

## HEIDEGGER AND THEOLOGY

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“... And the idea that a later development (or change) in Heidegger’s thought can or will produce a change in the approach to Scripture does seem very strange. Catholic biblical scholars who have had to learn to read Scripture without scholastic glasses are going to be somewhat dubious about substituting another pair of spectacles made in Germany. . . .” These are the words of the Sulpician Scripture scholar Fr. Raymond Brown in an excellent article that appeared recently in the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* and bore the title “After Bultmann, What?—An Introduction to the Post-Bultmannians.”<sup>1</sup>

In the article, Fr. Brown takes Catholic exegetes to task for having too long engaged in a polemic against Rudolf Bultmann himself. His reason is partly that the apologia has been excessive and perhaps unnecessary, partly, too, that contemporary non-Catholic exegesis has in good measure passed beyond Bultmann and therefore renders the apologia obsolete. For some of Bultmann’s disciples (like Bornkamm, Dinkler, Käsemann, Ebeling, Fuchs in Europe—and in America, James Robinson) have, while working in Bultmann’s framework, become so critical of the master’s principles in extending them that they form a trend of their own which Fr. Brown calls “post-Bultmannian.”

Fr. Brown examines the trend and notes two tendencies in particular that characterize it: (1) it is engaged in a new quest for the so-called “historical” Jesus, with all that this implies; (2) it appeals to the thought of the later Heidegger as a major source of inspiration.

With the first of these tendencies American theologians are familiar, due to the fine efforts of such men as Fr. Brown himself.<sup>2</sup> It is rather the second tendency that I should like to reflect upon in these pages—and this for two reasons in particular. In the first place, Fr. Brown himself remarks: “Ultimately, this interest in the later Heidegger and the whole problem of hermeneutic may prove of even more lasting

<sup>1</sup> R. E. Brown, S.S., “After Bultmann, What?—An Introduction to the Post-Bultmannians,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 26 (1964) 1–30; for the quotation, see p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> See also P. J. Cahill, S.J., “Rudolf Bultmann and Post-Bultmann Tendencies,” *ibid.*, pp. 153–78.

significance than the new quest for the historical Jesus. . . .”<sup>3</sup> I take him to mean that if the later Heidegger has any relevance for Christians at all, it will extend beyond the field of exegesis. The relation between revelation and faith, between faith and speculative thought, between the ministerial function of theological speculation and the magisterial character of the Church—all these matters would deserve to be rethought in the light of Heidegger’s thought, if, indeed, it offers any light at all.

But whether it offers any light or not, the ecumenical importance of Heidegger’s influence, especially for us in America, is unquestionable. This would be the second reason for discussing it. The *New Frontiers in Theology* series already includes such titles as *The Later Heidegger and Theology* (1963) and *The New Hermeneutic* (1964).<sup>4</sup> Another volume (now in preparation) will contain the proceedings of a consultation of Protestant theologians held at Drew University, Madison, N.J., in April, 1964, on the theme “The Problem of Non-objectifying Thinking and Speaking in Theology”—Heideggerian terminology of the purest water.

Let us, then, formulate the question for ourselves: Does the later Heidegger have any relevance for the Catholic exegete or theologian? Are his spectacles worth trying on? Heidegger himself, when he addressed a group of Bultmann’s former students at Marburg in 1960, suggested that if his effort had any relevance at all, it might be considered in terms of an analogy: as philosophical thinking is to Being, so theological thinking (the thinking of faith) is to the self-revealing God.<sup>5</sup> To be sure, this covers a multitude of sins. In the narrow compass of these pages, let us simply try to understand the relationship between Being and thinking for the later Heidegger, and then restrict our attention to only one way in which its application, by analogy, might be suggestive to the Catholic thinker.

#### BEING AND THINKING

Being and thinking, indeed! This is the whole of Heidegger. It is now a commonplace that the express intention of *Sein und Zeit*, his

<sup>3</sup> Brown, *art. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup> *New Frontiers in Theology*, ed. J. M. Robinson and J. B. Cobb, Jr. (New York, 1963-).

<sup>5</sup> See *The Later Heidegger and Theology*, ed. J. M. Robinson and J. B. Cobb, Jr. (New York, 1963) p. 190.

masterwork of 1927, was to interrogate the sense, or meaning, of Being.<sup>6</sup> He has told us since then that the question first occurred to him in 1907 when, during his last year at the Gymnasium in Constance, a priest-friend gave him the doctoral dissertation of the Neo-Scholastic thinker Franz Brentano, entitled *The Manifold Sense of Being in Aristotle* (where "being" translates the Greek *on* and the German *Seiendes*). Writing of the experience in 1962, he says:

... On the title page of his work, Brentano quotes Aristotle's phrase *to on legetai pollachōs*. I translate: "A being becomes manifest (scil., with regard to its Being) in many ways." Latent in this phrase is the question that determined the way of my thought: What is the pervasive, simple, unified determination of Being that permeates all of its multiple meanings? This question raised another: What, then, does Being mean? ...<sup>7</sup>

This, then, was his initial question. But it is important for us to understand that the Being whose sense he sought entered his experience as a process of revelation. There are several reasons, I think, for this. The first was his early experience of theology. After leaving the Gymnasium, he spent three semesters as a seminarian (with a brief interlude as a Jesuit novice). In the courses on exegesis he first heard the word "hermeneutic," and this suggested to him a relationship between language (the language of Sacred Scripture) and Being. We shall return to the problem of language later. Here let us remark simply that Being in this experience is the Being of God, to be sure, but of God insofar as He reveals Himself.

After leaving the seminary, Heidegger fell under the influence of Husserl. From the philosophical point of view this was decisive. He writes (1962): "Dialogues with Husserl provided the immediate ex-

<sup>6</sup> M. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (9th ed.; Tübingen, 1960); English translation: *Being and Time*, tr. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (London, 1962).

<sup>7</sup> "... Brentano setzte auf das Titelblatt seiner Schrift den Satz des Aristoteles: *to on legetai pollachōs*. Ich übersetze: 'Das Seiende wird (nämlich hinsichtlich seines Seins) in vielfacher Weise offenkundig.' In diesem Satz verbirgt sich die meinen Denkweg bestimmende Frage: Welches ist die alle mannigfachen Bedeutungen durchherrschende einfache, einheitliche Bestimmung von Sein? Diese Frage weckt die folgenden: Was heisst denn Sein? ..." (M. Heidegger, Preface to W. J. Richardson, S.J., *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought* [The Hague, 1963] p. xi; tr. Richardson, italics Heidegger's). For the sake of clarity, it would be well to call the reader's attention to the fact that we are translating Heidegger's *Seiendes* (that which is) as "a being" or "beings," and *Sein* (the lighting process by which beings are made manifest) as "Being."

perience of the phenomenological method. . . . In this evolution a normative role was played by the reference back to fundamental words of Greek thought which I interpreted accordingly: *logos* (to make manifest) and *phainesthai* (to show oneself)."<sup>8</sup> The beings, therefore, whose Being Heidegger wanted to *legein* (make manifest) were *phainomena*, i.e., were beings only insofar as they appear. For Heidegger, beings *are* only to the extent that they are *revealed*.

But it was not only Husserl, it was Aristotle, too, who confirmed philosophically at this time the experience of Being as a process of revelation: ". . . A renewed study of the Aristotelian treatises (especially Book 9 of the *Metaphysics* and Book 6 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*) resulted in the insight into *alētheuein* [verbal form of *alētheia*, truth] as a process of revealment and in the characterization of truth as non-concealment, to which all self-revelation of beings pertains . . . ."<sup>9</sup> In other words, for a being to be revealed as what it *is*, it must emerge from the state in which it was concealed, so that it thereby becomes un-concealed. The Being of such a being will be the process by which this non-concealment, or revelation, takes place. Now the Greek word for concealment, as we know, is (from *lanthano*) *lēthē*. What is un-concealed is *a-lēthes*, i.e., true. The process by which this takes place, the Being of this being, is *alētheuein*, the coming-to-pass of truth.

Now Being, thus experienced by Heidegger as the process of *alētheia* by which beings are revealed, is not "being" as understood in traditional metaphysics. For metaphysics, after Aristotle's definition of "first philosophy," asks the question *ti to on hēi on*: What are beings as beings? Heidegger's question is not concerned with beings at all, but with the Being of these beings, the lighting-process that lets them be revealed to the metaphysician so that he can raise the metaphysical

<sup>8</sup> "Durch die unmittelbare Erfahrung der phänomenologischen Methode in Gesprächen mit Husserl bereitete sich der Begriff von Phänomenologie vor, der in der Einleitung zu 'Sein und Zeit' (# 7) dargestellt ist. Hierbei spielt die Rückbeziehung auf die entsprechend ausgelegten Grundworte des griechischen Denkens: *logos* (offenbar machen) und *phainesthai* (sich zeigen) eine massgebende Rolle" (Heidegger, Preface to Richardson, *op. cit.*, p. xi).

<sup>9</sup> "Ein erneutes Studium der Aristotelischen Abhandlungen (im besonderen des neunten Buches der "Metaphysik" und des sechsten Buches der "Nikomachischen Ethik") ergab den Einblick in das *alētheuein* als entbergen und die Kennzeichnung der Wahrheit als Unverborgenheit, in die alles Sichzeigen des Seienden gehört. . ." (Heidegger, Preface to Richardson, *op. cit.*, pp. xi-xiii).

question. This process of revelation is itself not a being; hence metaphysics as such cannot interrogate Being. Yet Being makes metaphysics possible; hence it is the ground of metaphysics. To interrogate the meaning of Being is to lay the foundation for metaphysics. In the early years Heidegger speaks of this effort as constructing a fundamental ontology; in the later years he speaks rather of overcoming metaphysics by thinking the source (*Wesen*) from which it springs, i.e., by a *wesentliches Denken*, a "foundational" thought.

But all of this is perhaps not as simple as it sounds. If Being is interior to all beings (lighting them up as what they are) but itself is not a being—yet is not separated from beings, either—then this "not," interior to beings, is precisely what differentiates Being from beings. Differentiation says "difference," and from the earliest years Heidegger has called it the "ontological" difference. The Being-process, then, that reveals the beings that it is not—in short, the whole process of *alētheia*—is, when all is said and done, nothing else than the coming-to-pass of the ontological difference. So it is, then, that as the years go by and Heidegger's formulae are refined, it becomes more and more clear that what really interests him is not so much the Being of beings as the "not" that differentiates Being from the beings it reveals—in other words, the coming-to-pass of the ontological difference as such.<sup>10</sup> In 1929, and again in 1935, he formulates his question about the ontological difference with Leibniz' terminology: "... How is it that there are beings at all and not much rather Non-being [*Nichts*]?. . ." <sup>11</sup> More recently he meditates it under different guises: sometimes as simply *Unterschied* (the difference), sometimes as *Austrag* (the issuing forth of Being and beings), sometimes as *Ereignis* (the e-vent out of which the difference arises). Most recently of all, in a lecture still unpublished (as far as I know) delivered at Freiburg, January 30, 1962, he took as his title *Zeit und Sein*. It was deliberately evocative, for this was the title of the projected second part of *Sein*

<sup>10</sup> Here, and in the exposition that follows, the writer is relying on the broad textual foundation on which his longer study (*Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought*, supra n. 7) rests. The reader desirous of a fuller explanation or more detailed documentation from the works of Heidegger himself will find it in that more scientific work, with the help of the General Index. In principle, we shall cite here only the sources of direct quotations. Unless otherwise noted, translations are the writer's own.

<sup>11</sup> "... Wie ist überhaupt Seiendes und nicht vielmehr Nichts?" (M. Heidegger, *Was ist Metaphysik?* [7th ed.; Frankfurt, 1955] p. 42). Cf. M. Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (Tübingen, 1953) p. 1.

*und Zeit* that never appeared, and therefore suggested that the lecture would indicate the continuity of his present thought with his earlier work. What did the lecture turn out to be? A meditation on the formulae *es gibt Sein, es gibt Zeit* ("Being is granted," "Time is granted") and the correlation between the two. But what is it that does the granting? *Was ist das Es das gibt?* Heidegger answers: *Ereignis*, the e-vent of the ontological difference. And: "... This [e-vent] is not something new but the most ancient of ancients in Occidental thought, the primal ancient that hides itself under the name *Alētheia*. . ."<sup>12</sup>

If, then, we are to take literally the suggested analogy: as the thinking of philosophy is to Being (understood as *alētheia*, process of revelation), so the thinking of faith is to the self-revealing God, then we must be prepared to find in "the self-attesting Word of uncreated Truth" (Latourelle's description of revelation in summarizing the documents of the magisterium) some analogical counterpart to the e-vent of the ontological difference.<sup>13</sup> But here the matter is difficult. For my own part, I do not at all feel ready to suggest how this might be done. Let us leave this aspect of the problem for another day, then, and come rather to the nature of thought itself, for this may be more easily adaptable to our purposes.

What does Heidegger mean by thought? His whole enterprise is an effort to think the meaning of Being, the revelatory process of *alētheia*. But it is not until the later years that he formally calls the effort "thought." In the beginning the interrogation took the form of the phenomenological method itself as he understood it: *legen* (to let be seen) *ta phainomena* (those beings whose nature it is, *as* beings, to appear).

It might be interesting to see how freely he uses the method. Let us take, for example, his courses entitled "An Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion" and "Augustine and Neoplatonism," both given at Freiburg in the academic year 1920–21.<sup>14</sup> As a phenome-

<sup>12</sup> "... dass dieses [Ereignis] nicht einmal etwas Neues ist, sondern das Älteste des Alten im abendländischen Denken, das Uralte, das sich in dem Namen *Alētheia* verbirgt. . . ." (M. Heidegger, "Zeit und Sein," cited according to auditor's notes with Prof. Heidegger's permission).

<sup>13</sup> R. Latourelle, S.J., *Théologie de la révélation* (Bruges, 1963) p. 330; tr. A. Dulles, S.J., "The Theology of Revelation," *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES* 25 (1964) 49–50.

<sup>14</sup> M. Heidegger, "Einführung in die Phänomenologie der Religion" (winter semester, 1920–21) and "Augustinus und der Neuplatonismus" (summer semester, 1921).

nologist, he is concerned with life as it is lived in the concrete. Hegel and Dilthey had taught him that life in the concrete is always conditioned by a given historical epoch. The classic example of concrete living experience portentous with historical import was the life of the primitive Christians. Heidegger endeavors to let it be seen by analyzing several texts of St. Paul which yield the conclusion that the Christian life is never a thing possessed and to be disposed of like an object in one's hand, but a process that continues, always to be achieved. In its purity the experience needs nothing from philosophy but to be explicitated by phenomenological analysis. But in subsequent epochs the purity of the original religious experience becomes vitiated by the philosophical concepts with which it became identified. In Augustine, for example, it is vitiated by Neoplatonism. Now God is to be sought as an object of vision, head of a hierarchy of values in which the invisible is superior to the visible, etc. It becomes the task of phenomenology, then, to liberate the original experience from this metaphysical apparatus and reveal it in all its pristine vigor.<sup>15</sup> Note here that already in 1920–21 Heidegger conceives the necessity of somehow overcoming metaphysics (in this case Neoplatonism) in order to recover an original experience. Note, too, that he feels this is possible by applying the method of *legen in ta phainomena* to the language of a printed text.

But the crowning achievement of phenomenology during this period is, of course, the existential analysis of *Sein und Zeit* (1927). What here is the *phainomenon* that he lets be seen? *Dasein*—that being among all other beings endowed with a privileged comprehension of the Being-process, where “comprehension” must be understood in its most radical sense: not as abstract knowledge or intellectual perception, but as a seizure (*-prehendere*) of Being along with (*cum-*) its own self—a radical, preconceptual, prephilosophical openness to Being that constitutes the very structure of *Dasein* as a being.

What does the analysis of this *phainomenon* yield? That *Dasein* is transcendence that is finite, whose ultimate meaning is time. *Dasein* is transcendence, because by its structure it passes beyond all beings (including itself) to the Being-process. This transcendence is finite, because it is permeated by a multiple “not”: *Dasein* is not its own

<sup>15</sup> See O. Pöggeler, *Der Denkweg Martin Heideggers* (Pfullingen, 1963) pp. 28, 36–40.

source, i.e., it discovers itself simply as a matter of fact, as if it were thrown among beings; *Dasein* is not independent of other beings but is referentially dependent on them and even experiences a drag toward them that gives it the tendency to lose itself among them and forget the ontological prerogative by which it can pass beyond them; *Dasein* is not capable of experiencing Being except in terms of beings, i.e., as not-a-being, as Non-being (*Nichts*); finally, *Dasein* is not destined to be forever—it is Being-unto-an-end; and in man that end is death—it is Being-unto-death.

Now to achieve its self fully, i.e., to be authentic, *Dasein* must simply let itself be as transcendence that is finite. As transcendence, *Dasein* must overcome its fallen condition, i.e., the tendency to lose itself among beings and forget that it has a privileged access to Being. As finite, *Dasein* must simply acquiesce to its finitude, not in the sense of making a tragic surrender to ineluctable Fate, but in the sense of consenting to be no more than it is.

*Dasein* is finite transcendence, whose ultimate meaning—i.e., whose ultimate source of unity—is time. As transcendence, *Dasein* continually comes to Being, i.e., Being comes continually to *Dasein*. This coming is *Dasein*'s future. But Being comes to *Dasein* that already is; this condition of already-having-been is *Dasein*'s past. Finally, Being as it comes to *Dasein* renders all beings (including itself) manifest to *Dasein*, i.e., renders them present as manifest. This presence is *Dasein*'s present. What ultimately gives unity to *Dasein*, then, is the unity of time: future, past, present. Now to achieve authenticity precisely as temporal, *Dasein* must accept the temporal character of its finite transcendence. It must continue to *let* Being come to it through its past and render beings present to it. As a temporal process, the achieving of authenticity is called *Wiederholung*. Like hauling water from a well, *Dasein holt das Sein wieder*. We could translate *Wiederholung* as "re-search," but it seems better to say "re-trieve," for it is less a matter of seeking Being again than of finding it again. *Dasein*, then, achieves its authenticity as a temporal-historical being when it makes a re-trieve of Being, i.e., lets Being come again (future) through a possibility that has already been exploited before (past) and become present again in beings that *are* (present).

It would be difficult, I think, to exaggerate the importance of this



notion of re-trieve. Was it not a re-trieve that Heidegger had sought to accomplish when he examined the phenomenology of religion? After all, it was an effort to let the Christian experience come again to him through the language of a printed text. And of all the structures of which Rudolf Bultmann made use, none was more significant than re-trieve, for herein, it would seem, lies the whole principle of de-mythologizing. As one of Bultmann's disciples (no friend of Heidegger) conceded at Drew:

. . . De-mythologizing meant the re-trieving of [a] substance from the most compact, most unyielding, most extreme form of objectification in which it was locked up, and here indeed the categories evolved in Heidegger's analysis in *Sein und Zeit* offered a superior means of bringing to light the ground from which the projections of doctrine had risen and which contain their truth. . . .<sup>16</sup>

What relevance the notion of re-trieve has for the conception of thought we shall see very shortly.

After *Sein und Zeit*, Heidegger meditated more and more on Being as a process of *alētheia*, and in 1930 he gave for the first time his lecture "On the Essence of Truth." What strikes him now is this: if Being is the process of *alētheia*, then *lēthē* ("velation," if you will) must somehow antecede the privation of itself, the *a-lētheia* (*re-velation*). As a result, Being begins to be conceived now as possessing a certain priority over *Dasein*, a kind of spontaneity by reason of which it reveals itself to *Dasein*. With this experience the so-called "later" Heidegger emerges.

In this new phase, what is to be said of Being? It reveals itself as *alētheia* in beings and as beings, but because of itself Being is not a being, it hides itself in beings too. As a result, every manifestation of Being is finite, i.e., is constricted within the finite beings that it lets appear. Every revealment, then, is at once a concealment of the rich plenitude of Being, and this phenomenon of simultaneous revealment-concealment Heidegger calls "mystery." In this spontaneous disclosure of itself in beings to *Dasein*, Being is said to "send" (or "e-mit") itself (*sich schickt*), and *Dasein* is at the same time "com-mitted" (*Schicksal*) to the process. This process of e-mitting-com-mitting, taken as a correlation between Being and *Dasein*, is called "mittence" (*Geschick*),

<sup>16</sup> H. Jonas, "Heidegger and Theology," *Review of Metaphysics* 18 (1964) 231.

which, of course, is always a finite phenomenon. Now what characterizes any given epoch of history is precisely the way Being reveals itself (and conceals itself, too, for of course the mittance is finite) in beings at a given time. In other words, every epoch is determined by a finite mittance of Being. For example, the epoch of absolute idealism was characterized by the finite mittance of Being to Hegel; our own epoch is characterized by what Heidegger calls the mittance of "technicality" (*Technik*). At any rate, these epochs (mittences: *Geschick-e*) taken together constitute inter-mittance (*Ge-schick-te*), which is to say history (*Geschichte*), i.e., Being-as-history.

What now of *Dasein*? It is the *Da des Seins*, the There of Being among beings through which Being reveals itself. Being has need of its There, so that the revelation can take place. *Dasein*'s task is simply to let Being reveal itself in the finite mittance, to let Being be. Sometimes the revelation of Being to *Dasein* is conceived as a "call" or "hail" to *Dasein*. *Dasein*'s task is, then, to "respond" to that call, to "cor-respond" with it, to "tend" Being in beings as the "shepherd" of Being, to acquiesce to its own commitment in the e-vent of Being's self-revelation. It is this acquiescence of *Dasein* to Being-as-revelation that Heidegger now calls "thought"—"foundational" thought.

A few precisions here are in order. I say that this is called "foundational" (*wesentliches*) thought, for it thinks the Being-process as the foundation (*Wesen*) of metaphysics. For the same reason, it is not a metaphysical thought, for metaphysics deals with beings, and this thought is concerned only with the mittance of Being. Furthermore, since every "object" is first of all a being, only metaphysical thought can be "objectifying," and since foundational thought is non-metaphysical, it is for that very reason non-objectifying too. Finally, non-objectifying foundational thought overcomes metaphysics precisely to the extent that it realizes that the metaphysical tradition is itself an epoch of history, that it is constituted by a mittance of Being that is profoundly finite.

A second precision is this. Foundational thinking that corresponds with Being-as-history is necessarily a historical thought, i.e., thinks each epoch of history precisely as constituted by a mittance of Being in its finitude. This will be clearer, I think, if we examine it in the concrete as it takes the form of a dialogue with another thinker. Let

us see Heidegger at work as he tries to think the mittance of Being to Kant, for example. (The entire Kant book, that played such a decisive role in the evolution of Karl Rahner, is a brilliant example of this method.) Heidegger proceeds on the principle that the mittance of Being to Kant was finite, i.e., constricted by a "not" that concealed Being's "hidden plenitude" in what Kant said. Now Heidegger tries to meditate what Kant said by entering into it in such a way that he passes through what Kant said into this hidden plenitude of Being. In effect, then, he lets Being come again (future) through what Kant said (past) and brings it to expression in language that *is* (present). Foundational thought of this kind involves the triple direction of future, past, and present; it is therefore a temporo-historical thought. By it the thinker so penetrates the "not" that constricts the mittance of Being into finitude that he permits the hidden wealth of Being to come to expression again, in such a way that now the thinker says in his own right not what Kant said but precisely what Kant did not say, could not say, because the mittance to him was finite. Notice that what takes place here in the form of a dialogue with another thinker is nothing more and nothing less, after the accent has shifted from *Dasein* to Being in the passage from the early to the later Heidegger, than what *Sein und Zeit* called re-trieve, the process by which *Dasein*, in terms of its temporal structure, achieves its own authentic self.

One more precision and we are done: foundational thought is inseparable from language. You will recall that Heidegger first heard the word "hermeneutic" in the seminary courses in Sacred Scripture, when he sensed vaguely some mysterious relationship between Being, understood then in the sense of the self-revealing God, and language—the language of Scripture. Ever after that, the relationship between Being and language never ceased to haunt him. Eventually he met the word "hermeneutic" again in Dilthey, who had taken it from Schleiermacher, who for his part had broadened out the classic theological meaning to include not only the interpretation of Scripture but all types of interpretation. Heidegger meditated the etymology of *hermēneuein*, with its allusion to Hermes, herald of the gods. *Hermēneuein*, then, must mean to play herald, to make clear or manifest (in a word, to let be seen), so that "hermeneutic" came to be synony-

mous for him with the entire phenomenological effort, with this difference perhaps: it added the connotation of language. At any rate, it was, Heidegger claims, because phenomenology offered the hope of being able to develop a hermeneutic that he dedicated *Sein und Zeit* to Edmund Husserl.

However that may be, in the *legein* of phenomenology he sensed the ambiguity that permits the word to mean on the one hand "to make manifest, to let be seen," and on the other "to speak, say." He grappled with this ambiguity in *Sein und Zeit*, where he speaks of the "hermeneutic circle." More explicitly, he meditated again and again the word *logos* in different courses and seminars that bore the title—somewhat deceptively—of "Logic." Finally in 1944 there was a real break-through. Once more he meditated the word *logos*, this time as it appears in Heraclitus. Once more he makes a re-trieve of the finite mittance to Heraclitus and brings to expression not what Heraclitus said but what he did not say and could not say, namely, that *logos*, as a process of gathering beings together unto a state of non-concealment (*alētheia*) so that they appear as what they are, is *as such* language—language in its deepest origins, aboriginal Language. Being, then, is not simply related to language, but Being and Language (primordial Language) are one. Henceforth, to think Being is not only to respond to it as a process of revelation (*alētheia*) but as primordial Language (*logos*) too. We can see why Heidegger feels that he can find access to Being through meditating the language of poetry such as that of Friederich Hölderlin; we can see, too, why this problematic is at the center of a New Hermeneutic.

#### APPLICATION BY ANALOGY

Perhaps we had best stop here, though of course there is much more to say. Can a philosophical thought of this kind be of help, at least by analogy, to the Catholic exegete, or to the Catholic theologian as by his own thought-ful faith he endeavors to think "the self-attesting Word of uncreated Truth"? I suppose the exegetes and theologians alone have the right to say; so I leave the matter to them. By way of conclusion, however, I would like to raise one question. I raise it seriously—but respectfully, with all due reserve for better judgment. It is this: However difficult may be the conception of a thought-process

that attempts to be a temporo-historical, non-objectifying response to a self-revealing *Logos*, is there not, nonetheless, something suggestive, at least, in the notion of re-trieve—I mean, in the effort to think the un-thought, utter the un-said of the written word of Scripture, perhaps even of the Fathers of the Church and the documents of the magisterium?

What encourages me personally to think so is a remark I find in Avery Dulles' splendid review of Latourelle's important work on the theology of revelation. Fr. Dulles concludes his review with some questions of his own which extend the problem beyond the scope of Latourelle's own study. He writes in part:

. . . Tillich's view that Church history is a living channel of revelation, punctuated by decisive *kairoi*, seems closer to Catholic doctrine than the narrow biblicist view that salvation history ceased with the age of the apostles. Such an existential "filling up" of Christ's revelation in the course of later centuries would, of course, add nothing substantially new—inasmuch as the essential meaning of all history has been fully disclosed in the Christ-event—but it would continue to actualize God's message in new forms, adapted to new situations. . . . It would be helpful to have a fuller discussion of how, in an inchoate manner, revelation can be communicated without doctrine, i.e., without precise conceptualization and carefully articulated enunciation. . . . I should be inclined to say that the ineffable experience of the Word holds a certain precedence over its doctrinal statement. . . . The Church herself, in formulating and judging doctrines, draws abundantly on her pre-conceptual knowledge gained through a mysterious vital contact with the divine Persons. Unless this were so, it would be most difficult to account for the dogmatic progress that has occurred.

The primacy of the pre-conceptual, to which we have just alluded, is of major importance for an "ecumenical" theology of revelation. . . .<sup>17</sup>

I would take Fr. Dulles to mean, then, that the Church has an ineffable, pre-conceptual, pre-judgmental, therefore pre-doctrinal experience of the eternal self-revealing *Logos*; that no articulation, whether by the canonical writers, the Fathers, or the magisterium itself, is adequate to this experience; that every human effort to utter the ineffable is constricted by the law of finitude and therefore inevitably leaves something un-said. My question, then, would be: Cannot the Catholic exegete or theologian, in the service of the Church, make his a method

<sup>17</sup> A. Dulles, S.J., "The Theology of Revelation," *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES* 25 (1964) 53-54.

that deliberately tries to re-trieve that ineffable experience in all its hidden plenitude, i.e., a method that so enters into what has been said in a written text as to penetrate through the constriction of its finitude and let the revelation come again—come out of the future but through the past, so that he may utter in this *kairos* of history what hitherto has been left un-said?

I suspect that I know what the first reaction of a theologian will be: this is a risky business. See the trouble we already have to discover what the sacred authors *said*. How in God's name do you find out what they do *not* say? How would you ever know that the non-said in the sources of revelation really was revealed? Would this not make theological thinking completely arbitrary, or at least a completely subjective affair?

The objection is fair and must be squarely faced, but there is simply no time to do justice to it here. This much must be conceded: Heidegger's own effort to re-trieve the non-said through the analysis of language has been roundly attacked by the philologists precisely for its apparent arbitrariness. His reply, in substance, is that philology does not have the final say in the matter, for philology is only concerned with the said. But foundational thought, that lets the unseen plenitude come again through the said, has a rigor all its own. What is the guarantee of its rigor? He writes: ". . . Something viewed can be verified only insofar as it constantly continues to be viewed. Something viewed can never be proven by argument of pros and cons. Such a procedure forgets the [one] decisive factor, the [simple] viewing. . . ." <sup>18</sup> In a word, then, the non-arbitrary rigor of foundational thought consists solely in fidelity to the revelation of *alētheia*.

If the Catholic theologian in the service of the magisterium were to make an analogical use of Heidegger's method of re-trieve, the only absolute guarantee against the arbitrariness of the purely subjective would be, as far as I can see, his fidelity to revelation itself. But is it futile to hope that this could be effective? When all is said and done, what guarantee does the Church ever have for the purity of revela-

<sup>18</sup> ". . . Erblicktes lässt sich stets nur so ausweisen, dass es je und je erblickt wird. Erblicktes lässt sich nie durch Anführung von Gründen und Gegenründen beweisen. Solches Verfahren vergisst das Entscheidende, das Hinblicken . . ." (M. Heidegger, *Was heisst Denken?* [Tübingen, 1954] p. 141).

tion—except the revelation itself? What would distinguish the Catholic theologian from his non-Catholic colleague in trying to think and utter the hidden plenitude of the revealed Word is precisely the ecclesiastical character of his faith and the ministerial character of his thought. It is the fidelity of the *Church* to revelation in which the Church's minister would place his trust, for this fidelity is ultimately rooted in an "ineffable experience" born of "mysterious vital contact with the divine Persons" as such.

That all this calls for further precision I am painfully aware, but for the moment let us leave the problem here. Perhaps after time to reflect, the Catholic theologian will say that the answer to this question must be negative. Perhaps! But it would seem that the time has come for it to be asked, even if only in this groping, tentative form. For what is at stake in this matter is not simply the question whether we must substitute Heidegger's spectacles for Scholastic ones. What matters is that in the present *kairos* of the Church's history Heidegger is a powerful force, and if the common Christian task is to actualize God's message in new forms, adapted to new situations, surely we must hear his voice. For it is not the voice of an enemy. It is the voice of a man who, despite his apparent non-faith and tragic personal history, has spent a lifetime with a single question, the question about "the most ancient of ancients in Occidental thought, the primal ancient that hides itself under the name *Alētheia*." And if we look today for the relevance of his question for Catholic thought, the reason is that by faith we know that even Heidegger leaves a hidden plenitude unsaid, out of which may come the advent of the Paraclete.