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Rhetoric and ideology: An analysis of interaction among epistemology, praxis, and power

Gring, Mark Andrew, Ph.D.

The Ohio State University, 1993

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RHETORIC AND IDEOLOGY:

An Analysis of Interaction Among

Epistemology, Praxis, and Power

Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate

School of The Ohio State University

by

Mark Andrew Gring, B.S., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University

1993

Dissertation Committee

James W. Hikins

James F. Darsey

H. Lewis Ulman

Approved by

Adviser

Department of Communication
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1993
For Dana and Corinne
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Corinne, you give me delights and joys that renew my soul. What a wonderful daughter you are.

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Finally, the greatest debt is owed to the Author of life, the ΛΟΓΟΣ, reverence of whom is the beginning of knowledge. "Εν αυτῷ γὰρ ζωὴν καὶ κύριομεθα καὶ εσύς" [Acts 17:28a]
VITA

April 30, 1959 .............. Born: Cincinnati, Ohio

May 1976 ................. Lakin High School, Lakin, KS

December 1983 ............ B.S., University of Texas-Austin

May 1986 ................. M.A., University of Texas-Austin

1987-1993 ................ Teaching Assistant and Lecturer

The Ohio State University

Fields of Study

Major Field: ............... Communication

Specialization in: .......... Rhetoric and Public Address

Minor Fields: ............... Critical-Cultural Communication

Communication Theory
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CHAPTER I:
INTRODUCTION, QUESTIONS, AND METHOD

The study of rhetoric, situated at any point in history within the context of particular social milieu, and conceived as both *process* and *product*, is a perennial enterprise. Scholarly study of the theory and practice of rhetoric has been conducted for centuries. Among the important dimensions of any social milieu is the interaction of religion and politics, an interaction which is essentially *rhetorical* in nature. While many cultures accept the interaction between religion and politics as a natural wedding, secularized Western societies view this interaction with suspicion. Despite attempts to dichotomize these two dimensions of social activity, the "wall-of-separation" is regularly scaled, and both arenas influence
the other. For example, in the United States there have been long-standing attempts to interpret the Constitution to "maintain separation of Church and State"\(^2\) and multifarious efforts to keep religion out of politics. Yet there is reason to suggest that this effort to separate politics and religion is quixotic, due in large measure to the fact that rhetoric is the functional, instrumental art common to both.\(^3\)

My interest in the relationship of religion and politics begins outside of the United States in the Central American country of Nicaragua. In 1979, after almost twenty years of struggle by various political factions, the dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza was overthrown and a "popular revolution" came into power. This took place in a country dominated by Roman Catholicism and the military-political-economic power of the Somosan family. The Catholic church's traditional alliance with the government-in-power was an impossible force to overcome until, in the mid-seventies, several Roman Catholic priests and non-Catholic religious leaders renounced the Roman Catholic church's relationship with
the Somosan government and helped to incite the uninvolved masses to revolution. The involvement of the clergy and their newly developed theology--what has become known as "liberation theology"--were the key ingredients legitimizing the "glorious revolution" and securing the involvement and cooperation of religious leaders and lay people.

The glorious revolution was short-lived by any standard. Despite receiving outside aid, Nicaragua's revolution never achieved the utopia promised by the revolutionaries. Many groups which had fought for liberation from the Somocista dictatorship were disgruntled by the strong-arm tactics of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) and were neither afraid to voice their concerns through charges of corruption and terrorism against the FSLN nor to obtain weapons and fight against the newly formed Sandinista government. The eventual demise of the revolution began on Sunday, February 25, 1990 when Nicaraguans voted Marxist president Daniel Ortega out of office and elected to the presidency Mrs. Violeta Chamorro, publisher of the opposition
daily *La Prensa* and head of a fourteen-party coalition known by its Spanish acronym UNO. The precise reasons why the revolution failed will be pondered by historians, sociologists, and political analysts for years to come and is outside of the purview of this study.

The apparent anomaly that impelled my search for understanding was: How did Nicaraguan religious leaders combine what has traditionally been defined as two diametrically-opposed "ideologies"—Christianity and Marxism—and use the resulting system of thought, liberation theology, as a powerful rhetorical force to incite the Nicaraguan people to revolt? Based upon this initial question, the theoretical concern that energizes this dissertation is: How can two competing and apparently irreconcilable universal histories (or worldview systems or dialectical systems) become contiguous and overcome, or at least mask, their apparently inherent incompatibilities? I hypothesize that the keys to understanding this rhetorical enterprise are to be found in the concept of *ideology*, and in the rhetorical interaction among three con-
cepts: epistemology, praxis, and power.

Research Question(s)

Two topics currently dominating the study of rhetorical theory are: (1) the relationship of rhetoric and epistemology\(^8\) and (2) the interaction of rhetoric and power.\(^9\) All rhetoricians deal (directly or indirectly) with epistemological questions, and their theories, explicitly or implicitly, entail commitments to such issues as whether human knowledge is based upon a knowable reality, a subjectively (or intersubjectively) created or defined world, or a combination of the two. Essentially, the theories of all rhetoricians reveal, implicitly or explicitly, whether rhetoric is evidentialist (based upon knowable, verifiable reasons), subjectivist (that is, a function of individually-derived meaning) or intersubjectivist (that is, the product of culturally derived meaning), or some amalgamation of these approaches.

Intimately connected to this epistemic question is the concern about the influence of ideology. Questions about ideology have
been applied recently even to the study of science and have forced scholars to reconsider their epistemological "taken-for-granteds." One of the first concerns about ideology, though, is how it should be defined. Is it as all-encompassing as the term "worldview" or is ideology any system or process of thought which hinders our ability to see Truth (or, as some would deny a referent for the term Truth, is ideology any corroborated "truth?"), or is it something else entirely?

Issues of power are unavoidably bound up with concerns about ideology. If rhetoric is ideological (wholly or partially), who generates the ideology and how is it generated? Is an ideology promulgated by an elite group of people who "force feed the masses" through their individual and corporate communication power? Is ideology non-symbolically determined by an economic "base" and established for a "culture," or is it decided upon, or acquiesced to, by the individual? Issues of dependency (or power relationships) are predicated upon how an individual answers these questions. If the hoi polloi are ignorant sheep lead by some intellectual elite,
then they are completely dependent upon their "knowledge leaders" (powerless). Depending upon whether culture determines the dominant ideology or if the individual picks and chooses his/her ideology, then the degree of dependency and overt power relationships change accordingly.

One of the obstacles to locating answers to these issues is the lack of any agreed-upon definition of "ideology." Definitions offered in the past range from an all-encompassing Weltanschauung (worldview) to some form of "false consciousness" or collective illusion which does not allow its adherents to grasp social and economic realities. What, then, can be asserted about rhetoric's connection to ideology? Is all rhetoric ideological? What is the interplay between the epistemological assumptions of praxis, ideology, and notions of power? And how were these symbiotic dimensions of human sociality worked out in a specific historical period in the life of Nicaragua during the revolution and the ten years following until the Sandinistas lost the election to Chamorro? These questions catalyzed this inquiry and dictate the boundaries of what is
to be examined.

The rhetorical dimension of these interconnected issues is predicated on the symbolic nature of human interaction. Despite individual philosophical predilections about epistemology and ontology, we cannot deny the symbolic nature of human interaction and, as a result, the rhetorical dimension of human interaction. Ehninger's definition of rhetoric as "symbolic inducement and knowing" and Cherwitz and Hikins' definition of rhetoric as, "the linguistic [that is, symbolic] description of reality," affirm that the rhetorical dimension of the interplay between ideology, epistemology, praxis, and power is a function of the symbolic nature of each. Symbolic influences on epistemology have been defended to such a degree that they have become a commonplace. Human bases for knowledge, whether philosophically grounded in realism or in subjectivism/intersubjectivism, are subject to human perspectives which are influenced by language, that is, by symbols.

Similar exigencies and questions abound concerning the idea of praxis. Without getting into a "chicken and egg" argument about
action and thought, I am confident that scholars agree that human thought (that is, knowledge assumptions/epistemic base) influences human action. This "taken-for-granted" is the basis for persuasive interactions in such domains as education, politics, and religion. Rhetors assume that if a person's thinking can be changed it is most likely that his/her behavior will also change. This rhetorical dimension of power may not be widely recognized, but suffice it to say that the power dimension of human interaction—whether power is defined as: coercion, authority, prestige (credibility), money, or psychosocial dependence—is all determined in significant measure by how the individual interprets sociocultural symbols. Put another way, power exhibits an unavoidably symbolic dimension. Whether it is the politician's ability to get roads, dams, and bridges built for his/her constituency, the influence of the prophet-priest who "speaks for God," the prestige of the famous, the riches of a Donald Trump, or the mutual dependence of a long-married couple, each individual interprets symbols and determines his/her level of dependency with other indi-
individual(s) before s/he determines the degree of power possessed by those involved in the situation. Ideology, defined as the interaction among epistemology, praxis, and power, is inherently symbolic and, as such, is fulsomely rhetorical. One issue which must be resolved, though, is the degree to which and the way in which rhetoric is ideological.

A Brief Note on Method

An obvious concern for any dissertation is the method employed by the researcher. One's choice to be methodological or a-methodological, theoretical or a-theoretical must not be based upon mere whim but must be intimately connected to the concerns and the subject matter of the inquirer. Thus, given the nature of the questions that guide this study, the method must encompass theoretical/philosophical issues. Undergirding any method of rhetorical criticism, rhetorical analysis or any rhetorical theory are philosophical assumptions. Whether or not one's philosophical assumptions and theoretical framework are clearly delin-
eated or even consciously held, each person adheres to a philosophi-
atical theory that inevitably encompasses epistemology, ontology,
and axiology. These most fundamental philosophical commit-
tments unavoidably impinge on the rhetorician’s analysis or criti-
cism. For example, each person has a framework (a set of as-
sumptions or taken-for-granted) about how the world works;
that is, individual perspectives on how the world operates and
manifests itself on a day-to-day basis. Despite the infringing
presence of such presuppositions, it appears that little time and
space is spent critiquing and justifying philosophical first prin-
ciples in contemporary rhetorical treatises; instead, arguments are
advanced and analysis is proclaimed using disputed philosophical
principles and employing controversial terms as if the author and
each reader assumed similitude of words and ideas.

Currently accepted rhetorical methods have done little to ad-
Vance clarification and concise definitions of ambiguous and dis-
puted terminology such as: ideology, worldview, praxis, and
power. Without defining these terms and assessing the underly-
ing assumptions it is difficult to distinguish between competing philosophical perspectives and it would be impossible to argue how these terms can best be understood and used in a contemporary context. Without first examining philosophical principles and without first contending for particular definitions of ambiguous terms, the rhetorician could not be understood. It is doubtful that one could even begin to develop a productive dialogue on these matters without making clear the particular perspective and definitions that drive his/her research. I contend, along with virtually every major figure in the last 2500 years of the rhetorical tradition, that it is impossible to achieve an understanding of human rhetorical activity without first uniting philosophical analysis with rhetorical theory.

The "method," or process of analysis, which I propose for this dissertation, then, is to look at philosophical assumptions and definitions and attempt to clarify often-used but poorly-defined terms. The very essence of this activity limits and narrows how particular terms are understood and employed but I will limit
them only by placing these terms in context and examining their relationships to other things. This process asks for honest intellectual disclosure and seeks that common ground (of definition) from which the author and reader can begin a dialogue about the concepts/terms being used. My methodological goal, then, is neither to engage in a specific contemporary rhetorical/critical method nor to discredit the use of specific contemporary rhetorical methods used by others, such as Bormann's Fantasy theme analysis, Burke's pentad, Fisher's Narrative Paradigm, or Toulmin's model of analyzing arguments. The method I will use is an adaptation of speculative philosophical analysis.

Speculative philosophical analysis, with its concern for philosophical assumptions and definitions of disputed/vague terms, has historical precedent in the rhetorical tradition. Exemplars of this method include Plato's *dialectic* in the Socratic dialogues; Aristotle's arguments for definition and typology, and Cicero's and Quintilian's speculations on rhetorical issues without engaging in criticism of texts. Plato's *Phaedrus* commends rhetoricians to be con-
cerned about "words about which we all agree, and others about which we are at variance" (Plato, *Phaedrus*, 263a). He incorporates this concern into a systematic method when he states, "The student of the art of rhetoric ought, in the first place, to make a systematic division of words, and get hold of some mark distinguishing the two kinds of words, those namely in the use which the multitude are bound to fluctuate, and those in which they are not" (Plato, *Phaedrus*, 263b). Aristotle, too, talks about the importance of definitions and claims that, "It is by definition and the knowledge of what the thing is in itself that conclusions are drawn upon the subject in question" (Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, II.xxiii, 8; p.305). Cicero argues that all orators must know philosophy before they can be good orators (Cicero, *De Oratore*, B. I, XVII; p. 27; B. I, LI; p.66). He defines philosophy as, "processes of reasoning" and designates it as, "the originator and parent of all the arts which merit praise" (Cicero, *De Oratore*, B. I, C. III; 1970:8).

More recently, Kenneth Burke engages the reader in speculative philosophy through several volumes of texts that have been
considered some of the more significant rhetorical works of the
twentieth century. In his *Philosophy of Literary Form* Burke dis-
dains the pronouncement of his procedures as 'intuitive' and 'id-
iosyncratic' (Burke 1941:68) and states that philosophy is impor-
tant in the study of meaning: "Those who would banish philosophy
from the study of meaning must simply make a show of throwing
out by the front door what they covertly smuggle in again by the
back door" (Burke, 1941:399; 1973 3rd Ed.). In addition, Richard
Weaver commends to us the importance of speculative philosophy
in *Language is Sermonic* when he claims that definitions are the
attempt to capture the essence, the unchanging philosophical
*being*, of a subject (Weaver, 1970:209). He places definitions at
the top of the philosophical hierarchy (which consists of *being,
cause*, and *relationship*, p. 209) and claims that the rhetor, "is bas-
ing his case on the *highest order of appeal* when he is basing his
case on definition or the nature of the thing" (Weaver, 1970:212;
emphasis added). In his essay *Ideas have Consequences*, Weaver
argues against the scholars who claim that, "there are no real defi-
nitions; there are only the general pictures one arrives at after more or less induction” (Weaver, 1948:155), and he argues against the semanticists who regard language as “an obstruction or a series of pitfalls” (Weaver, 1948:158), or who argue that “language is an illusion or barrier between us and what we must cope with.” (Weaver, 1948:154-155). Weaver contends that definition, as a part of dialectic, becomes the basis for learning to think philosophically and for learning to think for oneself.

Dialectic comes to our aid as a method by which, after our assumptions have been made, we can put our house in order. I am certain that this is why Plato in the Cratylus calls the giver of names a lawgiver (νομοθέτης); for a name, to employ his conception, is “an instrument of teaching and of distinguishing natures.” ...Plato sees here that name-giving and lawgiving are related means of effecting order. Actually stable laws require a stable vocabulary, for a principal part of every judicial process is definition, or decision about the correct name of an action. (Weaver, 1948:168)

Weaver is not the last to emphasize the need for speculative philosophy and definition. More recently, Johnstone and Cherwitz argue that rhetoricians must engage in philosophical analysis as a prerequisite to building valid rhetorical theories and in order to do rhetorical criticism (Cherwitz, 1990: xv-xviii & 4-6).
Importance of the Research

The prevailing view in rhetoric is that all rhetoric is ideologi­
cal. I will argue that this claim is false. Nor is this an idle ques­
tion. The theoretical, teleological, and pragmatic ramifications for
rhetoric, inherent in any given answer to this question, are vast.
How rhetoricians respond to the claim that all rhetoric is ideologi­
cal bears significantly on what rhetoric is (that is, it's defining
characteristics), how it is practiced, and what we hope its practice
will accomplish. These and other issues concerning the nature and
definition of rhetoric are as old as the art itself. Definitions of
rhetoric are determined, in part, by the epistemological, ontologi­
cal, and philosophical perspectives to which theorists adhere.
Thus, the rhetorician's perspective on epistemology and ontology
(that is, his/her “philosophical grounding”) determines, and
should be consistent with, his/her assumptions about the ideologi­
cal nature of rhetoric, provides the foundation for the rhetorician’s
definition of rhetoric, and dictates rhetorical analysis and rhetori­
cal practice.

For instance, our perspective of rhetoric's relationship to knowledge has a direct bearing on how we go about "doing rhetoric." The constructivist perspective touts rhetoric as the "queen of the arts and sciences" because it assumes all knowledge is either arbitrarily agreed-upon (consensus theory) or is a matter of individual (or institutional or cultural) creation. Thus, language becomes the basis of knowledge/meaning and rhetoric becomes the way to know.\(^\text{15}\) Hence, rhetoric becomes the central, "archetectonic," discipline (McKeon, 1971:44-63). Those who argue for a non-constructivist (or a moderated constructivist/minimal objectivist) relationship between rhetoric and knowledge assume that there are certain things which have existence, significance, meaning, or verity despite the presence, or lack, of human consensus. Depending on which of these positions one accepts (explicitly or implicitly) one's definition of ideology will be affected.

Whatever position one takes on the epistemic issue, it is clear that rhetoric is inherently connected to epistemological issues. It
is not surprising, then, that the two most diametrically opposed versions of the "rhetoric as epistemic" literature agree that rhetoric is "the advocacy of realities" (Brummett 1976:31) or “the linguistic description of reality” (Cherwitz and Hikins, 1985:62). The relationship between rhetoric and epistemology encourages argument for the purpose of coming to a better understanding of what exists and what can be known.

For the purposes of this study, the epistemological dimensions of rhetoric also entail important considerations regarding liberation theology in Latin America. This is because traditional Western Christianity shares many of the same epistemological concerns with theories of rhetoric. Both are frequently interested in a priori assumptions, both proclaim the need to assess knowledge claims, and both are intimately connected with pragmatic questions of day-to-day human existence. Hence, both declare that an individual needs to do more than “mouth the words”--requiring a person to “live out” his/her beliefs or “practice what s/he believes.” It is not enough in either discipline to have knowledge
which is never used in "real life." Conceived in terms of the relationship between knowledge and action, these questions have a direct bearing on the definition and the practice of rhetoric and traditional Western Christianity.

Similar questions and concerns arise when both areas are confronted by Marxist assumptions (Critical-cultural concerns challenge traditional Rhetoric and Liberation theology challenges Western evangelical Christianity). These questions include: What is the interaction between knowledge and thought? What is meant by the Marxist claim that Marxism is the "philosophy of praxis" (Antonio Gramsci, 1971)? Can there be action-before-thought as some liberation theologians claim? If everything is ideological, is this ideology passed to the individual from his/her inception by parents, culture, education, and other authoritative institutions? If this is the case, could action then precede thought? Could action determine thought? If this is not the case with ideology, then are the Liberation theologians' claims about orthopraxy\textsuperscript{17} mistaken; are they merely offering a different means to as-
sess what is and what is not genuine knowledge? Are the liberation theologians trying to “short-circuit” thought, as Jacques Ellul (1965:27) claims modern propaganda does with its emphasis on “orthopraxy”? Finally, if everything is ideological, is anything ideological (in other words, does the term then cease to have any probative definitional utility)? These questions will be assessed and discussed in chapters ascertaining the nature of ideology and the relationship between rhetoric and ideology.

Before presenting the material concerning ideology, praxis, and power, though, a brief overview of the context in which I explore these concepts is warranted. The overview is brief because of time and space constraints and because this analysis neither focuses on the historicity nor the social movement dimension of liberation theology. The context in which I explore the rhetorical relationship of rhetoric and ideology is within the confines of the influence of liberation theology on the religious and sociopolitical dimensions of the Latin people. However, liberation theology cannot be understood completely without an overview of the base eccle-
sial communities that instigated the theology and the ensuing “grassroots movements,” or “popular revolution” within Nicaragua, if it can be named such.

**Overview of the Research Project**

The above description of the Liberation Theology movement in Latin America, and especially its activities in Nicaragua, offers the background against which I explore the interaction among epistemology, praxis, and power. As suggested, such an inquiry will shed light on the relationship between rhetoric and ideology. I conclude this chapter with an overview of the remainder of the dissertation.

An analysis of the relationship between rhetoric and ideology involves more than these two concepts. As soon as one begins to discuss ideology—regardless of its definition—one must be prepared to discuss sub-dimensions of ideology: epistemology, power, and praxis. The literature on each of these topics is vast and complex. The following chapters present a brief overview of each of
the above-mentioned concepts and explores the significance to rhetoric. Chapter II presents an historical overview of the inception of liberation theology through the base ecclesial communities and a survey of the basic tenets of liberation theology. Chapter III reviews the literature concerning ideology. The chapter begins with the inception of the word “ideology” and continues to the contemporary rhetorical uses of the term. Chapter III does not argue for a specific definition but poses the problematic usage of the term and contends that ideology can best be understood as the interaction between epistemology, praxis, and power. Chapter IV presents an overview of the concept of praxis within philosophy and liberation theology and argues that rhetoricians' use of this term as merely “practice” is inconsistent with its use by the ancients and by contemporary scholars. It concludes by arguing that liberation theologians perspective of praxis offers rhetoricians another means by which we can understand the tension between human thought and human action. Chapter V, reviews the ancients' conceptualization of power, overviews contemporary rheto-
ricians' use of the term and argues for power as psychosocial dependency. Chapter VI explores the interaction among epistemology, praxis and power and discusses how this knowledge adds to our understanding of rhetoric and the rhetorical dimension of human activity. Finally, Chapter VII offers conclusions and implications for future studies in rhetoric. Since my predominant focus is on an understanding of ideology through the context of liberation theology, I begin chapter II with an overview of the inception of liberation theology and its basic tenets.
CHAPTER I ENDNOTES

1. In many social circles etiquette dictates that in order to avoid arguments we must eschew discussions about religion and politics. The reason being that individual emotional commitments about these two very private matters are fodder for very real battles. The clash between, or union of, these two areas in the public arena in contemporary Western societies has been maintained within the realm of symbolic interaction. While physical warfare between churches and states is relatively limited in contemporary Western society, both areas have vested interests in how a society is defined, organized and maintained and frequently engage each other through rhetorical means. To this end note the involvement of religious leaders, and the subsequent use of religious language, in two volatile political issues of the last generation: civil rights and abortion. In both of these issues we can see clash and/or coalition between religion and politics.

sion," and 9, "Dominions and Powers].


3. Note the recent attention received by religious leaders when they ran for political office, the attention received by the outspoken religious Senator Jesse Helms (R-North Carolina), the involvement of religious groups in political lobbying (the Pro-Life movements' National Right to Life, Christian Action Council, among other groups) Concerned Women for America, James Dobson's *Focus on the Family* radio broadcast and related groups, the Family Research Council, Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum, and the Moral Majority, to name a scant few, and the rising influence of religious grassroots organizations which form political action committees and whose influence, it could be argued, dominates the conservative end of the Republican party.


5. Note, among others, Humberto Belli's *Breaking Faith* and Arturo J. Cruz *Memoirs of a Counter-Revolutionary: My Life with the Contras, the Sandinistas, and the CIA*.


7. Francis Fukuyama (1992) presents the idea of a Universal History as something which is progressive, dialectical, and
has a definite beginning and a defining telos which he describes as, "...the larger end or goal, the achievement of which necessarily brings the historical process to a close. This final end of man is what makes all particular events potentially intelligible" (Fukuyama, 1992:56) Fukuyama argues that the first truly Universal Histories in the Western tradition were Christian (p. 56) but that the most serious efforts at writing Universal Histories were in the German idealist tradition--especially under Kant and Hegel (pp. 57-64). According to Fukuyama, it was Hegel who introduced the idea of liberal democracy as the telos of our present Universal History. This does not mean, however, that he advocates that history ended once a liberal democracy was achieved; there are the dialectical and political tensions within the world which become the correcting, refining dimensions to a liberal democracy. Thus, he views communism, socialism, and totalitarianism as tensions which help to define/refine the concept of a liberal democracy. Fukuyama goes on to point out that Marx's ideas were a reaction to Hegel's position on a liberal democracy. Marx's own Universal History was a result of, "appropriating large parts of the Hegelians system for his own purpose" (p.64) and also differing with Hegel in many respects (pp. 65-66).

The concept of a Universal History is contrasted with the Plato's, Aristotle's, Oswald Spengler's and Arnold Toynbee's cyclical perspective of history. The cyclical perspective does not assume historical continuity and tends to be more pessimistic than those who advocate a Universal History.

8. Two types of scholarship abound within rhetorical/communication journals: those which argue directly for a specific epistemology and those which argue indirectly for (that is, they presume) a specific epistemological stance. These works can fall into several categories: those with specific epistemological emphases, those concerned about argument, those concerned about perception of the world and those concerned about daily human interaction.


9. The rhetoric-power interaction is usually discussed in conjunction with concerns about social change and/or ideology. Much of the feminist-centered analysis and the critical-cultural analysis is concerned about power relations among social agents (whether human-to-human or institution-to-human, or some "cultural zeitgeist"-to-human). Many who argue for a strong relationship between rhetoric and power presume a constructivist relationship among language, human interaction, and "reality."


Other works that deal indirectly with rhetoric and power include: Jacques Ellul, 1965; Michel Foucault, 1969, 1972;

10. Christian Smith depicts Chamorro’s win in Nicaragua as the disconcerting event that energizes critical self-examination by liberation theologians. He states,

   Events in Nicaragua took a surprising and dramatic turn when in February 1990 the Sandinistas were defeated by a coalition opposition led by Violetta Chamorro in a fair, democratic presidential election. This popular rejection of the Sandinista regime has raised serious questions for liberation theologians. Where did the Sandinista program go wrong? Do the Latin American people really want socialism? Are democratic elections and parliamentary politics reliable means to achieve liberationist goals? As of this writing, the full effect on liberation theologians of the Sandinista defeat by the Nicaraguan people has yet to be seen. However, it could prove to be an event troubling enough to force liberation theologians to reconsider some of their assumptions and strategies. (C. Smith, 1991:228)

Neither these situations nor these questions are answered, directly, in this dissertation but are fertile ground for future rhetorical analysis.

11. Note the use of Monroe's Motivated Sequence as a basis for organizing a speech to actuate. Monroe and Ehninger suggest a series of five steps to move the audience from passive listener to active participant: The speaker first gains the interest of the audience (“attention step”) then the speaker defines a problem(s) that affects the auditors (“need step”) a solution is presented to the need step (“satisfaction step”) and the speaker helps the audience to understand how much better the world will be once the solution is implemented (“visualization step”) and finally the auditor is invited to become an active participant in this process (“action step”). For further discussion see Douglas Ehninger, Bruce E. Gronbeck,

12. Burke claims in *A Grammar of Motives* that there is always a contextual locating in definitions, "To tell what a thing is, you place it in terms of something else. This idea of locating, or placing, is implicit in our very word for definition itself: to *define*, or *determine* a thing, is to mark its boundaries, hence to use terms that possess, implicitly at least, contextual reference" (Burke, 1945:24). This is similar to McGilvary's (1956) argument of perspective realism wherein he argues that entities are defined by their relationship to all other entities--there is both a contextual distinction and an essence which differentiates entities from other entities. My argument is that although definitions seem to narrow and place limits on something, the very nature of defining is to give humans order, hierarchy and to place our understanding of terms and ideas *in context* --that is, in similar or dissimilar relationship to other ideas and terms.

13. This observation is based upon: (1) ideational theories of meaning, popular among communication students, which claim that "meaning resides in people, not things," (Cherwitz and Hikins, 1986:74) and Barry Brummett's statement that, "Sensation alone is meaningless. To all experiences people give meaning....(1976:28)" and "People get meanings from other people through communication (1976:29);" (2) the "rhetoric as epistemic" literature which is sympathetic to claims that "meaning is something created and discovered in communication" (Cherwitz and Hikins, 1986:89-90, n.8); and (3) arguments about rhetorical criticism which claim that we cannot avoid being ideological because we all base our ideas upon personal histories, individually-biased philosophical assumptions, and intersubjective axiological systems (see, especially, the article by Phillip K. Wander (1983), and the subsequent responses, in *Central States Speech Journal* concerning
the ideological basis of rhetorical criticism—discussed at length in Chapter Two of this dissertation). Finally, based upon the above observations, there seems to be an enthymeme about rhetoric's relationship with ideology which argues:

Because meaning is in people, not things
and because all people are political/ideological beings
Therefore: all meaning is political/ideological.

14. Note the text *Rhetoric and Philosophy* edited by Richard Cherwitz (Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1990) which explores eight different philosophical positions and how each affects the definition of rhetoric, the practice of rhetoric, and the study matter of rhetoric.


17. Orthopraxis is defined by liberation theologians as "right actions." It is contrasted with orthodoxy (correct knowledge—literally correct opinions) and is cited as the basis for knowledge—correct actions (revolution or working for liberation) which determines thought. Orthopraxis is defined in depth in the chapter on Praxis.
18. In *Propaganda*, Ellul talks about orthopraxy (1965:25-32). He claims that modern propaganda, in order to be effective, “must constantly short-circuit all thought and decision” (1965:27, emphasis added). He proceeds to argue that modern propaganda does not seek adherence to an orthodoxy but seeks to obtain an orthopraxy, “an action that in itself, and not because of the value judgments of the person who is acting, leads directly to a goal, which for the individual is not a conscious and intentional objective to be attained, but which is considered such by the propagandist” (1965:27). While I believe Ellul’s emphasis on orthopraxy’s place in propaganda is well taken, I disagree with the implication that this is merely a Freudian subconscious action which leads to a goal which is not part of the value judgment of the person acting. The persuasive power of orthopraxy is that the action appears to the actor to achieve a desired end but it short circuits the thinking process because it urges the person to act without requesting an epistemological justification.
The more serious charge against liberation theology is that its sympathy for Marxism entails taking an "ideological" position that is foreign to the authentic substance of Christian faith. ...An ideological framework, as José Bonino contends, is always implicated in a given religious praxis. Every praxis articulates a view of reality and an ideology; there can be no neutrality. In the view of Juan Segundo, Christianity cannot avoid ideologies; God's revelation is never in a pure form; it is always fleshed out in historical ideologies. (Hoy, 1988:91; emphasis added)

There is a growing concern in the United States to understand the people and situations in Latin America. The old stereotype of the easy-going Latin taking an afternoon siesta has been shattered by images of political figures such as Oscar Arias of Costa Rica, the Ortega brothers of Nicaragua, General Manuel Noriega of Panama, and Fidel Castro of Cuba. It was easy to dismiss Latin Americans when they “kept their place” and were perceived as being a long
distance away from us. Now, however, the news media beam into our homes images of drug czars in Columbia, coup d'etat in Chile, uprisings in Panama, a Marxist-Leninist government in Nicaragua, civil war in El Salvador, our friends and relatives playing war games in Honduras, and a Latin population disillusioned about an ever-increasing debt. One way to begin to understand the people and situations in Latin America is to comprehend the influence of religion on their lives. The study of the influence of religion in Latin America can be done through an examination of the Base Ecclesial Communities and the popularity of liberation theology.

The purpose of this historical overview is to examine the influence and implications of the Base Ecclesial Communities (hereafter referred to as BECs) on the Latin American Roman Catholic Church and on political situations in Central America. In this section I present an overview of common themes in Liberation theology, define characteristics of BECs, examine how BECs helped to spread Liberation Theology, review how BECs are perceived to challenge the existing Church structures/organizations, and, finally, present
examples of BEC activity within El Salvador and Nicaragua.

In order for us to understand the context of Latin American liberation theology, the intellectual and cultural milieu which brought about the base ecclesial communities, and the subsequent politicized theology, I present an overview of some of the major developments and tenets of this theo-political position.

**Tenets of Liberation Theology**

The basic tenets of liberation theology, according to Tim Huffman consist of: (1) the perception of “history as one,” (2) Truth existing in action (praxis), (3) God’s special concern for the poor, (4) the Church’s use of all tools of analysis to understand what is happening in society,¹ (5) salvation as holistic, (6) the existence of evil within social systems, and (7) violence as an acceptable form of social change.²

Theologian Monika Hellwig outlines the tenets of liberation theology in an expanded form. Although she admits there are differences of opinion among “theologians of liberation,” Hellwig
claims there are five characteristics common to most versions of liberation theology. They are:

1. Political interpretation of the gospel, often expressed in the slogan, "history is one."

2. It arises directly out of the experience of the oppressed. This is treasured as an essential component by its participants, so that no one should claim the title of liberation theologian who is not personally and concretely identified with the oppressed in their struggles for liberation, and therefore able to reflect on the experience and action in which he participates. ...Theology is not found alongside the concern for the causes of suffering but arises out of that concern.

3. Theology is properly the critique of the praxis of the life of the believing community.

4. The epistemological and hermeneutic principle that undergirds Liberation theology is that truth is in action. [This] is not an assertion that pre-existent truth is to be humanly ascertained or recognized in action, but rather that the truth is constituted in actions, in fidelity, in the realization of promises. In other words, truth is not supra-historical, casting its shadows in history, but is essentially historical.

5. All theology is necessarily partisan. Every theology arises out of the perspective of a particular experience and a particular pattern of response within the experience. There is no such thing as a general, objective, or universal perspective for theology. [The perspective which is most privileged, however, is] the perspective arising out of the experience of the most oppressed, the sufferings of the excluded and the marginalized.

(Hellwig 1977:142-147; emphasis added)
Although not definitive, these two lists of the basic tenets of liberation theology will help to give a brief overview of some of the primary assumptions of this theological position and will help to enhance our understanding of the challenges presented to the Roman Catholic Church by the base ecclesial communities.

Background of BECs

Most historians of liberation theology and the base ecclesial communities agree that the seeds for the BEC movement began in Brazil. "Historians of the movement single out a handful of experiments in popular catechesis that began in the 1950s as being particularly significant milestones in the process that produced the comunidades (communities) in Brazil" (Cook 1985:64; see also Robert McAffee Brown, 1980:17-19). These experiments included, first, the 1956 lay missionary movement work begun by Dom Angelo Rossi who responded to the growth of protestantism and the lack of Catholic priests in the Barra do Pirai (Northwestern Brazil) by “...[mobilizing] 372 community coordinators... to hold 'mass
without a priest,' and in other ways to maintain a sense of com-
munity" (Cook 1985:64). Second, was the Movimento de Natal,
which was a grassroots education movement which used radio to:
(1) teach literacy, (2) conscientize its listeners (that is, to effect
changes in political, social and economic structures), and (3) to
take God to neglected communities; thus, it "... laid the ground-
work nationwide for the future of CEBs" (Cook 1985:64). Finally,
there were other isolated experiments which, "...fed into the swell-
ing stream of grassroots Christian education that would eventually
empty into the Amazon of the comunidades movement" (Cook
1985:65). Thus, the multidimensional combination of social, polit-
ical, and religious situations encouraged the rise of the BECs. The
social and political situations included the emergence of a group of
very poor people who were not receiving much attention or help
from their governments. The religious situations included the
changes in how the Vatican perceived the relationship between
the Church, the State, and the poor.
What were the main intentions and goals of these new groups? Marcello de C. Azevedo claims there were four main intentions or objectives behind the rise of BECs: "(1) To achieve an incarnate, missionary lifestyle in the world: (2) To be a poor Church by the side of the poor; (3) to foster more participatory and communitarian relationships; and (4) To develop flexible structures in line with urgent needs" (Azevedo, 1987:81-82). The growth of the BECs was tremendous, but what actually developed out of the early seeds of change? What was characteristic of this alternative approach to Roman Catholicism and political involvement?

**Characteristics of BECs**

Base ecclesial communities have been portrayed as a spiritual renewal movement concerned about reaching and helping the poor, having "Church" be more accessible to poor people, and having the institutionalized Church take more of an active role in the whole person--the spiritual, social, and personal dimensions. The involvement in the sociopolitical aspects of parishioners was
given greater attention. Dominique Barbé states, "The essence of the church base community is not in the political but in the religious realm. (However, what we have previously said about the relation between those two realms must not be forgotten [i.e., they cannot be easily separated])" (Barbé, 1982:106).

I contend that although the BECs maintain ties with the Church, many of the groups are politically/socially motivated; yet, they are portrayed as an embodiment of a sociopolitical utopian dream where all share their material goods and work together to bring about a millennial "kingdom of God" on this earth. One reason the BECs can be depicted as a political *movement*, however, is because they display developmental phases common to many mass movements. Barbé claims there are four developmental phases for the BECs:

*First*, a base community is in search of itself as a community; it is centered on the religious activities for which it was originally founded.

...*Second*, a base community participates in broader movements... These are called "popular movements"... those that are trying to organize themselves in the *barrios*, or on a nationwide level, to improve their existence.
...Third, a base community, so to speak, passes from the *barrio* to the factory. The people's base little by little is woven into a web of small organizations--of the *barrio*, of the factory, of farm workers who have learned to act together. From these have emerged the activists (*militantes*) who are working to regain control of their trade unions.

...Fourth, a base community raises the political question... It becomes necessary to build political parties in order to gain access to the political bodies that govern the nation.... (Barbé, 1982:105-106)

This developmental process of the BECs follows some of the organizational processes outlined by communication scholars[^6] and alludes to a loosely organized international movement (but centered, mainly, within Latin America). Nevertheless, how are the BECs related to the Roman Catholic Church? Do they claim to be parachurch organizations or maintain any official relationship with Roman Catholic or Protestant groups? Do they challenge existing church structure or thinking or do they tend to comply with the desires of the Pope? I define the relationship of the BECs to the Church in the next section.
Relationship of BECs to the Church

The BECs maintain a relationship with the Roman Catholic Church by means of their religious rituals and their religious organizers/leadership. Most BECs seem to begin with spiritual concerns where the intimacy of the small BEC is seen as a way to reduce the distance felt by participants in formal church settings, a way to be able to study the Bible together, taking the Eucharist, and, ultimately, making their Christianity more personal. Likewise, most of the people who organize the BECs are associated with the Church in the capacity of priests, nuns, or lay-helpers. In fact, many perceive the BEC movement as a Bible-study movement that organizes politically to help out with local community concerns. “The Christian Base Community movement sometimes appears not to be much more than a widespread Bible study movement, with an additional political and social dimension added to deal with specific local community concerns” (Hill, 1988:13).
Social/Political Involvement

One unique characteristic of the BECs, as per their own report, is their concern for the poor and their attempts to improve the living conditions of those in the *barrios*. Alvaro Barreiro, reviewing the situation in Brazil, emphasizes that most of the members were the *rural* poor--as opposed to the urban or suburban poor.

Nearly all the CEBs [CEB--*Comunidades Ecclesia de Base*--is the Spanish-based original form of BEC] in Brazil, located in the rural areas and, to a lesser extent, in the poor neighborhoods on the outskirts of cities, are communities of the poor. According to the study prepared by IBRADES (Brazilian Development Institute)... the locations of the CEBs, according to the area, are as follows: 53.5 percent in the rural area, 10.9 percent in the suburban area, and 16.8 percent in the urban area.(Barreiro, 1982:9)

Not only do the BECs target the poor communities, they also emphasize *action*, involvement, and commitment to the group. As noted earlier, the final three of the four phases of a BEC's development include getting involved in the political struggles--the emphasis is on *sociopolitical action*. "A group does not become a community until the day it decides to *act together*, to pass to action. Mission creates unity. Action permits verification of wheth-
er or not the word has truly taken on flesh" (Barbé, 1980:99). The amount of organization and the sheer numbers of individuals involved in the BECs impacted society, social attitudes, and perceptions about political involvement.

'Basic Christian Communities' may have contributed to a limited yet irreversible shift in popular attitudes. By nurturing hope and alternative visions of society, in the midst of political repression, they seem to have played a part in creating fresh reserves of radicalized opinion. They have also offered new models of political involvement owing little to traditional clientelist (sic) positions. (Medhurst, 1986:205)

Utopian Outlook

Finally, by their own admission, the BECs are extremely utopian in their descriptions of themselves and their potential achievements. This is particularly true of Leonardo Boff's descriptions about how BECs reinvent the Church. Boff's description of these communities almost make them sound like "heaven on earth." First, according to Boff, the base ecclesial communities are more interested in "building a living church rather than multiplying material structures" (L. Boff, 1986:4). Boff depicts the communities as achieving a more vital, lively, intimate
participation in a more or less homogeneous entity, as their members seek to live the essence of the Christian message. The clearer utopian perception can be seen in his depiction of the interdependent relationships among the members; relationships not marred by the "sin" of capitalistic societies.

Christian life in the basic communities is characterized by the absence of alienating structures, by direct relationships, by reciprocity, by a deep communion, by mutual assistance, by communality of gospel ideals, by equality among members. The specific characteristics of a society are absent here: rigid rules; hierarchies; prescribed relationships in a framework of functions, qualities, and titles. (Boff, 1986:4)

The utopian descriptions of BECs are somewhat tempered, however, with a certain amount of realism. Despite the depictions of a communal utopia, Boff assuages his critics by tempering his utopian descriptions.

Community does not constitute a typical phase of human-group formation. Nor is it possible for community to exist in a pure state. Concretely, there is always a power structure, in either the dominative or the solidarity version. There are always inequalities and stratified roles, in function of some particular scale of values. (Boff, 1986:5)
Despite the utopian depictions of the BECs and the degree to which these expectations can be met, the BECs attempt to be true to their name: base ecclesial communities. They claim to be “of the base” because they targeted the poor and “marginalized.” They claim to be ecclesial because many BECs began with an emphasis on popularizing Roman Catholic religious rituals and allowing more personal involvement in deciding what it means to “be the church.” Finally, many claim to be a community because they encourage group homogeneity, democratic decision-making, communal living, and interdependent relationships among the participants. Despite their success or failure to meet these goals, the BECs have been successful in challenging the hierarchically top-heavy Roman Catholic Church and in confronting those Protestant groups which have placed more emphasis on acceptance by the status quo rather than evangelization of the masses.
Challenges of the BECs to the Church

There are differing opinions about the extent of the BECs challenge to the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches. Guillermo Cook notes that there was a "notable cooling in the attitude of CELAM toward the CEBs between Medellín [1968] and Puebla [1979]" (Cook, 1985:241). Yet CELAM's attitudes did not deter what the BECs were able to accomplish. Similarly, Brazilian Jules Loredo believes the BECs threat to the Catholic Church was greater than it is now. "The BCC's [Basic Christian Communities] were more powerful during their heyday in the late 1970s and early 1980s. They are now more muted, and we are witnessing a certain reduction in leftist agitation here in Brazil and elsewhere," (Cunningham and Solimeo, 1989:20).

Nevertheless, the challenge seems to be present. The BECs are challenging the very core of the Roman Catholic Church by questioning its hierarchical structures, its formal liturgy, and the degree of its social involvement.
...Our ways of living and understanding the faith are challenged by the vitality and creativity of the popular movements and the basic ecclesial communities. [The challenge is] mainly along three lines: (a) the profound relationship between the Kingdom, human history, and the church, (b) evangelization and the basic ecclesial communities [evangelization as the “preferential option for the poor” and social liberation]; and (c) the following of Jesus. (From the Final Document of the International Ecumenical Congress of Theology in Torres and Eagleson, 1980:235-236)

Likewise, some claim that the BECs’ “protestantization” of Roman Catholicism challenges those Protestant groups who have attempted to legitimate themselves rather than maintain their commitment to those grassroots peoples from which those churches sprang.

At one level the CEBs represent a return to what Protestants believe is a more scriptural mode of the church, but at a deeper level the grassroots understanding of ecclesiality is far more radical than what many Protestants would be willing to accept. In fact, the Catholic communities challenge the Protestant mission in Latin America at both levels: their present church-mission and their loss of grassroots identity. The challenge of the CEBs is, at heart, a very Protestant challenge. (Cook, 1980:235)

Despite the BECs’ abilities to challenge the Protestant groups, they have been extremely successful in challenging the organization from which they arose. “The greatest challenge of the
Catholic *communidades de base*, is, of course, to their own church...

Ultimately, it is a challenge to the Roman See" (Cook, 1980:241).

Cook goes on to delineate the fourfold challenge of the BECs and the significance of each challenge.

1. The comunidades are historically significant because they challenge the monolithic self-understanding of the Catholic Church... their ecclesial style is a quiet revolt against ecclesiastical institutionalism and lack of community, as well as against centuries-old church-state alliances.

2. The comunidades are sociologically significant because they are both a critique and a creative consequence of Catholic institutionalism... but have not spun off into a new church... nor has the Vatican, to date, been able to mold the movement into an instrument of its ecclesiastical policies....

3. These Catholic grassroots communities are ecclesiologically significant because they are challenging the traditional Catholic pyramidal church structure. The monopoly of word and sacrament by the clergy and the concentration of ministries and privileges in the hierarchy are being questioned by the ecclesial praxis of the comunidades.

4. Finally, the grassroots communities challenge traditional Catholicism in its missionary theory and practice. The comunidades are a creative response to the challenge that has been posed to the Catholic Church by Protestant numerical growth in Latin America. (Cook, 1980:2-3)

The BECs challenge to the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church seems especially important because the credibility of
the authoritarian structure seems to rely on the presumption that this hierarchy was ordained by God and must be maintained and revered as it is.

It is this very challenge of religious and sociopolitical hierarchies that has caused some Latin Americans to feel dissonance. They find it difficult to align their religious loyalties with their disillusionment with the sociopolitical situations and/or their lack of enthusiasm for a "socially irrelevant" religion. Liberation theology, for many, seems to be the ultimate solution; this theological system redefines their faith and gives them a moral imperative to change the sociopolitical situations. Thus, when clergy leaders espouse their "option for the poor" interpretation of Scripture it presupposes an emphasis on social/political action. Thus, liberation theology is quickly spread among the BECs because it gives them a theological system from which it is easy to spring into revolutions that are to transform the present society into a promised utopia for tomorrow.
BECs and theology come together in the grounding experience of poverty and oppression as a central reality of our world and a challenge to our faith. It is basic to perceiving the mystery of humanity in history, and it is no less basic as a means of accepting the mystery of God. It also calls us urgently to transform the situation, which is marked by sin and in need of salvation and liberation. (Azevedo. 1987:195)

With the spread of liberation theology in the BECs, there was also the emphasis on taking action--political action--to help "redeem the sinful social systems." Many times this "redemptive action" took the form of overt Marxist-Leninist revolution, such as took place in Nicaragua, while other times it amounted to challenges to the Roman Catholic hierarchy and local political situations--such as took place in a BEC in San Salvador.

**Political Influence of BECs**

Nicaragua

The BEC movement in Nicaragua seemed to have different goals and agendas than the Bible studying utopian communities depicted by many of the previously quoted Brazilian authors.
The BECs in Nicaragua seemed to radicalize quite quickly, not only aligning themselves against the unjust government of "Tachito" Somoza but also aligning themselves with the openly Marxist-Leninist guerrilla group FSLN (Frente Sandinista de Liberación National). According to Humberto Belli, there were two prominent BEC groups in Nicaragua. One of the Nicaraguan groups was begun by Uriel Molina in Managua, Nicaragua.

Fr. Molina organized a "base community" in his parish of Fatima, in a very poor barrio of Managua. The members of the community were mostly upper-class students who came to live under Fr. Molina's roof in the first weeks of 1972. The group felt a sympathy for the struggle of the FSLN, but found it difficult to square with their Christian beliefs. A new theological approach, "theology of liberation," as advocated by Fr. Molina, provided a way out of this impasse. (Belli, 1985:20; emphasis added)

Molina's group, the University Community of El Riguero, consisted of many children from the upper-class families who wanted to "live outside the influence of our family. We'd even earn our own living because we didn't want our experiment to be financed by our parents, by the bourgeoisie. We wanted something more pure" (Randall, 1983:129). Although written from the
opposite perspective of Humberto Belli (1985), Randall (1983), too, admits that the BECs played an important role in the spreading of liberation theology and the revolution of 1979. Roberto Gutierrez, one of the individuals interviewed for Randall’s book admits that the students from the University of Central America specifically sought out Fr. Uriel Molina because he “was up-to-date on all the new ideas of liberation theology. . . .If he had been a traditional priest, we probably would not have gone to live that experience with him” (Randall, 1983:129).

The BEC of El Riguero played a central role in the Revolution. Not only did it help the young people to “resolve” the apparent anomaly dichotomizing their religion and the revolution, it opened up a gate for physical involvement in the revolution against Somoza. One member of El Riguero stated that joining the BEC was the preliminary to joining the Revolution. “The community was the step we took just before becoming revolutionaries. It offered more possibilities, more freedom to become politicized--and we did, very quickly” (Randall, 1983:137). Soon after the university
students joined the BEC, they became involved in local strikes and political action but wanted to become involved in a larger effort to overthrow the government.

We knew we weren't any kind of political alternative for our country. The only way to effect real change was to be a militant in a political party aimed at taking over power. ...So we set out to find out about the Font [FSLN]: what they thought and what their strategy was. It is interesting that our decision to find out more about the FSLN coincided with the Sandinistas' interest in us. They had heard that some Christians living in the barrio were doing mass organizing. This was tempting to the FSLN. Our class background meant that we'd have access to material resources... And we had dozens of people organized into circles from which cadre might be recruited. We had developed a kind of political structure throughout the neighborhood. (Randall, 1983:156)

A second Nicaraguan BEC, one that gained worldwide acclaim, was begun by Fr. Ernesto Cardenal. Cardenal began his version of a BEC on the island of Solentiname on Lake Nicaragua in 1965 (Belli, 1985:20). Cardenal, a renowned poet in his own right, encouraged other artists to join him in his base community and, additionally, claimed to have helped some of the poor fishermen in his area. Nevertheless, Cardenal's group did their own version of communal living, base ecclesial services, and, later on, openly
advocated the FSLN's numerous attempts to overthrow the Somo-
san government. Similar to the justification by other groups cited
earlier, Cardenal claims that it was the study of the Bible (with an
option for the poor) that radicalized his little community and, soon
afterward, committed them to advocate violence, or any other
means necessary to achieve the overthrow of Somoza (Cardenal,

Belli does not "blame the revolution," on the Nicaraguan BECs.
What he does argue, however, is that the FSLN knew they
wouldn't be able to win the Nicaraguan people on their own, so
the "revolutionary Christians" and any Catholic Church
representatives helped to legitimate the Marxist revolution.

As mostly upper-class youngsters, the revolutionary
Christians were able to provide the FSLN with some key logi-
tical support. ...Through its association with the revolu-
tionary Christians, the FSLN could give an air of greater le-
gitimacy to its struggles and increase appeal to the masses
of Nicaraguan Christians who were deeply alienated from
the unchecked corruption of the Somoza dictatorship. (Belli,
1985:21)
El Salvador

Not all the BECs are involved in trying to attain a specific national agenda, however. The 1986 work, *Faith of a People: The Story of a Christian Community in El Salvador, 1970-1980*, is an anonymously written account of BECs outside of San Salvador, El Salvador, by a European priest who was eventually expelled from the country. This account focuses specifically on the religious and social impact of the BECs. The author, who used the pseudonym Pablo Galdámez, worked in the San Salvador slum areas from 1970 to 1980. This particular account of the BECs is a personal, reflective narrative which focuses on the religious and social dimensions of what he was able to do in the BECs: starting small Bible-study groups, helping the people overcome alcoholism, cooperating to clean up the unsanitary conditions, teaching the people about the need to be married in the Church (not necessarily the institutionalized local Roman Catholic group, however), and teaching them about the need to obey God and help their fellow humans. Galdámez depicts the BECs in San Salvador as groups
which focused on the spiritual and physical needs of their people-devoid of any overt political agenda.

Other statements, though, reveal the political involvement of the BECs and the presumption that they must be that way. Galdámez condemns the charismatic Protestant groups who preached that gospel commitment was to God rather than social change (Galdámez, 1986:60) he condones the majority of individuals in the BECs who joined the "burgeoning popular organizations," (Galdámez, 1986:57) and he insists that the dichotomy between personal conversion and social transformation is a false dichotomy. "After all, behind every personal conversion is, at least in seed, a social commitment. ...The correct solution to this false dilemma, then, was a personal, interior commitment to the social task" (Galdámez, 1986:56).

Although portrayed, initially, as motivated by spiritual concerns, the author reveals that the BECs of San Salvador politically aligned themselves against the traditional Roman Catholic Church, against the Salvadoran government, and against the
“evil social system” which, because it promotes individualism and capitalism, repressed and marginalized the poor. In essence, they were overtly political, openly socialist or Marxist in their ideological orientation, and they encouraged subversive groups whom they thought would alleviate their social situation.

**BECs’ Relation to Church and to State: Conclusions**

It would be overly naive to condemn all BECs as hotbeds of Marxist-Leninist subversive activities. It remains, however, that the very existence of these groups challenged the status quo; they challenged the attitudes and methods of both the Church (Catholic and Protestant) and the governments. Many of the BECs may have started out to educate, organize, and spiritually unify the growing number of Latin American poor people, but they were easily set upon by those who hoped to achieve particular political agendas. The BEC organizations were ideal arrangements for infiltration by alternative groups with specific political agendas and, likewise, were easy stepping stones for those wishing to
organize a "popular movement" with an overt political agenda.

The BECs were especially useful in the propagation of liberation theology. The BECs targeted the very poor whom liberation theology claimed were the very embodiment of Jesus Christ. Liberation theology emphasized action; thus, those religious leaders who adhered to this position were admonished to help organize the BECs as a political movement. Finally, despite cries to the contrary, the religious leaders’ level of credibility with the Latin American people, combined with the preconceptions of liberation theology, helped to legitimate the existence and the political involvement of the BECs.

One of the charges leveled against the BECs, and the ensuing theology of liberation, is a propagation of a "politicized" or an "ideologized" version of Christianity. These charges, which would either be denied flatly or returned by means of an *et tu quoque* argument, have tended to fall on "deaf ears" because the label "ideology" has either referred to an "idealized" version of the world whose affects none can escape, or else it is used pejoratively with
little theoretical bite to its vindictive bark. I turn, then to an ex-
amination of the relationship between rhetoric and ideology.
CHAPTER II ENDNOTES


2. Tim Huffman, visiting lecturer from Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, Ohio, class notes from Donald Cooper's History 651.03, April 17, 1989, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.

3. By this they mean that social, political, and theological issues and activities are not easily divisible into distinct, separate entities which have little or no overlap--author.

4. "CEB" represents *communidades eclesias de base*, the Spanish name for what I have abbreviated "BEC."

5. Many of these changes came about as a result of the Church's official position as defined by Vatican II in 1962 and the CELAM conference in Medellín, Columbia in 1968.

6. John Waite Bowers and Donovan Ochs, *The Rhetoric of Agitation and Control* (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1971) depict several stages or strategies through which most ideological movements pass:

   (1) Petition the sources of power, (2) Promulgation--


7. For examples, see the transcripts of the Bible studies of the

8. "Humberto Belli is a native Nicaraguan who was a Marxist and a member of the Sandinista movement before becoming a Christian in 1977. He is trained as a lawyer (University of Madrid) and a sociologist (Masters degree from the University of Pennsylvania). After the Sandinista revolution in 1979, Belli worked as editorial page editor of the independent daily newspaper, *La Prensa*, often exploring the theme of church and state interaction. The imposition of total censorship on the press in March 1982 made this work impossible. He move to the United States to continue communicating about the difficulties that Christians in Nicaragua are facing. Belli is founder of the Puebla Institute, a non-profit organization concerned with fostering a Christian understanding of theological and socio-political issue affecting Latin America." Humberto Belli, *Breaking Faith*, (Westchester, Illinois: Crossway Books and The Puebla Institute), 1985:272.
CHAPTER III:IDEOLOGY

'Ideology' has become a hackneyed topic for discussion, but it can mean just about anything. In common usage, it means "any opinion different from mine," always with an unfavorable connotation. (Ellul, 1988:1)

Ellul's statement denotes his determination of the degree to which the current use of the term ideology has deteriorated. Ideology has come to mean quite a few different things, many of which will be discussed in this chapter, but current employment of this term is most frequently the pejorative. This chapter provides an historical overview of the prevailing uses and definitions of ideology found within philosophy and rhetoric. It begins with the inception of the term and then proceeds to the contemporary use of this term within rhetoric. I argue that we have placed ourselves in a philosophically untenable position because we have
assumed that those who discuss ideology are talking about the same thing whereas, in fact, the term is used in various ways. As a result, I argue for the need to clearly define this term, and I argue against the prevailing notion that all knowledge and meaning is ideological.

Overview of the Term “Ideology”

Although Karl Mannheim argues that Bacon’s *Idols* can be interpreted as the forerunner of ideology,¹ the French theorist-reformer, Destutt de Tracy, has been credited with coining the word *idéologie* in 1796. This term was used to identify his (and his friends’) “science of ideas’—a program (inherited from Locke) of reductive semantic analysis” which they hoped would help lead to institutional reforms in France (Braybrooke, 1967:125).² The pejorative use of the word was instituted by Napoleon when he attempted to dismiss these French thinkers/reformers as “impractical visionaries and persecuted them with ridicule, allegedly under the name *idéologues*” (Braybrooke, 1967:125). Marx co-
opted Napoleon's negative connotation of the term and used it to
denote a form of "false class consciousness" imposed on the indi-
vidual by elites in a system in order to maintain control over the
remaining individual members of the system. According to Ray-
mond Williams, Marx uses the term *ideology* in three senses:

1. A system of beliefs characteristic of a particular class
or group.
2. A system of illusory beliefs--false ideas or false con-
sciousness--which can be contrasted with true or scientific
knowledge.
3. The general process of the production of meanings and
ideas. (Williams, 1977:55)

Pryor claims that Marx's sense (1) "constitutes an epistemologi-
cal break from the French physiocrats (Condillac, de Tracy) who
had argued that ideas were the product of individual psychologi-
cal processes and physical sensations" (Pryor, 1985:4-5). For
Marx, society and economics determine the individual's ideas
rather than the individual's ideas determining society and eco-
nomics. Marx's sense (3), according to Pryor, "is a more neutral
conception of ideology where the production of meanings and
ideas is regarded as a general and universal process, and ideology
refers to the set of ideas which arise from a given set of material conditions..." (Pryor, 1985:4-5). Neither of Marx's distinctions aid our understanding of what Kenneth Minogue (1985) calls the "pure theory of ideology"--the essence of ideology. Marx's attacks on ideology were not intended as part of any rigorous academic review but were an attempt to lay blame and to see how he could instigate utopian revolution.

Mannheim also attempted to delineate the characteristics of ideology by comparing and contrasting it to the term utopia in his major work, Ideology and Utopia. By the end of the treatise, Mannheim's definition of ideology is still not clear. Minogue claims that Mannheim's definition best approximates "thought understood as determined by social conditions," (Minogue, 1985:42). This emphasis, claims Minogue, "...further muddied the waters by distinguishing ideology from utopia in terms of 'congruence with reality.' Mannheim himself admits (p.176), 'To determine concretely...what in a given case is ideological and what is utopian is extremely difficult'" (Minogue, 1985:231 n. 8). One way Man-
nheim distinguishes ideology from utopia, though, is by arguing a present orientation for ideology and a future orientation for utopia (Mannheim, 1949:173ff). This distinction emphasizes that ideology is grounded in the “present,” the “here-and-now reality.”

Minogue’s claim about the difficulty of determining the difference between what is ideological and what is utopian is reinforced simply by contrasting Mannheim’s comparison between these two terms and Gustavo Gutiérrez’s (1973) comparison between these two terms. Gutiérrez argues almost the opposite of Mannheim’s distinction between ideology and utopia. He claims that Liberation Theology is not an ideology but a utopia. Gutiérrez argues for a distinction that identifies ideology as something which masks reality because it, “does not offer adequate and scientific knowledge of reality” and it “does not rise above the empirical, irrational level” (Gutiérrez, 1973:235). Utopia, on the other hand is characterized by three elements: its relationship to historical reality, its verification in praxis, and its rational nature” (Gutiérrez, 1973:232). Gutiérrez argues that utopia’s relationship to historical
reality is complex, dynamic and is characterized by denunciation of the existing order; in addition, it is also an annunciation of a new social order which is to come (Gutiérrez, 1973:233). Its verification in praxis is based on Freire’s ideas that denunciation and annunciation can only be achieved “...in the praxis” (Gutiérrez, 1973:234).

This is what we mean when we talk about a utopia which is a driving force of history and subversive of the existing order. If utopia does not lead to action in the present, it is an evasion of reality. ...Utopia must necessarily lead to a commitment to support the emergence of a new social consciousness and new relationships among people. Otherwise, the denunciation will remain at a purely verbal level and the annunciation will be only an illusion. (Gutiérrez, 1973:234).

The rational dimension of utopia is defended by quoting Paul Blanquart who claims that utopia “is not irrational except as it relates to a transcended state of reason (the reason of conservatives), since in reality it takes the place of true reason”³ (Gutiérrez, 1973:234). Gutiérrez argues further that utopias are neither opposed to, nor outside of science and arise at “times of transition and crisis, when science has reached its limits in its explanation of social reality; [thus the utopias become] ...the prelude of
science, its annunciation" (Gutiérrez, 1973:234). How this constitutes reason, Gutiérrez never explains; ideology is depicted as tending to "dogmatize all that has not succeeded in separating itself from it or has fallen under its influence" while utopia is said to lead to "an authentic and scientific knowledge of reality and to a praxis which transforms what exists" (Gutiérrez, 1973:235).

Mannheim and Gutiérrez's distinctions between ideology and utopia are intriguing but do not add significantly to our understanding of ideology. My definition maintains Mannheim's distinction concerning ideology as present-oriented and utopia as future oriented but, as Minogue points out, the contemporary use of these terms (ideology and utopia) have become too fuzzy to be of much help. Nevertheless, it is significant to note that when either of the concepts is linked to action, whether ideology or utopia, its justification is linked to socio-historical reality. This distinction is important to my contention that a clearer definition of ideology has a philosophically realist base and is a point which is not as clearly emphasized in the following scholars' use of the term
ideology.

Kenneth Burke identifies seven separate definitions for ideology in his book *A Rhetoric of Motives*. These definitions include:

1. The study, development, criticism of ideas, considered in themselves. (As in a Socratic dialogue.)
2. A system of ideas, aiming at social or political action. (Pareto's sociology, or Hitler's *Mein Kampf.*
3. Any set of interrelated terms, having practical civic consequences, directly or indirectly. (A business men's code of fair practices might be a good instance.)
4. "Myth" designed for purposes of governmental control. ("Ideology" would here be an exact synonym for "myth of the state.")
5. A partial, hence to a degree deceptive, view of reality, particularly when the limitations can be attributed to "interest-begotten prejudice." (For instance, a white Southern intellectual's "ironic resignation" to a status quo built on "white supremacy.")
6. Purposefully manipulated overemphasis or underemphasis in the discussion of controversial political and social issues.
7. An inverted genealogy of culture, that makes for "illusion" and "mystification" by treating ideas as primary where they should have been treated as derivative. (Burke, 1962:104)

Burke's preferred definition, in this text, is the last definition; hence, his use of the terms *illusion* and *mystification* indicate his predisposition to the classical Marxist definition of ideology as false consciousness. Burke offers little help in finding a theoreti-
cal definition of *ideology* (as opposed to a descriptive definition) and his subsequent writings do not further clarify the issue. The reason for this is that Burke "never developed his initial encounters with the concept of ideology.... Thus, *A Rhetoric Of Motives* concludes by developing not a practice of ideology analysis but a philosophy of myth" (Pryor, 1985:10-11). Pryor argues that Burke, for unknown reasons, drops the analysis of ideology and descends into the "caverns of the symbolic" (p.11) and that he was "followed there by his subsequent interpreters in the field of speech criticism" (1985:12). I will examine these rhetorical interpreters in more detail in the next section and determine whether they follow Burke and Marx's examples in their definitions of ideology or whether they begin from different initial assumptions. Before doing that, let us briefly review several non-rhetorical scholars' definitions of ideology.

Antony Flew, in his *Dictionary of Philosophy*, suggests that ideology may be taken to mean "generally, any system of ideas and norms directing political and social action" (Flew, 1979:162). Flew
distinguishes between two Marxist uses of the term: (1) "false consciousness" as used by Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology* and (2) "other Marxist contexts...where the emphasis is on metaphysics, the word embraces all ideas of every sort, and the contrast is between ideological superstructure and material foundations" (Flew, 1979:162).

Most other philosophers tend to agree with Flew's assessment of the Marxist interpretations but William Reese's *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion* adds a new twist to the definition of ideology. Reese quotes the American philosopher Willard Van Orman Quine who, "distinguishing meaning from reference, ...calls the former 'ideology,' treating under this head the analytic-synthetic distinction, synonymy and similar problems" (Reese, 1980:475). Thus, according to Quine, "'ideology' is a near synonym of 'meaning.' [Quine] thus uses the term in something like its literal sense" (Reese 1980:245). Within the camps of philosophers and sociologists the definition of this term runs the gamut from Marxist notions of false consciousness to the examination of ideas and
their relationship to meaning.

If the attempt to find a definition for ideology from philosophers and sociologists is confusing, the attempt to find a definition among neo-Marxist thinkers is even more so. Raymond Williams' *Keywords* offers a new analogy to help us understand the concept of false consciousness when he notes that Marx and Engels also illustrated the term ideology as the "upside-down version of reality" as when a photographer looks through the lens of a camera (Williams, 1976:127). Williams goes on to note that Engels believed in an ideology hierarchy. Engels believed "the 'higher ideologies'--philosophy and religion--were more removed from material interests than the direct ideologies of politics and law" (Williams, 1976:128). Finally, Williams explains that the sense of ideology as "the set of ideas which arise from a given set of material interests has been at least as widely used as the sense of ideology as illusion. *Moreover, each sense has been used, at times very confusingly, within the Marxist tradition*" (Williams, 1976:129; emphasis added). The lack of a consistent definition of ideology
and the lack of the consistent use of the term is both longstanding
and pervasive.

Jacques Ellul, a scholar on Marx and social systems and institutions, claims that he adheres to Raymond Aaron's statement that an ideology is "any set of ideas accepted by individuals or peoples, without attention to their origin or value. But one must perhaps add... (1) an element of valuation (cherished ideas), (2) an element of actuality (ideas relating to the present), and (3) an element of belief (believed, rather than proved, ideas)" (Ellul, 1965:116). Ellul distinguishes ideology from myth by arguing that myth is embedded more deeply, is less "doctrinaire," is more intellectually diffuse, and has stronger powers of activation. Ellul contrasts the activation of myth with the more passive ideology by claiming that "one can believe in an ideology and yet remain on the sidelines" (1965:116). Ellul lists several myths: Work, Progress, and Happiness, and contrasts them with ideologies: Nationalism, Democracy, Socialism, and Communism (1965:117).
Years later, Ellul modified his definition of ideology, contrasting it with political doctrine or worldview. First, he recognized that the term ideology has become a pejorative denunciation of any opposing opinion, "different from mine," always with an unfavorable connotation" (Ellul, 1988:1). He then proceeded to define ideology as, "... the popularized sentimental degeneration of a political doctrine or worldview; it involves a mixture of passions and rather incoherent intellectual elements, always related to present realities" (Ellul, 1988:1).

Ellul differentiates between ideology and worldview by stating that ideology is "popularized sentiment," involves a mixture of passions, is "intellectually incoherent" and is always "related to present realities." Whereas he regards worldview, by his very definition, as that which has not been degenerated, is not popularized sentiment, is not always related to present realities and IS intellectually coherent. From the perspective of rhetorical theory and realizing that it is difficult to maintain pure dichotomous distinctions between pathos and logos within human interactions, I
find it untenable to maintain Ellul's distinctions between worldview and ideology. Isn't a person's worldview always related to "present realities?" If it is not grounded in a present reality, then how can it be a functional/pragmatic worldview rather than an idyllic utopia? Can one have a worldview which would not impinge upon his/her ontological perception and, consequently, any subsequent actions? My argument against Ellul's distinction is reinforced by Minogue's conceptualization of ideology as a symbiotic relationship between theory and practice.\(^5\)

"Ideology" Within Rhetorical Scholarship

Further exploration of ideology within the field of rhetoric fares no better than the Marxists and the philosophers in clarifying the nature of ideology. Similar to the definitions from philosophy and Marxism, the literature in rhetoric dealing with ideology reflects a lack of preciseness of definition; unlike philosophy and Marxism, though, rhetoric has an abbreviated history of concern with the term ideology. For the most part, the definitions
available for ideology in the rhetoric literature have been borrowed from the thought processes taking place in philosophy and sociology.

Although the concept of ideology has been discussed in other academic disciplines since the 1920s/1930s, it became an accepted focus of study in rhetoric only within the last two decades. Pryor argues that several factors operated in concert to exclude the concept of ideology from rhetorical criticism. These included "the value-laden nature of the subject matter; the inherent elusiveness of ideological thought; the defensiveness of established intellectual classes who see scientific probing into the social roots of ideas as threatening to their status; and the infancy of the discipline" (Pryor, 1985:7). For the mainstream rhetorician, "ideology's" association with Marxist thought and related totalitarian regimes, the rhetorical scholar's commitment to free speech, and the "closed universe" of the [Neo-] Aristotelian paradigm (that is, the text, speaker, audience relationship), all contributed to excluding the study of ideology (Pryor, 1985:8). The development of the
study of ideology by American rhetorical scholars seems to parallel their relatively recent tendency toward skepticism and their loss of faith in "the American system."

Articles in rhetorical journals which include the concept of ideology in their criticism include: Balthrop, 1984; Bass and Cherwitz, 1978; Black, 1984; Brown, 1978; Corcoran, 1983; Farrell, 1976; Foss, 1982; McGee, 1978, 1980; McKerrow, 1983; Mumby, 1988, 1989; and Solomon, 1988. Yet despite the use of the word in the title of their papers or in their analyses, most of these scholars fail to define ideology and fail to present philosophical justification for the use of the term within rhetorical studies. Most seem to simply assume a link between rhetoric and ideology. Some of these authors employ the terms culture, ideology, myth, vision, and worldview interchangeably, thereby heightening the confusion.

Only a few authors describe what ideology does or compare and contrast ideology with terms such as: myth, vision, or worldview. Bass and Cherwitz (1978, hereafter, B&C) contrast ideology with sacred myth and define a sacred myth as "an immutable
truth from which a system of normative ethics is derived” (p. 214). Sacred myths are emotive, include divine beings, and are surrounded by a cosmological aura (B&C, 1978:214-15). Ideologies, on the other hand, are more programmatic and materially oriented. They are capable of binding people together through references to historical and political events, and appeals to a material orientation to the world. They are also pragmatic, are not preordained, are occasioned by and constructed in response to particular circumstances, and are restricted by time. They employ principles rather than pronouncements, and are collective beliefs (B&C, 1978:215-16). The closest these authors come to a definition of ideology is, “a rhetorical tool employed by a societal grouping of people to secure, maintain, and justify political power by offering an explanation of historical reality” (B&C, 1978:217).

V. William Balthrop (1984) argues that the cultural whole subsumes ideology and he quotes Panikkar (1973:21) to define ideology as “the demythologized part of the view you have of the world...that enable[s] you to locate yourself rationally...in the
world at a particular time, in a particular space" (Balthrop, 1984:343). He goes on to argue that "Ideology thus establishes relations and explains who is responsible for what and why particular events have occurred" (Balthrop, 1984:343).

Finally, there were a series of articles, spanning ten years, which attempted to equate another term with ideology--public knowledge. This discussion originated with articles by Michael Calvin McGee (1975, 1977) who argues that "there is an imminently present 'people' possessed of an historically-material 'ideology'" (McGee and Martin, 1983:47) and an article by Lloyd Bitzer (1978) which argues that there is a timeless 'public' possessed of a unique kind of 'knowledge' (Bitzer, 1978:67-93). Bitzer's and McGee's articles were succeeded by critiques and subsequent analysis by McGee and Martin (1983) and Charles Kneupper (1985). The interesting part of this exchange, for this study, is the attempt to either equate ideology and "public knowledge" (McGee and Martin, 1983) or to argue that public knowledge subsumes ideology (Kneupper, 1985:187). Despite the descriptions and the com-
parisons, we still lack a definition of what ideology is because we remained trapped in describing what ideology does. The concept of ideology has initiated discussion within the field of rhetoric but the field has yet to clarify the term or delineate its relationship with rhetoric.

There is one major dialogue about ideology in rhetorical journals. This conversation involved direct give-and-take between several scholars and was instigated by an article written by Philip Wander (1983) which argued for a type of rhetorical criticism which he called ideological criticism. The exchange comprised six responses in subsequent issues of the Central States Speech Journal and ended with Wander's rejoinder. This colloquy has direct bearing on the interaction between rhetoric and ideology--especially in rhetorical criticism--and, as a result, I will summarize it more extensively than the articles mentioned previously.

In his initial article Wander argues, among other things, that all rhetorical criticism is ideological (whether or not the ideological dimensions are treated explicitly by the author) and that rhetori-
cal criticism should be ideological—that is, it should be socially relevant and it should attempt to exert "emancipatory change." However, Wander fails to give a clear definition of ideology and of what is ideological. In the first of the subsequent responses, Alan Megill critiques Wander for presenting two versions of ideology and for never resolving the issue concerning which of the definitions should be accepted. The first definition Wander presents, according to Megill, is ideology as "critical study of ideas," based upon the critic's subjective point of view. The second is ideology as the classical Marxian notion of false consciousness, rather than the all-inclusive notion of "all socially and politically relevant ideas" (Megill, 1983:116-117). Forbes Hill (1983), on the other hand, assumes that Wander defines ideology as "the partiality of 'party' interest in its formulation of reality and likewise 'the connection between what is embraced or concealed and the interests served by a particular formulation'" (Hill, 1983:122).

Wander contends that all rhetorical critics become emancipatory ideologues but fails to delineate from what we are being
freed and to what we are urged to offer adherence. Most importantly for this study, Wander fails to provide an understanding of ideology. Ultimately, Wander argues that the "ideological turn" consists in acknowledging: (1) the existence of crisis, (2) the influence of established, powerful interests, (3) the reality of alternative world-views, (4) the need to engage in right actions, and (5) that "good" and "right" are situated in an historical context (Wander, 1983:18). The most that can be deduced about ideology from all of this is that it results from a high level of paranoia about some "alien other" who influences our thoughts and actions for his/her/its benefit.

Other critics have also found reason for concern within Wander's metacriticism. Responses to Wander (1983) came from Megill, Rosenfield, Hill, McGee, Francesconi, and Corcoran. Similarly, the responses fail to tender a definition of ideology, they present inadequate philosophical foundations, and they fail to question Wander's reasons for the necessity to incorporate ideological concerns in rhetorical theory or rhetorical analysis.
Megill reproves Wander for his lack of definitional preciseness, his lack of understanding of Heiddeger's works, and accuses Wander of being a materialist. Megill, building on McGee's 1980 article, distinguishes between two conceptualizations of ideology. On the one hand are those symbolically-inclined rhetorical critics who see the "possibility of transcending the material determinations of the social order" through political myths. These theorists, argues Megill, posit ideology as a set of "voluntary agreements to create and to participate in the political order" (Megill, 1983:116). On the other hand are the materially-inclined rhetorical critics who see myth/ideology as, "an idea-system that seeks to advance material interests in society" (Megill, 1983:116). Megill's distinction is, essentially, epistemological and characterizes those who argue for knowledge based on interpersonal subjectivity/consensus as "symbolically-inclined" and pits them against the materialists-determinists who argue that economics or "material interests" determine society--that is, ideology is a lie perpetuated by one class in order to subjugate another.
This "social versus material" distinction is helpful in showing that the pronouncement of "ideology" can be made by either epistemological perspective and that there are at least two positions on ideology: exclusive (ideology as false statements) and all-inclusive (ideology as socially agreed-upon ideas—despite their veridicality or lack thereof).

Other participants in the 1983 CSSJ debate offer additional insights into ideological criticism that bear on the search for a definition of ideology. Rosenfield defends himself by stating that Wander misreads his text and fails to understand his perspective. Hill defends his rhetorical criticism by arguing for a "disengaged critic" who doesn't give him/herself over to the persuasion of the rhetor and who deals with "the essential features of the discourse before them" (Hill, 1983:125). These features include, "the internal structure of the work, the traditional topoi drawn on, the unique or unusual strategies developed, the pathe employed, or the kinds of audience it [the work] creates or seeks to persuade" (Hill, 1983:122). McGee (1984:43-50) enters the fray to promote
his materialist perspective and to argue against reading Wander's article as just another [ideological] "method."

McGee comes closest to presenting a definition of ideology when he states that "ideologiekritik is in fact not a method, but a practice, and ideology is a problem, not a counter in 'Marxian polemics.' ...the study of ideology is an attempt to describe human life from the perspective of history--from our knowledge that values and judgments of preceding generations may function to constrain or to liberate presently-living generations" (McGee, 1984:49). Francesconi (1984:51-53) comments that ideological criticism can "open huge vistas of perspective on our social lives if it is taken as the reconstruction of our symbolic social being," and that, "We can acknowledge our ideological biases and still strive for political impartiality in criticism" (1984:52-53).

Corcoran's (1984:54-56) closest attempt to define ideology is his citation of Althusser, who argues that ideology is a "system of representations...[which] have nothing to do with 'consciousness': they are usually images and occasionally concepts, but it is above
all as *structures* that they impose on the vast majority of people, not via their consciousness" (1984:56). He then cites Eliseo Ver­non to define ideology as "a set of deep-structural rules which generate ideological messages" (Corcoran, 1984:56).

The final round of the dialogue is given to Wander's response, "The Third Persona" (Wander, 1984:197-216). Similar to the earlier articles in this discussion, Wander spends most of his time refuting the earlier comments and very little time clarifying terms or giving philosophical grounds for his arguments about ideology. Nevertheless, Wander offers more poetic lines to describe what ideological criticism *does*: it "leaves the asylum offered by a world of ideas to confront the world of affairs, the sensual, material 'is' of everyday life. ...it insists on an historical perspective in relation to cultural artifacts and political issues, ...it takes humanity as its focus, ...it is not a 'method' of research, but rather indicates the ground on which research, scholarship, and criticism can be con­ducted" (Wander, 1984:199). Wander's argument concerning ideology climaxes with his reference to "the Totality." It is the
"whole, a total world-view, or Totality ever present but never fully realized" (Wander, 1984:205).

Wander compares the Totality with "poetry," Perelman's "universal audience," and links it to "democratic political theory and the assumption that no one, no party, no institution holds the truth whole" (Wander, 1984:205). But even after all this, the reader receives no clear definition because Wander subjects the Totality to a Gorgias-like tripartite argument where the Totality is posited, "...in the limits of language where, even if one knew the truth whole, it could not be contained in words, and if contained could never be heard but only interpreted in light of the limits of the other" (Wander, 1984:205). Though Wander attempts to give some semblance of a definition for ideological criticism, he is still remiss in his failure to provide a definition of ideology and to offer a philosophical grounding for its place in rhetoric.

Another collection of articles dealing with ideology was published after a 1988 Rhetoric Society of America national conference on rhetoric and ideology. Rhetoric and Ideology: Composi-
*tions and Criticisms of Power* (1989) is a collection of works from scholars in English, Rhetoric, and Philosophy. These works are centered around a common concern about rhetoric and ideology. The major corpus of this collection consists of rhetorical criticism of various texts and/or practices wherein the author places an ill-defined template of ideology over the "text." The result is a hodgepodge collection providing little time and attention to a definition of ideology or to its philosophical underpinnings. Thus, the common thread throughout this structure is the cavalier use of the word *ideology* rather than a use grounded in a consistent definition of, or philosophical position on, ideology. The authors' uses of the term range from quotations from Louis Althusser, Michel Foucault, to assumptions that equate ideology with false knowledge, worldview, critical theory, or individual perception. What is fairly consistent throughout, however, is the assumption that rhetoric and ideology are intimately related (though there is no consensus on that relationship) and that there is a significant relationship between rhetoric, ideology, epistemology (knowledge) and power.
The articles in this collection that are of significance to this study include James Berlin's Keynote Address, "Rhetoric Programs After World War II: Ideology, Power and Conflict" and Martha Cooper's "Reconceptualizing Ideology According to the Relationship Between Rhetoric and Knowledge/Power." Berlin advances the argument that there are two groups of rhetorics: (1) the first, "regards rhetoric as a transcendent arbiter of ideological disputes, considering it the discipline which enables citizens to discriminate true from false claims in the realm of the economic, social and political" (Berlin 1989:7) and (2) the second which, "attempts to problematize the question of ideology, situating rhetoric in ideology in the recognition that rhetoric itself is inherently ideological" (Berlin, 1989:7). Berlin claims, correctly, that the rhetoric as epistemic controversy is at the heart of the debate about the relationship of rhetoric and ideology. The development of theories concerning "epistemic rhetoric was a marked turn in the relationship between rhetoric and ideology...[where] rhetoric is no longer regarded as the mediator of competing social and political posi-
tions [but] as itself an ideological construct, endorsing in its very structure particular economic, social, and political arrangements--a particular version of what exists, what is good, and what is possible" (Berlin, 1989:12).

Berlin's argument is illuminating because it reflects the current climate of philosophical relativism dominating rhetorical scholarship. This line of thinking in rhetoric portrays the rhetoric/ideology relationship itself as relativistic. Essentially, the argument follows the line of reasoning which states: ideology is connected to the intellectual and social milieu which is in constant flux. We affect and are affected by this milieu; nevertheless, an ideology is something which others believe but which is not as profound or all-encompassing as what the more knowledgeable critic believes. This analysis is inherently contradictory because it accuses others of having incomplete knowledge or false consciousness while trying to argue that no one can have complete knowledge, nor can anyone be free from false consciousness. The result is a scholarship which is partisan, self-focussed, and whose "first task is to
know itself, to know what it itself is demanding of the world before it undertakes to analyze the demands of others" (Berlin 1989:13).

This self-focussed relativism presages the demise of rhetorical scholarship because it abandons philosophical first-principles and fails to lay a solid scholastic foundation by beginning with a definition of what was being examined. Our philosophical relativism has placed us in such a morass that we are now too afraid to attempt a definition of ideology because the definition itself would be biased by our as-yet-undefined ideological bias. This places us in the prison house of inescapable infinite regress, paralyzing scholarship.

As we have seen, few rhetoricians have attempted explicit definitions of ideology. At best, rhetorical scholars quote thinkers who adhere to Marxist preconceptions of the world. The next two scholars, however, attempt to define ideology from a rhetorical perspective. Although philosophically separated, their definitions hint at similar things—that is, ideology as a way of know-
ing/being/acting which encompasses one's epistemology, actions, and relationships with others. William R. Brown (1978) views ideology as a part of being human; to be human, he argues, is to be a philosopher--i.e., to have a worldview. Brown defines ideology as, "...any symbolic construction of the world in whose superordinate "name" human beings can comprehensively order their experience and subsume their specific activities" (Brown, 1978:124). Brown argues that an ideology is not "a pejorative false consciousness" but that it is "requisite to any world view. Given such a definition, the communication scholar commits to treating ideology as a function of symbolic process which--since I doubt that human beings command private symbol systems--entails the notion of communication process" (Brown, 1978:124). Brown argues that any system of thought is ideological and that any change in thought is a change from one ideology to another ideology and constitutes the way in which the individual reifies and/or defines (1) his or her focus of attention, (2) his/her depictions of physical and/or psycho-social needs, and (3) his/her
power relationships--i.e., sense of feeling dependent on others. Brown equates ideology and worldview and maintains that all knowledge and meaning is relative and subject to the individual perceiver.

James W. Hikins is the second rhetorician who presents a definition of ideology and is one of a select few rhetoricians who argue for a definition of rhetoric which is not simultaneously subsumed under the rubric of ideology. Hikins defines ideology as, "A systematic, idealized body of discourse promoting coherence of specifiable actions/behaviors generalizable to the culture as a whole" (Hikins, 1988:11) and argues that Mannheim is responsible for the mainstream rhetorical scholar's assumption that "all is ideological and ideology is all there is" (Hikins, 1988:6). More specifically, he argues that in Mannheim the distinctions between social knowledge and ideology are collapsed and that it is "within this context... that the interface between the theory of ideology and the theory of rhetoric has emerged" (Hikins, 1988:6). The doctrinal linkage between rhetoric and ideology began, according
to Hikins, with Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann's *The Social Construction of Reality*, wherein the authors conjoin social knowledge with human language use (Hikins, 1988:7). The end result was that most rhetoricians then pushed Berger and Luckmann's combination to make the epistemological statement (and aggrandize their own area of study) that our knowledge of reality (and reality, itself, some would say) is merely a linguistic construct. This, argues Hikins', made ideology the alpha and the omega of knowledge. Thus, "it is precisely the epistemological notion that knowledge is inherently linguistic--if not its stronger ontological formulation--that reality is itself a linguistic construct--that has precipitated the current employment of ideology as a term with unlimited scope" (Hikins, 1988:8).

It is upon this philosophical assumption, often unstated, that mainstream rhetoricians begin their examination of ideology. Hikins argues against this epistemological assumption through his analysis of the rhetoric of disaster. Real things, such as disasters, happen in the real world. There are some things about which
we agree when disaster strikes (a physical tornado, flood, or a tor­pedoes causes real-world problems, such as damage to homes, prop­erty, ocean-going vessels, and lives lost). We invariably respond to these real events--and even alter our interpretation of them--through communication, argues Hikins, but that does not make the events less real, the damage less, nor does it bring the dead back to life. At best, rhetoric helps us cope with the fact that major as­pects of our lives are not rhetorically constructed and are not very amenable to rhetorical amelioration.

It is apparent, then, that our epistemological presumptions have a direct bearing on our definition of ideology and our as­sumptions about the ideological nature of rhetoric. In fact, the definitions of the ideological nature of rhetoric seem easily classi­fiable along epistemological lines--those who argue for a relativis­tic epistemology and those who argue for an realist epistemology. I contend that it is the rhetorician's epistemological assumptions that determine his/her definition of ideology but that it is only the philosophically-grounded realist perspective which offers a
definition of ideology free from internal contradiction. Moreover, I assert that only the philosophically-grounded-rhetoric perspective narrows ideology to a usable term (that is, one capable of making meaningful discriminations among phenomena) instead of the all-encompassing or ambiguous definitions dominating the assumptions of most contemporary rhetoricians.

"Ideology" Within Liberation Theology

Liberation theology’s assumption of the ideological nature of theology is the challenge to contemporary Christian theology. Min (1989) asserts that

Until very recently, the prevailing conception of theology as primarily a theoretical, contemplative science, and separate from the critical problems of economic exploitation and political oppression, went largely unchallenged. It has been left to TL [theology of liberation] to challenge this dominant conception.... (Min, 1989:39)

Central to this debate is the question regarding one’s emphasis on orthodoxy (right knowledge and/or theory) or orthopraxy (right actions which target political liberation for the poor and the oppressed). Most liberation theologians disdain traditional theology
and denounce it as ideological because it sustains dominant socio-political systems. "Theologies of liberation typically charge that all pre-liberationist theologies are ideological; they claim that the liberation of theology from ideology is possible only on the basis of a prior option and commitment to an effective solidarity with the oppressed" (Min, 1989:41). The accusation of those who disagree with the theology of liberation is that it, too, is ideological because of its open adherence to Marxist assumptions as the basis for its critical analyses and socio-analytic mediation and, worse yet, dogmatic about not being ideological or dogmatic.

Such a "partisan" conception of truth [one which subordinates every affirmation of faith and theology to a political criterion, evaluating it from an a priori "classist" point of view and claims that "the viewpoint of the oppressed and revolutionary class is the single point of view"] would discredit in advance all views which do not share the same commitment to the class struggle and make impossible real dialogue with other points of view "with objectivity and attention." (Min, 1989:40)

Liberation theologians are exemplars of the epistemic relativism widely accepted in the Humanities and the Social Sciences of the academy. Clodovis Boff captures the mainstream perspective
about the ideological nature of knowledge and ideas.

Correlatively, no symbolic system, be it philosophical, scientific, or religious, can be considered completely immune, in virtue of an effort of internal organization of its significations, from ideological manipulation for objectives that it may indeed have previously and explicitly rejected or removed. *I may assert, then, this general principle: any idea is susceptible of an usus ideologicus.* (Boff, 1987:44; emphasis added)

These presumptions are then attached to theology or to any discourse about God or the implications of faith to society and social institutions. Boff’s argument for epistemic relativity within theology is based on his assumption that, “the properties of the real are not and cannot be the properties of knowledge. A rock is material; the concept of rock is immaterial” (Boff, 1987:45). The unresolved philosophical problem of the dualistic nature of human knowledge and the person/object to be known is placed upon theology.

As knowledge, theology is and always will be human, historical, concrete activity, and it is absolutely not *in virtue of* its bearing on the divine, eternal, and transcendent that it would have these same predicates. *A pari,* or perhaps *a fortiori,* theology remains a partial, precarious, defeatable (sic), “aspectual” knowledge—in a word, a *regional* knowledge. ...[Thus] the idea of God will never be God. To assert an
equivalency between the two would be to fall into idolatry.
(Boff 1987:45)

Boff applies these same stipulations to the theology of the political where one must distinguish between the political real and the knowledge of it which is derived from theology. Boff claims that since the “absolute of faith” can only be expressed through human language which is “something relative” (Boff, 1987:46), it must then be vigilant not to fall into the idealist tendency “which deems itself to have the thing itself in virtue of having its idea” (Boff 1987:46). As a result of theology’s inability to “see things in all their facets, of embracing them from every side” it is then obliged by socio-analytic mediation to listen first to, “what the sciences of the social have to say” (Boff, 1987:47). It is only after this takes place, according to Boff, that theology can then present its viewpoint. Theology’s presentation is to be viewed as the “second word” but never as the “last word” because “Its ‘last word’ will be such always, and only, in the sense of the last word so far enunciated” (Boff, 1987:47).
In light of this analysis, Boff’s assumptions about the ideological nature of all knowledge claims precludes theology from universal and transcendent knowledge. Theology is reduced to that of being more suspect and more tyrannical than any other human perspective. As such, it should only speak “...after the other disciplines have had their say” (Boff, 1987:47).

As for his definition of ideology, Boff accepts the Marxist assumptions of false knowledge, “error occurring under the appearance of truth” (Boff, 1987:42) but further distinguishes ideology as ‘first ideological’ (on the side of autonomy) and ‘second ideological’ (on the side of dependence). The ‘first ideological’ is that knowledge which has “almost no critical distance from concrete life... [and results in] doxa: seeming knowledge, opinion; ...[where] we have not error pure and simple, but illusion--error (mis)taking itself for truth... pseudo truths” (Boff, 1987:42). This first ideological comes from “the discourse of empiricism” where the language is “constructed with a direct view to the immediate imperatives of existence or of the historical moment--the language of pragma-
tism” (Boff, 1987:42). This is where the discourse either has not the “instruments of its own internal self-critique” or is not concerned about applying them; as a result, it represents “as ‘true’ what is simply ‘practical’” (Boff, 1987:43).

The “second ideological” falls within the rubric of “dependence.” Here Boff begins with the assumption that “every idea will have some relationship to determinate interests or practices” but the question is “what interests? ...Is the interest legitimate or not?” (Boff, 1987:42). Despite this ill-defined notion of “legitimacy,” Boff argues that the designation “‘ideological’ connotes the ‘unjustifiable’--not the simply unjustifiable, however, but the unjustifiable in the guise of the justifiable. We are dealing with the immoral in the guise of the moral. In a word, ‘ideological’ will be synonymous with ‘feigned,’ indeed with ‘lie’ (Boff, 1987:42). This second ideological represents a theology, however orthodox, whose “‘truth’ may very well have the role of justifying a morally indefensible social situation--or perhaps simply of masking this situation by a discourse that is doubtless ‘true,’ but that is irrelevant or inoppor-
tune, because it distracts the mind and 'detours' the attention of the faith vis-`a-vis the urgent tasks of a given conjecture” (Boff, 1987:43). If Boff's pronouncements are to be accepted, any person who advocates a position that could be used to justify an undefined "morally indefensible social situation" is adhering to an ideology. As such, the prison house of language, arguments from pragmatism, and adherence to any position that justifies a "morally indefensible position," condemns all users of language to the prison cells of an ideology. This condemnation is stated clearly, in the quote referenced previously, where Boff states “I may assert, then, this general principle: any idea is susceptible of an usus ideologicus” (Boff, 1987:44; emphasis added).

Boff's definitions of ideology are inconsistent with his own epistemological assumptions. He posits, through the back door, that there is "truth" and its opposite "non-truth" or "lie" which, as per his definition of ideology, would be something outside the scope of, and unattainable by, human knowledge. What is even more remarkable is that the notions of "truth" and "falseness" are
inherently theological concepts which bespeak of universals, “third party” observations, concepts which assume, as per Western orthodox Christian theology, attainable knowable propositions transcending time and space.

Conclusions

What then can we conclude about ideology from this overview? First, there is no consensus among rhetoricians on the definition of the term ideology. At best, rhetoricians have borrowed from those outside the field, more consistently Marxist thinkers than not, to define a term which they agree is fundamentally symbolic and an intimate part of rhetorical theory, criticism, and human thought. Likewise, liberation theologians offer little help in conceptualizing ideology. Their definitions, like the rhetoricians, reflect their epistemological and ontological commitment to neo-Marxist perspectives. Both groups are committed to the assumption that all knowledge is ideological without acknowledging the self-criticism inherent in such a position.
Second, one’s position on ideology, however ambiguous, reflects an inevitable ontological commitment. Whether or not there is consensus about that which is, ideology is grounded historically, in space and time, and is related to real events in a real world. Whether in response to physical, social, or political crises, ideology is a reaction to human perceptions of the world and to humans’ linguistic descriptions of reality, whatever they take reality to be.

Finally, the definitions offered in this section reveal that ideology has very specific dimensions: epistemological facets, action facets, and a relationship to others facets. The last two rhetoricians, in particular, offer definitions of ideology reflecting these three dimensions within their definitions.

I do not offer a definition of ideology at this time because I believe that we need to explore and expand on these three areas and look at the interrelationship among them in order to better understand what ideology is. In fact, my hypothesis is that ideology is the rhetorical interaction among epistemology, praxis (action and reflection) and power. As a result, I explore these arenas in the
following pages. Reflections on the relationship between rhetoric and epistemology have been analyzed thoroughly in the last two decades and will not be expanded upon in this analysis. The two other dimensions, praxis and power, have not had thorough analysis and discussion and require further elaboration in this dissertation. As a result, this next section will analyze the concept of praxis. This idea is the most closely related to epistemology because, as we shall see, it is the interaction of both action and reflection.
CHAPTER III ENDNOTES

1. Mannheim argues that if we interpret ideology as an unintentional, non-deliberate, "sphere of errors" which are psychological in nature and follow inevitably and unwittingly from the social situation in which one's adversary finds him/herself, then Bacon's theory of the *idola* is a forerunner of ideology because the "sources of error [are] derived sometimes from human nature itself, sometimes from particular individuals... [or] attributed to society or to tradition. In any case, they are *obstacles in the path to true knowledge*" (Mannheim, 1949:54-55; emphasis added).

2. It is interesting to note that De Tracy and friends were both theorists and reformers--concerned about theory and *praxis*. The significance of this is important to note because of my contention that ideology is the interaction between epistemology, praxis, and power.


4. Mannheim, too, seems to make a distinction between ideology and *Weltanschauung*, but it is one which is not always clear. Mannheim claims that every individual participates only in certain fragments of this thought-system [i.e., the proletarian *Weltanschauung*] *the totality of which is not in the least a mere sum of these fragmentary individual experiences* (Mannheim, 1949:52--emphasis added). Again, Mannheim talks about a "theoretical *Weltanschauung* [which] has
a unifying power over great distances" as opposed to "sentimental ties (ideologies?) [which] are effective only within a limited spatial area" (Mannheim, 1949:117). In Mannheim, then, ideology deals with "detached contents rather than to the whole structure of thought" (Mannheim 1949:52). Yet, despite this apparently clear distinction, Mannheim also talks about the "Weltanschauung of that particular group" (Mannheim, 1949:139).

5. Minogue uses the phrase "forelegs of practice and back legs of theory" to describe "the symbiosis between the two activities (i.e., practical men dealing with practical problems and theoretic presuppositions)" (Minogue, 1985:39-40). Minogue claims that ideology's combination of activism and intellectuality may well make it the dominant idiom of our time (1985:38), and he devotes one chapter to ideology as social criticism--more than critique, it is the desire to change an entire system. Thus, my argument for the relationship among ideology, praxis, and power is enhanced.

6. Pryor (1985) argues that ideology has been a "shadow figure" in rhetorical theory and rhetorical criticism and although rhetoric has no articles which deal with ideology between 1915 and 1965, these critics substituted concepts like ideas and values which, "did the analytical work of ideology " (Pryor, 1985:6). In support for his position he cites Reid, 1944; Wrage, 1947; and Wallace, 1953 as articles which "[intervened] within the discursive field of rhetorical criticism for the possibility of ideologiekritik" (Pryor, 1985:7).

7. See editors note at the beginning of "Special Reports: Responses to Wander" in Central States Speech Journal, 34, (Summer 1983), 114-119.


10. D.K. Mumby reflects this dilemma when he quotes Geertz (1973:193) on the problematic status of ideology, "It is one of the minor ironies of modern intellectual history that the term ‘ideology’ has itself become thoroughly ideologized" (Mumby, 1989:294) and when he paraphrases Althusser’s argument that "ideology functions such that those who believe themselves to be outside of ideology, are, by definition, inside of ideology" (Mumby, 1989:300).

11. Brown’s arguments are derived from Stephen C. Pepper’s *World Hypotheses* (1942, 1970--CA edition.) in which Pepper argues that there are four root metaphors (formism, mechanism, contextualism, and organicism, induced from world theories, which reveal a person’s view of the world. Note, also the use of the term *Weltanschauung*, and its usefulness within rhetoric, by Jamieson (1976) and Brown (1974).


Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. (James 1:22-24; New International Version)

From its inception rhetoric has been a discipline devoted to a study of praxis. But, ...any academic consideration of rhetorical praxis must commence with and end in theory. (Cherwitz, 1991:4)

The concept of praxis comes from the Greek, πράξις, and is usually translated as action or practice. When this term is introduced within academic discourse we tend to contrast it with its dialectical opposite--theory. Rhetoricians often become theoretical contortionists in the attempt to show how rhetoric maintains a
respectable balance between theory and practice. It is not within the domain of this work to present the definitive argument determining the appropriate relationship between theory and practice. I assert, however, that our traditional understanding of *praxis* (that is, *practice determined by contemplation or theory*) has been metaphorically "stood on its head" by contemporary rhetorical theorists, reconfigured with a priority given to the feet (action) instead of the head (contemplation). I contend that a careful exploration of this view, and its relativistic epistemological assumptions is fundamental to understanding ideology. It is also vital for understanding the epistemic assumptions within liberation theology.

In this chapter, I examine the definition of praxis hinted at by classical thinkers, openly advocated by critical-cultural scholars and proclaimed by liberation theologians. Despite claims to the contrary, there is an inherent epistemological basis for praxis—that is, this term encompasses both a *doing* and a *knowing*.

As noted in the previous chapter, an ideology implies a way of knowing (epistemology), the valuing of human relationships
(power), and of acting/being. The action part of ideology can be understood in the term *praxis*. This term is the microcosm of ideology because it contains the elements of thought, action, and human dependency (power). For critical background information on this term, I begin with Lobkowicz's (1967) work on theory and practice.

Lobkowicz contends that the classical understanding of praxis referred to "almost any kind of activity which a free man is likely to perform; in particular, all kinds of business and political activity" (1967:9). He argues that Aristotle was the first to use πραξις (*praxis*) as a technical term and that this term was set in opposition to the idea of ποιεῖσθαι (*poiesis*) or making. The difference between these two is their telos—the desired *end* of the action.

The distinction is not easily rendered in English; what comes closest to it is the difference between "doing" and "making." We do sports or business or politics, and we make ships or houses or statues. Aristotle himself illustrates the difference between these two kinds of activity by saying that while "making" aims at an end different from the very act of "making," the end of "doing" is nothing else but the act of "doing" itself performed well. (Lobkowicz, 1967:9)
Lobkowicz argues that Aristotle excludes "to some extent merely intellectual activities such as thinking and reflecting" (p.9) from the range of meanings of *praxis*, yet "...in a passage in which he wants to emphasize that a philosopher is not inactive, Aristotle himself distinguished between 'external actions (ἐξωτερικὰ πρᾶξις)’ which have an effect upon others and πρᾶξις such as contemplating and reflecting which are αυτότελες, have their end in themselves (Politics, VII, 2, 1325 b 16 ff)” (Lobkowicz, 1967:9-10). The main emphasis of Aristotle's use of *praxis*, though, is that it refers to "rational and purposeful human conduct" (Lobkowicz, 1967:11) which is only possible because "man alone of all animals is the true source of some activity...which is not possible without desire and a λογος ὑπὲρ τινος, a reasoning directed to some end (Nicomacean Ethics VI, 1, 1139 a 32 ff)” (Lobkowicz, 1967:11). So, although praxis was viewed as part of one's everyday activities and was not necessarily part of the specific contemplative life, it still involved reasoning, thought, and intentionality.
Life-practice in this sense is not *mindless activity* which is done without remembering the assumptions which are now "taken for granted" and it does not support perceptions of activity based upon the Marxist notion of "false consciousness." Instead, the dimension of *praxis* I examine is influenced by Marxist assumptions about praxis as everyday life/everyday activities—the very *doing* of life which becomes its own end. This is not inconsistent with the Classical Greek philosophers' use of the term. Lobkowicz refers to Aristotle's *Politics*, where he states that "life is πράξις, not ποιησις" (*Politics* I, 2, 1254 a 7 ff) (p.10). Most contemporary Marxists would agree with Lobkowicz's interpretation of Aristotle (that is, with the claim that life is praxis) but, for Marxists and some contemporary communication scholars, the term is molded to fit a relativistic epistemology and a revolutionary political posture which claims to be transformative and freeing.

One of the more influential contemporary Marxist writers is Antonio Gramsci, who was so enamored with the conceptualization of praxis that he renamed Marxism "the philosophy of praxis"
Praxis, as per Gramsci, is more than "mere action," (that is, reflex action like that of an animal or Pavlov's salivating dog). It involves action "directed/dictated by" an ideology outside the individual's control. This idea of praxis dictated by an ideology, especially if that ideology is defined as a false consciousness imposed by the dominant hegemony, eliminates any assumptions about individual intentionality, free will, choice, or contemplation. This relativizes the concept and places it outside the realm of an individual's conscious control and makes daily activity the responsibility of the hegemonic system (or Foucault's episteme) rather than individual thought or individual choice.

The Marxist conception of "life/revolution as praxis" characterizes the parameters of praxis prevalent within liberation theology. Here the concept of praxis encompasses epistemological, ontological, axiological and power dimensions. Gibellini (1987) supports this position when he argues that the Latin American theology of liberation is not a monolithic unitary block but has four identifiable currents. All four of these currents center around some di-
mension of praxis and imply certain epistemic, ontological, and ax-
iological positions.

1. Theology on the basis of the pastoral praxis of the church: ...aimed at the pastoral and spiritual aspects of liberation and not so much at the cultural and socio-political aspects; 2. theology on the basis of the praxis of the Latin American peoples ...it gives priority to the cultural aspects of the popular ethos and not so much to the socio-political aspects; 3. theology on the basis of historical praxis ...this stresses the relevance of the social and political aspects of liberation; 4. theology on the basis of revolutionary groups: what is predominant here is discussion of the political revolutionary action of Christian groups. (Gibellini, 1987:12)

Praxis gives epistemic and axiological priority to certain elements and cannot claim to not give preference to particular philosophical ideas and presumptions. These preferences are readily apparent in the Marxist assumptions found in liberation theology. Liberation theology's use of praxis will be examined in two different ways: first, through the emphasis of orthopraxy over orthodoxy (that is, right actions over right thinking) and second, in the ideas embodied in Boff's explanation of socio-analytic mediation.
Orthopraxy versus Orthodoxy

Liberation theology's perception of *praxis* is influenced heavily by Paulo Freire's ideas in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. In this book Freire begins with a concern about the *word*. The *word*, Freire claims, contains two elements: reflection and action. "Within the word we find two dimensions, reflection and action, in such radical interaction that if one is sacrificed—even in part—the other immediately suffers. There is no true word that is not at the same time a praxis. Thus, to speak a true word is to transform the world" (Freire, 1970:75). Freire's concept of 'speaking the true word' is connected to his ideas of *conscientization*. The "transformation of the world" is brought about through *conscientization*. This 'coming to awareness or to consciousness' can't be understood in the traditional sense. Freire argues that there is not a dichotomy between consciousness and the world but that it is "*intentionality towards the world*" (emphasis his; Mackie, 1981:58). Freire claims there is a dialectical relationship between consciousness and the world.
Only when we understand the "dialecticity" between consciousness and the world—that is, when we know that we don’t have a consciousness here and the world there but, on the contrary, when both of them, the objectivity and the subjectivity, are incarnating dialectically is it possible to understand what conscientizacao is and the role of consciousness in the liberation of humanity. (Mackie, 1981:62)

This does not mean that Freire accepts the label of "subjectivist" for the radical or the revolutionary. "The radical is never a subjectivist. For him the subjective aspect exists only in relation to the objective aspect (the concrete reality which is the objective of his analysis). Subjectivity and objectivity thus join in a dialectical unity producing knowledge in solidarity with action, and vice versa" (Freire, 1970:22; emphasis added).

Freire believes that religion and theology have a place in culture and argues that theologians should be involved in the process of liberation through conscientization. Gustavo Gutierrez’s emphasis on orthopraxy over orthodoxy is a prime example of the incorporation of Freire’s conscientization in the epistemic assumptions about praxis.
In *A Theology of Liberation* (1971) Gutierrez quotes freely from Freire and incorporates many of his ideas within his theology. Readers of Gutierrez recognize that “the keynote theme of Gutierrez’s political theology is the concept of historical praxis; ...in identification with oppressed human beings and social classes and solidarity with their interests and struggles” (Hoy, 1988:79). Gutierrez emphasizes a “theology” which is secondary to “real action, charity, service to men” (Gutierrez, 1971:11) and claims that Hegel’s notion about philosophy can be applied to theology--“it rises only at sundown” (Gutierrez, 1971:11). Gutierrez’s emphasis, then, is on the primacy of praxis—historical/liberation praxis—over theology. “Gutierrez speaks for a theology as a ‘critical reflection on praxis,’ which he sees *in opposition to* a classical theology as *wisdom and rational knowledge*” (Hoy, 1988:79; emphasis added).

This relationship is enforced by Clodovis Boff in his monograph *Theology and Praxis* (1987). Boff argues that the relationship between theory and praxis is both hierarchical and dialectical. It is
hierarchical because praxis holds primacy over theory; it is also dialectical because they are each affected by the other. Boff describes the dialectical relationship as, "a current receiving its first thrust from the side of praxis, ricocheting off theory, and returning to praxis and dislocating it--and so on, over and over again" (Boff, 1987:216). Note, however, Boff's emphasis, even in his "dialectical current" analogy, places a primary importance on praxis. This hierarchical relationship is evident throughout Boff's writings.

1. It must first of all be acknowledged that praxis holds the primacy over theory. This primacy is of an analytical, not an ethical, character. It is not to be understood as one of mechanical causality, but precisely of dialectical causality. It defines how the one factor is the prime, material condition for the existence of the other....

2. Theory, for its part, is a function of praxis. But it is possessed of its own proper logic, to which justice must be done. Thus its involvement in praxis is distinctively its own--theoretical; its involvement is that of symbolic intervention. This is specifically human activity. Hence we may conclude that it is theory that confers upon action its human character--that is, its essence as praxis, by which human beings freely implement historical meaning and come to their own destiny. (Boff, 1987:215-216; emphasis in original)
The emphasis on “human action as a point of departure for all reflection” (Hoy, 1988:80) has been called “orthopraxis.” Inherent within orthopraxis is the assumption that it is only in doing right actions that faith and theory are verified. Similarly, the goal of orthopraxis is “To balance and even to reject the primacy and almost exclusiveness which doctrine has enjoyed in Christian life. ...The intention is to recognize the work and importance of concrete behavior, of deeds, of action, of praxis in the Christian life” (Gutierrez, 1971:10). Orthopraxis exhibits no desire for knowledge based on intellectual contemplation; instead, it emphasizes “Christian action” which creates a utopian society. Thus, “the political is grafted into the eternal” (Gutierrez, 1971:232). This is because the focus of Christianity, Christian action, and Biblical hermeneutics are all centered in the political liberation of the poor/oppressed. They focus as well on the intersubjective understanding(s) expressed by the poor and the oppressed about the Bible and about their specific geopolitical society. The emphasis on orthopraxy, then, assumes that knowledge is intersubjectively
determined by: (1) sharing in the experiences of the suffering and
oppressed—(i.e., the much touted “option for the poor”); (2) Marx-

ist assumptions about society (i.e., society seen as heterogeneous,
tension-filled, eternal class struggle, need for revolution, emphasis
on the material here-and-now); and (3) participation in revolu-
tion.9

Unlike the more realist definitions of knowledge, as found in
orthodox, Western Christianity, liberation theology eliminates
“universal truth” and replaces it with knowing based upon praxis;
a praxis, though, based on the assumption that all knowledge is
ideological (that is, false consciousness), relative, material, socio-
historically bound and pluralistic.

Praxis is, positively stated, the realization that humans
cannot rely on any a-historical, universal truths to guide life.
In recent years we have come to understand praxis as
foundational, recognizing ideology critique, relativism, and
pluralism as appealing to human praxis for criteria and
norms of both reflection and action. (Chopp, 1986:36-37;
emphasis added)

The concept of praxis presupposes a political, economic, and so-
ciocultural environment that dictates what is known and
eliminates epistemological questions as the starting point of knowledge. If epistemological questions are engaged, they are usually done post hoc. Gutierrez reveals these tendencies when he calls for the elimination of traditional, “armchair theology” which begins with epistemological questions and, instead, emphasizes how theology should change the sociocultural and economic aspects of society. Gutierrez attempts to “detoxify theology” by saying that theological method will “no longer be based exclusively on ‘epistemological’ questions, but on an ‘economic and sociocultural’ mode of analysis capable of illuminating ‘every form of religious alienation’” (McCain, 1981:159).

In fact, there is no concern for method because praxis “is not the application of a preconceived theory upon practice but instead an encounter with historical reality which itself gives rise to thought within the context of engagement” (Nessan, 1989:119). In this context, then, “Praxis is the precondition of knowledge, even though in turn this knowledge issues forth into a new praxis” (Baum, 1976:407). The Marxist assumption of thesis versus
antithesis resolving into a synthesis from which comes a new thesis versus antithesis seems apparent in Buam's comments. But it does not conform with the dogmatic assumptions about class warfare, revolution, and "liberation" by liberation theology apologists.

To summarize, the epistemological assumptions of praxis posit that knowledge and truth claims are dialectical and begin with action/lived-experience. However, in the practical application of this doctrine within liberation theology, this un-reflected-upon action must conform to a priori assumptions about evaluating social reality, about reflecting on "theology" from the perspective of the poor, and about liberating the "poor and the oppressed"—typically viewed as those who are not receiving predetermined economic, social, or political advantages. These preconceptions about praxis have definite political ramifications and make certain unavoidable epistemological commitments about power and how power is dispersed. It is also clear they make very particular epistemological assumptions about what is acceptable as knowledge. Gibellini talks about these assumptions as the interference of the social
context with the epistemological context.

The 'interference' excludes both the lack of relationship between theory and practice and the existence of a direct relationship, in that the logic of science is not the logic of praxis; the 'interference' of the social context in the epistemological or theoretical context indicates an indirect relationship in the sense that the social context makes possible a corresponding theological discourse: 'what to do' becomes the object of 'what to think.' Under the pressure of this prior option, with such a configuration, the theology of liberation is a theology desde and sobre, from and about praxis, theology understood strictly as a second act. (Gibellini, 1987:9)

The second means of understanding liberation theology's relationship to praxis is through its emphasis on socio-analytic mediation rather than philosophical mediation. Boff's definitive work, *Theology and Praxis*, helps us to better understand this perspective.

**Boff: Socio-analytic Mediation**

Boff argues that praxis is political activity which has a particular telos--changing the social status quo--and has a particular "social scientific method" of analysis--Marxism. Boff emphasizes the sociopolitical dimension of praxis and talks about it in such a way
as to emphasize its intentionality and its philosophical presuppositions. Boff describes praxis as, “the complexus of practices orientated (sic) to the transformation of society, the making of history. ‘Praxis,’ then has a fundamentally political connotation in as much as it is through the intermediary of the political that one can bring an influence to bear on social structures” (Boff, 1987:6). In finding a method of socio-analytic mediation Boff presumes: (1) that they must dialogue with the “sciences of the social” and that (2) Marxism is the accepted process of analysis because it begins with a concern about those who are oppressed and it offers a means by which to end that oppression, namely, revolution.

Boff claims that “no theology concerned with the social in general and the political in particular can be ‘innocent of sociology’—some sociology. Let us say, then, that a theology of the social has taken up the sciences of the social (in socio-analytic mediation) in a resolute, active way” (Boff, 1987:27-28). Boff argues that theology must dialogue with the sciences of the social but theology can’t pretend to regulate such discourse nor should it just echo
what is said. Instead theology must "...hear them in order to make its own voice resound, and say what it has to say" (Boff, 1987:54).

Boff goes on to build a case for historical materialism as the basis for social-analytic mediation within liberation theology.

Boff admits that there are problems with using Marxism as scientific analysis and argues that it should be viewed as a scientific theory rather than as a Weltanschauung (Boff, 1987:56). He does not want theology to "be measured by the yardstick of Marxism and accept the place Marxism assigns it,...[because then] theology would cease to be theology" (Boff, 1987:56). He argues that articulation between a theology of the political and historical materialism is valid only when the theological word comes "after" and it is "pronounced from a point of departure in, and transcendence of, any other 'word,' Marxist or non-Marxist" (Boff, 1987:56). Despite the argument for analysis from the science of the social, Marxism is accepted as the means of socio-analytic mediation not because of its social-scientific accuracy but because of its ethical emphasis on the oppressed and because of the means which it offers to
resolve the perceived conflicts.

[Theologians of liberation] see in Marxism the theory that gives the best account of the current socio-historical situation, a situation challenging the conscience of Christians (capitalist exploitation on a worldwide scale, and so on). ...Marxism largely takes into account the problems of a people that suffers as a result of conflicts and seeks to resolve them, even at the price of revolution.. (Boff, 1987:57, 58; emphasis added)

This is precisely why the liberation theologians’ concept of praxis makes certain presuppositions: dialectical tension, a favoring of Marxist analytical assumptions, and the predilection to see revolutionary action as the only accepted practice of liberation.

So just as the assumption of socio-analytical mediation depends on a prior option in favor of the oppressed and is directed towards a praxis of liberation, so the social analysis favored is not of a functional type (society seen as an organic whole) which would lead to a reformist practice, but of a dialectical type (society as a complex of forces in tension), which leads to a praxis of liberation. (Gibellini, 1987:11)

This intentional action is not clearly defined across the liberation theology landscape. One author delineates the several forms praxis can take: “(1) language; (2) traditions of literature,
memories, stories and symbols; or (3) political activity” (Chopp, 37). The assumptions common to all versions of praxis involve the, “constructive attempt to take seriously the relativism, the pluralism, and the distortions of modernity ” (Chopp, 1986:37; emphasis added). Praxis is functional (pragmatically oriented), intersubjective, and relativistic. The irony of its intersubjectivity, however, is that it always begins with Marxist assumptions without giving any reasons why those assumptions should be the acceptable starting points.10 Put another way, intersubjectivity used as the epistemic grounds for liberation theology posits an anti-foundationalism whose tenets are non-relativistic--that is, they are foundational.

When the epistemic assumptions of praxis become the criteria for theological knowing, it reveals a radical shift in the conventional understanding of theology and in the understanding of human existence. Here praxis is not only meant to alter the existing social structures but to change the very understanding of human existence and human experience. “The testimonies
recorded thus far suggest far more than a theological reorientation; they demonstrate a radical shift in the understanding of human existence and the very experiencing of Christian faith" (Chopp, 1986:44-45).

Praxis, from the perspective of the theology of liberation, is an anti-methodological set of assumptions that begin with actions intended to change perceptions about knowledge, alter the understanding of existence, radicalize the poor and suffering in order to change the social structures of society, and maintain the perception of a dialectical tension between what is and what is emerging. Liberation theology's co-opting of Neo-Marxist principles and Freire's tenets incorporate an action-based epistemology that demands social change. This facilitates the drive to achieve sociopolitical ends through a "Christianized" message while at the same time trumpeting a concern for the struggles of the poor and oppressed.

Gibellini emphasizes liberation theology's "philosophical" base. He claims that it is analectical, going beyond the dialectical.
The movement of a philosophy of liberation is not just dialectical; it does not remain internal to the system, but comes close to the reality external to the system, to the reality of the other, with a movement which Dussel defines as analectical (ana =beyond), which therefore goes beyond the reality explored by dialectic. Liberation is thus presented as a de-totalizing category, going beyond systems, and the philosophy of liberation as a ‘post-modern, popular, feminist philosophy, a philosophy of youth, of the oppressed, of the condemned of the earth, of the condemned of the world and of history.’ (Gibellini, 1987:41)

The questions suggest themselves, “What legitimizes the fundamental tenets of Liberation Theology? What gives Liberation Theology presumption as a method of social reform?” On the assumptions of the theorists whose views we have just examined, one might be tempted to reply: These questions are not legitimate, because praxis precedes theory (reflection). But if we accept Freire’s contention that “to speak a word is to change the world,” we now see that there is a large body of praxis which is Liberation Theology\textsuperscript{11}. And we can reflect on it. From the perspective of social criticism, metaphorically the hunter becomes the hunted.

The interaction between praxis and ideology is rhetorical. The rhetor's philosophical (epistemic, ontological, and axiological)
assumptions, held implicitly or explicitly, dictate how the world is viewed and how one should respond to it. The ideological dimension arises as one's actions are determined by one's epistemic assumptions and one's assumptions about who holds the "power shares." It determines who is deemed acceptable, "on our side" and who is viewed as the opposition--those who hold inordinate amounts of the power shares and with whom individuals feel "unequally yoked"--that is, power is viewed as not held equally but held advantageously by the other.

These assumptions about praxis inevitably entail epistemic and power dimensions and so these dimensions are theoretically predetermined. Praxis, in the sense discussed above, is presented as the only option for liberating the poor; no other choices are available to generate liberation. These non-admitted theoretical presuppositions position the praxis of liberation theology against capitalism and decree that social analysis be confined to a Marxist dialectical-materialist perspective. In other words, these predetermined philosophical assumptions dictate that one's analysis can
and will reinforce the ideology of revolution.

One communication scholar has examined the idea of praxis under the heading of "critical rhetoric." Raymie E. McKerrow argues for a theoretic rationale of a critical rhetoric encompassing two forms of critique: a critique of domination and a critique of freedom (McKerrow 1989:92-97). McKerrow's continental and Marxist influences are evident when he argues that "In practice, a critical rhetoric seeks to unmask or demystify the discourse of power. The aim is to understand the integration of power/knowledge in society" (McKerrow 1989:91). McKerrow presents a conception of a critical rhetoric integrating power and knowledge based on rhetoric as doxastic rather than as epistemic.

The conception of a critical rhetoric need not displace all other rhetorics. What it must do, however, is provide an avenue—an orientation—toward a postmodern conception of the relationship between discourse and power. In so doing, it announces a critical practice that stands on its own, without reliance on universal standards of reason. Instead, a critical rhetoric celebrates its reliance on contingency, on doxa as the basis for knowledge, on nominalism as the ground of language meaning as doxastic, and critique viewed as a performance." (McKerrow, 1989:109, emphasis added)
McKerrow presents eight principles of critical rhetoric which delineate his philosophical relativism and argues for changing the emphasis in rhetoric from epistemic to doxastic (McKerrow 1989:102-108). This emphasis is significant because it delineates the epistemic shift from a rhetoric which is concerned about truth/falsity and making a distinction between what is perceived and what is real to a view of rhetoric which is concerned about “how the symbols come to possess power--what they ‘do’ in society as contrasted to what they ‘are’” (McKerrow 1989:104). McKerrow claims that our epistemic basis is the result of “the dynamic of concealment and unconcealment--of authorizing and marginalizing” (McKerrow 1989:104).

This is consistent with how I have depicted the contemporary conceptualization of praxis. Despite arguments to the contrary, there is an epistemic basis for praxis based on philosophical relativism and based on orthopraxis--right actions (or right criticism)--predefined as acts of transformation, providing “a polysemic critique... which uncovers a subordinate or secondary reading which
contains the seeds of subversion or rejection of authority, at the same time that the primary reading appears to confirm the power of the dominant cultural norms" (McKerrow 1989:108).

The implications of the concept of praxis for rhetorical theory and practice has yet to be realized. Praxis is more than practice, it is action that entails thought; it entails epistemological assumptions, whether or not those assumptions are acknowledged or fully cognizant to the actor. I argue for a definition of praxis that does not partition action from thought. This is important to rhetoric because, like the theology of liberation, it is concerned about people who ACT, why they act, and what motivates them to act.

The contemporary concept of praxis, whether it is wedded to rhetoric, theology, power, or epistemology, is used as the basis for arguing philosophic relativism. Though it may be philosophically and/or pragmatically difficult to separate thought and action we must understand that despite arguments to the contrary, our actions are grounded in thought, in theory, in a "small 'p' philosophy" of the world ("small p" to distinguish the concept from
professional Philosophy and from the activity of professional philosophers).

All of this suggests a definition of praxis. Praxis, whether based in philosophical relativism or in philosophical realism, becomes the microcosm of ideology. It is the combination of thought and action directed toward an end or telos. It is thought and action seeking a particular end and contains a reflection of the actor's intentions and mirrors the actor's epistemic, ontological, and axiological base. Combining these notions permits us to state: Praxis is human, intentional action of liberation/subversion grounded in a purportedly relativistic epistemology and which aims to transform the world according to a preconceived notion of what is just or of what "ought to be."

The notion of actions determining thought would have little implication on life if this were merely an academic exercise or if humans lived in isolation. However, praxis accepts neither of the assumptions to be the case. As soon as humans act, they impinge on the lives and desires of other humans. The social dimension of
human interaction determines that these actions result in desir-
able and undesirable ends. The degree to which humans like or
approve of these ends affects their feelings of like/dislike and the
degree to which they are dependent upon each other. The next
chapter focuses on the results of human actions--the degree of
power that humans have over each other as a result of their psy-
chosocial dependency.
CHAPTER IV ENDNOTES

1. Aristotle contrasts the two ideas in following passages: *Nic. Ethics.* VI, 4, 1140 a 2 ff.; 5, 1140 b 3 ff.; *Magna Moralia* I, 34, 1197 a 3 ff.; II, 12, 1211 b 27 ff.; *Pol.* I, 2, 1254 a 6 (Lobkowicz, 1967:9 n.17). Lobkowicz uses this as part of his "theory versus practice" argument to show that Aristotle considered "the contemplative life" as part of action but not a part of making.

2. This is interesting to note considering that Aristotle "admits a 'practical knowledge' but rejects the notion that there exists a 'theoretical knowledge,' and thus an ἐπιστήμη in the strictest sense of the term, of πρᾶξις" (Lobkowicz, 1967:12).

3. The episteme is defined as, "the total set of relations that unite, at a a given period, the discursive practices that give rise to epistemological figures, sciences, and possibly formalized systems" and can be found in Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon, 1972:191) and in Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Pantheon, 1970:xx).

4. Gibellini, 1987:40; Gutierrez 1971:91-92 in addition to numerous references to Freire throughout this text.

5. This term is difficult to "pin down" but refers to "learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to
take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (Freire, 1970:19).

6. Boff relates theory to theology when he defines theology as “one theoretical practice among a great number of others” (1987:216).

7. This relationship is clearly delineated in his preface where Boff claims that “The theology of liberation finds its point of departure, its milieu and its finality in praxis. Its intent is to develop an engaged, liberating theology to which it ascribes a political action, and which it subordinates to praxis. The latter, [praxis] in the eyes of the theology of liberation, holds the primacy over all theory, indeed is the criterion of verification of theology” (Boff, 1987:xxi-xxii; emphasis added).

8. There is the epistemic assumption in the option for the poor/oppressed that only those who are poor and suffering can truly understand the Bible and be able to place it in a correct/appropriate context because Jesus was poor/suffering. The poor/suffering are seen as the physical (mystical?) embodiment of Jesus on earth. This is an epistemology based on experience rather than thought or contemplation and thus favors the neo-Marxist ideas about praxis.

9. For an example of this, see the 4-volume set of Ernesto Cardenal’s *The Gospel in Solentiname*: “Revolution, which for me is the same thing as the kingdom of God,” “Communism, or the kingdom of God on earth, which is the same.” Note also E. Cardenal’s *La Sanctidad de la Revolution*, where he states, “The mission of the church is to teach communism.” It is important to note that the emphasis on revolutionary violence is held in differing degrees. Many of the academicians within liberation theology seem less willing to adhere to this as an option than those who have been a part of geographically specific sociopolitical activities.
10. Clodovis Boff is one of the few who tries to justify liberation theology's use of Marxist analysis. Most others just end up in a diatribe against capitalism rather than FOR Marxism. (Note Jacques Ellul, Marxism has died elsewhere except in theology.

11. That includes any of the political activities of the base ecclesial communities within any of the Latin American countries. Specifically for Central America, with which this author is more familiar, this includes the actions of liberation theologians and their followers, in the various barrios in El Salvador and the notorious 1979 overthrow of the Somosan dictatorship in Nicaragua. The implementation of Nicaragua's pro-Marxist government with the assistance of several liberation theologians--four of whom became officials in the new regime--becomes an intriguing example of the praxis of liberation theologians who have gained political positions, recognition, and whatever positional/institutional power is inherent in their office.


14. McKerrow's principles, as he has stated them, include:
   a. “Ideologiekritik is in fact not a method but a practice” (McGee, 1984, p.49).
   b. The discourse of power is material.
   c. Rhetoric constitutes doxastic rather than epistemic knowledge.
   d. Naming is the central symbolic act of a nominalist rhetoric.
   e. Influence is not causality.
f. Absence is as important as presence in understanding and evaluating symbolic action.
g. Fragments contain the potential for polysemic rather than monosemic interpretation.
h. Criticism is a performance. (McKerrow 1989:102-108)
CHAPTER V: POWER

Because there has been implanted in us the power to persuade each other and to make clear to each other whatever we desire,...generally speaking, there is no institution devised by man which the power of speech has not helped us to establish. ...And, if there is need to speak in brief summary of this power, we shall find that none of the things which are done with intelligence take place without the help of speech, but that in all our actions as well as in all our thoughts speech is our guide, and is most employed by those who have the most wisdom. (Isocrates, Antidosis, in Bizzell and Herzberg, 1990:50)

American scholars live in a national culture preoccupied with power, defined, says historian James Robertson, as "the ability to do things on a massive scale, bigger and better, and more effectively than anybody else" (1980:272). Further, in this culture doing is almost always contrasted with talking. In such a milieu, rhetoric becomes "mere" and communication is the engineered rather than the engineer. (William R. Brown, 1986:181; emphasis added)

William R. Brown (1986) urged us to consider that rhetoric is again in danger of being truncated because rhetoricians have "amputated power from rhetoric." He argued that a conception of
rhetoric-as-power was complementary to Robert Scott's (1967) claim that rhetoric is epistemic and that it should be deemed equally important.¹ Brown's call to analyze power as a concept central to rhetoric has largely gone unheeded. Contemporary rhetoricians' who actually discuss the relationship of rhetoric and power focus on this concept within the context of ideology. Though "power," and its impact on rhetoric, is sufficiently important to be discussed as a term in-and-of-itself, I contend that it is a necessary dimension of any analysis of ideology.

Use of the term power is a common feature of postmodern discourse, especially Marxism and liberation theology. As such, it is often used but seldom defined. This chapter examines both philosophical and rhetorical literature to come to an understanding of power and then argues for a definition that will help us in our quest to illustrate the relationship of rhetoric to ideology. The chapter begins by presenting the classical Greek uses of various terms which are translated as power, strength, influence, persuasion, etc. and argues that, despite some contemporary scholars'
claims to the contrary, the ancients were concerned about issues of power and their understanding helps us to comprehend this concept. Several types of power are recognized but the definition argued for here, and one that seems to illuminate best the rhetorical realm, is a psychosocial definition of power as the perception (based upon real-world situations) of interdependent need.

As stated earlier, I maintain that the relationship between rhetoric and ideology consists of the interaction among epistemology, praxis, and power. As established in my discussion of ideology (see Chapter III, pp. 64-ff), there have been several scholars who argued, from various perspectives, for a relationship between power and ideology. Marx’s conception of ideology as false consciousness, along with his assumption about economic determinism, implies that there is a ruling class who are “in charge” (and want to remain so) and a working class who are being deceived in order to keep them “in subjugation” to the production desires of the elites.
Althusser carries these ideas even further with his concept of the "ideological state apparatus," where ideology is linked to political power residing in particular cultural institutions. The link between ideology and power, though, is not just limited to those with a Marxist perspective. Minogue, in discussing ideology as social criticism, claims that the aim of ideological criticism is the exposure of unfair power relationships. "Wherever ideological criticism begins, it terminates in the discovery that some human practice functions to the benefit of some alien class" (Minogue, 1985:42). The ideological analysis of any situation, we have seen, uncovers [what is deemed as] exploitation and domination" (Minogue, 1985:63).

Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1967), whose misinterpreted ideas have had a major impact upon rhetoricians' assumptions about reality, also claim a relationship between ideology and power. "When a particular definition of reality comes to be attached to a concrete power interest, it may be called an ideology" (p.123). If we were to adhere to the arguments raised by
several continental thinkers, chiefly Michel Foucault, it would be easy to find a relationship between discourse, knowledge, and power (that is, rhetoric, epistemology and power, as I have phrased it). Many rhetoricians have interpreted Foucault's works to imply that power relationships construct and are constructed by a culture's discursive practices (Bizzell and Herzberg, 1990; Cooper, 1989; Foss, Foss, and Trapp, 1985; Sholle, 1988). Foucault's *episteme*, or discursive formation, is not seen as having primacy over the power relations--they are mutually defining and establishing. "The authority of the speaker, the authorizing powers, and the mode of expression are mutually defining, and all are part of the larger discursive formation that makes it possible to speak of certain objects at all" (Bizzell and Herzberg, 1990:1127). Power relations determine discourse which, in turn, determines knowledge/power relationships. Power relationships are established based on "knowledge that is disseminated in discourse and embodied in laws, regulations, texts, and in the very architecture of hospitals, schools, and prisons, showing the ways that
seemingly diverse discourses come together in formations that affect social practices and social controls” (Bizzell and Herzberg, 1990:1128). The concept of an intertwining between rhetoric and power has become accepted within the discourse about ideology.

Most rhetorical scholars agree that discussions about ideology are incomplete without an acknowledgement of power and power relations. The link of ideology with power is especially evident in rhetoricians adhering to a Marxist conception of ideology as false consciousness. It also exists for those who do not begin with Marxist assumptions about ideology. A 1989 compilation of articles about rhetoric and ideology, by the Rhetoric Society of America is subtitled: Compositions and Criticisms of Power. There is evident in these essays the fundamental assumption that rhetoric and power are inherently linked. Cooper (1989), for instance, argues for a reconceptualization of ideology according to Foucault's notion of knowledge/power. She asserts that the relationship between rhetoric and ideology is presentational and that "power, like ideology, is produced during rhetorical action [because]
'power relations are rooted deep in the social nexus'” (Cooper, 1989:34). Cooper's link between epistemology, ideology, and power becomes evident when she states that any discussions about knowledge or ideology must be accompanied by explanations about power because they each assist in explaining each other.

Explanations of the knowledge created during rhetorical action must be accompanied by explanations of the social relationships embodying power that are created during rhetorical action. ...Explanations of power assist in explaining the creation of ideology as surely as explanation of the construction of ideology assist in explaining the generation of power. (Cooper, 1989:34-35)

Cooper is not alone in these assumptions. Other communication scholars, such as D. K. Mumby, draw on the arguments of Althusser (1971), Giddens (1979), Hall (1985), and Therborn (1980) to posit a relationship between discourse, ideology, and power. Mumby argues for a constructivist perspective of meaning and of power; both of these, he claims, are constituted by discourse, and mediated by ideology.

To study the relationship between discourse, ideology, and power is to examine the ways in which meaning serves
to produce, reproduce, and resist relations of domination. To adopt this perspective one has to recognize that (a) discourse is the principle medium through which relations of domination are both constituted and represented and (b) that ideology functions in a mediatory capacity to connect discourse and relations of domination. (Mumby, 1989:291-304)

Clearly rhetorical and communication scholars are aware of the relationship between how we talk, what we talk about, what meaning we ascribe to our talk, and the degree of power which we believe we possess. But how is this power to be defined? Is it just the ability to get things done? Or is it a function of our capacity to persuade others against their will? Or is it the ability to achieve desired effects after communicating with people? Or the communicator’s perceived credibility? Or is it something else entirely? The examination of power, for this study, begins with an overview of the Greek and Roman rhetoricians’ answers to these questions.
Greek and Roman Conceptions of Power and Rhetoric

Despite accusations to the contrary, the ancient Greek and Roman thinkers were not merely concerned about power, they were concerned with power as a concept central to rhetoric. There are multiple Greek words used for power, among which are: ἀρχή (arche), λόγος (logos), δύναμις (dunamis), and ἵσχος (ischus). The Greek terms for power developed and changed through centuries of use and, thus, are translated in various ways. Nevertheless, the definitions of these terms allow us to grasp some of their subtle nuances. ἀρχή (arche) was used to denote the idea of: (1) first principles—that is, the primordial stuff of the world; (2) beginning (or divine beginning); and, (3) foundation. Later on this term meant, in practical usage: method of government, sovereignty, realm, or political authority and, in philosophical discussions: principle of knowledge, basis of being, cause of motion, or source of action (Diamandopoulos, 1967:145).

λόγος (logos) was an important but vaguely defined notion which tied together the concepts of reason, communication, and
power. Kerferd claims that by the time of the Stoics the term *logos spermatikos* (seminal reason) was tied to reason and power. According to Kerferd it was seminal reason which, “worked on passive matter to generate the world.... In man it was the *power* of reason in his soul, ‘resident’ in him, and also, when spoken, it became ‘uttered reason’”(Kerferd, 1967:83; emphasis added). The next term, δύναμις (*dunamis* or *dynamis*) is usually used in reference to general power or physical might but has also been defined as influence, faculty, capacity, art or craft, the force or meaning of a word, the capability of existing or acting—i.e., potentiality, and the manifestation of concrete divine powers, miracles (Liddell and Scott, 1968:452 and 1976:252). One of the better known uses of δύναμις (*dunamis*) by Aristotle is in his definition of rhetoric where he states, “Εστὶ δὴ ρητορικὴ δύναμις περὶ εκαστὸν τοῦ θεωρήσαι τὸ ενδεχόμενον πιθανὸν.” [Literally, rhetoric is *power* concerning each (to observe/see) the means, the available, of persuasion—author]. What has typically been translated as “faculty” or “ability” should be translated “power.”11 William
Wiethoff claims that it is Aristotle's use of \( \delta\nu\alpha\mu\varepsilon \) (dunamis) which links rhetoric to power.

Aristotle consistently defined rhetoric as a "faculty." His denotation of the rhetorical faculty as dynamis linked the art with a term used later by critics to connote potential and "power," among other meanings. Aristotle followed an ancient tradition of perceiving rhetoric in terms of diverse human powers, including those faculties derived from aesthetic compulsion. (Wiethoff, 1980:4; emphasis added)

Both Aristotle and Plato were concerned with power and the ability to get things, especially political things, done—the ability to accomplish certain deeds within a very real and practical world. In the Rhetoric Aristotle states that good fortune tends to those of noble birth, wealth, and power (Aristotle, Art of Rhetoric, II.xv-xvii, 1982:257-263). Among these three, according to Aristotle, power is superior to noble birth because as good crops eventually deteriorate, so noble families degenerate into maniacs (Aristotle, Art of Rhetoric, II.xv-xvii, 1982:257-259). Likewise, power is better than wealth. "The powerful are more ambitious and more manly in character than the rich, since they aim at the performance of deeds which their power gives them the opportunity of
carrying out” (Aristotle, *Art of Rhetoric*, II. xvii, 1982:261). Power is better because it allows one to accomplish certain deeds. Not only that, but power indicates that those who want to carry out particular deeds have both the will to do something and the ability, “the doing must be close at hand” (Cooper, 1932:108). In fact, Aristotle states, “You may argue that a thing will come to pass when the power and the wish to have it so are joined; as likewise when such power is coupled with desire, or with anger, or with calculation [considered purpose]” (Cooper, 1932:146). Again, power is an indication of one’s ability to do something—accomplish particular deeds.

Plato, too, talks about power as the ability to do something. He indicates, though, that power is not limited to those who are morally upright or honest; those who are dishonest have power to deceive.

Socrates: Do you say that the false, like the sick, have no power to do things, or that they have power to do things?

Hippias: I should say that they have the power to do many things, and in particular to deceive mankind. (Plato, *Lesser Hippias*, 365d, 1961:203)
In *Greater Hippias* Socrates and Hippias contrast the useful and beautiful possession of power with the useless and ugly lack of power. The context of power, though, is within public life, political affairs, and a man’s own city.

Socrates: Then we are now right in affirming that the useful is preeminently beautiful.

Hippias: We are.

Socrates: And that which has the power to achieve its specific purpose is useful for the purpose which it has the power to achieve, and that which is without that power is useless?

Hippias: Certainly.

Socrates: Then power is a beautiful thing, and the lack of it ugly?

Hippias: Very much so. We have evidence of that fact from public life, among other sources, for in political affairs generally, and also within a man’s own city, power is the most beautiful of things, and lack of it the most ugly and shameful. (Plato, *Greater Hippias*, 295e-296a, 1961:1549).

The conclusion of Hippias and Socrates’ discussion, though, results in agreement that power is *not a priori* beautiful because it can also be used to accomplish evil ends. Thus, “The theory that that which is powerful and useful without qualification is beautiful has vanished away. ...What we really had in mind to say was that beauty is that which is both useful and powerful for some
good purpose" (Plato, *Greater Hippias*, 296d, 1961:1550). As beauty has a dimension of power as part of its essence, so too, wisdom. And the subject of power is a topic of interest to the people in both private and public settings.

It is a natural law that wisdom and great power attract each other. They are always pursuing and seeking after each other and coming together. Furthermore, this is a subject that people always find interesting whether they are themselves discussing it in a private gathering, or are listening to the treatment of it by others in poems.” (Plato, *Letters*:II, 310e, 1961:1564; emphasis added)

The concept of power pervades Plato’s understanding of his culture and of every person’s ability to accomplish desired socio-political ends. For the Greeks power was not just an abstract philosophical concept, it was the faculty to reason well, communicate effectively, and the ability to accomplish real-world tasks in both the private and public spheres. The ability to accomplish particular ends within the political arena, though, became a more pronounced pragmatic concern for the Roman rhetoricians. The pragmatic emphasis on power compelled the Roman rhetoricians
to emphasize power through communication.

The Romans were statists; the State was all-encompassing, the ultimate control. The legal codes and political systems were of primary importance—over and above the worth of the individual members of the State. The Roman emphasis on codifying law and systematizing political institutions affected the rhetoricians who were a part of that cultural milieu. If nothing else, the emphasis on the State and on Law forced the Romans to be realists about power; they wanted to accomplish tangible political/legal ends through their persuasive abilities. Two important exemplars of Roman rhetoric are Cicero and Quintilian. These two rhetoricians addressed the growing concern about the individual's ability to manage/manipulate the expanding forms of representative government and the increasingly more complex and litigious Roman legal system. The basis of political power within a highly codified representative government is in the interaction between individuals, between the individual and the State, and in the relationships between States. Cicero and Quintilian address all of
these concerns.

Cicero’s concept of power comes from his ideas about influencing a courtroom or a political assembly through the art of persuasive speaking. Cicero states that an orator should be concerned about the language of power. “For the proper concern of an orator, as I have already often said, is the language of power and elegance accommodated to the feelings and understanding of mankind” (Cicero, *De Oratore*, (XII), p. 20). The power of oratory was accepted by Cicero and his contemporaries without question. “What other power could either have assembled mankind, when dispersed, into one place, or have brought them from wild and savage life to the present humane and civilized state of society...?” (Cicero, *De Oratore*, VIII, p.14). The foremost power of the orator was to be able to move the passions, “For who is ignorant that the highest power of an orator consists in exciting the minds of men to anger, or to hatred, or to grief, or in recalling them from these more violent emotions to gentleness and compassion?” (Cicero, *De Oratore*, XII, p.19). The passions weren’t the only things to be
moved, however. “What you can effect is sufficiently great, namely, that in judicial matters the cause which you plead shall seem the better and more probable; that in public assemblies, and in delivering your opinions, your oratory shall have the most power to persuade; that, finally, you shall seem to the wise to speak with eloquence, and even to the simple to speak with truth” (Cicero, De Oratore, X, p.17).

Eloquence was an integral part of the language of power; combining eloquence with wisdom was the most powerful rhetorical appeal. “...but the real power of eloquence is such, that it embraces the origin, the influence, the changes of all things in the world, all virtues, duties, and all nature, so far as it affects the manners, minds, and lives of mankind” (Cicero, De Oratore, XX, p. 213). Though the orator who combined eloquence with philosophic wisdom was the preferred ideal, the power of oratory was neutral and could be used by good and bad alike.

[The power of oratory] expresses the thoughts and purposes of the mind in such a manner, that it can impel the audience withersoever it inclines its force; and, the greater is its influence, the more necessary it is that it should be
united with probity and eminent judgment; for if we bestow the faculty of eloquence upon persons destitute of these virtues, we shall not make them orators, but give arms to madmen. (Cicero, *De Oratore*, p. 207)

In *De Inventione* Cicero expounds on our attraction to those things which bring us an advantage but which are still deemed honorable. Among these is the idea of influence which he defines as, "A fullness of power, dignity, or resources" (Cicero, *De Inventione*, II, LV. 166-169). Advantage, according to Cicero consists of two parts: security and power. It is only here that Cicero gives a semblance of a definition of power and he claims that "Power is the possession of resources sufficient for preserving one's self and weakening another" (Cicero, *De Inventione*, II. LVI. 16). This definition of power, however, is quite revealing. Cicero was unapologetically realist when it came to power, holding to the "bottom line" of preserving oneself and/or weakening another by whatever resources one possessed. This includes wealth, influence, prestige, and the ability to think clearly and speak persuasively.

Quintilian's concept of power is similar to Cicero's in that they both concentrate on influence in the legal/political arena. Howev-
er, Quintilian is more concerned about training the Roman orator as a lawyer-citizen. This influenced Quintilian’s writing of *De Institutio Oratoria*. “The end result is to make the *Institutio*, like other rhetorical treatises, a work concerned more than anything else with judicial oratory...” (Kennedy, 1969:64). Quintilian focused on the rhetor being a good Roman citizen who always kept the desires of the Roman state above his/her own desires. This concern for the state is borne out in rhetorical scholars’ interpretation of Quintilian’s definition of rhetoric as “*vir bonus dicendi peritus*” (the good man speaking well) where the “good man” is the good citizen who helps to maintain the state’s power, the state’s structure, and is thus “politically empowered” because he knows how to use the system effectively and to his advantage. This system emphasized oral communication.

Like Cicero, Quintilian was concerned about power through communication. In his *Institutio Oratoria* Quintilian spends a considerable amount of time reciting several rhetoricians definitions of rhetoric. It is interesting to note that in this section he ques-
tions the view that rhetoric should be "merely a power [as opposed to a virtue]" (Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, II. xv. 2) or that the task of oratory "lies in a persuasion or speaking in a persuasive manner: for this is within the power of a bad man no less than a good" (Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, II. xv. 3). Quintilian goes on to state that by power he means *dunamis*, a concept derived from Isocrates, and contrasted with what others call a capacity or a faculty (Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, II. xv. 3-4).

Quintilian, too, is a philosophical realist and does NOT presume that only rhetorical and/or symbolic constructs have the power to persuade. "But many other things have the power of persuasion, such as money, influence, the authority and rank of the speaker, or even some sight unsupported by language, when for instance the place of words is supplied by the memory of some individual's great deeds, by his lamentable appearance or the beauty of his person" (Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, II. xv. 6). Quintilian describes three different situations where, during their defense, three different individuals were saved by means other than
speaking. These include: people seeing the honorable scars of Manius Aquilius, Servius Galba's escape of condemnation by carrying around a young child in his arms, and, finally, Phryne, who was saved by drawing aside her tunic and revealing "her exquisite body" (Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, II. xv. 7-9). Although Quintilian does not deny the ability of a rhetor to persuade an audience through symbolic inducement, his examples of persuasive power argue for both linguistic and non-linguistic agencies.

All of this suggests that the ancients were concerned about power and that their conception of power was one which included (but is not exclusively held by) the power of the communicating rhetor. Yes, the Greeks and the Romans believed that we can exert power through communication and influence real people in a real world. What both groups failed to do, though, was to leave us a philosophical definition of power.

Contemporary philosophers confront the same problem of defining power as their ancient counterparts. There is no single accepted contemporary definition but there are a multitude of
philosophical/conceptual problems concerning power which must be taken into consideration and which could be attenuated if not resolved by more carefully defining the term. There is not time in this overview to deal with all of the philosophical problems inherent in various contemporary discussions of power. Neither is there adequate time and space to present an exhaustive review of all the literature on power. Thus, in the following pages I present an overview of various contemporary perspectives on power and then narrow the focus and examine the interchange between competing conceptions of communication and power. My goal is to support my claim, raised in the introduction of this chapter, that power is a function of "the perception of interdependent need."

Contemporary Conceptions of Power

Stanley I. Benn argues that definitions of power (and related words such as: influence, control, and domination) are uncertain, shifting and overlapping (Benn, 1967:424). He argues that, instead of looking for a single analysis of power, "It is more helpful
to think of diverse uses of 'power' and of associated words like 'influence' as instances of different members of a family of concepts that do not all share any one particular characteristic but have various relations and resemblances by which they are recognizably kin" (Benn, 1967:424).

Notwithstanding that definitions of power are problematic, we still need to be able to philosophically conceptualize power. Benn provides an overview of power: "Power is often said to be a relation (H. Lasswell, C. J. Friedrich, P. H. Partridge), yet we talk about the distribution of power, about the power of speech, about seeking power as a means to future enjoyment (Hobbes), or about power as 'the production of intended effects' (Russell)" (Benn, 1967:424). Benn describes problems with all these perspectives and suggests constructing a power paradigm which combines as many "family features" as possible. The five main features of his paradigm include: "(1) an intention manifest in the exercise of power; (2) the successful achievement of this intention; (3) a relationship between at least two people; (4) the intentional initiation
by one of actions by the other; and (5) a conflict of interest or wishes engendering a resistance that the initiator overcomes" (Benn, 1967:424). Benn attempts to overcome many of the potential problems and questions accompanying an analysis of power and, thus, he argues that not every feature would be present in every instance of power. The suggested paradigm approach is indicative of the difficulties surrounding any inquiry concerning power. One characteristic of power about which there is increasing agreement is that an inherent link exists between language and power.

Several contemporary scholars argue for a definitive relationship between power and language. Kramarae, Schulz, and O'Barr's edited work, *Language and Power*, includes twenty-two authors who argue for a relationship between language and power. These authors argue that the effects of power--intentional and non-intentional influence through authority, manipulation, persuasion (argumentation)--are realized through language. The only exception mentioned to their claim of power's link to language is the in-
fluence of physical force. According to these authors, what matters is not a static, classical definition of power but the processual, relational, and verbal base common to every conceptualization of power except those which deal with physical strength. "Power has been conceptualized in a number of useful ways (depending on basic assumptions about relationships and on the stress laid upon various features of the aspects to be described); but, regardless of its definition, the resources available to exert or resist influence are recurrent, similar, and— in societies at peace—chiefly verbal" (Kramarae, Schulz, and O’Barr, 1984:11). This is where rhetorical scholarship should be extremely enlightening and I will return to the issue in a moment. First, a more definitive work on power that deserves scrutiny is Peter Morriss’s *Power: A Philosophical Analysis* (1987).

Morriss argues that "a general theory of power is as far-fetched as a general theory of holes— or of wholes" (Morriss, 1987:45). The search for a philosophical definition could thus prove fruitless. Despite this claim, however, Morris aids our general under-
standing of power when he contends that power, as the ability to
effect, is important in three different contexts: practical, moral,
and evaluative. He claims that these ability concepts are required
when we try to answer the following questions:

- **Practical**
  - (a) What can I do?
  - (b) What can you do for me?
  - (c) What can you do to me?

- **Moral**
  - (a) Could you have done it (e.g. a crime)?
  - (b) Could you have prevented it (e.g. a disaster)?

- **Evaluative**
  - How good is the distribution and amount of
    power here? (Morriss, 1987:46)

It is the evaluative context which is given the most considera-
tion in academic discussions of power. The evaluative concept of
power is used when people judge social systems. It is concerned
with “the distribution--and extent--of power within a society”
(Morriss, 1987:40). Morriss claims that the evaluative context is
the most complicated of the three contexts because the range of
what people value is so great. Two broad perspectives involving
power may be discerned. “We can be interested either in the ex-
tent to which citizens have the power to satisfy their own ends, or
in the extent to which one person is subject to the power of anoth-
er” (Morriss, 1987:40). In short we are concerned about power within the classic philosophical problem of the one versus the many. This problem is concerned with the tension within a society concerning the rights of its individual members versus the needs and/or rights of the society as a whole. For example, the United States’ admitted problem with trafficking in illegal drugs has elicited the suggestion from some that there should be mandatory drug testing. Advocating such invasive surveillance in a democracy raises questions about how well we are maintaining individual rights to privacy versus the maintenance of the society’s “public safety.” Morris advances his explanation of evaluative power and states: “We can judge societies either by the extent to which they give their citizens freedom from the power of others, or by the extent to which citizens have the power to meet their own needs or wants. To be impotent is to lack a power; to be dominated is to be subject to the power of another...” (Morriss, 1987:41). This category/context of power is helpful because of its emphasis on social interaction. Here power is manifested as part
of social (i.e. human) interaction and is affected by our language.

It should be noted that this is not to argue that power is a material thing which can be possessed; but, neither is power merely a linguistic and/or social construction. To the extent that power is a part of human social interaction, we need to consider its relationship to communication. To this end I examine what rhetorical scholars have to say about this interaction.

**Rhetorical Scholars Conceptions of Power and Rhetoric**

Definitions of power in rhetoric are scarce, not because rhetoricians have failed to discuss it, but because they write as if we all already know what what power is and how it works. Again, the problem is that we have failed to address basic philosophical concerns of definition. Andrew King, however, is one rhetorical scholar who has considered the relationship between communication and power assiduously. King contends that a look at this relationship requires a theoretical perspective which examines three things: “(1) an image of society; (2) a perspective on the nature of
the tension between the individual and the social order; (3) a view of the role of discourse in communal life" (King, 1987:4). King argues that power is a "communication act" wherein a strategic message is "formulated by a person (or group) and is addressed to an audience" (King, 1987:4). King writes that his arguments rest upon two key ideas:

(1) Much power is group power. Although power seems to be exercised by individuals, they often do so as agents or 'leaders' of their sponsoring groups. ...(2) Groups are created by talk. They are begun, nurtured and even destroyed by communication. When groups are utilized as power blocks they are activated by strategically crafted discourse. It is Rhetoric (the art of persuasive communication) that builds and sustains configurations of power. (King, 1987:4)

Despite his well-presented overview, King does not go far enough in providing a philosophical definition of power. He does provide some specifics about power when he talks about group mobilization and proclaims, "power results from the unification of mass and is achieved through the mobilization of resources" (King, 1987:39) and when he presents the formula "mass x unity = power" (King, 1987:41). But again, we are left without a very satisfying analysis of the nature of power.
Another rhetorician who is very concerned about the relationship of rhetoric and power and who presents a workable definition of power is Brown (1989). Brown argues that rhetoric is being truncated because contemporary "rhetoricians have not been attending to the aspect of rhetoric as power" (Brown, 1989:180). Brown, influenced by the scholarship of Kenneth Boul-ding, is concerned about a social interventionist perspective of power which conceives of power as the "interaction of processes leading to stability and alteration in society" rather than power as causation or control. There are three attributes of power, according to Brown:

First, its genesis is taken-for-granted interpretations of a code, i.e., a set of cultural rules by which to transmit a selection among alternative versions of the future from one party to another, or among parties. Second, power is code-ordered relational communication. It depends upon shared interpretations that during future choosing, power holders and power subjects must mediate each other's goals in order to make real those futures. [Thus conceptions of power are]...types of conceived human interdependency.... Third, and growing out of the mutual attribution of shares in that task, the process constitutive of power becomes open to inspection.... (Brown, 1989:185; emphasis added)
When dealing with power, our attention, according to Brown, falls on human beings involved in hierarchical mutual dependency, "who attribute power to each other while jointly making decisions which affect events to come" (Brown, 1989:185). These people would be those who would "hold" powershares in that situation.

Brown’s perspective on power is useful to this study and takes into consideration several of the previously mentioned concerns. His perspective acknowledges that power is not static, is a part of human social interactions, can be intentional and/or non-intentional, and is a part of human communication though not entirely dependent upon language. Finally, Brown’s conception of power addresses the three contexts presented by Morriss and examines the three areas which King believes should be a part of any theoretical perspective of power and communication.

We can see from this overview that the concept of power has been a part of the study of rhetoric since the ancients. We may not find rhetoricians’ “static” perceptions acceptable to current so-
ciological rhetorical concerns (though it is difficult to see in many of their discussions the purported "static" quality), yet we cannot continue to reprimand them for not being concerned about issues of power. Most rhetoricians have focused on one aspect of power—the ability of the speaker to persuade the audience through language in order to achieve effect. Brown expands our concerns about power and communication and argues that we need to concern ourselves with both power-through-communication and communication-through-power. His model of this interaction reveals that a Ronald Reagan may elicit money for the Nicaraguan Contras through his oral communication but that he can also achieve the same end more obliquely by allowing his subordinates to know that the Office of the Presidency would be disappointed if the Nicaraguan Freedom Fighters did not, by some means, receive the aid they so desperately needed.

Brown's definition of power as psychosocial interdependency grasps the essence of what I argue is a sound and useful definition of the concept. This characterization allows us to assess criti-
cally the power dimensions within any social interaction—especially those aiming for specific sociopolitical change. This perception of power allows us to examine what the liberation theologians and the Marxist revolutionaries were saying to the people of Nicaragua and how they were saying it; but it also allows us to examine the influence that some of the political and the religious hierarchy (that is, their positional and institutional credibility and authority) exerted in persuading the people of Nicaragua to join the revolution. In addition, this perspective on power helps us to better understand the notion of ideology. The power of ideology is not based solely on elocutionary appeals and informal reasonings which attempt to mislead or attempt to “tell the truth.”

Instead, our discussion of power reveals that the power dimension of ideology is part and parcel of how reality is linguistically defined (as opposed to “created”) and how people perceive their relationships (and their degree of interdependency) to others in a hierarchical grouping. This is not a mere linguistic construction of power but it is a recognition that power, especially in sociopolitical
settings, where the desired end is interventionist, has several di-

mensions. It is a combination of one’s ability to communicate ef-

tively (the typical conceptualization of persuasion, persuasiv-

eness) and a result of relationality—my position in society in rela-

tion to others’ positions in society.

This material reminds us of the complexity of the concept of

power and that the cavalier use of this term, or the neglect to con-

sider the concept, negates an important dimension of the study of

rhetoric. We cannot continue to ignore this dimension of rhetoric

which even the ancients acknowledged as an important dimension

of practical, day-to-day human interaction. Concerns about the

dimension of power within rhetorical interactions, whether the so-

ociopolitical dimension or the physical forces on a material-histori-

cal reality, will ensure that rhetoricians are well grounded in real-

ity.

My concentration on power as both a real and a linguistically

influenced psychosocial dependency acknowledges power as both

a linguistic and extra-linguistic interaction. There is, as Brown de-
scribes it, the distinction between power through communication (the linguistic emphasis) and communication through power (the extra-linguistic dimension). Power as psychosocial dependency emphasizes the social interactions among humans who are involved in linguistic descriptions of reality but does not negate intrapersonal dependency and the dependency among individuals, society, and economic, material, objective, and extra-human factors. We cannot negate the biophysical and the linguistically construed "dependency" of the self and of the society upon economic depressions or recessions. Even such events in the physical world as weather conditions, natural events (trees falling, floods, draughts, hurricanes, tornadoes), purported supernatural interventions, and our dependency upon extra-human factors such as gravity, magnetism of the earth, and sunlight must be acknowledged as items upon which we are dependent. What bearing does the theology of liberation have on this understanding of power? Is the notion of psychosocial dependency consistent with their experience?
Psychosocial Dependency and Liberation Theology

The theology of liberation, at times named political theology, views knowledge and all of life as political. Gutiérrez condemns the theological social praxis of the past for "not sufficiently tak[ing] into account the political dimension (Gutiérrez, 1971:48). Unlike many of his Western theological counterparts Gutiérrez does not dichotomize the political and the religious. In fact, he claims that "It is impossible to think of or live in the Church without taking into account this political dimension" (Gutiérrez 1971:49).

Human reason has become political reason. For the contemporary historical consciousness, things political are not only those which one attends to during the free time afforded by his private life; nor are they even a well-defined area of human existence. The construction--from its economic bases--of the "polis," of a society in which people can live in solidarity, is a dimension which encompasses and severely conditions all of man's activity. ...Only within this broad meaning of the political sphere can we situate the more precise notion of "politics," as an orientation to power. ...It is always in the political fabric--and never outside of it--that a person emerges as a free and responsible being, as a person in relationship with other people, as someone who takes on a historical task. Personal relationships themselves acquire
an ever-increasing political dimension. Men enter into relationships among themselves through political means. (Gutiérrez, 1971:47).

Gutiérrez’s perspective on power and the political is consistent with the definition of power as psychosocial dependency, proposed earlier in this essay.

Discussion about the power relationships within a society are explained in the context of dependence theory. Dependency theory is articulated on two levels: individual and systemic. The individual dependence is described in terms of the lay person’s reliance on Church hierarchy for the orthodox understanding of Christianity and of Biblical interpretation. The systemic dependence is elaborated in terms of the Latin American people’s subjection to the economic system and politics of the “first world” countries—specifically the “evil” capitalist system of the United States which is alleged to profit by “living off the lives of the poor.”

The entire Base Ecclesial Community movement was a reaction against the individual’s dependence on Church hierarchy. It was
a radical move, more so in the eyes of the Roman Catholics than the “evangelicals,” to break the cycle of religious psychosocial dependency and to create a theological leveling that allowed the laity to enter into the theological discussions. Ernesto Cardenal’s four volume set of Biblical discourse, *The Gospel in Solentiname*, is exemplary of the types of Biblical discussions encouraged within the BECs and is indicative of the liberation theologian’s hermeneutical “option for the poor and oppressed.” Discussions about power in the BEC in Solentiname focussed on economic dependency, the systemic dependency rather than the individual dependency, and the degree to which violence should be accepted as a means for revolution. Both of these issues are exemplified in the discussion about the kingdom of heaven and violence by the BEC in Solentiname. The Biblical texts from which they began their discussion were Matthew 11:12-19 and Luke 16:16-17.

I [Ernesto Cardenal]: “Christ was talking of the kingdom of heaven as something that was soon going to be established. I’ve often asked myself why it hasn’t yet been established. It seems to me that it’s because he came in the midst of a slave society, and before the establishment of the kingdom, humanity has to pass through several stages. ...Martí said
that humanity has climbed half of Jacob's ladder. And since Martí it's advanced even more. Especially in Cuba. I believe this has been much clarified for us by what Antidio has said, that it's no longer as obscure as the Bible scholars said it was, and that we can comment on it."

ESPERANZA: "Ernesto, I see what Christ says began to exist with John the Baptist is the same thing that has begun to exist with us with the Gospel. We had religion, a lot of religion throughout the country [Nicaragua], but it didn't mean a thing. Only now, when we're beginning to discover the Gospel in all its passages, does it have to bring violence because of course it goes against the rich. So it's something violent because the rich are not about to their things be taken from them. So each part of the Gospel brings violence, which we have to create, then, even if we don't want it.

I: "What Esperanza says is as clear as a bell. At first the Gospel didn't bring any danger; they even thought that the kingdom of heaven was the sky. But with John and Christ, of course, violence already begins, revolutionary violence, and counterrevolutionary violence."

OLIVIA: "And you could also say: the violence of love and the violence of injustice, those are the two violences. Because there is a just violence, a violence of love that wants to put an end to injustice with the Gospel, with love among people."

I: "So what Christ is saying is that the prophets talked about the kingdom, but that's all they did, just talked. Now is the time for action. Now there is revolution and repression."

OLIVIA: "But revolutionary violence exists to put an end once and for all to all violence and to bring love into being."
I: “If the violent were the ascetics, those who do violence to themselves, it’s hard to understand how they can seize the kingdom of heaven, since the kingdom of heaven isn’t heaven the way we used to think about it; it’s a perfect society. How can good people, saints, want to seize a society and appropriate it for themselves? But if the kingdom of heaven is a society, as we know it is, it certainly is clear that those who use force want to take it away from us.”

ANTIDIO: “I’m going to add something. I’ve been rereading this text and it makes it very clear that the coming of the kingdom of heaven isn’t once and for all but something that gradually gets done, and this kind of violence assumes that it’s something hard to achieve. And when it says that those who use force try to conquer it, I start thinking that Christianity has been conquered by that force for two thousand years, not counting the two or three hundred years of primitive Christianity. This kingdom that they’re trying to build was blocked by people who had the force, who were rulers of the world (of weapons, of money, and of culture). They have opposed Christ’s plan to establish justice. Injustice was perpetuated. You could say they snatched the kingdom and they’ve kept it snatched for seventeen hundred years, that kingdom of heaven. That kingdom would have already come if we humans had wanted it.”

JULIO: “The kingdom of heaven is perfect communism.” (Cardenal, vol.III 1979:225-227; emphasis added)

ANTIDIO: “So the work of the revolution done by the workers consists of making people of all us who aren’t people, and none of us are, we’re either poor or rich, not people. And that’s the great responsibility of the working class,... It’s not a question of persecuting the rich guy or even jailing him. We have to be sorry for those poor guys; of course, now’s not the time to be sorry, that’s for later. Later we’ll
have to feed them and send them to the hospital and educate them, re-educate them.”

NATALIA: “They’ve become rich through the poor, because that’s why they’re rich, through the poor, who’ve given them their riches.”

ANTIDIO: “They’re bandits, and every bandit, especially at that rank, is not a person. Being a person is something they don’t know anything about.” (Cardenal, vol. III 1979:244-245; emphasis added)

These passages depict the assumptions about systemic dependency as a form of power. The wealthy, who assume they are helping out the “dependent” poor people, only have their wealth because, “the poor gave given it to them.” Thus, according to their conclusions, the wealthy are really dependent upon the poor. The dependency not only includes their current level of wealth but also a future dependency—to retrieve their humanity. Once the rich regain their “ears to hear,” through revolution, they will want to become human. This, too, will only be achieved through the poor.
The lack of humanity on the part of the rich and the ultimate goodness of the revolutionary's end, justified by laity's interpretation of the Biblical passages, constitutes the necessary justification for violent revolution. Antidio justifies this need for violent revolution because some of the poor have been deluded into thinking like the rich and only the shock of violence will renew their hearing.

One of the biggest problems in any revolution isn't the rich at all; it's the poor people. They've taken everything away from the poor. And among the things they've taken is the sense to understand their situation, or using the Gospel words, they've taken away their ears. They've taken from them the knowledge that in them lies the force of revolution. ...They think like the rich, and that's their tragedy, because they're not rich. The rich have tricked the poor, making them think, feel, and react as if they were rich. ...[I]t's not that they [the poor] don't want to hear. The horrible thing is that they're not able to hear. It's only through a particular violent reality that they're able to hear. (Cardenal, vol. III 1979:233-234; emphasis added)

Violence, for the liberation theologian, becomes a means by which the power of psychosocial dependencies (both individual and systemic) can be overcome. Violence, though a part of achieving and maintaining power, is not viewed as the essence of
power. The individual, and more importantly the systemic, dependency is the essence of power. Liberation theology's perception of power may have begun with the reactionary theory of economic dependency but the concept of power is described linguistically as mutual interdependence. The "non-hearing" poor are dependent upon the rich for their linguistic description of reality—the acceptable way to view the world. The rich (whether individuals or countries or regions), on the other hand, are dependent upon the poor (individuals, countries, and regions) in order to maintain their wealth. The question of violent revolution enters in when the "hearing poor" decide to break the system of mutual interdependency.

**Conclusions**

We have examined the literature concerning ideology, praxis, and power. Each of these concepts, it has been shown, are of great interest to those who study communication, are a part of a growing concern within the study of rhetoric. We, as rhetoricians, are
in a position to share these concerns with liberation theologians and those who are "doing theology" in Latin America as well as with others whose practice or intellectual endeavors impinge on the interrelationship among these concepts. The concepts I have explored have been employed frequently in the service of various causes, intellectual and political, but have been poorly defined and have been used with too little attention to the necessary philosophical grounding—attention that could improve understanding and human interaction. It has been the attempt of this study, to this point, to present a philosophical grounding of ideology, praxis, and power and to remind the reader of the philosophical concerns within epistemology bearing on these concepts. It will be the task of the remainder of this study to argue for the rhetorical interaction between epistemology, praxis, and power and, in the process, help us come to a better theoretical understanding about ideology and about how humans interact rhetorically.
CHAPTER V ENDNOTES


2. Marx and Engels (1932), *German Ideology*; Jacques Ellul comments on this in *Jesus and Marx*, (1988:14);


4. To add to my argument it is interesting to note that Minogue's title for his book on ideology is *Alien Powers*.

5. Many constructivist rhetorical theorists read Berger and Luckmann's *Social Construction of Reality* as a philosophical (that is, an epistemological and/or ontological) treatise on knowledge instead of as a sociological theory as the authors intended. Berger and Luckmann specify how the text is to be read.
It is, therefore, important that we clarify at the beginning the sense in which we use these terms [reality and knowledge] in the context of sociology, and that we immediately disclaim any pretension to the effect that sociology has an answer to these ancient philosophical preoccupations [questions about the ultimate status of reality and knowledge]. If we were going to be meticulous in the ensuing argument, we would put quotation marks around the two aforementioned terms every time we used them.... (Berger and Luckmann, 1967:1-2)

Hikins and Zagacki (1988) identify the misinterpretation of Berger and Luckmann's work as, "One of the major confusions of rhetorical theorists concerned with philosophical, and especially epistemological, dimensions of human communication" (p. 213). Hikins and Zagacki cite Orr's (1978) allusion to the "trouble rhetoricians have gotten themselves into by failing to draw a distinction between the sociological explanation of rhetorical knowledge and a philosophical explication of the same concept" (Hikins and Zagacki, 1988:214).

6. Berger and Luckmann admit that their use of ideology is limited and too narrow to be applied to monopolistic situations (p. 123) but that their definition is preferred to a neologism (p. 204, n. 100).


8. See also Sonja Foss, Karen Foss, and Robert Trapp, Contemporary Perspectives on Rhetoric, Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1985:189-211.

9. By presentational she means that, "Ideology doesn't exist until rhetoric takes place" (Cooper, 1989:32).

11. Lane Cooper notes that “faculty” can be translated as “power” in The Rhetoric of Aristotle (1932:7).

12. Rousas J. Rushdoony explains his philosophical concept of statism as placing the worth of the One (the State) above the worth of the Many (the individuals)—placing the State as the supreme authority. See his book The One and the Many (Fairfax Virginia: Thoburn Press, 1978).


14. Gutiérrez cites André Gunder Frank’s idea that “[T]he term dependence is nothing more than a euphemism for oppression, injustice, and alienation (Lumpenburgesia, p.18)” (Gutiérrez, 1971:187, n. 93).

15. Systemic dependency, a result of systemic “evil” or systemic “sin,” is explained by Robert McAfee Brown’s (1980) interpretation of Marx.

Marx points out that the evil that needs to be combated is not just the evil of a few individuals but the evil of the system as a whole. Capitalism is evil not because there are nasty individuals on boards of directors scheming to find ways to make children starve. However, Marx says, decisions made in good faith by boards of directors will tend, by the very nature of the system, to produce greater wealth for the few and greater poverty for the many, and thus compound injustice. ...It is not enough to get a few highly placed individuals to have a “change of heart” (or even “find Jesus”) since they are also trapped by the system and accountable to it. (Brown, 1980:37).
16. Note Gutiérrez's comments that "[T]he problems are rooted in the structures of a capitalist society which produce a situation of dependency" and that "it is necessary to change the very bases of the system" (1971:110). As a result of this underlying assumption, many argue against developmentalism, because it advocates the capitalist model as a solution, and propose a social revolution and socialism (pp. 110-111).

Economic indictments against the "first world" countries were based upon the economic theory of dependence whose Latin American adherents claimed that "[U]nderdevelopment, which in Latin America was actually becoming more marked relative to the developed nations of the capitalist West, was due to the inherently exploitative nature of world economic relations"—specifically those "embodied in the 'Alliance for Progress' launched by John F. Kennedy" (Kirk, 1980:115).

Exemplars of the Marxist-based theory of economic dependence include "Darcy Ribeiro, Las Américas y la Civilización (Buenos Aires, 1972); Gunder Frank, Celso Furtado, Theotonio dos Santos in H. Bernstein (ed.) Underdevelopment and Development: The Third World Today (Harmondsworth, 1973)" (Kirk, 1980:115, n. 3).

17. Note the discussion on the challenge of the BECs to the Church structure and operations in Chapter II.
CHAPTER VI:

IDEOLOGY AS RHETORICAL INTERACTION AMONG

EPISTEMOLOGY, PRAXIS, AND POWER

Where do incorrect ideas come from? They come from reality—like all ideas. In particular, ideological representations derive from and reflect reality. They take idealized and distorted forms, moreover, because of the contradictions and conflicts which are a part and parcel of real life. Their power is the power of reality. (Sean Sayers, 1985:106)

Having explored notions of epistemology, praxis, and power, we are now in a position to assay the concept of ideology and its relationship to rhetoric with more precision. Ideology, conceived as the product of particular interrelationships among epistemology, praxis, and power is seen as fulsomely and necessarily rhetorical. It is so because the dual processes of discovery and articulation that impinge on instances of knowing, doing, and affecting depend
upon the basic human proclivity for describing reality symbolically for the purpose of persuasion. The goal of any ideology, for example, is the successful advocacy of some social program. Simply put, ideologies and their protagonists seek to gain adherence from political constituencies--adherence to recommendations of what to treat as knowledge, what to do with that knowledge, and what outcomes or effects such knowing and doing will likely achieve. Rhetorically, then, any resulting action or reaction on the part of an audience which has granted adherence to a rhetor's view of the way the world was, is, and/or should be (that is, any effect of rhetorical discourse) may be viewed as a function of the consonance between and audience's axiology and the particular narrative of reality proffered by the rhetor.

From the standpoint of humans as social beings, these two aspects of the rhetorical process--axiology and narrative--will be driven more or less strongly by the bonds which make a group otherwise autonomous individuals a society (or identifiable group within a society). However, it must be emphasized that the
common denominator in this account of the rhetorical nature of ideology—the central feature without which ideology would not and cannot operate—is the symbolic creation of reality descriptions.

Unlike many theoretical models of abstract concepts, this theoretical description of ideology is subject to quite a straightforward empirical test. Remove from any instance of ideological persuasion (those passages which advocate a particular social program) the linguistic descriptions of reality there found—descriptions of past, present, and/or future—and one is left without anything identifiable as either rhetoric or ideology. This is not to say that rhetoric and ideology are equivalent. Indeed, I have suggested earlier, if we are to afford any usefulness to the term "ideology," we must be able to draw distinctions between instances of discourse (rhetoric) and other things that are not ideological. What I have established is that whatever else rhetoric is, it is essentially the linguistic description of reality and that this feature of reality description is a necessary, though not sufficient, requirement of
ideology (as stated, for instance, an ideology must recommend a social program). Thus, while all ideology is necessarily rhetorical, not all rhetoric is necessarily ideological.

The remainder of this chapter further clarifies the contentions just raised, illustrates the conception of ideology as interaction among epistemology, praxis, and power, and relates this conception to the liberation theology movement in Latin America.

**Ideology as Rhetorical Interaction: An Overview**

A linguistic description of what is may depict Somalians who will starve without food and assistance. Assuming the general humane response of valuing human life, many individuals would feel compelled to extend aid. However, if it is discovered that there are also thugs with guns who will try to kill anyone who brings in food, then most people would have to reevaluate the situation and determine whether or not the value of human life, that is, of the starving individuals, overrides their concerns about preserving the lives of their compatriots who would provide aid but
jeopardize themselves in the process. Thus the symbolic, historically situated language describes the situation, discovers the power relations of the situation, and this narrative helps to determine whether or not action is required.

With respect to liberation theology, the ability of liberation theologians and revolutionary priests to get the Nicaraguan lay people involved in revolution was dependent upon how the theologians described their world and how they justified their calls for action or their requests for compliance with the Sandinistas' revolutionary goals. As we base our ideas and our willingness-to-act upon the linguistic appeals of others there is still the common sense notion that, typically, we demand justification or support for the ideas/claims being advanced by those seeking our adherence. Justification comes about by at least two different means: the credibility (authority, believability, power, sociopolitical acceptability) of the speaker, and, more importantly, the degree to which the speaker's version of that being described--his/her narrative or "reality sketch"--is convincing. If a rhetor tries to
convince the auditors that they need to overthrow the oppressive system of mediated capitalism, and the country’s dictator who benefits from that economic system, it will be difficult to do if the people are economically comfortable. However, if the people are in economic straights, as was the case in Nicaragua, and see themselves as much worse off than the dictator and the beneficiaries of his goodwill, it would be much easier for the ideologue to persuade the auditors. Essentially, then, the rhetor’s appeals need to be grounded in the audience’s intellectual and cultural milieu. Rhetorical appeals for action are potentially convincing if the rhetor’s assumptions are based on, or if the speaker employs, “starting points” which are constructed enthymematically from beliefs and values already accepted by the audience. Otherwise discourse is potentially convincing when the rhetor shows the audience that their perception of reality is mistaken and that a change in their understanding to that which is advocated better adheres to the ways things [really] are, or ought to be [really could and should be]. The basic contention, therefore, is that the
interaction between epistemology, praxis, and power is rhetorical because any given historically situated instance of rhetoric is a function of the interaction between these three characteristically linguistic (symbolic) concepts. To examine the relationship between ideology and rhetoric requires a careful conceptualization of rhetoric and what it means to be *rhetorical*.

**Rhetoric and the Rhetorical**

The definition of rhetoric has been the source of countless arguments and arguing for a definition of rhetoric has launched countless academic careers. Since Aristotle's definition of rhetoric as, "The power to discover in every case the available means of persuasion," rhetoricians have attempted to determine the nature, scope, and definition of rhetoric. I do not intend to assess the various definitions, their implications, and their strengths and weaknesses. I will, however, explore those definitions which depict the symbolic and historically situated nature of rhetoric and so help to illuminate the interaction among epistemology, praxis, and power.
Douglas Ehninger's (1968) well-known treatment of rhetoric titled, "On Systems of Rhetoric,"1 argues that the contemporary period of the history of rhetoric places an emphasis on the sociological nature of rhetoric. The sociological concerns of rhetoric include its use as an instrument for understanding and improving human relations and as an instrument for understanding what is accepted as knowledge. Ehninger (1975) claims that rhetoric is "the art of symbolic inducement and knowing” and argues that rhetoric is influenced by the intellectual and social milieu in which it finds itself at any given time. Cherwitz and Hikins expand on Ehninger's definition and offer a definition of rhetoric as, “The linguistic2 description of reality” (Cherwitz and Hikins, 1986:65). The authors do not contend that the reality which is described must be veridical. Rhetors can try to deceive and/or create a “fictional reality.” But they do insist that the essential defining characteristic of rhetoric is the attempt by a rhetor to convince an audience of the “truth” of some particular “reality sketch.” This accomplished, the
assumption is that the audience will then act (or be likely to act) in the fashion advocated by the speaker.

Other definitions add to our understanding of rhetoric as symbolic and as the advocacy of reality. Robert S. Cathcart describes rhetoric as, “a communicator’s intentional use of language and other symbols to influence or persuade selected receivers to act, believe, or feel the way the communicator desires in problematic situations” (Cathcart, 1981:2). John Bowers and Donovan Ochs talk about rhetoric as “the rationale of instrumental symbolic behavior” (Bowers and Ochs, 1971) and Barry Brummett defines rhetoric as the “advocacy of realities” (Brummett, 1976:22). Whether talking about rhetoric as product or as process, all these scholars agree that rhetoric consists of human symbolic interaction which presents an ontological description to produce change in belief or in action.

Rhetoric is also historically situated; that is, rhetoric influences (and is influenced by) that which is known (that is, culture, society, physical surroundings) and advances how we ought to act
within the linguistically described reality. Ehninger (1968), Bitzer (1968), Bormann (1972, 1985), and Hikins (1992), among numerous others, argue that rhetoric is influenced by and influences the environment in which it is ensconced. Ehninger's position is quite clear on this point, as first noted. Bitzer (1968) advances a similar idea when he argues for the "rhetorical situation," which grounds rhetoric in particular sociohistorical exigencies which call it forth and which can be altered or ameliorated by the rhetorical process. It is widely accepted in the sociological (or contemporary) era of rhetoric that the symbols rhetors use to describe reality are presented to audiences who understand what is said based, in part, on its historical relatedness, that is, on their understanding of history.

Our ability to act rhetorically, then, is dependent upon epistemological, ontological, and axiological assumptions about reality, truth, and our relationship to reality, (that is, our physical and social interactions). This, in turn, affects our perceived ability to influence people within sociopolitical realms. The items of reality
(or, at any rate, many such items) are not merely rhetorical symbolic constructs. They do have substantive (material/ontological) dimensions. It is our ability to make sense of the world through our linguistic description of reality vis à vis our understanding of such description's relationship to reality which enables us to distinguish descriptions which are sound from those descriptions which are not. As a result, we have the potential to critique false claims that may lead one to become "caught in the grip of an ideology."

**Ideology as Historically Situated Symbolic Interaction**

The interaction among epistemology, praxis, and power is rhetorical because this interaction is symbolically based and historically situated. It is persuasive because it is part of a linguistic description of reality proffered by a rhetor(s) for the purpose of persuasion. How are we to decide the symbolic, historically situated dimensions of epistemology, praxis, and power, and explore their interaction theoretically? I begin with an examination of epistemology as symbolic and historically situated.
With the introduction of the “rhetoric as epistemic” doctrine in 1967, knowledge, or what is accepted as knowledge, has been understood as having a symbolic basis. Few philosophically grounded rhetoricians desire to argue a purely objective understanding of the world; similarly, few philosophically grounded rhetoricians want to be accused of solipsism, subjectivism, or idealism, or any of the other untenable consequences of a strictly representational epistemology. Some scholars attempt to work out a “middle ground,” and formulate various epistemological systems whereby a person can achieve at least some minimal correspondence between the non-symbolic world and our symbol-based understanding of the non-symbolic world. The scholars in the rhetoric-as-epistemic dialogue have been characterized by their adherence to (or differences with) the individuals whom most clearly depict the polar opposites: Robert Scott and Barry Brummett on the constructivist side and Cherwitz, Hikins, and Zagacki on the realist side. Though Brummett (1978) argues the “advocacy of realities” construed as some form of intersubjectively agreed upon “meaning”
(so as to avoid the charge of solipsism) and Cherwitz and Hikins (1985), and Hikins and Zagacki (1989) argue for "minimal objectivism" based on perspective realism, both "camps" of the rhetoric-as-epistemic doctrine agree that knowledge has a symbolic and an historic dimension. If they agree on nothing else, they acknowledge that our ability to talk and to reason is a function of the use of symbols. In addition, whether or not the non-symbolic reality "outside our head" is knowable or has a direct impact on the knowledge inside the head, most agree that there are physical events and social interactions which impinge on how we think and what we do. Even Brummett, plagued by the specter of solipsism, repairs to an admission that some things are not symbolically constituted but are "recalcitrant," (Brummett, "Beyond Rhetorical Objectivism") resisting and impinging on the symbol user. In short, most agree, human knowledge is symbolically construed and historically situated.

The philosophical position I believe best accounts for this model of the rhetorical situation is philosophical realism. Long in
eclipse at the hand of postmodern relativistic and skeptical philosophers, realism has gained adherence among scholars outside of rhetoric under the names of: philosophical realism, perspective realism,⁴ and moral realism.⁵ Rhetoricians argue for philosophical realism under the rubric of rhetorical perspectivism.⁶ The basic tenets of rhetorical perspectivism are as follows:

1. Reality exists largely independent of human attitudes, beliefs, values, and communication behavior.
2. Much of reality is capable of being perceived and known by humans.
3. Entities are what they are by virtue of the relationships in which they stand to other entities.
4. Human perception is always perspectival.
5. Knowledge is both incremental and cumulative.
6. The accumulation of veridical claims and their continual reassessment and elevation to the status of knowledge is made possible by argument, conducted in the marketplace of ideas.
7. Despite our direct access to perspectives on reality, at times we make mistakes or are mislead when elevating claims to the status of knowledge. (Cherwitz and Hikins, 1983:266 1986:115—160).

It is important to note that the form of realism described is diametrically opposed to skepticism which holds that occasional error places our entire stock of knowledge in question. Occasional error, according to the perspective realist, indicates, at most, that we are
occasionally in error in our knowledge claims. The majority of our knowledge claims serve us well and are veridical. In other words, it is specious to claim, as the skeptical tradition has, that, because we are sometimes in error, then it is possible we err all the time. This perspective on knowledge assumes a dialectical interaction between reality “per se” and our social linguistic interaction about reality. This dialectical relationship recognizes that although we can perceive some aspect of reality, we don’t always apprehend all of reality. On this view, our discourse, that is our linguistic description of reality relevant to any given object of discourse, usually offers a depiction of only part of reality. Dialectical tension exists between the whole ontological reality and our limited or partial perspective on it. It must be clearly understood that this is not to say that individual perspectives negate the existence of reality or our ability to know it. It is to suggest that our perspectives, and the reality descriptions we derive from them, are generally partial. When we juxtapose and merge these perceptions into descriptions we may generate a more complete “picture” of
reality. Or, wittingly or unwittingly, we may generate false pictures of reality, that is, montages of perspectives that distort the larger reality from which they originate. As Sayers states, "Even the most aberrant forms of consciousness ultimately reflect objective reality" (Sayers, 1985:80; emphasis added). The very social interaction of individuals, argues Sayers, insures that our knowledge will be based in reality.

Human thought and human consciousness are essentially social. Our concepts and categories, our theories, our 'ways of seeing things,' are social and historical products. So, too, are our practical relations to the world, our forms of activity in and on it. All these propositions are true; but there is nothing in them that entails that we are therefore isolated and walled off from objective reality. ...Our concepts and categories, our 'world-view', our 'way of seeing things', that is to say, do not act as barriers between us and reality. Our ideas and beliefs are not cut off from the world. Still less do we mentally or socially 'construct' our world. Our ideas and beliefs, on the contrary, reflect reality; and it is only through our use of language and the categories and concepts that it embodies, that our knowledge of the objective world is developed. (Sayers, 1985:133-134)

These are the philosophical contentions which undergird the analysis of the rhetorical dimensions of epistemology, praxis, and power and from which the definition of ideology is constituted.
Rhetorical Dimensions of Praxis

Praxis, or orthopraxis as used by liberation theologians, has a rhetorical dimension because it is both a product of and an instigator of historically situated symbolic, including linguistic, interaction. The liberation theologians assumption about the dialectical nature of praxis (action affecting reflection affecting action) exhibits a definite rhetorical dimension. Employing the definition of rhetoric as "the linguistic construction of reality," praxis is a microcosm of the interaction between rhetoric and ideology. Whether admitted or not, the intentional actor has a perception of the world which is, to a significant degree, the result of linguistic interaction. This linguistic interaction affects how and why someone will be willing to act. In liberation theology, symbols (language) are used to communicate the orthopraxis ("right actions") to the individual. This in turn affects the actor's intrapersonal reflection (his/her decision making and commitment to the "cause") which, in turn, affects his/her actions and his/her subsequent linguistic
descriptions of reality offered to other individuals.

An example of this in the liberation theology movement can be seen in the activity of the base ecclesial communities in Latin America. Through Bible study, Church activities, or educational activities, the base ecclesial communities proffer their particular version of reality. These base ecclesial communities began with a very simple premise: local, community-based small groups are the best format to use to enlighten individuals who were Biblically and educationally illiterate. Once these groups were established, came the recognition that they could instigate social and political change. The base ecclesial communities were a reaction, typically Roman Catholic, to two observations of the world: (1) the less hierarchically laden evangelical churches were much more successful in their proselytizing than the Roman Catholics and (2) if people were going to become more involved, spiritually and politically, they needed to be able to read and to write. As delineated in chapter 1, these small, community-based “educational groups,” overseen by some priests and lay people “dedicated to the
liberation of the poor and oppressed” became the basis for “consciousness-raising education” (both secular and religious). They also laid the groundwork for later political activity which attempted to overthrow governments (succeeding in Nicaragua in 1979) and to reduce the influence of capitalism within the region. All of this was the result of people whose dialogue with each other presented “linguistic descriptions of reality” in order to persuade and to get others involved in their educational, religious and, eventually, political agenda.

In the concept of orthopraxis we see linguistic/symbolic activity along three different, but interrelated, dimensions: the linguistic description of reality by the individual who communicates to the potential actor, the intrapersonal activity and the resulting perception of reality in the mind of the actor (ideally resulting, eventually, in symbolic or non-symbolic action), and the subsequent communication of the actor to other potential actors about “right actions.” Thus a persuasive “linguistic description of reality” is spread, a value-laden description of “acceptable actions” is
disseminated, and a social movement takes root and grows.

The historical dimension of praxis is apparent because human actions are always situated within an historical context (both affecting and being affected by the social and intellectual milieu, as Ehninger would say). Liberation theologians argue that it is also historically situated because the church, theology, ethics and epistemology are only historical and that they can never be universal or ahistorical. Nevertheless, when people act for or against socio-political change, they act in a real world and react to real, though not always consensually agreed-upon, situations.

Liberation theology came about as a response to real physical/material needs and a perceived inadequacy of the church's response to social needs. J. Andrew Kirk points out that they accepted a Marxist basis because of two factors.

First, they accepted the current explanation of the causes of underdevelopment being put forward by a new generation of Latin American economists working with Marxist categories of analysis. These economists maintained that underdevelopment, which was actually becoming more marked relative to the developed nations of the capitalist West, was due to the inherently exploitative nature of world economic
relations. ...Secondly, they believed that, in the light of increasing poverty and economic exploitation, Christian faith needed to adopt a particular ideological framework to give fresh impetus to its commitment. (Kirk, 1980:115)

Adherents of liberation theology are quick to point out the economic hardships, lower educational standards, economic and industrial dependency on the first-world countries, which are all very real “lived experiences” for many individuals in Latin America. These real events became the base, interpreting a specific ontology and interpreted by a specific epistemology, upon which individuals were requested to give adherence and to join in revolution. As Kirk points out above, the reaction of liberation theologians came about as a result of real events. It was the “standard of evaluation,” the epistemic base with its emphasis on orthopraxis and the epistemic “preference” for the “poor and disenfranchised” which emphasized revolution. “[Liberation theology] has also emphasized the fact that true knowledge of any situation is available only to those committed to change it. This epistemological principle, sometimes called ‘action-reflection,’ means that truth is grasped in experience only as the subject of liberating action”
This specific epistemic base, in conjunction with the emphasis on praxis, resulted in an *anthropos* centered rather than *theos* centered theology of liberation. This attention shift maintains strong realist ontological ties but it eventually negates the orthodox theological base because of its emphasis on the human needs and/or the potential human utopia (the often-spoken-of “kingdom of God”) which is to be reached through violence rather than an orthodox understanding of a *theos* who is both transcendent and immanent. The new emphasis within their theology is on humanity and the ability to create revolutionary change.

[Liberation theology] has shown that no theoretical thought is neutral, but is harnessed either for or against revolutionary change. Theology is no exception. It should be used, therefore as an agent of conflict, making people aware of the real causes of oppression and how the church has tacitly defended the mechanisms which maintain the status quo. (Kirk, 1980:118, emphasis added)

The central issue in liberation theology, then, becomes not the initial ontological basis of liberation theology but the epistemic/orthopraxis basis used for justifying what actions should be taken in
response to these initial situations. Again, as Sayers (1985) points out, incorrect ideas and ideologized reflections come from interpretations of real events and situations.

**Rhetorical Dimension of Power**

There is a rhetorical dimension of power which is symbolic and historically situated. The symbolic dimension of power driven by one's psychosocial dependency, is based on the intrapersonal and interpersonal linguistic description of reality.\(^8\) People interact linguistically with each other and fulfill biological needs (such as hunger, thirst, love, belongingness) and/or linguistically-construed needs (such as the perceived need to shave bodily hair or to wear substances which make humans smell more like flowers and trees rather than like sweaty humans). Similarly, the historical situatedness of power is the result of human interactions within time and space situations. Whenever people interact linguistically with each other, the result is hierarchy and psychosocial dependency. Psychosocial dependency can come in two different forms:
adherence to or disagreement with another person and his/her ideas. Antagonism between two or more individuals, or groups, does not depict a paucity of psychosocial dependency. “Indifference, not hate, is the opposite of love,” as the saying goes and one’s commitment to oppose an individual or group could be as much a need as a person who is committed as the person who agrees with an individual or group. So, we can see that psychosocial dependency comes from both strong agreement with and strong disagreement with an individual or group.

The next dimension of power that we need to recognize is how it helps to define the in-group/out-group dimensions of group identity and group goals. This is similar to the claim that psychosocial dependency not only comes from agreement with (or adherence to) an individual/group but that it can come from strong disagreement with an other individual/group. In like manner some groups or organizations can be more easily defined by those individuals/groups with whom they strongly disagree rather than statements of their own goals or group mission. There is the
sense that highly defined power relationships within an ideology do as much to define the “in-group” by specifically defining the idea, individual, or group with whom to disagree.

My argument, however, is not that power is merely a symbolic construct. Obviously, people have the ability to affect our lives whether or not we want to “admit it.” There are people with whom we are psychosocially dependent, who have very real power over us, despite our attempts to dismiss them or to distance ourselves from them. One example of this can be found in offspring who do not want to be like their parents. Attempts to “distance oneself” does not necessarily eliminate psychosocial dependency--this is especially true of offspring who are consumed by their attempts to not be like their parent(s).

Our analysis has shown that there is a rhetorical dimension to epistemology, praxis, and power. All three of these concepts are part of a “real” reality and are symbolically construed or, at least, have a symbolic dimension to them. All three of them are part of the intellectual and social milieu and are tools by which rhetors
attempt to gain adherence through linguistic descriptions of reality.

**Interaction Among Epistemology, Praxis, and Power**

Ideology can be approached through any of the three interrelated dimensions: epistemology, praxis, or power. Contained within each of the three are elements of the other two. Whenever one is talked about, explicitly, the other two are always implied.

First, an epistemic system implies *required* actions and power relations. One of the tenets of orthodox western Christianity is that a personal, knowable God exists in time and space and that this Deity offers propositions of fact. Accepting this proposition implies certain activities and power relations. The activities implied are that a person will either willfully accept (and do) or willfully reject (and not do) what this Deity has to say. Whether or not a person does what is acceptable, though, does not negate the implied power relations. If a person accepts the proposition that a God exists and that this being has presented statements of
acceptable actions then, despite the doing/not doing of these things, the person must contend with the possibility of eventually dealing with a supernatural being who holds decisions concerning life and death or one’s ultimate destination.

Let us examine a material example of these concepts. If a person accepts the authority of a government which has determined that the speed limit on highways should not exceed 65 miles per hour, this implies acceptable activities and power relationships. The “orthopraxis,” or right actions of the citizenry, would be to go no more than the posted speed limit and the implied power relations include the driver’s dependence on the government’s accuracy in checking the speed of those driving, the government’s dependency on drivers to not organize in mass revolt against its authority, and the interdependency of all the drivers to act in good faith vis à vis each other to maintain the speed limit, resulting in a smooth flow of traffic for all. The power relations become even more pronounced in this situation because of the existence of agents who operate on behalf of the government (in its authority)
and carry with them the power of threat (that is, fines, elimination of driving privileges, impounding vehicles, and threat of loss of freedom--jail or prison). We see that accepting a given epistemic base--that which is counted as knowledge and/or the criteria by which we determine what is accepted as knowledge--implies parameters of what is accepted as "right actions" and those upon whom one is interdependent.

Let us examine the interrelationship among epistemology, praxis, and power from the perspective of praxis. Praxis is the microcosm of ideology because it is the combination of actions, thought, and implied power relations. Praxis, especially the notion of orthopraxis, implies an epistemology (acknowledged or tacit) and definite power relations. When a person accepts that "right actions" consist of liberating the poor and oppressed, a particular epistemic base which must be accepted and very definite power relations are implied. First, the "preference for the poor" implies an epistemic system which assumes that only the poor and oppressed know what it really means to live. Within liberation
theology this means that those who are financially comfortable (whether as individuals, nations, or systems), such as capitalists, can not understand life nor can they have a correct interpretation of the Bible. Only those who have given up material goods, and their comforts can truly understand what it means to live and correctly interpret the Christian Bible.

This epistemic preference for the poor implies very obvious power relations. Anyone who is not poor and oppressed is dependent upon those who are. It is from the poor and oppressed that one is to achieve understanding about what it means to live (through suffering) and one is enabled to understand the true intent and meaning of the Christian Bible. In addition, any person, people, nation, or system which fosters "economic oppression" (however that may be defined) is suspect and should be destroyed. There is, then, an epistemic dependency of the middle and upper classes upon the poor and the creation of specific in-groups (those aligned with the poor) and out-groups (those who oppress the poor). Members of the out-groups become targets for
persuasive change or destruction. Those who are not willing to be persuaded concerning the option for the poor become a threat.

Finally, we examine the interaction among epistemology, praxis, and power through psychosocial interdependency. Power relations imply an epistemic base and the correlated required actions. The acceptable actions would be those which are amenable to the person(s)/group upon whom I am dependent (and want to be a part of) or conversely, actions which counter, directly, those with whom I am in opposition. This implies an epistemic system because it determines what is to be purposefully accepted, or rejected, as true/untrue. The power relations help to set the standard (or criteria) by which one's knowledge is to be evaluated.

The interaction among these three areas is rhetorical because it aims to persuade to a particular description of reality through language. All three of these have linguistic (symbolic) dimensions which can be used to persuade an individual toward a particular ontological perspective. I argue that they have symbolic/linguistic dimensions, not that they are merely symbolically constructed.
This is an important distinction to consider.

There are dimensions to power and actions which are not linguistically dependent. An obvious exemplar can be found in the area of power relationships. Whether or not an individual cares to accept the epistemic assumptions about government and its right to determine speed limits for those driving automobiles there are certain realities which will impinge upon the individual despite the degree to which s/he may declaim their existence. First, is the obvious reality of non-symbolic threat and punishment which the government may place upon the individual. If a person refuses to obey posted speed limits s/he will eventually encounter the threat of a fine or imprisonment which will entail the loss of money or freedom, or both. No matter how much one may denounce the epistemic assumptions associated with the existence of a federal government and its powers, s/he will still have to face potential repercussions of his/her acts. Even if a person were to respond to charges of speeding by arguing philosophical solipsism, the threat of loss of driving privileges or even confinement to a
mental institution, could result because the power of the federal government is not a mere symbolic construct.

Let us place this, again, within the context of Nicaragua and liberation theology. Whether or not a person wants to accept the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church or the injustice of some of the Somosan political system both sides of the political debate had to admit that there were certain non-symbolic events/situations which impinged upon them. The liberation theology's emphasis on the poor is one of these non-symbolic impingements. Despite the linguistic depictions, there are still poor people who have fallen upon economic hard times and whose pleas have fallen upon deaf political ears. There are those aspects of life which, despite our attempts to the contrary, we cannot talk into, or out of, existence.

The interaction among epistemology, praxis, and power is interrelated. Each of these three have implications which determine the other two. The fundamental rhetorical dimension for each of them is their use in symbolically describing reality. How then
can we differentiate between an ideology and a worldview?

Distinguishing Ideology and Worldview

What dimensions must exist to determine that something is an ideology as opposed to a worldview? The emphasis on praxis, especially orthopraxis, with its implied power relations and epistemological justification, results in an ideology. The key for my definition of ideology is the emphasis on praxis and power (almost to the exclusion of an epistemological justification for why the actions should be performed). When the conceptualization and/or execution of “right actions” become the *driving force*, to the exclusion of justifying one’s philosophical position in the marketplace of ideas, then we can be assured it is an ideology. The demand for “right actions” without a well-defined epistemology to justify the actions is the distinguishing mark between an ideology and a worldview. An ideology demands actions—specific actions—without much epistemic justification for those actions. A worldview, on the other hand, becomes a system of belief, specifically an
Determining an Ideology

A decrease in the emphasis on a well-defined, cognizant epistemic base in conjunction with an increase in the emphasis on right actions (orthopraxis) and a highly defined in-group which is violently opposed to a particular out-group, is what I categorize as zealous ideology. This is where one is caught in the grip of an ideology and sees him/herself as part of a web from which s/he cannot find individual identity--there is little emphasis on the identity of the individual or the worth of the other individual/group with whom one disagrees.

Being caught in the "grip of an ideology" means that a person is so focused and drawn into a small sub-group/sub-culture that s/he is not willing to dialogue with others in the marketplace of ideas about his/her beliefs. When one becomes a part of such a group and foregoes the necessary justification for the marketplace of ideas, the result is little (or no) questioning about what or why
the person believes what s/he does. Without engagement in the marketplace of ideas there is little emphasis on a philosophical (especially an epistemological) justification for believing what s/he does. It is once the ideologue encounters, and engages, people in the marketplace of ideas that s/he must then begin to formulate reasons for why s/he believes what s/he does.

An ideology can be realist based or non-realist based (including intersubjectivist/subjectivist, or even solipsistic). The epistemic basis is important because it determines which actions will be undertaken but it does not seem to be the determining factor in categorizing an ideology. It is the symbolically construed and historically situated primacy of right actions over and above the ability to reason or to give justification which is the necessary factor for an ideology.

What difference do these distinctions make? How does this more narrow definition of ideology, and what is ideological, affect our understanding of rhetoric? These questions will be answered in the next chapter.
CHAPTER VI ENDNOTES


2. The author’s argue that the linguistic is a narrow band of the symbolic spectrum. Language is accepted as symbolical but it is only a small part of the symbolical which can actually be deemed as rhetorical.


4. Perspective realism has been more fully delineated in Evander Bradley McGilvary’s Toward a Perspective Realism, Ed. Albert G. Ramsperger (La Salle, IL: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1956).
Other adherents of realism include: Sean Sayers’ Reality and Reason: Dialectic and the Theory of Knowledge, (New York: Basil Blackwell Inc., 1985); Thomas Russman’s A Prospectus


Recent work has begun on moral realism by communication scholars, specifically David Lawrence (1993), "Rhetoric and the

7. It was within these types of groups that Paulo Friere's ideas about consciousness-raising education were implemented and the resulting actions carried over into organized political activity.

Note, again, the four volume set of lay people's conversations, in the context of weekly Bible study, edited by Ernesto Cardenal. The implementation of Friere's ideas of education along with Cardenal's Marxist epistemological assumptions results in a small group of people who read various Scriptural passages from the first four books of the New Testament and then "interpret" them according to their political situation/agenda. The result is a highly contextualized interpretation which is used to justify their political agenda against the traditional Roman Catholic Church's positions and against the Somosan regime in Nicaragua. (Ernesto Cardenal, The Gospel in Solentiname, vols. 1-4, Donald D. Walsh trans. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1982.

8. I acknowledge that there is a material dimension to power where humans are dependent upon natural/supranatural forces which tend to be beyond our capacity to predict or to control. For example, hurricanes are beyond our control but our predictive power has allowed humans to be less dependent upon sudden, and drastic, changes in the weather. The analysis of these other dimensions of power are beyond the scope of this endeavor.

9. There are multiple examples of this attitude in Cardenal's The Gospel in Solentiname. One of note is when the group is commenting on the parable of "the rich man and Lazarus" from Luke 16:19-31. One member of the group states
It's because the Gospel hasn't been well preached that we have a society still divided between rich and poor. There are few places like this one [Cardenal's group in Solentiname] where the Gospel is preached and we understand it. Also, it's us poor people who understand it. (Cardenal, 1979:253, vol. III)

This attitude is characteristic of those who adhere to liberation theology. Note, also, the activities which took place in the base ecclesial communities in "El Riguero"--a poor section of Managua, Nicaragua. Here many young students from the wealthier families in Nicaragua joined the poor communities in order to learn from them. One young student states, "We wanted to be with the people, with the oppressed, in the struggle for justice. We found we couldn't really tackle these questions in the family and university environment in which we lived. ...We came to see that one's faith could not be authentic except around those who are poor and exploited" (Randall, 1983:129-130).

10. Note Humberto Belli's argument in Breaking Faith (1985) where he states that diverse political and religious groups worked in conjunction to overthrow the Somosan dictatorship because of its injustice, intolerance of democratic principles, and its greed. Belli's title comes from the claim that the Marxists who were involved with the overthrow broke faith to deal fairly and justly with those non-Marxists who wanted to achieve greater political, religious, and economic freedoms.

11. Note, again, Hikins' material on the rhetoric of disaster. James W. Hikins, (revised 1990) "Discursive Responses to Calamity: The Rhetoric of Disaster," under review at The Quarterly Journal of Speech, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH.
CHAPTER VII:

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR RHETORIC


But things can be done in the name of reason only for so long; eventually, it becomes apparent that reason is in the name. (Whitson and Poulakos, 1993:131)

It is *art*, not *truth*, that serves the purposes of human life (Whitson and Poulakos, 1993:132)

'Thinking' as epistemologists conceive it, simply does not occur: it is a quite arbitrary function, arrived at by selecting one element from the process and eliminating all the rest... Epistemological investigations and treatises do not produce knowledge *qua* knowledge; they only testify to one's will to know. ...To the epistemologists' objective reality Nietzsche responds with and aesthetics of appearance. (135) ...I [Nietzsche] am not claiming that appearance is opposed to 'reality'; on the contrary, I maintain that appearance is reality. (Whitson and Poulakos, 1993:135,137)

In the epigraph, Whitson and Poulakos speak favorably of a particular theoretical approach to the world, one that may be
characterized as the rejection of traditional philosophical methods of reason as a tool for understanding and assaying the world. In their abandonment of traditional rationality, these scholars, like their nineteenth-century mentor, reject both the desirability and the possibility of philosophy itself. "We now oppose knowledge with art: return to life!" is the aphorism these thinkers share (Whitson and Poulakos, 1993: 141, 143).

We have seen thus far in this study that this repair from "metaphysics, morality, and epistemology" (Whitson and Poulakos, 1993:132) leads inexorably to the conclusion that all rhetoric is ideological, since we can never, on this view, escape from the "prison-house" of language and, hence, from interests that are always and completely the creation of humans. If we are confined to the prison-house of language, we reject the conception of, and hence the need for, Truth. Freed from the requirement of Truth and urged to consider life and art as the two exhaustive categories of ontology, we may suspect that any resultant rhetoric must confine itself to life and art, too. Moreover, we might suspect that, as
at other times in its history, removed from any requirement to check its conclusions about the true nature of life, that is, relieved of the burden of logos, rhetoric becomes concerned merely with style and delivery.

Aristotle contends that philosophy, not art, is what we have as our aim and that we must, and do, engage in it (though not on a sophisticated level) each day.

If we are to engage in philosophy, we are to engage in philosophy; and if we are not to engage in philosophy, we are to engage in philosophy. In every case, therefore, we are to engage in philosophy. For if philosophy is possible, then we must in every way engage in it, since it exists. And if it is not possible, in this case too we ought to inquire how it is possible for philosophy not to be, and in inquiring we engage in philosophy: for inquiry is the cause of philosophy. (W. D. Ross, Aristotelis Fragmenta Selecta, Oxford, 1955:28)

We might extract a cliché from Aristotle, following a well-known catch-phrase of our day, stating, “We cannot not philosophize.”

I have argued that rhetoric is not and should not be wholly concerned with ideology and I have sought to sketch out in some detail the interaction between epistemology, praxis, and power. This interaction is depicted as occurring within the context of
philosophical realism. Viewed in this way, ideology is seen to represent a narrow portion of persuasive appeals which emphasize the primacy of orthopraxis (acceptable actions) over epistemological justification, contain an accepted epistemic perspective, and define specific in-group and out-group psychosocial dependencies. What, then, is the usefulness of this definition of ideology? What heuristic value or perspectival understanding can we derive from this study concerning rhetoric? Is it possible to avoid being caught in the grip of an ideology?

This chapter argues that the more focussed definition of ideology developed in this study makes the term useful/usable for rhetorical theory. I argue also that grounding rhetoric and its relationship to ideology in a realist philosophy renders the art a tool of great social importance. I also contend that the more definitive terminology I have developed helps us to dialogue more precisely about human rhetorical interaction and that definitional clarity is mandated if we are to remain true to our philosophical heritage and maintain a productive dialogue within the marketplace of
ideas. Next, I argue that ideology's grounding in reality, exemplified by the liberation theologians' appeals, contributes to the contention that grounding persuasion in philosophical realism enhances the rhetor's persuasive appeals. Finally, I delineate the implications of the tripartite conceptualization of ideology, praxis, and power on our understanding of rhetoric contending that it: (1) reinforces the need for a method of argument which develops criteria for assessing knowledge claims; (2) emphasizes the importance of grounding rhetorical analysis in epistemic philosophy and invites rhetoricians to continue explorations in the rhetoric of epistemology; (3) renews the discussion about the rhetorical importance of praxis and; (4) underscores the need to examine issues of power within rhetorical analysis.

Usefulness of a More Focussed Definition of Ideology

The more narrowly focussed definition of "ideology" developed in this study ensures and enhances the usefulness of the term ideology within rhetoric. The proposed conceptualization of ideology
contains specific criteria for application in rhetorical analyses. It is hoped that these criteria will replace the ambiguous use of the term which has become an indiscriminate weapon employed imprecisely to lambaste any and all opponents and/or their ideas. The new definition requires specific emphases/characteristics of the interaction among epistemology, praxis, and power to be met before it qualifies as an “ideology.”

An ideology is more than a difference of opinions, ideas, attitudes, or beliefs. An ideology emphasizes orthopraxy, contains an admitted or implicit epistemological base, and results in social hierarchy and psychosocial interdependency. Ideology is a socially derived system of thought advocating a particular social program, couched in a linguistic description of reality, emphasizing correct actions over correct thoughts, and resulting in and from interpersonal groupings of social hierarchy and psychosocial interdependency. Defined in this manner, the concept of ideology has increased rhetorical usefulness because it defines a specific rhetorical situation/exigency. Among other advantages, such a definition
encourages analysis and discourages pejorative, *ad hominem*, and uncritical claims on the part of rhetorical critics and practitioners. These definitional boundaries assure rhetoricians that we will not be caught in the philosophical morass of “everything is ideological, thus *nothing* is ideological.”

The contemporary epistemological assumption within the mainstream of rhetorical thought presumes that knowledge is subjectively constituted and constrained and that a “change of mind” or a “change of heart” is merely a change from one ideology to another. This presumes we are always caught in an ideology and that *renouncing* an ideology only results in *changing* from one ideology to another. If such is the case, it catches us in two dilemmas. First, we are always caught in the grip of an ideology and can never distinguish the ideological from the non-ideological. At best, we can only distinguish between ideologies and can only argue our subjective preferences for choosing one over another. Second, ideology as all-encompassing, loses any distinguishing characteristics. If everything is ideological, then is *anything* ideolo-
logical? Part of determining the ontological status of a thing is dependent upon determining what the thing is not. It would be difficult to determine what an ideology is if we cannot determine what it is not.

The definition of ideology proposed here does not fall prey to such a problem. This definition discriminates between knowledge which may be a part of one's worldview but which does not require action, nor places it above epistemological justification, nor determines some social hierarchy or interdependency. To say and believe, "the sky is blue" does not require action; neither does it determine social groupings of hierarchy and dependency. It is not an ideological comment nor does it entail any ideological commitment. On the other hand, an admonition that "One must, to be a patriot, take up arms against the national guard who are an inherent part of the capitalistic system oppressing and dominating us" is clearly ideological. It is now possible to say precisely how and why it is ideological, given the definitional work of this study.
Avoiding Entrapment in the grip of an ideology

The definition of ideology is also practical because it suggests a means by which auditors can avoid being caught in the grip of an ideology. The suggestion is threefold: (1) require a realist, philosophically grounded epistemic base; (2) ensure the primacy of thought (epistemological justification) over action when dealing with social interactions/social change; (3) be able to articulate a standard of analysis (that is, criteria used to distinguish between competing claims about how to view the world, such as "justified true belief")\textsuperscript{2} and; (4) be willing to enter into genuine, self-risking dialogue within the marketplace of ideas. The realist epistemic base will ensure that the persuasive appeals, and the desired adherence, is ontologically grounded. The primacy of an epistemology over an orthopraxy ensures that auditors are given the opportunity to reason through their actions and attitudes before they are requested to act on them. The criteria for analysis enables the auditors to critique both the requests for adherence and their own criteria by which they choose between competing claims. Finally,
entering into a genuine dialogue within the marketplace of ideas ensures that adherents contend with the arguments of others in order to determine the defensibility of their ideas in the light of other positions/perspectives. The position advocated here is similar to John Stuart Mill's contention that humans become wise (have an assurance of their own position) by engaging in argument with detractors.

In the case of any person whose judgment is really deserving of confidence, how has it become so? Because he has kept his mind open to criticism of his opinions and conduct. Because it has been his practice to listen to all that could be said against him; so as to profit by as much of it as was just, and expound to himself, and upon occasion to others, the fallacy of what was fallacious. Because he has felt that the only way in which a human being can make some approach to knowing the whole of a subject, is by hearing what can be said by persons of every variety of opinion, and studying all modes in which it can be looked at by every character of mind. No wise man ever acquired his wisdom in any mode but this; nor is it the nature of human intellect to become wise in any other manner. (John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, 1859; reprint Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1956:25)

Offering our claims and arguments up for scrutiny within the marketplace of ideas helps auditors to achieve a soundness of thought and defense for their positions and helps ensure that they
avoid being caught in the grip of an ideology. Contention within the marketplace of ideas, along with our human concerns about power, forces us to ask and answer ontological questions by retaining a grounding in philosophical realism.

The Argument for Realism

The more focussed definition of ideology developed in this study contributes to an understanding of philosophical realism because it recognizes that appeals for adherence must be grounded in the day-to-day lived experience of the auditors. The ideological emphases on action and on power relations connect the rhetor with the day-to-day concerns of the auditors. The rhetorical appeal of any ideology is based on its adherence to, and correspondence with, the auditors' daily experience. The ideological must have some ontological grounding in order to gain adherence. Sayers (1985) contends that the persuasive appeal of that which is erroneous is that it is grounded in reality--it is the persuasive appeal of reality which cannot be negated. "Ideological representa-
tions derive from and reflect reality. They take their idealized and distorted forms, moreover, because of the contradictions and conflicts which are a part and parcel of real life. *Their power is the power of reality*” (Sayers, 1985:106).

Liberation theology's ties to naive realism, their arguments from superficial ontology, enabled them to persuade people to get involved in revolution. They became caught in the "grip of an ideology" when they demanded actions over deeper philosophical justification and, once they gained political power (especially in Nicaragua), did not open themselves up to critique/dialogue within the marketplace of ideas. Examples of this can be seen in the control of the press, the mass media, activities of the Church, elections, and especially in liberation theology's Biblical hermeneutic. Limitations on the Chamorro family's freedom to publish the counter-revolutionary paper, *La Prensa*, the totalitarian control on the mass media, attacks on church groups which disagreed with liberation theology, and limitations placed on free elections are well documented in Humberto Belli's (1985) *Breaking Faith* and in

The totalitarian controls over media of communication is representative of the hermeneutic control over Biblical interpretation. The base ecclesial communities proclaimed a breaking away from the hermeneutic dictatorship of the clergy-elite within the Roman Catholic church. Leaders of the BECs would help individuals learn how to read but just enough so that they could understand the ideological framework of the priest. Lacking was any effort to teach them to critically assess the competing claims and calls for adherence. Gutierrez exemplifies this dictatorial hermeneutic with his pro-revolutionary approach. He states that Paulo Freire was correct to assert that, "Only the oppressed peoples can denounce and announce. Only they are capable of working out revolutionary utopias and not conservative or reformist ideologies" (Gutierrez, 1973:235). Gutierrez’s limited hermeneutic, entitled the "option for the poor," is exemplified in Ernesto Cardenal’s *Gospel in Solentiname*. This four volume set contains Cardenal’s re-
corded dialogues with some of the campesinos (and occasional visitors) on the island of Solentiname. They discoursed concerning selected Biblical passages from the New Testament section of the Gospels. One such discussion, used as exemplary of the strict pro-revolutionary hermeneutic, concerns a passage from Luke 6:27-31 which talks about loving one’s enemies. The orthodox Christian perspective tends to treat these verses as commands for how Christians should behave toward those who dislike them and intend them harm. The orthodox emphasis is on a pietistic attitude and behavior which transcends time, space, social groups, or specific situations.

Cardenal and his group reveal revolutionary presumptions which take this passage in a much different direction. Each section within the four volume set begins with a Scriptural reference and then proceeds to the discussion about the passage. Cardenal usually begins each section with comments--this is one of the few times he doesn’t “set the tone” from the beginning. I attempted to retain as much of the relevant material from the text in order to
present a fair assessment of the dialogue as edited by Cardenal.

"But to you who hear me I say: 'Love your enemies and pray for those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who insult you.'"

There was a long silence. Nobody spoke. We heard only the hubbub of some children playing in the church, and outside the murmur of the lake. I asked if anyone had any comments to make. Everyone kept silent.

“What do you say, Laureano? Don’t you want to speak?”

He smiled and said: “No, I don’t want to speak; that nonsense is very confusing. That’s crazy.”

OLIVIA: “That’s a very difficult thing, but we have to do it, because the gospel orders us to do it. The words are very clear.”

I asked if they thought this was practiced much here in Solentiname. And some answered Yes and others No.

ANDREA, Oscar’s wife, said: “Nonsense! We answer evil with evil. When they insult us, we insult back.”

Another said: “I believe this is practiced quite a lot in this group.”

LAUREANO: “It’s true that we don’t usually insult each other.”

REBECCA: “I understand that God wants us all to love each other, not to have enemies, because he has come to give us love here on earth. He hasn’t come to give us hatred. Then what he wants is for us to love each other and not to have enemies. For all of us to treat each other with love, because he ordered it and that’s how it’s written.”

I said: “Rebecca has told us one thing very clearly: The kingdom of God is love, and therefore we cannot have hatred in that kingdom. And therefore we are commanded to love our enemies. Is that clear enough?”

WILLIAM asked: “Even class enemies?”

I said: “In the class struggle we are struggling to put an end to the division into classes. As long as we are divided
into classes, with opposed interests, we have to have class enemies. But if we struggle to unite with them and to form all together a humanity united in classless society, then we are struggling for love and not for hatred. Marxists sometimes talk about hatred. And Che [Gueverra] has a phrase or two in which he says that the revolutionary must hate. But I think that is just a way of talking, a little like what Jesus says: 'He who does not hate his father and his mother is not worthy of me.' We Christians have always said: 'We must hate sin and love the sinner.' I have the impression that Che never fought because of hatred of other people but because of hatred of injustice. I was very pleased by a phrase that I heard from a Marxist priest in Chile, Father Arroyo, on one occasion when we had a small Eucharist in his home. A priest was defending revolutionary hatred and he said to him: 'Only love is revolutionary, hatred is always reactionary.'"

...MANUEL: “But we have class enemies. And how are we going to manage to struggle against the enemy if we have to love him? How are we going to defend ourselves?”

MARCELANO, slowly: “If we hate, we too are no longer struggling against the enemy...We are the enemy, because we are evil... He says we must love the enemy, but he doesn’t say we can’t fight them...The question is how are we going to fight them. If they hate, the weapon against them is love. The difference between us and the enemy is that we fight them without wanting to oppress them, only to liberate them. They do hate us. But we are no longer the opposite of them if we answer hatred with hatred...I say that it is with love that we can defend ourselves.” (emphasis added)

If someone strikes you on one cheek, offer him also the other cheek. And if someone takes your coat from you, let him have your shirt also.
JULIO RAMON, incredulous: “Does this mean that the poor person must suffer and let people take his things away from him?”

LAUREANO: “It seems to me that this applies to the rich: They should let people take their things from them. He talks about a coat, right? And poor people are always in shirtsleeves [laughter]. So when the revolution comes and their farms are taken away, their factories, their extra houses, they shouldn’t put up any resistance. And if they lose one piece of property, let them offer up the other piece.” (emphasis added)

FELIPE: “Let them give it up freely and give more than is asked of them. This is for the have's. What can the poor give, if they don't have anything? The Christian should be detached from everything, not wanting to defend property with force.”

MANUEL: “Then what it says about the other cheek is only for the rich, and the poor should never turn the other cheek?”

I said: “This is also a precept for the poor, and it is very revolutionary. I mean that we must pass over our own personalities, put aside all personal pride and all individualism, fight not for our own interests but for the interests of other people. This doesn’t mean not to fight. It means not to fight for yourself but for others. And Christ says to turn the other cheek, but it’s your other cheek, not the other cheek of other people. Christians who do not fight for the revolution aren’t turning either one of their two cheeks. They’re turning the cheeks of undernourished children, of the hopelessly ill, of abandoned widows, of workers robbed of their work.” (emphasis added)

...I said: “These words of Christ can be understood in a reactionary way (and they have been so understood many times) or in a revolutionary way, as we are understanding them now. And I believe that the only correct way of understanding them is the revolutionary way.” (emphasis
Do unto others as you wish them to do unto you.

JULIO: “Just as the rich want us to work for them, so also they should work for us.”

I said that this system is called socialism. Everyone works for everyone. (emphasis added)

FELIPE: “To want for everyone what we want for ourselves means that we’re all going to be equal.”

I said that here Christ is really planning a new society for us. I asked Laureano: “Now do you agree?”

He smiled. He blushed a little. I asked him again: “Is it clearer now?”

He nodded. And he said: “I was very confused before.”


The presumptions of class struggle, the denunciation of those who are “rich,” the aggrandizement those who are “poor,” and the right of these “Marxist Christians” to take up arms against those who oppose them are the a priori basis upon which everything else is said. There is no counter argument given which delineates an orthodox Western Christian interpretation of the passage or which counters assumptions about class struggle, the evils of capitalism, preference for the poor, or that true Christianity is socialist or communistic.
Concentration on orthopraxis, with its overt emphasis on temporal, revolutionary power, diverts attention away from liberation theology's orthodox Christian moorings which places less emphasis on the temporal power and has a *theos*, a wholly Other, as a critic of its epistemology. Liberation theology was able to integrate the religious because it placed emphasis on orthopraxis just as the orthodox Christian hierarchy had placed emphasis on Biblically based obedient action. The Christians did not realize these problems because they did not understand the epistemic basis for their knowledge (they, too, were in the grip of an ideology?).

There was, then, in the orthodox Christian groups, an undue emphasis on right and wrong actions rather than the search for wisdom or a justified epistemological foundation for their beliefs (less emphasis on the specific right/wrong in each case and more emphasis on understanding the principles which undergird the knowledge). It was easy to integrate orthodox Christian principles and revolutionary Marxist-Leninism because of the similar concern about right actions and because the people tended to know
the **forms** of the thoughts which resulted in the right actions rather than the substance of the thought which was to result in right actions. The similarities between the two universal histories masked and concealed the epistemological/philosophical anomalies.\(^4\)

**Implications For Rhetoric**

In addition to the above-mentioned contributions of this study, there are four specific implications for rhetoric that deserve mention; the first two reinforce the stance of those who defend a traditional, philosophically-based approach to rhetoric and the last two emphasize areas which need to be examined more thoroughly by rhetoricians, namely, praxis and power. First, this study reinforces the need for the investigation, development, nurturing, and application of a method of argument for assessing knowledge claims. Second, it emphasizes the importance of philosophical analysis (epistemology) to rhetorical analysis and calls rhetoricians to continue explorations in the rhetoric of epistemology.
Third, it suggests the importance of renewed discussion about the relationship of theory and action (or praxis) on rhetoric. Fourth, it underscores the need to continue to examine issue of power within rhetorical analysis.

Rhetoric, Ideology, and Argument

This exploration of ideology in this dissertation reveals the need for a method of argument which develops criteria of knowing. Auditors can only avoid being caught in the "grip of an ideology" if they have a method of argumentation which emphasizes assessment and evaluation. Cherwitz and Hikins (1986) have argued for the concept of justified true belief as the basis for evaluation. This is reinforced when we consider that the alternative to such epistemic criteria is, as Whitson and Poulakos (1993) suggest, an emphasis on art. Such an aesthetically grounded rhetoric develops no standard of evaluation and assessment is left ultimately up to the influence of the speaker.
Rhetoric and Epistemology

This study emphasizes the need for a rhetoric ultimately grounded in philosophical epistemology and calls us to continue explorations in the rhetoric of epistemology. Henry Johnstone argues that rhetoricians must concern themselves with rhetoric as a philosophical concept; yet rhetoricians must not assume that rhetoric can be assessed as "'philosophy without tears'" (Cherwitz, 1990: xvii). "'Philosophy without tears' is not philosophy at all; the phrase is an oxymoron," proclaims Johnstone (Cherwitz, 1990: xviii). Part of the challenge found within the definition of ideology I have offered is the admonition to avoid being caught in the grip of an ideology by developing a philosophically sound epistemic base. The epistemic soundness of ideas expressed by our rhetoric is enhanced when they stand up to challenges found within the marketplace of ideas. If we are to maintain any degree of confidence in our public policy decisions we need to be able to present well-reasoned arguments which justify our criteria for
analyzing knowledge claims. This cannot be accomplished if we presuppose the death of philosophy/epistemology and acquiesce to the pursuit of what is, at best, a temporal satisfaction through art. Consider the recommendation to flee from knowledge to art: "The rhetorical art asks not for dialectically secured truths but for linguistic images that satisfy the perceptual appetites or aesthetic cravings of audiences. These appetites can only be satisfied temporarily through artistic creations" (Whitson and Poulakos, 1993:138). This description of the temporal nature of art with its vaporous, fleeting satisfaction, offers one overarching reason why we should sustain exploration of rhetorical epistemology: While a thoroughgoing rhetorical aestheticism absolves us from the difficult task of grounding our rhetoric in Truth, it does not, and by its very nature can not, help us decide the crucial questions of day-to-day living. Unlike rhetorical epistemology, rhetorical aestheticism abrogates the responsibility to tell us how to decide what to do.
Whitson and Poulakos (1993) argument for the end of philosophy and the triumph of the aesthetic is not the first to advocate the demise of the rhetoric-as-epistemic doctrine and introduce a rhetoric based on doxa (opinion). These scholars join the ranks of other postmodern relativists and skeptics who proclaim the new era of rhetoric as doxastic. Raymie Mckerrow (1989) articulates the concept of an emancipatory "critical rhetoric... that explores, ..., a theory that is divorced from the constraints of a Platonic conception" (1989:91) and "escape[s] the trivializing influence of a universalist approach" (1989:91). Mckerrow disdains the rhetoric-as-epistemic doctrine and denies the existence of certainties or "universalizing truths against which we can measure our progress toward some ultimate destiny" (1989:97). Nevertheless, he admits his project is "one of never-ending skepticism" (1989:96) and contends that "History teaches us that there are no certainties, there are no universalizing truths against which we can measure our progress toward some ultimate destiny" (1989:97 quote from Clark & Mckerrow, 1987). Mckerrow's reconceptualization of
rhetoric as doxastic, as contrasted with epistemic, is set forth in eight principles:

Principle 1: "Ideologiekritik is in fact not a method, but a practice" (McGee, 1984, p.49).
Principle 2: The discourse of power is material.
Principle 3: Rhetoric constitutes doxastic rather than epistemic knowledge.
Principle 4: Naming is the central symbolic act of a nominalist rhetoric.
Principle 5: Influence is not causality.
Principle 6: Absence is as important as presence in understanding and evaluating symbolic action.
Principle 7: Fragments contain the potential for polysemic rather than monosemic interpretation.
Principle 8: Criticism is a performance.
(Mckerrow, 1989:102-108)

Mckerrow concludes that the critical practice of this rhetoric based on doxa will, "Stand on its own, without reliance on universal standards of reason" (1989:109). Mckerrow seeks a permanent doxastic criticism based on itself and not on "universals." Is such a critical rhetoric possible?

The second law of thermodynamics contends that physical systems tend to go from order to disorder. This law can very easily be applied to the thought processes argued by Whitson and Poula-kos and Mckerrow. Any system of thought which is not main-
tained, and continually explored and critiqued will likely devolve into disorder. Whitson and Poulakos contend that in moments of "realization, rhetoric has reasserted itself the way it did in the Sophistic Movement, the Second Sophistic, the Italian Humanism, and the aestheticism of Nietzsche" (1993:131). I contend that these periods epitomize our entropic moments when we were in disarray and decay and that only the reattachment of rhetoric to philosophy, rhetoric as the counterpart of dialectic and rhetoric as epistemic, has assured the continuance of rhetoric as an endeavor of respect and viability within the marketplace of ideas.6 Calls for a return to our sophistic and Ramistic past should be resisted; instead, we should renew our commitment to explore rhetoric's epistemic dimensions and to maintain or even enhance rhetoric's long-standing, if tenuous, relationship with philosophy.7

Theory versus Action and the Ethics of Rhetoric

This study of ideology and rhetoric renews the discussion about the kind of balance which should be maintained between theory
and action in order to gain adherence ethically (as rhetors) and to avoid falling prey to the "grip of an ideology" (as auditors). The persuasiveness of praxis, specifically orthopraxis as the basis for adherence, reveals that for most real-world audiences knowledge is experiential and based on naive realism. As such, we are susceptible to appeals for adherence which promise some sort of tangible, immediate "reward" if we only perform the "right actions." This promise for a reward can be seen in orthodox Christianity as the reward of heaven. In liberation theology it is the emphasis on a temporal, material "kingdom of God" which affords its loyal subjects material goods and political power which were, heretofore, unobtainable. Praxis, defined as action which determines thought, must be attenuated by the sort of rhetorical theory and practice that emphasizes reflection and rationality. Again, this can be accomplished only by rhetorics grounded in theories of argument and epistemology.

Finally, this study emphasizes the importance of examining the relationship of power and rhetoric. The definition of ideology
developed in these pages emphasizes that we should not ignore
the concept of power but that power, even as psychosocial depen-
dency, has significant linguistic and non-linguistic dimensions, di-
mensions that frame and infuse rhetorical discourse. This fact
should give us great pause when we are asked to view rhetoric as
aesthetically grounded. To do so is to divert attention from the
fact that rhetoric operates not merely to be **overheard**, as the art-
ist may do in order to be expressive or cathartic, but to be **heard**--
to get attention and move the audience to believe and act.

We have seen that rhetoric's relation to power has been an
issue of extreme interest and concern since the ancients. Isocrates,
Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, have all written (and spoken)
extensively about the interaction between rhetoric and power.
This material merits continued exploration and analysis, recogniz-
ing that the ancients' attention to this concept enlightens contem-
porary scholarship.
Ideology, Praxis, and Power on Rhetorical Interaction

Understanding the interrelationship of epistemology, praxis, and power helps us to understand the nature and scope of the rhetorical art. It assures us that rhetoric is to be highly regarded because it helps us to discover truth and use that truth to deliberate. Similarly, such an understanding keeps both the practitioner and the consumer of rhetoric still anchored to reality/metaphysics—to something which transcends us and, yet, something which connects us to that which is and that which affects us. Any argument concerning power is inherently a realist argument because arguments concerning power are pragmatic, experientially based, and are concerned about the degree of interdependence among individuals in the here-and-now. Similarly, the emphasis on praxis is important. We must realize what praxis is and use the term correctly. It is more than practice, it is day-to-day lived experience which influences how we think. This understanding provides an important balance to theoretical rhetoric and makes us realize an important dimension of lived experience which helps us to un-
derstand practical reasoning in our rhetoric. The caution discov-
ered in this analysis concerning praxis warns that when praxis is
placed above a philosophically grounded epistemology we encoun-
ter ideology. Even the most well-reasoned worldview can become
ideological when *praxis*, specifically *orthopraxis*, becomes more
important than discovering the underlying "good reasons."

One ancient sage exhorted that "Where there is no guidance a
people fall, but in abundance of counselors there is deliverance."8
Not all counselors will agree, nor will they all be correct; the indi-
vidual is still ultimately responsible for his or her decisions and
actions. The advantage of multiple counselors, and the ensuing
dialogue, however, is one of perspective which advances us in our
search for Truth rather than digressing toward a limited, even
subjectivist, view of the world and becoming ensconced in the
"grip of an ideology."

2. Cherwitz and Hikins (1986) argue for knowledge as justified-true-belief (see Chapter 2, “Knowledge,” pp. 18-48). They argue that knowledge is distinguished from other forms of thought because it is justified (“sufficient as well as relevant to establish the truth of any knowledge claim” (p.30)), it is true, and “the utterer must believe that it is true” (p. 21). This tripartite criteria for knowledge is given extensive coverage in their book Communication and Knowledge: An Investigation in Rhetorica Epistemology.

3. Term used to denote the people who live and work outside the cities. Sometimes used pejoratively to denote one who is naive or simpleminded. Here it is used to define the farmer-fishermen who lived and worked on the Solentiname islands in the southern part of Lake Nicaragua.

4. My contention is not that liberation theology is ideological while western orthodox Christianity is never ideological. The point is that any system of thought can become ideological when greater emphasis is placed on orthopraxis than that
placed on justifying one's belief system. My critique of liberation theology is not offered as a vituperative assessment but as an example of what can happen with any worldview, any system of thought, where the adherents place an emphasis on an uncritical acquiescence to a set of "acceptable practices" rather than emphasizing the ability to give good reasons for why they believe and act the way they do. Western orthodox Christianity can similarly become ideological when it asserts that this middle eastern based system of thought and action can only be maintained within an western, capitalistic system which asserts the preeminence of the individual. These sorts of orthopraxic claims misinterpret the cultural origins of Christianity, demand that "true Christianity" is "western" in its belief system and in its actions, and, as such make it ideological.

The definition of ideology offered here is not determined by the correctness/incorrectness of the thought vis à vis "my orthodoxy." Such a position would take us right back to an ill-defined term which is used pejoratively against one's detractors. As I hope I have shown, the pitfalls of ideology are determined by the emphasis placed on practice to the exclusion of the careful consideration of theory.


6. With the exception of the age of Italian Humanism, it is arguable whether any of these eras in rhetorical history were happy ones for practitioners or auditors. And in the exception--Italian Humanism--the age was characterized as much
by the rediscovery of objectivist philosophies and advances in objectivist sciences than by the sort of skepticism and relativism proffered by Whitson and Poulakos.

7. One might question the call for a renewed commitment to rhetorical epistemology with the question, “Doesn’t this emphasis on the rhetoric-as-epistemic doctrine dethrone rhetoric as the queen of the arts and relegate her once more to the “harlot of the arts?” I contend that this is not the case because rhetoric must continue to enlighten humans about how language is, and ought to be, used. In addition, philosophical realism enhances the idea of rhetoric as the apex of the interaction between thought and action—the lived experience of people, the real-world reasoning of individuals. This enhances rhetoric’s appeal to the other areas of inquiry because rhetoric, closely aligned with philosophy, enables individuals as consumers of persuasion to escape from being caught in the grip of an ideology and to learn to distinguish “the real” from the “non-real” (or at least know how to begin asking questions and evaluating the claims which determine such a distinction).

BIBLIOGRAPHY


