiletical theory out of the Enlightenment quest for empirical foundations (or what Gadamer refers to as Erlebnis-type experience; something one has) to a postmodern ontological homiletic that may occur "beyond objectivism or relativism" (or what I argue Gadamer refers to as Erfahrung, an experience that one undergoes).

This privileging of Erfahrung over Erlebnis is not a new occurrence in the Christian tradition. For instance, in the Christian New Testament, this Erfahrung type of experience is recorded in the Gospel of Saint Luke. According to the Gospel, after Jesus's crucifixion, two men were walking to a village called Emmaus and they were ὡμίλουν (conversing, talking) with each other about the preceding events. In the middle of their ὁμιλεῖν (conversation), the resurrected Jesus came alongside and joined them, but they did not recognize him. Later in the evening, in the breaking of bread, the two men came to recognize their conversation partner as the risen Christ, and they expressed the ontological change that had occurred within them by asking the rhetorical question: "Were not our hearts burning within us when he was talking with us along the road . . . ?" (Luke 24:13-35).

This work is an effort to re-center homiletics as rooted in ontologically experiential conversation and not the transmission of information. Homiletics, I

argue, should again fundamentally label an experience that one undergoes, rather than an experience that someone has, controls or possesses.

THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary assumption of this dissertation is that there is a fundamental shift taking place in homiletical theory. Many contemporary homileticians have characterized this shift as move from the Old to a New Homiletic. A review of the New Homiletic literature demonstrates that what has been characterized as the Old Homiletic is more closely associated with Aristotle's Rhetoric, while theorists of the New Homiletic more closely align themselves with Aristotle's Poetics. Theorists of the Old Homiletic seek to make an argument about the gospel, while theorists of the New Homiletic endeavor to create an experience of the gospel.

The argument of this dissertation is that the Old Homiletic is fundamentally flawed because of its appropriation of a semiotic view of language. The Old Homiletic views language as primarily re-presentational or symbolic by utilizing argument as the unique way for conveying the "information" of scripture. In this paradigm, the function of the hermeneut is to decipher the original meaning or the author's original intent in the symbols, grammar, and syntax of the written word. The hermeneut is then to discover a way to adequately present his or her findings. The hermeneut is first and foremost a Cartesian cogito employing reason and rational methods to connect

the world of the text with the world of the audience by some form of argumentation. It is the hermeneut's responsibility to transport information and experiences from the interior of the text to the interior of the listening audience.[17] This hermeneutic continues to foster a line of demarcation between scripture as word and the spoken word, between the world of the text and the world of the audience. Or, to alter the Second Helvetic Confession, in this homiletical tradition the preaching of the word of God is about the word of God.

In contrast to the Old Homiletic, the New Homiletic privileges the creation of an experience over the generation of rational arguments. Theorists of the New Homiletic have not so much rejected the rational as they have subordinated its propositional orientation to the experience of temporality and personal identity. The result is a move away from questions of Truth framed as propositions and toward questions of meaning. New Homiletical theorists have not yet developed the hermeneutical underpinnings to fully justify the move from what Gadamer calls Erlebnis to Erfahrung, from making an argument to facilitating an experience. The initial step to ground such a hermeneutical theory in the philosophy of Paul Ricoeur has been helpful, but it seems to have recently stalled as New Homileticians have appropriated Ricoeur's metaphoric theory as the theoretical impetus for that ". . . semantic imaginative act that results in a surplus of meaning [and includes] some significant affective dimension[s]."[18] Thus, it appears that semantic imagination will be the

trajectory that some New Homileticians will follow in their pursuit to facilitate Erfahrung. Richard Eslinger intimates this move by attempting to unite "imagination's role" with Gadamer's "foundational" notion of play.[19] He writes,

> [It is through] playing and being played [that] we find freedom and meaning in the give-and-take, back-and-forth structure of the game. Imagination, then, in its most profound expression, involves the full giving of self in play "by which we are initially taken into a structure of meanings, (and) is the presupposition for all conscious imaginative activity of the subject." In the activity of play is the hermeneutic clue to human experience. . . . This world wrought by the imagination has become our world.[20]

Although his contribution is certainly innovative, I believe that Eslinger and others have overestimated the value of play and its imaginative qualities as a "foundational" feature of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics.[21] By featuring play and its "imaginative" features at the expense of Gadamer's organizing concept of linguisticality and "conversational understanding," Eslinger has created a homiletic that continues to focus more on product than process; one designed to facilitate an experience that exists because of language rather than an experience that exists in language; an experience that is still more Erlebnis than Erfahrung.

The purpose of this dissertation is thus to extend New Homiletic theory with the help of the philosophical hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer. This

revised New Homiletic will focus on conversation as a means of facilitating an experience of Erfahrung, a homiletical concept that is already present in the New Testament corpus under the rubric of what I have called "homileo-ism." I address three research questions in this dissertation. What views of language are embedded in contemporary homiletical theory? How does Gadamer's postmodern philosophical hermeneutics, as it is informed by Kierkegaard's concept of contemporaneity, improve upon the foundationalist hermeneutical practices and methodologies that continue to be tacitly present in contemporary homiletical theory? And, based on case studies from two homileoing (ὡμίλουν) practitioners, how does a postmodern homiletic look and sound?

PREVIEW OF REMAINING CHAPTERS

In the remainder of this chapter, I briefly overview the rhetorical tradition and homiletical theory's place within it. I demonstrate that the discipline of homiletics has been influenced by various social-cultural factors throughout its rich and varied history, and that the generation of a postmodern homiletic is part of the continuation of this unfolding process.

In the second chapter I analyze what has been called New Homiletical theory and then juxtapose my findings with the Old Homiletic. I demonstrate that, although the New Homiletic it is strongly influenced by the thought of Søren Kierkegaard, its hermeneutical underpinnings continue to be underdeveloped and even sometimes tacitly reflect a semiotic view of language.

Because of these tendencies, I argue that New Homiletical theorists must develop and clarify their hermeneutical commitments in such a way that they can be meaningful to a contemporary postmodern audience.

Chapter three introduces Hans-Georg Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics. I locate and explicate key features of Gadamer's theory by paying particular attention to the linguisticality of understanding. I demonstrate that Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics describes a philosophy of communication where language forms or constitutes human reality. I argue that Gadamer's appropriation and development of Kierkegaard's concept of contemporaneity permits his philosophical hermeneutics to transcend the limitations of the philosophy of language grounding the New Homiletic. Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics offers a postmodern alternative to a semiotic view of language and may be one way that contemporary homiletical theorists can move beyond a hermeneutic grounded in exegetical method toward a hermeneutic informed by genuine homileoing. My suspicion is that this peculiarly postmodern homiletic is already evident in the practice of many homileticians who also function as engaged pastors. By homileoing and listening with their congregations, these practitioners have developed a homiletic that is grounded in a hermeneutic of praxis rather than a hermeneutic of method. I suspect that such a homiletic will be peculiarly conversational as well as dialogical, and that it will be resistant to Enlightenment motivations of securing certainty, closure, and control.

In chapter four I integrate a version of Gadamerian application by critically interpreting two sermons from two practicing homileticians, both of whom are grounded in what I believe to be a hermeneutics of homileoing. Through a rhetorical analysis of these sermons, I isolate key elements of postmodern homiletical practice. This analysis demonstrates how postmodern homiletical practices are more productive than reproductive, more Erfahrung than Erlebnis.

In the final chapter I consider the implications of my inquiry for the task of homiletical renewal. I believe that a thorough understanding and application of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics can inform an innovative alternative to modern preaching practices as well as a theoretically-grounded extension of New Homiletical theory.

HOMILETICS AND THE RHETORICAL TRADITION

If Aristotle's definition of rhetoric is ". . . an ability in each [particular] case, to see the available means of persuasion,"[22] then homiletics may be defined as the practice of theological persuasion. Although a thorough history of homiletics and its relationship to rhetoric has yet to be written, the present debate in homiletical theory is not without its corollary in the rhetorical tradition. In a series of articles from 1984-1990 and in a book published in 1995, John Poulakos contrasted Sophistic and Aristotelian approaches to rhetorical theory.[23] Three broad epochs in the history of homiletical practice may be

seen as a theological forum which plays out the Sophistic/Aristotelian tension that grounds Poulakos' argument. From this perspective, postmodern homiletics may be seen as a natural continuation of theological persuasive practices that adapt to the changing nature of audiences.

In "Rhetoric, the Sophists, and the Possible," Poulakos examines the relationship between Aristotle and the Sophists. Whereas the contentious relationship between Plato and the Sophists is well known, the relationship between the Sophists and Aristotle remains unexamined. Poulakos argues that, in Aristotle, the practical art of rhetoric turned into a theoretical matter and was afforded a place within the parameters of philosophy. At the same time, its identity was changed from a "rhetorician's rhetoric" to a rhetoric of metaphysics. For centuries, the Sophists' rhetoric was overpowered by Aristotle's metaphysical version. Since the late-nineteenth century, the supremacy of metaphysical thought has been brought into question by Nietzsche, Heidegger and Foucault who "reject the separation of reality from language about reality."[24]

Poulakos initiates a recovery of the Sophistic rhetorical tradition which he contends privileges the possible (dunamis) over the actual (energeia). He believes that this privileging of dunamis recognizes humankind's essential incompleteness in the world. Poulakos maintains that Aristotle's preference for the actual (energeia) over the possible (dunamis) pervades Aristotle's entire corpus. On the supposition that "we are most fully persuaded when we

consider a thing to have been demonstrated," Poulakos contends that Aristotle regards rhetoric as a δὐναμις τοῦ πορἰσαι λογους (faculty for providing arguments) thus making proof the most essential part of persuasion.[25] By insisting on the primacy of facts, Aristotle endeavored to grant the world its own objective status and lift the linguistic spell cast on it by the Sophists. "Aristotle assumes that the world can be known and reproduced accurately by linguistic means."[26]

The Sophists, on the other hand, were not that confident in humankind's ability to know the world as it was, nor were they sure of any correspondence between objective reality and language. For them, what mattered was not "pure" fact, but fact as perceived, interpreted, and communicated. For them, rhetoric was not concerned with the accurate presentation of facts but with the fact of language and its impact on people. For the Sophists, rhetoric was an art whose power resided in its capacity to go beyond the world of facts. For Aristotle, rhetoric was a faculty (art) subservient to a world whose make-up it must discover and reproduce faithfully. So, in contrast to Aristotle, the Sophists privileged the possible (dunamis) over the actual (energeia). They adhered to a world that was constantly changing, full of ambiguity and uncertainty, always lacking and never complete. For the Sophists, there was no world apart from language.[27]

A rhetoric of actuality (energeia) assumes a rational universe, one whose causes and structures human beings need to know and understand. This

rhetoric attempts to instruct by presenting the what and explaining the why of the world. It is persuasion by explanation, and its purpose is to affect decisions. A rhetoric of possibility (dunamis) assumes an incomplete universe. Persuasion is its central goal but, instead of arguments, it favors persuasion facilitated by figurative language.[28]

Poulakos' work certainly has not ended the debate around a Sophistic verses Aristotelian rhetoric. In fact, the dualistic, either/or tone of his exchange, especially with Edward Schiappa, may be seen as a latent tendency to cling to the modern practice that he endeavors to critique. However, Poulakos' argument provides some significant insights into the processural nature of language and, in this instance, the various definitions surrounding the available means of persuasion.

The Sophistic/Aristotelian, dunamis/energeia tension that I have just described is not unique to the rhetorical tradition, considered narrowly. The part of the rhetorical tradition called homiletics has also emphasized one or the other pole of this tension. At some points in history, preachers have practiced a homiletics of energeia, a homiletical rhetoric of actuality that favors the "here, now, and is." At other points in history, preachers have practiced a theological rhetoric of dunamis, one that features a "there, then, and the can be." The first approach to preaching is characterized by objective language; it displays a world that can be mastered and known, and is often referred to as the Old Homiletic. The second approach foregrounds the fluid aspects of humankind's

existence, those elements of being in the world that cannot be objectified or epistemologically subdued. Although the term New Homiletic is often applied to this second approach, there are at least two prominent dunamis traditions in the history of preaching, rabbinic conversation and Augustinian post-classical preaching. The former included the Hebrew rabbis and their casuistic practices. The latter appeared at the beginning of the third century, and is most prominent in the homiletical practice of St. Augustine. Brief reviews of each of these historical instances of dunamis preaching illustrate some of their key features and, together, they demonstrate that there is precedent in homiletical theory for a practice that is more open than closed, more ontological than epistemological, more Erfahrung than Erlebnis.

PREACHING IN ORDINARY LANGUAGE

CASUISTRY AS RABBINIC HOMILEOING

Christian homiletical practice is not the sole by-product of the early Church's witness to the resurrected Christ. In fact, Christian preaching has a genuine antecedent in the hermeneutical and homiletical practice of rabbinic Judaism. The Hebraic faith has its roots in the tradition in which Moses, after an encounter with God on Mt. Sinai, was given the Ten Commandments. Robert Brooks argues that these commandments were a record of God's most basic guidance to the Israelite nation and undergirded their law and ethics.[29] In concise, principled form, these commandments set forth the essence of

social and religious covenant throughout Judaic, Christian, and Islamic civilizations.[30] Jacob Neusner notes that most of the world at large has approached Judaism as a religion of the Old Testament, somewhat static and extremely unyielding. However, as Neusner demonstrates, there is much more dunamis in at least one Jewish tradition. Rather than being treated simply as a set of laws and regulations which had been engraved into stone, the letters of which were to be followed with extreme care, Judaism inherited and made the Hebrew scriptures its own, just as does Christianity.[31] Moreover, the Hebrew Torah (or Law) encompassed much more than the Decalogue. As the Christian New Testament is an appropriation of the Old Testament scriptures in light of Rabbi Joshua (Jesus), Torah is an appropriation of the Decalogue in light of the changing circumstances of Hebraic practical life. There existed in Judaism an entire hermeneutical tradition grounded in the application of Decalogical principles to practical life. The practical application of this unique hermeneutical tradition gave rise to a tradition of preaching that featured on-going and open conversation with the community of faith rather than an argument directed at the community of faith.

In addition to the Written Law (Decalogue), tradition asserts that an Oral Law was also delivered by Moses to the people after his encounter with Yahweh on Mt. Sinai. According to Jonsen and Toulmin, from the fifth century B.C., teachers (known as Sopherim, scribes, or Men of the Book) expounded upon the Written and Oral Law, explaining and appropriating its meaning and

relevance for the everyday lives of the Jewish people. This process of interpretation continued up to the second century A.D. and eventually resulted in codifications of the Oral Law (Mishnah). The Mishnah comprises sixty-three treatises collected into six orders covering differing aspects of practical life ranging from prayer, holy days, marriage, civil and criminal law to temple ritual and ceremonial purity.[32] The Mishnah is the written version of what was once an oral interpretation of the Written Law of Moses. In this version, new applications of the ancient precepts are offered in light of the redactor's present situation.[33] As the rabbis perceived it, the spirit of biblical revelation resided in the persistent application of legal procedure and not in the particular ruling in a specific case. As Brooks notes, "Judaism, in the rabbinic era and beyond, was not a religion of wooden legalism, but of soaring intellect, of humane and studied adherence to an overarching set of [guidelines] for daily conduct, found in the Torah."[34] The rabbis' constant drive to integrate scripture into the practical life of the community, gave rise to a dynamic process of ongoing conversation that eventuated in regulations that were constantly adjusted and readjusted, often taking the oral form of mashals (parables) and narratives.[35]

Once this redaction process found its final form in the Mishnah, these codes became the basis for commentary and explanation. This newer codification process resulted in the Talmud of which there are two versions; the Palestinian and the Babylonian. In a canonization process similar to that of the Christian scriptures, rabbinical leaders established this involved system of

codes on the basis of what was useful to the community and faithful to the perceived intent of Yahweh as revealed in the Decalogue. Torah evolved from being a list of architectonic Commandments into a complex web of basic text, narrative, commentary, action and reaction, all grounded in its utility for the Hebraic community. To view Torah simply as Decalogue or strict narrow legalism, while ignoring the subtleties of particular cases, is misleading. Rather, Torah, in its expanded form, represents one faith tradition's sustained attempt to live under a written legal code while, at the same time, allowing for the ever-unfolding unpredictabilities that are a result of practical life.

Much of the early rabbinic biblical commentary takes the form of a genre of writing known as midrash. In the generic sense midrash simply refers to the exegesis and interpretation of Scripture.[36] Roger Brooks notes that midrash is marked by a characteristic reading of scripture as if it were addressed to the immediate circumstances of the community itself, fluctuating as those situations surely were. Additionally, he suggests that midrash is often characterized by its ability to spin out seemingly endless and contradictory meanings based on a single word or phrase inherent in the biblical text. From a more contemporary, Western perspective, this rabbinic practice may seem to be a bit loose, almost sloppy in its lack of consistency. But for the rabbis, the citation of multiple interpretations in midrash was an attempt to represent in textual terms a continuation of a single divine conversation between humankind and Yahweh. Polysemy in midrash is to be understood as a claim to textual stability and not

an indication of sloppy exegesis. Polysemy in midrash is a faith statement, a recognition that even in the face of changing circumstances, Yahweh's covenant remains immutable.

Within rabbinic Judaism an intricate and refined process of hermeneutical and homiletical reflection existed with each one of four exegetical methods tailored to meet the needs of the audience and account for the nature of the rhetorical situation at hand. This procedure had the effect of carrying on a divine conversation, one that was constantly being renewed as the spirit of the law came into contact with the praxis of community life. Perhaps not coincidentally, the Hebrew term for paradise, pardes, is taken as an acronym for these four hermeneutical approaches (P shat [the simplest literal meaning of the text], Remez [an implicit hint through numerology or acrostics], D rash [homiletical], Sod [esoteric and mystical interpretations]). The third approach, D rash, is often employed to explicate a difficult passage through the use of a parable or several extended stories.[37] This four-tier system of reading scripture illustrates the flexible nature of rabbinic exegetical practice. At its best, rabbinical Judaism was a kind of ongoing dialectic between thinking and doing; between a disciplined, carefully regulated phronetic process of reflection known as casuistry and the disciplined observance and application of the law. Rather than adhering to a list of beliefs which were to be inculcated, rabbinic Judaism required of its adherents an active mind as well as a contrite character.

Rabbinic casuistry was firmly grounded within rabbinic hermeneutic

principles. Casuistic interpretation, or halakhah, is itself a technical process within the larger hermeneutical and homiletical process. Torah thus allows for alteration of human action only, as Brooks says, ". . . in the context of a legal process that it never seeks to nullify."[38] Three principles of discernment arise out of the halakhaic process. They are: 1) the integrity of the legal system, 2) the original intent of a given rule, and 3) straightforward practicality.[39] All three principles of casuistic discernment function to maintain the spirit of the biblical law while adapting to the nuances of practical life.[40] Halakhah functions as technical exposition of legal, case-related matters. Aggadah, as narrative, is the form through which the content of halakhah is communicated. The interrelationship of halakhah and aggadah is at the very root of the Judaic faith; the two, in essence, exist in tandem.

Rabbinic casuistry was about the practice of religious and practical phronesis. Rabbinic casuistry was an outgrowth of the rabbis' contention that Yahweh's decrees provided the authoritative umbrella under which individual cases could be casuistically analyzed and appropriate action could then be taken. The Ten Utterances (or Written Law) served as archetypal principles in the Hebraic faith. The Oral Law, which tradition asserts was also delivered to Moses on Mt. Sinai, functioned as organizational maxims (rather than principles, for the term "principle" connotes static immutability and, contrary to Christian perceptions, was not the rabbinic perception of the Decalogue) which guided the ensuing discussion. The rabbinical reflections on both the Oral and

Written Law found in the Mishnah and the Talmud (and throughout the entire Torah) served as paradigms and analogies from which inferences applicable to the case under review could be drawn and appropriate action could then be taken. This complex web of moral and ethical reasoning was, by its vary nature, grounded in disciplined reflection. As such, rabbinic casuistry was an integral component in the Hebraic faith's ongoing conversation with Yahweh.

Within the rabbinic corpus, the clearest explication of casuistic practice revolves around the working out of the fifth Utterance; the honoring of father and mother. In response to a question about a person's obligations to the fifth Utterance, the rabbis answered with illustrative stories, each of which contained a minimum of explicit biblical materials. When viewed collectively, the discussion fell into three structural layers, slowly but continually moving to delimit the spirit of the law. The internal dynamic of the explication moved from a discussion of non-Jews and their relationship with parents (Yerushalmi Peah 1:1 [Venice: 15c-d; Vilna: 3a-4a]), to Jews and their relationship with parents. As the following excerpt clarifies, Talmudic authors did not employ rigid, blanket-like principles to guide the obligations of a child to his or her parents. Instead, they opted to operate casuistically, allowing appropriate action in each case to instruct the audience. By operating in this fashion, stories about gentiles, sages, and hypothetical ordinary people work together to draw the student towards the desired conclusion and serve to instruct the audience about appropriate action. So, according to the rabbis, "The Bible tells me so," did not

serve as a principle from which proper action could be deduced; rather, the rabbis' method was one of, "Take my hand and let me show you how" from which the active mind, in conversation with the Judaic tradition, could be challenged to contemplate appropriate action. The following excerpt is taken from Roger Brook's translation. It demonstrates the conversational and narrative qualities inherent in rabbinic casuistical practice.[41]

Mishnah Peah 1:1

> These are things that are not [subject to a specific] measure: (1) The [quantity of produce set aside as] the corner offering (see Lev. 19.9), (2) the [quantity of produce designated as] first fruits, [and brought to the Temple on Pentecost (see Deut. 26:1-11)], (3) the [value of the] appearance [offering, brought to Jerusalem on each of the three pilgrimage festivals (see Deut. 16:16-17)], (4) the [quantity of] righteous deeds [performed], and (5) [time spent in] study of Torah.
>
> These are things the benefits of which a person enjoys in this world, while the principal remains for him in the world to come: (1) [deeds done in] honor of father and mother, (2) [performance of] righteous deeds and (3) acts that bring about peace between one person and another. But (4) study of Torah is equal to all of them together.

Yerushalmi Peah 1:1 [Venice: 15c-d; Vilna 3a-4a]

> . . . R. Abbahu in the name of R. Yohanan: "They asked R. Eliezer, 'How far must one go in honor of father and mother?'
>
> "He said to them, 'You're asking me? Go ask Dama ben Natina, [someone known for the great lengths to which he went in honor of his father and mother].'"
>
> [The Talmud now cites several stories about Dama ben Natina to show to what length one must go in honor of his father and mother:] (1) Dama ben Natina was the chief of the city councilors. One time his mother hit him in front of all the councilors, and the slipper [with which she hit him] fell out of her hand. [Dama had so much respect for his mother that] he reached [and picked up the slipper] for her, so that she would not have to trouble herself [to pick it up].
>
> (2) Said R. Hezekiah, "There was a gentile from Ashkelon [i.e., Dama ben Natina], who was chief of the city councilors. [He had so much respect for his father that] during his entire life, he never sat upon the stone seat upon which his father used to sit. [Furthermore], when his father died, he deemed the stone his god [in his father's honor]."

Several key points may be inferred from this brief analysis of rabbinic casuistical practice. First, the Fifth Utterance, initially given in the Decalogue and then continued in the Mishnah, functions more as a maxim from which

appropriate action emerges rather than an archetypal principle from which appropriate action may be deduced. Each member of the audience must decide for himself or herself what the proper action should be as they integrate the narrative with their own personal experience. Although the rabbis construct the narrative, they are not in control of how the story is received and/or appropriated. Second, the rabbis have employed narrative to delineate the particulars of a paradigmatic cases thereby providing the means from which inferences may be drawn. Topics peculiar to the particular case under consideration emerge through the use of narrative from which comparisons can be made and probable action may then be taken. Finally, this form of persuasion is built on the conviction that the study of Torah is paramount in the life of any practicing Jew. The result of such a standard is that much of the persuasion that takes place in this form of rabbinic conversation is based upon certain enthymematic assumptions that the rabbis have of their audience.

Although the Mishnah and the Talmud did not appear in their written form until the earlier centuries A.D., it is reasonable to hold to the possibility that the practice of casuistical analysis was part of the oral fiber of rabbinic Judaism. Rather than a religion inculcated in negative admonitions, the hermeneutical and homiletical practice of the early rabbis reveals a faith grounded in disciplined reflection; a hermeneutical and homiletical practice that was more conversational than argumentative; a type of reflection that considered the ongoing to and fro, back and forth of practical life. The rabbis'

use of narrative functioned as a descriptive tool from which the community of faith inferred proper action. It was both a hermeneutical and homiletical practice that embraced the fluid aspects of humankind's existence, those elements of being in the world that were always changing as they encountered the changing demands and challenges of practical life. It was therefore a theological rhetoric that was more dunamis than energeia, a theological rhetoric that recognized that humankind was, essentially, a responder to the world and not its master.

In the Christian faith tradition, St. Augustine also practiced a homiletic of dunamis. An analysis of Augustine's practice of preaching shows that his sermonic style was more open than closed, a style that foregrounded the fluid aspects of humankind's existence in the world. Like the homiletical practice of the rabbis, Saint Augustine's preaching style was a theological rhetoric that embraced a world view that was always already on the way to becoming.

PREACHING IN POST-CLASSICAL LANGUAGE

ANOTHER LOOK AT THE TRADITIONAL AUGUSTINE

Many commentators portray Augustine's contribution to rhetoric as an appropriation of Ciceronian theory, an enlightened attempt to adapt pagan principles of rhetoric to Christian hermeneutics and homiletics.[42] Consequently, the homiletic that emerged from such a rhetorical practice was more energeia than dunamis, more rational than experiential. According to George Kennedy,

De Doctrina Christiana is Augustine's major contribution to the history and theory of rhetoric, and it consist largely of a guide for preacher, with books I-III corresponding to Aristotle's dialectic and book IV to his rhetoric.[43] James J. Murphy similarly characterizes Augustine as a key player in the age of transition.[44] Charles Sears Baldwin maintained that Augustine "begins rhetoric anew" after centuries of sophistry, and he gave a "new emphasis for the urgent tasks of preaching the word of God."[45]

These characterizations overlook a significant dimension of Augustine's rhetorical theory which is manifested in his homiletical practice. For Augustine was more than a mere mediator of transition. His style of preaching was an innovative rhetorical response to the intellectual, ecclesiastical, and cultural crises that surrounded him.[46] In response to the needs generated by cultural and military collapse, Augustine provided a "new basis for critical thinking"[47]; a homiletical practice that responded to the cultural and political uncertainty that emerged from the perceived deficiencies of Classicism. Augustine was born into a world the perplexities of which have never been exceeded. As Charles Cochrane notes, for over a century prior to the birth of Augustine, the genius of Rome had been suffering from a chronic debility; nothing that political activity could achieve seemed capable of restoring the majesty and insight of Rome's original vigor. Additionally, as the evidences of internal decay became increasingly apparent, a succession of military disasters added an exclamation point to the end of an epoch. Classicism's vision for a world that could be

understood and controlled had lost its power over people's minds.[48] Augustine's innovation was to develop a philosophical response that bridged the chasm between fatalistic nihilism and subjective fideism; a philosophy that informed a homiletical practice which addressed the deficiencies of Classicism yet provided a means by which individuals could be more than just passively engaged in the transformation of their lives and culture.[49] In the face of the diminishing influence of Greek rationalism, Augustine's alternative philosophy was, as Michael Polanyi articulates, a philosophy which made room for the synthesis of faith and knowledge and was the dominant paradigm until Descartes' subject/object split and the ascendancy of the so-called scientifically demonstrable.[50]

In an age beyond Greek rationalism, Augustine ". . . taught that all knowledge was a gift of grace for which we must strive under the guidance of antecedent belief: nisi credideritis, non intelligitis" (unless you believe, you shall not understand).[51] For over a thousand years, Augustine's doctrine of nisi credideritis, non intelligitis ruled the minds of Christian scholars.[52] Initially, this doctrine appears to reduce the classical quest for order to a purely naive form of fideism. Yet, an analysis of the doctrine uncovers an implicit dialectical combination of exploration and exegesis. The process of understanding is both an exploration into a specific topic and an exegesis of fundamental beliefs.[53] Consequently, fundamental beliefs are continuously reexamined as they are held in tension with what is discovered and by what is believed. This dialectic

is a creative process that does not reach a point of synthesis. It gives rise to a theological rhetoric that is open rather than closed, conversational rather than demonstrable, more dunamis than energeia. It is ". . . a teleology without a telos."[54] In Cochrane's analysis, Augustine's approach provides the groundwork for a synthesis that can never be achieved. Yet, that doctrine meets the legitimate aspiration of Classicism's quest for order while, at the same time, it discloses a world to which Classicism, from the limitations of its outlook, remains inevitably blind.[55]

If nisi credideritis, non intelligitis constitutes an acceptable way of negotiating the ambiguities of practical, equitable and faithful life, then the natural question to be explored is how this alternative way of philosophizing, of being, affected the way Augustine preached in his unstable world. As I have already demonstrated, many commentators view Augustine's contribution to be an enlightened attempt to adapt pagan principles of rhetoric to Christian hermeneutics and homiletics. If this were accurate, his sermons should resemble the form and theory of Cicero. As I will demonstrate, in a post-classical age, what was more important for Augustine was the creation of an experience in the minds of the audience, and not the propositional transmission of information. In a post-classical age, all claims to textual authority and certainty were, at best, tenuous. There had to be something more, and that something was the creation of an ontological experience that one underwent rather than epistemological experience that one possessed.[56] Augustine

practiced a theological rhetoric of dunamis.

It is my sense that Kennedy has overlooked an essential element of Augustine's hermeneutic which, in turn, informed his homiletical practice. In seeking to identify a clean break between books I-III and book IV of De Doctrina, Kennedy has left the impression that once the interpreter has a sufficiently thorough knowledge of the scriptures, those things which are clear can be used to explain those things which are not.[57] Simply, the acquisition of knowledge leads to the explanation of knowledge. Sermons, therefore, relying upon Ciceronian eloquence, convert belief into works and impel the faithful to the Christian life.[58] Although Kennedy does not discuss the matter, it stands to reason that the form of the sermon would be very propositional. The truth would discerned, supported, and then declared. The audience, in return, receives, agrees/disagrees, and then acts.

Gerald Bruns, on the other hand, implies that an Augustinian hermeneut's approach to the text is not so much in the spirit of sensus litteralis as the sensus spiritualis.[59] By sensus spiritualis Bruns suggests that the spiritual meaning ought not to be thought of as the meaning of the text. "It is rather the spirit of fore-understanding in which the text is to be studied."[60] In other words, the main concern of De Doctrina has to do with the spirit in which the text is to be approached. Put into Martin Buber's terms, the text is treated as a "thou" as opposed to an "it"; an orientation from which meaning is experienced rather than treated as an object for dissection and

dissemination.[61] With this understanding, Augustine's maxim nisi credideritis, non intelligitis is critical for an experiential exposition. As Bruns notes, in book II Augustine speaks of the steps that must be taken in order to be in a position to understand what is read. Each of these steps identifies an orientation of the state of mind or spirit that nurtures an experiential encounter with the text. Through an orientation of fear, piety, knowledge, fortitude, mercy and, finally, a metaphorical cleansing of the eye, a spiritual transformation occurs. This transformation naturally leads to a different kind of transmission.[62] This transmission, or sermonic form, as I argue, was constructed to invite the audience into an experiential encounter with the text. Rather than a propositional vessel for the transmission of facts, Augustine's hermeneutic facilitated a way for both preacher and audience to participate in a co-created event. In his post-classical age, Augustine's hermeneutical orientation structured his innovative homiletical form.

Erich Auerbach appears to offer an initial understanding of the peculiar attraction of Augustine's sermons. He writes:

> In East and West alike a fusion or adaptation had taken place. The authors of Christian sermons drew on the rhetorical tradition that pervaded the ancient world and spoke in the forms to which their audience was accustomed, for in those days almost everyone judged an oration by the ring of the words. . . . The congregation clapped and cheered when a rhetorical figure caught

> their fancy. . . . To us the rhetorical figures seem artificial, pedantic, and precious; and so they are, but they derive their justification from a universal love of phronetic parallels and plays on words; and moreover, what a given public might regard as the height of art may strike later generations as utterly hackneyed and conventional.[63]

Auerbach notes that both the form of the sermon and the ring of the words was important for the audience. Not a word is mentioned about the sermon's content. Furthermore, Auerbach has voiced that which has prevented many moderns from perceiving the unique nature of Augustine's method; namely, that features that may be perceived as hackneyed and conventional are, in effect, the very elements that moved the ancient audience to an experiential encounter.

Čelica Milovanović-Barham has explicated Auerbach's insight by suggesting that ". . . the three levels of style in Christian oratory should reflect the level of emotional impact on the audience, which would result in frequent variation through the course of the speech."[64] According to Milovanović-Barham, for Augustine, the decisive element in the composition of a sermon was the choice of style and not the subject matter, i.e., consideration of the desired effect on the audience.[65] Furthermore, with the exception of the middle style which could operate on its own, Augustine advocated combining all three styles in one oration, the effect of which was a sublime oscillation and pulsation,

"like the tides of the sea."[66] The innovative nature of Augustine's practice may be seen in the following brief excerpt of the grand style from his Christmas sermon number five.[67]

Rather than a series of rhetorical questions as Milovanović-Barham suggests, it is my sense that in this sermon Augustine achieves his desired effect on the audience by using a form of simple parallelism where each sentence in the rhetorical complex is parallel in thought, and each sentence concludes with a parallel word. Note how these heightened graduations in thought and word perform a pedagogical function. They serve to offer a brief survey of the mystery of the faith, while they at the same time lead the hearers to the answer of that mystery, namely, "He Himself, is the day which the Lord has made."[68] The power of the conclusion is such that an ensuing altar call can be imagined. When asked why they were going forward a member of the audience may have responded with something like, "I'm going forward because I have experienced the mysterious presence of God." The nature of that experience could probably not be explained in rational terms but its power, its effect on the listener, was very real.

The numbers on the left represent the syllables in the colon. Note how the pericope begins and ends with syllables of moderate length and climaxes in the middle with syllables of short, snappy length. Augustine concludes:[69]

13 Exsultet itaque in credentibus mundus,

14 quibus salvandis venit per quem factus est mundus.

6 Conditor Mariae,

6 natus ex Maria:

5 filius David,

5 Dominus David:

5 semen Abrahae,

7 qui est ante Abraham:

4 factor terrae,

5 factus in terra:

5 creator caeli,

6 creatus sub caelo.

11 Ipse est dies quem facit Dominus,

13 et dies cordis nostri ipse est Dominus.

10 Ambulemus in lumine ejus,

12 exsultemus et iucundemur in eo.

(Let the world, therefore, rejoice in those who believe. To save them, he came through whom the world was made--the Creator of Mary, born of Mary **[simple parallelism]**; the Son of David, Lord of David **[simple parallelism]**; the seed of Abraham, who was before Abraham **[simple parallelism]**; the Maker of the earth, made on the earth **[simple parallelism]**; He who brought the heavens into existence, brought into existence under the heavens **[antithesis]**. He Himself is the day which the Lord hath made, and the day of our heart is itself the Lord. Let us

walk in His light, let us rejoice and take delight in it.)[70]

I have discovered that none of Augustine's extant Christmas sermons possess the tone of being completely finished. There is no sense that he has delivered the authoritative analysis of one of faith's unfathomable mysteries. Rather, listeners are left with the impression that they have received an authoritative word in an unauthoritarian form. In this regard, Augustine is clearly employing a theological rhetoric of dunamis. There is certainly more to tell but, for now, the audience can be content with having experienced part of the story. And it seems that it is at the point of being content with experiencing only part of the story, that Augustine establishes himself as one of the first spokespersons for a post-classical age, an age that calls forth a different kind of homiletical practice. Rather than serving as a repudiation of the sophistic tradition,[71] as Kennedy claims, Augustine's dunamis style of theological rhetoric shares many similarities with that tradition. Moreover, like his rabbinic predecessors, Augustine's homiletical practice demonstrated that he is more interested in what a sermon may do and even undo in the experience of the receiving audience, than in pointedly conveying content. Augustine demonstrated that in a post-classical world, the most effective kind of preaching was that which emulated the "pulse and ebb flow"; that which embodied a convergence of style. Augustine's homiletical practice functioned more as a sophistical creation of an experience than the propositional transmission of knowledge and, in this way, it was a theological rhetoric that privileged dunamis

over energeia.

PREACHING IN OBJECTIVE LANGUAGE

MODERNITY AND THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE OLD HOMILETIC

Augustine's hermeneutical practice enjoyed a faithful following for over one-thousand years. Even sixteenth century reformers such as Luther and Calvin appropriated major components of Augustine's theory in their hermeneutical and homiletical practice. Through the vernacular translations of the Bible and the subsequent debates about social and ecclesiastic reform, the Reformation had an enormous impact on the Modern Age. However, the Reformation did not inaugurate a new era in the history of hermeneutical and homiletical practice. Scott Hendrix argues that "the dividing line between medieval and Reformation interpretation of Scripture is blurred."[72] These sixteenth century interpreters of Scripture used a variety of hermeneutical practices which they inherited from their ancient and medieval predecessors.[73] In other words, preaching practices in the age of Reformation continued to be a theological rhetoric that favored dunamis rather than energeia.

The impact of the Enlightenment on hermeneutical and homiletical practices is a different matter. The current tension that exists between the Old and the New Homiletic is in some ways an extension of the tension between an Augustinian and an Enlightenment hermeneutic. As Gerald Bruns argues, in the tradition of Luther, the Augustinian monk, the scriptural text was to be taken

in the spirit in which it was written. The interpreter was to be informed, consumed and even exalted by the text. According to Luther, "Scripture is not understood, unless it is brought home, that is, experienced."[74] Luther's hermeneutical posture was not that of a grammarian's relationship to a textual artifact but as "One [who] always has to progress in the understanding of Scripture"[75]; or, in rhetorical terms, Luther's theological rhetoric was more dunamis than energeia.

Luther's process-oriented hermeneutic contrasted with the kind of method-driven hermeneutic that characterized the Enlightenment's quest for cognitive objectivity. Whereas from Augustine to Luther, scriptural interpretation was a process that took place within a community, from Descartes onward the hermeneutical impetus was for interpretation to take place outside of community. Descartes' famous "truth," I think therefore I am, was a result of his "pretend[ing] that everything that had ever entered [his] mind was not more true that the illusions of [his] dreams."[76] This turning away from community and in to the self, Gary Madison argues, is a primary distinctive feature of modern philosophy. Madison writes,

> What above all characterizes that form of the logocentric metaphysics of presence known as modern philosophy is that it seeks to realize philosophy's traditional goal of achieving a basic, fundamental knowledge (episteme, Wissenschaft) of what is (ta onta) by turning inward, into the knowing subject himself

> (conceived of either psychologistically or transcendentally), where it seeks to discover grounds which will allow for certainty in our "knowledge" of what, henceforth, is called "the external world." . . . the methodological conviction of the modern philosopher is that he may come to know truly that reality which is only indirectly present (re-resented) with the unquestionable laws of logic . . . . If only he can string his ideas together in the right ways, the result supposedly will be that they will form a true "representation" or likeness of "objective" reality. Representationalism has been the name of the game from Descartes up to our twentieth-century positivists and analysts.[77]

As Madison indicates and Descartes intimated, Modernism may broadly be characterized by practices or methods which allow the human subject to form true representations of a so-called objectively verifiable reality.[78] As it relates to texts, such a hermeneutical posture allows for the subject to reflect himself or herself out of the hermeneutical situation in order to regard the artifact from a historical-critical or analytical distance.[79] "Truth," then, exists in the text and it is verifiable through historical-critical objectivity. This foundational "truth" is re-presented by language because ". . . language is made up of words that function to name aspects of this other reality."[80]

The quest for an accurate representation of the external world is evident in a variety Modern language theories. From John Locke's view that language

itself is a vehicle for representing knowledge to George Campbell's "Common Sense" approach where persuasion is the result of a four-step process that begins with instruction and proceeds through imagination and passions until it motivates the will, most Modern theorists are involved in a project that entails the "accurate" representation and effective presentation of external and foundational worlds.

Friedreich Schleiermacher is credited with being the pioneer of modern theology, the dominant Protestant theologian between John Calvin and Karl Barth who, according to one writer, ". . . carried out a 'Copernican revolution' in theology as consequential as Kant's revolution in philosophy."[81] As a theologian who was heavily influenced by the methodological impetus of his day, Schleiermacher's project was not so much about a "lack of understanding" as it was about the hermeneutical and homiletical clarification of "misunderstanding."[82] Schleiermacher argued that the problem with the hermeneutical practices of his day was historical distance. Understanding means having some kind of internal connection with what is understood. This "internal connection" means,

> . . . situating the text in the time and the place of its composition, as in the logical reconstruction of meaning based on formal analysis and historical research; but it also means retracing the process of composition so that, as Schleiermacher had once phrased it, "the interpreter can put himself 'inside' the author [dass

man sich dadurch in den Schriftsteller 'hinein' bildet][83]

Both Descartes and Schleiermacher were driving toward some kind of absolute, foundational, certainty that could be accurately represented, but each had a different way of getting there. In contrast with Descartes, Schleiermacher's hermeneutical method demanded that the hermeneut understand the "other" or in this case, the author, from the inside out rather than from the outside in; from inside a community rather than as a distanced observer from outside the community. For Schleiermacher, a person's religious consciousness emerged from "the community life one shares."[84]

Schleiermacher's drive to foundational certainty depicts "proper" understanding as a reconstructive process that consists of two broad categories, the grammatical and the psychological.[85] The goal of his hermeneutical method was to reconstruct the mental experience of the text's author, or to reconstruct the author's thinking.[86] According to Schleiermacher's lecture notes, this reconstructive process had twenty-three different steps or hermeneutical maxims.[87] At different points along the exegetical continuum, both the grammatical and the psychological components of the reconstructive process were emphasized. In essence, the grammatical and the psychological existed dialectically so that ". . . each side of the interpretation must be developed so thoroughly that the other becomes dispensable, or, better, that the results of the two coincide."[88] For Schleiermacher, the result of this hermeneutical process was the text's original meaning and the author's original

intent.

In more recent biblical scholarship, the term "exegesis" has supplanted "hermeneutics" as the word to describe the contemporary version of Schleiermacher's interpretive process. As Gordon D. Fee indicates, the term exegesis,

> refer[s] to the historical investigation into the meaning of the biblical text. Exegesis, answers the question, "What did the biblical author mean? It has to do both with what he said (the content itself) and why he said it at any given point (the literary context). Furthermore, exegesis is primarily concerned with intentionality: What did the author intend his original readers to understand?[89]

As with Schleiermacher, Fee's interpretive process involves a quest to arrive at the text's original meaning as well as the author's original intent. There is a sense in which, through proper exegetical method, the contemporary exegete can know what the "original text" meant better than the author himself or herself. These objective methods of hermeneutical practice inform the Old Homiletic, a homiletic that is about the accurate re-presentation of whatever "truth" has been objectively verified.

There are fifteen steps in Fee's exegetical method which range from a survey of the historical context to ascertaining the "meaning" of a given passage:

1. Survey the historical context in general.
2. Confirm the limits of the passage.
3. Become thoroughly acquainted with your paragraph/pericope.
4. Analyze sentence structures and syntactical relationships.
5. Establish the text.
6. Analyze the grammar.
7. Analyze significant words.
8. Research the historical-cultural background
9. Determine the formal character of the Epistle.
10. Examine the historical context in particular
11. Determine the literary context.
12. Consider the broader biblical and theological contexts.
13. Accumulate a bibliography of secondary sources and read widely.
14. Provide a finished translation (optional).
15. Write the paper (For gospel lessons this paper includes an Opening, a review of the Context, a discussion of the Sitz im leben Jesu, and a discussion of the passage's Meaning. This Meaning is the canonical level [original intent], and it is that which is to be proclaimed.).[90]

Once these steps have been applied to a particular passage, the application or sermon preparation move is initiated. Before drafting the sermon, Key advises

his reader to "sit down and hammer out three things--in writing--as guidelines for the sermon:" They are:

> a. The main point or points of the biblical text that you want to proclaim. [CAUTION: Do not feel compelled to touch every exegetical point--only those that contribute to this sermon.]
>
> b. The purpose of the present sermon, i.e., how the above points are seen to be applicable.
>
> c. The response that one hopes the sermon will receive.[91]

The sermon that emerges from this exegetical procedure tends to resemble an argument or a history lecture. It is often very propositional or pedagogical and is composed of three main points that are fleshed out with clarifying sub-points. These points are often connected with some sort of illustration that can be applied to the hearer's life. Many practitioners believe that by following the proper exegetical procedures, the author's original intent can be carried forth to the contemporary congregation. In rhetorical terms, the emphasis is more energeia than dunamis.

This Enlightenment period of historical-critical methodologies where theorists from Schleiermacher to Fee were the norm of hermeneutical and homiletical practice was not without its critics. For instance, In 1971, the New Testament scholar and homiletical theorist, Fred Craddock, appropriated Søren Kierkegaard's indirect method of communication by publishing As One Without Authority: Essays on Inductive Preaching.[92] Craddock's critique arouse from

observations he made about his own practice of speaking to public groups and his reflections on how this style differed from his preaching in congregations. He discovered that the style of speaking he used at the local Lion's Club with its use of narrative and story was in stark contrast to the propositional style of preaching he used on Sunday morning. It was only after one of his church members who was also a member of the Lion's Club confronted him about these differences that he began to think more critically about the presuppositions of his homiletical practice.[93] As I will demonstrate in the next chapter, most contemporary homileticians trace the birth of what has been called the New Homiletic to Craddock's re-discovery of Kierkegaard, a re-discovery that sought to depict preaching as more of a creation of an experience than the generation of propositional arguments, a theological rhetoric that, in its practice, favors dunamis over energeia.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

After an initial introduction to the trajectory I pursue throughout this dissertation, this chapter reviews three major moves in hermeneutical and homiletical theory. I have attempted to frame the epochs of rabbinic conversation, Augustinian post-classical practice, and Modern historical-critical exegetical methods as they relate to the dunamis/energeia discussion that is currently unfolding in rhetorical theory. This broad overview demonstrates that an approach to preaching as homileoing (ὡμίλουν), as conversation, has been

present throughout the history of preaching, even if its voice has at times been muted. It is an approach that is particularly evident in the practice of rabbinic conversation and in what I have depicted as Augustinian post-classical practice. The more recent Modern emphasis on historical-critical methodologies that attempt to impose certainty, closure, and control on texts and, consequently, sermons, is in many ways inconsistent with the broader history of hermeneutical and homiletical practice. One of the few exceptions to the modern hermeneutical/homiletical paradigm is the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, and it is Kierkegaard to whom Fred Craddock turns to develop what has come to be known as the New Homiletic.

Notes to Chapter One

1. Søren Kierkegaard, Practice in Christianity, ed. and trans., Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991) 233-234.

2. Raymond E. Anderson, "Kierkegaard's Theory of Communication," Speech Monographs 30 (1963): 3.

3. See, for example, Kierkegaard's lengthy discussion entitled "The Calamity of Christendom," Practice, 35-36.

4. Kierkegaard, Practice, 35.

5. Richard L. Eslinger, A New Hearing: Living Options in Homiletical Method (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987) 11. Eslinger is not alone in his views. Within recent years several homileticians have attempted to mitigate the crisis in preaching. Among others, see Richard Lischer, Theories of Preaching: Selected Readings in the Homiletical Tradition (Durham: Labyrinth Press, 1987) 1-5, and David Buttrick, A Captive Voice: The Liberation of Preaching (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994). For a review of some trends in homiletical theory see, Lucy A. Rose, "Preaching in the Round-Table Church," diss., Emory University, 1995. For a look at how homiletic practices in Twentieth Century United States have been conscripted by the secular culture see, Marsha G. Witten, All is Forgiven: The Secular Message in American Protestantism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

6. Buttrick, A Captive Voice, 112. My emphasis.

7. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), for instance, has lost one-sixth of its membership over the last fifteen years. Although ineffective preaching is surely only part of the cause for such massive attrition, my work in the larger denomination, my service on the Committees of Ministry and Preparation, as well as my conversations with many lay people have demonstrated to me that an alarming number of ministers and candidates for ministry do not know how to preach effective sermons.

8. Office of the General Assembly Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), "The Second Helvetic Confession, The Book of Confessions (Louisville: Office of the General Assembly, 1991) 5.0004. My emphasis. At the request of Frederick III, Henrich Bullinger wrote The Second helvetic Confession to provide a full and clear explanation of the faith. See "Helvetic Confessions" The Westminster Dictionary of Church History, ed. Jerald C. Brauer (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971) 392. I am particularly grateful to my friend and colleague, Rev. William L. Roemer, for reminding me that Karl Barth also picks up this theme. In his Church Dogmatics, Barth declared that, "Real proclamation as this new event, in which the event of human talk is not set aside by God but exalted, is the Word of God" (95). See Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics,2nd ed., 14 vols. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1986) I.1: 47-99. My emphasis.

9. John Stewart, Language as Articulate Contact: Toward a Post-Semiotic Philosophy of Communication (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995) 7-8.

10. Stewart, 7.

11. For a helpful introduction to the contemporary debate surrounding the changes in philosophy see, Thomas McCarthy, After Philosophy: End or Transformation, eds. Kenneth Baynes, James Bohman, and Thomas McCarthy (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987) 1-18 and Gary B. Madison, The Hermeneutics of Postmodernity: Figures and Themes (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988). For research related to communication, rhetoric and postmodernism see, John Stewart, "A Postmodern Look at Traditional Communication Postulates," Western Journal of Speech Communication 55 (1991): 354-379; John Poulakos, "Rhetoric, the Sophists, and the Possible," Communication Monographs 51 (1984): 215-266; John Poulakos, "Interpreting Sophistical Rhetoric: A Response to Schiappa," Philosophy and Rhetoric 23 (1990): 218-228; John Poulakos and Steve Whitson, "Rhetoric Denuded and Redressed: Figs and Figures," Quarterly Journal of Speech 81 (1995): 378-385; Edward Schiappa, "Neo-sophistic Rhetorical Criticism or the Reconstruction of Sophistic Doctrines?" Philosophy and Rhetoric 23 (1990): 192-217; and Edward Schiappa, "History and Neo-sophistic Criticism: A Reply to Poulakos," Philosophy and Rhetoric 23 (1990): 307-315. For research related to preaching, biblical studies and postmodernism see, James Breech, Jesus and Postmodernism (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1989); Walter Brueggeman, Texts Under Negotiation: the Bible and Postmodern Imagination (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993); Gerald L. Bruns, Hermeneutics Ancient and Modern (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Edgar V. McKnight, Post-Modern

Use of the Bible: the Emergence of Reader-Oriented Criticism (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988); J. Richard Middleton and Brian J. Walsh, Truth is Stranger Than it Used to Be (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1995); Stephen D. Moore, Poststructuralism and the New Testament: Derrida and Foucault at the Foot of the Cross (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994); Thomas C. Oden, Requiem: A Lament in Three Movements (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995); Lucy Rose, "Conversational Preaching: A Proposal" Journal for Preachers 19, No. 1 (1995): 26-30; and Anthony C. Thiselton, New Horizons in Hermeneutics (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992).

I am aware that my reader may be wondering what, precisely, I mean by postmodernism. Do I fall into the camp of Jean-François Lyotard where postmodernism is defined as "incredulity toward metanarratives" (Jean-François Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984) xxiv.), or may I be more closely aligned with Gerald Bruns' depiction that postmodernism is ". . . the cold recognition, after years of radical aspiration, that there is no breaking free of the systems that contain us" (196)? Because I recognize that, in the words of A.K.M. Adam, ". . . the hyperactive pursuit of precise definitions can itself be one of the marks of modernity" (A.K.M. Adam, What Is Postmodern Biblical Criticism (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995) xii.), I am not inclined to offer a definition of postmodernism that attempts to describe it as a thing to be grasped, controlled, contained or understood. Rather,

throughout this dissertation, I prefer to think of postmodernism as a response to and critique of the foundational presuppositions of Cartesian modernity that engulf various disciplines in the Western world. Throughout this dissertation, postmodernism is understood as simply a way of thinking, philosophizing, or preaching that resists being identified with modern assumptions about certainty, closure, and control. I do not consider myself to be a Nietzscheian-Foucaultian-Derridian-Lyotardian poststructuralist-postmodernist-deconstructionist theorist who is either a bane or boon to my particular academic discipline. Unlike some of my postmodern, poststructural, and deconstructionist colleagues, I believe in Truth with a capital "T," but I also recognize that such Truth is rarely seen, comprehended, or understood by humanity as a whole and, perhaps more distressing, is often defined by the individual or group that has the most weapons and has won the most recent proverbial war. The kind of Truth that I believe exits is a kind of Truth that is always already on the way to becoming or, in the words, of Gadamer, ". . . it is a discipline of questioning and inquiring" (Disziplin des Fragens und des Forschens, Truth and Method, 491. My emphasis.). Perhaps the Apostle Paul summed it up best when he wrote about the paradoxical human condition in I Corinthians 13:12-13 that, "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood." For a fine and brief analysis of the relationship between postmodernism and communication theory see Kenneth W. White, "An Application of Gadamer's Hermeneutics Through an

Empirical Description of Communication in a Collaborative Learning Community," diss., U of Washington, 1992, 8-22.

12. Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Man and Language," Philosophical Hermeneutics (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976) 62.

13. Stewart, 115.

14. For example, Raymond Bailey is attracted to Gadamer's "method [of] conversation . . . [a method] that has tremendous implications for the preacher." Raymond Bailey, "Hermeneutics: A Necessary Art," Hermeneutics for Preaching: Approaches to Contemporary Interpretations of Scripture, ed. Raymond Bailey (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992) 22. However, Bailey's awareness of Gadamer appears to be more informed by the work of David Tracy than the work of Gadamer himself. In Tracy's own words, "interpretation-as-conversation, although clearly indebted to Gadamer's pioneering work, is less directed than his to an ontology of understanding and more to developing an empirical (Anglo-American?) model for the interpretation of texts . . . ." See David Tracy, Plurality and Ambiguity (San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, 1987; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994) 115. Additionally, in an unpublished paper presented at the Academy of Homiletics Jeff Kisner attempts to link the "hermeneutic philosophy" of Gadamer with the task of "sacred rhetoric" or preaching. Kisner does an adequate job of locating Gadamerian references to "preaching" by demonstrating that ". . . the interpretation of the biblical text is not an objective, sterile, surgical task but a participatory one, more like a conversation or 'dance.'" But, like Tracy, Kisner

fails to see the peculiarly ontological nature of Gadamer's linguisticality and its ramifications for preaching. See Jeff Kisner, "Hermeneutic Philosophy as Rhetoric: Gadamer as Rhetorician," Academy of Homiletics Proc. of a Conference on Preaching, 2-4 Dec. 1993 (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University, 1993) 6. To date, Richard Eslinger is the first homiletician to try to engage Gadamer's theory into some kind of conversation with homiletics. Although I disagree with Eslinger's appropriation of Gadamer, I welcome and admire his theoretical instincts. See Richard L. Eslinger, Narrative Imagination: Preaching the Worlds That Shape Us (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995) 127-129, 207, 210.

15. Richard Bernstein, Beyond Objectivism and Relativism (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985) 19.

16. Bernstein, 223.

17. Stewart, 110.

18. Richard L. Eslinger, Narrative Imagination, 69.

19. Eslinger, 69-70.

20. Eslinger, 71. My emphasis.

21. See among others, David J. Bryant, Faith and the Play of Imagination: On the Role of Imagination in Religion (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1989), 85 and Thomas H. Troeger, Imagining a Sermon (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990).

22. Aristotle, On Rhetoric, trans. George A. Kennedy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 36.

23. John Poulakos, "Toward a Sophistic Definition of Rhetoric," Philosophy and Rhetoric 16 (1983): 35-48; John Poulakos, "Rhetoric, the Sophists, and the Possible," Communication Monographs 51 (1984): 215-266; John Poulakos, "Interpreting Sophistical Rhetoric: A Response to Schiappa," Philosophy and Rhetoric 23 (1990): 218-228. Representing a more Aristotelian approach to the topic, Edward Schiappa responded to the sophistic emphasis in the Poulakos articles. See Edward Schiappa, "Neo-sophistic Rhetorical Criticism or the Reconstruction of Sophistic Doctrines?" 192-217; Edward Schiappa, "History and Neo-sophistic Criticism: A Reply to Poulakos," 307-315. Although I have chosen to concentrate on the Poulakos argument, the Poulakos/Schiappa exchange underscores the difficulty of any hermeneutical theory that endeavors to ascertain the author's original intent or a foundational meaning of a specific word. The word that Poulakos defines as energeia (actual) has in various places been defined as "working, operation, action," the antithesis of Aristotelian "actuality." See William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979) 265. Poulakos elaborates on these articles by showing the tensions between the Sophists and Plato, Aristotle, and Isocrates in, John Poulakos, Sophistical Rhetoric in Classical Greece (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1995).

24. Poulakos, "Rhetoric," 216.

25. Poulakos, "Rhetoric," 218.

26. Poulakos, "Rhetoric," 218. My emphasis.

27. Poulakos, "Rhetoric," 222-224.

28. Poulakos, "Rhetoric," 223.

29. Robert Brooks, The Spirit of the Ten Commandments (San Francisco: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1990) 1.

30. Brooks, 1.

31. Jacob Neusner, Writing with Scripture: The Authority and Uses of the Hebrew Bible in the Torah of Formative Judaism (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989) 1.

32. Albert R. Jonsen and Stephen Toulmin, The Abuse of Casuistry (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988) 56.

33. For a more complete analysis of this very complex historical and theological move, see Howard Clark Kee, The Origins of Christianity: Sources and Documents (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970) 126.

34. Brooks, 26.

35. Brooks, 27. See also, Jacob Neusner, 113-136 and Daniel Boyarin, Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990) 80-92.

36. Richard N. Soulen, The Handbook of Biblical Criticism (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1976) 106.

37. Brooks, 17.

38. Brooks, 23.

39. Brooks, 23.

40. Brooks, 23-27.

41. Brooks, 116-128.

42. See among others James J. Murphy, "Saint Augustine and the Debate about a Christian Rhetoric," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 46 (1960) 400-410; Lesslie Newbigin, Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986) 102; George A. Kennedy, Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980) 149-160; Charles Sears Baldwin, Medieval Rhetoric and Poetic (Glouster: Peter Smith, 1959) 51-73. Kathy Eden, "The Rhetorical Tradition in Augustinian Hermeneutics in De doctrina christiana," Rhetorica, 8 (1990), begins the process of exploring a less conventional view.

43. Kennedy, 153.

44. James J. Murphy, Rhetoric in the Middle Ages: A History of Rhetorical Theory from St. Augustine to the Renaissance (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974) 47.

45. Baldwin, 51.

46. I would be remiss if I failed to credit Arthur Van Seters for this insight. Although Van Seters chooses to track the Augustinian innovation as it relates to theological doctrine, his thought has opened the door for me to analyze innovation as it is manifested in Augustine's preaching. A brief survey of Van Seters' position may be found in Academy of Homiletics, Proc. of a

Conference on Preaching, 2-4 Dec. 1993 (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University, 1993) 39.

47. Newbigin, 103.

48. Charles Norris Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture: A Study of Thought and Action from Augustus to Augustine (London: Clarendon Press, 1940) 380-381. Lesslie Newbigin echoes a theme similar to that of Cochrane when he suggests that Augustine stood at the point where the classical vision had lost its power over people's minds. In the midst of chaos and cultural nihilism, Augustine's innovation shaped public life for a thousand years. Lesslie Newbigin, 133.

49. I presented a first panel paper on this topic at the annual convention of the American Academy for the History of Rhetoric in New Orleans, Louisiana, in November 1994. The paper is entitled, "Augustinian Innovation: A Spokesperson for a Post-Critical Age." It is currently under review for publication in The Journal of Communication and Religion.

50. I take Polanyi's understanding of a post-critical philosophy to be something akin to a belief in belief; an attempt to make room for "tacit accent" as a responsible way to "be" in the world in the face of the diminishing influence of Greek rationalism. A post-critical philosophy is a kind of synthesis of faith and knowledge and was the dominant paradigm until Descartes' subject/object split and the ascendancy of the so-called scientifically demonstrable. Polanyi writes, "Tacit assent and intellectual passions, the sharing of an idiom and of cultural heritage, affiliation to a like-minded community: such are the impulses

which shape our vision of the nature of things. . . ." Michael Polanyi, Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958) 266. Additionally, I am coming to see that John Henry Newman's notion of an "Illative Sense" shares many similarities with Polanyi's post-critical philosophy. Newman indicated that he was attempting to ascertain "when it is that assent is given to propositions which are inferred, and under what circumstances" (270). As Newman indicated, "It is the mind that reasons, and that controls its own reasonings, not any technical apparatus of words and propositions. This power of judging and concluding, when in its perfection, I call the illative Sense . . ." (276). John Henry Cardinal Newman, An Essay in Aid of A Grammar of Assent (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979) 270-299. More recently, Pretext has dedicated an issue to describing a Post-Critical rhetoric. See Pretext, 5, No. 4 (1984). It is clear, however, that Polanyi and others have described as a post-critical philosophy shares certain characteristics with what has elsewhere been described as postmodern thinking. Polanyi and particularly Newman still cling to a high view of the human cogito's ability to rightly reason. Therefore, I see both Polanyi and Newman as philosophers in transition to a postmodern world view. I am obliged to use Polanyi and Newman because they both continue to be highly regarded and cited in theological and homiletical literature.

51. Polanyi, 266.

52. Although he was certainly the most innovative homiletician of the

Medieval period, Augustine was not the only person who considered the topic of preaching. Several theorists wrote on the subject. The ars praedicandi (Art of Preaching) was studied by such people as Guibert de Nogent (1053-1124) and Robert of Basevorn (c. 1322). Nogent's "Liber quo ordine sermo fieri debeat" ("A Book About the Way a Sermon Ought to be Given" addressed the four methods of scriptural interpretation: 1) history, 2) allegory, 3) tropology (moral instruction), and 4) aesthetics (spiritual enlightenment). Robert of Basevorn's "Forma praedicandi" ("The Form of Preaching"), is one of many preaching manuals that existed at the latter end of the Medieval period. Basevorn argued that Christ set a model for Christian preachers. For Basevorn, this meant that Scripture had two purposes, that is, Scripture was to be used for evangelical "announcement" and for doctrinal "teaching." See Murphy, 269-355.

53. I am indebted to Polanyi for this insight. See Polanyi, 267.

54. Gary B. Madison, "Beyond Seriousness and Frivolity: A Gadamerian Response to Deconstruction," Gadamer and Hermeneutics, ed. Hugh J. Silverman (New York: Routledge, 1991) 135. In borrowing the phrase "a teleology without a telos" from Merleau-Ponty, Madison is attempting to illustrate Gadamer's dialectic of experience which culminates, not in "definitive knowledge," but in "openness to experience that is encouraged by experience itself." It is in the unclosed closedness of this kind of dialectical experience that Augustine and Gadamer share some intriguing similarities.

55. Cochrane, 400.

56. By experience, I mean something akin to Hans-George Gadamer's sense of Erfahrung as opposed to Erlebnis. As I have already suggested, Erlebnis is something one has; something which is embedded with a subject/object dichotomy. In this context, an aesthetic experience that a preacher imparts or provides for a congregation. Erfahrung, however, is something that one undergoes; the subjectivity of the subject/object dichotomy is overcome by an event of understanding. In this context it implicates an integrative event in which preacher and congregation participate in coming to an understanding of text together. Since it is difficult to point to one place in Truth and Method where these terms are clarified, see the overview of the distinctions between Erlebnis and Erfahrung in the translators' preface of Hans-Georg Gadamer, Truth and Method, Second Revised Edition, Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, trans. (New York: Continuum, 1993) xiii-xiv.

57. Kennedy, 154.

58. Kennedy, 157.

59. Gerald L. Bruns, Hermeneutics Ancient and Modern (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992) 142.

60. Bruns, 142.

61. For a better understanding of Martin Buber's four hermeneutical steps see Steven Kepnes, The Text as Thou: Martin Buber's Dialogical Hermeneutics and Narrative Theology (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992) 78.

62. Saint Augustine, On Christian Doctrine, trans. D. W. Robertson, Jr. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1958) 38-40. Bruns, 142.

63. Erich Auerbach, Literary Language and Its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and in the Middle Ages, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1958) 32-33.

64. Čelica Milovanović-Barham, "Three Levels of Style in Augustine of Hippo and Gregory of Nazianzus," Rhetorica, XI, No. 1 (Winter 1993) 1.

65. Milovanović-Barham, 5.

66. Milovanović-Barham, 9.

67. This Augustinian homiletical pattern is not limited to his Christmas sermon five. Although here I limit my analysis to Augustine's Christmas sermon number five, Lawler's entire translation is a rich repository for viewing Augustine's innovative rhetorical contribution. See St. Augustine, Sermons for Christmas and Epiphany, trans. Thomas Comerford Lawler (Westminster: The Newman Press, 1952). Gerald A. Press has made a perceptive attempt to better understand the structural composition of De doctrina christiana. Press persuasively argues for a chiastic organizational structure in De doctrina christiana; a kind of parallelism within parallelism, that I believe is in many ways analogous to specific pericopes within Augustine's actual sermons. See Gerald A. Press, "The Subject and Structure of Augustine's De doctrina christiana," Augustinian Studies, 11 (1980) 120.

68. All Latin quotations are taken from the Benedictines of St. Maur, Sancti Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis episcopi hipponensis opera omnia (Paris:

1841) 1001-1005.

69. I am indebted to Professor William Purcell of Seattle Pacific University's Department of Communication for his assistance in the Latin translation of this sermon.

70. St. Augustine, Sermons for Christmas and Epiphany, 90.

71. Kennedy, 159.

72. Scott H. Hendrix, "Luther Against the Background of the History of Biblical Interpretation," Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology 37 (1983): 229.

73. Hendrix, 229

74. Bruns, 147. See also, Dr. Martin Luthers Tischreden (1531-1546) (Weimar: Hermann Bohlaus, 1914), vol. 3, 170: "Die schrifft versteht keiner, sie kome den einem zu haus, id est, experiatur."

75. Hendrix, 234.

76. René Descartes, Discourse on Method for Rightly Conducting One's Reason and for Seeking Truth in the Sciences, trans. Donald A. Cress (Hackett Publishing Company, 1980) 17.

77. Gary B. Madison, The Hermeneutics of Postmodernity: Figures and Themes (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990) x.

78. Madison, x.

79. Bruns, 148.

80. Stewart, 40.

81. James C. Livingston, Modern Christian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Vatican II (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1971) 96.

82. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 184.

83. Bruns, 152-153.

84. Livingston, 109.

85. Richard Palmer, Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969) 86-87.

86. Palmer, 89.

87. Keith W. Clements, ed., Friedreich Schleiermacher: Pioneer of Modern Theology (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991) 157-171. Clements is citing Manuscript 3 of Schleiermacher's lecture notes from August 19, 1819.

88. Clements, 170.

89. Gordon D. Fee, New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors, 2nd edition. (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993) 27. There are a number of books on the market that deal with this type of emphasis on exegetical method, all of which have imbedded in them some kind of structuralist quest to arrive at an "original meaning" and the author's "original intent." See for instance, Walter C. Kaiser and Moises Silva, An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics: The Search for Meaning (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994) and David Alan Black and David S. Dockery, eds., New Testament Criticism and Interpretation (Grand Rapids: Zondervan

Publishing House, 1991). My emphasis.

90. Fee, 34-60.

91. Kee, 61.

92. Fred Craddock, As One Without Authority: Essays on Inductive Preaching (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971).

93. Craddock, 112-115. When describing some the essential components of his alternative hermeneutical theory, Craddock demonstrates that he is indebted to Karl Barth who believed that, ". . . God's Word is God's Word to the reader/listener, not a word about God gleaned from the documents" (114).

CHAPTER TWO

OLD AND NEW HOMILETIC THEORY

This chapter reviews the major theorists of what has been called the New Homiletic. I demonstrate that theorists of this tradition have been strongly influenced by Kierkegaard and are attempting to develop a homiletic that privileges the creation of an experience rather than the making of a propositional arguments. I argue, however, that the hermeneutical underpinnings of the New Homiletic continue to be underdeveloped and even sometimes tacitly reflect a semiotic view of language. This semiotic view of language embodies ontological commitments that make the New Homiletic's sought-after experience more re-presentational than presentational, more re-productive than productive. The New Homileticians' tacit acceptance of a "Janus-faced character of language . . . holds that there is a difference in kind between the linguistic world, or the world of 'signifiers,' and some other world, that of 'things,' 'mental experiences,' 'ideas,' 'concepts,' or some other 'signifieds."[1] When this perspective grounds preaching, it separates the event of preaching into two-worlds, the linguistic world of the preacher's "signifiers," and the world of scripture, or that which is "signified."

In order to develop an experience of preaching that is more Erfahrung than Erlebnis, a homiletic must emerge that, in its practice, is able to collapse the two-world dichotomy that grounds in a semiotic view of language. I contend that it is possible to revise New Homiletical theory by engaging Gadamer's

philosophical hermeneutics. This revised theory of preaching will foreground dunamis more than energeia; it will be one that embraces the essential incompleteness of human being. This homiletic works in the emerging postmodern world view because it does not insist on providing rational answers to modern questions about certainty, closure, and control. Rather than attempting to explain the mystery of faith representationally via methodologically acquired truths or imagination, this revised theory of preaching facilitates an experience of belonging in and through conversational community. This revised New Homiletic embodies the ontological union spoken in the Second Helvetic Confession: "The preaching of the word of God is the word of God."

TRENDS IN CONTEMPORARY HOMILETICAL THEORY[2]

During the last quarter century, theorists of what is coming to be known as the New Homiletic have been engaged in a radical re-appraisal of preaching. As Richard Eslinger suggests, the work of these homileticians represents a move away from rationalistic presuppositions that give rise to the propositional model of preaching to a new kind of homiletical model.[3] Although each theorist appears to have a different technique for making this move, it appears that this new homiletical model is more focused on what a sermon may do and even undo in the experience of the receiving audience, than on pointedly conveying content. This renewed emphasis on the experience[4] of the listener appears to be the most productive aspect of this emerging paradigm shift in homiletic

method.

As noted earlier, most contemporary homileticians trace the birth of the New Homiletic to the publication in 1971 of Fred Craddock's As One Without Authority: Essays on Inductive Preaching. Locating his work in Kierkegaard's indirect method of communication, Craddock initiates a move away from the deductively propositional and pedagogical approach characteristic of the Old Homiletic model for sermon preparation to a more inductive conception of the task. The purpose of preaching from this perspective "is to engage the hearer in the pursuit of an issue or an idea so that he [or she] will think his [or her] own thoughts and experience his [or her] own feeling in the presence of Christ and in the light of the gospel.[5] The goal of such a sermon is to create an experience of "the word of God" in listeners in order to bring about a hearing of the Gospel. Craddock's orientation toward listeners is further delineated in Preaching where he describes the sermon as a communication event in which listeners are co-creators of the sermonic experience.[6] Sermons are to be designed to allow the congregation to experience the preacher's own process of hermeneutical insight and appropriation. More than imparting knowledge, this kind of sermon seeks to bring about an experience by cultivating the surprise of the gospel through the preacher's ability to embed that experience in the "local soil" of the congregation's world.

Overhearing the Gospel functions as Craddock's apologetic for his new homiletical approach. Citing Kierkegaard's communication by indirection,

Craddock turns away from both pedagogy and congregation as the goals of preaching. In their place, he calls the preacher to be a kind of Socratic maieut, one who, like Socrates himself, is willing and able to midwife the possibilities of understanding and appropriation by means of which the listener can enter the hermeneutical circle of the text.[7] Craddock's argument is based on the Kierkegaardian premise that "There is no lack of information in a Christian land; something else is lacking, and this is a something which the one man cannot directly communicate to the other."[8]

The essence of what I find to be new in Craddock's understanding of New Homiletical theory is the hermeneutical concern for the audience as listeners and for what they can experience. Unlike the Old Homiletic which attempts to represent certain truths through exegetical methods, Craddock views the preacher's own act of coming to insight as a pattern for a process rather than the blueprint for an answer. Like Kierkegaard before him, Craddock does not believe that knowing about means knowing; there is a "something else," another kind of sermonic experience for which he is searching.

The move away from argument to what the audience experiences is also at the center of David Buttrick's work. Buttrick's Homiletic: Moves and Structures shifts the discussion of thesis and argument style to ask: 1) how ideas form in communal consciousness of an audience, and 2) what difference considering a question like this should make in the structuring of sermons.[9] Because of these motivations, Buttrick believes that, instead of developing

arguments, the preacher should focus on whether he or she has shaped the sermon in a way that can bring about communal convictional understanding. Because people interpret the world in consciousness metaphorically, Buttrick concludes that a sermon should be characterized by this same rhetorical process of imaging. Since metaphor is an act of consciousness, Buttrick believes that "faith (convictional understanding) is formed in the nexus of image, symbol, metaphor, and ritual . . . [and] therefore, the language of preaching [should] essentially [be] metaphorical as well."[10] In this sense, Buttrick wants to remove the persuasive sermon from the traditional argument mode without denying that an argument is being made.

The tradition of the topical sermon is not lost in this approach, because "naming" is as much the "stuff" of Christian preaching as "story."[11] What makes his approach particularly interesting is that Buttrick is attempting to reconceive the role of what he calls symbolical reflective preaching without its rationalist baggage. He believes that sermon strategies can be designed that both "form and transform"[12] to the extent that an experience of communal consciousness is created and a congregation's movement of convictional understanding is deepened.

This rhetorical concern for what happens with listeners and the question of how the audience participates in the event of preaching is central to that which is new in the New Homiletic of Craddock and Buttrick. Craddock's "inductive approach" firmly locates the authorizing impetus for the moment of

insight in the preacher's hermeneutical experience with the biblical text. That which is inductively experienced by the preacher is to be shaped in such a way that it may be re-experienced by the audience. Buttrick, on the other hand, shifts the ground of his approach to a phenomenology of the preaching "event" itself. He wants to liberate the "event" from what he perceives to be the tyranny of textual historicism without denying the importance of the text and the tradition of its interpretive heritage in and for the church. Thus, for Buttrick, "Preaching is the Word of God" because it functions within God's liberating purpose and not necessarily because it is per se biblical.[13]

Tom Long has challenged what he calls Buttrick's theoretical move "to a rarefied notion of how language forms in consciousness generally--in everybody, everywhere, always."[14] He questions whether actual (rather than phenomenologically idealized) audiences "experience" preaching with Buttrick's notion of unified communal consciousness. For his part, Long connects homiletics to experience rhetorically but, in opposition to Buttrick, views preaching as an act of speech in the midst of the life of the church in which listeners are not essentially alike.[15] Whereas Buttrick wants to release God's word from both textual and profane captivity by defining this word according to the redemptive purpose to which its language is put,[16] Long argues that the biblical text "alone embodies the primary way in which the church discerns the will of God for its life."[17] Long's preacher is one who "becomes a witness to what has been seen and heard through the scripture, and the preacher's

authority grows out of this seeing and hearing."[18] The preacher's task is not to replicate the text for a listening congregation, but to "regenerate the impact" of the biblical text such that it becomes the word of God once again in a new setting.[19]

Whatever reservations Long has with Buttrick's appropriation of a phenomenological rhetoric, he does not question the shift that has occurred in homiletical theory, one that Eslinger argues begins with Craddock and has been pursued by Buttrick. Where a former generation of ministers felt obliged to clarify meaning propositionally, Long notes that contemporary preachers have begun to grasp that it is audience and preacher together who create an experience of meaning.[20]

This is the sense in which focused attention to the experience of the audience represents what is new in the New Homiletic. Craddock's perspective may be the most explicitly dialogical, but Buttrick is equally concerned about viewing preaching as an event where meaning must be co-constructed. Of course, this awareness of the dialogical nature of preaching, though often attributed to Craddock, did not originate with him. He notes this as well, pointing to the way in which this style of preaching has long been operative in black preaching.[21] Far from being a solo expression of the minister, African American sermons are often the message of the entire congregation where ministers speak in and for the community rather than to it.

According to Henry Mitchell, part of the uniqueness of this style of

preaching is the dialogue that occurs between the preacher and the audience. This dialogue in which parishioners cry out such phrases as "Tell it," "That's right," Uh-huh," and "So true" is, according to Mitchell, the "epitome of creative worship."[22] The call and response pattern invites the congregation's sustained involvement in the affirmation of the preacher's ability to improvise on a proven theme, building to a well-anticipated resolution. At the same time it is a means by which the minister is able to call forth an abiding reaffirmation of the deeply held convictions of the congregation. Black preaching is also distinguished by its avoidance of the rigid logic of the traditional expository preaching style. Preachers are more inclined to "prove the depths" than to make an argument.[23] Hence, the Bible is more likely to be used as a homiletical sourcebook than the basis of doctrinal or ethical authority. In this context, black preaching becomes the "transgenerational transmittal" of an originally oral biblical tradition and authority emerges, not from the written text, but from the "imaginative tradition" by which the preacher elaborates the phrases and stories of this heritage. Thus, the central challenge for a black preacher is to learn the art of telling a Bible story in a way that relates that narrative to the reality of the lived experience of the parishioners. The re-appropriation of such stories and sagas permits the kind of acceptance and belief that, according to Mitchell, sophisticated argumentation can never achieve.

In Celebration and Experience in Preaching Mitchell argues that the totality of human beings is best engaged by offering vicarious encounters with

experiences of biblical narrative in which the preacher attempts to reach the intuitive consciousness of the hearers. Mitchell writes,

> The term experiential encounter is used to denote a homiletical plan in which the aim is to offer direct or vicarious encounters with experiences of truths already certified as biblical, coherent, and relevant. Sermons are reasonable and relevant sequences of Biblical affirmations planted in or offered to the intuitive consciousness of hearers, by what may be called homiletical coworkers with the Spirit.[24]

This rather adroit "study in the mode of presence,"[25] as Mitchell refers to it, is not simply a substitution of story (or stories) for points. Rather, in the "mode of presence," the preacher attempts to provide a vicarious reinterpretation of the biblical story instantiated in the lived experience of the listeners and to fashion that re-emplotted story in such a way as to arrive at a final celebrative denouement of hope and possibility.

For some time, this role of narrative and story has been privileged in the New Homiletic. For many it has been a necessary first step to wean homileticians from a dependence on rationalistic approaches to preaching. Accounts of narrative preaching in homiletical theory generally result in the advice to do a "first person" sermon where the preacher dons the garb of the shepherd or the handmaiden and tells the biblical story from that individual's perspective. Implicit in this design is the conviction that persuasion that would

move people to act needs to be expressed as action, by a theory of mimetic emplotment as opposed to the propositional presentation of an argument. Rather than vigorously ordering ideas in what is often referred to as the rhetorical approach, narrative preachers choose to embrace a poetics of ordering experience.

Since narrativity is a quality implicit in or at least fundamental to human experience, homileticians such as Eugene Lowry have argued that preachers would do well to structure sermons more by the theory of arrangement in Aristotle's Poetics than the theory of argument in the Rhetoric. Like good jazz, Lowry contends, sermons should trade in the resolution of disequilibriums and the pursuit of complicating riffs rather than the linear logic of argument.[26] Lowry is interested in how to emplot an experience instead of how to make an argument, how to trade in temporal experience as opposed to spatial categories. In The Homiletical Plot: The Sermon as a Narrative Art Form, Lowry conceptualizes a sermon as an ordered form of time that moves from opening disequilibrium, through the complication of escalating conflict, to a crisis/revelation of reversal, and finally to the concluding denouement. He models this approach on the narrative style of Jesus, whose manner of communicating invariably seemed to upset comfortable notions of religious responsibility and productivity only to reset the table according to a surprising gospel pattern.[27] In Doing Time in the Pulpit, Lowry argues that propositional Truth is reductionist by design, while narrative truth, like a poem, is never

reducible to just one thing, but can be filled with ambiguity and complexity. Propositional sermons order ideas spatially, while imaging a sermon orders experience temporally. "Ideas," Lowry maintains, "seldom have the power to supplant time; [whereas] a story seldom fails."[28] For Lowry, there is a loss of human meaning when the predicaments of existence are organized in space rather than in time. By turning events into "matters," a spatial treatment provides the illusion that they may be "handled." By spatializing what we have to say into ideas that can be converted into separate, distinct, measurable quantities we try to order them into a logic, "like points in space or marks on a chronometer."[29] Time, however, is more elusive, and reflects the complexity of human existence. The only way to communicate meaning, he maintains, is to do time in the pulpit.

In "The Parameters of Narrative Preaching," Lucy Rose also locates various approaches to the process of sermon invention on a continuum of logics/strategies with rational logics at one end and narrative strategies on the other.[30] Sermons completely controlled by rational logic focus on a logical exposition of propositional Truth. Sermons controlled by narrative strategies are plotted as story qua story--"truth" emerging out of shared experience. The distinguishing feature of narrative preaching is the inventional strategy that controls the approach to the task and whether this strategy draws people into an experience, into a process of thinking their own thoughts, or in one way or another supplies the answers/propositions to which they should subscribe.

One philosopher to whom many New Homileticans look to enhance their theoretical perspectives is Paul Ricoeur. In the summary of his extensive reflection in the third volume of Time and Narrative, Ricoeur concludes that personal identity is only intelligible in the temporal dimension of human existence; that our human conception of personal identity is primarily a narrative identity; that narrative provides the primary set of signs and symbols by means of which meaning is mediated and appropriated in human existence.[31] He develops this notion again in Oneself as Another, this time seeking to devise a theory of narrative, "no longer considered from the perspective of its relation to the constitution of human time, as I did in Time and Narrative, but from that of its contribution to the constitution of the self."[32]

This relationship among time, narrative and personal identity represents the essential triadic tension of the structure of human experience that is intimated in the New Homiletic's "creation of an experience." This privileging of the individual's experience of narrative and imagination over rational argument is conceptually the essence of the emerging paradigm shift in what has been called the New Homiletic. Like Ricoeur, theorists of the New Homiletic have not so much rejected the rational as they have subordinated its propositional, ideational orientation to the experience of temporality and personal identity. The functional result is a move away from questions of Truth framed as propositions and toward questions of meaning, a relocation of the authority of the sermon from congregational persuasion to the transformation or refiguration

of the single individual.[33]

HERMENEUTICAL FOUNDATIONS IN THE NEW HOMILETIC

As has been noted, Fred Craddock was first drawn to Kierkegaard's communication theory because of Kierkegaard's concept of indirect communication. In response to Christendom's tacit appropriation of Cartesian rationalism and its emphases on absolute foundations, methods, the turn to the human subject, truth, and direct communication, Kierkegaard viewed himself as a Christian apologist whose mission was to indirectly communicate the Christian gospel.[34]

By most accounts, Craddock's appropriation of Kierkegaard is a remarkable innovation to homiletical theory. Virtually all homiletical theorists recognize in Craddock's work an initial step away from the Old Homiletical paradigm to one based on a model of communication that privileges the experience of the audience and the sermon as an event of understanding. What may not be understood by homiletical theorists and perhaps even by Craddock himself is why or how the maieutic method facilitates such an experience. Craddock has persuasively demonstrated that something other than the Old Homiletic's propositional model is needed if an experience[35] of the gospel is to be facilitated, and he offers preaching by induction as the model which serves such a facilitating function. However, as Craddock notes, an inductive model is a deductive model turned upside down.[36] Rather than

condensing the message into three points and a poem as is sometimes done with the deductive model, Craddock's inductive sermon is patterned after the movement that exists in the biblical text. For the inductive sermons of Craddock, Long, Lowry and Rose, narrative "plots" replace sermonic "points," and the sermon acquires a form that is more like that of a story than an argument. Yet, in the inductive model, the speaker still does not appear to be operating as a maieut in the full sense. He or she is still very much in control of the message and its final meaning. The only thing that has really changed is the manner in which a specific text's meaning is presented. From a hermeneutical perspective, little has changed in the inductive method. In both the deductive model of the Old Homiletic and the various inductive models of the New Homiletic, meaning is still located in the text. What the passage means today is still very much guided by what the passage's first author originally intended and, therefore, the historical chasm is not spanned.

David Buttrick responds to the problem of historical distance and the shortcomings of narrative by attempting to liberate the "event" of preaching through his phenomenological hermeneutics. The key question for Buttrick is simply, "How can words bridge time?"[37] and, in Buttrick's estimation, something other than the inductive method is needed to bridge the historical-temporal chasm. Buttrick believes that a hermeneutic that posits an "original meaning" is unable to address a contemporary consciousness. "If original meanings are located," he argues, "are they not locked in a particular time and

space as objects of our consciousness of the past? If they are applied, do they not change as they intend toward an entirely different world in consciousness?"[38]

Buttrick offers three general hermeneutical proposals for what he sees as an alternative to a hermeneutic of textual historicism. These proposals function as hermeneutical principles, guiding the hermeneut's textual encounter. The three proposals are: 1) Biblical texts are addressed to communal consciousness, 2) The consciousness which texts address is the 'double' consciousness of being-saved in the world, and 3) Speaking of God, the Bible tells stories and singles out symbols. Thus, the Bible must be interpreted within an interaction of symbol and story."[39] Buttrick believes that his hermeneutical proposal bridges the span of "time" by focusing on the constant of "hermeneutical consciousness." This focus on "hermeneutical consciousness" is dyadic in nature. Texts are produced by a faith community for a faith community. Although the historical setting of each generation of faith communities changes, each community is still a community bound together in faith. As Buttrick describes it, ". . . biblical language mediates a faith-consciousness shaped by impinging mysteries, relating symbols of faith and a being-saved community."[40] In Buttrick's hermeneutic, interpretation that leads to mediation is "true," and interpretation is mediation when it, 1) aligns the mysteries of being-in-the-world with the Mystery disclosed in scripture, 2) defines being saved in relation to being-in-the-world, and 3) invokes the

Presence in Mystery though Jesus Christ in story and symbol.[41]

Although Buttrick deserves credit for being the first homiletical theorist to recognize the productive role of language, and is certainly one of the first theorists to address hermeneutics as "meaning making" rather than "exegesis," the theory that supports Buttrick's phenomenological hermeneutic is questionable. Buttrick's ample use of "consciousness" and "being-in-the-world" implies an acquaintance with Edmund Husserl's "life-world" and Martin Heidegger's "being-in-the-world," respectively.[42] However, with the exception of one citation, Buttrick does not attempt to clarify the contribution of either Husserl or Heidegger, nor does he explain his rationale for appropriating these two theorists into his distinctive hermeneutical formulation.[43] It appears that Buttrick is aware of the need to explore the possibilities of an alternative hermeneutic, one that attempts to address the productive rather than the re-productive role language plays in the formation of "world[s]."[44] Although his intuitive awareness exceeds his theoretical resources, he perceives Husserl and Heidegger to be theorists who were attempting to remove hermeneutics from the tyranny of historical objectivism, an area of inquiry that he also wants to pursue.

Notwithstanding Buttrick's favorable nod toward Husserl, many contemporary philosophers have come to believe that Husserl's project was incomplete. For example, Georgia Warnke outlines some inadequacies in Husserl's critique of objectivism. Warnke reviews Hans-George Gadamer's

argument that Husserlian phenomenology, as a science, endeavored to discern the ways in which objects are given to consciousness, and sought to be a "rigorous" science that employed a specific method to "secure" facts that exist "within a certain range . . . in our experience and in the social group united with us in the community of life."[45] Gadamer argues that Husserl's solution to this dilemma was to see the different life-worlds as themselves varieties of a more basic universal structure. That is, "phenomenological research is to penetrate below the different cultural life-worlds to an eidos 'life-world' which is the product of an original, non-historical constitution of meaning, the product, to put it another way, of 'transcendental subjectivity.'"[46]

In order for this move to be coherent, Gadamer believes that a kind of "suspension"[47] of reality must occur, an "alienation"[48] from life itself which, ironically, is a posture not too far removed from Kierkegaard's ill-advised Christian "observer." Despite Husserl's innovations, Gadamer believes that Husserlian phenomenology was motivated by a methodological quest for a foundation, beginning, or objective starting point. Echoing Heidegger, Gadamer argues that there is something about the nature of the hermeneutical experience that Husserl missed. Rather than a foundational kind of transcendental subjectivity, Gadamer submits that, "What we call experience (Erfahrung) and acquire through experience is a living historical process; and its paradigm is not the discovery of facts but the peculiar fusion of memory and expectation into a whole. . . . The historical sciences only advance and

broaden the thought already implicit in the experience of life."[49] This fusion of "memory and expectation" that is an implicit part of the "experience of life" contrasts with a grasping, containing, or controlling of a subject matter. Rather than an epistemological experience that is characterized by the quest for certainty, closure, and control, Gadamer's preliminary statement in Truth and Method articulates a different kind of experience, an ontological experience that one undergoes; an Erfahrung that, as I will later demonstrate, happens when a player has been thrown into the game and is guided by the subject at hand. Like Kierkegaard before him, Gadamer believes that there is a way to transgress the limits of Cartesian rationalism and continental romanticism or, referring back to Buttrick's project, a way to bridge time. This way is via a process called contemporaneity.

KIERKEGAARDIAN CONTEMPORANEITY AS A BRIDGE FOR TIME

I believe that an analysis of Kierkegaard's actual communicative practice will reveal that his model of communication is neither deductive or inductive. Kierkegaard's practice demonstrates an understanding of the maieutic method more thorough and nuanced than the one present in the New Homiletic. In Kierkegaard's practice, meaning is lifted from the text and the author's intent, and may instead be facilitated in the dialogic conversation that occurs between text and reader. By contrast, practitioners of the inductive method continue to locate meaning in the text and in the preacher's ability to plant the historical text

in the listener's "local soil," and Buttrick's phenomenological approach continues to tacitly cling to the idea of Husserlian transcendental subjectivity. But a Kierkegaardian postmodern homiletic, as informed by his actual practice, removes the need for any kind of "soil" or ground. Kierkegaard demonstrated that meaning takes place at the nexus of text and reader so that "The preaching of the Word of God is the word of God." Through a brief textual analysis of Kierkegaard's Either/Or, I hope to demonstrate that one of his key innovations was to use stylistic conversation as a means of facilitating the dialogic encounter between text and reader. Through his deployment of style, Kierkegaard managed to transgress[50] the limits of the modern age, limits that continue to be evident in the hermeneutical presuppositions of both the Old and New Homiletical models. At every step along the way, Kierkegaard's reader must remember that how Kierkegaard did theory is in some respects more important than what he had to say. Kierkegaard demonstrated that style is more than mere ornamentation; it is also a means of invention.

Either/Or is a strange book. When it first appeared in 1843, only a few people knew the author's real name. In the preface, the reader discovers that the work is supposed to have been edited by Victor Eremita but, as Mark C. Taylor notes,

> Although apparently intended to clarify the issue of authorship, Victor's editorial preface actually is calculated to complicate the question of the author. In a scathing satire

> on Hegelian philosophy, Victor explains that one day in a fit of anger he had smashed his treasured desk with a hatchet. The devastation below uncovered a secret drawer which contained a collection of papers. Victor clearly implies that had it not been for this act of violence, the words we are about to read never would have come to light.[51]

Through rigorous textual analysis, Victor eventually concludes that this newly discovered work has been written by two authors whom he simply calls A and B. Volume I, authored by A, is a collection of essays of varying length as well as a number of aphorisms and reflections. They appear to be the work of a young man whose sole purpose is to enjoy the aesthetic life; a life of complete and total self-gratification; a man whose existence is simply in the temporal with no conception of the eternal. Volume II, on the other hand, is composed of two long, carefully argued, ethical treatises which are presented in the form of letters of advice to the young man living the aesthetic life. Author B extols the virtues of living an ethical life; a life with marriage, career, family; a life lived under control; a life that is aware of eternal ramifications. Victor called B the fictitious Judge Wilhelm who also happens to be an ethical, married, steady and pious man. But just when he seems to have resolved the authorial dilemma, Victor uncovers some evidence which leads him to believe that A does not acknowledge himself as the author of Volume I; rather, A claims responsibility

for the last essay in the series, "The Seducer's Diary."

And that is just the preface to the work. As the reader makes his or her way through volumes I and II, the reader begins to experience what it means to live an aesthetic and an ethical life. After getting over the initial frustration of not being able to discern the author's intent, the volume's purpose, or the work's plot, at some moment, without really knowing when, the world of the reader begins to fuse with the world of A and B.[52] Taylor maintains that Either/Or is a "plurality of texts, texts within texts, texts which overlap, interlace, echo one another. Every text . . . is the intertext of another text . . . [in which the text] achieves plurality of meaning, an irreducible plurality."[53] While reading Either/Or, one comes to be transformed into an entirely different kind of reader. Categories that once worked for the reader to gain some sense of understanding, some sense of meaning, are no longer useful or, actually, no longer exist. The narrative plot is no longer that which moves the work and reader along. There are no points with which to agree or disagree. Rather, the style of the work is what keeps the reader turning the page. Either/Or demands that its reader wonder, ponder, and think.

Clearly the structure of Either/Or is dialectical. This kind of dialectic, however, contrasts with the dialectic featured by Hegel. Kierkegaard's dialectic may be described as having a teleology without a telos; it is always already on the way to becoming but it never completely arrives. The reader of Either/Or moves dialectically from A to B and from B to A. In contrast to Hegel there is

no sense of progress, no sense that the author is moving towards some transcendent synthesis. Yet, Kierkegaard's method is not meaningless; rather, he posits a different kind of meaning, one that is available to the reader who chooses to subject himself or herself to the process of getting there. In Point of View, Kierkegaard described his method by stating that,

> when . . . a dialectical reduplication is used in the service of a serious purpose, it will be so used as merely to obviate a misunderstanding, or an over-hasty understanding, whereas all the while the true explanation is at hand and ready to be found by him who honestly seeks it.[54]

In the same passage, Kierkegaard asserted that the mark of dialectical reduplication is that the "ambiguity is maintained."[55] "Dialectical reduplication," he writes, "has a reference to true seriousness. To one less serious the explanation cannot be imparted . . . ."[56]

Here Kierkegaard revised his reader's understanding of what counts as meaningful, as what counts as true. Like many postmodern theorists, Kierkegaard rejected what Gary Madison has calls "a static, mirroring relation between a subject and an object."[57] Instead, Kierkegaard wrote to that authentic "single individual"[58] who is struggling; that authentic reader who reads as a subjective being and not a member of the crowd;[59] that person who ventures forth in a daring and risky way; a way that is not possible in the

category an observer. Through Kierkegaard's conversational style, the reader eventually discovers that he or she is involved in a text that has no real exit, no resolution; it is, in effect, a text without end. It is a text that is functioning as a continuing conversation. This does not mean that the text is without purpose or meaning. By becoming part of A's experience and part of B's experience, the reader undergoes an encounter in which he or she is prompted to think, to question, to engage in a way that facilitates a fusion with the text. If there is a point or motivation to Either/Or it surely must be this drive towards the facilitation of an existential encounter, one that in Kierkegaard's view is not possible through a lecture or direct communication, but may only be maieutically facilitated via indirect communication.

The unique feature of this kind of stylistic invention is that it allows the reader to undergo an experience of meaning unlike the information that may be received through a lecture or a sermon based on the propositional model of preaching. Unlike the subject/object experience that Gadamer has called Erlebnis, Kierkegaard's maieutic method allows the reader to experience more than mere information; this is the kind of experience that Gadamer labels Erfahrung. Craddock calls the process that generates a non-subject/object experience, "overhearing," and it is premised on the belief that by overhearing the conversations of others (in Either/Or A and B), we receive information in a way different from that of a lecture. As Craddock describes it,

> [Kierkegaard] was walking through a cemetery late

> one afternoon when from beyond a hedge he overheard an old man talking to his grandson beside the fresh grave of the one who had been son to one and father to the other. Totally unaware of SK's presence the grandfather spoke tenderly but forcefully of life, death, and life eternal. The substance of that conversation, not at all addressed to him . . . helped determine SK's use of indirect communication.[60]

The sort of experience which arises from a non-direct, non-propositional, non-subject/object communication style is similar to the type of experience that is being explored by theorists of the New Homiletic. Yet, unlike New Homileticians who have yet to separate their understanding of experience from an innovative re-presentation of the text, Kierkegaard's stylistic conversation moves this experience of meaning out of the text and locates it in that moment of contact between the text and the reader. Kierkegaard calls this moment of contact contemporaneity, and it is an extremely significant component to his postmodern view of communication.

Kierkegaard's style facilitates the possibility for his individual reader to be contemporaneously engaged with the text. Unlike New Homileticians who endeavor to build a hermeneutical bridge of understanding from ancient Palestine to contemporary Pittsburgh, Kierkegaard's concept of

contemporaneity implies a negation of history. For Kierkegaard, history does not prove anything. That Jesus existed 1800 years before Kierkegaard, does not mean anything. As a Christian apologist, Kierkegaard believed that the single individual must encounter Jesus not as a historical being, but as an immediate presence where both the temporal and the eternal contemporaneously intersect. This encounter, which is facilitated by a kind of conversational style, exists independently of hermeneutical practices that are related to the author's original intent or historical-critical exegetical methodologies, practices and methods which create the illusion of an objective reading of the text. In contrast to these vestiges of Cartesian rationalism, Kierkegaardian contemporaneity promotes a quality of immediacy; he facilitates an encounter of Jesus as an immediate presence rather than as a historical being. In a lengthy passage Kierkegaard writes,

> In relation to the absolute, there is only one time, the present; for the person who is not contemporary with the absolute, it does not exist at all. And since Christ is the absolute it is easy to see that in relation to him there is only one situation, the situation of contemporaneity; the three, the seven, the fifteen, the seventeen, the eighteen hundred years make no difference at all; they do not change him, but neither do they reveal who he was . . . . Christ is no play-actor . . . neither is he a merely historical person, since

> as the paradox he is an extremely unhistorical person. But this is the difference between poetry and actuality; contemporaneity. The difference between poetry and history is surely this, that history is what actually happened, whereas poetry is the possible, the imagined, the poetized.[61]

Through his stylistic innovation, Kierkegaard created the possibility for the individual reader to be more than a distanced observer. Whereas a Kierkegaardian observer remains objective and is unable to allow that which he or she is observing into himself or herself, the Kierkegaardian individual becomes a participant who in some sense shares in the response-ability of delineating knowing about from knowing. The reader becomes a co-participant in a contemporaneous event of understanding. When it is applied to the field of homiletics, Kierkegaard's communication theory brings homileticians back to a view of the homiletical task where "The preaching of the word of God is the word of God." Through the concept of contemporaneity, the historical past is fused with the present or, as Gadamer notes, memory and expectation have been fused with the experience of life,[62] and the respective writer, speaker, reader, and listener have become that single individual who stand before God in fear and trembling.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The New Homiletic privileges the creation of an experience over the generation of rational arguments. New Homiletical theorists have not so much rejected the rational as they have subordinated its propositional orientation to the experience of temporality and personal identity. I have argued that the result is a move away from questions of Truth framed as propositions and toward questions of meaning. Yet, in its current configuration, New Homiletical theorists have not yet developed the hermeneutical underpinnings to justify fully the move from what Gadamer calls Erlebnis to Erfahrung, from making an argument to facilitating an experience. Craddock's, Long's, Lowry's and Rose's inductive models of preaching where narrative "plots" replace sermonic "points" provide innovative alternatives to the propositionally-based model of the Old Homiletic.[63] However, as Craddock confesses, induction is deduction turned upside down. Although the hermeneutical underpinnings for this inductive approach are undeveloped, it is fair to infer that the sermon's meaning is still located in the biblical text, and that the sermonic experience has more to do with the preacher's ability than his or her hermeneutical commitments. As a re-presentation of scripture, the preaching of this word of God is about the word of God.

David Buttrick's hermeneutical theory is a commendable innovation given his relative unfamiliarity with contemporary hermeneutical literature. In Husserl and, to a lesser extent, Heidegger, Buttrick has located hermeneutical theorists

who he believes offer something new to homiletical theorizing. Although the limitations of Husserl's phenomenological turn have been well-documented, the journey on which Husserl's project leads Buttrick has been nonetheless elucidating for the development of New Homiletical theory.

This point has been demonstrated by one of Buttrick's students, Richard Eslinger, who has endeavored to build on the phenomenological approach of Buttrick by attempting to combine the theoretical work of Paul Ricoeur and Hans-Georg Gadamer. In The Narrative Imagination: Preaching the Worlds that Shape Us, Eslinger appropriates Ricoeur's metaphoric theory as the theoretical impetus for that ". . . semantic imaginative act that results in a surplus of meaning [and includes] some significant affective dimension[s]."[64] Thus, it appears that semantic imagination will be the trajectory that Eslinger will follow in his pursuit to facilitate what Gadamer calls Erfahrung. Eslinger intimates this move by attempting to unite imagination's role with Gadamer's foundational notion of play.[65] He writes,

> [It is through] playing and being played [that] we find freedom and meaning in the give-and-take, back-and-forth structure of the game. Imagination, then, in its most profound expression, involves the full giving of self in play "by which we are initially taken into a structure of meanings, (and) is the presupposition for all conscious imaginative activity of the subject." In the activity of play is the hermeneutic clue to human experience. . . . This world

wrought by the imagination has become our world.[66]

Although his contribution demonstrates the New Homileticians' desire to fuse contemporary hermeneutical theory with homiletical practice, Eslinger and others have overestimated the value of play and its imaginative qualities as a foundational feature of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics.[67] I believe that by featuring play and its "imaginative" features without appropriating and understanding Gadamer's organizing concept of "linguisticality" and "conversational understanding," Eslinger continues to refine a homiletic that is more product than process; an experience that exists because of language rather than an experience that exists in language; an experience that is still more Erlebnis than Erfahrung.

Nevertheless, Eslinger's nod to Gadamer is an invitation to conduct a more thorough examination of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics and its relationship to New Homiletical theory. With this examination comes the possibility of exploring a homiletic that intimates a sermonic experience that is more ontological than epistemological, more of a conversation than an imaginative story or argument. Additionally, by integrating Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, homiletical theorists will find that Gadamer has a curious and satisfactory relationship with the thought of Søren Kierkegaard. This relationship is located in what both Gadamer and Kierkegaard refer to as "contemporaneity," and it is through this collective notion of contemporaneity that "time" is bridged and a way is cleared to assist in the facilitation of a

homiletic that is rather than is about the word of God; a homiletic that is more productive than re-productive; a homiletic that is more Erfahrung than Erlebnis.

Notes to Chapter Two

1. John Stewart, Language as Articulate Contact: Toward a Post-Semiotic Philosophy of Communication (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995) 7.

2. Much of what is included in the literature review has already appeared in Robert Reid, Jeffrey Bullock and David Fleer, "Preaching as the Creation of an Experience: the Not-So-Rational Revolution of the New Homiletic," The Journal of Communication and Religion 18 (1995): 1-9. To date, this article represents the only overview and synthesis of what is known as the New Homiletic.

3. Richard L. Eslinger, A New Hearing: Living Options in Homiletical Method (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987) 13-14.

4. The nature of this homiletical "experience" appears to be one of the fundamental points of discussion in New Homiletical theory. Whereas I am attempting to develop a definition of "experience" as homileoing, there are other practitioners who are pursuing a somewhat different trajectory. For instance, Robert S. Reid argues that, ". . . the New Homiletic represents a recovery of a premodern approach to making argument in the Isocratean, sophistical tradition of rhetoric rather than the Aristotelian tradition of philosophical rhetoric (10)." Reid argues that this approach is not a ". . . radical postmodern approach because of its underlying assumptions concerning the significance of narrative

and narrative closure. However, since it is not founded on the rationalist lust for certainty and control, it does represent an approach that is commensurable with much of the postmodern without giving itself wholly over to it" (10). See Robert S. Reid, "Postmodernism and the Function of the New Homiletic in Post-Christendom Congregations," Homiletic 20, No. 2 (1995): 1-13.

5. Fred Craddock, As One Without Authority: Essays on Inductive Preaching (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971) 157.

6. Fred Craddock, Preaching (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985) 84-98.

7. Fred Craddock, Overhearing the Gospel (Nashville: Parthenon Press, 1978) 91. It is my impression that Craddock is using the term maieut in its idealized meaning. I am aware that Plato's dialogic method is laden with issues of control, and that a persuasive argument against the non-authoritative nature of Plato's (or Socrates') actual practice may be rather difficult to articulate.

8. Craddock, Overhearing, 9. Although Craddock attributes this phrase to Kierkegaard, he does not cite where the phrase occurs. In my reading of Kierkegaard, I have yet to uncover an exact quotation, although I have come across numerous passages which express the same general idea.

9. David Buttrick, Homiletic: Moves and Structures (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987) 28, 276-279.

10. Buttrick, 125. Buttrick draws upon a host of thinkers to inform his metaphorical view of preaching (466-477). The most "magisterial" of them all, according to Buttrick, is Paul Ricoeur, The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-Disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language (Toronto: University of Toronto

Press, 1977).

11. Buttrick, 16-20.

12. Buttrick, 18.

13. David Buttrick, A Captive Voice (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994) 31.

14. Thomas G. Long, "And How Shall They Hear? The Listener in Contemporary Preaching," Listening to the Word: Studies in Honor of Fred B. Craddock, eds. Gail R. O'Day and Thomas G. Long (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993) 183.

15. Long, 183-184.

16. Buttrick, A Captive Voice, 29-32.

17. Thomas G. Long, The Witness of Preaching (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989) 49-50.

18. Long, Witness, 44.

19. Thomas G. Long, Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989) 33-34.

20. Long, The Listener, 170-172.

21. Craddock, Preaching, 27.

22. Henry Mitchell, Black Preaching: The Recovery of a Powerful Art (New York: Harper and Row. Reissued: Nashville: Abingdon, 1990) 127.

23. Mitchell, 179.

24. Henry Mitchell, Celebration and Experience in Preaching (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990) 36.

25. Mitchell, Celebration, 36.

26. Eugene L. Lowry, "The Narrative Quality of Experience as a Bridge to Preaching," Journeys Toward Narrative Preaching, ed. W.B. Robinson (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1990) 67-84.

27. Eugene L. Lowry, The Homiletical Plot: The Sermon as Narrative Art Form (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1980) 58-61.

28. Eugene L. Lowry, Doing Time in the Pulpit: The Relationship Between Narrative and Preaching (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985) 13.

29. Lowry, Time, 36.

30. Lucy Rose, "The Parameters of Narrative Preaching," Journeys Toward Narrative Preaching, ed. W. B. Robinson (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1990) 24-47.

31. Paul Ricoeur, Time and Narrative, Vol. 3, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1988) 249.

32. Paul Ricoeur, Oneself as Another, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) 114.

33. Readers familiar with the terminology of Søren Kierkegaard, will recognize a reference to Kierkegaard in my use of "single individual." In Practice in Christianity, Kierkegaard indicates that he is writing to that authentic "single individual" who is struggling; that authentic reader who reads as a subjective being and not a member of the crowd; that person who ventures forth in a daring and risky way, a way that is not possible in the category of an

observer. Søren Kierkegaard, Practice in Christianity, trans. and ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991) 223-225. In Point of View, Kierkegaard further elaborates his concept of "the individual." Paraphrasing, the "individual" is both the "pre-eminent individual in the aesthetic sense, the distinguished person . . . [and also] the individual is what every man [sic] is or can be." Søren Kierkegaard, The Point of View, Etc., trans. Walter Lowrie (London: Oxford University Press, 1939) 126. Kierkegaard's "crowd" is the antithesis of the "individual." A member of a crowd "observes"; they do not have to be actively involved per se. An "individual," however, has to be personally response-able.

34. As may be the case for many postmodern thinkers, it may be helpful to approach Kierkegaard's project as a response to some of the essential tenets of Cartesianism. When reading Kierkegaard, it is immediately apparent that he is up to something quite innovative. In many of his works, Kierkegaard employs a pseudonym; hence, it is difficult to discern the author's intent or purpose. Additionally, Kierkegaard sometimes went to elaborate extremes to camouflage his current interests. When he was drafting Either/Or, Kierkegaard took elaborate measures to appear at the theater for the first ten minutes of a play to ensure that the general public would perceive him to be lazy and unproductive. Stylistically, Kierkegaard wrote in such a way that the reader must experience the narrative rather than grasp the point. It is not until the posthumous publication of The Point of View for My Work as an Author that

Kierkegaard offered any kind of assistance in how he should be read and/or understood.

35. Craddock locates his understanding of experience in the work of Stanley Fish. See Craddock, Overhearing, 130-132. Like other reader-response critics, Fish entertains the possibility of an "ideal" reader; a reader that may be idealized but who is wholly informed. See Stanley Fish, "Literature in the Reader: Affective Stylistics," Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism, ed. Jane P. Tompkins (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980) 73-74. In my estimation, this reliance weakens the impact that reader-response critics desire to have in their efforts to move away from a Cartesian hermeneutics of doubt. Implicit within the very concept of an ideal reader is a "correct" or "true" reading of a text. The idea of an ideal reader suggests that there is a point of dialectical closure in the interpretation process; an implicit teleology that is both on the way (processual) and final (ideal reading).

36. Craddock, Overhearing, 153.

37. Buttrick, Homiletic, 264.

38. Buttrick, Homiletic, 266.

39. Buttrick, Homiletic, 266-279.

40. Buttrick, Homiletic, 276. My emphasis.

41. Buttrick, 281.

42. For an introduction to the various distinctions between Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger see, Richard Palmer, Hermeneutics (Evanston:

Northwestern University Press, 1969) 124-139. For a more specific delineation of Husserl and Heidegger see, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Truth and Method, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, 2nd ed. (New York: Continuum, 1993) 242-259. For an interpretation of Gadamer's dissatisfaction with the phenomenological turn see, Georgia Warnke, Gadamer: Hermeneutics, Tradition and Reason (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987) 34-41.

43. A more detailed account of Buttrick's alternative hermeneutic may be found in Buttrick, Homiletic, 263-281.

44. Buttrick, Homiletic, 7.

45. Warnke, 36-37.

46. Warnke, 37. Palmer, 125. In addition to Gadamer's discussion of Husserl in Truth and Method, see Hans-Georg Gadamer, "The Science of the Life-World," Philosophical Hermeneutics, trans. David E. Linge (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976) 189-193.

47. Gadamer, "The Science of the Life-World," 189.

48. Warnke, 37.

49. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 221. My emphasis.

50. When I use the word "transgress" or "transgression," I have in mind something similar to Jacques Derrida's impression of the word. Perhaps not surprisingly, Derrida has been profoundly influenced by Kierkegaard. In an interview with Henri Ronse, Derrida suggests that the purpose of play is to involve one in transgression. As with most postmodern thinkers, transgression is not a sinful word for Derrida; rather, it is a word rooted in critique, even at its

own expense. Transgression is at one an the same time a movement through something to an exit and an upheaval. Through this movement something is changed, it is not in vain; it is always on its way but it never completely gets there. Derrida writes,

> But, by means of the work done on one side and the other of the limit the field is modified, and a transgression is produced that is consequently nowhere present as a fait accompli. One is never installed within transgression, one never lives elsewhere. Transgression implies that the limit is always at work. Now, the "thought-that-means nothing," the thought that exceeds meaning and meaning-as-hearing-oneself-speak by interrogating them--this thought, announced in grammatology, is given precisely through which there is no sure opposition between outside and inside. At the conclusion of a certain work, even the concepts of excess or of transgression can become suspect. See Jacques Derrida, Positions, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981) 12.

51. Mark C. Taylor, "Text as Victim" Deconstruction and Theology (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1982) 59.

52. The process that I am describing as "fusion," is the source of investigation for reader-response critics. For various approaches to reader-response criticism, see Jane P. Tompkins, ed., Reader-Response Criticism:

From Formalism to Post-Structuralism (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980). In contrast to other reader-response critics, Kierkegaard does not posit an ideal reader but a "single individual." The single individual never completely arrives to a final point of destination or understanding. If there is a moment of absolute truth for Kierkegaard, it is in the person of Jesus Christ, and the single individual is always already confronted by their own shortcomings when compared to this "God-man." In Kierkegaard, there is a teleology that is processural but it is never synthesized into an ideal being.

53. Taylor, "Text as Victim," 61.

54. Søren Kierkegaard, The Point of View, Etc., trans. Walter Lowrie (London: Oxford University Press, 1939) 16.

55. Kierkegaard, Point of View, 17.

56. Kierkegaard, Point of View, 17.

57. Gary B. Madison, "Beyond Seriousness and Frivolity: A Gadamerian Response to Deconstruction," in Gadamer and Hermeneutics, ed. Hugh J. Silverman (New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc., 1991) 133-134.

58. Søren Kierkegaard, Practice in Christianity, 223 and 225. In Point of View, Kierkegaard further elaborates of his concept of "the individual." Paraphrasing, the "individual" is both the "pre-eminent individual in the aesthetic sense, the distinguished person . . . [and also] the individual is what every man is or can be" (126).

59. Kierkegaard's "crowd" is the antithesis of the "individual." A member of a crowd "observes." They do not have to be actively involved per se. An

individual, however, has to be personally "response-able." Crowds belong to Christendom; the individual belongs to Christ.

60. Craddock, Overhearing the Gospel, 105-106.

61. Kierkegaard, Practice, 63-64.

62. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 127-128, 572.

63. The reader will note that I have not included a hermeneutical critique of Henry Mitchell's contribution to New Homiletical theory. This is because I believe that the call and response pattern of more traditional Black preaching is a homiletical genre that exits outside of the scope I am attempting to define. Although, as Mitchell and others demonstrate, Black preaching certainly has dialogical qualities, there is also an obligatory element that characterizes the "response" of the congregation. For one perspective on this rich tradition see David Fleer, "Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Reformation of Sources: A Close Rhetorical Reading of His Compositional Strategies and Arrangement," diss., U of Washington, 1995, 48-57.

64. Richard L. Eslinger, Narrative Imagination (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995) 69.

65. Eslinger, 69-70.

66. Eslinger, 71.

67. See among others, David J. Bryant, Faith and the Play of Imagination: On the Role of Imagination in Religion (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1989), 85 and Thomas H. Troeger, Imagining a Sermon (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990).

CHAPTER THREE

PREACHING AS ONTOLOGICAL CONVERSATION: GADAMER'S LINGUISTICALITY AS NEW HOMILETIC WOR[L]D

Like many others, my first introduction to Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics was Richard E. Palmer's Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer. Unlike theorists in the historical-critical tradition, Gadamer "is not directly concerned with the practical problems of formulating right principles for interpretation; he wishes, rather, to bring the phenomenon of understanding to light."[1] Put differently, Gadamer's primary concern is not the generation of a method for the accurate interpretation of texts. More fundamentally, Gadamer wants to explore how understanding is possible. What is it about texts and works of art that give them meaning in humankind's experience of the world, that make them truthful?

It was not too long before I began to see in Gadamer's alternative hermeneutic of meaning a way to extend the conversation that was taking place in New Homiletical theory. In this chapter, I review Hans-Georg Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics and its contribution to contemporary homiletical theory. Hermeneuticians identified with philosophy,[2] communication[3] and religion[4] have appropriated aspects of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics. However, with a few exceptions,[5] homiletical theorists have not actively pursued Gadamer's hermeneutical project and its relationship to preaching. In this chapter I hope to integrate components of Gadamer's philosophical

hermeneutics with the practice of preaching, thereby offering a new way to approach and possibly revise New Homiletical theory.

I do this by locating and explicating essential features of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics by paying particular attention to the linguisticality of understanding. I argue that Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics embodies an alternative philosophy of communication where language forms or constitutes human reality; thus, his work offers insight into a postmodern homiletic, one that facilitates an experience in language rather than an experience because of language, a homiletic that is more Erfahrung than Erlebnis. Especially as informed by Kierkegaard's notion of contemporaneity, Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics offers a postmodern alternative to a semiotic view of language and may be one way that contemporary homiletical theorists can move beyond a hermeneutic grounded in historical-critical exegetical methodologies and return to a hermeneutic informed by genuine homileoing.

PHILOSOPHICAL HERMENEUTICS AND THE HOMILETICAL WOR[L]D

A number of theorists review Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics and incorporate his innovations into their respective fields. Richard Palmer, for instance, claims that Gadamer ". . . brings hermeneutics to a new level of comprehensiveness."[6] Palmer believes that Gadamer expands Heidegger's ontological understanding by ". . . develop[ing] the ontology of understanding

into a dialectical hermeneutics that calls into question the most fundamental axioms of modern aesthetics and historical interpretation. And it could provide the philosophical foundation for a radical critique of the conceptions of interpretation prevailing in . . . criticism today."[7] Georgia Warnke demonstrates that, for Gadamer, ". . .openness to the constant possibility of developing one's perspective or conceptual framework is a crucial feature of rationality itself . . . . Rationality, then, [is] a willingness to admit the existence of better options.[8] Even though Gadamer's faith in practical reason may be problematic for some theorists, Gadamer demonstrates that "our historical situatedness does not only limit what we can know with certainty; it can also teach us how to remember and integrate what we must not forget."[9] In his explication of Truth and Method, Joel Weinsheimer demonstrates the unique capacity of Gadamer's theory to describe humankind's essential being in language. Arguing against the form-content split that emerges from a representational view of language, Weinsheimer contends that, "in use, when language is performing work, its forms disappear as such because they are working. They are full of what they mean . . . ."[10] Rather than being a re-presentation of some external reality, "Truth happens when we lose ourselves and no longer stand over against it as a subject against an object."[11]

Few homileticians, however, have attempted to incorporate Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics into preaching theory. As I argued in Chapter two, Richard Eslinger is intrigued by Gadamer's notion of play, and suggests that it

is one part of a description of preaching as "semantic imagination." Lucy Rose is attracted to Gadamer's concept of "conversation" as a useful metaphor for describing that moment when participants listen and respond to one another ". . . as people with particular historical and social locations within an atmosphere of openness and mutual respect."[12] Although these allusions to Gadamer have been useful for the development of New Homiletical theory, they have been too narrowly focused to exploit fully the complex and nuanced theory of understanding that Gadamer proposes. It is my intention, therefore, to pick up where these homileticians have left off. That is, I will offer an overview of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics and then demonstrate how his theory of understanding may assist in the renewal of New Homiletical theory.

Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics is part of a larger hermeneutical tradition that dates back to ancient Greece. Although Hebrew rabbis practiced the art of interpretation long before Aristotle, it was primarily Aristotle who gave the practice of hermeneutics its theoretical underpinnings in the West through the Organon and On Interpretation.[13] As Richard Palmer states, "The roots for the word hermeneutics lie in the Greek verb hermēneuein, generally translated 'to interpret,' and the noun hermēneia, 'interpretation.'"[14] Palmer maintains that philologically,

> The Greek word hermeios referred to the priest at the Delphic oracle. This word and the more common verb hermēneuein and noun hermēneia point back to the wing-footed messenger-god

> Hermes, from whose name the words are apparently derived (or vice versa?). Significantly, Hermes is associated with the function of transmuting what is beyond human understanding into a form that human intelligence can grasp. The various forms of the word suggest the process of bringing a thing or situation from unintelligibility to understanding. The Greeks credited Hermes with the discovery of language and writing--the tools which human understanding employs to grasp meaning and to convey it to others.[15]

Palmer's description illustrates that in the "Hermes process . . . something foreign, strange, separated in time, something requiring representation, explanation, or translation is somehow 'brought to understanding'-- is 'interpreted.'"[16]

As I have noted, in modern theological hermeneutics this belief is manifested in the conviction that it is possible to determine the author's original intent in the passage that is under consideration. This hermeneutic coincides with a rhetoric of actuality or energeia, one that favors a more closed as opposed to open-ended reading of texts. This type of preaching is analogous to what communication theorists describe as the "action" or "conduit" view of communication.[17] In this homiletical model, spiritual growth and maturity take place through the direct acquisition of information that, prior to the sermon, existed outside the listener's horizon of understanding.

Kierkegaard demonstrated, however, that there was an inherent problem in the direct method of communication that the conduit metaphor presumes. Kierkegaard's statement that, "There is no lack of information in a Christian land; something else is lacking, and this is a something which the one man cannot directly communicate to the other"[18] implied that one of the problems with the direct homiletical approach was that it ignored what happened in the actual practice of communicating.[19] The conduit, or direct communication approach assumes that ideas, meanings, thoughts, and images must be "accurately," "objectively," and "truthfully," re-presented by the preacher on behalf of the listening congregation. It does not acknowledge that ideas, meanings, thoughts and images exist in language among people living in relationships and in communities whose ". . . situated interests focus and thus shape what is learned and known."[20] The conduit approach to preaching privileges epistemological re-presentation over the kind of ontological presentation that I believe is the "something else" to which Kierkegaard referred. Such an epistemological view of preaching implies a basic distinction between the non-linguistic and the linguistic world in that it posits that the preacher's "words" can re-present the external "wor[l]ds" of scripture. In this model, the preaching of the word of God is about the word of God.

Yet, another hermeneutical model may help to inform a renewed homiletical practice. This hermeneutic is more ontological than epistemological, more presentational than representational, and it may help to uncover the

"something else" of Kierkegaard's statement. This approach traces its roots to the "ontological turn"[21] of Martin Heidegger, and it comes to its fullest fruition in the philosophical hermeneutics of Hans-George Gadamer.

GADAMER'S PHILOSOPHICAL HERMENEUTICS: PREACHING AS ONTOLOGICAL CONVERSATION

Heidegger's ontological emphasis fundamentally altered the nature of hermeneutic practice.[22] Heidegger argued that "Hermeneutics as a theory of understanding is, in consequence, really a theory of ontological disclosure."[23] In contrast to an approach to understanding that sees hermeneutics as a "mode of knowledge," Heidegger saw understanding as a "mode of being."[24] Thus, Heidegger fundamentally redirected the emphasis of the entire hermeneutical enterprise. Rather than the re-presentation of external data characteristic of the epistemological hermeneutics of a "mode of knowledge," Heidegger's ontological hermeneutics grounded understanding in the humans "mode of being"; that is, he began from the insight that to be a <u>human</u> is to be a understander.[25]

The connection between Heidegger's ontological turn and theology is a broad topic that was of interest to Heidegger. In a 1921 letter to his friend and student, Karl Löwith, Heidegger wrote that it would be a fundamental mistake to measure him ". . . against figures such as Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, . . . or any of the other creative philosophers. Such is not to be prohibited, but then it must

be said that I am not a philosopher, and I am only deluding myself to believe that I could be something comparable [for] I am a Christian theologian."[26] Of course, this is not to say that Heidegger was a Christian theologian in the classical sense, rather, ". . . it is to say that all of his efforts to sort things out with himself and with his questions were motivated by a desire to free himself from the dominating theology in which he had been raised--so that he could be a Christian."[27]

The dominating theology in which Heidegger had been raised was influenced by the then-contemporary Neo-Kantian emphasis on methodological rigor and its concentrated focus on the foundations of science. Gadamer writes that, for the Neo-Kantians, ". . . it was completely self-evident that the complete acquisition of all that is knowable could take place only in the sciences, that the objectification of experience through science fulfilled completely the meaning of knowledge. The purity of the concept, the precision of the mathematical formula, the triumph of the infinitesimal method--this, not the midworld of the unstable linguistic shapes, defined the philosophical orientation of the Marburg school."[28] For Heidegger, the problem in theological inquiry was not one of "mathematical formula" or "infinitesimal method"; rather, it was a problem of "unstable linguistic shapes," or, as he was quoted elsewhere, a "problem of language."[29] For the ". . . true task of theology--a task that theology must find its way back to--[is] to search for the word that was capable of beckoning one to and preserving one in faith."[30]

Although Heidegger's comments about theology raise as many questions they answer, they point to the fundamental shift that Heidegger's ontological turn initiated in theological discussion. Whereas theological hermeneutics had been about the methodological acquisition and the homiletical disputation of objective facts, Heidegger's ontological turn reintroduced an alternative approach to hermeneutics and homiletics, one where "Understanding is not a resigned ideal of human experience adopted in the old age of the spirit, as with Dilthey; nor is it, as with Husserl, a last methodological ideal of philosophy in contrast to the naivete of unreflecting life; it is, on the contrary, the original form of the realization of Dasein, which is being-in-the-world."[31] "Understanding," Gadamer continues, "is the original characteristic of the being of human life itself."[32]

Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics continues Heidegger's project by describing how language forms or constitutes human reality, or world. This perspective claims that words, that is, talk, conversation, dialogue, question and answer, produce worlds.[33] In Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, the subject/object split that is foundational to the paradigm that views the hermeneut as Cartesian cogito is replaced by a Heideggerian-informed hermeneutics of Dasein. Stewart argues that, ". . . Heidegger noticed something that humans 'are' and 'do' prior to operating as subjects on objects. He observed that we are immersed in what might be called everyday coping . . . [And this coping is] thoroughly relational not individual, social not

psychological."[34] This alternative hermeneutic is fundamentally ontological because, as Heidegger claimed, "the person is not first and foremost a cogito employing reason to connect and disconnect with objects around it, but is first and foremost an interpreter, understander, or sense maker engaged in everyday coping,"[35] and the primary site of this coping is conversation, interpersonal speech communicating. Gadamer suggests that Truth and Method is an extension of Heidegger's ontological project. He writes,

> The role that the mystery of language plays in Heidegger's later thought is sufficient indication that his concentration on the historicity of self-understanding banished not only the concept of consciousness from its central position, but also the concept of selfhood as such. For what is more unconscious and "selfless" than that mysterious realm of language in which we stand and which allows what is to come to expression, so that being "is temporalized" (sich zeitigt)? But if this is valid for the mystery of language it is also valid for the concept of understanding. Understanding too cannot be grasped as a simple activity of the consciousness that understands, but is itself a mode of the event of being. To put it in purely formal terms, the primacy that language and understanding have in Heidegger's thought indicates the priority of the "relation" over against its relational members -- the I who understands and that which is understood.

> Nevertheless, it seems to me that it is possible to bring to expression within the hermeneutical consciousness itself Heidegger's statements concerning "being" and the line of inquiry he developed out of the experience of the "turn." I have carried out this attempt in Truth and Method.[36]

This impetus ultimately leads Gadamer to his central claim, "Being that can be understood is language."[37]

Because humans understand relationally and not individually, socially and not psychologically, conversationally and not monologically, Gadamer believes that a semiotic view of language misrepresents what actually happens in what he calls the hermeneutical phenomenon. In a lengthy passage that extends Heidegger's notion of being-in-the-world to language theory, Gadamer writes,

> It is obvious that an instrumentalist theory of signs which sees words and concepts as handy tools has missed the point of the hermeneutical phenomenon. If we stick to what takes place in speech and, above all, in every dialogue with tradition carried on by the human sciences, we cannot fail to see that here concepts are constantly in the process of being formed. This does not mean that the interpreter is using new or unusual words. But the capacity to use familiar words is not based on an act of logical subsumption, through which a particular is placed under a

> universal concept. Let us remember, rather, that understanding always includes an element of application and thus produces an ongoing process of concept formation. We must consider this now if we want to liberate the verbal nature of understanding from the presuppositions of philosophy of language. The interpreter does not use words and concepts like a craftsman who picks up his tools and puts them away. Rather, we must recognize that all understanding is interwoven with concepts and reject any theory that does not accept the intimate unity of word and subject matter.[38]

Gadamer's ontological view of language surfaces throughout this discussion of what he calls the hermeneutical phenomenon. Whereas a semiotic view of language allows an interpreter ". . . to use words and concepts like a craftsman," Gadamer underscores ". . . the indissoluble unity of thought and language . . . the unity of understanding and interpretation."[39] This fusion of thought and language, understanding and interpretation, is Gadamer's way of overcoming the subject/object dichotomy that exists in systems that treat language as a tool or an instrument.

Gadamer explains this unity though the concept of linguisticality. Simply, linguisticality is Gadamer's way of describing the distinctive nature and function of language to create worlds via the medium of words. As Palmer notes, world as well as understanding occurs between persons, and the medium of this

understanding is language.[40] Linguisticality provides the "common ground" where this fusion between persons, traditions, cultures, interpersonal experiences and horizons can meet.[41] Gadamer's hermeneutical experience, therefore, is a process between human beings rather than a product which accurately re-presents a world that is objectively verifiable. Gadamer's view of communicating is productive but in a way that is distinct from the semiotic mode. One fundamental premise of Gadamer's concept of linguisticality is that human beings live and find meaning in language not because of language. Joel Weinsheimer emphasizes this point when he writes that, for Gadamer,

> Language can be considered as an object, however, only when it is idling and abstracted from its use. In use, when language is performing work, its forms disappear as such because they are working. They are full with what they mean, and there is no form-content split. In use, language is always saying something. Children do not first learn the universal forms of their tongue and then how to apply them to particular cases; rather they learn horizontally, from use to use. From speech they learn to speak, and from application to apply. Language is most itself . . . when it is least objectified, when form and content, discourse and world are not distinguished.[42]

In contrast to a traditional, Aristotelian view of language where spoken words represent mental images and written words are symbols for spoken words,

Gadamerian linguisticality emphasizes a fundamental unity between language and human existence. Interpretation can never be divorced from language or "objectified." Because language comes to humans with meaning, interpretations and understandings of the world can never be prejudice-free. As languaged beings, humans cannot step outside of language and look at language or the world from some objective standpoint. Language is not a tool which human beings manipulate to represent a meaning-full world; rather, language forms human reality.[43] "Being that can be understood" cannot be separated from wor[l]d, from "language." Linguisticality is Gadamer's central term for describing the way understanding emerges through the process of language in use.[44]

This process is not without its constitutive parts, however.[45] If the concept of linguisticality is a central feature of Gadamer's philosophy of communication, then the fundamental character of the linguisticality that discloses human existence is that it is playful. Unlike some aesthetic theorists who see play as an activity of the human subject, Gadamer uses play to remove understanding from being an activity of the human subject.[46] He contends that players are absorbed in the game itself. In Gadamer's philosophy of communication, a player does not operate as subject over against an object; rather, the player is guided by the centrality of the subject matter or, put another way, that which presents itself in the playing of the game. Richard Palmer argues, ". . . the game has its own special spirit."[47] This metaphor for

conversational understanding emphasizes that, in any genuine conversation, the player experiences the game as a reality that surpasses the intentionalities of the player. The player is caught up in a something that exists beyond his or her intentions and, furthermore, the game never comes to a complete end but renews itself in constant repetition.[48]

It is this sense of surpassing the intentionalities of the player and being renewed in constant repetition that Gadamer has in mind when he says that, in serious play, we lose ourselves.[49] Gadamer maintains that the mode of being that characterizes serious play is not that of subject operating against an object, a Cartesian cogito in control of his or her world. Rather, in serious play, the player is taken over by the game so that "the primacy of the play [is featured] over the consciousness of the players."[50] This process of being taken over, of being overcome, facilitates what Gadamer describes as an ontological "transformation." This is the direction of Weinsheimer's thought when he writes,

> This change results from the fact that since the subject is not allowed to act toward the game as an object in itself, the subject does not remain itself either. The player loses self-control and cedes control to the game. . . . The idea of the game is that the subject should take leave of itself and that the game should take over. Thus Gadamer writes that "all playing is being played." "The charm of play, the fascination it exercises, consists precisely in the fact that the game becomes master over the players. . . .

> The one who tries is in truth the one who is tried. The real subject of the game is not the player . . . but the game itself."[51]

Gadamer uses play to describe the process by which the subject/object dichotomies characteristic of semiotic views of language are overcome, and as a means of describing the ontological transformation that occurs in this experience. Additionally, there is a component to play that Gadamer implies is particularly useful to homileticians. He asserts that it is through the experience of play that something distant is brought near through a process he calls "contemporaneity."

Contemporaneity is a term that Gadamer borrows from Kierkegaard who admittedly gave it a ". . . particular theological stamp."[52] Gadamer writes,

> For Kierkegaard, "contemporaneity" does not mean "existing at the same time." Rather, it names the task that confronts the believer; to bring together two moments that are not concurrent, namely one's own present and the redeeming act of Christ, and yet so totally to mediate them that the latter is experienced and taken seriously as present (and not as something in a distant past). . . .
>
> Contemporaneity in this sense is found especially in religious rituals and in the proclamation of the Word in preaching. Here, "being present" means genuine participation in the redemptive event itself.[53]

In Truth and Method, Gadamer uses the Kierkegaardian concept of

contemporaneity to contrast the unique experience (Erfahrung) of a work of art with the ". . . simultaneity of aesthetic consciousness . . . ," where ". . . several objects of aesthetic experience (Erlebnis) are all held in consciousness at the same time--all indifferently, with the same claim to validity."[54] But this concept can naturally be extended to homiletics. Gadamer does not believe that it is possible for one who is involved in genuine play to remain a member of the Kierkegaardian "crowd," that is, a distanced observer or an aesthetic "spectator" who merely watches, who is interpersonally isolated and out of touch.[55] Genuine players are caught up, captured, and actively participate in the game. This is a different kind of experience that generates a different kind of understanding.

The nature of experience that may emerge from genuine playing is one of the distinctive features of Gadamer's theory. In Truth and Method, Gadamer moves toward describing the experience of genuine players as Erfahrung rather than Erlebnis. Erfahrung is an experience that has the effect of collapsing together two separate moments in time. It is a contemporaneous experience of reunion with past and present, ". . . an excursion into the alien that is also a return to ourselves . . . ."[56] It is, as previously noted, an experience that one undergoes rather than an experience that one has. Homiletics is a discipline that Gadamer uses to describe this experience, and he distinguishes a homiletical practice where the ". . . word is called on to mediate between past and present."[57] "Free speaking," Gadamer says elsewhere, "flows forward in

forgetfulness of oneself and in self-surrender to the subject matter made present in the medium of language. That is even true in the case of understanding written discourse, in understanding texts. For they too, if one is to understand them, must be merged again with the movement of meaning in speaking."[58]

In this passage, Gadamer is referring to the interconnected relationship that exits between understanding and speaking, even when this relationship resides between written and spoken discourse. In contrast to an Enlightenment vision of understanding that equates knowing with apprehending rational truths, Gadamer's concept of play describes understanding as a dialogical conversation, a process where "language is not coincident . . . with that which is expressed in it, with that in it which is formulated in words."[59] In Gadamer's view, the form/content debate that is part of the representational view of language is collapsed through the playful process of contemporaneity. Language is the site or place where understanding occurs in conversation, in use. Understanding begins ". . . when something addresses us."[60] Understanding is more than the epistemological apprehension of methodologically acquired data, more than something a person has. When understanding is reduced to objective data, truth claims lose their claim on us. They are objects to be seen but not necessarily understood. In essence, Gadamer is trying to explode what Fred Craddock has called the myth that knowing about is knowing.[61] Like Craddock, Gadamer believes that there is

more to understanding than controlling. He insists that understanding is verbal and that it is always in the process of being "concretized."[62] Understanding exists in language, in collaborative ongoing conversation, or, in preaching terms, through genuine homileoing. Understanding is communicative, and "To know in truth is to allow one's self to be known as well, to be vulnerable to the challenges and changes that [the text] brings. . . . Truthful knowing weds the knower and the known; even in separation, the two become part of each other's life. . . ."[63] Genuine understanding, then, is playful.

Several additional features of linguisticality emerge from this explication of play. The first of these is what Gadamer describes as the dynamic of question and answer. As a central feature of communicative understanding, the dynamic of question and answer is Gadamer's terminology for the way conversational partners come to playful understanding. Understanding or meaning emerge in the to-and-fro, the give-and-take, that characterizes any genuine conversation about a subject matter. In the process of genuine conversation, Gadamer believes that the conversation partners step into the hermeneutical circle.[64] The dynamic of question and answer demands that each participant bring his or her tradition and prejudice to the conversation. It is through the to-and-fro movement of the conversation that understanding or meaning may be dynamically encountered.

Prejudice is another Gadamerian concept, and an important component of linguisticality. For Gadamer, genuine conversation centrally involves the

process of bringing one's presuppositions and prejudices into "play" within a community of human discourse. In fact, human prejudice or preconception is the starting point for communicative understanding. Whereas a central component of modern and semiotic views of language is that "methodologically disciplined uses of reason can safeguard us from error,"[65] Gadamer believes that prejudice is a crucial component of communicative understanding. Historically effected consciousness is related to prejudice. Historically effected consciousness is Gadamer's way of describing how the past operates on us now in the present and impacts our conception of what is yet to come. In other words, we do not exist outside a historically effected consciousness. We communicate and understand as part of, not independent from, a tradition. Gadamer sees tradition as a partner in dialogue, in understanding, and not something from which a hermeneut can be methodologically separated. "Understanding is," says Gadamer, "essentially, a historically effected event."[66]

As a historically effected event, ". . . all interpretation is, in fact, speculative."[67] The speculative nature of interpretation does not imply that an interpretation is truth-less; rather, Gadamer uses the term speculative to describe the mirror-like relationship that exists between understanding and interpretation.[68] Rather than a view of understanding that locates what is considered to be truthful in the assimilation of accurately represented traditionary texts, Gadamer asserts that a speculative person is able to "reflect" on that which addresses me, or, put into Hegeleian terms, the speculative

person is one "who sees that the 'in-itself' is a 'for-me.'"[69] This mirroring is really a metaphor for describing the to-and-fro-ing that is part of the hermeneutical experience. Mirroring describes a process of movement that thought takes between a subject and an object; that process that moves from the whole and to the part, or from the part back to the whole. Rather than a reflecting out of prejudices, the speculative nature of understanding incorporates prejudice as a partner in the hermeneutical experience.

Subtly but effectively, Gadamer is rounding out the interpretive experience by introducing practice as a critical component to the hermeneutical enterprise. He writes,

> "What is meant . . . is that all interpretation is speculative as it is actually practiced, quite apart from its methodological self-consciousness. This is what emerges from the linguistic nature of interpretation. For the interpreting word is the word of the interpreter; it is not the language and the dictionary of the interpreted text. This means that assimilation is no mere reproduction or repetition of the traditionary text; it is a new creation of understanding.[70]

Gadamer contends that all meaning, then, is related to the "I."[71] "As far as the hermeneutical experience is concerned," he writes, ". . . all the meaning of what is handed down to us finds its concretion (i.e., is understood) in its relation to the understanding I--and not in reconstructing the originally intending I."[72]

Understanding is relational.

This is the point that White appears to make when he notes that, "In Gadamer's account, historically effected consciousness always involves openness to being questioned by a subject matter.[73] The centrality of the subject matter means that conversation partners are guided in the conversation by the subject at hand and not simply by their individual wants and needs. As in any game that claims the focus of the players, the centrality of the subject matter implies a willingness to let go, an orientation that "participates in" rather than attempts to "control" the outcome of the conversation or hermeneutical endeavor. The subject matter guides the conversation as well as the partners who, in genuine conversation, work to some sort of consensus, which does not necessarily mean agreement.

As Gadamer notes, understanding means coming to an understanding with each other about something (Verständigung). Understanding is not understanding the other person as it was with Schleiermacher; rather, it is understanding each other with respect to something, to some subject matter.[74] As Warnke indicates, understanding is an agreement about something and, yet, it has the characteristic of a genuine conversation. It is essentially a to-and-fro process of coming to a consensus, one that does not necessarily imply agreement.[75] In other words, the focus of understanding is the "truth" of the subject matter. Warnke believes that this requires taking seriously the claims of one's text, defining and testing one's prejudices as one encounters these claims

and then coming to the text with a new understanding of the subject matter at issue.[76] What emerges from this dialogical encounter is not something that either party controls. Understanding is something new that emerges from the process of genuine conversation. Gadamer contends that this is why understanding is not reproductive, but a productive activity, a process of conversation, integration, and appropriation that is always on the way to becoming, that is always being renewed in and through language.[77]

Gadamer describes the experience that one undergoes on the way to coming to an understanding about a subject matter as the fusion of horizons. As Gadamer describes it, a horizon is ". . . the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point.[78] Part of "real understanding" involves regaining the concepts of a historical past in such a way that they also include our comprehension of them.[79] This fusion of horizons is that event of understanding or, specifically, ontological refiguration, that occurs when participants are addressed by a subject matter. Gadamer understands this fusion event as more ontological than epistemological and more Erfahrung than Erlebnis. Fusion of horizons implies not only a broadening and expanding of the horizons of the conversational partners, but a quality of understanding that is always on the way to becoming but never completely arrives. Fusion does not so much mean "getting it," "controlling the facts," or "understanding the author." It means coming to an "agreement" or "understanding" about the subject matter at hand, even if that agreement is an

agreement to disagree. The locus for this agreement or new understanding is dialogical conversation. This conversation does not occur outside of language as independent subjects operating to control objects, but in language as each participant brings his or her prejudices into play to be put to the test of interaction and reaction or what I have elsewhere described as genuine homileoing.

Finally, Gadamer's depiction of application is itself an essential and innovative component to his philosophy of communication. At every point it must be understood that Gadamer's hermemeneutics is a way of thinking, a way of reflecting, that also recognizes the important relationship between practice and theory. Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics is not the kind of theory that is constituted in a theoretical vacuum, a theory that is generated, articulated, refined and then applied "in some sphere."[80] As Dieter Misgeld and Graeme Nicholson note, "Only an age of engineering would suppose that the application of a science or a theory would take the results of a theory erected in its own domain, and then impose it somewhere, hoping to produce results useful to human life."[81] Gadamer proposes an alternative way of theorizing, a mode of thinking that weds application and theory. "The heart of the hermeneutical problem," he says, "is that one and the same tradition must time and again be understood in a different way, the problem, logically speaking, concerns the relationship between the universal and the particular. Understanding is a special case of applying something universal to a particular

situation."[82]

Gadamer's alternative hermeneutic emerges from his encounter with Aristotle who made the distinction between the human sphere, or ethics, and that of nature or physics. Whereas laws of physics exist independently in nature, wholly separate from human beings, human civilization is what it is through what humankind does and how humankind behaves.[83] Aristotle argued that ethical reflection differed from the kind of reflection that was required in physics precisely because ethics required an element of interpretation about behavior and action, about what was considered to be right and what was considered to be wrong within the confines of human community. Human ethical reflection always had its eye toward its particular occasion of use. Gadamer contends that the kind of knowledge that is required to discern good action from bad action ". . . is really knowledge of a special kind. In a curious way, it embraces both means and end, and hence differs from technical knowledge."[84] The special kind of knowledge that Gadamer has in mind ". . . contains a kind of experience in itself," it is experience as Erfahrung which fundamentally differs from all other experiences which ". . . represent an alienation, not to say a denaturing."[85] Rather than distanced observation, Erfahrung is an experience that one undergoes in the process of both interpretation and application.[86]

It is this relationship between interpretation and application as it intersects with practical life that Don Browning appears to have in mind when

he writes, "The relation of understanding to phronesis [practical wisdom] is apparently one of Gadamer's most striking and little understood points. [Gadamer] argues that we do not first understand something and then later apply our understanding to action or praxis. Instead, he writes, 'application is neither a subsequent nor a merely occasional part of the phenomenon of understanding, but co-determines it as a whole from the beginning.'"[87] In other words, in Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, theory is constituted in the process of being worked out in the praxis of interpersonal relating. This is not a theory that can constitute itself in advance of its application; rather, it is constituted through application with an eye to its occasion of use.[88]

As it relates to the interpretation of sacred texts and homiletical theory, Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics is a theory of interpretation which acknowledges that every sacred text comes to us with a history or tradition, but it is nevertheless a sacred text that must be encountered again and again as it intersects with the living out of community life. Therefore, to be meaningful, to be understood, to be experienced as Erfahrung rather than Erlebnis, each tradition-bound text must be applied or field-tested; it must be in conversation with the community of faith as it endeavors to live out its faith. This hermeneutical approach calls forth a fundamental shift in the role of pastor. In this model, the preacher is first a pastor, a listener, not only to sacred texts as they come to him or her in tradition, but also to the ways in which sacred texts intersect with the lives of the congregation. In this approach, the preacher is

not the resident expert whose function is to dispense methodologically-acquired truths. The preacher is a conversation partner, an attuned participant whose sermons incorporate elements of interpretation and application and manifest themselves as articulated practice.

Part three of Truth and Method can be broadly characterized as articulating Gadamer's application move. Practically, Gadamer believes that any theory of understanding must itself be concertized in praxis. Communicative understanding does not exist in a vacuum but in use, in dialogue, in application which is ". . . the task of concertizing something universal and applying it to oneself."[89] Or, paraphrasing Gadamer and applying this conversation to a theological discussion, the meaning of the preacher's proclamation finds its fullest realization as scripture comes into contact with the practical life of the community of faith. Understanding always involves applying the meaning understood to praxis.[90]

FIRST SUMMARY

Three primary innovations emerge from this review of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics. In contrast to semiotic views of language that characterize human beings as Cartesian cogitos operating as subjects upon objects, Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics sees human beings as on the way to becoming, as relational beings who, in the process of everyday coping, homileoing, questioning and answering, produce wor[l]ds. In contrast to an

Enlightenment approach that views humans as essentially "controllers," Gadamer's linguistic understanding describes a person who is a responder and not in control, a person who is guided by the subject matter rather than one who operates wholly as subject; a person who is as much acted upon as he or she is an actor. Embedded in Gadamer's ontological view is a community of collaboration rather than a community of domination; a community in which "Learning to speak does not mean learning to use a preexistent tool for designating a world already somehow familiar to us; it means acquiring a familiarity and acquaintance with the world itself and how it confronts us."[91] "Hence," Gadamer concludes, "language is the real medium of human being, if we only see it in the realm that it alone fills out, the realm of human being-together, the realm of common understanding, . . . a realm as indispensable to human life as the air we breathe."[92]

A second important feature of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics is his definition of truth. Whereas semiotic philosophies of language characterize truth under the rubric of accurate representing or mirroring, Gadamer views truth as a term that can and should be used to characterize what emerges from the to-and-fro of serious play in relational community.[93] He concludes Truth and Method with the words, "what the tool of method does not achieve must--and really can--be achieved by a discipline of questioning and inquiring, a discipline that guarantees truth."[94]

Gadamer is sometimes criticized for being relativistic and too optimistic

about what Anthony Thiselton calls the capacity of ". . . language, tradition, and temporal distance to filter out what is false and leave only what is true."[95] But Thiselton fails to recognize that Gadamer's understanding of truth is not the historical-critical, final, closed truth that is the ultimate meaning of things but, as Gary Madison argues, a construction that emerges from the interplay of linguisticality, the meaning of which lies in the ontological reformulation and enhanced self-understanding of the player.[96] Madison contends that, for Gadamer,

> Truth refers not to a static, mirroring relation between a subject and an object but to the transformation process which occurs in all instances of genuine understanding. Truth refers to the self-enrichment and self-realization that occurs as a result of the play of meaning.[97]

Although Gadamer's conception of truth is central to his philosophical hermeneutics, it is also elusive. Joel Weinsheimer offers some clarifying thoughts when he contends that, for Gadamer,

> Truth occurs as a response to a tradition that addresses us in a language we can understand. . . . This truth is something we neither possess nor make, a product of consciousness, but rather something that happens to us and in which we participate, as when we get caught up in a game. Truth happens when we lose ourselves and no longer stand over against it as a subject against

> an object. When we are caught up in the game that is played with us, it is then, even before we are aware of it, that we have joined in the continuing event of truth. 'The one who understands is always already drawn into the event whereby the meaningful validates itself. . . . When we understand, we are drawn into an event of truth and we come, as it were, too late if we want to know what we are supposed to believe.'. . . [T]he truth of tradition occurs to us.[98]

Therefore, Gadamerian truth should be seen in transformational and ontological terms. He believes in the possibility of truth for, as he says, ". . . what else is interpretation in philosophy but coming to terms with the truth of the text and risking oneself by exposure to it?"[99] The element of risk, of exposing oneself to the "immanent unity of meaning in a text or the self-presentation of a work of art" is not so much about uncovering an original meaning or intent as it is about being exposed to and transformed by that which is truth-full.

This appears to be the point that Gadamer is trying to make in some of his later reflections about Heidegger. If the meaning of a text is understood as the mens auctoris (author's intent) of the New Testament authors, then those authors are "given a false honor." Gadamer argues that their usefulness, ". . . lies precisely in the fact that they are the herald[100] for something that surpasses their own horizon of understanding--even if they are called John or Paul."[101] For Gadamer, understanding is never a retrieval of that which the

author intended, regardless of whether the author was the creator of a work of art, the perpetrator of some act, or the writer of a biblical text. As for Kierkegaard, genuine understanding involves "something more" than the transmission of information. Understanding begins, Gadamer declares, " . . . when something addresses us."[102] One who understands is never bound by the word-for-word renditions of the translator; rather, Heidegger and Gadamer maintain that there is an ontological link between "being and speech."[103] "Simultaneously with man's departure into being, he finds himself in the word, in language."[104]

The third feature that arises from this analysis is Gadamer's recasting of experience from Erlebnis to Erfahrung. The word Erlebnis first appeared in the late 1870s in one of Hegel's letters, and it was most often associated with biographical writing.[105] As I have already indicated, Erlebnis is used to describe that experience of meaning which can be "traced back to ultimate units given in consciousness, unities which themselves no longer contain anything alien . . . or in need of interpretation"; it is the ". . . epistemological basis for all knowledge of the objective."[106] As it relates to biographical writing and the understanding of texts, Erlebnis is an experience of meaning that comes from getting inside another person and reliving his or her experiences (Erlebnisse).[107] It is an experience of meaning that relies on the methodological acquisition and retrieval of the original intent of the author; it is understanding in an objective and uninvolved way where one who endeavors to

understand methodically excludes everything that is subjective and discovers what is contained.[108] It is the kind of understanding that emerges from subjects operating on objects, and its aim is to objectify experience so that it contains no historical element.[109]

Erfahrung is an altogether different experience. Gadamer holds to a view of understanding that is not the possession or grasping of the "expression of another person's life" or intent, but a "meaning that is detached from the person who means it."[110] The "meaning that is detached from the person who means it" is that quality or capacity of a text or work of art to address humans, that quality or capacity that speaks to humans despite historical distance. The experience that he has in mind to describe this kind of understanding is not the "discovery of facts" but the "peculiar fusion of memory and expectation into a whole."[111] As historically effected beings, humans are not able to separate themselves from tradition, but they stand in the midst of it. This kind of hermeneutical experience is an experience of the tradition and the truth claims encountered in the tradition.[112] It is through the process of authentic dialogue and genuine questioning and answering that something can be revealed about the tradition or the object that is being understood. The posture of this kind of hermeneut is that of a partner, a listener, a seeker, an interpreter who belongs to that which is being interpreted.[113]

This sense of belonging to the truth and tradition of the text or that which is being interpreted is quite different from the kind of control exhibited by an

interpreter who endeavors to discover via methodology. The experience of understanding that Gadamer has in mind is made possible ". . . only because the word that has come down to us as tradition and to which we are to listen really encounters us and does so as if it addressed us and is concerned with us."[114] It is an experience of understanding, an event that is at once "appropriation and interpretation,"[115] an event that takes place in language. The experience of this kind of understanding does not emerge from method but from the rigor of "uninterrupted listening."[116] This hermeneutical experience is transformational, but it is a transformation that is conversational. In this conversation, the hermeneut listens and relates what he or she hears to his or her "own linguistic orientation to the world."[117] In essence, it is an understanding that occurs from being spoken to rather than speaking, an experience that one undergoes rather than an experience that one possesses or controls.

Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics points to a different kind of sermonic practice, one that is not so much of a pronouncement or argument as it is a contribution to a genuine conversation. The preacher would herald his or her experiences of being spoken to, of listening, as one who stands in the tradition and not outside of it. He or she would converse about how he or she is encountered by the text and would be responsive to ways in which this encounter intersects with the lives of his or her congregation. In order for this moment of intersection between theory and practice, textual encounter and

sermonic conversation to be a genuine dialogue, however, the preacher would have to know his or her congregation in ways that can only be experienced by a pastor who participates, who shares, who converses in the actual events of congregational human being. For in holding the hands of the dying, and in marrying, counseling, listening, eating, moderating, baptizing, blessing, laughing, crying and communing, the pastor, by grace, becomes an authentic partner in the ongoing conversation that constitutes the human being of the congregation. This experience of speaking and being spoken to, of genuine listening, is one that is not unlike that of the two men on the road to Emmaus. It is an experience that happens in conversation, in the process of genuine homileoing.

PREACHING AS CONVERSATION

Preaching as conversation is a metaphor that one well known homiletical theorist has recently begun to pursue, but the model Lucy Rose envisions is fundamentally different from one that is informed by Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics. I can most economically introduce my sense of preaching as conversation by clarifying how Rose's model, which seems to echo important aspects of Derrida's version of play[118], contrasts with a model anchored in Gadamer's markedly different understanding of play.

Rose argues that preaching is a time ". . . to gather the community of faith around the Word where the central conversations of the church are

refocused and fostered [and this is] a conversational understanding of preaching."[119] She sees this vision of preaching as an addition to current theory.[120] Rose justifies the need for this addition by locating her theory in the new "postmodern world" where, by definition, all definitions can be reworked, and where there is room for her and others to share "experiences" that have previously been left on the margins of the modern world.[121] She contends that,

> In the postmodern world these "small stories," our lived experiences from the fringes of the modern world, are no less important than the stories of those who were "somebodies" in the "old country." In fact our "small stories" become our starting points for expanding former definitions. We attend to and reflect on our experiences, our actual practices, and our hopes as preachers. Then, as we speak and write these reflections, in the postmodern world, since we are preachers, the meaning of the word <u>preaching</u> by necessity stretches to embrace us.[122]

In Rose's conversational model, the experiences of "conversational partners"[123] are elevated onto a level that is equal to the experience of the preacher whose responsibility it is to focus the homiletical conversation. She contends that the content of this "postmodern" preaching does not "slide into the quagmire of relativism," however, because ". . . the sermon's content is a proposal offered to the community of faith for their additions, corrections, or

counterproposals."[124] In this "postmodern" world, "no 'truth' is objective, absolute, ontological, or archetypal[;] [rather], the only way I can speak of 'truth' is eschatologically."[125] Conversational preaching values ". . . poetic, evocative language because of its ability to invite to the sermonic round table the experiences" of the other conversation partners, and the inductive sermons of Craddock and the narrative sermons of Lowry are ". . . potentially heuristic forms that invite the congregation to work out their own meanings in a give-and-take with the Spirit. . . . Conversational preaching is communal, heuristic, and nonhierarchical."[126]

Rose's interest in a conversational approach to preaching is an important contribution to contemporary homiletical theory, because it indicates a growing concern among theorists about what and even how to preach in a postmodern world. Because of Rose's intentional interest in the "practice" or the "flesh and blood" of what preachers actually do,[127] she has invited a dialogue between contemporary homiletical theory and, for example, Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics. However, as I have indicated, the trajectory that she pursues is quite different from the trajectory intimated by Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics. The difference between the two trajectories can be condensed into the difference between Gadamer's and Derrida's understanding of play.

Derrida comes as close as he ever does to articulating a Position on the meaning of play in an interview with Julia Kristiva. He states that, "Différance is the systematic play of differences, of the traces of differences, of the spacing

by means of which elements are related to each other."[128] For Derrida, "the a of différance refers to the generative movement in the play of differences. . . . Differences are the effects of transformations, and from this vantage the theme of différance is incompatible with the static, synchronic, taxonomic, ahistoric motifs in the concept of structure."[129] Like Kierkegaard, Derrida almost always communicates indirectly, playfully. The purpose of his play is to involve the reader in a moment of transgression, a moment that is simultaneously upheaval and movement. Playful transgression is a resistance to and a recognition of the ". . . limit [that] is always at work,"[130] the modern quest for absolute final definitions. If there is an absolute for Derrida, it is the absolute of play, but it is an absolute that is controlled by nothing. For Derrida, "there is no closure beyond the ceaseless play of dissemination."[131]

In Rose's new proposal, "conversation" serves as the playful metaphor for the reevaluation of "modernism" and its drive for "truth" and absolute definitions. In her addition to contemporary homiletical theory, Rose foregrounds a Derridian playful conversation, one where the limits of modernism's influence on the traditional definitions of preaching may be transgressed. This commitment surfaces when she writes that she envisions a practice "where no single story is 'the whole truth and nothing but the truth'" or where "[m]y story or your story as the preacher with our unavoidably particular wagers, interpretations, and meanings is neither more nor less important than the story of every other believer, congregational groupie, or hanger-on who

hopes against hope to trade secondhand beliefs for firsthand discipleship."[132] This description of an ongoing conversation is genuinely attractive because it is so open and inclusive.

But as I noted, there is a significant difference between Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics and the kind of homileoing that it facilitates, and Rose's conversational proposal. Simply, Rose's conversational model transgresses the limits without articulating a position. Gadamer's conversational model articulates a position, but one that is always on the way to becoming, always already on the way to being worked out in community life. One of the difficulties of transposing Derrida's critical style onto the contemporary homiletical forum is that Derrida is a critic who performs his criticism, and his performance takes place through a style of writing that resists the ". . . theological presence of a center."[133] Through the style of "double gesture," Derrida struggles to avoid being pinned down to a meaning, a word, for the double gesture is a word that is almost "unspeakable." He asserts that, in the West, there has been a privileging of speech over writing, a "phonologism,"[134] the limits of which he endeavors to challenge in his particular style of play. Following Derrida, Rose's proposal appears to advocate a free-flowing exchange where each participant's story shares equal authority and meaning, where "truth" exists eschatologically, that is potentially, around the Word. If there is a meaning that emerges from the sharing of these conversations about individual experiences, it is akin to the kind of meaning

participants experience in Derridian play. By extension, it seems that one of the questions that emerges from Rose's proposal is whether it is possible to actually "talk" about such an experience of play. After all, according to Derrida, transgressive play is almost unspeakable and yet, paradoxically, one of the essential components of preaching is speaking.

Gadamer also recognizes the central importance of conversation within the hermeneutical enterprise. However, his vision of conversation or dialogue, is concretized in language. Rather than the ceaseless nature of Derridan playful conversation, Gadamerian conversation comes to its most complete fruition in language which happens in the process of genuine playing. Gadamer asserts that understanding begins "when something addresses us."[135] Understanding occurs in language because "language is the medium where I and world meet or, rather, manifest their original belonging together," and understanding is always in the process of being concretized.[136] Truth exists in the here and now rather than in some eschatological future. The "whole value of the hermeneutical experience . . . seemed to consist in the fact that here we are not simply filing things in pigeonholes but that what we encounter in a tradition says something to us. . . . [Understanding] is a genuine experience (Erfahrung)--i.e., an encounter with something that asserts itself as truth."[137] Gadamerian truth is not the truth of my subjective experience or individual story, a truth that will only be known in some eschatologically future Day, nor is it the truth of certainty that is achieved through the use of scientific

method. Gadamer envisions a truth that is facilitated when conversation partners are being played by the game. It is a truth that emerges from being subject to a text and its traditions rather than being the subject of one's own experience with that text. As Gadamer contends, "What we mean by truth here can best be defined again in terms of our concept of play.[138] Elaborating, he says that,

> When we understand a text, what is meaningful in it captivates us just as the beautiful captivates us. It has asserted itself and captivated us before we can come to ourselves and be in a position to test the claim to meaning that it makes. What we encounter in the experience of the beautiful and in understanding the meaning of tradition really has something of the truth of play about it. In understanding, we are drawn into an event of truth and arrive, as it were, too late, if we want to know what we are supposed to believe.[139]

Contrary to Derrida and perhaps even to Rose, Gadamer envisions a version of play that is out of our control, a play that occurs when "something addresses us." Unlike Rose's version where the playing, conversing subject is more or less autonomous, or the subject of and center of the playful conversation, Gadamer contends that it is only when historically effected beings are subject to the meaning of the text as it comes in and through tradition that humans are able to be drawn into an event of truth. As players, humans are

subject to rather than subjects of the game. Humans do not control their understanding, nor do they operate as subjects over against objects. Humans are listeners, receivers, men and women who are speaking and being spoken to, but men and women who must finally find the words to speak the truth about which they are experiencing, the truth which cannot be postponed to some eschatological future. In order to be genuine, the Erfahrung experience of play must finally find application in practical life. The experience of play cannot remain wordless, as it may for Derrida, because human beings exist praxically, continually, and immediately in language.

The implications of Gadamer's project for practicing homileticians are far reaching. Preachers who are informed by Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics paradoxically preach with a cupped ear. Their first move is to listen rather than to speak, to be subject to the events that make up the life of the congregation. Their preaching can therefore be a communicating, a verb, an ongoing interaction or activity that intersects with and emerges from their actual practice of ministry. Even then, their arrival, their utterance, their sermon, is always already a heralding, a pointing to something that surpasses their own horizon of understanding. They will never receive or have the final word. They must therefore be cognizant of the "open space" that surrounds every sermonic utterance, the "space" that leaves an open door for genuine listening, questioning and answering, the to-and-fro, the give-and-take of authentic interpersonal communicating, ". . . the discipline that guarantees

truth."[140] Such preaching is a process of conversation, of homileoing, that is facilitated in and through language, an experience of conversation between both preacher and congregation.

In short, Gadamer's ontological understanding contributes to homiletical theory in two ways. First, it introduces a way of thinking about homileoing that is a process of ongoing conversation rather than a method of retrieval and/or re-presentation of biblical texts. As Stanley Deetz writes,

> The genuine conversation [that Gadamer has in mind] does not require the baring of one's feelings, nor the hearing out or accepting of another's opinions though these may accompany it. The genuine conversation is characterized more by giving in to the subject matter and allowing it to develop in the interchange. As Gadamer showed: "To understand what a person says is . . . to agree about the object, not to get inside another person and relive his experiences." This kind of conversation develops less from the will of the participants than from the power of the subject material. . . . The ideal is not, then, of "self-expression and the successful assertion of one's point of view, but a transformation into communion, in which we do not remain what we were."[141]

Second, Gadamer's ontological understanding articulates a different sermonic experience, an experience (Erfahrung) that happens in the interchange of genuine conversation, in communicating, rather than an experience (Erlebnis)

that happens because of language.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

As understanders who participate in speaking and listening, Heidegger and Gadamer recognize that human understanding is always already underway and never completely finished. Human horizons are always limited and incomplete, and they exist in, and not outside, of language.

Gadamer's ontological understanding contributes to homiletical theory by introducing a way of thinking that is more of a process of ongoing homileoing or dialogue in language than a method of retrieval and exposition of biblical texts. One who seeks to understand is in conversation with a given text, with the author of that text, and with the tradition that carries a specific text. This hermeneut as understander does not view texts as objects or artifacts, but as communicatings[142] that are still communicating. Therefore the hermeneut's words, their talk, their conversation, their language does not mirror reality, it constitutes it.[143] Their words constitute their worlds. This view of understanding does not see language as a tool but as a mode of being human. As Stewart contends, there is only one kind of human world, "a pervasively languaged kind."[144] Functioning more holistically than exegetically, this view of hermeneutics posits that conversation and dialogue contribute more to understanding than analysis or argument.

Therefore, it would appear that the Gadamerian homiletician would be

more of a participant in an ongoing conversation than a scriptural expositor. He or she would be more of a herald than a preacher, one who announces and shares his or her experience of the wor[l]d, but one who, nevertheless, realizes that the "free space" that surrounds his or her understanding aptly characterizes the necessity for further reflection and conversation. This preacher would embody the recognition that it is through talk, question and answer, and genuine dialogue, that "The preaching of the word of God, is the word of God." As with the two men on the road to Emmaus in Saint Luke's gospel, understanding for this homiletician would arise out of genuine homileoing.

Notes to Chapter Three

1. Richard E. Palmer, Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969) 163.

2. Richard Bernstein, Beyond Objectivism and Relativism (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985; Gary B. Madison, The Hermeneutics of Postmodernity: Figures and Themes (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988; Georgia Warnke, Gadamer: Hermeneutics, Tradition and Reason (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987); Joel C. Weinsheimer, Gadamer's Hermeneutics: A Reading of Truth and Method (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985.

3. See for instance, Gary B. Madison, "Coping with Nietzsche's Legacy: Rorty, Derrida, Gadamer," Philosophy Today 36 (1992): 3-20; Michael J. Hyde and Craig R. Smith, "Hermeneutics and Rhetoric: A Seen but Unobserved Relationship," Quarterly Journal of Speech 65 (1979): 347-363; John Stewart, "Speech and Human Being: A Complement to Semiotics," Quarterly Journal of Speech 72 (1986): 55-73; John Stewart, Language as Articulate Contact: Toward a Post-Semiotic Philosophy of Communication (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).

4. See among others, Don Browning, "The Nature and Criteria of Theological Scholarship," Theological Education 32 (1995): 1-11; Walter C.

Kaiser, Jr., "The Nature and Criteria of Theological Scholarship: An Evangelical Critique and Plan," Theological Education 32 (1995): 57-70; Anthony C. Thiselton, The Two Horizons: New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description with Special Reference to Heidegger, Bultmann, Gadamer, and Wittgenstein (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980); Anthony C. Thiselton, New Horizons in Hermeneutics (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992); Iain R. Torrance, "Gadamer, Polanyi and Canonical Interpretation," Scottish Journal of Theology 46 (1989): 309-328; David Tracy, Plurality and Ambiguity: Hermeneutics, Religion, Hope (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

5. See Raymond Bailey, "Hermeneutics: A Necessary Art," Hermeneutics for Preaching: Approaches to Contemporary Interpretations of Scripture, ed. Raymond Bailey (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992): 22; Richard L. Eslinger, Narrative Imagination: Preaching the Worlds that Shape Us (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995); Jeff Kisner, "Hermeneutic Philosophy as Rhetoric: Gadamer as Rhetorician," Academy of Homiletics (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University, 1994). Gadamer is intrigued by the relationship between his project and that of theology. Noting the connection he writes, "Genuine speaking, which has something to say and hence does not give prearranged signals, but rather seeks words through which one reaches the other person, is the universal human task -- but it is a special task for the theologian, to whom is commissioned the saying-further (Weitersagen) of a

message that stands written." Gadamer, "The Universality of the Hermeneutical Problem," Philosophical Hermeneutics, trans. and ed. David E. Linge (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976) 17.

6. Palmer, 214.

7. Palmer, 217.

8. Warnke, 171-173.

9. Warnke, 174.

10. Weinsheimer, 243.

11. Weinsheimer, 258-259.

12. Lucy A. Rose, "Preaching in the Round-Table Church," diss., Emory University, 1995, 8-13.

13. Palmer, Hermeneutics, 12. For Aristotle's influence on Heidegger and Gadamer, see Hans-Georg Gadamer, Heidegger's Ways, trans. John W. Stanley (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994) 32-33, 140-142.

14. Palmer, 12.

15. Palmer, 13.

16. Palmer, 13-14.

17. Michael Reddy, "The Conduit Metaphor," Metaphor and Thought, ed. A. Ortony (Cambridge: University Press, 1979).

18. As cited by Fred Craddock, Overhearing the Gospel: Preaching and Teaching the Faith to Persons Who Have Already Heard (Nashville: Abingdon, 1978) 9.

19. See Brenda Dervin, "Verbing Communication: Mandate for

Disciplinary Invention, Journal of Communication 43 (1993): 45-54. Dervin argues for a renewed view of communicating that takes place in actual practice. Rather than a noun (communication), Dervin posits that communicatings (verb) take place across time and space or ". . . as a process in myriad contexts" (51). Klaus Krippendorff argues for a similar position, but he elects to describe the processual nature of "communicatings" by using the "conversation" metaphor. See Klaus Krippendorff, "The Past of Communication's Hoped-For Future," Journal of Communication 43 (1993): 34-44.

20. John Stewart, "A Postmodern Look at Traditional Communication Postulates, Western Journal of Speech Communication 55 (1991): 362-363.

21. Gadamer describes Heidegger's "turn" in Hans-Georg Gadamer, "The Way of the Turn," Heidegger's Ways, 121-137.

22. Palmer, 129.

23. Palmer, 137.

24. Susan K. Dyer, "Hermeneutics and Deaf Education: An Analysis and Critique of Theories of Language and Communication," diss., U of Washington, 1992, 148.

25. Stewart, 365. Palmer, 205-207.

26. Gadamer, "The Religious Dimension," Heidegger's Ways, 170.

27. Gadamer, "The Religious Dimension," 170. However, as George Steiner notes, Heidegger rejected what he called the "onto-theological," that is, ". . . a philosophy of being or epistemology of consciousness on some kind of rationally or intuitively postulated theological basis. Steiner contends that,

"Heidegger's thought is an "overcoming of theology" or, more precisely and crucially, a supersession of the theological ghosts which, obstinately, inhabit Western philosophy even in its most explicitly agnostic or atheist vein (that of Nietzsche). Heidegger's allusions to theology, to the uses which theologians in Marburg and elsewhere were making of his ontology, became increasingly ironic. The distance between himself and the theologians had to be made wholly unmistakable. In late years, he was wont to observe that the problem, on which he himself had no opinion, was not whether theology could be a Wissenschaft (a scientific, positive corpus of method and knowledge), but whether it had any right to be. See George Steiner, Martin Heidegger (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989) xvii.

28. Gadamer, "The Marburg Theology," Heidegger's Ways, 30.

29. Gadamer, "The Marburg Theology," 30. A different translation of the same essay appears in Hans-Georg Gadamer, Philosophical Hermeneutics, trans. David E. Linge (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

30. Gadamer, "The Marburg Theology," 29. My emphasis.

31. Hans-Georg Gadamer, Truth and Method, Second Revised Edition, Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, trans. (New York: Continuum, 1993) 259.

32. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 259.

33. Although Gadamer's view may initially seem to be a bit esoteric and even mystical, it is important to note that his wor[l]d view is firmly rooted in practice. Responding to a representational view of language that treats words

as tools, Gadamer writes,

> A word is not a sign that one selects, nor is it a sign that one makes or gives to another; it is not an existent thing that one picks up and gives and ideality of meaning in order to make another being visible through it. This is mistaken on both counts. Rather, the ideality of the meaning lies in the word itself. It is meaningful already. But this does not imply, on the other hand, that the word precedes all experience and simply advenes [sic] to an experience in an external way, by subjecting itself to it. Experience is not wordless to begin with, subsequently becoming an object of reflection by being named, by being subsumed under the universality of the word. Rather, experience of itself seeks and finds words that express it."

See Gadamer, Truth and Method, 417. My emphasis. For an elaboration see 417-428.

34. John Stewart, Language as Articulate Contact: Toward a Post-Semiotic Philosophy of Communication (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995) 109.

35. Stewart, 109.

36. Gadamer, Philosophical Hermeneutics, 50. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 259 ff. See also, Madison, 37-38.

37. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 474.

38. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 403.

39. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 403.

40. Palmer, 206.

41. Palmer, 207. Stewart, 116.

42. Joel C. Weinsheimer, Gadamer's Hermeneutics: A Reading of Truth and Method (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985) 243. My emphasis added.

43. Kenneth W. White, "An Application of Gadamer's Hermeneutics Through an Empirical Description of Communication in a Collaborative Learning Community," diss., U of Washington, 1992, 22-23.

44. A growing cadre of communication theorists are attempting to think through the value of understanding communication in ways consistent with Gadamer's. Arguing for the need to analyze philosophical problems from a perspective of language in use, Brenda Dervin writes, ". . . differences come into existence in communication; differences rigidify in communication; differences are bridged in communication; and differences are destroyed in communication" (51-52). For Dervin, it is the actual praxis of communicating grounded in phronesis that motivates communication theory. See Dervin, "Verbing Communication: Mandate for Disciplinary Invention," 51-52.

45. In addition to Kenneth W. White's work, there are a number of other dissertations that appropriate Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics for particular fields of investigation. See, for instance, Judith Heinrich, "Communication as Productive Understanding: Toward a New Story," diss., U. of Washington, 1989, and Karen Jane Williams, "Toward a Hermeneutic

Ethnomethodology of Conversation: An Integration of Gadamer and Garfinkel," diss., U of Washington, 1995. I have discovered that White, Heinrich, Williams and I generally agree that the essential features of linguisticality are: play, the dynamic of question and answer, prejudice, historically effected consciousness, the centrality of the subject matter, fusion of horizons, and application. As I demonstrate later, unlike these other works, mine includes "contemporaneity" as a central component of play, one that has a unique capacity to inform the practice of preaching.

46. Palmer, 171-172.

47. Palmer, Hermeneutics, 172.

48. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 100-106.

49. Gadamer, Dialogue and Deconstruction, 78-80. Weinsheimer also makes this point. See Weinsheimer, 102.

50. Gadamer, Dialogue and Deconstruction, 78-80. Weinsheimer, 102.

51. Weinsheimer, 102-103. My emphasis. Gadamer is not the only theorist who uses the concept of "play" to denote a collapsing of the subject-object dichotomies that characterize the modern world. In the opening pages of "The Double Session" Jacques Derrida comments about the privileging of philosophy over art by discussing the privileging of Plato's Philebus over Mallarme's Mimique. In the way that both Philebus and Mimique are positioned on the first page of the essay, the reader is invited to ponder how Plato's logo-centric Philebus all but smothers Mallarme's Mimique. The Mimique is left to endure the burden of Philebus' overwhelming weight. Yet, because of the

page's configuration, the reader may notice that Platonic logo-centrism has not yet had the final word. By deconstructing both Philebus and Mimique, Derrida is attempting to de-centralize the concept of mimesis so that it functions as a kind of inventional play that ". . . should in the last instance be independent of truth [but] does not mean that it is false, an error, appearance, or illusion" (15). Whereas in Plato's Philebus the reader may infer that the good speaker is one who ". . . paints in the soul pictures of these assertions we make . . . "; that mimesis is the accurate, true, clear representation or imitation of the facts, Mallarme points a different direction. Derrida suggests that in Mimique there is no imitation; the mime's movements ". . . form a figure that no speech anticipates or accompanies" (195). In this capacity, mimesis is a ". . . perpetual allusion being performed in the background . . ." (219); "[a]llusion, or 'suggestion' as Mallarme says elsewhere, is indeed that operation we are here by analogy calling undecidable" [and] "[a]n undecidable proposition . . . is a proposition which, given a system of axioms governing a multiplicity, is neither an analytical nor deductive consequence of those axioms . . . neither true nor false with respect to those axioms" (219). See Jacques Derrida, Dissemination, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972). Regarding Derrida's relationship with Gadamer see Dialogue and Deconstruction: The Gadamer-Derrida Encounter, eds. Diane P. Michelfelder and Richard E. Palmer (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989). The difference between Gadamer and Derrida's notion of play is that, for

Gadamer, because play manifests a way of being, it conveys "truth," whereas for Derrida, ". . . there is no closure beyond the ceaseless play of dissemination" (266).

52. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 127.

53. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 127-128. My emphasis.

54. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 127-128.

55. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 128.

56. Weinsheimer, 115.

57. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 127. My emphasis.

58. Gadamer, "The Scope of Hermeneutical Reflection," Philosophical Hermeneutics, 87-88.

59. Gadamer, "The Scope of Hermeneutical Reflection," Philosophical Hermeneutics, 88. Gadamer, Dialogue and Deconstruction, 164-166.

60. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 299.

61. Fred B. Craddock, Overhearing the Gospel: Preaching and Teaching the Faith to Persons Who have Already Heard (Nashville: Abingdon, 1978) 9-20.

62. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 476.

63. Parker J. Palmer, To Know As We Are Known: Education As a Spiritual Journey (1983; San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993) 31.

64. The hermeneutical circle refers to the path thought takes as it attempts to find meaning. This process is often described as moving from a part of a sentence to the sentence as a whole, and then from whole back to

part. See Richard N. Soulen, Handbook of Biblical Criticism (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1976) 75. Gadamer borrows the phrase "hermeneutical circle" from Heidegger's Being and Time. Gadamer maintains that Heidegger is attempting to work out a "description" rather than a "prescription" for the way that interpretive understanding takes place. This process of working out, of revision, of fore-conceptions and fore-meanings from which understanding emerges is what Gadamer refers to as the hermeneutical circle. See Gadamer, Truth and Method, 266-269.

65. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 277.

66. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 300.

67. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 473.

68. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 466-474.

69. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 466.

70. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 473.

71. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 473.

72. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 473.

73. White, 31.

74. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 180. For Gadamer's extensive treatment of Schleiermacher see Truth and Method, 184-197.

75. Warnke, 102 and 180. White, 31.

76. Warnke, 102.

77. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 296. In the essay, "The Nature of Things," Gadamer describes how the concept of the thing or matter (Sache) is

"permeated above all by what is called causa, that is, the disputed 'matter'" (71). That is, Sache does not exist independently; rather, it is shaped, colored, and tempered by its causa. Gadamer clarifies himself latter in the essay when he contends that, "In truth . . . the illusion that things precede their manifestation in language conceals the fundamentally linguistic character of our experience of the world. In particular, the illusion of the possibility of the universal objectification of everything and anything completely obscures this universality itself. (77-78). Gadamer, "The Nature of Things," Philosophical Hermeneutics, 69-81. See also, Warnke, 101.

78. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 302.

79. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 374.

80. Hans-Georg Gadamer, Hans-Georg Gadamer on Education, Poetry, and History: Applied Hermeneutics, trans. Lawrence Schmidt and Monica Reuss, eds. Dieter Misgeld and Graeme Nicholson (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992) vii.

81. Gadamer, On Education, vii.

82. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 312. My emphasis.

83. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 312.

84. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 322.

85. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 322.

86. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 463.

87. Don Browning, "The Nature and Criteria of Theological Scholarship," Theological Education 32 (1995): 3.

88. Gadamer, Hans-Georg Gadamer, ix.

89. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 332.

90. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 332-333.

91. Gadamer, "Man and Language," Philosophical Hermeneutics, 63.

92. Gadamer, Philosophical Hermeneutics, 69. My emphasis.

93. Eva-Maria Barthel makes this argument in an unpublished paper. She contends that, ". . . hermeneutic truth describes a mode of experiencing the world. The 'event' of truth can be defined as the truthfulness of experience (Erfahrung), in which application is inherent in such a way that experience implies by definition self-investment" (2). Therefore, the truth of an experience is directly related to what Barthel refers to as "the mode of involvement which qualifies the experience" (10). Gadamerian truth is not an accurate mirroring as it is in a representational language view, but an "experiencing" that informs ontological refiguration. Eva-Maria Barthel, "The Truth of Experience. On the Assimilation of Ontological Philosophy in Gadamer's Conception of Truth, Unpublished Essay, U of Washington, 1996, 1-23.

94. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 491. Earlier Gadamer asserts that "the close relation between questioning and understanding is what gives the hermeneutical experience is true dimension . . . . Understanding is always more than merely re-creating someone else's meaning." See, Truth and Method, 374-375.

95. Anthony C. Thiselton, The Two Horizons: New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description with Special Reference to

Heidegger, Bultmann, Gadamer, and Wittgenstein, 2nd. e. (1980; rpt. Grand Rapids; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993) 314.

96. Gary B. Madison, "Beyond Seriousness and Frivolity: A Gadamerian Response to Deconstruction," Gadamer and Hermeneutics, ed. Hugh J. Silverman (New York: Routledge, Chapman, Inc., 1991) 133-134.

97. Madison, 134.

98. Weinsheimer, 258-259.

99. Gadamer, "Martin Heidegger and Marburg Theology," Philosophical Hermeneutics, 201. See also, Neal Oxenhandler, "The Man with Shoes of Wind: The Derrida-Gadamer Encounter," Dialogue and Deconstruction, 266-267.

100. Gadamer's notion of "herald" is consistent with Karl Barth's understanding of the preacher as herald. In Barth's theology, the task of the preacher was to point to something beyond himself or herself or, to use Gadamer's words, to point to another reality that "surpasses their own horizon of understanding." See David G. Buttrick, foreword, Homiletics, by Karl Barth, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Donald E. Daniels (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991) 71-75.

101. Gadamer, "The Marburg Theology," Heidegger's Ways, 42.

102. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 299.

103. Steiner, 52.

104. Steiner, 52.

105. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 60-70.

106. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 65-66.

107. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 383.

108. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 358-359.

109. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 346-347.

110. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 357-358.

111. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 221.

112. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 361-362.

113. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 458.

114. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 461.

115. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 463.

116. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 465.

117. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 463.

118. Rose does not cite Derrida in either her article or her dissertation. However, in a telephone conversation on February 10, 1996, she did say that Derrida was influential in her understanding of conversation as play. See Lucy A. Rose, "Conversational Preaching: A Proposal," Journal for Preachers 19.1 (1995), and Lucy A. Rose, "Preaching in the Round-Table Church," diss., Emory University, 1995.

119. Lucy Rose, "Conversational Preaching: A Proposal," 27.

120. Rose, 26-27.

121. Rose, 26.

122. Rose, 27.

123. Rose, 28. These conversational partners include participants in: 1) divine-human conversation between members of the community of faith 2)

divine-human conversations between community of faith and God, 3) human-human conversations (27). Additionally, these "conversation partners" include ". . . those who preach and those who do not, those who are confident in matters of faith and those who find themselves awkward and unsure, those for whom church is a second home and those who rarely set foot in institutionalize holy space, those who are 'like us' and those whose ideas come from 'off the wall' or 'out in left field,' those who are glib and those who are mute, those who are successful in the eyes of the world and those whose true selves have been slammed and silenced" (28).

124. Rose, 28.

125. Rose, 28. Rose's elaborates on her understanding of "truth" as "eschatological" by saying that, "There will come a Day when we will understand, but until that Day we live by faith and hope, not by sure knowledge, clear facts, or unambiguous truth" (28).

126. Rose, 29.

127. Rose, 27.

128. Jacques Derrida, Positions, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981) 27.

129. Derrida, "Semiology and Grammatology," 27.

130. Derrida, "Implications," 12.

131. Oxenhandler, "The Man with the Shoes of Wind," Dialogue and Deconstruction, 266.

132. Rose, 29-30.

133. Derrida, "Implications," 14.

134. Derrida, "Implications," 10.

135. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 256.

136. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 474-476.

137. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 489. My emphasis.

138. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 490.

139. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 490. My emphasis.

140. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 491.

141. Deetz, 19-20.

142. In a way that is analogous to Gadamer, Brenda Dervin attempts to think through the value of philosophizing as a process rather than a product which is an approach that presumably will lead to more "relevance" (51-52). She argues that "Differences come into existence in communication; differences rigidify in communication; differences are bridged in communication; and differences are destroyed in communication" (51-52). For Dervin, it is the actual praxis of communicating grounded in phronesis that motivates communication theory. Dervin, "Verbing Communication," 51-52.

143. Stewart, Language as Articulate Contact, 115.

144. Stewart, 124.

CHAPTER FOUR

INTIMATIONS OF PREACHING AS HOMILEOING: TWO SERMONS AND COMMENTARY

As I have noted, at some points in history, preachers have practiced a homiletics of energeia, a rhetoric of actuality that favors the here, now, and is. At other points in history, preachers have practiced a rhetoric of dunamis, one that features a there, then, and can be. The first approach is characterized by objective language and rational arguments; it displays a world that can be mastered and known, and it has been referred to as the Old Homiletic. The second approach foregrounds the fluid aspects of humankind's existence, those elements in the world that cannot be objectified or epistemologically subdued but that can be experienced through narrative and imagination. Homiletical theorists have labelled this approach the New Homiletic.

In Chapter two, I demonstrated that New Homiletical theorists have not yet developed the hermeneutical underpinnings to justify fully the move from what Gadamer calls Erlebnis to Erfahrung, from making an argument to facilitating an experience. The inductive model of preaching where narrative "plots" replace sermonic "points" provides an innovative alternative to the propositionally-based model of the Old Homiletic, but as Craddock confesses, induction is deduction turned upside down. Hermeneutically, the inductive model continues to locate the sermon's meaning in the emplotted and re-presentation of scripture. In this model, the preaching of the word of God is

about the word of God.

Richard Eslinger offers an alternative to the inductive model by building on the phenomenological approach of David Buttrick. Borrowing from Ricoeur's metaphoric theory and Gadamer's concept of play, Eslinger argues that preaching as semantic imagination is the key to facilitating the kind of experience that can be characterized as Erfahrung. An analysis of the sermons in Eslinger's imaginative model, however, reveals a preacher who is still very much in control of the sermon. In contrast to Gadamer's concept of play where players are participants in and not in control of the game, Eslinger's preacher constructs an imaginative sermon for the congregation. As a result, although Eslinger's model is an innovation to preaching as induction, it continues to be a homiletic that is more monological than conversational, a homiletic more concerned with product than process, a homiletical experience that exists because of language rather than an experience that exists in language, one that is still more Erlebnis than Erfahrung.

In Chapter three, I reviewed the philosophical hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer and its contribution to contemporary homiletical theory. I argued that Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics describes an alternative philosophy of communication where language forms or constitutes human reality and, therefore, offers insight into a postmodern homiletic that facilitates an experience in language rather than an experience because of language, a homiletic that is more Erfahrung than Erlebnis. Gadamer maintains that

language is not merely one of humankind's possessions in the world; rather, it is because of language that humankind has a world at all. Experience (Erlebnis) does not exist apart from language, nor is language autonomous in such a way that it creates an experience. For Gadamer, experience (Erfahrung) and language arise together.[1] Gadamer's ontological understanding contributes to homiletical theory in two ways. First, it introduces a way of thinking about homileoing as a process of ongoing conversation rather than a method of retrieval and/or re-presentation of biblical texts. Second, Gadamer's ontological understanding articulates a different kind of sermonic experience, an experience (Erfahrung) that happens in the interchange of genuine conversation, in communicating, rather than an experience (Erlebnis) that happens because of language.

I suggested that a homiletician informed by Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics is more of a conversational partner with scripture, tradition, and the congregation than an expositor of scripture who imposes his or her exegesis on the receiving congregation. He or she is a participant in the play of meaning rather than the creator of meaning, a homiletician who paradoxically preaches with a cupped ear. The first move for this kind of homiletician is to listen rather than to speak, both to scripture and to the persons making up his or her community. This homiletician learns to be subject to the power of the subject matter rather than the subject of a message that is considered to be powerful. As subject to that which presents itself as scripture, this homiletician

is acted upon as much as he or she is an actor. He or she also practices ministry within the to-and-fro, give-and-take of congregational community life, a community that is also subject to that which presents itself in scripture. The homiletician who practices this kind of ministry, who is in conversation with the everyday events of his or her congregation, is similar to the two homileoing partners in St. Luke's gospel. Homileo understanding is more than an assertion of a particular point of view. When partners are engaged in genuine conversation, in Deetz's words, it may be almost communion-like.[2] As the two partners on the road to Emmaus discovered, it is through this give-and-take of talk, of genuine homileoing, that the risen Christ is recognized.

In this chapter, I initiate a version of Gadamerian application by critically reading two sermons from two practicing homileticians. One feature of this analysis is that the sermons I analyze were preached by ministers who are active pastors in congregations with fewer than one hundred families. The smaller numerical size of each congregation provides the preacher with an opportunity to become familiar with the congregation in ways that are extremely difficult in numerically larger congregations. Although there are gifted pastors in numerically larger congregations who anchor their preaching in their pastoral ministry, pastors of a numerically smaller congregations are often able to know their entire congregation by name. They know their likes and dislikes, many of their difficulties and shames, as well as their joys. They are often welcomed into homes, hospital rooms, nursing homes, places of employment and

education. In conversations with these pastors, I have discovered that it is often very difficult for them to preach at their congregations and still function as pastor. One cannot preside at a memorial service for a member of the congregation on Wednesday, for instance, sharing in tears, sorrow, and hope, and then lecture at that same congregation about death and dying on Sunday. The pastoral contact that emerges from conversations between a practicing minister and his or her congregation appears to influence the shape and form of sermons. In this section, I contend that knowing the congregation through the actual practice of ministry alters the fundamental nature of the sermon.

The relationship I am arguing for between application or practice and theory is not new to rhetorical studies, but it is new to homiletical theory. For example, in her recently published study on the effects of Protestant preaching on American culture, Marsha Witten samples forty-seven sermons preached on the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) by twenty-one Southern Baptist and twenty-six Presbyterian ministers in congregations of at least eight-hundred members. Her goal is to analyze how a small segment of contemporary religious preaching ". . . replies to conditions of modern secular culture."[3] Through her analysis of the actual practice of preaching, however, Witten discovers a surprising Janus-faced paradox. That is, while Protestant speakers of these larger congregations bear the visage of traditional piety and endeavor to critique culture, their actual religious speaking often accommodates itself to the norms of secular culture. Witten's analysis of actual practice

demonstrates that there is often a marked difference between the theory that informs preaching and actual homiletical practice.

Stephen Yarbrough and John Adams are two rhetorical theorists who also analyze actual discourse to provide new insights to contemporary theory. In their analysis of the sermons of the Puritan preacher, Jonathan Edwards, Yarbrough and Adams claim that an affinity exists between Edwards' philosophical thought and postmodern theory. In postmodern parlance truth is "undecidable" and "illusory" and, the authors contend, Edwards also believed that truth could only be partially represented, that the ". . . fallen self was a floating signifier that no longer has its 'place' within a semiotic system."[4] Although Edwards was not a postmodern practitioner in the contemporary sense, Yarbrough and Adams' rhetorical analysis of his practice suggests that Edwards developed a preaching strategy that was responsive to the changing landscape of his culture.

In their respective analyses, Witten, Yarbrough and Adams demonstrate that theory and practice do not exist in a vacuum where a theory is generated, articulated, refined and then applied "in some sphere."[5] Rather, their analyses lend support to Gadamer's central argument that theory is practice articulated. Through this claim, Gadamer is proposing an alternative way of theorizing, a mode of thinking that weds application and theory. "The heart of the hermeneutical problem," he says, "is that one and the same tradition must time and again be understood in a different way, the problem, logically speaking,

concerns the relationship between the universal and the particular. Understanding is a special case of applying something universal to a particular situation."[6] In other words, Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics is a hermeneutical theory that is constituted in the process of being worked out in the praxis of life. It is not a theory that can constitute itself in advance of its application; rather, it is constituted through application with an eye to its occasion of use.[7]

Gadamer's perspective on the relationship between understanding and application is further explicated in the section of Truth and Method where he addresses the matter of sacred texts. In Gadamer's view, application is "the primary thing," but his approach is distinct from that of the modern sciences.[8] That is, a text's meaning emerges in the nexus of the universal and the particular, in that moment where something universal is applied to oneself.[9] Elaborating, Gadamer writes,

> We can, then, only distinguish what is truly common to all forms of hermeneutics: the meaning to be understood is concretized and fully realized only in interpretation, but the interpretive activity considers itself wholly bound by the meaning of the text. Neither jurist nor theologian regards the work of application as making free with the text . . . . [Furthermore], the meaning of what is proclaimed finds its fullest realization in the proclamation . . . of the gospel.[10]

Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics is a theory of interpretation which acknowledges that every sacred text comes with a history or tradition, but it nevertheless must be encountered again and again as it intersects with the actual living of practical life. Therefore, to be meaningful, to be understood, to be experienced as Erfahrung rather than Erlebnis, each tradition-bound text must be applied, field-tested, and in conversation with the community of faith as it endeavors to live out its faith. This hermeneutical approach calls for a fundamental shift in the role of the clergy. In this model, the preacher is first a pastor, a listener, both to sacred texts as they come to him or her in tradition and to the ways in which sacred texts intersect with the lives of the congregation. From this perspective, the preacher is not the resident expert whose function is to dispense methodologically acquired truths. Rather, the preacher is a conversation partner, an attuned participant whose proclamation emerges from application and whose interpretation manifests itself as articulated practice.

One of the features of this type of articulated practice is the relationship it embodies between understanding and speaking. In contrast to an Enlightenment vision of understanding that equates knowing with controlling, Gadamer envisions understanding as a genuine conversation, a process where "language is not coincident . . . with that which is expressed in it, with that in it which is formulated in words."[11] For Gadamer, language is the site or place where understanding occurs in practice, in use. It is more than the

epistemological apprehension of methodologically acquired data, more than something a person possesses. Understanding is linguistic-communicative and it is always in the process of being "concretized;"[12] it exists in collaborative ongoing conversation or in what I have called articulated practice.

This central quality of the sermon makes doing a Gadamerian analysis a challenging task. He does provide a perspective from which to view texts but not a method to analyze or critique them.[13] Because Gadamer characterizes understanding as an ongoing process of play, a Gadamerian-informed homiletic naturally resists efforts to break it down into its constituent parts. The role of the Gadamerian-informed critic is not to apply theory to a textual artifact. His or her role is to ascertain points of contact that help to distinguish a sermon that is anchored in Erfahrung and genuinely playful from one that endeavors to make an argumentative claim; points of contact that demonstrate how, in the ongoing process of play, words constitute worlds.

It is therefore in the role of a critical listener that I attempt to locate certain features of Gadamerian understanding in the following two sermons. I analyze and then demonstrate ways in which each homiletician uses interpretation and application to facilitate articulated practice. I describe how each sermon functions as part of an ongoing conversation between pastor and congregation, one that is guided and even formulated by the centrality of the subject matter as it encounters the lives of the participants. Each sermon achieves its conversational nature quite differently. The first sermon clearly

incorporates elements of congregational collective memory to facilitate a conversational experience among sacred text, congregation, and preacher. The second is also conversational, but in an entirely different way. The first two-thirds of this sermon are carried by some extremely graphic imagery that makes the sermon almost imaginative. Not until midway through the fifth move does the preacher re-introduce a candidate for baptism whose preparation process has been monitored by the congregation. The placement of the baptismal candidate at the end of the sermon, a candidate who is physically present and well-known by the congregation, puts flesh on what otherwise would have existed only imaginatively.

Importantly, neither of these homileticians is familiar with Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics. If their practice can fruitfully be read from Gadamer's perspective, it is because these ministers are seasoned pastors whose practice exists in the daily between of interpretation and application, in the practical life of the community.

In the following analyses, the left column includes the scripture passage or passages, as well as the written transcript from the audio tape recorded sermon. In the right column, I offer a running commentary of what is unfolding in each move. I discovered this two-column format while reviewing Eslinger's Narrative and Imagination, and found the juxtaposition of text and close commentary to be a useful way to acquire a more immediate sense of what is happening in the sermon. Additionally, my division of each sermon into moves

stems from Buttrick's Homiletic: Moves and Structures. Buttrick contends that ". . . sermons are a movement of language from one idea to another, each idea being shaped in a bundle of words. Thus, when we preach we speak in formed modules of language arranged is some patterned sequence."[14] Thus, modules of language are called moves.

After a close textual analysis of each sermon, I move into a more technical analysis where I comment on how features of each sermon demonstrate a Gadamerian-informed homiletic of conversation. These sections help demonstrate how a Gadamerian-informed homiletic looks and sounds. Additionally, these sections underscore my central thesis that genuine homileoing emerges from the interplay of interpersonal communicating.

"When You Least Expect It"

Rev. Molly McNelis Dykstra

First Presbyterian Church

Dubuque, Iowa

December 3, 1995

Scripture Lessons

Romans 13:11-14

Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealously. Instead, put on

the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Matthew 24: 36-44

But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be

grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.

Sermon	Commentary
Introduction	
How does the saying go? "When you least expect it, expect it." You all know the saying, I trust? It reminds me of the Boy Scout motto, "Be	The sermon begins with an expression that is well-known by everyone, "When you least expect it, expect it." The theme that presents itself in both

prepared." "Be prepared," so it seems from the Boy Scouts dear ones. What a task they have. "Be prepared" for any situation, for all contingencies. Simply the motto is, "Be prepared."

I heard comedian Michael Feldman say that, "This is the time of year when those who have left their lights up all year long are feeling vindicated." [Laughter in the congregation.] Those folks have been prepared. They've been ready for months and months, just waiting for the right month to flick that switch. "Be prepared." "When you least expect it, expect it."

Move 1

But before Boy Scouts was founded, even long before scripture passages is "expectation" and "preparation." "Expectation," is linked with another motto, that of the Boy Scouts, "Be prepared." The "expectation" and "preparation" of scripture are contemporaneous with the expectation and preparation of contemporary life.

There is laughter in the congregation. The community is aware of those who are feeling "vindicated" for their preparation. Furthermore, the preacher builds and elaborates on the laughter so that the contact between them is tacitly acknowledged and even deepened.

Move 1

Transitional sentence into scripture passages.

English as we know it was ever spoken, Jesus was saying something similar.

"Be ready. Be prepared. When you least expect it, expect it." Only his "Be prepared" wasn't like the Boy Scouts for all contingencies in every situation. His "when you least expect it, expect it," was not a possibility, not even a probability, but a certainty.

"Be ready," he said. "Be prepared. When you're least expectant, expect this sure thing. The Son of Man will come."

"The only inevitables in life," our popular saying has it, "are death and taxes." But Jesus presents us with a third and, according to our text today, this third may circumvent

Contemporary Boy Scouts are linked with historical Jesus. Their linkage, however, is not without a twist.

Preparation and expectation are fused with the faith conviction that the Son of Man will come.

Another transitional sequence that pairs "death and taxes" (another well known expression) with the scripture lesson. In the lesson's story, however, the reality that is

numbers one and two. "Two will be in the fields," he says, "one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding meal, one will be taken and one will be left."

Two folks who [look] just the same from the outside, whom one [can't] distinguish from one another if one tried, will on that day be found, somehow, to have been different. Some people will be ready for Jesus' return, he says. And with his coming the day of divine reckoning.

expressed is that some will be prepared for his return while others will not be prepared. Particularly noteworthy is the way in which the preacher uses only present-tense language in reference to the scripture passage, while the story itself is presented in future-tense.

Move 2

Our Presbyterian Church magazine printed a blurb recently about how theological students at New College, Edinburgh, that

Move 2

A well-known denominational publication that is available to the congregation. This transitional paragraph is

when they preach their first sermon in a church, they were to read their text and then if they were nervous and found the words hard to read, they were to read the text again.

used to unite Jesus' warning that he is coming with the themes of "expectation" and "preparation."

Well, one Sunday, a very nervous young minister-to-be was called to preach in a city church and standing up in the pulpit he said, "My text this morning is, 'I am coming.'"

The illustration begins as if it is a serious story. It is not until the illustration is complete, that the humorous punch line is revealed.

He looked down at his notes, but they were nothing but a blur. Remembering what his professor said he read his text again. "My text this morning is, 'I am coming.'"

To his great consternation, he found his notes were still a blur. So for the third time he announced his text, but

he was so nervous that he gripped the side of the pulpit so firmly that the pulpit collapsed and he landed in the lap of the woman in the first row. [Laughter in the congregation.]

"Oh, I am so sorry," he said.

"Don't worry young man," she said. "You warned me three times." [Laughter in the congregation.]

[Pause]

Again, laughter facilitates contact between preacher and congregation. Laughter also underscores the conversational connection between the preacher and the congregation. The entire move functions as a segue into the more pressing question of when that "time" may be.

Move 3

We can't say, when that day comes, Jesus didn't warn us. That he didn't tell us to be prepared. To get ready for that day. It is one of the great themes of all scripture, the day of the Lord is coming soon.

Move 3

In this transitional sentence and in the paragraph that follows, the preacher uses the levity created by laughter to introduce the more difficult moment of Jesus' "warning." The congregation is then able to

And this church's season of Advent, you see, is not only a way of remembering what happened in the past and celebrating it like an anniversary or a birthday. We remember, certainly, that Jesus was born at this time of year. That God became flesh one day in human history, and dwelt among us full of grace and truth. In Advent we focus on the incarnation in Bethlehem so many years ago, but not only that. Advent is about the comings he has yet to do.

Remember way back last spring, after Easter we celebrated the Ascension, when Acts tells us the disciples saw the risen Jesus who had been walking and teaching with them infer that this "warning" can be an invitation to "prepare" in the season of Advent. The levity that fosters contact, however, has a binding effect on the community of faith. This is something that they experience together.

This move culminates with the fusion of past and future into a contemporaneous moment of expression, "Advent is about the comings he has yet to do." The incarnational event of Jesus Christ is a present reality and not a past memory.

The use of the word "remember" arises from the community's collective memory.

for some days, rising up through the sky into the clouds, so the scripture tells us. And the angels said to them, "Why do you stand there gazing up into the sky? Jesus is going to come back, just as he went."

So Advent is the time that we remember what happened in Bethlehem, but we remember, too, that even after that baby born that night had grown up, and had lived and had died walking in the ways of the Lord, he became alive again and walked and talked among the people then, and then told them, like the young preacher in the pulpit, "I am coming. I'm coming back."

Three separate themes are woven together in this paragraph. The past (what happened in Bethlehem), past-present-future (he became alive again), and the most recent present from the humorous story that culminated in laughter (I am coming). There is no sense of this being a lecture or a history lesson, a sermon about a past event. Time is collapsed and past-present-future exist together, in the moment of homileoing. Contemporaneous contact occurs in the present.

It is true, the only clues about when the day will come

In these two paragraphs, two clues are given about when

are that, first, it will be a day like any other, so Jesus tells us. People will be going about their business just as they were before the flood in the days of Noah. Noah heard the rains were coming. He knew something was up, and he got himself and his family ready. But other people didn't see, didn't know. They thought life would always roll along just as it had.

The second thing we know about that day, is that nobody knows when it will come. It's clear that Jesus is not saying here today, that because he is coming soon, that we should forget our regular chores, our daily routine. Though it seems to me that's a great excuse for

the return will be. The Old Testament figure of Noah is introduced in the first clue. The congregation is able to infer through Noah that there is a connection between hearing and preparing, seeing and doing. And, quite possibly, those who see and prepare are in the minority.

In the second clue, Jesus' remarks are contemporaneous with house chores. The laughter indicates an additional moment of contact between the preacher and the congregation.

not cleaning the house . . .
"Honey, Jesus is coming soon.
What's a little dust matter?"
[Laughter from the congregation.]

No, he doesn't let us off the hook. The people are in the field, threshing. The women are at the wheels grinding meal for their daily bread. People are doing the work of life. They are living day-by-day, just like everyone else, just like every other day. And yet, for them, something is different. They, even in their threshing and grinding, their dusting, their feeding the children, their teaching the class, their studying their books, their working at their machines . . . something is different. These people are ready.

Again, past is fused with present in a contemporaneous moment, "No, he [Jesus] doesn't let us off the hook." This moment is expanded when "threshing" and "grinding" are subtly fused with "dusting" and "feeding their children" and "teaching their class" and "studying their books" and "working their machines." In the process, historical tasks become contemporary tasks.

Move 4

Now, I know and you do too, what people who are ready for our North American style of celebrating Christmas are like. They're those folks I envy even today, Lord forgive me. Their presents are already bought and wrapped. The tree is up. Christmas cards are likely only needing to be addressed and stamped. They've been working at if for awhile now. All is calm all is bright. [Laughter in the congregation.] Little-by-little they've been keeping up with the tasks of celebrating this holy day.

But what does readiness, not just for Jesus' birthday party look like, but for Jesus' coming again? What does "awakeness,"

Move 4

The preacher begins this move with a signal of collective memory. "Now, I know and you do to . . ." is preface to describing a typical "North American" conception of being prepared for the holiday season. As the laughter indicates, contact is facilitated and, unlike the preacher whose lights or tree are not up, whose presents are not yet purchased or wrapped, these people are well-organized and they are prepared in a stereotypical Protestant work ethic fashion. But, as the last sentence in this paragraph and the first sentence in the next paragraph signals, there is more to readiness than preparation.

The crucial question is

if that's a word, to the day of our salvation of which Paul also wrote to the church, look like? What does it look like when we're ready for Jesus? It seems to me, if nothing else, it has to do with a kind of vision of which Paul spoke when he said, "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ."

It's not unlike the one that those who are Christmas Day ready already have. Those folks see what the celebration involves, what it entails, and they have gotten the necessary things in order. They see that day and understand what will happen. We will have turkey to cook, we will have presents to unwrap, we will watch football. (Do they play football on Christmas Day? Yeah, that's what I thought, o.k.

posed, what does "readiness" for Christmas as well as for Jesus' coming again "look like?" What does Paul's metaphor of "awakeness" "look like?" And in the following paragraph, the rhetorical question is answered by suggesting that we prepare for the Lord's return in the same way that we make preparations to celebrate his birth. Additionally, the words "look like" are subtle intimations to application. Although it is not yet clear, the congregation is beginning to get a sense that preparation and application or action belong together.

This question is directly presented to the congregation and, again, it is a moment of

[Laughter from the congregation.] I saw blank looks from you all and I thought, "Did I make a big fauxpas?")

These people know what Christmas Day will involve. You all do, so do I. It's the same thing for those of us who are readying ourselves for Jesus' coming again. We see it not so much with our eyes, but with our spirits. We see it not so much as something we have engaged in and known before, but something that lives deep down in our hearts . . . our deepest hope . . . our profoundest expectation. We see it afar off. We know that it lies in the person of Jesus coming again to us.

These folks, and I know direct and poignant contact between preacher and faith community.

"You all do, so do I," illustrates that understanding happens "between" people, in this case, existing in community. Words constitute worlds.

Throughout the remainder of this move, the word "seeing" is employed to describe the kind of ontological refiguration that motivates some people to "do" more than make preparations. Note how the "seeing" and "knowing," however, are present tense words used to describe future ("afar off") and past ("Jesus coming again").

The Browning quotation is

there are some of you here, are able to see beyond the present. And yet, strangely enough, just because they do so, these folks see in the present what others cannot. It's as if those who are ready were folks like Moses in a quote attributed to E. B. Browning: "Moses saw a burning bush, while the rest just kept on picking blackberries."

Move 5

Sixty-seven-year-old Californian Marilee Robertson, I think, saw a burning bush, while others around her may have kept picking blackberries. Five other people too, four of them Presbyterians, also saw it. She and the others have served as international witnesses in

humorous yet catchy, and it also functions contemporaneously. Historical Moses represents those who "see" and "know" in a different way. Moses also serves as one who turned his special kind of seeing and knowing into doing. The congregation is now ready to hear about what "readiness" and "awakeness" look like.

Move 5

Move 5 is the moment of concrete application. The past paragraph, the verbal wondering of what this new way of being "looks like," is concretized in the person of Marilee Robertson and her seeing the burning bush rather than picking blackberries. What is particularly noteworthy,

Guatemala on behalf of their denominations and the National Council of Churches. The burning bush they saw led them to engage for a time in a special ministry which they describe as a ministry of accompaniment with Guatemalans whose lives are in danger.

According to Presbyterian News Service reporter, Alexis Smith, "Whenever Guatemalan Presbyterian minister Lucio Martinez's old yellow truck hit the dirt packed back roads of Guatemala's rural mountain country this fall, it was sixty-seven-year-old Marilee Robertson, usually, behind the wheel. And heads turned not just because pastors working among Guatemala's poor don't

is that this congregation is composed of many older adults, some of whom may be wondering how they can contribute, how they can be ready and alert to the Lord's coming. As the preacher has indicated throughout this sermon, there is more to being ready than making preparations. Readiness is fusion of preparation and application or, in this instance, the ministry of accompaniment. Therefore, the congregation discovers that, as Gadamer contends, understanding is more than apprehending. Understanding emerges in the to-and-fro of preparing and doing. Understanding unfolds in the actual praxis of ministry.

usually have chauffeurs, but because there was a sixty-seven-year-old gringa behind the wheel.

Lucio Martinez was accompanied by Marilee Robertson, who stayed with him day and night for two months, in hopes of keeping him alive. He is one of three Guatemalan Presbyterians threatened by what they believe is a military-backed death squad. His life is in danger because he has pressed the government to find and prosecute the killers of two Presbyterian human rights workers. One of those killed was Manuel Saquis, a pastor, whose body was found this summer, a body which had been stabbed at least thirty times.

"Accompaniment is not without risk," so says mission worker Dennis Smith, "but it is saying publicly to the people who do the killing, the persons being accompanied are not alone. These lives here, the life of Lucio Martinez has value to us and to God."

The practice of ministry, however, is not without its risks nor does it occur in isolation. The ministry of "accompaniment" reminds that congregation that this new kind of "seeing" or understanding is always connected to being in community.

Move 6

Funny thing about expecting something. It changes how today looks. How the present feels. How we live it. But unlike our American Christmas celebration, Jesus coming again is something that is true all year round. Our expectation of him which we focus on in Advent isn't to disappear when we've

Move 6

The preacher begins this move with a descriptive analysis of how changes in approaches and involvements alter the way today "looks" and the present "feels" but it is a change that is more than seasonal. Words such as "looks," "feels," in addition to the phrase "How we live it" begin to describe an entirely new way of being in the

unwrapped all the presents.

Brothers and sisters, there is a spiritual awakeness, a spiritual alertness which God grants that causes us to look toward the future, toward the day of the Lord, and find there something that affects present lives, like Marilee Robertson's life. Maybe we won't be able to drop our job and go to Guatemala, maybe we won't be able to leave our family and serve some group here in town, but the expectation of Jesus coming none-the-less, means something for you here today. Calls from you some decision to make.

It makes a difference who you're waiting for. You aren't waiting for one to come who is world.

The congregation can now infer that being ready and prepared takes the form of "spiritual awakeness" and "spiritual alertness," grants to us new eyes through which we can look toward the future and, just as importantly, find in that future something that affects our present. This "awakeness" or "expectation" does not have to be as dramatic as the preceding story, but it does have meaning for the present as long as this present is seen through the eyes of the future.

Quickly, the preacher moves from the second person singular (you) to the first person

going to destroy and mutilate and do violence and hatred. Instead, we are waiting for the one who comes to bring peace and justice to the world. The one by whom we take the effort to pick the hammers and beat the swords into plowshares, and to take those spears no longer, we say, needing them for war, instead, beating them, day-by-day, into pruning hooks.

So I ask you this question: "Do you believe it? Do you believe Jesus will come again, and if you do, what does that require of you today? Are you living your life in the light of Jesus' return, able to say at the end of the day, 'I have thought of eternal things? I have chosen in light of his coming?'"

plural (we). This suggests that the kind of new understanding that has unfolded in this sermon does not take place in isolation, but in community.

The preacher is wondering if the congregation can take the high road, beating swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks, thereby contemporaneously recasting their present lives as they are lived in the light of Jesus' life.

The rhetorical question solicits a moment of personal reflection. Given the contact that has already preceded this invitation-challenge, the congregation understands that the past and future exist now in faithful community.

Move 7

Our lives are all a-readying. All a-readying for that day, if the Lord should tarry, that day of our death, that day of his return if it comes soon. And until then, brothers and sisters, let us keep telling one another the story, keep reminding ourselves to be ready. Keep remembering the path that Jesus himself took. The one that shows us the way up that mountain of the Lord of which Isaiah spoke where God will teach us his ways, Isaiah writes. And lead us in God's paths. That readiness, the preparedness by which Jesus saw the future and it changed his today. It's possible also for us. And it is what we do in this table. You recall the words,

Move 7

In this move, the style of language changes dramatically. The word "a-readying" describes the process on ongoing understanding that takes place in faithful community. It is a process that is always already on the way to becoming but never completely arrives. This process involves "telling," "reminding," "remembering," "teaching," and "leading." In short, this process of understanding does not occur from communication as a noun, but from communicating as a verb,[15] from existing in a communicative community.

The moment of reformulation and personal

"Here we will proclaim the saving death of our risen Lord until he comes."

We can't say, "He didn't tell us. He didn't warn us." But we can say, "Feed me, Lord. And make me ready to meet you."

Amen.

transformation takes place around the table in the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

ANALYSIS

"When You Least Expect It," serves as an example of what a Gadamerian-informed homiletic may look like in a number of effective ways. One of the first things to note is the way in which the preacher presents herself to the congregation. There is no sense in which she is the exemplar from which the rest of the congregation is to take their cue. Throughout the sermon, the preacher is drawing upon resources that are accessible to the community at large. There are no references to the original Greek or Hebrew texts or quotations from erudite theologians. Furthermore, there are no attempts to employ any critical methods to ascertain the scriptural author's "original" or "intended" meaning. Rather, the preacher is sharing the central subject matter in the text which has addressed her. The resources that she employs to link

past with present are from well-known phrases like "When you least expect it, expect it," or the motto, "Be prepared." These familiar phrases are contemporary points of contact with the central subject matter of the texts. When a quotation is used, it is profound but still approachable. E.B. Browning's, "Moses saw a burning bush, while the rest just kept on picking blackberries," is one such example.

In addition to presenting herself as a nearly equal partner in the process of sermonic homileoing, a second unique feature of this sermon is its conversational quality. Perhaps the most distinctive evidence of this quality is found in the responses of laughter on line 12 of page 181, 6 and 11 of page 185, 4 of page 189, lines 14 through 15 of page 190, and line 1 of page 192. These moments of contact between congregation and minister evidence some of the sense of abandonment that accompanies any genuine conversation, the sense of being caught up in Gadamerian play. On a more subtle level, the preacher's use of memory to facilitate conversation is also innovative. The uses of the denominational periodical on pages 183 through 184, the celebration of the Ascension last Spring on page 186, the self-effacing story about cleaning the house on page 189, and the account of Marilee Robertson on pages 193 through 196, are all invitations to collectively recall something which many members of the congregation share in common. In this way the sermon resembles two conversational partners coming to an understanding about a particular subject. The to-and-fro movement throughout the sermon is

epitomized by the direct exchange "Do they play football on Christmas Day? Yea, that's what I thought, O.K." The direct exchange is immediately followed by the phrase, "You all do, so do I." Subtly but effectively, the preacher has demonstrated Gadamer's central claim that linguisticality is social, that words constitute worlds. This brief exchange is understanding happening.

A third feature of this sermon has to do with the preacher's use of contemporaneity to collapse the historical distance between the biblical texts and the receiving congregation. As Gadamer indicates, Kierkegaard did not believe that contemporaneity meant existing at the same time; rather, it was the mediative bringing together of the present moment and the "redeeming act of Christ" and it is most apparent in the proclamation of the word in preaching.[16] Moments of contemporaneous mediation exist throughout the sermon, but the most apparent example occurs on lines 5 through 22 on page 189. On line 6 the preacher revisits the images of people working in the fields and women grinding meal that have been presented by the scripture passages. And then, beginning on line 16, the preacher very subtly moves from the past, "their threshing and grinding," to the present, "their dusting, their feeding the children, their teaching a class, their studying their books, their working on their machines." The past and present are fused together into one contemporaneous moment with the closing sentence of the third move, "The people are ready." In this contemporaneous moment, what I describe as contact is experienced by both preacher and congregation. There is a

"mediative bringing together" of the present with the past that has a seamless quality to it. The congregation is not aware when or maybe even how it has occurred but, very discretely, this preaching of the word of God [now] is the word of God.

Another feature of this sermon that bears some explication takes place in moves 4 through 5. On lines 19 through 5 on pages 190 through 191, the preacher asks a series of questions that invite the congregation to begin thinking about what being expectant, or awake, or ready for "Jesus' coming again" "looks like." After a series of familiar and descriptive paragraphs that aptly describe "preparedness" on pages 190 through 191, the preacher offers a concrete example of one person, of similar age to many in the congregation, who embodies the characteristics that are being foregrounded in the scripture passages. The congregation discovers that being prepared looks something like a retired sixty-seven-year-old Californian named Marilee Robertson. This preparedness includes elements of surprise, and faithful response. There is risk and foolishness involved, but it is a risk and foolishness that are paradoxically full of meaning and purpose. On lines 13 through 15 of page 196, the preacher is able to suggest that this faithful orientation of "expectation" and "preparation" ". . . changes how today looks. How the present feels. How we live it." This new "spiritual awakeness" and "spiritual alertness" (lines 3 through 4 on page 197) even affects our present lives in ways that are spelled out on pages 197 through 198.

The last move of the sermon begins with a word that the preacher creates to describe this process of ontological refiguration. The newly coined word to describe this change is the word "a-readying." When taken in its entirety, "When You Least Expect It, Expect It" functions as an extended conversation about what it possibly means for the community faith to be "a-readying" for Jesus' return. The coined word "a-readying" is an active verb and not a permanent noun. It is a word that implies that this process of "preparation" and "expectation" depicts the essential nature of the community of faith. In this sermon, that which is meaningful is not the accurate representation of the biblical texts; rather, that which is meaningful exists in language by people existing in relationships and in community as they are "a-readying" for Christ's return. Paraphrasing Gadamer, understanding occurs in the homileoing of the sermon because language is the medium where world of the congregation and world of the text meet and manifest their belonging together.[17] In this regard, the preacher's language or words constitute the congregation's world. Preaching the word of God is the word of God.

Father Ralph Carskadden

St. Clement's Episcopal Church

Seattle, Washington

August 6, 1995

Transfiguration Sunday

Scripture Lessons

Exodus 34:29-35

Moses came down from Mount Sinai. As he came down from the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant in his hand, Moss did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face was shining, and they were afraid to come near him. But Moses called to them: and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him,

and Moses spoke with them. Afterward all the Israelites came near, and he gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. When Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face; but whenever Moses went before the Lord to speak with him, he would take the view off, until he came out; and when he came out, and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, the Israelites would see the face of Moses, that the skin of his face was shining; and Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

II Peter 1:13-21

I think it right, as long as I

am in this body, to refresh our memory, since I know that my death will come soon, as indeed our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.

For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honor and glory from God the Father when that voices was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased." We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven, while we were with

him on the holy mountain.

So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

Luke 9:28-36 (Chanted)

Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And while he

was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and his companions were weighted down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"--not knowing what he said. While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and

they were terrified as they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.

Sermon	Commentary
<u>Introduction</u>	<u>Introduction</u>
A brilliant light was seen in the morning sky. At first there was silence, and then a tremendous sound came from the heavens. And then a searing heat which vaporized wood and flesh. The garments of those who were out a ways from the epicenter of the blast were burned off the bodies of the	The preacher begins the sermon with an immediate, extremely graphic image. The congregation is at first unclear about the image, for the story can be about "heaven" or it can be about "earth." Words like "epicenter" and "blast" help to facilitate a nod of recognition. This is August 6,

wearers, but the patterns of the cloth appeared like cosmic tatoos on the flesh underneath. The earth itself was sterilized with heat and radiation. Ironically, in the little house gardens around the outer parts of the blast site, the potatoes in the ground were roasted into place in the dirt. Seventy-thousand people, mostly older women, old men and young children, died instantly or within minutes or hours. Thousands more died slow, painful deaths over the coming days, weeks, and years. Today, five thousand additional names were added to the list.

Ironically or obscenely, the bomb was the product of what had been named "The Trinity Project." The day the bomb, the 1996. Fifty years ago today, the Atomic Bomb was dropped. News coverage of the anniversary was particularly heavy in Seattle, Washington.

The irony of potatoes having been baked in the earth, an instrument of death preparing that which sustains life, cannot be missed.

Past and present are contemporaneously fused in two short sentences. That is, "Thousands more died . . ." , and "Today, five thousand additional names were added to the list."

This transitional paragraph signals another moment of irony. That is "The Trinity Project," or the Atomic Bomb, was exploded

atom bomb, exploded over a civilian target was the Feast of the Transfiguration--fifty years ago today, fifty years ago this morning.

on one of the highest days of the Church Year, Transfiguration Sunday. Only the transformation of the Bomb was "disfigurement" not "transfigurement."

Move 1

The moral debate over the use of atom and hydrogen bombs continues. Especially so at this time of anniversary.

Most of the articles we read suggest that since the evil enemies of democracy had committed such terrible atrocities, we were justified to take any and all means to stop them. Precedents for such destruction had been set when the allies fire-bombed Berlin and Dresden. After that it just seemed logical, if not moral, to

Move 1

The first two paragraphs in this move serve a transitional function. There is "moral debate" over the use of the atom and hydrogen bombs, and many pundits believe that their use was justifiable. By the end of the second paragraph, the congregation is expecting to hear another description of the bomb.

This paragraph serves as

use such wholesale destructions in other cities--Tokyo, Hiroshima, Nagasaki.

The light, the brilliant, unearthly light in the sky. The awesome roar from the heavens. The consuming fire and the invisible but lethal radiation which touched, destroyed and disfigured human, animal, and earth itself. These are the memories of humankind's power unleashed against itself, against ourselves, against the creation itself.

both a summary and a surprise. It reiterates what was first introduced in the opening paragraph but, in a transitional surprise, it segues into the scripture passage, i.e., transfiguration. In the first sentence of the third paragraph, the congregation is associating "light" with destruction. This surprise is that the preach now moves to associate "light" with Moses' shining face and the light of God.

Move 2

But August 6 has other memories. Memories dating back not just fifty years, but memories dating back twenty centuries. Memories also of

Move 2

"Memories" is one of the contemporaneous links that the preacher uses to fuse biblical past, with historical past, and with present. Although this

radiant light, high, of heavenly voice, sound, and of transfigured human. Tradition calls that place, Mt. Tabor. You and I know it was Mt. Rainier. [Laughter in the congregation.]

Jesus had taken his closest friends, Peter, James, and John, with him to an isolated place so that he could pray. He was on his way to Jerusalem, and he knew what was going to happen in Jerusalem. He was going to run headlong into the powers and authorities of religion and politics. And in doing so, he certainly risked death.

He had gone to the mountain for a time of prayer, perspective, silence, for the very reasons we still go to the high places, to the mountains. As

biblical memory is of radiant light, heavenly sound and transfigured human, it signals a different kind of power; a "constructive" rather than "destructive" power. The Mt. Tabor/Mt. Rainier juxtaposition also works to fuse past and present in a contemporaneous moment of contact.

This sentence also functions contemporaneously. That is, "[Jesus] had gone to the mountain . . . " for the very same reason that "we go to the high

often seemed to occur on such occasions, he was deep in prayer--they were sound asleep.

But when they finally awoke, they saw him standing there, talking with Moses, the great liberator, the Law giver of God's people, and with Elijah, the greatest of the prophets, the one, the one who had not died, but who had been taken up to heaven in a fiery chariot. The prophet whose coming again would signal the arrival of the Messiah and the inauguration of God's reign of justice, mercy, and peace. And as Jesus was there with Moses and Elijah, they could hear him talking about his coming departure, his Exodus.

And he was enveloped in brilliant light. His face shone.

places, to the mountains." The use of the first person plural "we" in this sentence is telling. There is a point of contact between Jesus, congregation, preacher and that contact occurs in the "high places."

Jesus' coming "departure" is analogous to Moses' "Exodus" from Pharaoh.

These two transitional sentences contrast the brilliance and light of Jesus' transfiguration with that of the "radioactive" Bomb. Distant past is contemporaneously fused with

His garments glowed. It was as if he was radioactive.

Move 3

Stephen Spielberg in "Raiders of the Lost Ark" had it almost right, at least according to biblical understanding. That's why the High Priests wore the special garments. The things of God were too hot to touch. They could destroy you with their power.

His garments were so bright that we don't even have adequate words for it. The old King James translation manufactured a wonderful word. It said his garments were "glistering." For that kind of light, you need a word, a whole new conception of understanding.

present memory, and a powerful point of contact emerges.

Move 3

The third move is a detailed description of the brilliance of the transfiguration. Later in the move, the congregation sees that the transfiguration is not just of Jesus, but also of the disciples who "wake up" and are "turned upside down" having been "bowled over by the radiancy, the awesomeness, the otherness of [Jesus' light].

The manufactured word "glistering" is similar to the use of "a-readying" in the previous sermon. It is a word used to

And the light was reflected in everything. That brilliance, that transfiguring radiancy spilled out from him onto the faces and the garments of those who were around witnessing this. This same brilliance spilled out onto the plants, the animals, the rocks, the trees, the very earth.

In the icon of the feast, you can see that light radiate. If I could afford a real icon of gold you could see it more clearly. [Laughter in the congregation.]

And the sight is so awesome that the disciples, when they finally wake up, are turned upside down. They are bowled over by the radiancy, the awesomeness, the otherness of it.

But in this case, it was not

describe the indescribable. In this context, "glistering" intimates ontological refiguration. The "radiancy," "brilliance," and "light," of Jesus spills out "onto the faces and garments" of the witnesses and, later on, they are "turned upside down."

Transfiguration has to do

a light that destroyed or blinded but, rather, a light that illumined. And in that light, everything, everyone, could be seen in its, his, her, true essence. The true beauty, the true purpose, the place and relationship with everyone was somehow for a moment glimpsed and seen.

And then, the brilliance was erased when a cloud passed by. The ancients understood that clouds didn't mean a rainy day in Seattle, they meant a veiling, a hiding, of things that are too much to behold. The cloud obscured the sight for a moment, but it was also a cloud which covered the living God, Jehovah, who spoke saying, "This is my Son, listen to him." When the cloud had

with "illumination" and not "radiation," and this illumination or refiguration is not the cause of "blindness" but a new way of "seeing" or being in the world.

Although the preacher uses the past tense, "The ancient's understood," he juxtaposes the "ancient" understanding with a contemporary association of clouds, i.e., rain in Seattle. The historical lesson has been contemporized with a communal point of reference, and contact between ancient community and present community is enhanced.

The answer to this

passed, Jesus was seen alone.

What happened? What happened on the mountaintop? Did he change or, perhaps for a moment, did humankind glimpse him for what he was all along? Glimpse the creation as it is and has been from the beginning?

Move 4

The Episcopalian poet, Magdalene L'Engle, suggests that Jesus and the creation were always that way. It was just an occasion when, for a moment, the disciples glimpsed the reality. They had the eyes of faith to see what was really there.

She writes in her book, The Irrational Season, which is filled with wonderful poems for the seasons and feasts of the

rhetorical question has been implied but not directly given in the preceding paragraphs. Each member of the congregation is invited to decide what has happened in the transfiguration. Did Jesus change or, for a moment, was it humankind's capacity of seeing that changed?

Move 4

The answer to the rhetorical question is supplied by a lengthy quotation from the poet. Transfiguration is interpreted as personal refiguration which leads to a new way of seeing.

church year, she writes this glorious text. "Suddenly, they saw him, the way he was, the way he really was all the time. Although they had never seen it before. The glory which blinds the everyday eye and so becomes invisible. This is how he was--radiant, brilliant, carrying joy like a flaming sun in his hands. This is the way he was, is, from the beginning. And we cannot bear it. So he 'man-ed' himself, came manifest to us. And there on the mountain they saw him, really saw him, saw his light. We all know that, if we really see him, we die. But isn't that what's required of us? For then, perhaps, we will see each other too."

The last portion of this move functions as a summary for the kind of refiguration that facilitates contact. Jesus "man-ed" or "manifested" himself and, like Moses before him, to see God directly is to die. But a kind of death is required for a new kind of seeing or being. To "see each other too" is what emerges from participating in the praxis of community.

Move 5

Today, the fiftieth anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima invites us to see ourselves, members of the human race, as we are, as we really are. Capable of using power to destroy, to control, to subjugate, to terrorize, to keep in place those we think are less by reason of race, or class, or sex, or whatever. Capable in our blindness to use other creatures, and the creation itself, as endless resources to waste or use without consequence or recourse.

Today is host of the Feast of the Transfiguration which invites us to see ourselves as we are, as we really are. And to see each other and the creation

Move 5

On eight different occasions throughout the fifth move, the word "today" is used to contemporize or fuse past, present, and future. The congregation is invited to use the anniversary of Hiroshima to see, along with the preacher, humankind as we really are; capable in our "blindness" to exploit our power. These contemporaneous moments are points of contact between scriptural tradition and community life. The use of "we" throughout the move echoes Gadamer's belief in the linguisticality of understanding. Understanding happens between people in moments of articulate contact.

with the eyes of the disciples who, for a moment, glimpsed the Divine Presence in each other, within the creation.

Today in the presence of Moses, and Elijah, and Jesus, we can see how power can be used in an other way. How power can be used to serve, to liberate, to free, to forgive, to bring out and up those who have been put down.

Today, at her baptism, we are invited to see Emily as she is, as she really is, created in the image and likeness of God.

Today, we have come to the mountain ridge to join with her in prayer.

Today, we can hear the Divine voice calling her.

Today, we will witness the

Although it is certainly a time for recollection, the Feast of Transfiguration is contemporaneously a time of re-creation. This universal nature of this re-creation concretized in an eighteen-year old woman named Emily who is being baptized. She has spent many weeks with the Priest and others in the congregation. She is known by name by everyone in the congregation.

Emily's baptism, which takes place within the community of faith, is also an invitation for

Spirit illumine and enlighten her.

Today, before our eyes, we will see her buried and raised with Christ.

Move 6

Marcel Proust wrote in a little quote that began the daily devotional booklet which started this past Tuesday, August 1, "The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new lands, but in seeing with new eyes."

If we have those eyes to see the events this morning, we will find that into the waters of baptism Emily will carry with her humankind's memories. The memories of Cain and Abel, of Bataan and the Staligs, of Auchwitz and Nanking, of Pearl

the community to bury the "old" and rise up with the newness offered in Christ.

Move 6

The newness, however, is not a forgetfulness, not a denial or justification for past deeds, as it was with the bomb or various other atrocities perpetrated by humans onto other humans. As the poet says, the newness is the capacity to see or, by

Harbor, Okinawa, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, of Cape Town and Ungara, Srebrenica, Port-au-Prince. All those memories go with her into the waters.

But with our new eyes, we will also see that that is holy ground, holy water. In that water she will be washed in the primal waters of creation, returned to what she was created and intended to be by virtue of the creative act of God.

In those waters she will pass through the Red Sea into a new life of freedom, marching boldly with Moses and the children of Israel.

In those waters, though they be on the front porch of this church, she will be crossing over the Jordan, the Jerden, to enter

extension, to be in a new way.

Through the Sacrament of Baptism, the old ground is washed clean into holy ground. From the waters of Baptism, Emily becomes part of the solution rather than part of the problem.

into promised life in God's kingdom of peace, justice, righteousness.

It is a day to hold these opposing memories in balance and discover God's powerful message transfiguring all human beings.

God's "powerful message" has transfigurative power when we, ourselves, have become part of that word. In this regard, the preaching of the word of God, is the word of God.

ANALYSIS

Although "When You Least Expect It, Expect It" embodies more obvious conversational characteristics, Father Ralph Carskadden's Transfiguration Sunday sermon is also an example of how a Gadamerian-informed homiletic may sound. It reveals a pastor who is intimately aware of and connected to the life of his congregation, a participant in the unfolding life of the community rather than a controller of that community's life. In this sermon, Father Carskadden functions as a herald, one who is sharing his experiences of being spoken to, of listening, as one who stands in the tradition and not outside of it. The conversation he facilitates in moves 1 through 4 is more between scripture and tradition than it is a conversation between pastor and congregation. However, in the sermon's fifth move, the preacher uses contemporaneity to solidify the congregation's place in the conversation between scripture, tradition,

and community life.

As with the previous case, one of the most striking features of this sermon is the way in which the preacher presents himself. Throughout, his voice is clear but soft. There are no sermonic highs or lows but, instead, the sermon displays a consistent steadiness that may be experienced when two conversation partners are thoroughly engaged in a discussion about a subject matter that has addressed them. There are lulls in the conversation, even occasional moments of dramatic emphasis, but there is never a sense that one partner is thoroughly dominating the discussion. This point is dramatically emphasized by the absence of the first person singular pronoun. Throughout the entire sermon, there is only one use of the pronoun "I" (line 13, page 217), and its use elicits a moment of laughter from the congregation. Conversely, the first person plural pronoun, "we," is used on twenty-one occasions. This "we" dramatically illustrates that the preacher is not the focal point of the sermon or the worship service, nor is he attempting to make an argument. Rather, there is a keen participatory sense throughout the sermon that comes to its fullest fruition in the baptism of a young woman (lines 13 through 4 on pages 222 through 223). The sacrament of baptism is something in which the entire community of faith participates.

Again, there are also no references to the original Greek or Hebrew texts that would most often be accessible only to the priest. The quotations that are used are taken from resources easily available to the members of the

congregation. Additionally, there are no attempts to employ any critical methods to ascertain the "original" or "intended" meaning of the scriptures passages. The preacher is heralding his experience of being addressed by the central subject of transfiguration.

In addition to the way in which the preacher is subject to rather than subject of the sermon, one of the most striking features of this reflection is the way in which it is constructed around the central biblical theme of "transfiguration." From the introduction on line 12 of page 210 where the preacher describes what one kind of transfiguration looks like, through the conclusion on line 5 of page 212 where the congregation is reminded that it is Transfiguration Sunday, to the more elaborate description of Jesus' transfiguration on pages 213 through 216, transfiguration is the central subject that is guiding the preacher-congregation conversation. Not until near the end of the sermon does the preacher use transfiguration as an invitation ". . . to see ourselves as we are, as we really are" (lines 20 through 21 on page 221) and to ". . . see each other and the creation with the eyes of the disciples . . . " (lines 1 through 21 on page 222). This move invites the congregation to remember the transformative power of their own baptisms even as they participate in transfigurative sacrament for one of their own community members. Transfiguration amounts to a new way of being in the world.

One of the most innovative features of this sermon is the way that the preacher uses elements of contemporaneity to bring together the historical

events presented in the scripture passage, the anniversary of the release of the Atomic bomb, and the present moment of congregational life. The contemporaneous fusion of past and present exits throughout the sermon, but two instances are especially noteworthy. The first occurs immediately after the reading of the scripture passage where the central theme of transfiguration is readily evident to all who are listening. The preacher begins the sermon with a detailed description of another fantastic encounter, an encounter that initially leaves the congregation wondering whether the preacher is talking about "heaven" or "earth." Then it becomes evident that this holy day of Transfiguration also has something to do with another anniversary that is being observed. In this moment of prompting and recollection, scriptural past, historical past, and congregation present are united into a collective moment of remembering.

The other pronounced example of contemporaneity occurs during the fifth move. On eight different occasions throughout the fifth move, the word "today" is employed to move the congregation through a series of encounters that include, among other instances, the fiftieth anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima (line 2, page 221), the feast of Transfiguration (line 18, page 221), the scripture passages (line 5, page 222), Emily's baptism (line 13, page 222), and the promised resurrection (lines 2 through 4, page 223). Unfortunately, this dissection of the fifth move robs it of its rhetorical and conversational power. When the move is heard as part of the unfolding process of the entire sermon,

the effect is one of complete mediation among scripture, tradition, congregation, and preacher. Paraphrasing Gadamer, there is a sense in which the congregation is involved in the events themselves through the act of genuine participation.[18]

One subtle feature of this sermon is related to Gadamer's theory of application and the kind of experience that emerges from a genuine encounter between interpretation and application. The kind of understanding Gadamer envisions is not the imposition of theory onto some human sphere, that of subject acting upon object, but a kind of understanding that emerges in the encounter between theory and practice, between words of worlds. The encounter between theory and practice, or scriptural texts and congregational life, is embodied throughout this sermon. In many ways, the sermon is seamless. That is, there is no distinct separation between the words of the scripture texts and the worlds of the congregation. The kind of experience that this homiletical practice facilitates is peculiarly Erfahrung. Erlebnis is an experience of understanding that results from separation, alienation, or distanced observation, an experience that is sometimes associated with "getting it." Erfahrung is an experience of being or understanding that emerges from the to-and-fro, give-and-take of a genuine conversational encounter. It is an experience that this congregation undergoes as it endeavors to live out its faith in the daily between of human interpersonal relationships. This point most clearly unfolds in the last two moves where the first person plural pronoun "we,"

participates in the event of Emily's baptism. This sacramental experience is enhanced, is made possible, by the congregation existing, together, in community.

This practice of living out a faith that has been in conversation with scripture texts and the tradition is captured in moves four through seven by playing off the metaphor of sight. On seventeen occasions the preacher uses images related to sight to describe this new way of being in the world. The new way of being is captured by the disciples' new way of seeing which emerges from their encounter with the transfigured Jesus. This encounter is so sublime that the disciples ". . . are bowled over by the radiancy, the awesomeness, the otherness of it" (lines 19 through 22, page 217). The new way of seeing, or transfiguration, that the disciples have experienced is essentially the death of their old way of seeing (line 19 page 220) and the birth of their new way of seeing. This transformation is available to the community of faith as well, and it, too, is an experience that entails "new eyes" (line 6, page 224) through which ". . . we also see holy ground, holy water" (lines 7 through 8, page 224). The kind of experience that the preacher has described, is not an experience (Erlebnis) of radical separation from the world but an experience (Erfahrung) of involvement in the world. The words of the faith community as it exists in praxis help to clarify, shape, color and constitute the worlds of that community.

Father Ralph Carskadden's Transfiguration Sunday message is a good

example of how a sermon that functions as a contribution to a genuine conversation sounds. The sermon reveals a pastor who knows his congregation, who participates, shares and converses in the actual events of congregational human being. Transfiguration is the central theme around which the sermon unfolds, but it is also the organizing impetus around which the congregation is invited to consider their new eyes, their refiguration, their new way of seeing and being in the world. In this regard, the sermon functions as an event of articulated praxis. Through the give-and-take, to-and-fro of communicating in community, words disclose the possibility for new worlds.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I begin to address the question, "How does a Gadamerian-informed homiletic sound?" by analyzing the sermons of two homiletical practitioners. I demonstrated that, in their respective ways, each sermon functions as a contribution to an ongoing conversation between both pastor and congregation, one that is guided and even formulated by the centrality of the subject matter as it encounters the actual lives of the participants. Rev. Dykstra's "When You Least Expect It," is more explicitly conversational, but Father Ralph Carskadden's message also reveals on ongoing dialogue between pastor and congregation as, together, they are addressed by the scriptural texts and their tradition. I posit that both practitioners are able to facilitate this conversational experience because they

practice their ministries in numerically smaller congregations. As good pastors, they know the names of their conversational partners as well as their fears, hopes, joys, and concerns. The nature of this pastoral relationship seems to facilitate a homiletical practice where the preacher is not explicitly in control of the message. At no point in either sermon is the preacher lifted up as the resident expert; rather, through the process of contemporaneity, humor, question and response, and collective memory, pastor and congregation appear to be functioning as co-contributors in what is meaningful as they are addressed by scripture texts and tradition while living in community.

What is perhaps most intriguing about these sermons is the way in which both preachers employ contemporaneity to collapse the historical distance between the words of scripture and their present world. This process of contemporaneous collapsing has the effect of facilitating a way for the words of scripture to have a constitutive role in the creation of meaning. In contrast to the practices of Old and New Homiletic practitioners, the purpose of these sermons is not to re-present scripture via rational arguments, sermonic plots, or semantic imagination. Rather, it is through the to-and-fro, give-and-take of communicating in community, of sharing words and worlds, that the new worlds of pastor and congregation are explored. It is this conversational process of ontological refiguration that makes these sermons more Erfahrung than Erlebnis, an experience in language rather than an experience because of language, sermons that are full of moments of what I describe as contact.

Together, these two sermons illustrate that a Gadamerian-informed homiletic cannot be reduced to one specific model for preaching. Sermons, like conversations, are widely varied. Just as no one model of conversing adequately describes a genuine conversation, no one model of preaching adequately describes how a Gadamerian-informed homiletic sounds. However, these two sermons do illustrate Gadamer's central claim that it is only when historically effected beings are subject to the meaning of the text as it comes in and through tradition, that humans are able to be drawn into an event of truth. As players, humans are subject to rather than subjects of the game. Humans do not control their understanding, nor do they operate as subjects over against objects. Humans are listeners, receivers, men and women who are speaking and being spoken to, but men and women who must finally find the words to speak the truth about which they are experiencing. In order to be genuine, the Erfahrung experience of play must finally find application in practical life. The experience of play cannot remain wordless, because human beings exist praxically, continually, and immediately in language. Referring back to a observation that was made by Stanley Deetz, "The ideal is not, then, of 'self-expression and the successful assertion of one's point of view, but a transformation into communion, in which we do not remain what we were.'"[19]

Notes to Chapter Four

1. Stanley Deetz, "Conceptualizing Human Understanding: Gadamer's Hermeneutics and American Communication Studies," Communication Quarterly 26 (1978): 18.

2. Deetz, 19-20

3. Marsha Witten, All is Forgiven: The Secular Message in American Protestantism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993) 129.

4. Stephen R. Yarbrough and John C. Adams, Delightful Conviction: Jonathan Edwards and the Rhetoric of Conversion (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1993) 80-81.

5. Hans-Georg Gadamer, Hans-Georg Gadamer on Education, Poetry, and History: Applied Hermeneutics, trans. Lawrence Schmidt and Monica Reuss, eds. Dieter Misgeld and Graeme Nicholson (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992) vii.

6. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 312. My emphasis.

7. Gadamer, Hans-Georg Gadamer, ix.

8. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 332-333.

9. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 332.

10. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 332.

11. Hans-Georg Gadamer, "On the Scope and Function of Hermeneutical Reflection," Philosophical Hermeneutics, 18-43. Gadamer, Dialogue and Deconstruction, 164-166.

12. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 476.

13. In a recent article, Barbara Warnick identified four different roles for the rhetorical critic. The artistic critic treats criticism as a performance and the critic's role is to demonstrate a proper response to the text's artistry (232). The analyst critic decodes allusions, myths, and motifs so as to render incoherent or esoteric texts comprehensible (233). Advocate critics endeavor to engage the text polemically, to change readers' perspectives through the process of criticism (234). And postmodern critics see the culture as a corpus of codes and myths and emphasizes intertextual critique and analysis (235). See Barbara Warnick, "Leff in Context: What is the Critic's Role?" Quarterly Journal of Speech 78 (1992): 232-237. In my estimation, Gadamer does not fit into any of these categories. He does, however, provide an alternative way in which to view texts.

14. David Buttrick, Homiletic: Moves and Structures (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987) 23.

15. See, Brenda Dervin, "Verbing Communication: Mandate for Disciplinary Invention," Journal of Communication 43 (1993): 45-54.

16. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 127-128.

17. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 474-476.

18. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 127-128.

19. Deetz, 19-20.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

There is a charcoal drawing framed in rustic wood hanging on the wall of a professor's study. It is a large creation, approximately eleven inches wide by seventeen inches in height. The charcoal image is a little blurry. The image's borders are unclear, and sometimes even seem to run together. After a time of gazing, however, the image becomes more clear. The image is a portrait of a religious figure who is probably a rabbi. His beard is long and it flows into his robe. He is sitting down, as rabbis do when they teach, but rather than an open mouth, the rabbi has one of his hands cupped behind his ear. The first move in the rabbi's lesson is a cupped ear rather than an open mouth, is to listen rather than to speak.

This portrait is a contrast to the image that has often been associated with religious speakers. Some preachers have been recognized as charismatic, enlightening, and inspiring, but many others who practice the art of preaching have been portrayed as argumentative, overbearing, and full of empty words. Webster defined a preacher as one who exhorts in an officious or tiresome manner,[1] and Kierkegaard contended that there existed in Christendom no shortage of " . . . an everlasting Sunday babbling about Christianity's glorious and priceless truths."[2]

Throughout much of its history, homiletical practice has begun with an open mouth rather than a cupped ear. This project is an effort to re-center

homiletics in ontologically experiential conversation rather than the transmission of information. Homiletics, I argue, should again fundamentally label an experience that one undergoes, rather than an experience that someone has, controls or possesses. The first move that any practicing homiletician should make before he or she delivers a sermon is to listen rather than to speak.

THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this dissertation has been to explore a revised New Homiletic that begins with a cupped ear. To this end, I have addressed three research questions: What views of language are embedded in contemporary homiletical theory? How does Hans-Georg Gadamer's postmodern philosophical hermeneutics, as it is informed by Kierkegaard's concept of contemporaneity, improve upon the foundationalist hermeneutical practices and methodologies that continue to be tacitly present in contemporary homiletical theory? And, based on case studies from two homileoing (ὡμίλουν) practitioners, how does a postmodern homiletic look and sound?

In response to the first research question, I suggested that practitioners of the Old Homiletic view language as primarily re-presentational or symbolic using argument as the means for conveying the "information" of scripture. This preaching paradigm continues to foster Aristotle's famous dictum, "Spoken words are the symbols of mental experience and written words are the symbols of spoken words." In this model, the hermeneut's function is to decipher the

original meaning of the author's original intent in the symbols, grammar, and syntax of the scriptural word. The hermeneut then finds a way to adequately present his or her findings. The hermeneut is first and foremost a Cartesian cogito employing reason and rational methods to connect the world of the text with the world of the audience. This connection is usually accomplished through a form of rational argumentation. In the Old Homiletic, the hermeneut continues to foster a line of demarcation between scripture as word and the spoken word, between the world of the text and the world of the audience.

There are a growing number of homileticians, however, who have become dissatisfied with the Old Homiletic. These New Homileticians privilege the creation of a sermonic experience over the generation of rational arguments. Theorists of the New Homiletic have not so much rejected the rational as they have subordinated its propositional orientation to the experience of temporality and personal identity. New Homileticians often use narrative, story, or semantic imagination to facilitate this new homiletical experience. The result is a move away from questions of Truth framed as rational propositions and toward questions of meaning.

The argument of this project has been that, though their work is innovative, New Homiletical theorists have not yet secured the hermeneutical underpinnings to fully justify their claim. Their initial step to ground New Homiletical theory in the philosophy of Paul Ricoeur has been helpful, but it seems to have recently stalled as New Homileticians have appropriated

Ricoeur's metaphoric theory as the theoretical impetus for that ". . . semantic imaginative act that results in a surplus of meaning [and includes] some significant affective dimension[s]."[3] The result of this move to semantic imagination is a homiletical theory that continues to depend on the preacher's ability to affect a sermonic experience onto the receiving congregation. Although the form of the sermon may be more imaginative than the sermon of the propositionally-based Old Homiletic, New Homileticians continue to tacitly perpetuate a conduit model of preaching where the congregation receives the information that the preacher has to deliver. Rather than co-participants in the creation of meaning, New Homileticians continue to practice a homiletic that is grounded in a re-presentational view of language.

In my response to the second research question, I attempted to extend New Homiletical theory with the help of the philosophical hermeneutics of Hans-George Gadamer. This revised homiletic moves beyond constraints imposed by contemporary homiletical theory's re-presentational language commitments to an appropriation of conversation rather than narrative, story, or semantic imagination, as a means of facilitating an experience (Erfahrung) with the word. Or, to paraphrase Kierkegaard, this revised homiletic addresses "the personal, this You and I"[4] in ways that are more ontologically experiential than epistemologically foundational.

Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics contributes to homiletical theory because it embodies an alternative philosophy of communication where

language forms or constitutes human reality. This perspective claims that words, that is, talk, conversation, dialogue, question and answer, produce worlds. In Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, the subject/object split that is foundational to the paradigm that views the hermeneut as Cartesian cogito is replaced by a Heideggerian-informed hermeneutics of Dasein. The person is not first and foremost a cogito employing reason to connect and disconnect with objects around it, but is first and foremost an interpreter, understander, or sense maker engaged in everyday coping, and the primary site of this coping is conversation, is interpersonal speech communicating.[5] This impetus ultimately leads Gadamer to his central claim, "Being that can be understood is language."[6]

Because humans understand relationally and not individually, socially and not psychologically, conversationally and not monologically, Gadamer believes that a semiotic view of language misrepresents what actually happens in what he calls the hermeneutical phenomenon. Whereas a semiotic view of language allows an interpreter ". . . to use words and concepts like a craftsman," Gadamer underscores ". . . the indissoluble unity of thought and language . . . the unity of understanding and interpretation."[7] This fusion of thought and language, understanding and interpretation, is Gadamer's way of overcoming the subject/object dichotomy that exits in systems that treat language as a tool or instrument.

Gadamer explains this unity through the concept of linguisticality.

Linguisticality is Gadamer's descriptive term for articulating the distinctive nature and function of language to create worlds via the medium of words. Linguisticality provides the common ground where the fusion between persons, traditions, cultures, interpersonal experiences and horizons meet. Therefore in contrast to a hermeneutical theory that is grounded in a re-presentational view of language, Gadamer's hermeneutical experience is a process between human beings and not a product which accurately re-presents a world that is objectively verifiable. Communicating is productive not reproductive and it occurs in language, not because of it. In contrast to a traditional, Aristotelian view where spoken words represent mental images and written words are symbols for spoken words, Gadamerian linguisticality emphasizes a fundamental unity between language and human existence. Interpretation can never be divorced from language or "objectified." Because language comes to humans with meaning, interpretations and understandings of the world can never be prejudice-free. Language is not a tool which humans manipulate to represent a meaning-full world; rather, language constitutes human reality. "Being that can be understood," cannot be separated from wor[l]d, from language. Linguisticality is Gadamer's central term for describing the way understanding emerges through the process of language in use, in conversation. Thus, Gadamer's insight informs a postmodern homiletic that facilitates an experience in language rather than experience because of language, a homiletic that is more Erfahrung than Erlebnis.

The Erfahrung type of experience that emerges from a Gadamerian-sensitive homiletical practice is analogous to what Kierkegaard described as contemporaneity. For Kierkegaard, contemporaneity entailed the bringing together of two separate moments in time; the moment of one's own present and the redeeming act of Christ. One discipline that most clearly epitomizes that fusion between past and present is homiletics. Through genuine participation (or play-ing), players are caught up, captured, and actively participate in the game. This kind of genuine participation generates a distinctive experience of understanding. Gadamer describes this experience (Erfahrung) as a contemporaneous experience of reunion with past and present, ". . . an excursion into the alien that is also a return to ourselves . . ."[8] It is, as I previously noted, an experience that one undergoes rather than an experience that one has, controls, or possesses.

The privileging of Erfahrung over Erlebnis is not a new occurrence in the Christian tradition. As I have already stated, in the Christian New Testament, this Erfahrung type of experience is recorded in Saint Luke's account of the two men on the road to Emmaus. When the two men came to recognize their conversation partner as the risen Christ, they expressed the ontolological change that occurred within them by asking the rhetorical question: "Were not our hearts burning within us when he was talking with us along the road . . . ?" (Luke 24:13-35).

As it relates to the interpretation of sacred texts and preaching,

Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics is a theory of interpretation which acknowledges that every sacred text comes with a history or tradition, but it is nevertheless a text that must be encountered again and again as it intersects with the actual living out of community life. Therefore, to be meaningful, to be understood, to be experienced as Erfahrung rather than Erlebnis, each tradition-bound text must be applied or field-tested; it must be in conversation with the community of faith as it endeavors to live out its faith. The question that remains to be answered is research question number three, how does this postmodern homiletic look and sound?

The argument of this dissertation is that Gadamer's hermeneutical approach calls forth a fundamental shift in the role of preacher. In this model, the preacher is first a pastor, a listener, not only to sacred texts as they come to him or her in tradition, but also to the ways in which sacred texts intersect with the lives of the congregation. The preacher is a conversation partner, an attuned participant whose sermons incorporate elements of interpretation and application and manifest themselves as articulated practice. Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics points to a sermonic practice that is not so much of a pronouncement or argument as it is a contribution to an ongoing conversation. The preacher heralds his or her experiences of being spoken to, of listening, as one who stands in the tradition and not outside of it. In order for this moment of intersection between theory and practice, textual encounter and sermonic conversation, to be genuine dialogue, however, the preacher must

know his or her congregation in ways that can only be experienced by a pastor who participates, who shares, who converses in the actual events of congregational human being. This experience of speaking and being spoken to, of genuine listening, is one that is not unlike that of the two men on the road to Emmaus. It is an experience that happens in conversation, in the process of genuine homileoing. It is a sermonic experience that begins with a cupped ear.

I offered two examples of how this revised homiletic may look. In both sermons, the preacher uses a distinctive form of contemporaneity to collapse time, thereby fusing together the present moment with the "redeeming act of Christ." This dissertation argues that the contemporaneous qualities that embody these sermons provide moments of contact between pastor, congregation, and sacred text whereby "The preaching of the word of God [now] is the word of God."

The most contemporaneous example in "When You Least Expect It," occurs when Rev. Dykstra revisits the scriptural images of people working in the fields and women grinding the daily meal. Subtly, she moves from the past "their threshing and grinding," to the present, "their dusting, their feeding the children, their teaching a class, their studying their books, their working their machines." Past and present are fused together into one contemporaneous moment with the closing sentence of the third move, "The people are ready." Sacred text, preacher, and congregation meet in these contemporaneous moments. Subtly but effectively, word becomes world.

Father Carskadden's homily employs elements of contemporaneity to bring together the historical events presented in the scripture passage, the anniversary of the detonation of the Atomic bomb, and the present moment of congregation life. In one distinctive passage, Father Carskadden's description of another fantastic encounter leaves the congregation wondering whether he is talking about heaven or earth. Only gradually does it become apparent that this holy day of Transfiguration also has something to do with another anniversary that is being observed. In a moment of prompting and recollection, scriptural past, historical past, and congregation present are united into a collective moment of remembering, a moment of contact.

In varying degrees, both of these sermons reveal pastors who listen to and are in conversation with sacred texts, tradition, and their faith community. Their sermons are not about a sacred text, nor are they about the application of exegetically acquired truth claims. These sermons are not simply extended imaginative narratives nor are they stories with varying degrees of plot development. When viewed in their entirety, both sermons have the feel of an on-going conversation. They reveal pastors who know their congregations, and congregations who know their pastors. In both cases, there is a sense in which there is more to be said but, for now, both pastor and congregation can be content with experiencing only part of the unfolding story of the always already mystery called faith.

LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

No thesis can adequately reflect the total picture of a research project. Because of necessary parameters each is, at its best, only a small collection of voices in a larger unfolding conversation. In many respects, a thesis that has done its work generates more questions than it answers. Like any good conversation, however, much is learned in the give-and-take, to-and-fro of listening and speaking.

This thesis could be improved in a number of specific ways. First, in order to test the claims that are made in chapter three, more sermons from a representative cross-section of homileticians who are practicing in numerically smaller congregations need to be analyzed. A crucial feature of this project is the claim that there is something fundamentally different about the sermons that are generated in congregations where pastor and congregation exist together in numerically smaller faith communities. A research project along the scale of Marsha Witten's All is Forgiven: The Secular Message in American Protestantism could help to clarify whether the sermons that are analyzed in this study are representative samples of an unexplored phenomenon. Although my argument is that sermons generated in numerically smaller congregations tend to be more conversational, I suspect that there are ways that pastorally sensitive preachers in numerically larger congregations compensate for not knowing all of their parishioners and thereby achieve a homiletic that is genuinely conversational. Although I believe that there is a direct relationship

between the numerical size of the faith community and composition of the sermon, more research analyzing the sermons of pastors in numerically larger churches needs to be done. Perhaps my emphasis on numbers has caused me to overlook the possibility that an approach to preaching that begins with a cupped ear may give rise to a conversational homiletic regardless of a congregation's numerical size.

Second, in this study, no formal interviews were conducted with worship participants in either congregation. Although a limited number of listeners from each congregation shared their experiences with me, my analyses were primarily limited to audio tapes and informal conversations with each pastor. Interviews and conversations with congregational members could help clarify how effectively each minister functions as pastor and preacher in the congregation.

Third, because the central focus of this thesis is the generation of a Gadamerian-informed postmodern homiletic, other theorists have not been integrated as fully as they might be. More work needs to be done in Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Derrida, and Foucault for this project to be in genuine dialogue with the many other contemporary voices that are helping to describe the emerging postmodern landscape. What Stephen D. Moore has accomplished for biblical studies with his Post-Structuralism and the New Testament: Derrida and Foucault at the Foot of the Cross needs to be generated in homiletical theory. That is, attempts need to be made to bring

each contemporary theorist into conversation with homiletical theory.

IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

For most of its history, homiletics has been a discipline that is anti-theoretical. That is, theological seminaries and divinity schools have often recruited men and women "from high steeple churches with stained glass voices" to teach seminarians "how" to preach. Consequently, most homiletical seminars are long on practice and short on theory. Fortunately, there appears to be an emerging interest in the theory behind the "how" of preaching. David Buttrick, Fred Craddock, Richard Eslinger, Thomas Long, Eugene Lowry, and Lucy Rose have all begun the process of integrating homiletical theory and practice. As David Buttrick suggests, however, homiletics has reached a point in its development where theorists need to look outside the traditional and comfortable disciplines of theology and biblical studies to the somewhat less-traditional and unfamiliar disciplines of rhetorical and, I would add, critical, and language theory as sources for homiletical renewal. With the exception of Eslinger, Judith McDaniel, and Robert Reid, most homiletical theorists continue to be more aware of the secondary literature than the primary sources from those disciplines that are often considered to be outside of the purview of homiletical inquiry.

It is to that end that I have undertaken this project. Although my analysis is primarily limited to Gadamer's contribution to homiletical theory, I have tried

at least to extend an invitation to other homiletical theorists to begin dialoguing with traditions other than their own. For instance, from Isocrates, Aristotle, and Augustine, to Guibert de Nogent, George Campbell, and Kenneth Burke, the rhetorical tradition offers a host of partners with whom homileticians can be in conversation. It is my conviction that something happens when we enter into genuine conversations, and it is almost always a something that exists beyond our control. There are many more voices to which homileticians can listen and from which they can learn.

But there is another motivation to my project. Because I was trained in a theological tradition that featured historical-critical methodologies, I graduated with the proper "tools" to practice ministry. That is, I learned to exegete scriptural texts in such a way that I could articulate their "truths," and argue for their validity. After about six months of preaching a weekly sermon, however, I discovered that to survive in the pulpit, I had to be able to provide more than a rational argument. To paraphrase Kierkegaard, there was no lack of information in the homilies that I was preaching; rather, something else was lacking. Later in my career, I had the fortune of being introduced to the writings of Nietzsche, Heidegger, Gadamer, Ricoeur, Derrida and Foucault. I soon discovered that each theorist was at least nominally indebted to Kierkegaard for part of the energy behind their respective projects. As I began to explore those relationships more deeply, it occurred to me that each philosopher's indebtedness did not have so much to do with Kierkegaard's thought, as it did

with the way that Kierkegaard worked out his philosophy through his practice of writing. That is, for Kierkegaard, philosophy was not so much systematic and direct, as it was rambling and indirect. To a greater or lesser extent, like Kierkegaard, the contributions of Nietzsche, Heidegger, Gadamer, Ricoeur, Derrida, and Foucault emerge from their practice of analysis and critique.

The revelation that theory and practice could not only exist together, but are codeterminate, was a radically new insight for me. After all, the tradition in which I was trained separated theory from practice, seminary from parish. My experience in the practice of ministry, however, demonstrated to me that something else was happening. Although I did not have the theoretical ability to even begin articulating the questions, I discovered that much of what I was reading in the literature had little to do with my actual practice of ministry, and those works that were helpful were sometimes so devoid of theory that they were not taken seriously by the theological academy. It was not until I read Martin Buber's I and Thou, Richard Palmer's Hermeneutics and, consequently, Gadamer's Truth and Method, that I began to understand that rigor and relationships, theory and practice, academy and parish, exist together.

It is with an eye toward continuing to foster this relationship between theory and practice, academy and parish, that I continue my vocation as a pastor and scholar. Something emerges in the between of these two apparently competing worlds, a something that cannot be directly communicated, experienced, apprehended, controlled, or manipulated by the

professor or the student, the pastor or the faith community. It is a something that is mysterious, but not necessarily mysterious with a capital "M." Perhaps this something is a part of the mystery behind interpersonal relationships, that component of human being that cannot be objectified or epistemologically subdued. Maybe it is a something that Gadamer visualizes when he prefaces Truth and Method with a poem from Rainer Maria Rilke:

> Catch only what you've thrown yourself, all is
> mere skill and little gain;
> but when you're suddenly the catcher of a ball
> thrown by an eternal partner
> with accurate and measured swing
> towards you, to your center, in an arch
> from the great bridgebuilding of God:
> why catching then becomes a power--
> not yours, a world's.

Notes to Chapter Five

1. Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (Springfield: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1981).

2. Søren Kierkegaard, Practice in Christianity, ed. and trans., Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991 35.

3. Richard L. Eslinger, Narrative Imagination: Preaching the Worlds that Shape Us (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995) 69.

4. Kierkegaard, Practice in Christianity, 223.

5. John Stewart, Language as Articulate Contact: Toward a Post-Semiotic Philosophy of Communication (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995) 109.

6. Hans-Georg Gadamer, Truth and Method, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, 2nd ed. (New York: Continuum, 1993) 474.

7. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 403.

8. Joel C. Weinsheimer, Gadamer's Hermeneutics: A Reading of Truth and Method (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985) 115.

Works Cited

Adam, A.K.M. What is Postmodern Biblical Criticism. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995.

Anderson, Raymond E. "Kierkegaard's Theory of Communication." Speech Monographs 30 (1963): 3-14.

Aristotle. On Rhetoric. Trans. George A. Kennedy. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Arndt, William F., and F. Wilbur Gingrich. A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.

Augustine. On Christian Doctrine. Trans. D.W. Robertson, Jr. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1958.

---. Sermons for Christmas and Epiphany, trans. Thomas Comerford Lawler. Westminster: The Newman Press, 1952.

Auerbach, Erich. Literary Language and Its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and in the Middle Ages. Trans. Ralph Manheim. New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1958.

Bailey, Raymond. "Hermeneutics: A Necessary Art." Hermeneutics for Preaching: Approaches to Contemporary Interpretations of Scripture. Ed. Raymond Bailey. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992. 7-25.

Baldwin, Charles Sears. Medieval Rhetoric and Poetic. Glouster: Peter Smith, 1959.

Barth, Karl. Church Dogmatics. 2nd ed. 14 vols. Edinburgh: T & T Clark,

1986.

Barthel, Eva-Maria. The Truth of Experience: On the Assimilation of Ontological Philosophy in Gadamer's Conception of Truth. Unpublished essay, 1996.

Benedictines of St. Maur. Sancti Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis episcopi hipponensis opera omnia. Paris, 1841.

Bernstein, Richard. Beyond Objectivism and Relativism. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985.

Black, David Alan, and David S. Dockery, eds. New Testament Criticism and Interpretation. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991.

Boyarin, Daniel. Intertexuality and the Reading of the Midrash. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990.

Breech, James. Jesus and Postmodernism. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1989.

Brooks, Robert. The Spirit of the Ten Commandments. San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, 1990.

Browning, Don. "The Nature and Criteria of Theological Scholarship." Theological Education 32 (1995): 1-11.

Brueggeman, Walter. Texts Under Negotiation: The Bible and Postmodern Imagination. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993.

Bruns, Gerald L. Hermeneutics Ancient and Modern. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.

Bryant, David J. Faith and the Play of Imagination: On the Role of Imagination in Religion. Macon: Mercer University Press, 1989.

Buttrick, David. A Captive Voice: The Liberation of Preaching. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994.

---. Foreword. Homiletics. By Karl Barth. Trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Donald E. Daniels. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991. 7-11.

---. Homiletic: Moves and Structures. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987.

Clements, Keith W., ed. Friedreich Schleiermacher: Pioneer of Modern Theology. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991.

Cochrane, Charles Norris. Christianity and Classical Culture: A Study of Thought and Action from Augustus to Augustine. London: Clarendon Press, 1940.

Craddock, Fred. As One Without Authority: Essays on Inductive Preaching. Nashville: Abingdon, 1971.

---. Overhearing the Gospel: Preaching and Teaching the Faith to Persons Who Have Already Heard. Nashville: Abingdon, 1978.

---. Preaching. Nashville: Abingdon, 1985.

Deetz, Stanley. "Conceptualizing Human Understanding: Gadamer's Hermeneutics and American Communication Studies." Communication Quarterly 26 (1978): 18.

Derrida, Jacques. Dissemination. Trans. Barbara Johnson. Chicago:

University of Chicago Press, 1972.

---. Positions. Trans. Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.

Dervin, Brenda. "Verbing Communication: Mandate for Disciplinary Invention." Journal of Communication 43 (1993): 45-54.

Descartes, René. Discourse on Method for Rightly Conducting One's Reason and for Seeking Truth in the Sciences. Trans. Donald A. Cress. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1980.

Dyer, Susan K. "Hermeneutics and Deaf Education: An Analysis and Critique of Theories of Language and Communication." Diss. U of Washington, 1992.

Eden, Kathy. "The Rhetorical Tradition in Augustinian Hermeneutics in De doctrina christiana." Rhetorica 8 (1990): 45-64.

Eslinger, Richard L. Narrative Imagination: Preaching the Worlds That Shape Us. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995.

---. A New Hearing: Living Options in Homiletical Method. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987.

Fee, Gorden D. New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors. 2nd ed. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993.

Fish, Stanley. "Literature in the Reader: Affective Stylistics." Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism. Ed. Jane Tompkins. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980.

Fleer, David. "Martin Luther King Jr.'s Reformation of Sources: A Close

Rhetorical Reading of His Compositional Strategies and Arrangement." Diss. U of Washington, 1995.

Gadamer, Hans-Georg. Hans-Georg Gadamer on Education, Poetry, and History: Applied Hermeneutics. Trans. Lawrence Schmidt and Monica Reuss. Eds. Dieter Misgeld and Graeme Nicholson. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992.

---. Heidegger's Ways. Trans. John W. Stanley. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994.

---. "Man and Language." Philosophical Hermeneutics. Trans. and Ed. David E. Linge. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976. 59-68.

---. "Martin Heidegger and the Marburg Theology." Trans. and Ed. David E. Linge. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976. 198-212.

---. "The Nature of Things and the Language of Things." Philosophical Hermeneutics. Trans. and Ed. David E. Linge. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976. 69-81.

---. "On the Scope and Function of Hermeneutical Reflection." Philosophical Hermeneutics. Trans. and Ed. David E. Linge. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976. 18-43.

---. "The Science of the Life-World." Philosophical Hermeneutics. Trans. and Ed. David E. Linge. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976. 182-197.

---. Truth and Method. Trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall. 2nd

revised ed. New York: Continuum, 1993.

---. "The Universality of the Hermeneutical Problem." Philosophical Hermeneutics. Trans. and Ed. David E. Linge. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976. 3-17.

Heidegger, Martin. Being and Time. Trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson. New York: Harper and Row, 1962.

Heinrich, Judith. "Communication as Productive Understanding: Toward a New Story." Diss. U of Washington, 1989.

"Helvetic Confessions." The Westminster Dictionary of Church History. Ed. Jerald C. Brauer. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971.

Hendrix, Scott H. "Luther Against the Background of the History of Biblical Interpretation." Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology 37 (1983): 229-239.

Hyde, Michael J., and Craig R. Smith. "Hermeneutics and Rhetoric: A Seen But Unobserved Relationship." Quarterly Journal of Speech 65 (1979): 347-363.

Jonsen, Albert R., and Stephen Toulmin. The Abuse of Casuistry. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.

Kaiser, Walter C., and Moises Silva. An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics: The Search for Meaning. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994.

Kaiser, Walter C. "The Nature and Criteria of Theological Scholarship: An

Evangelical Critique and Plan." Theological Education 32 (1995): 57-70.

Kee, Howard Clark. The Origins of Christianity: Sources and Documents. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970.

Kennedy, George A. Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980.

Kepnes, Steven. The Text as Thou: Martin Buber's Dialogical Hermeneutics and Narrative Theology. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992.

Kierkegaard, Søren. Either/Or. Trans. and Eds. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong. Part 1. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987. 2 parts.

---. The Point of View for My Work as an Author. Trans. Walter Lowrie. London: Oxford University Press, 1939.

---. Practice in Christianity. Trans. and Ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.

Kisner, Jeff. "Hermeneutic Philosophy as Rhetoric: Gadamer as Rhetorician." Proc of Academy of Homiletics. 2-4 Dec. 1993. Washington D.C.: Georgetown University, 1994.

Krippendorff, Kiaus. "The Past of Communication's Hoped-For Future." Journal of Communication 55 (1991): 362-363.

Lischer, Richard. Theories of Preaching: Selected Readings in the Homiletical Tradition. Durham: Labyrinth Press, 1987.

Livingston, James C. Modern Christian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Vatican II. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, Inc., 1971.

Long, Thomas G. "And How Shall They Hear? The Listener in Contemporary Preaching." Listening to the Word: Studies in Honor of Fred B. Craddock. Eds. Gail R. O'Day and Thomas G. Long. Nashville: Abingdon, 1993. 167-188.

---. Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989.

---. The Witness of Preaching. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989.

Lowry, Eugene L. Doing Time in the Pulpit: The Relationship Between Narrative and Preaching. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985.

---. The Homiletical Plot: The Sermon as Narrative Art Form. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1980.

---. "The Narrative Quality of Experience as a Bridge to Preaching." Journeys Toward Narrative Preaching. Ed. W.B. Robinson. New York: Pilgrim Press, 1990. 67-84.

Lyotard, Jean François. The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge. Trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

Madison, Gary B. "Beyond Seriousness and Frivolity: A Gadamerian Response to Deconstruction." Gadamer and Hermeneutics. Ed. Hugh J.

Silverman. New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc., 1991. 119-135.

---. "Coping with Nietzsche's Legacy: Rorty, Derrida, Gadamer." Philosophy Today 36 (1992): 3-20.

---. The Hermeneutics of Postmodernity: Figures and Themes. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988.

McCarthy, Thomas. After Philosophy: End or Transformation. Eds. Kenneth Baynes, James Bottman, and Thomas McCarthy. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987.

McKnight, Edgar V. Post-modern Use of the Bible: The Emergence of Reader-Oriented Criticism. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988.

Middleton, J. Richard, and Brian J. Walsh. Truth is Stranger Than It Used to Be. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1995.

Milovanović-Barham, Čelica. "Three Levels of Style in Augustine of Hippo and Gregory of Nazianzus." Rhetorica 11.1 (1993): 1-26.

Mitchell, Henry. Black Preaching: The Recovery of a Powerful Art. New York: Harper and Row; Nashville: Abingdon, 1990.

---. Celebration and Experience in Preaching. Nashville: Abingdon, 1990.

Moore, Stephen D. Poststructuralism and the New Testament: Derrida and Foucault at the Foot of the Cross. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994.

Murphy, James J. Rhetoric in the Middle Ages: A History of Rhetorical Theory from St. Augustine to the Renaissance. Berkeley: University of

California Press, 1974.

---. "Saint Augustine and the Debate About a Christian Rhetoric." Quarterly Journal of Speech 46 (1960): 400-410.

Neusner, Jacob. Writing with Scripture: The Authority and Uses of the Hebrew Bible in the Torah of Formative Judaism. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989.

Newbigin, Lesslie. Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986.

Newman, John Henry Cardinal. An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979.

Oden, Thomas C. Requiem: A Lament in Three Movements. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995.

Oxenhandler, Neal. "The Man with Shoes of Wind: The Derrida-Gadamer Encounter." Dialogue and Deconstruction: The Gadamer-Derrida Encounter. Eds. Diane P. Michelfelder and Richard E. Palmer. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989. 265-268.

Palmer, Parker J. To Know As We Are Known: Education As a Spiritual Journey. 1983. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1993.

Palmer, Richard. Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969.

Polanyi, Michael. Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958.

Poulakos, John. "Interpreting Sophistical Rhetoric: A Response to Schiappa." Philosophy and Rhetoric 23 (1990): 218-228.

---. "Rhetoric, the Sophists, and the Possible." Communication Monographs 51 (1984): 215-266.

---. Sophistical Rhetoric in Classical Greece. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1995.

---. "Toward a Sophistic Definition of Rhetoric." Philosophy and Rhetoric 16 (1983): 35-48.

Poulakos, John, and Steve Whitson. "Rhetoric Denuded and Redressed: Figs and Figures." Quarterly Journal of Speech 81 (1995): 378-385.

Press, Gerald A. "The Subject and Structure of Augustine's De doctrina christiana." Augustinian Studies 11 (1980): 99-124.

Reddy, Michael. "The Conduit Metaphor." Metaphor and Thought. Ed. A. Ortony. Cambridge: University Press, 1979. 10-12.

Reid, Robert S. "Postmodernism and the Function of the New Homiletic in Post-Christendom Congregations." Homiletic 20.2 (1995): 1-13.

Reid, Robert, Jeffrey Bullock, and David Fleer. "Preaching as the Creation of an Experience: The Not-So-Rational Revolution of the New Homiletic." The Journal of Communication and Religion 18 (1995): 1-9.

Ricoeur, Paul. Oneself as Another. Trans. Kathleen Blamey. Chicago:

University of Chicago Press, 1992.

---. The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-Disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977.

---. Time and Narrative. Trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer. Vol. 3. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988. 3 vols.

Rose, Lucy. "Conversational Preaching: A Proposal." Journal for Preachers 19.1 (1995): 26-30.

---. "The Parameters of Narrative Preaching." Journeys Toward Narrative Preaching. Ed. W.B. Robinson. New York: Pilgrim Press, 1990.

---. "Preaching in the Round-Table Church." Diss. Emory University, 1995.

Schiappa, Edward. "History and New-sophistic Criticism: A Reply to Poulakos." Philosophy and Rhetoric 23 (1990): 307-315.

---. "Neo-sophistic Rhetorical Criticism or the Reconstruction of Sophistic Doctrines?" Philosophy and Rhetoric 23 (1990): 192-217.

"The Second Helvetic Confession." The Book of Confessions. Louisville: Office of the General Assembly Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 1991.

Simon, Josef. "Good Will to Understand and the Will to Power: Remarks on an 'Improbable Debate.'" Trans. Richard Palmer. Dialogue and Deconstruction: The Gadamer-Derrida Encounter. Eds. Diane P. Michelfelder and Richard E. Palmer. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989. 162-175.

Soulen, Richard N. The Handbook of Biblical Criticism. Atlanta: John Knox

Press, 1976.

Steiner, George. Martin Heidegger. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.

Stewart, John. Language as Articulate Contact: Toward a Post-Semiotic Philosophy of Communication. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995.

---. "A Postmodern Look at Traditional Communication Postulates." Western Journal of Speech Communication 55 (1991): 354-379.

Taylor, Mark C. "Text as Victim." Deconstruction and Theology. New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1982.

Thiselton, Anthony C. New Horizons in Hermeneutics. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992.

---. The Two Horizons: New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description with Special Reference to Heidegger, Buttmann, Gadamer, and Wittgenstein. Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980.

Tompkins, Jane P., ed. Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1980.

Torrance, Iain R. "Gadamer, Polanyi and Canonical Interpretation." Scottish Journal of Theology 46 (1989): 309-328.

Tracy, David. Plurality and Ambiguity: Hermeneutics, Religion, Hope. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.

Troeger, Thomas H. Imagining a Sermon. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990.

Warnick, Barbara. "Leff in Context: What is the Critic's Role?" Quarterly Journal of Speech 78 (1992): 232-237.

Warnke, Georgia. Gadamer: Hermeneutics, Tradition and Reason. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987.

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary. 1981 ed.

Weinsheimer, Joel C. Gadamer's Hermeneutics: A Reading of Truth and Method. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985.

White, Kenneth W. "An Application of Gadamer's Hermeneutics Through an Empirical Description of Communication in a Collaborative Learning Community." Diss. U of Washington, 1992.

Williams, Karen Jane. "Toward a Hermeneutic Ethnomethodology of Conversation: An Integration of Gadamer and Garfinkel." Diss. U of Washington, 1995.

Witten, Marsha G. All is Forgiven: The Secular Message in American Protestantism. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.

Yarbrough, Stephen R., and John C. Adams. Delightful Conviction: Jonathan Edwards and the Rhetoric of Conversion. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1993.

Jeffrey Francis Bullock

VITA

EDUCATION

Ph.D. University of Washington, Seattle, WA 1996

M.A. University of Washington, Seattle, WA 1993

M.Div. Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, PA 1985

B.A. Seattle Pacific University, Seattle, WA 1982

PUBLICATIONS

Reid, Robert S., Bullock, Jeffrey F., Fleer, David. "Preaching as the Creation of an Experience: The Not-So-Rational Revolution in the New Homiletic," The Journal of Communication and Religion 18 (1995) 1-9.

REVIEWS PUBLISHED

Witten, Marsha G. All is Forgiven: The Secular Message in American Protestantism. Book Review, The Quarterly Journal of Speech 81 (1995) 257-259.

Yarbrough, Steven R. and Adams, John C. Delightful Conviction: Jonathan Edwards and the Rhetoric of Conversion. Book Review, The Quarterly Journal of Speech 81 (1995) 525-527.

REFEREED CONVENTION PAPERS

"Augustinian Innovation: A Spokesperson for a Post-Critical Age." Submitted to the annual convention of the American Academy for the History of Rhetoric in New Orleans, Louisiana, November 1994. Fourth Ranked Paper Overall, First Panel

WORK EXPERIENCE

Pastor, Queen Anne Presbyterian Church, Seattle, WA, 1991-Present

Adjunct Professor, Department of Communications, Seattle Pacific University, Seattle, WA, 1995

Pastor, Union Presbyterian Church, Murrysville, PA, 1985-1991