Taste and See

Real Presence as Revelation in Heideggerian Perspective

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SHORT ABSTRACT

This project addresses the Christian of doctrine of revelation by asking how Christians are able to translate an ontological expression of divine self-communication (i.e., the Incarnation of Jesus Christ) into intellectual faith statements in a way that retains something essential of that ontological revelation. The argument of this project is that such incarnational revelation must be understood through encounter, so that the Eucharist—as the site of Christ's attested real presence—becomes the natural site in which to explore such encounter as the ground of Christian speech. What follows is a theological experiment in which the Eucharist is evaluated in terms of its capacity to reveal the person of Jesus Christ in a post-metaphysical milieu and to shape the understanding of Christians who encounter Christ therein.

In order to establish this constructive argument, this project consults the work of Martin Heidegger. Heidegger's notion of Being-in-the-world opens up a new definition of understanding, where what is primary is praxis in the form of worldly involvement, so that understanding in the form of habits, mood, and know-how becomes foundational for any knowledge of the beings with which we interact. Language is then linked up with this pre-reflective understanding, first as discourse and then later as poetry, both of which disclose a fundamental world-orientation to language.

As the sacrament where Christ is attested as really present, the material event of the Eucharist becomes a world in the Heideggerian sense, in which Christian participants come to understanding through dynamic involvement. Rather than rooting Christian hermeneutics in mental processes disengaged from embodiment, then, Heidegger helps us relocate the root of Christian understanding in the material reality that is, in the Incarnation and continued in Christ's real sacramental presence, the very stuff of divine revelation.

LONG ABSTRACT

This project asks how a Christian theology of divine revelation can be articulated in a contemporary, post-metaphysical milieu in such a way that effectively grounds and shapes Christian speech. For Christians speaking in contexts where their religious beliefs are neither assumed nor self-evidently true, the question emerges as to what validity Christian speech has or why Christians ought to be Christian in the first place. This question is particularly poignant for Christianity because the Christian tradition locates the climactic sum of divine revelation not in true *statements* but rather in a *person*, namely, Jesus Christ. That is, the apparent foundation of Christian speech is not itself an element of speech, nor is it an object which is obviously available for contemporary consideration. To locate the summative point of God's self-communication in the being of a person thus raises two key questions: (1) By what process do Christians derive intellectual-linguistic propositions from the ontological entity of a person? And (2) How can this process take place for Christians today in lieu of that person's contemporary existence? In other words, how are Christians to make speech based on that which is not speech, and how do we account for the historical gap between the proximity of Jesus to his first disciples and our modern epoch?

In order to answer these questions, this project proposes a model of understanding through common encounter, where one can ground their statements about a person in their own familiarity with said person, and furthermore that such encounter with the person of Jesus Christ takes place in the sacrament of the Eucharist. In order to flesh out this notion of encounter in such a way that satisfies the demands for a post-metaphysical account, I turn to the thought of Martin Heidegger. Heidegger is relevant to this topic because of his interests in both ontology and language as well as the relationship between the two. Because the impetus of this project is

the presupposition that not only is a sufficient link between revelation and hermeneutics not obvious but furthermore that it must be articulated within a secular milieu in which Christian truth claims are already suspect, Heidegger's significance as the primary initiator of post-metaphysical thought in Western philosophy makes him doubly relevant to the interests of this investigation.

While Heidegger is of course not at all new to postmodern theological discourse, nor even to the question of revelation, this project sets its own tack by focusing on Heidegger's notion of Being-in-the-world and the role of dynamic involvement and embodied understanding in *Being and Time*, thus emphasizing the centrality of praxis to knowledge in Heidegger's thought. This notion of knowing-as-doing, then, offers a different approach from the largely existential analysis of many Protestant theologians (e.g., Rudolf Bultmann, Paul Tillich, John Macquarrie) and the emphasis on the ontological difference among many Catholic theologians (e.g., Louis-Marie Chauvet, Jean-Luc Marion), both of whom end up reifying the thinking subject which I believe Heidegger actually wishes to abolish. By placing the emphasis on understanding as involvement and unconscious familiarity, we can address the question of how human beings can acquire knowledge of an ontological being through their dynamic involvement with it in such a way that provides an embodied root for language. Without bracketing Heidegger's existential analysis of anxiety or his rejection of Cartesian metaphysics with the ontological difference, by shifting our focus within Heidegger's work, we can come to a unique way of addressing the problem of revelation.

By locating the essence of understanding in movement, Heidegger gives us a starting point for defining the Being of beings as dynamism. That is, a being is not a substantial entity but a material performance of nebulous affordances for Being. In this way, and in the ways that

human beings themselves understand this dynamism of Being through participatory involvement, we can understand how the Eucharist as material performance is the enactment (and thus the making-present) of the character of the risen Christ. And because that performance is itself an event of involved understanding for the Christian participant, we can follow Heidegger's analysis to understand how belonging to the eucharistic world grounds and shapes subsequent theological speech.

The introductory chapter is designed to lay out the above questions, to assert their importance for contemporary Christian discourse, and to then forecast how and why Heidegger's thought will be used to articulate the constructive argument to follow. Chapters 2-4 then focus in depth on one aspect of Heidegger's thought as it is pertinent to this argument. Chapter 2 considers how Heidegger's account of involved understanding unveils the Being of beings as dynamic. In the early Heidegger, we see this theme through his analysis of human Dasein's Being-in-the-world, that is, the human's active, pre-reflective way of inhabiting its environment by handling and interacting with beings rather than consciously thinking about them. This pre-reflective familiarity with beings in activity then sets up the later Heidegger's more explicit characterization of beings as fluid and dynamic in themselves, particularly as he sets it out in his notion of the fourfold. What we ultimately discover by following this line of thought, then, is that there are no such things as *things* at all. That is, there are no beings that are self-sufficiently substantive entities. Rather, beings *are* their dynamism, so that to know a being is in fact not to think about it at all but rather to become enmeshed in its activity.

Chapter 3 follows this account of understanding with an analysis of language. In the early Heidegger, we will see how the involved understanding of Being-in-the-world sets up human interpretive thinking and thus grounds speech in Dasein's mode of discourse. We will then

observe how the later Heidegger cautions against the way such interpretation can depart from truth by seeking to hem in and domesticate beings within a technological worldview. This will set up what Heidegger ultimately determines to be the truest form of speech—poetry—which has its character as ultimately giving beings back over to worlds of involvement.

Having set up these two interrelated themes of our phenomenological investigation, Chapter 4 then seeks a definition of personhood from Heidegger's works. Though Heidegger does not consider the metaphysical category of personhood explicitly, since what we are ultimately seeking in applying his phenomenology to the Eucharist is an account of Christ's real presence, we ought to have some idea of what we are looking for. To this end, Chapter 4 concludes the exegetical portion of this project with a cursory investigation of Heidegger's treatment of the human way of Being before exploring how that treatment gets taken up into the analysis of the body by the French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Our ultimate conclusion will be that, far from a substantive soul or a continuous consciousness, a person is a node of myriad possibilities and attunements within a world, such that what one encounters in another person is not a person-thing but an ineffable pattern of openness and coordination across particular worlds. By way of transitioning to explicitly theological considerations, this chapter concludes by consulting theologians Karl Rahner and Dietrich Bonhoeffer as thinkers who reflect on the personhood of Christ in light of the themes we find in Heidegger.

Chapter 5 then turns to a constructive phenomenology of Christ's real presence in the Eucharist. As hinted at in the above questioning of the validity of classical metaphysics in eucharistic theology, the argument laid out here is that Christ is not present in the things of bread and wine themselves but that his person is rather synonymous with the dynamic world of the sacrament itself. As a world of coordinated movements that open up moods of understanding,

trajectories of activity, and possibilities for Being, the Eucharist is a world in which Christians understand themselves and the beings around them in a distinct and pre-reflective way through the habituation of the body and the acquisition of existential reflexes. The particular character of this world is named Jesus Christ, then, in the speaking of liturgical words, which poetically cut the shape of a clearing that is filled in by the dynamic revelation of his person in motion. To participate in the eucharistic world is thus to participate in the world of Jesus' own person, to understand him prior to conscious thought by being taken up into the flow of his very way of Being-in-the-world.

But this account of real presence does not in itself answer the epistemological question which motivates our consideration of the doctrine of revelation. The final chapter, then, seeks to draw the account given in Chapter 5 to its theological implications for Christian speech in two ways: by tracing the development of involved understanding to its linguistic manifestation with the early Heidegger's model of discourse and then by exploring the later Heidegger's notion of poetry as the giving-over of beings from our linguistic grasp back to the worlds of their dynamic Being. In so doing, it is argued that true Christian speech is ultimately world-oriented and that the Eucharist, as the world of revelation, is both the source and summit of that speech. The chapter closes with an analysis of how the Bible may be fruitfully read within such an account of eucharistic language, so that the concerns raised earlier about the tether of Christian hermeneutics to the object of that speech may be illustrated in a concrete way that satisfies our initial concerns.

By focusing on the embodied implications of Heidegger's Being-in-the-world, this project combines some well-worn theological themes (revelation, hermeneutics, Eucharist, and Heidegger's theological influence) in an original way. In answer to the question laid out at the

beginning of how Christians can come to linguistic, theological claims to truth while the Christian understanding of the revelation of that truth is ontological, this project provides an experimental model for rethinking both ontological revelation and the orientation of Christian speech in a post-metaphysical way. By belonging to the world of the Eucharist—with its implicit habituation of behavior, mood, and understanding—Christians come to understand the truth of God's self-communication from the inside, as it were. One participates in the very person of Christ existing as a world of performance, thereby imbibing the habits and orientations that then make statements of a certain type possible. Likewise, in response to the question of how the historical gap between the Incarnation and today's Christians limits the possibility of revelation, it is argued that this gap is actually not the problem that it at first seems. By dislocating the category of "person" from archaic metaphysical constructs such as souls or consciousness and instead, following Heidegger's lead, demonstrating how personhood is a performance of attunements and possibilities within a world, the Eucharist is allowed the scope to quite literally enact the person of Christ and so makes immanently present to our understanding what otherwise seems distant to our thinking minds.

The end goal of this project is to provide an update to the Christian doctrine of revelation that renders it viable in both a pluralistic milieu and a context in which even many Christians operate with secular metaphysical (or post-metaphysical) assumptions. By turning to Heidegger's work on understanding through praxis, we can shed both the archaic metaphysics that hold back Christian theology and the focus on the thinking subject that reduces real presence to personal significance while at the same time articulating a compelling account of reality in a contemporarily viable way.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

For Christian theology today, the doctrine of revelation may seem a bit old hat. After all, serious reflection on the character and mechanics of God's self-communication seemed to have reached its post-Enlightenment zenith by the mid-twentieth century. According to one narrative, for example, the post-war world had lost much of its zeal for grand philosophical systems, so that theologians such as Karl Barth were able to emphasize the irreducible and immanent mystery of God's revelation while disposing of the metaphysical explanations that had often previously accompanied it.[1] In other words, the *how* questions of revelation that smack of well-worn European metaphysics increasingly gave way to the *what* questions of God's character revealed therein, based on the assumption that such *how* questions were not only impossible to answer but moreover distracting from the task of faith. Ostensibly freed from the philosopher's conceptual grasp, God was once again a personal God: the God of Israel, the God of the poor and the oppressed, the God who is moved in wrath and love, and so on.

But within an increasingly pluralist world wracked by post-truth politics, the dominance of opinion news, and the occasional deployment of "alternative facts" for myriad ideological purposes, the question of *what* is true increasingly demands a reevaluation of *how* we come to know and assess truth as such. So where Christians seek to participate in public discourse by making appeal to God as moral authority, the question of Christianity's alleged access to divine truth is worth taking back out of the closet. For, as Barth points out, "speaking of God means

[1] See Joel D.S. Rasmussen, "The Transformation of Metaphysics," in *The Oxford Handbook of Nineteenth-Century Christian Thought*, ed. Joel D.S. Rasmussen, Judith Wolfe, and Johannes Zachhuber (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 31.

something other than speaking about the human in a somewhat higher pitch."[2] That is, Christianity's place at the table of cultural discourse is not warranted by its providing yet another cultural angle for interpreting human nature but rather by its unique capacity to speak credibly about what is *super*-natural. "When [non-Christians] come to us," Barth suggests, "they are not asking about *their* existence but about the other side of their existence, *God's* existence. As village or city sages, we are unwanted, superfluous, and ridiculous."[3] If Christianity takes its theological claims as simply useful devices for meaning-making, then they are reduced to options of personal preference and so undermine the very authority for which people turn to religion in the first place. Insofar as public theological claims are legitimated by their articulation of something thoroughly real beyond immediate human experience, there must be a basis for such speech and a criterion by which the veracity of such claims can be tested.

This need for a criterion is not only pertinent to the question of Christianity's viability in a pluralist world, though, for it also addresses the intellectual needs of Christians in the pews. As Charles Taylor suggests, the age in which we live is not only different from previous ones by the decline of religious belief but also by the increasing "presumption of unbelief."[4] The modern world is shaped by the primacy of scientific rationality and concern for individual flourishing so that we moderns are increasingly wary of appeals to the transcendent and skeptical of claims which lack empirical evidence. Taylor calls this cultural milieu the *immanent frame*: a world whose operative assumptions do not need to posit any transcendent reality in order to function.[5] As believers within this immanent frame, Christians today attend to their religion not only with

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[2] Karl Barth, "The Word of God as the Task of Theology," in *The Word of God and Theology*, ed. and trans. Amy Marga (Edinburgh: T & T Clark International, 2011), 183.
[3] Ibid., 179.
[4] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 13.
[5] Ibid., 543.

the built-in assumptions of the primacy of reason but also with a scientific skepticism toward claims that appear to contradict the natural order of things. For both the conservative fundamentalist who deploys the Bible as evidential proof that the Earth is six thousand years old or the liberal priest who preaches the resurrection as a metaphor because she finds it unbelievable, the immanent frame holds sway with its demands for empirical knowledge and the harmony of religious truth with natural laws. Against the backdrop of such an intellectual milieu, many Christians may rightly question the veracity of their own faith claims and even wonder whether Christianity offers the most viable option for flourishing in contemporary society. Insofar as Christianity must give some account of its beliefs to its own followers, then, it must do so in a way that takes account of their belonging to this immanent frame as the condition of any possible belief. For motivated though they may be by their thirst for the transcendent, Christians do not leave the immanent frame of their existence at the sanctuary door each Sunday.

Finally, in an age of political polarization and denominational impasse, it is unclear how Christians ought to or are even able to talk to one another productively. When a priest wears a clerical collar while marching for racial justice or a pastor quotes the Bible on cable news to denounce abortion, they are both making appeals to Christian audiences by employing words and symbols that carry meaning within their traditions. But how does a Christian assess these uses of religious symbols? On what authority can a reading of scripture or an interpretation of dogma be deemed legitimate or fraudulent? How do Christians across political and theological differences find points of commonality that make any conciliatory discourse possible?

In short, regardless of what Christians think they should believe, it is incumbent upon Christians who acknowledge the realities of pluralism and the immanent frame to articulate *how belief is possible in the first place*. For the non-Christian wary of Christianity's voice in the

modern world, for the Christian seeking to better understand herself and her faith, and for Christians of different confessional impulses seeking to more fruitfully engage and persuade one another, the question of the truth of Christian claims remains painfully open and in desperate need of addressing. There thus exists a very real demand for Christianity to supply a criterion for Christian belief in such a way that modern ears can hear it and subsequently employ that criterion to assess individual truth claims. Short of this, it is unclear why Christianity ought to have a voice at the table of contemporary ethical discourse, why its calls to repentance, justice, and peace ought to be taken seriously, or even why lifelong Christians ought to bother remaining Christian at all.

That this need for a criterion of Christian truth claims should prompt a reengagement with the doctrine of revelation should come as no surprise, as interest in revelation often coincides with historical periods of doctrinal shifts and upheaval. As Avery Dulles notes, revelation as a doctrinal category did not become a key theme in theology until the Reformation, as revelation had always been taken for granted until denominations needed to appeal to it in confessional disputes.[6] To this end, Dulles offers five broad, though not mutually exclusive, models for how Christian revelation has been and may be treated: (1) Divinely authoritative doctrine communicated through the Bible or official church teaching; (2) the manifestation of God's saving power in history; (3) the self-manifestation of God by presence in the depths of the human spirit; (4) God's address to those whom God encounters in scripture and proclamation; and (5) a breakthrough to a higher level of human consciousness.[7] As Dulles summarizes all the

[6] Avery Dulles, *Models of Revelation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992), 4. Cf. Emil Brunner, *Revelation and Reason* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1946), 3: "All that the Church proclaims and teaches is an attempt to express in human language the truth which she has received. Hence the divine revelation alone is both the ground and the norm, as well as the content of her message."
[7] Dulles, *Models of Revelation*, 115.

models, "Revelation is God's free action whereby he communicates saving truth to created minds, especially through Jesus Christ as accepted by the apostolic Church and attested by the Bible and by the continuing community of believers."[8]

However, the implication of Dulles' summary is that revelation is primarily *informational*. That God "communicates saving truth to created minds" suggests that what is communicated is primarily mental content. Insofar as the necessity for a doctrine of revelation stems from the question of Christianity's intellectual credibility, this actually suits our needs. But insofar as the medium of said revelation is conventionally seen as *not* information or intellectual in nature, however, we may have a problem. "Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets," says the Letter to the Hebrews, "but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word" (1:1-3a).[9] In other words, the whole of God's communication is not words nor any mental content but a living, biological, human person. As the Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation puts it, "Christ… is himself both the mediator and the sum total of revelation."[10] The person of Jesus perfectly reveals God not primarily as a teacher of information but as the actual incarnation of "the inner life of God."[11] As "the image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15) who "was with God and… was God" (Jn 1:1), Jesus as revelation does not appear to communicate anything *about God* so much as *God's own self*. He is both the message *and* the medium.

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[8] Ibid., 117.
[9] All biblical citations are from the New Revised Standard Version.
[10] Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum*, Vatican II, November 18, 1965, In *Vatican Council II: The Basic Sixteen Documents*, ed. Austin Flannery (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1996), §2:98.
[11] Ibid., §4:99.

To speak about revelation, then, is to speak of the person of Jesus. It is for this reason that H. Richard Niebuhr reasons that the rational value of revelation is not actually its primary purpose.[12] Rather, "The most important fact about the whole approach to revelation… is that we must think and speak in terms of persons. In our history we deal with selves, not with concepts."[13] And as Niebuhr clarifies, "Selves are known in act or not at all."[14] In other words, to know the revelation of God is to know it in the incarnate person of Jesus long before it is ever to know any information about that person. If our quest for revelation is driven by the need for an intellectual criterion, then it seems such a criterion itself lies outside the intellectual sphere. In short, our quest for revelation is in fact a quest for a *being* that then grounds subsequent *thinking*.

1.1 OUTLINING THE PROBLEM

However, if we are pursuing a modernly viable way of articulating how divine revelation occurs according to the Christian tradition, and if we locate that revelation in the human person of Jesus of Nazareth, then two challenges immediately emerge. Firstly, it is unclear how one moves from a person themself to language about said person without losing something in the process, what I will call the *problem of language*. Secondly, two thousand years of history, not to mention a radical cultural divide, separate contemporary Christians from the life of Jesus, so that it is unclear how a theory of language alone helps us overcome centuries of disputed claims by fallible Christians. This I will call the *problem of time*. Regardless of whether Jesus of Nazareth was the complete revelation of God, it makes little difference if these gaps between the thing

[12] H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Meaning of Revelation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 73.
[13] Ibid., 75.
[14] Ibid., 77.

itself and our knowledge of it remain insuperable. Before proposing a solution to these problems, let us take each of these concerns in turn.

1.1.1 The Problem of Language

The problem of language is not simply the problem that the meanings of words and grammar are fluid and subjective, so that linguistic communication always remains an imprecise art rather than an exact science. For our purposes, the problem of language centers rather on the difficulty of converting the pre-linguistic reality of a being into the mental categories of speech. Most of the language we use in daily life is descriptive from a distance, but this is not a problem because the ontological reality of the things about which we speak are rarely of absolute importance. I can describe a football game to a friend at work, and while my friend may be sad he missed it, as long as I can convey the broad strokes of what happened, he hasn't ultimately missed much. But in the case of Jesus Christ, whom Christians claim to be wholly one with God and thus communicative of God's very person, to simply describe the reality of his revelation, though perhaps helpful, is always inadequate to the thing itself. Just as one cannot simply love an online dating profile but must actually meet and enter into a shared life with any potential lover, so there is something about revelation in the form of a person that is inevitably lost when that person is reduced to description. If Christian theology and the biblical witness are to be taken as in some way authorized by revelation, then it must be shown how such forms of speech take their cue from the more primordial reality of Jesus' person.

One way to maintain such continuity of revelation with speech is, with Karl Barth, to identify the person of Jesus with the text of scripture and the human act of proclamation under the common heading of the Word of God. For Barth, the Bible is a reliable witness to revelation

not because it is an accurate record of historical fact nor because it encapsulates a latent existential truth about our humanity but because it witnesses to the event of God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ.[15] As witness to the Christ-event, the Bible maintains its continuity with that event when brought to present light through the medium of proclamation. This threefold unity of revelation guarantees the integrity of Christian speech by underlying its continuity with its object.[16] This is not to say that the Bible ought to go unquestioned. Rather, "It is where the Church declares that it has found Holy Scripture that we have actually to expect Holy Scripture."[17] In other words, because the Church proclaims that the Bible is where God's Word is to be expected, it looks to the Bible with trusting yet open hands, not with preconceived notions of its meaning.

But as witness to a more primordial revelation in Christ, the Bible maintains the intrinsically derivative quality of language even as it participates in the present event of revelation. Barth writes, "The Bible is not the Word of God on earth in the same way as Jesus Christ, very God and very man, is that Word in heaven."[18] Though they participate in revelation, Barth admits that the words of scripture are always secondary to the real revelatory event itself. [19] Witnessing the revelation of the Word today, according to Barth, "undoubtedly means perceiving revelation by the word of man—understanding, investigating the humanly concrete word in the light of revelation—expounding, clarifying the word in its relation to revelation."[20] What is heard as a human word must therefore be clarified and comprehended only in the terms of a more primal revelation—that of Christ. Yet how is this primal revelation heard if not through the

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[15] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. 1/1, ed. G.W. Bromily and T.F. Torrance (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2010), §4.3: 111.
[16] Barth, *CD* 1/1, §4.3: 117.
[17] Barth, *CD* 1/2 §19.2: 479.
[18] Ibid., §19.2: 513.
[19] Barth, *CD* 1/1 §4.3: 111
[20] Barth, *CD* 1/2 §19.1: 466.

human word? Since the legitimacy of proclamation and the quality of the Bible's truth hinge on the prior ontological reality of the Incarnation, how can we arrive at that reality except through the historical witness which that reality is meant to shape?

One way to avert this problem is to locate the ultimate meaning of revelation in the biblical text itself, thus bypassing a need for an external referent. Such is the move made by narrative theology, which has been quite popular in mostly Protestant circles in recent decades following the publication of Hans Frei's monumental *Eclipse of Biblical Narrative* in 1974. Against the various impulses for literal readings of the Bible, historical-critical deconstruction, and mythical-existential reductions of its meaning, Frei argues that "what [biblical stories] are about and how they make sense are functions of the depiction or narrative rendering of the events constituting them—including their being rendered, at least partially, by the device of chronological sequence."[21] The meaning of a biblical story is not its propositional content nor its correlation to our existential state nor even its accurate reflection of a reality external to itself. Rather, the meaning of the text is its story, which opens up a world of dramatic characters and happenings.[22] Since humans understand much of our lives in the context of telling and listening to stories, this insight is quite natural. Just as my personal history is not an easily digestible sequence of key principles by which I live but rather a dramatic unfolding of events and a building up of my character in response to them, so narrative provides the necessary medium for understanding the revelation of Christ that was so important to Barth within the context of his character and history rather than a systematic account of his meaning.

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[21] Hans Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 13.

[22] Ibid., 280: "If one uses the metaphorical expression 'location of meaning,' one would want to say that the location of meaning in narrative of the realistic sort is the text, the narrative structure or sequence itself."

However, as Stanley Hauerwas notes, "the very power of the narrative to engulf us makes us doubt its veracity, since we have no means to check its truthfulness. It may be true that the biblical accounts are only historylike [sic], but does not that history finally have to refer in a way that makes it liable to standard forms of reference?"[23] Here we are again faced with the problem of a criterion. For Hauerwas, however, narrative theology's answer lies not in the text itself but in the activity of the Holy Spirit within the Church as reader and interpreter.[24] The Church preaches the Gospel in such a way as to prepare its people to both hear its good news aright and to produce the kinds of people who live that Gospel out in their daily lives.

This is a clever maneuver (one not terribly dissimilar to what I myself will propose). The Bible becomes sacred as proclaimed by the Church, whose activity is validated by the Holy Spirit. But locating the criterion of proper interpretation in the Church seems to merely kick the can down the road in terms of locating a criterion. Where Barth asserted the primacy of the Incarnation over the witness of scripture and proclamation, the narrative reliance on the efficacy and shape of the text itself hinges on the activity of the Holy Spirit which is itself only acknowledged on the basis of a reading of that same text. In both cases, the criterion for the text is determined on the basis of the text which is meant to be judged by it, trapping us in a vicious circle of intellectual reflection on a being to which we never actually arrive.

If we are to produce a truly thorough model of revelation, then, it seems we need something along the lines of *encounter* with the criterion itself—in this case, the person of Jesus Christ—as well as a model of how such encounter sufficiently grounds the secondary act of reflective speech, so that the latter becomes tethered and thus accountable to the former. But if

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[23] Stanley Hauerwas, "The Church as God's New Language," in *Scriptural Authority and Narrative Interpretation*, ed. Garrett Green (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 191.
[24] Ibid., 192-194.

such an encounter is to be made possible, then we must address the second problem I laid out above, namely, that the person of Jesus is a long-gone artifact of history.

1.1.2 The Problem of Time

The second challenge that arises when enquiring about revelation is that of historical distance between revelation and Christians today. If what is needed for a criterion of biblical scripture and Christian speech is an encounter with the reality of that revelation, then Christianity has both a resource and a challenge toward that goal in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. As a real human being who occupied actual space and time, Jesus was (so we are told) a revelation par excellence to those who knew him. Since language invariably creates distance between a thing and thought about it, Christians believe the immanence of God's person in the Incarnation of the Son provided a climactic leap in divine-human relations, an intimacy of the highest degree. However, precisely as an occupant of space and time, this revelation of God's own self in the Incarnation proves problematic because it took place over a brief period of history, so that only a very few were privy to that revelation within a very specific context. The distance between language and its object is thus exacerbated by the substantial distance of time and the vast cultural difference between the world of Jesus and of his followers today.

This is one of the theological challenges that Kevin Hector seeks to overcome with his "therapeutic" model of Christian speech. Hector's model is "therapeutic" in that it strives to give an account of language that both avoids essentialist metaphysics on the one hand and the indeterminacy of apophaticism on the other.[25] However, because Hector's solution is a theory of Christian language governed by conventional use traced back to Jesus as the ground of its

[25] Kevin Hector, *Theology Without Metaphysics: God, Language, and the Spirit of Recognition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 15-27.

normative force, his model also becomes a way to address the evolution of speech over the intervening period. As Hector summarizes:

> The proposal, briefly stated, is to understand the Spirit's work in the following terms: after Jesus Christ had taught his disciples to follow him, he recognized them as competent to recognize other persons and performances as doing so; the disciples, in turn, recognized still others as competent recognizers, and so on; in this way, the Spirit implicit in Christ's own normative assessments was passed along from person to person.[26]

Within this theory of language, the meaning of a word is "the product of its relationship to a normative trajectory implicit in precedent uses of the concept."[27] One's position within a normative milieu provides the condition for more or less correct language usage. To use a concept theologically, then, "is to try to go on in the same way as precedent uses which are recognized as correct, where 'correct' turns out to mean 'in the same way as those recognized by Christ.'"[28] By locating the veracity of theological language on a trajectory stemming from Christ, Hector binds true speech not to any object in reality but to practices of Church convention that emerge from historical continuity with that past event. Thus, Christians use "the ordinary practice of taking-true to explain 'truth,' rather than using 'truth' to explain the practice of taking-true."[29] Truth is a function of interpretation rather than interpretation being more or less adequate to some objective truth. Hector is not afraid of the subjectivism that may accompany this reliance on interpretation, since the norms which govern Christian language have been historically established by Christ. Since "God has determined to include human persons in the mediation of God's own measurement… human measurement need not be thought incompatible with God's own."[30]

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[26] Ibid., 38-39.
[27] Ibid., 146.
[28] Ibid., 101.
[29] Ibid., 243.
[30] Ibid., 242.

But compatibility is one thing; accuracy is something else altogether. The fact that Hector's model of theological language relies on normative continuity going back to Christ under the guidance of the Spirit is historically dubious and ethically dangerous. While Hector is upfront about the fluidity of linguistic norms, to credibly introduce theological categories like Christ and the Spirit into a discussion of norms is also to allow for a discussion of sin. If the legitimacy of norms is traced back to the moral and spiritual influence of Christ, then the prevalence of violent and discriminatory norms in the intervening history offers a caution against trusting that such norms are in fact guided by the Spirit. Furthermore, relying on the Spirit's guidance of historical norms once again locates us in a vicious circle, as the veracity of theological claims hinges on a theological interpretation of history that is itself contingent upon the very theological language that Hector is here trying to legitimate. Finally, requiring that the truth of language be contingent upon participation in a spiritually directed normative community runs the risk of either excluding many persons from any purchase on true speech or the assumption that God only cares about and directs certain (theologically explicit) speech.

If the Church is to make credible appeal to revelation in terms of *encounter*, then it now appears it must also do so in terms of a *common* encounter. That is, for both the Christian and the non-Christian, both the lifetime observer and the novitiate to faith, and both the First Century disciples and the contemporary believer, there must be a commonality of access to that reality which grounds Christian speech. If Søren Kierkegaard is right that "There is no follower at second hand"—that is, that the first Christians were neither at an advantage in faith for their proximity to the human Jesus nor at a disadvantage for their lack of a biblical canon—then it seems some manner of encounter with Christ as divine teacher must not only be possible but

must further be accessible to all.[31] It is therefore now incumbent upon us to explore whether and how such a common encounter across time and space may be possible.

1.2 RECOVERING ENCOUNTER

What is needed now is an account of immediacy across time and space as a theological precondition for such a common encounter, and so I will here briefly survey two theologians who offer models of such revelatory encounter before proposing a mechanism from within the Christian tradition that may prove a fertile grounding for our inquiry.

The Protestant theologian Emil Brunner takes up the theme of encounter in conversation with Barth's location of God's total self-revelation in the person Jesus of Nazareth. For Brunner, to know the truth of Christ's revelation is not to have proper factual knowledge but rather to enter into communion with his person: "To know him in trustful obedience is not only to *know* the truth, but through God's self-communication to *be* in it, in the truth that as love is at the same time fellowship."[32] Consequently, truth is no longer a matter of propositional statements but is an event in which one participates. "Here *truth happens*, here we *are* in the truth… In this truth as encounter,… to have and to be are one."[33] One thus does not know truth, strictly speaking, by *thinking* it but by *being in* it.[34]

For Brunner, the Incarnation is revelation as participatory rather than as conceptual.[35] "It thus becomes unmistakably clear that what God wills to give us cannot really be given in

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[31] Søren Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments*, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 104.
[32] Emil Brunner, *Truth as Encounter*, trans. David Cairns (London: SCM Press, 1964), 21.
[33] Ibid., 21.
[34] Ibid., 117: "Likewise, 'knowing' also acquires a new meaning. No longer is it a question of the insertion of something into the knowledge I possess, the expansion of the intellectual riches at my disposal; but it is answering personally when personally addressed, and hence obedient, thankful confession and prayer."
[35] Ibid., 109: "The self-revelation of God is no object, but wholly the doing and self-giving of a subject—or, better expressed, a Person."

words," writes Brunner, "but only in manifestation: Jesus Christ, God himself *in persona* is the real gift."[36] Words, in the form of the Bible and Christian doctrine, are valuable insofar as they usher us into encounter with Christ and further usher that encounter into reflective thought. But such words have "only an instrumental value."[37] To know Christ in this way is not to ultimately know anything *about* Jesus but rather to encounter his living person within one's own context.

This present encounter happens through *faith*. Faith here is not simply a matter of belief, however, nor even of explicitly affirming one's trust in God. Rather, faith is a way of life:

> Faith is resurrection with Christ to a new life. Faith, therefore, is not merely "believing something," but faith is a real happening that grips the whole person: coming into fellowship with the Redeemer, a genuine participation in his resurrection life. Faith means to be born again to a new life, to walk in the spirit, to become implanted in Christ, to become a member of his body. Faith is, therefore, a genuine alteration of the person; indeed, a transformation of the person.[38]

Faith is a participation in Christ's own life, a seeing and doing through the very eyes and body of Christ. The transformative effect of faith is the alteration of one's person, the blurring of lines between the person of Christ and one's conscious sense of self. The Bible and Christian doctrine may be helpful instruments in one's entering into Christ's life, then, but they are not that life itself. To experience Christ in encounter is to experience Christ as something foreign from within, to be taken up into his person which is not our own but which shapes our persons accordingly. "Truth is something that *happens*, that God *does*," writes Brunner.[39] Brunner's truth as encounter thus leads us toward a definition of true knowledge as *coincidence with reality*, in this case the lived reality of Christ's person. The truth of Jesus Christ is truly "known" only in

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[36] Ibid., 132.
[37] Ibid., 132.
[38] Ibid., 163.
[39] Ibid., 154.

the act of personal participation in his own person, so that the truth of Christ is one and the same as his very being, and knowledge of this truth is one and the same as living his person.

However, insofar as God reveals Godself in the embodied life of Christ, and insofar as we humans are all embodied as knowers and believers, the absence of the body from Brunner's metaphysic of encounter seems a significant oversight. While Brunner effectively rearticulates true knowledge as a matter of true being, his Protestant impulses preclude him from providing a concrete, material encounter which metes out the incarnational faith he describes. But if we, as material beings, are to come to know through faith (that is, participation) in the life of Christ revealed in that same human, material embodiment, then what embodied mechanism is there to facilitate such an encounter?

Such a material mechanism for encounter is precisely what we find in the Christology of Edward Schillebeeckx. Whereas the Protestant Brunner located present encounter in the experience of faith, the Roman Catholic Schillebeeckx characterizes such encounter in terms of *sacrament*.[40] The problem of Jesus' physical absence to the modern Christian is solved somewhat paradoxically, according to Schillebeeckx, by the bodiliness of the resurrection:

> Christ's incarnation is, as it were, some paces ahead of our deification, so that for a time he has passed out of sight beyond the visible horizon; but from there he is preparing the perfect reunion in bodily life and remoulding us from within, so that when our hearts are pure enough we, ourselves glorified, may see him face to face in the bodily encounter of the *parousia*.[41]

Like the point on a sheet that is dragged upwards between two fingers, Jesus is the individual within the fabric of humanity whose divinization and glorification drags the rest of his species with him toward salvation. With the withdrawal of Christ's physical form in the

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[40] Edward Schillebeeckx, *Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1963), 6: "In this book we are directing our attention to sacramentality in religion in order to arrive eventually at the insight that the sacraments are the properly human mode of encounter with God."
[41] Ibid., 41.

ascension, then, Schillebeeckx suggests that the sacraments become something like the edges of the sheet: the physical experiences which hem human participants onto the sanctifying trajectory of Christ. "Sacramentality thus bridges the gap and solves the disproportion between the Christ of heaven and unglorified humanity," Schillebeeckx writes.[42] The sacraments "are flashes of light within the whole of Christian life," moments of clarity where the character of Christ's life is manifest in material reality.[43]

The Eucharist epitomizes this encounter with the sacramental embodiment of Christ. Schillebeeckx writes, "Our personal relationship with the Lord is also essentially an *anamnesis*, a calling to mind of the historical event of salvation on the cross, not insofar as it is past, but insofar as it endures eternally in its completion."[44] Because what is remembered in the *anamnesis* is Christ's sacrificial giving of himself to the world, the Eucharist performs this very event and so both commemorates this past event and makes it present through its performative perpetuation.[45] In doing the Eucharist, Christians effectively follow Christ down the performative road he has already paved toward our glorification.

However, if Brunner is guilty of not providing a sufficiently embodied point of entry into a lived coincidence with the reality of Christ's person, then Schillebeeckx is guilty of the opposite, that is, of providing a material point of entry into what seems an immaterial encounter. Schillebeeckx defines his theology of the Eucharist in terms of *transignification*—that is, the transformation of the *meaning* of bread and wine even as their ontological status remains unchanged: "Remaining physically what it is, bread can be included in a sphere of meaning that is quite different from the purely biological. In that case, the bread *is* different, because the

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[42] Ibid., 44.
[43] Ibid., 214.
[44] Edward Schillebeeckx, *The Eucharist* (Tunbridge Wells: Burns & Oats, 2005), 126.
[45] Ibid., 137.

definite relationship to man at the same time defines the reality under discussion."[46] Schillebeeckx thus discards the metaphysical baggage of transubstantial change in the elements while endowing them with the valuative significance of Christ's character. However, this location of change in the valuation of the elements rather than in their very existence seems to emphasize—rather than overcome—the subjective barrier between Christ and the human which Brunner's model of encounter was meant to overcome.

While Emil Brunner offers us as a model of truth as encounter in terms of lived participation in Christ's life, the absence of the body as the interface of that encounter leaves us somewhat empty-handed for a mechanism of participation. In the reverse direction, Edward Schillebeeckx provides a material, embodied mechanism for encounter in the Eucharist, but the nature of that encounter as transignification fails to fulfill the notion of true knowledge as lived participation we derived from Brunner.

In order to address my initial question of the possibility of true Christian speech from the vantage of an encounter with revelation, I now propose to harmonize the insights of these two theologians with a theological experiment. In what follows, I will treat the sacrament of the Eucharist as the Christian's material, embodied, lived experience of participation in the living person of Jesus Christ in such a way that meets the necessary criteria of a common encounter laid out above. Without entirely discounting the ritual meaning ascribed to the sacrament by Christian participants, this experiment will instead focus on the embodied character of the sacrament and the ways in which material dynamics shape the conditions of consciousness and so lay the groundwork for second-order reflection. The fruit of this experiment, I hope, will be to legitimate the possibility of the Christian's participation in the truth of which they speak, thus

[46] Ibid., 131.

grounding the secondary speech-acts which emerge from that experience and providing a criterion by which Christian claims to truth may be assessed first-hand in a way that satisfies the demand for a common encounter.

The language of experiment is crucial to what this project hopes to accomplish. As a work of constructive theology, this project offers up a creative hypothesis for a trial-and-error-style assessment. Because I am operating with an assumption of Taylor's immanent frame, I do not take the approach of doing theology from the posture of assuming certain doctrines or deducing particular conclusions from those doctrines. Rather, I take certain Christian claims (in this case, that God reveals Godself fully in the person of Jesus of Nazareth and that this person lives presently in the Eucharist) as worthy objects of philosophical investigation. What I propose here is not a matter of *explanation* (since I am not trying to explain the Eucharist from an intra-doctrinal position) so much as it is a work of creative *problem-solving* (addressing the possibility of Christian truth claims in a secular context).

It is for this reason also that I intentionally refrain from exploring any specific eucharistic liturgy.[47] As a constructive hypothesis from the assumption of an immanent frame, what is offered here is meant for the reader's own individual assessment, that they might figuratively "try on" my proposal as a lens on their own sacramental history and see how well it fits. The non-confessional breadth which is attempted in the latter chapters is thus an intentionally wide net cast for the variety of my potential readers' experiences. Lastly, because various

[47] As a biographical note, I have personally had a wide variety of eucharistic experiences—I grew up in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, flirted with evangelicalism in my youth, have belonged to multiple high-church Anglican communities, have worshipped with Latin American Pentecostals and African Lutherans, have lived and worshipped among both ecumenical and Roman Catholic monastic communities, and have written original eucharistic liturgies for experimental and ecumenical church settings—so that where I do emphasize certain patterns in eucharistic liturgies, I draw on a broadly Western, mainline Protestant and Catholic understanding of the sacrament while trying to avoid individual differences. This intentionally broad approach to eucharistic rites is also in keeping with the experimental nature of this project.

denominational rites bear the marks of the doctrinal formulations that inform them, close interpretation of those rites would inevitably draw us into an intra-doctrinal theological hermeneutics, whereas my interest here is in the very possibility of such hermeneutical discourse. For this reason, many eucharistic theologies treat the language of the sacramental rite and the relevant biblical texts around it as normative, whereas I will not do so precisely because it is the validity and possibility of normativity of those words which is at issue here.[48] If theology is understood as reasoning from dogmatic propositions, then the present work is not, strictly speaking, a work of eucharistic theology proper but something more like a philosophical prolegomenon to theology. If, on the other hand, my reader takes theology as the search for a linguistic understanding of God based on one's own existential encounter, then perhaps this work qualifies as a philosophical or experimental theology.

Finally, as a theological experiment, this project is an exercise in the very kind of theological creativity which my own proposal recommends. Because my investigation emphasizes the root of theology in present, personal, embodied encounter with revelation, this project hopefully illustrates the kind of philosophical creativity which may be used to make conceptual sense of such experiences in the Christian life. This approach takes seriously and as legitimate certain lay and pastoral ways of doing theology, in which one's own life is the scene of God's work which can only be conceptually interpreted by trying on and assessing various

[48] For an example, see Joseph Mudd, *Eucharist as Meaning: Critical Metaphysics and Contemporary Sacramental Theology* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014). Mudd treats the Eucharist phenomenologically, much like what I am attempting here. However, Mudd's conclusion that Christ's presence in the sacrament is caused by a linguistic transmission of meaning is quite different than what I will conclude (Ibid., 11). For instance: "The presence of Christ in the Eucharist rests on the truth of the statement of Christ. But the statement of Christ is the judgment of a divine person and so is true" (Ibid., 154). Mudd assumes the legitimacy of eucharistic language on the basis of its being initiated by Christ, an event which is known from the scripture that also legitimizes Christ as divine. While this might be a perfectly legitimate interpretation from an intra-doctrinal position, it does not suffice as an explanation of the Eucharist from a starting point of the immanent frame, in which claims of Christ's divinity or the veracity of scripture are not assumed.

explanations according to reason as one presently has it. As a demonstration of just this kind of trial-and-error theology, this project hopefully offers at least a useful thought-exercise in theological method, even if the content of my conclusion proves unpersuasive to my reader. As an experiment, this project does not seek to insist on a new meaning of the Eucharist so much as it offers up a hypothetical option for my reader's personal and spiritual consideration.

In pursuit of this goal, I will engage the thought of the German philosopher Martin Heidegger, whose account of involved understanding provides a phenomenological basis for participatory knowledge and which further provides the grounds for an account of language in terms of worldly belonging. Drawing on Heidegger's philosophical tools, I will argue that the Eucharist constitutes a world of dynamic relations and happenings which becomes transparent to the Christian participant through her being caught up in the dynamic movement of that world and whose character is revealed as one and the same as the character of Jesus Christ through the poetic reading of scripture and uttering of liturgical prayers.

However, before we get to Heidegger, we should first consider whether appealing to the Eucharist does not already fall prey to my earlier critique of legitimating Christian theological and biblical interpretations on the grounds of divine activity attested by those very interpretations. In other words, is the Eucharist not simply another case of circularity in which Christian claims are proved by what they themselves allege are their basis? I would caution against this critique in the specific case of the Eucharist because of its uniquely empirical character. As an experience of material reality, each participant has equal access to the same event. The bishop, the priest, the weekly Churchgoer, and the first-time participant all belong to a shared experience. Unlike textual interpretations, mystical visions, or divine inspiration, what occurs in the Eucharist takes place outside the individual and thus serves as a kind of social

container in which participants belong together to a common experience. As an event to which individuals belong rather than the other way round, whatever interpretations come out of the Eucharist thus have a certain egalitarian quality by virtue of their shared origin.

One could of course argue that the same can be said of appeals to the Holy Spirit, and indeed, many denominations that heavily emphasize the role of the Spirit do adopt a highly democratic, charismatic polity. This is a fair point, but as immaterial, the alleged movement of the Spirit can also be easily weaponized by Church hierarchies precisely because there is no material evidence by which such alleged divine activity can be contravened. If the Church oppresses women or forbids same-sex relationships, for example, it can always chalk these decisions up to the Holy Spirit to avoid allegations of bigotry, and it is difficult to dispute these claims without entirely abandoning the shared ecclesial experience from which they spring.

By contrast, the Eucharist is a common experience shared through the material reality of space and time and as such has a certain empirical quality that invoking the Holy Spirit does not. As both democratically inclusive and materially extended, the Eucharist can be pointed to by those on the margins of the Church not only as experiential evidence for their cause but as evidence that is equally authoritative and available to their ideological opponents in the Church. The Eucharist thus provides a meeting-space for the Church's diversity, a common point of reference for Christians of differing and opposing viewpoints, and thus an occasion for real dialogue between traditions and theologies within the world of the Church.[49]

[49] This might seem at first to be a fictional and utopian vision of the Eucharist, as the eucharistic communion is often the *last* thing that denominations share with one another. However, the intense historical and ongoing debates about the Eucharist along confessional lines in fact proves my point. That the Eucharist is so intensely guarded by various churches in their disagreements with one another demonstrates the shared centrality and experience of the sacred that so many Christian denominations associate with the sacrament. That eucharistic discourse is marred by centuries of polemical debate, accusations of heresy, inquisitorial condemnations, and ecclesiastically sanctioned exclusion illustrates that the Eucharist is indeed a primary location where the Church's diversity (including its divergence) comes to light, even in those churches that refuse to share the sacrament with each other. The rich

But *how* does the Eucharist do this? How can the sacrament credibly be said to be the real presence of Jesus Christ without relying on dubious and antiquated metaphysics? And even if that can be shown, how does one go about deriving a verbal interpretation from a material event? For these questions, we need an account of both human understanding and language, and so we turn to the phenomenology of Martin Heidegger.

1.3 MARTIN HEIDEGGER

Pursuant to the above parameters of revelation by common encounter, it must be shown how the being of Christ's person can not only be known as such but how it can be further ushered into language and interpretation as an effective criterion for Christian speech. That is, we find ourselves in need of philosophical accounts of human understanding through encounter and their subsequent use of language in order to offer theological proposals for how this understanding might take place in the Eucharist, how the Eucharist can be understood to be the risen person of Jesus Christ, and how human participants in the sacrament can then proceed from that experience to the level of reflective thought. It is not difficult to see, then, that our discussion will necessarily steer us in the direction of metaphysics. But insofar as this project seeks to give an account of revelation sufficient to the demands of Taylor's immanent frame, such metaphysical musings must avoid the temptation to wax lyrical about immaterial hypotheses or necessitate a transcendental plane to explain phenomena in reality. I thus turn to the German philosopher Martin Heidegger, whose phenomenology not only addresses our need for a post-Metaphysical[50]

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history of debate about and around the Eucharist is precisely the reason that I find it a fertile area of exploration for revelatory potential.

[50] There are two broad definitions of "metaphysics" at work in this project. Firstly, there is what may be called essentialist metaphysics—what I will hereafter label as "Metaphysics" (with a capital "M")—inherited from Greek philosophy via Scholasticism, which considers material beings in terms of what is immaterial (e.g., substances, essences, natures, souls, etc.) and which consequently often treats this immaterial reality with a pseudo-scientific exactness. This Metaphysics has been rightly questioned and largely discarded in contemporary philosophy on the

way of thinking but further provides a model of lived understanding and language that fits the needs of our inquiry into revelation.

Heidegger famously opens the *question of Being*,[51] which seeks to go deeper than traditionally Metaphysical ways of speaking that cover up Being by treating it as a being itself.[52] Heidegger argues that before one can grasp the *what*-ness of a particular being, one must reacquaint oneself with the Being of beings—their *is*-ness—itself. In the introduction to his magnum opus, *Being and Time* (1927), he sketches his inquiry as follows: "What is sought after in the working out of the question is Being, that is, what determines beings as beings… The Being of beings 'is' not itself a being… Being, as what is sought after, therefore requires its own demonstration, which essentially differs from the discovery of beings."[53] If a linguistic, metaphysical description given to an object is to be anything other than a label applied by a subject cut off from that object's reality, then the subject's knowledge of the object must entail a more primordial awareness of the Being of that object in the first place.[54] To engage in the ontic

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grounds that it assumes a correspondence of reality to mental categories that allows humans to assume intellectual dominance over beings. See Kevin Hector, *Theology Without Metaphysics*, 1-13. There is, however, a second definition of metaphysics available to us, which I will designate as "metaphysics" (with a lower-case "m"): the general practice of thinking critically about beings and how, what, and why they are what they are. I argue that we can and should (and furthermore, that theology *must*) retain a metaphysical way of thinking in the second sense of the term without being beholden to the outdated methodology of the first. See George Pattison, *God and Being* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 38-48, for a defense of theology's necessary use of metaphysics.

[51] It is common—though not universal—in English translations of Heidegger to capitalize the verb *Being* [*Sein*] in order to distinguish it from the noun *a being* [*Seien*], so that Heidegger's study is into the "Being of beings." Though some uses of the word "being" are ambiguous as to where they lie between beings and Being, I will continue this convention for the duration of this project for the sake of distinguishing between the two terms for my reader.

[52] Martin Heidegger, "The Onto-Theological Constitution of Metaphysics," in *Identity and Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 58: "Metaphysics thinks of the Being of beings both in the ground-giving unity of what is most general, what is indifferently valid everywhere, and also in the unity of the all that accounts for the ground, that is, of the All-Highest." In contrast to the so-called ontotheological Metaphysics that treats Being as the being which grounds all other beings, Heidegger proposes that we can only think Being correctly in its difference from beings. This Being does not reveal itself as a being beneath all beings but rather as the *way* in which beings *are*: "Being shows itself as the unconcealing overwhelming" (Ibid., 64).

[53] Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, Neunzehnte Auflage (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2006), §2:6. All translations of *Sein und Zeit* throughout this project are my own unless otherwise stated.

[54] Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. Peter D. Hertz (New York: Harper Collins, 1971), 69.

analysis of metaphysics thus requires a more basic availability to ontological understanding, for otherwise ontic statements have no "to what" [*Wonach*] to be held for confirmation.[55]

In asking about Being, Heidegger's project takes him to that very being who is "always already involved in an understanding of Being," namely, human beings.[56] What begins as a pursuit of the preconditions of metaphysics thus becomes, in *Being and Time*, a phenomenological investigation of humans—or, more accurately, human Dasein[57]—as the beings who can understand Being as the backdrop of their metaphysical interpretation of beings. What follows in Heidegger's treatment of human understanding, attunement, discourse, interpretation, and language offers a phenomenological portrait of the human knower in such a way that illuminates the various demands of the task I have set for myself in this project.

As a philosophical investigation into the possibility of divine revelation laid out within the limits of the immanent frame, this project finds a natural compatibility with Heidegger's treatment of human lived involvement as the field of ontological disclosure, and so Heidegger's usefulness to this project is principally his phenomenological ontology as an alternative to ontotheological Metaphysics. However, there are multiple models of revealing at work in Heidegger's thought, so that the question emerges as to which one may prove most fruitful for our discussion. In his 1927 lecture "Phenomenology and Theology," Heidegger distinguishes between the tasks of theology and philosophy: the former is a "positive science" and therefore

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[55] Ibid., 18.
[56] Heidegger, *SZ*, §2:5.
[57] Heidegger famously refers to Dasein as the object of his analysis in *Being and Time*, though it is generally agreed that he does not mean this term as a simple synonym for "human being." For a helpful definition of Dasein and its difference from the human being itself, see John Haugeland, *Dasein Disclosed: John Haugeland's Heidegger*, ed. Joseph Rouse (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013), 81-82, where Haugeland defines Dasein as "a *way of living that embodies an understanding of being*." That is, according to Haugeland, Dasein denotes the mode of Being particular to humans, a mode which entails a pre-apprehension of the Being of beings through worldly familiarity and the importance of that Being to oneself. We will return to a fuller examination of this theme in Chapter 4.

deals with an ontic revelation [*Offenbarung*], while the latter is the science of a more primordial ontological manifestness or revealability [*Offenbarkeit*]. As Heidegger juxtaposes them, "Ontic sciences in each case thematize a given being that in a certain manner is always already disclosed *prior* to scientific disclosure… Ontology, or the science of being, on the other hand, demands a fundamental shift of view: from beings to being."[58] The ontic revelation of Christianity is "Christ, the crucified God," and the theological science of this revelation is shaped by the nature of human knowledge in the mode of faithful believing.[59] Yet this *ontic* theological knowledge is itself contingent upon *ontological* disclosure of Christ assumed in theological science.[60] This gets at the crux of Heidegger's usefulness to this project. For while it may seem that we are most interested in an *Offenbarung* type of revelation, since our focus is on the person of Christ, I have already made the case that what is necessary here is an account of possible encounter with the present person of Christ, and this is less a matter of deducing the content of ontic revelation itself than of evaluating the ontological possibilities for such a revelation in the first place.[61]

Heidegger's manner of addressing the ontological concern for the manifestness of beings is through his notion of *unconcealment* [*Unverborgenheit*], Heidegger's preferred translation of the Greek *aletheia*. In one sense, unconcealment is Heidegger's way of denoting the truth of beings, their self-subsistence as what they are. In another sense, unconcealment implies the inherently privative dimension of revelation, so that revelation always entails a paring back of obscurity and bringing to light of what always already was. A being is properly revealed in its truth on the basis of a privative dis-closedness [*Erschlossenheit*] belonging to the ontological

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[58] Martin Heidegger, "Phenomenology and Theology," trans. James G. Hart and John C. Maraldo, in *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 41.
[59] Ibid., 44.
[60] Ibid., 50: "Every ontic interpretation operates on the basis, at first and for the most part concealed, of an ontology."
[61] For a fuller examination of the tension between the ontic *Offenbarung* and the ontological *Offenbarkeit* in and after Heidegger, see Hent de Vries, *Philosophy and the Turn to Religion*: Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2019.

structure of the world in which such revelation takes place.[62] Our inquiry into the Eucharist as a site of revelation is thus an investigation into *Unverborgenheit* as the prevailing character of *Offenbarkeit*, which grounds the possibility of second-order reflection on the meaning of any *Offenbarung*. In other words, we are asking how the Eucharist might *unconceal* the *manifestness* of the sacramental world in such a way that determines the shape of theological reflection on the Eucharist as an event of divine *revelation*.

However, even with a phenomenological account of unconcealment in hand, one might justifiably raise the question as to whether a work of Christian theology should take Heidegger's critique of ontotheology at face value. The main thrust of this concern is that the separation of theological and ontological reflection along the lines Heidegger suggests risks limiting any Christian metaphysic to a constricting of God on philosophy's terms, thereby posing the choice to theology of whether it will be either genuinely Christian or philosophically credible. Any Christian metaphysic that chooses the second option would seemingly entail dogmatic exclusion, wherein certain central tenets of Christian belief are bracketed for the sake of a philosophically coherent account of God. For example, in response to the attempt made by Jean-Luc Marion to give a phenomenology of givenness that evades the ontotheological treatment of God as a Metaphysical stopgap, John Caputo argues that Marion no longer allows for a genuine revelation but instead forces any possible revelation to conform to Marion's model of givenness.[63] The

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[62] Heidegger, *SZ*, 75: "'Disclose' and 'disclosedness' [*'Erschließen' und 'Erschlossenheit'*] will be used in subsequent technical terminology to mean 'open up' [*'aufschließen'*] and 'being laid open' [*'Aufgeschlossenheit'*]." Mark Wrathall considers *Erschlossenheit* to belong under the same heading as *Unverborgenheit* on the basis of their commonly privative natures as ontological structures of revealing. See Wrathall, *Heidegger and Unconcealment: Truth, Language, and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 17.

[63] John D. Caputo, "The Hyperbolization of Phenomenology: Two Possibilities for Religion in Recent Continental Philosophy," in *Counter-Experiences: Reading Jean-Luc Marion*, ed. Kevin Hart (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 80-81: "One is thereby led by the hand of phenomenology to the threshold of theology, which can be crossed only by faith and would represent, if confirmed in actuality, an existential and theological 'crowning' of phenomenology by actualizing an essential possibility of which phenomenology is not itself capable. Theology would be what phenomenology wants to be but cannot attain."

unconditionality of God is violated, says Caputo, by Marion's attempt to provide a philosophical (even if post-Metaphysical) model of God's activity. If Heidegger's critique of ontotheology is taken seriously, as Marion wants to do, then it seems either that theology is left without a tether to philosophical thinking or that any revelation must be conformed to a post-Metaphysical phenomenology, which is simply ontotheology of a different stripe.

Yet despite this concern, Heidegger's critique of ontotheology is not only appropriate but perhaps even necessary to the project I have sketched out above. Understanding the full value of Heidegger's critique of ontotheology requires an appreciation of how it is directed as much at philosophy as theology. As Iain Thompson points out, Heidegger's elaboration of ontotheology takes place within the context of the late Heidegger's interest in the history of Being, so that Heidegger's deconstruction of Western Metaphysics is properly understood in part as an exposition of the history of intelligibility. Thompson writes, "By codifying and disseminating an understanding of what entities *are*, metaphysics provides each historical 'epoch' of intelligibility with its ontological bedrock. And by furnishing an account of the ultimate source from which entities issue, metaphysics supplies intelligibility with a kind of foundational justification that… Heidegger characterizes as 'theological.'"[64] Metaphysics is ontotheological, in other words, by providing the bottom-up intelligibility of beings (ontology) on the basis of a particular epoch's construal of the top-down order of the universe (theology). The critique of ontotheology is not just an undermining of Metaphysics, then, but also a critique of conceptual foundationalism, directed as much at philosophy as theology. The theological dimension of ontotheology provides a foundational stopgap for philosophical schemata, much in the way that "revelation" often acts

[64] Iain Thompson, *Heidegger on Ontotheology: Technology and the Politics of Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 8.

as a theological simulacrum for the dogmatic construals of other Christians (usually in the past), which are then taken as foundational for subsequent thinking.

In accepting a certain dogmatic exclusion as a philosophical theology after ontotheology, this project embraces a rejection of conceptual foundationalism not as a rejection of revelation but rather as the necessary precondition for a genuine reception of it. Such an attitude enables a recovery of incarnality as central to the Christian's encounter with Christ. Following Caputo's critique of Marion above, we might say with Joeri Schrijvers that the problem with many philosophical and theological responses to ontotheology is the inclination to render the significance of immanence on the basis of a supposed transcendence.[65] Rather than embrace a dogmatic understanding of revelation in rejection of philosophy or embrace any of myriad apophaticisms in an attempt to preserve the transcendent over and against the immanent, a theology which takes ontotheology seriously is a theology that begins with a turn to the beings of everyday, material existence. As Schrijvers poses this possibility:

> What if, for instance, all there is to transcendence is the ambiguous encounter with the sensible realities of the broken bread or with the texts of Scripture? In this way, an enquiry into ontotheology operates a decentring of the modern subject that no longer succumbs to the temptation of a 'pure' encounter with its other (and that thereby would differentiate between pure and impure encounters). Such an incarnational approach to transcendence—incarnational, since it encounters transcendence only *through* and *in* immanence—indeed avoids attempts to 'demarcate the rigid boundaries of the community.'[66]

Phenomenology constitutes an incarnational response to ontotheology precisely in taking its cue from the objects and experiences of everyday life, acknowledging these as the possible scene of God's appearance while simultaneously insisting on the integrity of beings-in-

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[65] Joeri Schrijvers, "On Doing Theology 'After' Ontotheology: Notes on a French Debate," *New Blackfriars* 87 (2006): 312.
[66] Ibid., 312-313. See J.K.A. Smith, *Speech and Theology: Language and the Logic of Incarnation* (London: Routledge, 2002), 169.

themselves apart from transcendent significance or dogmatic foundationalism. "Incarnation entails both God's freedom to appear and the freedom of human beings with regard to God," argues Schrijvers. "God is always able to appear wherever God wills: in objects, sacraments, persons or nature."[67] The following treatment of the Eucharist as a site of revelation is thus not a matter of insisting that revelation takes place in a single way in the sacrament or to the exclusion of other modes of revelation. It is instead a consideration of how God *might* be manifest in the unconcealment of the event where Christ is already attested to be present and which for precisely this reason merits investigation.

That Heidegger's thought includes the critique of ontotheology is thus an added reason for our consultation of him, as it both reiterates the non-foundationalist approach needed for a theology within the immanent frame and reinforces the magnitude of what is at stake for Christians in a present, embodied encounter with revelation. Heidegger is therefore a useful conversation partner for this project because he provides so many of the tools which we need for such an investigation: a critique of ontotheological, Metaphysical foundationalism; a phenomenology of lived understanding; an account of language as grounded therein. Heidegger is far from the only available alternative to Metaphysics or a theory of language, and other like-minded philosophers have engaged more explicitly with theological material. However, Heidegger is not selected here on the basis of the assumed superiority of his thought (though the abundance of Heidegger scholarship and his far-reaching influence suggest that many intelligent people believe he was at least onto something) but because his philosophical toolbox is so well-suited to the particulars of this investigation. In keeping with the experimental nature of this project, Heidegger is offered up not so much as the definitive answer to a theological problem as

[67] Schrijvers, "Theology 'After' Ontotheology," 313.

providing an available option for thinking through this problem in a productive way. As an experiment, this project will also deploy Heidegger's philosophical tools toward ends not his own, so that this project is decidedly neither a work *about* Heidegger nor a strictly "Heideggerian" theology but instead a creative arrangement of Heideggerian themes for the production of an original hypothesis.

1.3.1 Heidegger and Theology

In choosing Martin Heidegger as a philosophical conversation partner for this theological investigation of revelation, I must acknowledge that I am far from the first thinker to do so. Among Protestants, Heidegger's existential analysis has tended to hold a powerful allure. Rudolf Bultmann reads the New Testament as the mythological packaging of an existential message, taking up Heidegger's themes of anxiety and Being-toward-death as framing authentically Christian life as eschatologically oriented toward love, freedom, and openness to God.[68] Paul Tillich takes up this existential theme in borrowing Heidegger's notions of care and involvement in his discussion of God as the Christian's ultimate concern.[69] John Macquarrie then follows Bultmann and Tillich in emphasizing the existential role of anxiety, whereby revelation is ultimately the moment of tearing down human illusions and exposing one to the mystery and wonder of Being and so realigning one's understanding of oneself.[70]

For other theologians, Heidegger's reflections on ontology and the overcoming of the traditional human subject have proven attractive. The Jesuit Karl Rahner borrows Heidegger's theme of the human exteriority to self, so that humans are always already implicitly aware of

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[68] Rudolf Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology," in *New Testament and Mythology and Other Basic Writings*, ed. and trans. Schubert M. Ogden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 15-31.
[69] Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 11-14.
[70] John Macquarrie, *Principles of Christian Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1977), 84-89.

Being and thus "are always already on the way to God, whether or not we know it expressly, whether or not we will it."[71] For Dietrich Bonhoeffer, revelation occurs in the collective Being of the Church community, so that, following Heidegger, one understands revelation not by thinking as an individual but by dwelling within a particular world that is not contingent upon oneself.[72]

Still other theologians have found Heidegger's rejection of ontotheology useful in their adherence to various apophatic accounts of revelation. For John Caputo, Heidegger's reconception of human thinking in terms of active involvement "is a call to leave the domain of rational argumentation—the sphere of *ratio*—behind."[73] For Jean-Luc Marion, the ontological difference and the later Heidegger's critique of technology's enframing worldview bring to light the way Metaphysical language commits violence and idolatry by reducing the excess of God's reality into our human categories.[74] This same hesitation about the Metaphysical threat of language leads Louis-Marie Chauvet to turn to Heidegger's later reflections on poetry as a "discourse of grace," that is, language that carves out space for God to be without being contained in human concepts.[75] Anticipating my own turn to the Eucharist as a site of revelation, both Marion and Chauvet further believe that the sacrament opens up the reality of God's ineffability, presencing to human experience what is either too excessive or too immaterial for words to contain.[76]

There is also a current of theology after Heidegger which seeks to address revelation in a post-Metaphysical way. Eberhard Jüngel attempts to think about God from within a world of

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[71] Karl Rahner, *Hearer of the Word*, trans. Joseph Donceel (New York: Continuum, 1994), 53.
[72] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Act and Being: Transcendental Philosophy and Ontology in Systematic Theology*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, vol. 2, trans. Hans-Richard Reuter (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 110-114.
[73] John D. Caputo, *The Mystical Element in Heidegger's Thought* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1986), 4.
[74] Marion, *God Without Being*, 33-48.
[75] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 60.
[76] See Marion, *God Without Being*, 139-158 and Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 98, 174. I will engage with Chauvet's and Marion's models of Eucharist as revelation in Chapters 5 and 6, respectively.

atheistic metaphysical assumptions by returning to the Christ-event as the only viable revelation of God in the form of human unity with God.[77] In particular, Jüngel sees the cross as the primary moment of revelation, in which Jesus' death and suffering is shown not as incompatible with the Being of God but rather as the very manifestation of it, thereby drawing on Heidegger's own notion of Being-toward-death as indicative of the human participation in the kenotic Being of God.[78] For Jüngel, the focus on the lived experience of Jesus as manifest in the face of his personal possibilities (specifically, the possibility of pouring himself out in love) borrows from Heidegger's notion of persons as processes in motion oriented toward authenticity by reading an account of the cross through Heidegger's philosophy.[79] Similarly, Erich Przywara sees in Heidegger's phenomenology a return to things in themselves, thereby breaking theology free from the prison of Kantian transcendental philosophy. But Przywara remains critical of Heidegger's focus on specifically *human* Being as limiting the investigation into Being to brute Being-in-the-world as opposed to a genuine experience of the transcendent. Whereas Edmund Husserl's phenomenology rightly aims at essences by a legitimate turn to consciousness, says Przywara, "for Martin Heidegger the Being of life becomes the fundamental problem," leading to a preoccupation with immanence that brackets the possibility of genuine theological

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[77] See Eberhard Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World: On the Foundation of the Theology of the Crucified One in the Dispute Between Theism and Atheism*, trans. Darrell L. Guder (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 155: "To believe in Jesus means to understand him as that person through whom and in whom God has become definitively accessible… Therefore, that event in which one comes to the thinking of God is also to be understood as an event in which God brings us to himself."

[78] See Ibid., 364: "God has then identified himself with the Jesus who made himself sin for us as our substitute. We have recognized this identification of divine life with the dead Jesus as the event of divine love. As such, it is the turning point of the world, because God has interposed himself in the midst of fatal God-forsakenness in order to create a new relationship with God."

[79] For further discussion of Jüngel's use of Heidegger in his reading of the cross, see Deborah Casewell, "Reading Heidegger Through the Cross: On Eberhard Jüngel's Heideggerian Ontology," *Forum Philosophicum* 1 (2016): 95-114.

knowledge.[80] By contrast, Przywara prefers a renewal of the *analogia entis* as a means by which phenomenological analysis of the immanent can uncover the transcendent.[81]

While Heidegger has often been a popular resource for constructing Christian theories of revelation, then, I believe my own engagement with his thought will accomplish a slightly different outcome from those listed above. Whereas theologians who emphasize the existentialist thread in Heidegger's thought end up focusing on the interior life of the Christian, often even reducing the question of Being to the question of personal meaning, and so reduce Heidegger's insights to existential anthropology, I find that Heidegger's existential examination only emerges within his larger interest in reality itself. Heidegger's later turn from Being to beings suggests as much, so that the externality of humans as Being-in-the-world and the dynamism of worlds in *Being and Time* is opened up as actually an ontology of reality, not simply an examination of human consciousness. Similarly, those thinkers who prioritize the openness of human beings to Being risk taking the early Heidegger as belonging too much to the broader tradition of transcendental idealism, so that divine-human encounter seems to occur more at the level of mental awareness than as fully embodied encounter. Apophatic readers of Heidegger are further liable to take his notion of the ontological difference (as in Marion) and his later musings on poetry (as in Chauvet) out of the context of his entire corpus, so that, rather than belonging to worlds of involvement, these philosophical notions simply give license to criticize all speech as idolatrous. Finally, though much of Jüngel's interpretation of Christ in terms of personal possibilities resembles the conclusions to which this project will arrive, it remains the case that

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[80] Erich Przywara, "Die Fünf Wenden—Eine Grundlegung," in *Katholische Krise*, ed. Bernhard Gertz (Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 1967), 111.

[81] See John R. Betz, "The *Analogia Entis* as a Standard of Catholic Engagement: Erich Przywara's Critique of Phenomenology and Dialectical Theology," *Modern Theology* 35.1 (January 2019): 90: For Przywara, "what is metaphysically ultimate is neither an absolute immanence nor an absolute transcendence, but a dynamic rhythm between them—between the poles, so to speak, of divine immanence and divine transcendence." Cf. Erich Przywara, *Ringen der Gegenwart*, vol. 2 (Augsburg: Benno Filser Verlag, 1929), 960ff.

his and Przywara's applications of Heidegger are clearly under the umbrella of theological discussion of revelation as *Offenbarung*, wherein the Christ-event is assumed as a theological datum to which philosophical interpretation may be given.

By contrast, this work strives toward an ontological account of Christ's present manifestation [*Offenbarkeit*] as unconcealed in the Eucharist rather than a Heideggerian interpretation of a given revelation [*Offenbarung*]. Implicit in my insistence on revelation by encounter is the assumption that if God self-communicates through the incarnate Jesus, then to arrive at the manifestation of his person is in fact of greater importance to faith than any conceptual interpretation of the meaning of Jesus. If Jesus is taken at his word—"Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (Jn 14:9)—then there is nothing that theological reflection can give us which the thing itself does not, and it is this reasoning which informs the ontological (rather than ontic) deployment of Heidegger offered here.

1.3.2 Heidegger and Nazism

Finally, a word must be said about the choice of Martin Heidegger as a conversation partner for a work of Christian theology in light of his membership in the Nazi Party. While the nature of Heidegger's devotion to Nazi ideology remains somewhat ambiguous and his official party capacity as rector of the University of Freiburg was short-lived, there can be little doubt that he maintained at least some genuine sympathy with the movement, as evidenced in his 1933 *Rektoratsrede* and the1935 lecture series *Introduction to Metaphysics*, enough to raise the question as to whether he is a legitimate theological conversation partner for today.

I have nonetheless chosen to engage with Heidegger in pursuit of my larger question for two reasons, one historical and the other ethical. The historical reason for studying Heidegger is

that his thought has arguably proven more influential than any philosopher of the twentieth century, so that his thought is so thoroughly embedded in modern philosophical and theological thought that it cannot now be extracted. And were we to instead study one of Heidegger's many disciples, we would still find ourselves tracing much of that content back to Heidegger himself, who may in fact present his breakthroughs in ways more useful to our purposes.

The ethical motivation for engaging Heidegger is that, amidst this history of his immense influence, Heidegger's thought has been quite effectively deployed toward ethical reflections quite contrary to his own ideological commitments. Christian theologians who belonged to the German Confessing Church or who came into conflict with Nazi ideology such as Bonhoeffer, Bultmann, and Tillich all consulted Heidegger's insights in their theological works. Perhaps even more remarkably, Jewish thinkers such as Hannah Arendt and Emmanuel Levinas drew extensively on Heidegger's influence in laying out philosophical ethics that center on human responsibility to the other and society. That Heidegger's philosophical insights have not only been so frequently employed but so successfully used to construct theological and ethical frameworks opposed to his own suggests that the immensity of Heidegger's breakthroughs may have been wasted in his ostensibly a-theistic methodology or were misplaced in a politic framed by Hegelian nationalism and Nietzschean will-to-power. Perhaps what Heidegger's reception in both philosophical and theological history shows us, then, is that the real power of Heidegger's thought only shines through when deployed alongside ethical commitments that contravene the ideological misgivings of their author. All this is not to exonerate Heidegger from his political sins nor to calmly bracket the man from his works. It is simply to acknowledge that the ensuing history of Heidegger's ideas has borne out an ethical corpus in distinct contradiction to his

personal one. To engage Heidegger responsibly, then, is to engage him toward ethical ends not his own.

1.4 A ROADMAP FOR INVESTIGATION

We now have a picture of what is required from a contemporary doctrine of revelation. In a pluralist world dominated by the immanent frame of secular thought and the presumption of unbelief, the possibility of credible Christian speech hinges on the foundation of that speech in a lived experience which is widely available and which effectively grounds Christian thought. That the Christian tradition identifies the summative climax of God's self-revelation in the person of Jesus Christ thus provides both a resource for such an understanding by encounter as well as a hurdle to be overcome in the twofold form of language's relation to said encounter and the temporal gap between the life of Jesus and Christians today. To overcome the temporal gap for presumptive Christian speakers, I have proposed an experimental treatment of the Eucharist as the site where Christians traditionally allege Christ's risen presence to abide and where common encounter may thus be possible. The Eucharist further addresses the question of language insofar as we can establish the human capacity to understand through involved activity and to furthermore produce language as grounded in that experience.

Because this experiment takes place within the immanent frame, however, it is necessary to address the possibility of a eucharistic revelation from a philosophical perspective which accepts the critique of ontotheological foundationalism and seeks to elucidate the self-disclosure of entities from a phenomenological treatment of material beings, yielding a philosophical proposal for theological consideration. Enter Martin Heidegger, whose phenomenology of Being-in-the-world opens up a non-foundationalist horizon for thinking not only about involved

understanding but moreover about language in its relationship to that understanding. Because Heidegger gives us a model to address metaphysical problems without the ontotheological language of Metaphysics, his phenomenology opens up a pathway to engage in theological metaphysics without positing a transcendent realm beyond the immanence of everyday reality. Deriving from Heidegger a phenomenology of lived understanding, we thus open up the philosophical possibility for a theologically revelatory encounter with the *Ding an sich* of faith: the person of Jesus Christ.

In keeping with the experimental nature of this project, and because our analysis will focus on lived experience rather than concepts, what follows is thus not an explication of the Eucharist deduced from its theological source material, nor is it a scientific, sociological analysis of the eucharistic ritual as such, but it is rather a creative and imaginative deployment of some of Heidegger's philosophical tools toward a creative reappraisal of what the Eucharist might be, offering up a proposal for my reader's consideration. Building off of Heidegger's treatment of knowledge and language, I argue that the Eucharist, far from being either the transformation of bread and wine or the ascription of meaning to what is ultimately a human-made ritual, is most primordially a world of involved activity. As a world, the sacrament inscribes an understanding on participants at the unconscious level of physical movements and habits which incubates a particular worldview that becomes constitutive of Christian thought. To know Christ in the Eucharist is to enter into the dynamic flow of the sacramental world which is named and recognized as his very person and which provides the pre-cognitive basis for subsequent speech.

In order to set up this constructive argument in the final two chapters of this project, I will first provide three exegetical chapters outlining key themes in Heidegger that make such an argument possible. In Chapter 2, I will analyze how Heidegger's account of understanding

through involvement unveils the Being of beings as dynamic. In the early Heidegger, we will see this theme through his analysis of human Dasein's Being-in-the-world: the human's active, pre-reflective way of inhabiting its environment by handling and interacting with beings rather than consciously thinking about them. This pre-reflective familiarity with beings in activity then sets up the later Heidegger's more explicit characterization of beings as fluid and dynamic in themselves, most visible in his notion of the fourfold. What we ultimately discover by following this line of thought is that there are no such things as *things* at all. That is, there are no entities which substantially subsist as such. Rather, beings are their dynamism, so that to encounter a being in truth is in fact not to contemplate it but rather to become enmeshed in its activity, to effectively wed one's own dynamic Being with that of another, what we sometimes call *flow*.

In Chapter 3, I will outline how this account of knowledge, far from undermining speech, actually provides the conditions for its proper use. In the early Heidegger, we will see how Being-in-the-world sets up human discursive activity and interpretive thinking and thus grounds speech in worldly involvement. We will then observe how the later Heidegger cautions against the way such interpretation can depart from truth by seeking to hem in and domesticate beings within the technological worldview. This will finally set up what Heidegger ultimately determines to be the truest form of speech—poetry—which has the function of giving beings back over to worlds of involvement.

Having set up these two interrelated themes of our phenomenological investigation, we will then initiate our turn to the theological concerns of this project by parsing out a definition of personhood from Heidegger's works. Though Heidegger does not consider the metaphysical category of personhood explicitly, since what we are ultimately seeking in applying his phenomenology to the Eucharist is a real encounter with the person of Jesus Christ, we ought to

have some idea of what we are looking for. To this end, Chapter 4 will conclude our evaluation of Heidegger with a cursory investigation of his treatment of the human way of Being before exploring how that treatment gets taken up by the French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty in his treatment of the body. Our ultimate conclusion will be that, far from a substantive soul or a continuous consciousness, a person is a node of myriad possibilities and attunements within a world, so that what one encounters in another person is not a person-thing but an ineffable pattern of openness and coordination across particular worlds.

These preliminary steps being established, we turn at last in Chapter 5 to a constructive phenomenology of Christ's real presence in the Eucharist. Following my earlier appeal to Heidegger, my argument is that Christ is not substantially present in the concrete things of bread and wine themselves but that his performative person is synonymous with the dynamic character of the sacramental world. As a world of coordinated movements that open up moods of understanding, trajectories of activity, and possibilities for Being, the Eucharist is a world in which Christians understand themselves and the beings around them in a distinct and pre-reflective way through the habituation of the body and the acquisition of existential reflexes. This particular world is named Jesus Christ in the speaking of liturgical words, which poetically cut the bounds of who his person is while giving the ultimate meaning of those words over to the activity of the world thus named. To participate in the eucharistic world, I will argue, is to participate in the world of Jesus' own person, to understand him prior to conscious thought by being taken up into the flow of his very being, and to then have eyes trained to see the possibilities opened up by his person beyond the sacramental sphere.

But this account of real presence does not in itself answer the epistemological question which motivates the doctrine of revelation. Our final chapter, then, will seek to draw the

metaphysical account given in Chapter 5 to its theological implications for Christian speech. I will do this in two ways: by tracing the development of involved understanding to its linguistic manifestation with the early Heidegger's model of discourse and then by exploring the later Heidegger's notion of poetry as the giving-over of beings from our linguistic grasp back to the worlds of their dynamic Being. I will argue that true Christian speech is ultimately world-oriented and that the Eucharist, as a world of revelation, is both the source and summit of that speech. I will close this chapter with an analysis of how the Bible may be fruitfully read within such an account of eucharistic language, so that the concerns I have raised in this introduction about the tether of Christian hermeneutics to the object of their speech may be illustrated in a concrete way that satisfies our foregoing concerns.

My goal in pursuing this theological experiment is not to prove anything about the content of the Eucharist but only to legitimate the credibility of what one may find in the sacramental encounter. Two Christians may, through a lifetime of eucharistic practice, come to radically opposing viewpoints on a given doctrine. A non-believer who attends a Mass may find their assumptions of Christ's non-divinity validated. Even a lifelong Christian may discover in the sacrament only a vacuous ritual of human self-indulgence that undermines what they once believed. It is not my prerogative here to contest any of these findings (indeed, as a distinctly *common* encounter, the Eucharist as I am describing it precludes my making such universal claims on my own). My goal is only to set the phenomenological stage for theological discourse in a way that props up that enterprise as legitimate and provides a criterion for appeal.

The analysis which follows may thus be read as a prolegomenon to biblical and theological interpretation as much as it is a post-Metaphysical reappraisal of sacramental theology. A theology without a prior encounter becomes a language game based on itself which,

in a pluralistic milieu marked by increasingly secular assumptions, renders itself entirely optional, even to the individual who has belonged to it since birth. If Christian theology is to be deemed credible today—to Christians and non-Christians alike—then it must be grounded in a present, ontological encounter with the ontic reality to which it points. Against the staunchly apophatic theologian, I suggest that we need not hedge against speaking of God because we are already and routinely confronted with the very person whom Christians attest is God Incarnate. But against both the sacramental and hermeneutic literalist, I also suggest that such confrontation is not measurable by human concepts which are in any way adequate to static things in reality. Rather, my hope is to pursue a Christian theology of lived encounter as the cornerstone of any appropriate theology. To speak of Christ rightly is to first become familiar with him in the present, to engage and commune with him, to uncover his various contours and tendencies, and ultimately to abide in him as he abides in us (Jn 15:4).

CHAPTER 2

UNDERSTANDING

Having established the overarching goal of this project, we here begin with an exploration of just what Heidegger means by Being-in-the-world and how this human way of Being shapes our capacity to genuinely understand beings. The topic of human understanding is admittedly broad—too broad for a single chapter to adequately summarize—and the type of understanding Heidegger describes in *Being and Time* is a nuanced and many-layered apparatus. However, for the sake of this project's goals, we can limit our investigation here to the possibility of true human understanding through encounter with beings. The first part of this chapter will thus be devoted to exploring Being-in-the-world [*In-der-Welt-sein*] as the paradigm of human understanding in *Being and Time*, and the second part will then investigate how this phenomenological anthropology sets up the possibility for a true grasp of beings in themselves in Heidegger's later works, particularly surrounding his notion of the fourfold [*das Geviert*]. Following these investigations, my conclusion is that, in Heidegger's works, the Being of beings is dynamism, that beings are their activity, and that understanding of beings consequently occurs through encounter with their dynamic activity and a cooperative involvement of one's own activity with theirs.

In order to set up this conclusion, however, we need to be clear from the outset about the kind of true understanding which is required by this project and how that fits within the scope of Heidegger's treatment of the topic. Mark Wrathall helpfully offers a four-tiered description of Heidegger's conception of truth, ranging from the most conventional definition to the most primordial: (1) *propositional truth*, the correct correspondence of a proposition to a state of

affairs, (2) *the truth of beings* (or "*entities*"), the uncovered availability of beings for human comportment, (3) *the truth of Being*, an understanding of the Being of everything that shapes the possibility of our comportment, and (4) *truth as clearing* [*Lichtung*], the sphere in which certain possibilities come to light and prevail while others fade back into hiddenness.[1] The correspondence of our language to beings can be true only on the basis of the unconcealment of those beings as what they are, which is in turn contingent upon the truth of Being revealed in terms of worldly relationships, which Heidegger eventually comes to see as itself dependent upon the clearing as the underlying structure of unconcealment. Thus, "The truth—that is, the uncovering or making manifest of beings *can* be brought about through an assertion or a theoretical apprehension," argues Wrathall, "but it normally occurs in our practical involvements with things in the world."[2] Our focus in this chapter will be this practical involvement. In order to set up my discussion of linguistic truth in the next chapter, I will here evaluate the ontic truth of beings as it emerges against the backdrop of the ontological truth of Being and, in the later Heidegger, within the sphere of the clearing.

Within the scope of this project, priority is given here to Heidegger's account of involvement with beings for two reasons: (1) If Christ is really and literally present in the Eucharist and if this is, as I am proposing, the foundational locus of individual encounter with Christ as God's self-communication, then how we understand non-human beings (e.g., bread and wine), is foundational for how any personal presence can be understood therein. And (2) since an essential component of both the Incarnation and any phenomenology of encounter is the materiality of Christ's person, it is vital to flesh out how we humans, as material organisms,

[1] Mark Wrathall, *Heidegger and Unconcealment: Truth, Language, and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 12-14.
[2] Ibid., 13.

understand beings through the interface of material reality in such a way that then makes theoretical knowledge and interpersonal exchange possible. The priority I give to Heidegger's notion of involved understanding in this chapter, then, is not indicative of Heidegger's own prioritization (understanding is, for him, equiprimordial with discourse and mood[3]) but is rather motivated by our need for a basic grasp of embodied knowledge. What Heidegger provides to this end is a sketch of basic human existential openness to beings which forms the backdrop to our discursive, interpretive, and relational lives. The way that lovers understand one another's moods through subtle facial twitches or the way I can tell a politician is being facetious by the rehearsed tone of their voice thus come to light against the backdrop of a more basic human familiarity with matter's propensity to relate and articulate through motion. The emphasis I place on Heidegger's discussion of equipmental understanding in what follows should thus not be interpreted as situating tool-usage at the center of all human understanding (one would hope lovers do not treat each other as tools!) but as disclosive of our more general way of Being in relation to material entities.

It is this *way* that is the seminal insight of this chapter, as I will argue that the principal manner of our encounter with beings is *dynamic*, which then reveals the Being of beings as *dynamism* itself. So far as this project requires metaphysical thinking, this chapter ushers us into a radical departure from the essentialization of beings as substantially subsisting and instead points us toward a metaphysic of motion, marked by a recognition of beings as constantly unfolding patterns of character and activity. In the end we will discover that there are no such things as *things* at all, so that the purest form of understanding is unveiled as a cooperative involvement with the unfolding of beings rather than a domesticating conceptualization of them.

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[3] Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, Neunzehnte Auflage (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2006), §34:161.

Such a paradigm shift sets the stage for a radical reframing of eucharistic presence and further situates the possibilities for Christian understanding of God's material self-revelation in Christ.

2.1 UNDERSTANDING IN *BEING AND TIME*

At the outset of *Being and Time*, Heidegger raises the question of whether his exploration of Being falls prey to circular reasoning. In inquiring about Being through an investigation into beings, do we not have to admit that a basic understanding of "Being" is already at work in our venture?[4] Heidegger answers that the implicit understanding of Being that emerges from our consideration of beings indicates an essential component of human Dasein as the being with an orientation to Being: "This preliminary consideration of Being grows out of the ordinary understanding of Being, in which we always already move *and which in the end belongs to the constitution of Dasein itself*."[5] Circularity is avoided because the very question into Being reveals something particular about the questioner, human Dasein: "*Understanding of Being is itself a determination of the Being of Dasein*."[6] To be always already aware of the Being of beings is intrinsically human, and so Heidegger indicates from the outset a permeability at the interface of subject and object. What is understood "internally," we might say, is in fact already in contact with the "external" object of that understanding, so that the supposed internal/external divide in fact fails to accurately articulate the basic character of our understanding. "In understanding as an existential," Heidegger goes on, "the thing we are able to do is not a what, but Being as existing."[7] That is, the understanding of Being is not itself an activity we undertake as otherwise subsistent beings but is in fact the very manner of our existing as what we are: what

[4] Ibid., §2:7.
[5] Ibid., §2:8.
[6] Ibid., §4:12.
[7] Ibid., §31:143.

Heidegger refers to as Being-in-the-world. To comprehend human understanding is to comprehend this way of Being which is always already attuned to the Being of beings and thus has an intrinsic grasp on the way of things.

The following investigation of *Being and Time* will center on the manner of this understanding as the existential characteristic of Dasein. So far as this enables us to speak of beings correctly (which will be the topic of the next chapter), then such speech, per Heidegger, "is not an agreement between cognition and matter, nor between the mental and the physical, but neither is it an agreement between any 'contents of consciousness' themselves. The only thing that can be extracted is the Being-uncovered [*Entdeckt-sein*] of the being itself—and only *it* in the how of its uncoveredness."[8] We must therefore comprehend this "Being-uncovered" as manifest to our human understanding. In pursuit of a definition of this understanding, I will begin this section with an analysis of Dasein's Being-in-the-world, which undermines the subject/object distinction and locates Dasein as externally involved within the world, before examining how this comportment manifests in several interrelated ways: through ready-to-hand involvement, through an inherent grasp of worldly relevance structures, and finally by Dasein's projection of possibilities in the state of attunement. The resulting picture paints human understanding as a matter of practical engagement with beings existing in dynamic relations, so that this basic, pre-cognitive familiarity with various nexuses of beings in motion forms the foundation of our ascertaining the character of those beings.

[8] Ibid., §44:218.

2.1.1 Beyond Subjectivity: Dasein as Being-in-the-World

Our starting point, then, must be to establish just how Heidegger replaces the subject/object distinction of traditional Metaphysics. Heidegger famously refers to his alternative model as Dasein's "Being-in-the-world" [*In-der-Welt-sein*]. He writes, "In directing itself toward and grasping something, Dasein does not go beyond its inner sphere, in which it is first encapsulated, but its primary way of Being is to be always already 'outside,' alongside encountered beings in the already discovered world."[9] Being-in-the-world should not, therefore, be considered a procedure whereby Dasein reaches out of its closed self toward an external world but as a manner of existing which presumes that very externalization. We are "outside" long before we are ever "inside" ourselves. As Hubert Dreyfus astutely puts it, "Heidegger holds that all relations of mental states to their objects presuppose a more basic form of being-with-things which does not involve mental activity." [10] Before we ever think about beings (that is, before they ever "enter" our minds), we are already in relationship to them by virtue of our belonging to the world which we share with them.

This phenomenon can perhaps be best observed in infants, who, lacking language, cannot think in the conventional sense of interior speech and, lacking a firm understanding of what objects in the world are or can be compared to, must engage in the world through sensation and handling in order to come to understanding.[11] Even if we want to say that a fully-developed human is constituted by their thinking subject, we cannot deny that each human has their foundation without that cognitive foothold. The infant's way of Being is exclusively involved

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[9] Ibid., §13:62.
[10] Hubert Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's* Being and Time*, Division I* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991), 52.
[11] See Hubert L. Dreyfus, "Overcoming the Myth of the Mental: How Philosophers Can Profit from the Phenomenology of Everyday Expertise," in *Skillful Coping: Essays on the Phenomenology of Everyday Perception and Action*, ed. Mark A. Wrathall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 104.

with that which exists beyond its physical sphere, even if that involvement is as simple as gazing at a mobile from a crib, and so the infant's way of Being is fundamentally a way of encounter. Reality is mediated through the skin, and one is a toucher, seer, or hearer long before one understands oneself as such.

Heidegger's labeling Dasein as Being-in-the-world is thus not simply a geographical transplantation of Dasein from a windowed subjectivity into a slightly larger container called "world." Heidegger notes that the state of Being-in does not refer to a physical location of the body but rather to the existential quality of Dasein.[12] Being-in denotes Dasein's character of "Being alongside" or "Being absorbed" into the world.[13] And since he is speaking existentially here, Heidegger does not mean by "Being alongside" anything like touching.[14] As Dreyfus comments, "*Being-in* (with a hyphen) is essentially distinguished from *being in* because Dasein takes a stand on itself *by way of being occupied with things*. Being-in as being involved is definitive of Dasein."[15] Being-in-the-world says something ontological about Dasein (that is, pertaining to Dasein's basic openness to Being) rather than something merely ontic (pertaining to its material constitution). More specifically, what is revealed is Dasein's Being as *care* [*Sorge*], that is, Dasein's involvement with the dynamic structure of its world.[16]

The character of the world thus reveals itself not as a place (since we have established that Being-in is not a geographical identifier) but as a way. The world is not a thing nor a sum of parts. Rather, the world operates as the framework or structure in which entities become what they are.[17] But is a framework or a structure not itself a thing? It might therefore be more

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[12] Heidegger, *SZ*, §12:54.
[13] Ibid., §12:54. Cf. Macquarrie and Robinson eds., *Being and Time*, 80.
[14] Heidegger, *SZ*, §12:55.
[15] Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, 43.
[16] Heidegger, *SZ*, §12:57.
[17] Ibid., §14:63.

accurate to Heidegger's meaning here if we refer to the world as framed-*ness* or structural-*ity* and to hereafter refer to "world" without a definite article. As Heidegger writes in "On the Essence of Ground" (1929), "World refers to a *'how' of being* of beings, rather than to these beings themselves."[18] Emphasizing this non-geographical status of world, Heidegger distinguishes *nature* as an intra-worldly entity rather than a synonym for world.[19] Unlike nature, world is not a place, but a way. It is the way of structure and relation, the condition of interaction between beings, and so, by virtue of Dasein's Being-in-the-world, Dasein has its Being as always involved with this dynamic *how of Being*. From this position as caringly involved, the character of Dasein's understanding of that world thus comes to the fore.

> If we now ask what shows itself in the phenomenal findings of knowing [*Erkennens*], then we must remember that knowing itself is grounded beforehand in already-Being-in-the-world, which essentially constitutes the Being of Dasein. Initially, this already-Being-in-the-world is not merely an ogling gaze at what is objectively present [*puren Vorhanden*]. Being-in-the-world is *comported* as care for the world with which it is concerned. For knowing to possibly consider what is objectively present requires a prior *deficiency* of caringly having-to-do with the world. In ceasing all making, handling, and so on, care leaves itself in the only mode of Being-in now remaining, the mode of merely lingering with… *On the basis* of this way of Being toward the world, which only lets us encounter inner-worldly beings in their mere *appearance* (*eidos*), and *as* a mode of this way of Being is an explicit inspection of what is encountered possible.[20]

Heidegger is not here suggesting that what we conventionally think of as knowledge—the mental contemplation of objects—is not actually knowledge but rather that it is not the purest form of knowledge. Such "objective" knowledge is, Heidegger explicitly states, a *deficient* form of knowing, not because it is inaccurate so much as because it is derivative and thus removed from Dasein's more basic comportment toward the world, namely, caring involvement. Only by removal from Being-in-the-world's more basic mode of care does knowledge take on the

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[18] Heidegger, "On the Essence of Ground," trans. William McNeill, in *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 112.
[19] Heidegger, *SZ*, §14:63.
[20] Ibid., §13:61.

behavior of gazing at appearances. So far as Dasein's Being-in-the-world reveals its ontological status as enmeshment with the dynamic *how of Being*, then, the character of Dasein's understanding in turn reveals itself as engaged concern before it is conscious thought. In order to unpack this caring involvement in greater detail, we now turn to Heidegger's notion of equipment as it reveals Dasein's understanding through ready-to-hand involvement.

2.1.2 Zuhandenheit: Understanding Through Equipmental Involvement

Having established Dasein's Being as care, let us now consider one of the ways in which that care opens up Dasein's Being-in-the-world while also opening up the Being of beings to Dasein's understanding. "The way of dealing which is nearest us is not just cognitive recognition," Heidegger writes, "but the fiddling, useful care, which has its own knowledge.'"[21] That is, we principally come to understand beings by handling them, not contemplating them. This handling in turn does not reveal beings to our thought, nor are beings revealed to our "internal" subjectivity through the window of our mind. As Being-in-the-world, Dasein's active involvement with its surrounding entities already entails a pre-thematic grasp of beings in the dynamic activity of interactive care.

> Phenomenologically pre-thematic beings, what is made use of in the process of production, become accessible when we move ourselves in such care. Strictly speaking, the notion of moving ourselves into care is misleading; for we do not need to first move ourselves in this way of Being of careful handling. Everyday Dasein always already *is* in this way. For example, in opening the door, I use the doorknob. The retrieval of phenomenological access to the beings thus encountered consists rather in the rejection of the interpretational trends crowding and accompanying us, which cover up the phenomenon of such "care" and thus even more so beings *as* they are encountered in themselves *in* care.[22]

[21] Ibid., §15:67.
[22] Ibid., §15:67.

Heidegger here emphatically articulates how most of the beings with which we have an acquaintance are known unthematically, that is, without explicit intellection. As Being-in-the-world, everyday Dasein is *already* in acquaintance with beings in its constant handling and manipulating of them. In opening the door, I use the doorknob. In driving my car, I turn the steering wheel. In writing this chapter, I type on my computer's keyboard. At no point in any of these processes am I consciously thinking about the physical interactions I am performing with beings. It requires no mental effort to contemplate the proper grasp of the doorknob or to aim my finger at the proper key. As a being whose Being is manifest in involvement and immersed within worlds of connection, I have the ability to navigate a variety of environments, to manipulate objects in accordance with their capacities, and to enact my own will through the instrumentation of other beings.

This access to beings through pre-cognitive handling is what Heidegger describes with the term *readiness-to-hand* or *handiness* [*Zuhandenheit*].[23] The readiness-to-hand of a being denotes its usefulness within Dasein's orientation of care. A being is ready-to-hand when it reveals its particular Being as belonging in a particular way within the structure of world. In his famous example of the hammer, Heidegger describes this phenomenon thus: "The less the hammer-thing is simply ogled at, the more accessible it becomes, the more primordial is one's relationship to it, the more unconcealed [*unverhüllter*] it is as what it is as a thing."[24] What is unconcealed in the act of hammering (as opposed to the act of contemplative ogling) is the dynamism of the hammer within a nexus of worldly relations. "Strictly speaking, there 'is' no such thing as *a* useful thing [*ein Zeug*]," says Heidegger. "To the being of equipment always belongs a totality of equipment in which it can be what it is. Equipment is essentially 'something

[23] Ibid., §15:69.
[24] Ibid., §15:69.

in order to…'"[25] What hammering reveals is not, strictly speaking, a hammer-thing itself—this draws us back into the ogling gaze—but rather a network of directional relations. Hammering reveals the relationship of hammers to nails and wood, which in turn reveals a world of construction, with its various dynamics of production, purpose, and the various motivations underlying it. In short, hammering reveals the hammer-being not as some-*thing* but always as flush with a larger web of connected happenings which are revealed as a directional whole. The hammer's Being is unconcealed in performance which itself discloses the very dynamic character of world.

Heidegger calls Dasein's propensity to find ready-to-hand entities useful *circumspection* [*Umsicht*].[26] Circumspection denotes Dasein's grasp of an entity as a certain *so-doing* within a worldly context, what Wrathall refers to as an "affordance."[27] An affordance is a being's capacity for performing this or that function, the manner of its belonging withing the network of world, and so circumspection is Dasein's capacity to gauge that affordance. I circumspectly find the pen in my hand useful for writing, of course, but perhaps surprisingly, this pen also proves useful for scratching the itch on the back of my neck or fishing a lost ring out of a drainpipe. In worlds where the prevailing "in-order-to" changes, then, so too does my circumspection of the pen change. Yet this circumspection is never a thoughtful consideration of beings. I can itch my neck without even realizing I'm using the pen to do it. And though I might scan my desk for the most useful tool with which to dig through my drain, I never conduct anything like a job interview of the pen, considering its constitutive properties to assess its candidacy for the job. *I just take it and use it*. "The ready-to-hand is not understood theoretically at all," says

[25] Ibid., §15:68.
[26] Ibid., §15:69.
[27] Mark Wrathall, "Introduction" in *Skillful Coping: Essays on the Phenomenology of Everyday Perception and Action*, ed. Mark Wrathall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 6.

Heidegger.[28] This is not to say that theoretical knowledge is not knowledge at all. Beings considered theoretically are what Heidegger calls *present-at-hand* [*Vorhandenheit*].[29] This is not a lesser mode of knowing beings so much as it simply denotes a different manner of care on the part of Dasein, a comportment toward the world defined by looking at beings rather than handling them. However, Heidegger is keen to highlight that beings are not simply sorted into ready-to-hand and present-at-hand beings. Our theoretical consideration of beings always occurs against the backdrop of their belonging to dynamic worlds of directional activity. A being considered theoretically may appear useless, as damaged or deficient, as missing, or even as not meant for any kind of usefulness at all.[30] Rather than being an *opposing* model of knowledge, then, Heidegger suggests that theoretical consideration of the present-at-hand is in fact innately tied to the more pervasive form of knowing through ready-to-hand involvement.

> That the world does not "consist" of ready-to-hand objects is indicated by the fact (among other things) that the illumination of the world in the interpretative mode of care goes together with the de-worldization [*Entweltlichung*] of the ready-to-hand, so that only presence-at-hand comes to the surface. In order for the ready-to-hand equipment to be encountered in its "Being-in-itself" in our everyday care of the "environment," the references and totality of reference in which circumspection is "opened up" must remain unthematic for that circumspection and all the more so for a noncircumspect, "thematic" abstract comprehension. The *not-making-itself-known* of the world is the condition for the possibility of the non-emergence of the ready-to-hand from inconspicuousness. And this constitutes the phenomenal structure of the Being-in-itself of these beings.[31]

Heidegger here points out that there are no ready-to-hand "things" as such. Rather, the readiness-to-hand of beings is revealed by their embeddedness within worlds of reference, direction, and purpose to which Dasein's circumspection is privy. It is therefore not the case that theoretical knowledge is *false* knowledge so much as it is simply *derivative*, and it remains the

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[28] Heidegger, *SZ*, §15:69.
[29] Ibid., §16:73.
[30] Ibid., §16:73-75.
[31] Ibid., §16:75.

case that our knowing involvement with beings-in-themselves takes place through activity of our Being as care.

Circumspection is thus revealed as constitutive of human knowledge generally and further reinforces the intrinsic dynamism of world. This will be a theme we revisit in Heidegger's later works, but for now let us consider what his treatment of care and circumspection already reveals about world itself. Insofar as Dasein is the being to whom it belongs to be concerned with Being, Dasein is that being which is aware of the backdrop against which beings exist. Insofar as this awareness takes shape in everyday understanding through encounter with beings in motion, we may say that the Being of beings reveals itself *in motion*. That is, even at this early stage we get a glimpse of reality as consisting not of countless self-subsisting objects but of dynamic processes in constant flux. Such a portrayal is in fact consistent with modern scientific construals of reality. Even when resting in apparent stillness, hammers consist of molecules held together by dynamics of electric charge and atoms of constantly moving particles, its materiality expanding or contracting with the heat, the limits of its body being microscopically shaped by the erosion of wind and the force of other objects as well as the chemical processes of rust. What science tells us via "objective" observation—namely, that reality consists of constant motion and perpetual instability—Heidegger here affirms at the level of phenomenological experience. While it is true that we do not phenomenologically encounter atoms in motion in our interactions with the hammer, such involvement *does* reveal to us a universe of constant transition, direction, and the unfolding of dynamic processes at its very core. That a scientist can determine the motricity of an electron around an atomic nucleus, then, is itself conditional upon that scientist being the kind of being who can ascertain processes of trajectory, cause, and function. The scientist who gazes through a microscope and the carpenter

involved in the act of hammering both share in Dasein's fundamental way of Being-in-the-world by sharing in a latent understanding of structural dynamic relation.

It should be noted at this point that I do not wish to insinuate that the Christian's relationship to the Eucharist (nor to the Incarnation of Christ) is equipmental in nature. It should not take much persuading to acknowledge that Christians do not endow the sacrament with the connotation of usefulness, and one would rightly be concerned if they did. That said, since one of our central concerns in the present study is the possibility of knowledge through encounter, we must acknowledge that Heidegger's examination of Dasein's ready-to-hand involvement opens up a pathway for articulating the *how* of such knowledge. While I hopefully do not find a friend or colleague *useful*, I *do* find their eyelids, lips, and facial muscles quite useful for disclosing their various emotions and demeanor, even though I never consciously cognize them as such. The circumspection of our daily interactions with beings indicates our basic awareness of relations of purpose, causation, trajectory, and limit. Our capacity to find this or that object more or less useful thus reflects a more basic capacity to comprehend the dynamic thrust of a particular world. The point to be derived from this section, then, is that our primordial, pre-cognitive Being-in-the-world grounds our understanding in the material happenings of world, which exists as the structure of dynamism, which in turn opens up beings to our understanding through directional action. How Dasein navigates this world and is able to derive an understanding of reality from it will be the subject of the following two sections.

2.1.3 Bedeutsamkeit: Understanding Through Relevance

Being-in-the-world as an existentiale denotes Dasein's fundamental exteriority, its participation in the web of intersecting dynamics understood through care. Just as we have seen how world

emerges as the coordinated directionality of entities, so beings unfold their Being in a directional network of relations. World, therefore, exists for Dasein as a network of *relevance* [*Bedeutsamkeit*], that is, the underlying relational structure of beings that empowers them to stand forth as the beings that they are.[32] Heidegger writes:

> The for-the-sake-of-which indicates an in-order-to, this a what-for, this a what-in of letting something alone, and this a what-with of coordination [*Bewandtnis*]. These relations are interlocked between themselves in a primordial totality. They are what they are as this indicating, wherein Dasein gives itself to understand its prior Being-in-the-world. The relational totality of this indication we will call *relevance* [*Bedeutsamkeit*]. It is what constitutes the structure of the world, wherein Dasein always already is.[33]

Just as our ready-to-hand involvement with equipment opens up the directionality of purpose and the dynamic unfolding of beings, so these directional dynamics in turn open up other relations, revealing the totality of world. Our handling of the hammer opens up its affordance of relations with nails and wood, revealing a purposive world of construction. Similarly, that dynamic world of construction in turn reveals a host of other dynamic relations, from the physical relations of beams to screws to the material relations of old houses to termite damage to the social dilemma of urban sprawl. However, within the world of an office, the Being of a hammer might be revealed instead as a paperweight or a doorstop. The unique Being of this particular being, then, exists and is called to expression within the web of relations which we are here calling relevance. Beings unveil their Being ultimately as indicating, but this is not a "pointing at" something else so much as a matter of interchange of activity, wherein beings'

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[32] Heidegger, *SZ*, §18:87. Both Macquarrie and Robinson as well as Stambaugh translate *Bedeutsamkeit* as "significance," which I generally find appealing because of the way it avoids the translation of "meaning," with its intellectual ascription of value, while retaining the notion of importance. However, because I am reading Heidegger as articulating an account of pre-cognitive understanding, I translate the term as "relevance" so as to avoid importing unwanted connotations of visual symbolism into the terms "sign" and "significance." No doubt the relations of beings do indeed signify in their referral to one another through interaction. But because these significations are not at their base *linguistic*, I think the "sign" language of "significance" poses a potential pitfall for English readers. As I hope to show, I think a better understanding of *Bedeutsamkeit* would be something along the lines of "weightiness" or "interdependence," but these are a bit clunkier than the more elegant "relevance," which I will use hereafter.
[33] Ibid., §18:87.

various affordances complement and situate one another. Hammers and nails open up particular propensities in each other's Being, and it is within this nexus of relations that "Dasein gives itself to understand its prior Being-in-the-world" by grasping and responding to these relations. The Being of the doorknob is opened up within the relevance-structure of entering a room; the Being of a telephone is opened up within the relevance-structure of a conversation; the Being of a salad fork is opened up within the relevance-structure of a fancy restaurant. Relevance exists in part as a call upon Dasein as the being with an apprehension of world to enter into more or less appropriate ways of Being. Identifying the Being of a given being is thus never a matter of *assigning* a function to a being but rather responding to what a world calls for and draws out of each particular being as they hang together within the nexus of world.

Beings in such relevant relations reveal the underlying structure of world to which Dasein is uniquely open. Heidegger writes in his lectures on "Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion," (1920-21), "What is cognized [in everyday existence] does not have the character of an object but is experienced as significance. A relating, a grouping-together, manifests itself now; therein, a connectedness of objects that bears a specific logic, a material logic, a structure peculiar to the specific material states of affairs, is formed."[34] The "material logic" Heidegger highlights here reflects the orderly interrelation of beings. For example, an apple falling from a tree will never pass straight through the ground. My dog may become accustomed to the fact that this *does not* happen, so that if it ever did, she would be alarmed. But only human Dasein can apprehend the "logic" of the reality, that this possibility *cannot* happen. The human capacity to make scientific discoveries or to convert a tree into a wooden beam comes to light as dependent

[34] Martin Heidegger, "Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion," Winter Semester 1920-21, in *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, trans. Matthias Ritsch and Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), §4:10.

upon the human's way of existing as Dasein, where relations such as causation, development, limit, resistance, and compatibility are unveiled in the interweaving affordances of beings in relation. To really know an entity is at its base to involve oneself with a *how-doing* that derives both its *how* and its *doing* from the relational sphere in which it emerges. Understanding the how-doings of beings, then, Dasein is able to understand their relations of causation and dependence: the "material logic" of their Being. How each being has its Being, in other words, reveals itself within the nexus of relations that ground and guide that Being, channeling it into the particularity of its being as a unique node within the flow of world.

Thomas Sheehan keys in on this idea of relevance as constitutive of world in his interpretation of *Being and Time* as concerned principally with *meaning*. By Sheehan's reading, Being "refers not to the mere physical presence of a things to the sense organs. Rather, it refers to the meaningful presence of things, which is given only with human beings."[35] Sheehan contends that *meaningfulness*, not Being as existence, is what is at issue for Heidegger. "Meaning is closer to us than are the things we deal with," Sheehan says. "It is not only 'more real' than they are, but in fact constitutes their realness-at-all for us."[36] That is, the sheer existence of things is more removed from us than our interpretive takings-as of what a thing means for our own purposes.[37] Meaning is here less a matter of finding a being emotively significant as it is finding a being to "fit" within our scheme of indicating associations within the world. Whether an object is of great importance, simply useful, or just junk, it is endowed with an interpretive value that allots it a place within our world. The omnipresence of meaning in this

[35] Thomas Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger: A Paradigm Shift* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 112.
[36] Ibid., 112.
[37] Ibid., 21: "the *Sein* of something shows up only in discursive thinking and acting—that is, only when we take a thing *as* such-and-so." See Chapter 3.1.2-3 for my own examination discourse and interpretive taking-as, which Sheehan here conflates into one movement.

way is so pervasive in Sheehan's reading that he even suggests that *In-der-Welt-sein* ought to be reinterpreted as *In-der-Bedeutsamkeit-sein*.[38]

Sheehan's emphasis on meaning seems to make sense insofar as Dasein always already belongs to a world that is defined by structures of relevance. Hammers only have their Being as hammering within structures that call for it, after all. But it is also true that hammers can be discovered as paperweights or doorstops, suggesting that there is something intrinsic to the affordances of beings themselves which is determinative of our meaningful associations. I therefore dislike Sheehan's use of the term "meaning" because "meaning" is, I believe, a bad translation of the German *Sinn*, which Dreyfus better translates as "sense," as in one's grasp, intuition, or feel for a given being or world.[39] "Meaning" risks implying an active human intention or a conceptual value to beings which evokes the essentialist Metaphysics we are trying to avoid. By contrast, "sense," as a translation of *Sinn*, communicates Dasein's capacity to develop a habitual familiarity with something, thereby reinforcing Heidegger's focus on unconscious understanding. As Heidegger writes in his later discussion of *Sinn*, "But that which is understood, taken strictly, is not the sense [*Sinn*] but the being, or alternatively, Being."[40] Sense is a component of understanding, not its object, so that translating *Sinn* as "sense" implies the existence of *something sensed*.

Even if Sheehan wishes to read *Being and Time* as concerned principally with interpretation, there must be something to which human beings are primordially available for such interpretation to be possible, let alone accurate. This reinforces the importance of relevance as the backdrop of relations to which human Dasein is always latently aware. "*Dasein is*,"

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[38] Ibid., 124.
[39] Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, 222.
[40] Heidegger, *SZ*, §32:151.

Heidegger writes, "*in its familiarity with relevance, the ontic condition of the possibility of the discoverability of beings, which are encountered in a world by the way of Being of involvement (readiness-to-hand) and so can manifest themselves as they are in themselves [in seinem An-sich]*."[41] Dasein is the condition for *discovering* entities within a world of relevance but is not the condition of that relevance itself. "The relevance itself with which Dasein is always already familiar," Heidegger goes on, "holds the ontological condition of the possibility that understanding and interpreting Dasein can develop something like 'significations' [*Bedeutungen*] which for their part found the possible Being of words and language."[42] While assignments of meaning may indeed be constitutive of Dasein's existence, it does not appear they are foundational to—but are rather derivative of—its understanding as Being-in-the-world. "Dasein has, insofar as it is, ever submitted [*angewiesen*][43] to an encountered 'world,' and to its Being this submission essentially belongs," says Heidegger.[44] And it is only because of this prior submission to the relational structure of world that Dasein can then *make* meaning, either cognitively or practically.

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[41] Ibid., §18:87. Emphasis original.

[42] Ibid., §18:87. It must be noted here that Heidegger later added a note to this passage: "Untrue. Language is not imposed, but *is* the primordial essence of truth as there (*Da*)," (Stambaugh, trans., *Being and Time*, 82). This would seem to undercut my argument that it is familiarity with relevance itself that grounds the possibility of interpretive meaning-making. However, for our purposes here it is sufficient to note that even in his later note Heidegger does not believe that language is imposed by Dasein as if by some external force but rather has its origins in primordial truth. This is consistent with what I will argue in my next chapter on language, namely, that Heidegger's later development on language broadens that term to refer to something more akin to what Heidegger means by *discourse* [*Rede*] in *Being and Time* and which moreover, in his later works, belongs to beings themselves rather than to humans alone. Cf. Wrathall, *Heidegger and Unconcealment*, 123: "Heidegger, I believe, was never a linguistic constitutionalist—he *never* believed that our experience is *necessarily* conceptually constituted, nor that everything we apprehend in experience can be captured in linguistic terms."

[43] Cf. Macquarrie and Robinson, eds., *Being and Time*, 121, footnote 1: "The verb 'anweisen,' like 'verweisen,' can often be translated as 'assign,' particularly in the sense in which one assigns or allots a place to something, or in the sense in which one gives an 'assignment' to someone by instructing him how to proceed. The past participle 'angewiesen' can thus mean 'assigned' in either of these senses; but it often takes on the connotation of 'being dependent on' something or even 'at the mercy' of something. In this passage we have tried to compromise by using the verb 'submit.'"

[44] Heidegger, *SZ*, §18:87.

> These "relations" and "relata" of the in-order-to, the for-the-sake-of, the with-what of coordination [*Bewandtnis*] resist any mathematical functionalization of their phenomenal content. They are also not imaginary, first grounded in "thinking," but rather relations wherein caring circumspection as such already dwells. This "relational system," as constitutive of the world, does not volatize the Being of innerworldly ready-to-hand beings at all. Rather, these beings are detectable in their "substantial," "in-itself" only on the ground of the worldliness of the world. And only when innerworldly beings can be encountered in the field at all does the possibility exist to make present-at-hand beings accessible.[45]

It is not the relevance of world that is submitted to Dasein, then, but the other way around. Since Dasein's navigation of myriad relevances is not a thinking process, Dasein's ability to apprehend their material logic cannot be reduced to Dasein's meaning-making capacity. Rather, Dasein's familiarity with the relevance-structure of world must be credited to an unconscious understanding of worldly dynamism.

2.1.4 Befindlichkeit: Understanding Through Attunement

To this point our study has revealed the way in which we attain our basic familiarity with beings through encounter—that is, through the handling involvements of care—in such a way that grounds and shapes our understanding of them. As always already situated in a worldly structure of relevant relations, Dasein never encounters beings in a static way. Instead, objects exist as their dynamic doings, which unfold within realms of context and relation, where certain affordances for Being are called for and drawn out of beings while others are not. And because we encounter beings through such dynamism, we always encounter them in a certain way. That is, we always come to beings along a particular trajectory, under particular influences, and with particular ends available to us. As such, our encounters with beings always amount to negotiations of our attitudinal predispositions with the affordances of the objects we meet.

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[45] *SZ* §18:88.

Such predispositions are what Heidegger refers to as *moods* [*Stimmung*], which color Dasein's understanding of other beings in a given moment. For Heidegger, "A mood makes manifest 'how one is and becomes.' In this 'how one is' Being-attuned [*Gestimmtsein*] brings Being into its 'there.'"[46] By "brings Being into its 'there,'" Heidegger indicates once again that a being is never known in the abstract but always within situated involvement. A mood is Dasein's existential situation in which the Being of a being may be understood. Moods underlie the very *Da* of Dasein, indicating its situatedness by carving out a particular existential space for experience to be grasped. As Katherine Withy suggests, rather than simply being subjective or emotive projections on the part of Dasein, moods are the foundation of finding oneself to be this or that Being-in-the-world at all: "Like soundtracks or climates, they set the stage for our immersion in our lives."[47] My mood is how I understand myself as affected—and thus involved—within a given situation. As Macquarrie and Robinson note in their translation of *Being and Time*, "The noun 'Stimmung' originally means the tuning of a musical instrument, but it has taken on several other meanings and is the usual word for one's mood or humour."[48] Just as musical instruments make sounds whether they are "in tune" or not, so Dasein is always in some kind of *attunement* [*Befindlichkeit*] within its world.

But just as a violin can fall out of sync with the rest of the orchestra with the changing tautness of its strings, so Dasein's understanding of world is distinctly colored by its existential posture and orientation, thereby opening Dasein up to certain possibilities while shutting others down. Heidegger thus writes, "Attunement always has its understanding, even if it only suppresses it. Understanding [*Verstehen*] is always attuned."[49] Understanding is never just our

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[46] Heidegger, *SZ*, §29:134.
[47] Katherine Withy, *Heidegger on Being Uncanny* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 52.
[48] Macquarrie and Robinson, eds., *Being and Time*, 172, footnote 3.
[49] Heidegger, *SZ*, §31:142. Cf. Stambaugh, ed., *Being and Time*, 138.

grasping of relations between other beings but always also a matter of our being attuned to that relational structure as it relates to us. Heidegger encapsulates this phenomenon with the term *thrownness* [*Geworfenheit*], indicating "the *facticity of [Dasein's] Being delivered over.*"[50] Dasein's thrownness indicates its attunement by locating Dasein within the particularity of a given world and its affectability as a result. Dasein is only ever Being-in-the-world as thrown, for it is Dasein's thrownness that discloses the Being-in of its particular situation.

For attunement to have its understanding, then, is for Dasein's thrownness to be disclosive. Understanding oneself to be not only in a world but in it *in a certain way* and to have entered it *from a certain direction* (existentially and dispositionally as well as physically) frames what may be seen within a world and how its relevance-structure may be opened up. My mood is thus essential to my implicit awareness of my Being-in-the-world at all. Moods indicate that I am always *from* some situation and *toward* another.[51] Without a mood, I could not truly inhabit a context of world, for to be without a mood would render me unaffected and thus uninvolved. Dispassionate, objective reasoning, it seems, is impossible.

Consider, for example, the myriad ways people might respond to the social discomfort of getting drawn into a street performance by a mime or magician. Becoming an object to be looked at and judged by a crowd in an unforeseen and unscripted performance can be very alarming for most people, all the more so because such crowd participation is often meant as comic relief at the participant's expense. But while some people may grow red and go quiet with shame, others may grit their teeth and brazen through it while still others take on an uncharacteristically outlandish character and seek to own the improvised performance, even perhaps trying to show

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[50] Heidegger, *SZ*, §29:135.
[51] CF. Katherine Withy, "Situation and Limitation: Making Sense of Heidegger on Thrownness," *European Journal of Philosophy* 22.1 (March 2014): 66-71.

up the actual street performer. All of these reactions—welling up in everything from the physiological reactions of heart rate and perspiration to emotions of anger or fear to various attitudes of compliance or unwillingness to play along—disclose the prior dispositions of each participant as manifest under the conditions of their present world. The participant who goes red in the face from public shame may come from worlds that have habituated them to fear the consequences of being looked at or publicly embarrassed. The one who guts it out unhappily may have been having a bad day and was in no mood to be so publicly humiliated or may feel deeply uncomfortable at the loss of control. And the one who flamboyantly hams it up and tries to steal the show may have a deep, unfulfilled hunger for attention or is perhaps the most embarrassed of all and simply uses their exuberance to deflect from their discomfort. Far from being simply emotional responses (although moods certainly include the emotions), moods manifest how one is upon entering a particular world and thus frame how the relevance-structure of that world can be unconcealed through involved participation.

Thrown into a world, Dasein engages in *projection* [*Entwerfen*] of its personal possibilities.[52] For Heidegger, projection is Dasein's constant throwing of itself onto worlds as a means of determining how one can and ought to be within a particular nexus of worldly relevances. What is projected, then, is not meaning nor intention nor even interpretive taking-as but rather Dasein's own exteriority, projected upon the world as a kind of question to be answered by the dynamics the world gives back to understanding.

[52] Ibid., §31:145. Cf. Macquarrie and Robinson, eds., *Being and Time*, 185.

> Projecting has nothing to do with comportment to a predetermined plan, according to which Dasein arranges its Being, but rather as Dasein has always already projected itself and is, so long as it is, projecting. Dasein always already and always will understand itself, so long as it is, in terms of possibilities. Further, the projecting character of understanding does not grasp thematically what it projects, the possibilities themselves. Such apprehension would take away the character of possibility from what is projected, and would reduce it to a given already in mind; whereas projection, in throwing, throws possibility as possibility before itself and lets it *be* as such. Understanding is, as projecting, the way of Being of Dasein, in which it is its possibilities as possibilities.[53]

Projection is thus an openness to *how one can be* within a world into which they are already thrown. In saying that Dasein is always already projecting beyond itself, Heidegger is exploring the mooded quality of Being-in-the-world. Not only is Dasein already "outside" itself as we have seen, but in being so outwardly projected, Dasein's understanding has the quality of affectability. In understanding the world in terms of dynamic relevances through care, Dasein understands itself in terms of its own possible attunements to that relevance-structure. Just as Dasein cannot grasp a single relevance-relation without having a unique preapprehension of *relevance itself*, so too in projection Dasein "throws possibility as possibility before itself and lets it *be* as such." As this affective openness to possibilities, projection is like the navigation feature of Being-in-the-world, more akin to an existential sonar than to a film projector. It is a negotiating with one's environment to discern its contours of relevance and chart a course through the available landscape.

Projecting possibilities thus belongs to Dasein's understanding in the form of attunement as the foundation for action. A doctor who laughs at a funny joke from a colleague in the hallway immediately before entering a bereavement room to deliver bad news to a patient's family has to scan the worlds both inside and outside the room for the unconscious cues as to how to behave. Such mooded cues are derived from the unthought data of facial expressions, tones of voice,

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[53] Heidegger, *SZ*, §31:145.

volume of sound, gestures, and even things like the color of the carpet or the paint on the walls, all of which are circumspectly absorbed into an understanding of relevance that is simultaneously discerned for the possibilities which it affords. There is consequently a "mood in the room," one established by countless factors, most of which are understood unconsciously and are difficult to explain. Just as it is not a thinking process that renders certain patterns of sound waves which we call minor chords seem "sad," so moods are opened up by a conglomeration of factors taken in by Dasein's projective scanning and yet which elude anything like rational meaning.

Projection thus indicates the permeability of Dasein. Affected and involved, Dasein experiences itself in and through its world, which it likewise experiences in and through itself. The subject/object distinction which Heidegger's Being-in-the-world was meant to overcome is consequently sanded down as the dynamism of world and the involved character of Dasein are thoroughly integrated into one another. Dasein's Being-in-the-world situates it within the relational structure of relevance, incorporating it into the directional thrust of world and so rendering Dasein both a participant in and a conduit for the connectedness of worldly dynamics. Thus, "Dasein is continuously 'more' than it objectively is," since Dasein is not a *thing* but a way of Being defined by continuous extension into the world of beings around it.[54] As affected and attuned, Dasein's projection discloses its openness to the character of the worlds it inhabits and its own malleability in response to that character.

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[54] Ibid., §31:145.

2.1.5 Conclusion

Our objective in this chapter is to establish the possibility of what Emil Brunner calls *truth as encounter*—that is, an understanding of a being through participatory contact rather than intellectual reflection—and which we observed in the introductory chapter as essential for a metaphysically plausible accounting of Christian revelation. The first half of this chapter has been an exploration of the tools Martin Heidegger provides us for just such an investigation through his account of human involvement as care in *Being and Time*. As Being-in-the-world, Dasein encounters beings in the mode of care, revealing their Being as belonging to dynamic worlds of directional relations. In becoming familiar with the relevance-structure of world, Dasein is privy to the connectedness and thrust of worldly character, so that it becomes enmeshed in and responsive to that character in the mode of attunement.

This portrait of human understanding is one of familiarity by immersion rather than cognitive thought. As Heidegger says explicitly, "'Contemplation' and 'thinking' are both already removed derivatives of understanding."[55] It is this very pre-cognitive understanding that enables a shortstop to react to the crack of a bat, dive to his right, reach out his glove, enclose it around a ball zipping at just such an angle and speed, leap into the air, contort his body in the exact opposite direction while reaching into his glove for the ball, keeping his eye on first, and finally throw the ball with both the remarkable speed required to beat the runner and the perfect trajectory so as to land at the right height and depth in the first-baseman's mitt, all within a matter of three seconds. If that had anything to do with thinking, then the shortstop would be a world-class physicist. Instead, what it does have to do with is an intimate awareness of various relevances, imbibed over time through repeated involvements of care, attuned to the various

[55] Ibid., §31:147.

possibilities opened up within the world of a baseball diamond. If any of those relevances were changed (the grooming of the dirt, the weight of the ball, the composition of the bat, gravity, etc.), then the understanding of the shortstop would be ever so slightly confounded. In those three seconds of glorious fielding, what amounts to the shortstop's understanding, what enables him to make such a stunning play, is a oneness with the entities around him (ball, glove, dirt), a transparency between their Being and his own in the dynamic activity of care.

We therefore have a preliminary foothold on how Christian understanding might take place within the Eucharist. As a world, the sacramental event enacts a particular thrust of Being, coordinating the beings that populate that world along a certain trajectory that may open up a plethora of ineffable characteristics to those who inhabit it. A sanctuary space may be marked out by ancient stones or high vaulted ceilings or light streaming through stained glass. The sacrament may be enacted amidst the smell of incense that has soaked into wooden pews for decades or the warmth and power of an organ anthem or the rhythmic dance of standing, sitting, bowing, and kneeling. The mood may be a particular and fluid confluence of hope and solemnity, sorrow and joy, trust and uncertainty, guilt and belonging. The character of the congregation in motion may ebb and flow between these and any of countless other mooded nodes that together form the vague boundaries of unspoken tension and possibility. And before any of these elements can *mean* anything to our interpretive assignments, they are understood within the pre-reflective apprehension of relevance and mood through the familiarity of involvement that makes Dasein the uniquely open, understanding being that it is. What is most basically understood in such a world is not a meaningful interpretation but a character. Through the way beings hang together in relevance and open up pathways of possibility, Christian participants in the eucharistic world acquire a *feel* for their environment, a *sense* of its dynamics,

an *intimacy* with the ineffable strangeness that it gives in motion and fluidity through a lifetime of involvements.

But we have obviously not yet reached a sufficient answer to the overarching question of this project: How can Christians know the revelation of God in the Eucharist as grounds for their interpretive speech? For starters, we have not even begun to talk about language, whose link with primordial understanding will be addressed in the next chapter. Additionally, the Eucharist is for Christians more than just a world, for it is also attested to be the real presence of a particular person. This qualification poses two significant challenges. Firstly, we need an account of personhood in accordance with this phenomenological metaphysics of dynamism so as to determine whether and how the character of a person may be distinctly recognized in the character of a world. This will be the subject of Chapter 4. Secondly, the ascription of Christ's person to the eucharistic world raises the serious question of agency. If the Being of beings is indeed their dynamic doing of themselves, then we would probably want to say that the dynamic presence of Christ in the sacramental world is a performance of his very person and not an interpretive assignment given to that world by Christians. But as a ritual conducted by human persons within the context of organized religion, is not the Eucharist fundamentally an action of Christians who are *not* the person of Jesus Christ? If Christ is *really* present, how is he allowed the space to *presence himself* and not be made or produced as a result of others' agency?

This concern raises the question of the reality of the Being of beings apart from Dasein. That is, if the account of Being-in-the-world we have been considering locates Being in human perception, then perhaps we have reason to doubt the legitimacy of what is thereby understood. Heidegger himself is somewhat ambiguous on this point, as in the following oft-discussed passage:

> Beings *are*, independently of experience, knowledge, and understanding, through which they are opened up, discovered, and determined. But Being 'is' only in the understanding of those beings to whose Being something like the understanding of Being belongs. Being can therefore be uncomprehended, but it is never not completely understood.[56]

Heidegger here emphatically insists upon the existence of beings outside of any determination by human Dasein. This is the position which Taylor Carman helpfully calls *ontic realism*—"the claim that occurrent entities exist and have a determinate spatiotemporal structure independently of us and our understanding of them."[57] Carman's reading of this passage thus allows for the independent reality of entities even as Being itself remains dependent on Dasein.[58] This is an idea similar to what we observed in Thomas Sheehan's interpretation of Heidegger as principally concerned with meaning, wherein he suggests that "Being" does not refer to the existence of beings proper but instead the "intelligibility of beings."[59]

However, I think there is an alternative reading of the above passage, one that does not reduce Being's reality to Dasein while still allowing for Heidegger's concern with understanding. Heidegger softens his use of the verb *sein* in its application to Being by placing it in quotes: "Being 'is' only in the understanding" of Dasein. Read within the context of Heidegger's ontological difference, where Being is not a being, this makes complete sense. Being *cannot* have Being for itself. Strictly speaking, *Being isn't*. It only "has" Being in the consideration of Dasein, who alone is the being who can grasp Being *as if* it has Being (i.e., *as if* it were a being). By contrast, Heidegger doubles down on the reality of the Being of beings by italicizing *sein* in, "Beings *are*, independently of experience, knowledge, and understanding." Beings *have Being*, in other words, without Dasein. Dasein does not provide Being to beings, for

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[56] Ibid., §39:183.
[57] Taylor Carman, *Heidegger's Analytic: Interpretation, Discourse, and Authenticity in* Being and Time (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 157.
[58] Ibid., 164.
[59] Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger*, 9.

they have it already, which is itself the condition of possibility for Dasein's understanding of Being through involvement. The only thing Dasein provides to Being is its conceptual "existence," since it is only humans who have the neurological hardware for ontological understanding. This, then, explains what Heidegger means when he says that that Being may be uncomprehended but is never not completely understood. Being may or may not be brought to conscious comprehension *as if* it were a being, but it is never not latently apprehended as the backdrop to our continual involvements with beings. Being itself has no Being, but this does not make Being unreal. Being is rather *that by which beings are*. It is the *is*-ness of their existence, the dynamism of their particular performance, and thus the ontological condition for Dasein's ontic understanding.

What may seem an overly technical detour in our discussion instead proves a vital clarification for the present project. Since our motivation for considering revelation through encounter is the need for an empirical experience by which to build and assess truth claims, we must say that any revelation understood through encounter is only trustworthy insofar as it is revelatory in itself (and not only in the interpretation of the witness). Were the Being of beings subject to Dasein's understanding, the possibility of understanding beings as they are in themselves would be brought into doubt. But where Being has a reality of which we always already have an understanding (ontological truth) as the backdrop to our understanding of beings as nodes of dynamic activity within a world (ontic truth), we have an opening for credibly addressing beings in themselves. It is true that Heidegger himself does not articulate the Being of beings as pure dynamism, but he provides us an existential-ontology of understanding that opens up just such a possibility through its focus on active worldly involvement. We therefore turn now to Heidegger's later works, where, in his turn to beings themselves, he opens up a pathway for

understanding beings dynamically, thus developing some of our key conclusions in this investigation into understanding by encounter.

2.2 THE BEING OF BEINGS AS DYNAMISM IN HEIDEGGER'S LATER WRITINGS

The previous section provided us a basic grasp of the multi-layered apparatus of human understanding as Heidegger conceives it. In this section, our attention turns to Heidegger's treatment of beings themselves. Since our pursuit in this project is not simply an account of understanding but rather of revelation, it is important that any insight into how we humans may understand said revelation is matched by an account of how such revelation is given apart from human intention. To that end, this section will evaluate the later Heidegger's development of his ideas of involved understanding in ways that cede revelatory autonomy to beings themselves.

Though the later Heidegger adopts a distinctly different (and increasingly esoteric) style and methodology, his concern with involved understanding remains. We are here simply transitioning from a study of understanding to a study of what is understood. Or, to put it another way, we are transitioning from an ontology of knowledge to the truth of beings themselves. My goal in this section of the chapter, then, is to bring to light how Heidegger's depiction of beings themselves in his later works fills out of the basic structure of understanding laid down in *Being and Time*. This will begin with a focus on Heidegger's emphasis on letting beings be, which takes up the dynamic involvement of *Being and Time* and repackages it in a more explicitly non-subjective way, particularly in conjunction with Heidegger's new language of the clearing as the arena of disclosure. These preliminary conditions set, I will then examine the *what* of beings themselves as I find it best expressed in Heidegger's account of the fourfold, which both elucidates the dynamism of beings and deploys the language of poetry to metaphysical ends, a

theme that will reemerge in the next chapter. By the end of this section, I thus hope to have articulated an account of beings in Heidegger's later works that is both sufficient to the account of involved understanding laid out in *Being and Time* and fulfills our need for the autonomy of beings in their revelation to that understanding.

2.2.1 Letting-Be Within the Clearing

In the essay "On the Essence of Truth" (1943), Heidegger rejects the notion that the truth of beings is a matter of human conceptual adequacy.[60] Instead, "The essence of truth is freedom."[61] At first, this may seem to indicate that truth lies in a subjective human freedom, thereby undoing all the work Heidegger has already done to invert the subject/object distinction. The problem with this reading, however, lies in its conception of freedom as a property of the human being itself.[62] In reality, Heidegger thinks the opposite is true. Prior to the human experience of freedom as removal of constraint, there is a deeper sense of the word: "freedom is engagement in the disclosure of beings as such."[63] Freedom, it turns out, is the freeing of entities in relation to one another. Freedom is not principally *mine*, that is, I am not free to dispose of the beings around me as I see fit. In fact, such mastery over beings indicates the height of *un*-freedom.

> On the contrary, where beings are not very familiar to man and are scarcely and only roughly known by science, the openedness of beings as a whole can prevail more essentially than it can where the familiar and well-known has become boundless, and nothing is any longer able to withstand the business of knowing, since technical mastery over things bears itself without limit.[64]

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[60] Martin Heidegger, "On the Essence of Truth," in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper Collins, 2008), 116-120.
[61] Ibid., 123.
[62] Ibid., 124-125.
[63] Ibid., 126.
[64] Ibid., 129.

Here "the business of knowing" is conceived in terms of domination, raising the question of Dasein's centrality to the disclosure of Being. The more the hammer becomes familiar to me as a particular, ready-to-hand kind of *what-doing*, the more I myself am liable to interpret the hammer as *only* this particular kind of *what-doing*, thereby glossing over alternative possibilities that might disclose themselves in the fullness of its Being. Moreover, I am also liable to take the hammer as just one identical member of a general type rather than as the unique being that it is (overlooking, for example, the way I have to grip it differently because its handle is worn down or how the length and angle of its claw or the size of its face make it more or less useful for certain tasks).[65]

To know beings in a way that defines them is always to limit and domesticate them, and this itself is insufficient to be called knowledge, insofar as knowledge is tethered to truth. By contrast, "Freedom now reveals itself as letting-beings be," says Heidegger. "To let be—that is, to let beings be as the beings which they are—means to engage oneself with the open region and its openness into which every being comes to stand, bringing that openness, as it were, along with itself."[66] *Letting-be* [*Gelassenheit*] ultimately means *availability* on the part of the human knower, allowing a being to present itself on its own terms to the human who encounters it. As theologian and Heidegger scholar Judith Wolfe describes it:

> This [mindfulness of beings] requires not so much deliberate *action*—since a proactive 'framing' of the world is precisely what has distorted it—as an attentive letting-be, a spiritual discipline that allows the self to become a 'clearing' on which the light of Being may fall and show forth beings as they are. It is important for the later Heidegger that it is never in one's own power whether this coming-into-view will occur: revelation and communion must always come from without. The human calling is merely to hold oneself in readiness for them.[67]

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[65] I will explore Heidegger's treatment of interpretation [*Auslegung*] as the act of "taking-as" in *Being and Time* in the Chapter 3.1.2. For the moment, let it suffice that the early Heidegger sees interpretation as the act of putting involved understanding to use. In interpretation, understanding "becomes itself" (Heidegger, *SZ*, §32:148).
[66] Heidegger, "On the Essence of Truth," 125.
[67] Judith Wolfe, *Heidegger and Theology* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 138.

Such availability is only possible within the sphere of mutuality, though, where the human knower and the known entity approach each other in a process of mutual disclosure and relation. Heidegger expresses this mutuality with the language of exposure: "Ek-sistence, rooted in truth as freedom, is exposure to the disclosedness of beings as such."[68] Exposure implies not only nearness and familiarity (e.g., "I was exposed to classical music at a young age") but also vulnerability (e.g., "I was exposed to the elements while camping"). If understanding as we have grasped it in *Being and Time* affords us the nearness and familiarity of exposure, then the later Heidegger's emphasis on letting-be reinforces the vulnerable component. In exposure, there is a mutuality between humans and the beings they encounter, each both affected and affecting.

But if the unfolding of beings to human understanding is to take place through mutual dialogue, there must be a structure to facilitate such exposure. This is what Heidegger refers to above as the open region and what he comes to call the *clearing* or *lighting* [*Lichtung*]. Like an opening within a forest, the clearing is the event of light shining into the wash of beings, the open space where particular beings can stand out and be recognized in their particularity. Heidegger describes this clearing in "The Origin of the Work of Art," (1950/1960):

> In the midst of beings as a whole an open place occurs. There is a clearing, a lighting. Thought of in reference to what is, to beings, this clearing is in a greater degree than are beings. This open center is therefore not surrounded by what is; rather, the lighting center itself encircles all that is, like the nothing that we scarcely know.[69]

The clearing is neither a being nor Being itself. It is rather the springboard of Being, where beings blossom out of non-Being and are given over to their particular manner of Being. However, Heidegger is also keen to point out that the very structure of this clearing that makes

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[68] Heidegger, "On the Essence of Truth," 126. Choosing to hyphenate the term *Existenz* here highlights Heidegger's emphasis on the externality of freedom, thus reinforcing the externality of Dasein's primordial understanding. One must be turned out into the open region in order to be adequately exposed to the Being of beings.
[69] Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper Perennial Classics, 2001), 51.

the Being of beings possible is its limit. “This open center is therefore not surrounded by what is,” he says in the above passage, “rather, the lighting center itself encircles all that is, like the nothing that we scarcely know.” What forms the boundary of the clearing is the *nothing* [*Nihil*]. The particular possibilities of what a being can be—and thus of what humans can make of it—are shaped by what they are not. Moreover, beings in their worldly dynamics are always transient: enduring erosion, damage, repair, and decay; losing their color and luster; gathering dust. Just as beings burgeon out of non-Being, so too do they fade back into nothingness. What the language of the clearing discloses of beings, then, is their state of constant flux. Beings *come into* and *fall out of* Being.

As we will see in our examination of anxiety in Chapter 4, Heidegger always maintained an understanding of how the human being’s latent awareness of the nothing frames its understanding of things. In his 1929 lecture “What is Metaphysics?” he states plainly that “Da-sein means: being held out into the nothing.”[70] On the one hand, this extension of human Dasein into the nothing is what provides the basis for its openness as Being-in-the-world at all:

> Holding itself out into the nothing, Dasein is in each case already beyond beings as a whole. This being beyond beings we call ‘transcendence.’ If in the ground of its essence Dasein were not transcending, which now means, if it were not in advance holding itself out into the nothing, then it could never be related to beings nor even to itself.[71]

On the other hand, awareness of the inevitable nihilation of each being and the perpetual precariousness of its very existence brings with it an awareness of each being’s finitude and the enormous gap between their Being and our own.

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[70] Martin Heidegger, “What is Metaphysics?” in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (London: Harper Perennial, 2008), 103.
[71] Ibid., 103.

> In the clear night of the nothing of anxiety the original openness of beings as such arises: that they are beings—and not nothing… The essence of the originally nihilating nothing lies in this, that it brings Da-sein for the first time before beings as such… Only on the ground of the original revelation of the nothing can human existence approach and penetrate beings.[72]

Framed by the nothing, the clearing discloses the structure of world as affording possibilities and establishing the conditions for connection. The nothing both forms the open space through which a being may develop (a tree may become a wooden beam) while delimiting the finitude of those possibilities (a tree may never become a steel beam), and so the clearing, as the space within the nothing in which Being burgeons, becomes the realm of contact and exchange between the human and the beings which they understand. Wrathall helpfully summarizes the clearing thus:

> The clearing makes it possible for a certain understanding of being—a particular mode of presence—to come to prevail among entities. For possibilities to be live possibilities, however, it requires a space from which other incompatible possibilities are excluded. The clearing maintains a world by keeping back (concealing) possibilities that are incompatible with the essence that is currently operative. In order for some possibilities to shape our experience of the world, any other possibilities cannot be live possibilities, they cannot be possible for us, they must be kept from us.[73]

What the language of the clearing provides us is a clarification and expansion (rather than a refutation) of the model of worldly understanding established in *Being and Time*. In establishing the clearing as the locus of beings' coming into Being, and by moreover framing this clearing with the nothing, Heidegger identifies the directional, interconnected dynamics of Dasein's understanding as constitutive of world itself rather than simply of Dasein. The clearing reveals the structure of world as compatible with that of Dasein (or, rather, it indicates that Dasein's character is in fact reflective of the very structure of world). As the being with an understanding of Being, Dasein is that being in whom, by virtue of its understanding, the very

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[72] Ibid., 103. See Chapter 4.1.2 for my full discussion of Heidegger on anxiety.
[73] Wrathall, *Heidegger and Unconcealment*, 34.

structure of world is brought to dynamic expression, what Dreyfus calls "being the world existingly."[74] The connectedness of world by the forces of physics comes to expression in Dasein's capacity for construction, and the structure of building becomes the template for intellectual logic and grammar.[75] In order for such structural connectedness to become the norm of Dasein's expressive activity, Dasein must assume the posture of letting-be, of allowing the structure of Being to inform Dasein's understanding rather than simply be determined by it.

The character of letting-be, entailing both the familiarity and vulnerability of exposure, thus comes into full view. Because the locus of disclosure has moved from human Dasein to the Da-sein of the clearing in which the human shares space with the beings that emerge, the character of that disclosure is likewise removed from human determination.[76] The familiarity of Being-in-the-world is now related to (and, indeed, contingent upon) a coincident availability on the part of the human. "There is much in [Being] that man cannot master," Heidegger writes. "There is but little that comes to be known. What is known remains inexact, what is mastered insecure. What is, is never of our making or even merely the product of our minds, as it might all too easily seem."[77] To really *know* a being through encounter necessarily entails a posture of availability to what gives itself to the knower, even as this availability still occurs through the handling involvement of care.

John Haugeland helpfully gives a four-tiered definition of letting-be that explores this relationship of involved care to the freedom of beings. Haugeland's model ascends from the

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[74] Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, 249.
[75] I will develop this idea further in conjunction with Heidegger's notion of discourse in Chapter 3.1.1.
[76] See Jeff Malpas, "Heidegger's Topology of Being," in *Transcendental Heidegger*, ed. Steven Crowell and Jeff Malpas (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 119-134. Malpas argues that Heidegger's decline in the use of "Dasein" to describe the human way of Being in his later works corresponds to his introduction of the clearing as the new *da* ("there") of Being. This "topological" change constitutes Heidegger's clarification and improvement of the Dasein-world relation from *Being and Time*. Da-sein is still where Being is understood, but humans must now enter into this sphere rather than locate it within themselves.
[77] Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," 51.

most passive form of letting-be to the most active: (1) *Acquiescing*, passively accepting circumstances, (2) *Allowing*, actively giving permission, (3) *Enabling*, actively producing the conditions for an outcome, and (4) *Effecting*, actively producing an outcome.[78] Haugeland locates Heidegger's understanding of entities in terms of the "horizon of production," which sees each entity not as existent already but as having the *potential* to exist, a potential that requires Dasein to come to fruition.[79] Haugeland thus asserts that letting-be amounts to Dasein's *enabling* beings to be what they are by setting them free to be used in myriad ways.[80] By this interpretation, a being's coming into Being remains contingent upon Dasein as the condition its being put to proper use.[81]

But following the reading of Heidegger to which I have been adhering in this chapter, and moreover following the foregoing analysis of the clearing as setting beings free to be against the backdrop of the nothing, I cannot help but find Haugeland's interpretation of letting-be as enabling to be overly anthropocentric. By contrast, I am more inclined to identify letting-be as some combination of what Haugeland calls acquiescing and allowing. On the one hand, Heidegger wants to guarantee the independence of beings in terms of their own unique finitude against the backdrop of the nothing, which lends itself to a human posture of acquiescence. Beings *are*, independently of our own interpretive stance. On the other hand, *letting*-be does imply some level of activity on the part of human beings, if only that of knowing affirmation. To let beings be in this manner is to affirm the independent possibilities an entity affords in the very activity of familiarity we experience in care. Far from insisting upon letting-be as a passive

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[78] John Haugeland, "Letting Be" in *Transcendental Heidegger*, ed. Steven Crowell and Jeff Malpas (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 94.
[79] Ibid., 97.
[80] Ibid., 98.
[81] See John Haugeland, "Heidegger on Being a Person," *Nôus* 16.1 (March 1982): 15-26.

observation, letting-be instead takes the form of allowing the independent shape of beings to determine the shape of our own possibilities. I can only build a wooden house if there is wood available to me, if its material constitution inclines itself to my intentions, and if its physical properties disclose themselves to my capacity to understand them. Understanding is thus informed by what humans allow beings to reveal, a revelation which is shaped by the clearing in which humans and beings are now seen to stand together in mutual freedom.

But what *are* beings in this free exposure? So far as Heidegger's emphasis on letting-be and his development of the language of the clearing clarify and advance his analysis of involved understanding in *Being and Time*, we have a better grasp on how such independent self-revelation by beings is possible. But since the nature of understanding is still dynamic involvement and not the essentializing categories of Metaphysics, any articulation of the Being of beings that adopts the posture of letting-be must both express their performative doing of themselves while preserving the freedom of their unfolding uniqueness against the backdrop of the nothing. The language which Heidegger comes to employ for just this purpose is that of the fourfold, and it is to that expression that we now turn.

2.2.2 The Fourfold and the Dynamism of Beings

In the first part of this chapter, our aim was to set out a picture of human understanding by way of encounter. The picture I have tried to paint of how that understanding comes to the fore in Heidegger's work has focused on the theme of *dynamism*. Following Heidegger's *Being and Time*, we observed how entities come to light to human Dasein's understanding by means of involved care. In the previous section, we then observed how the later Heidegger clarifies the manner of this encounter with the language of letting-be and the ontological apparatus of the clearing, which set the structural stage for the self-revelation of beings apart from Dasein's own

assignments of value. Our need at the end of this chapter is thus to finally establish how beings *are* in and of themselves. Consistent with the foregoing analysis, the late Heidegger allows us to think of beings in terms of the same dynamism through which we understand them in care. Beings *are* what they *do*. From the subatomic level of electrons swirling around electrically charged nuclei to the plane of our ordinary experience, where beings exist in the flux of motion and relation, hammering nails or gathering dust or being worn down by centuries of exposure to the wind. Heidegger does not himself identify the very Being of beings as *dynamism*, though I will argue here that his later works in particular leave us ample intellectual resources by which to arrive at such a conclusion.

This theme of dynamism is perhaps most apparent in Heidegger's concept of *the fourfold* [*das Geviert*]. This term poetically frames the dynamics of beings by naming the underlying nodes of relevance that are held in balance within each being: earth, sky, divinities, and mortals. In his 1954 essay "Building Dwelling Thinking," Heidegger brings this concept into view in terms of *dwelling* [*Wohnen*], which he defines as belonging with beings.[82] "To dwell, to set at peace," he writes, "means to remain at peace within the free, the preserve, the free sphere that safeguards each thing in its nature. *The fundamental character of dwelling is this sparing and preserving*."[83] This sparing and preserving character of dwelling within the free preserve echoes what we just observed of letting-be in freedom within the clearing. To properly *dwell* with beings is to abide in the dynamic play of their Being, with all the tension and transience that entails. The relational nodes of the fourfold thus express this dynamic nexus of each being, and every being in turn has its Being from the four, so that its existence brings "the four into the light of their

[82] Martin Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper Perennial Classics, 2001), 149.
[83] Ibid., 147. Emphasis original.

mutual belonging."[84] To dwell with beings, then, is to dwell within the ever-shifting relations of earth, sky, divinities, and mortals that makes up the play and movement of each world.

Andrew Mitchell suggests that as this underlying framework, the concept of the fourfold is principally a "thinking of finitude":

> To think the finite is to think the limitation of a thing as the surface of its exposure to the world beyond it. The limit of a thing is its interface with that beyond. But this means that to be finite is to extend past oneself and enter into a multiplicity of relations. Finitude is a kind of relational 'radiance,' we might say. By thinking finitude in this 'ecstatic' way, we make the relation to a beyond essential to what the finite thing is. This means that a thinking of finitude is impossible without a concomitant consideration of this beyond (the finite is nothing other than this connection or relation).[85]

This analysis attributes a certain transcendence to beings. Not only is the human being already "outside" itself, but Mitchell credits this same externality to all things. Beings radiate and relate between themselves. And if this is so, then my analysis of the full depth of relevance in *Being and Time* appears to be confirmed in the later Heidegger. The finitude of a being—its what-ness framed by its limitation—emerges "at its interface with that beyond." The fourfold should therefore not be thought of as a set of elements, fundamental building blocks of all matter. Rather, the fourfold *draws out* the Being of beings, forming them inversely the way temperature causes a tire to expand or deflate. Instead of material elements, we should rather consider earth, sky, divinities, and mortals as gravitational poles in a four-dimensional field. The unique shape stretched out between the poles constellates the dynamic way of a particular being.

Earth is the most familiar to us of the four, coming nearest to what we understand as the material or elemental in a being. As the means of all beings' extension into space and time, earth not only conditions plain existence but all motor possibilities. "Earth is the serving bearer," Heidegger writes, "blossoming and fruiting, spreading out in rock and water, rising up into plant

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[84] Ibid., 171.
[85] Andrew Mitchell, *The Fourfold: Reading the Late Heidegger* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2015), 4.

and animal."[86] Heidegger's active language of "blossoming," "fruiting," "spreading," and "rising" is in fact quite insightful. Earth is not just the raw, "physical stuff" of matter. As Mitchell astutely notes, "The 'matter' of experience is phenomenality."[87] That is, the seeming material reality of our everyday lives is in fact the phenomenal manifestation of molecules held together in electrical charge, which themselves consist of atoms composed of wildly active subatomic particles, and so on. The real "essence" of matter which Heidegger is getting at here with the term "earth" is in fact the ever dynamic, unstable, transient *manifestness* of beings. As "blossoming and fruiting," earth is not just dead matter into which life is breathed, for earth itself entails growth, decay, and reproduction. This dynamism is not restricted to living beings either, as Heidegger explicitly mentions rocks and water along with plants and animals. This is justly so, for even inanimate rocks are formed and eroded through millennia of tectonic pressure and molten violence, while water is constantly in flux between evaporating, falling, flowing, and so on. Earth, then, brings to light the kinetic reality of physical beings.

Sky is the ether through which beings are borne by earth. As Heidegger notes, when we look to the sky, we discern the changing seasons, anticipate weather, and navigate according to the stars.[88] But this does not locate the sky in a particular physical realm "above us" but rather situates it as the medium of involvement. Sky is where the change of seasons is observed and is the sphere in which we locate ourselves. When earth fruits and blossoms, it does so into and through sky. Sky both gives to and receives from earth, as with rain and evaporation.[89] The tree grows into the same air through which the apple falls, the dog walks, and the human gazes. Sky

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[86] Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," 147. Mitchell highlights this role of earth as bearing in contrast to what we might assume as earth's grounding. Rather than being the concrete *terra firma* on which all reality is built, earth is the phenomenon of presencing, yielding beings forth from the abyss of nothingness (*The Fourfold*, 74-78).
[87] Mitchell, *The Fourfold*, 71.
[88] Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," 147.
[89] See Martin Heidegger, "The Thing," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper Perennial Classics, 2001), 170.

is "the domain of motion, i.e., of change of places across time."[90] In this way, sky is the condition of difference between beings, allowing earth to separate itself, thus rendering interaction possible. Were there no sky, there would be no room for motion, and so sky is the field of dynamism.

Heidegger calls *divinities* "the beckoning messengers of the godhead."[91] This is perhaps the most obscure of the fourfold. Earth and sky, though not mapping onto any scientific equivalents, at least evoke the relatively conventional dimensions of matter and space. Divinities, on the other hand, appear at first glance to introduce a wholly new field—theology—into a discussion that has heretofore been ostensibly a-theistic. But Heidegger clarifies what he means by this term when he writes in his "Letter to a Young Student" (1950), "The default of God and the divinities is absence. But absence is not nothing; rather it is precisely the presence, which must first be appropriated, of the hidden fullness and wealth of what has been and what, thus gathered, is presencing."[92] The divinities presence as absence, a sort of vacuum whose negative pressure beckons the expansion of a being in a particular direction. If the fourfold is indeed a thinking of finitude, then we might recall our above analysis of the clearing as carving out the space of possibilities for a being against the backdrop of the nothing. Here, however, Heidegger insists that the absence of divinities is not the same as nothing, but is instead the "hidden fullness" of what is gathered in the fourfold. Divinities thus name the pregnant possibilities of a being, that which is endowed to its particularity as a gathering of the fourfold. As Mitchell says, "Things are inherently messengerial."[93] That is, things do not simply subsist but stand forth in

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[90] Mitchell, *The Fourfold*, 117.
[91] Heidegger, "The Thing," 176; "Building Dwelling Thinking," 147.
[92] Martin Heidegger, "Letter to a Young Student," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper Perennial Classics, 2001), 182.
[93] Mitchell, *The Fourfold*, 164.

self-expression. Things are purposive and directional, even if they lack animation or will. Beings are not infused with a divine essence, as in some sort of panentheism, but are rather inclined toward a beckoning call, a sort of final cause imprinted on their material behavior. Divinity thus names that force that invites beings to be in this or that direction. Divinity gives *telos*—and thus trajectory and orientation—to earth through the path of sky.

Mortals, then, are human beings.[94] But humans are here referred to specifically as mortals because they can die. "Only man dies. The animal perishes. It has death neither ahead of itself nor behind it."[95] Here we recall the early Heidegger's account of Dasein's projection of possibilities (and we further anticipate my analysis of anxiety in Chapter 4). Projecting itself beyond beings, the human is that being who is uniquely held out into the nothing, thereby becoming open to the possibility of its non-Being. Framed as it is by death, the mortal is always already given over to the nothing, and so it is given over to the beings who likewise burgeon out of and into the nothing. "To be mortal is to 'belong' to the world without 'being' the world," says Mitchell. "Belonging is a relation of difference, one that the mortal accedes to through its ability to die."[96] The mortal is the witness of beings, the one given over to the beckoning call of beings, the one who understands by letting beings show themselves in the mortals' care.

A being is thus what gathers the fourfold into a unity, a unique pattern of tension, relation, and direction.[97] Yet how does this marriage occur? Heidegger gives the example of a bridge. The bridge "*gathers* the earth as landscape around the stream. Thus it guides and attends the stream through the meadows."[98] The rain that falls through the sky then forms the river that

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[94] Heidegger, "The Thing," 176; "Building Dwelling Thinking," 148.
[95] Heidegger, "The Thing," 176.
[96] Mitchell, *The Fourfold*, 223.
[97] Heidegger, "The Thing," 172: "Thinging gathers." Cf. Mitchell, *The Fourfold*, 12: "As a gathering, the thing is desubstantilized, it is no longer construed as a present and self-enclosed entity."
[98] Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," 150.

both flows beneath the bridge and provides the challenge for the bridge to solve. “The bridge lets the stream run its course and at the same time grants their way to mortals so that they may come and go from shore to shore.”[99] Yet while the bridge shapes and tames the earth to let mortals traverse the sky, there is still another element outstanding: namely, that of crossing itself. This is finally given by divinities, that teleological pull that beckons purpose, possibility, and direction from each being, including from human beings, inviting them to become bridge-builders and boundary-crossers in the first place.[100]

Or consider the banana on my desk. The Being of the banana is borne out in earth, which contains millennia of evolutionarily determined genetic data conveyed through the reproductive processes of a particular tree to yield this particular banana. It grew out through sky, was plucked from its tree, and traversed a great space to reach the desk where it now sits. From divinities it receives the teleology of its DNA. As a reproductive organ of a banana tree, its particular coordination of earth is directed toward the evolution and perpetuation of this particular species of fruit. Finally, my banana has its Being framed by mortals, not only by me as I save it for an afternoon snack, but by the mortals who grew and harvested it, who put it on a plane, and who sold it at a discount at my local supermarket. So even when I am involved in care of the banana by peeling and eating it, this banana’s Being will remain utterly its own beyond anything I can assign it, enough so that it will exert its own force on *my* Being as a mortal, endowing me with nutrients and satisfying my craving for a snack. So not only is the Being of this banana a distinct confluence of the fourfold among fruit, but its Being is utterly unlike that of any other banana. Sitting still on my desk, growing from green to yellow to a spotted brown, it bears its history and trajectory into its present. In its Being, the banana thus stands free, all the more so against the

[99] Ibid., 150.
[100] Ibid., 151.

backdrop of the possibility that there could not be any such banana at all had the fourfold been configured ever so slightly differently. Framed by the nothingness of its past, imminent, and potential non-Being, the banana stands forth in its own unique, unrepeatable Being.

Heidegger's specific language of the fourfold as sketched out above will not figure prominently in my own constructive analysis to follow. What we gain from this admittedly cursory overview of this concept is instead the completion of the metaphysical tack we have been on throughout this chapter. Beings do not subsist, nor are there, strictly speaking, such things as "things" in the conventional sense of the word.[101] Rather, beings burgeon, grow, manifest, and decay. The Being of beings reveals itself at last as the performance of physical processes, as the emerging and fading of various tensions and relations which we grasp in the phenomenal nodes of individual beings. The project of departing from conventional Metaphysics which we observed in *Being and Time* now reaches its completion. There, Heidegger ushers us into a model of human understanding based on involvement and care, where beings are understood through the dynamic revolving of world. In the later Heidegger, we have seen how the human openness to world reaches its zenith in letting-be, where beings are affirmed in their self-revelation within the shared space of the clearing. The fourfold thus offers a model by which to consider this self-performing of beings as pure dynamism, so that the dynamic character of world in Dasein's understanding is in fact revealed as the very structure of reality. The shape of world is not simply influenced by humans but, in the end, is seen to shape mortals themselves. Mortals are invited into their care by the beckoning of worldly dynamism, a dynamism that is then incorporated into the very worldly character of those humans. What we glean from this latter half of the current chapter, then, is a template for thinking Being as dynamism, for

[101] Mitchell, *The Fourfold*, 308.

considering beings-in-themselves in the affirming mode of letting-be, and for performing the task of metaphysics without the reifying, essentializing, pseudo-science of Metaphysics.

CONCLUSION

Our objective in this chapter has been to establish the possibility of human understanding through encounter. Following the demands for an account of revelation in the Eucharist laid out in my introductory chapter, we have here been exploring the resources in Heidegger's thought for an understanding of the ontic truth of beings against the backdrop of the ontological truth of Being. What we gleaned from Heidegger's early discussion of the topic in *Being and Time* is a depiction of understanding as world-embedded. As Being-in-the-world, we humans are "in" the world in the mode of care long before we are ever withdrawn "out" of it. Involved with equipment, we understand beings as ready-to-hand, as available and useful within particular contexts, which in turn reveals our innate circumspection, that is, our existential-ontological capacity to recognize and participate in worlds of direction and purpose. Circumspection then unveils human Dasein's understanding of relevance, of the intrinsic connectedness and structurality of world, so that our grasp of beings is always situated within webs of interaction and relation rather than simply dead matter. Finally, this relevance-structure of world opens up our human attunement to situations, our affectedness in various relational webs and our projection of possibilities into the worlds of our involvement. Understanding is thus revealed as a matter of worldly belonging, of one's ability to pre-cognitively apprehend the structural dynamics in a given situation and to adapt their behavior appropriately.

But what is disclosed in such a world? This was the focus of the second part of this chapter, wherein we considered the later Heidegger's turn to beings themselves with a focus on

letting-be. Far from a passive contemplation of beings from afar, however, this letting-be is in fact a qualification of understanding as care. The later Heidegger rearticulates the "*da*" of Being—the "there" of disclosure—so that humans may understand in the mode of letting-be through mutual exposure with beings within the free realm of the clearing. The structure of world established in *Being and Time* is thus affirmed as in fact belonging to world itself, so that Dasein, in the mode of letting-be, is likewise affirmed in its understanding as given over to beings themselves. The Being of beings is then revealed as fundamentally dynamic in Heidegger's treatment of the fourfold. What this poetic account of beings opens up is the inherent motricity and instability of what we might otherwise consider to be subsistent entities. Far from being "things" in any strict sense, the fourfold opens up beings as in fact nodes of dynamic processes, as loci of physical dynamism within worlds of tension and relation. The metaphysical revolution of the early Heidegger is thus completed by his later affirmation of the independence, freedom, and dynamism of beings in themselves.

Such a revolution radically shapes the possibilities for our own metaphysical consideration of eucharistic presence. It appears no longer possible to ascribe the presence of a substantial Christ-thing to the beings of bread and wine, because it turns out there are no such things as bread-things or wine-things at all. Rather, the sacrament properly understood is a world, an event of dynamic happenings which disclose certain relations of relevance that in turn open up particular paths of possibility. If we are to understand the Eucharist properly, it seems we can only understand it in the state of letting-be within the freedom of the clearing, where its dynamic character as a world in flux may rise and fall away, surprise or affirm, comfort or convict, conceal or reveal. The only way to understand the Eucharist, in short, is to let it be what it will be and to ride the wave of its Being through involvement with its dynamic revelation.

But this is not itself a call for theological silence in the face of ontological mystery nor of apophatic non-commitment toward the sacramental presence. If the Eucharist is indeed a revelation of the person of Christ, then it must be shown how our understanding through sacramental involvement can indeed be properly understood as an encounter with a specific person. This will be the subject of Chapter 4 on personhood. Further, if any such revelation is to meet the intellectual needs of Christians which I sketched at the outset of this project, then we need an account of how understanding yields language that retains its tether to that primordial understanding. This will be the subject of our next chapter on language, to which we now turn.

CHAPTER 3

LANGUAGE

Having defined human understanding as dynamic involvement in the last chapter, we may be right to ask what role language has for human Dasein in Heidegger's work. If God's self-revelation occurs ontologically in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, then the previous chapter's analysis establishes at least a baseline capacity on the part of human witnesses to understand the character of God by becoming involved with the person of Jesus. But does an account of immersive understanding then preclude us from any conceptual knowledge of the type we ordinarily imagine—say, justified true belief? Are religious communities not then limited to a hollow apophaticism that limits the value of involved understanding and undercuts their ability to share what is thereby understood? Is the Good News simply that there is, strictly speaking, no *news* at all?

It is with these concerns in mind that we turn our attention to the question of language in Heidegger's thought, asking whether and how language may emerge out of worldly encounter in such a way that retains its tether to that encounter. If the human faculty of speech is simply a covering up of reality with mental content, then it appears the linguistic character of our everyday existence is largely a simulation: "the generation by models of a real without origin nor reality: a hyperreal."[1] Such a world, determined in its shape by human concepts rather than the other way round, is what we will see characterizes our modern technological epoch in Heidegger's view. But if we are to avoid such a hyperreality, a world constituted by images without referents, we need to demonstrate a fundamental tether between our language and the

[1] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 1.

involvement that is our belonging to world. It is to this end that this chapter will explore Heidegger's account of language and its relationship to involved understanding.

In the first part of this chapter, I will show how Heidegger's account of language in *Being and Time* draws on his notion of discourse as equiprimordial with involved understanding. In this way, we will see how Heidegger's preliminary account of language depicts speech as born out of involved experience rather than imposed upon that experience from without. As in the last chapter, we will then see this theme develop in Heidegger's later writings, where he widens the scope of discourse by redefining language, culminating in poetry as the speech that brings to expression the elusiveness of worldly understanding in the state of letting-be. Insofar as we can synthesize Heidegger's earlier and later reflections on language (which I believe we can), we are left with a picture of language that is distinctly un-scientific, but which for this reason may be capable of bringing to conscious reflection those elements of dynamic understanding that humans experience through their involvement with beings. The contrast between poetic bringing-to-presence and the domesticating force of language will be set up in the middle section of this chapter on Heidegger's treatment of technology as a worldview, constitutive of calculative, scientific language and thus of a more disinvolved way of thinking about the world.

The purpose of this chapter is both to demonstrate how Heidegger's early analysis of discourse yields an account of language as grounded in pre-linguistic understanding and to open up the worldly terminus of such discourse by exploring the late Heidegger's treatment of poetry. My conclusion is that language is properly always world-oriented, with the dynamism of world as its source and summit. Just as discourse emerges out of such embodied activity, so poetry becomes the style of speaking that orients language back toward the reality in which we are immersed.

3.1 LANGUAGE IN *BEING AND TIME*

Unsurprisingly, Heidegger rejects any strict correspondence theory of language in *Being and Time*, suggesting, "This characterization of truth as 'agreement,' *adequatio*, ὁμοίωσις, though, is quite general and empty."[2] What Heidegger characterizes as truth is the "Being-uncovered [*Entdeckt-sein*] of the being itself," which we witnessed in the last chapter as taking place through involved care.[3] And precisely because truth is defined as uncovering, Heidegger is able to put forward a notion of language as tethered to truth. "That an interpretation *is true*," he writes, "means that it uncovers the being in itself. Such assertion says, points out, 'lets' a being 'be seen' (ἀπόφανσις) in its uncoveredness. The *Being-true* (*truth*) of an assertion must be understood as *Being-uncovered* [*entdeckend-sein*]."[4] In other words, the truth of beings as their unconcealment does not exclude language from truth but rather provides the conditions for how language can participate in truth, namely, by participating in the process of unconcealment.

Mark Wrathall thus defends the character of language as corresponding to truth on the basis of Heidegger's definition of truth as *aletheia*, unconcealment.[5] "Where Heidegger's view differs from correspondence *theories* of truth," Wrathall claims, "is in denying that the concept of correspondence can be understood on a representational model."[6] What makes a statement correspond to truth is not some semantic mapping onto reality, wherein each syntactic element within a sentence refers directly and completely to a finite and enclosed element in the world. Such a model would require such "fullness of reference" that for any reference to be true, it

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[2] Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, Neunzehnte Auflage (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2006), §44:215.
[3] Ibid., §44:218.
[4] Ibid., §44:218.
[5] Mark A. Wrathall, "Heidegger and Truth as Correspondence," *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 7.1 (January 1999): 73.
[6] Ibid., 74.

could be nothing less than the referent itself.[7] No word or phrase, then, can adequately *represent* beings in their truth.

However, Wrathall does not believe this means correspondence is altogether impossible. Rather than pointing us toward representations of reality, language orients us toward world itself: "The relation between an assertion and the world is thus not a relation of representation, according to Heidegger, but a relation of indication."[8] Language does not indicate by shoehorning entities and relations into conceptual boxes but simply by pointing, showing, and positioning the human observer to witness worldliness in a particular light. Consequently, linguistic statements can be *correct*; they simply cannot be *true in and of themselves*.[9] That is, a sentence cannot employ the "right" concept for a particular state of Being, but they can properly position us to witness the truth of unconcealment. In effect, "Unconcealment makes truth possible by making assertions the kind of things which can be true."[10]

This is good news, but it needs parsing out. Specifically, we need an account of how the unconcealment of beings through involved understanding is contiguous with the language that emerges from it. By turning to the foundation of language in Heidegger's notion of discourse, we can then discover how language not only participates in the uncovering of beings but in so doing takes its cue from the very world whose dynamic character it seeks to express.

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[7] Ibid., 74.
[8] Ibid., 75.
[9] Ibid., 74.
[10] Ibid., 81.

3.1.1 Discourse

We begin, then, by examining Heidegger's notion of *discourse* [*Rede*], which he calls the "*existential-ontological foundation of language*."[11] Discourse is not necessarily language itself but rather the way of Dasein's Being that makes language possible. Heidegger defines discourse as "the articulation of understandability [*Verständlichkeit*]. Thus it already lies at the bottom of interpretation and assertion."[12] We might therefore describe discourse as the engine that powers the vehicle of language. Discourse filters and directs understanding, reminding us that just as the beings with which Dasein is involved unfold their Being dynamically, so too does Dasein perform its Being in activity, which includes the articulation of understanding. Discourse is Dasein's acting-out of understanding.

The understanding that is articulated in discourse is the "totality-of-relevances [*Bedeutungsganze*]."[13] We observed in the last chapter how Dasein's world is disclosed as a constellation of relevances—that is, the relations of dynamism and direction between beings that make up a world. Discourse then brings out these myriad relations as a whole.

> Discourse is the structure in accordance with relevance of the attuned understandability of Being-in-the-world. Its constitutive components are: what discourse is about (the discussed), what is discussed as such, communication, and demonstration. These are not properties which can simply be empirically pulled out of language but are existential characteristics rooted in the ontological constitution of Dasein, which first make something like language ontologically possible. In the actual linguistic shape of a certain discourse, some of these components may be lacking or remain unnoticed. That they are often *not* "verbally" expressed is only an indication of a particular kind of discourse which, insofar as it is discourse, must always lie within the totality of these structures.[14]

Discourse brings Dasein's attuned understanding to expression through the coordination of the object of discourse and the functions of communication and demonstration.

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[11] Heidegger, *SZ* §34:160. Emphasis original.
[12] Ibid., §34:161.
[13] Ibid., §34:161.
[14] Ibid., §34:162-163.

Communication, though, is not simply a matter of speech. "Predicative 'communication,' such as exchanging information, for example, is an outlier from fundamental existential communication," says Heidegger.[15] Most basically, communication "enacts the 'sharing' of Being-attuned-with and the understanding of Being-with. Communication is never anything like a transport of, for example, experiences, opinions, and desires from the interior of one subject to the interior of another."[16] Here Heidegger expands the notion of communication to include any and all activities which open up a shared world between one individual and another. We can thus understand why Heidegger is so insistent in the above passage that, even when the components of discourse are not "verbally" expressed, they still belong to the discursive activity of Dasein. Discourse communicates by inviting others into "co-attunement [*Mitbefindlichkeit*]."[17] Discursive communication is not simply a matter of conveying *information about* something, where what is essential is the reference-quality of words and grammar. "In discourse, Being-with is 'explicitly' *shared*."[18] The requiem beckons the audience into the shared experience of the composer's grief. The meal invites the many into fellowship. The prayer attunes the assembly to its neediness.

Taylor Carman helpfully summarizes discourse as "the expressive-communicative dimension of practice, broadly conceived, language being just one of its concrete manifestations."[19] More specifically, discourse is "the way in which our world is coherently articulated, not just pragmatically or teleologically in terms of ends and activities, but expressively and communicatively, that is, in terms of how it makes sense to express our

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[15] Ibid., §34:162.
[16] Ibid., §34:162.
[17] Ibid., §34:162.
[18] Ibid., §34:162.
[19] Taylor Carman, *Heidegger's Analytic: Interpretation, Discourse, and Authenticity in* Being and Time (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 205.

understanding and convey it to others, and indeed to ourselves."[20] What discourse brings to light is how human praxis is fundamentally communicative and how human communication, in turn, occurs at much deeper levels that just the verbal use of language. In building cities, engaging in commerce, practicing religion, or endorsing a particular governmental policy, humans engage in activity that in discloses the worlds of their own understanding to others. A parent cooking or mowing their lawn discloses a world of domestic life to their child, who then tries on these possibilities in the imitative praxis of play. Similarly, in living a life in accordance with certain spiritual dispositions or ethical precepts, the religious person opens up an understanding of the cosmos and the moral direction of its history.

Discourse is fundamentally a matter of *interfacing* on the part of Dasein. Like arranging furniture in a living room, discourse is about opening up a world with a particular directional logic. My finger interfaces with a taught steel string to generate a vibration, which then interfaces with the hollow, wooden body of a guitar to produce a particular sequence of sound waves and so disclose a world of music. A hammer interfaces with a chisel, which in turn interfaces with a block of marble in the process of carving out a sculpture to disclose a world of artistic representation. We pour the wine, light the candles, and turn on Barry Manilow to "set the mood" for a romantic evening. We hang orbs on a pine tree in the living room next to a fire while listening to Nat King Cole in ugly sweaters to generate "Christmas spirit." As discursive, Dasein is always arranging and coordinating beings, fashioning new worlds of attunement and understanding.

Heidegger therefore says that "*Discourse is existentially equiprimordial with attunement and understanding*."[21] One is not simply passively understanding and only then discursive.

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[20] Ibid., 206.
[21] Heidegger, *SZ*, §34:161. Emphasis original.

Dasein is simultaneously discursive and understanding from its beginning. That Dasein can apprehend the world of a face—the relevance structure of nose, ears, eyes, mouth, skin, hair, etc., organized and coordinated just so—bespeaks Dasein's understanding. That Dasein can then *create* a face—from the haunting enigma of Vermeer's *Girl with the Pearl Earring* to the surreal agony of Munch's *Scream of Nature*—indicates its discursiveness. As this creative coordinating of world, discourse is Dasein's very capacity for playing, dreaming, hoping, composing, abstracting, dancing, and singing. If Dasein absorbs its world in understanding like a sponge, then we might say discourse is what gets squeezed out.

For the purposes of this investigation, the value of discourse is the link it forms between Dasein's understanding and explicit, verbal language. Our guiding question in this chapter is whether and how human language can be rooted in understanding and participate in the disclosure of what is understood. For the early Heidegger, discourse answers this query by dislocating expression from the mental confines of speech. As both dependent upon and yet distinct from involved understanding, discourse provides the basis for expression as contiguous with understanding. However, we have not yet acquired an account of language as such—that is, vocabularies of word-things and the systems of grammar and syntax that arrange their expression. And so in order to get closer to language itself we now turn to Heidegger's treatment of interpretation.

3.1.2 Interpretation

For the early Heidegger, *interpretation* [*Auslegung*] is the *taking-as* operation of Dasein's understanding. One interprets a being when one consciously recognizes "*something as*

something."[22] In other words, interpretation cuts out the particular shape of a being from the blur of worldly relevances in which it is embedded. To take a hammer *as* a hammer (or even, pre-predicatively, as a *thing-for-hammering*) is to pluck it out from the wash of beings which are otherwise undistinguished from one another.[23] In interpretation, objects of understanding become appropriated to Dasein's own projection of possibilities: "Interpretation is not the information of what is understood, but the working-out of possibilities projected in understanding."[24] Interpretation is therefore something like Dasein's homing device, narrowing its focus on a previously ready-to-hand being and drafting it into Dasein's own projection of possibilities in the praxis of discourse.

On the one hand, then, interpretation is a development of understanding: "In [interpretation], understanding lends itself understandingly to what is understood. In interpretation, understanding does not become something different; it becomes itself."[25] Understanding thus forms the primordial foundation for interpretive taking-as. On the other hand, "Discourse is the articulation of understandability. Thus it already lies at the bottom of interpretation and assertion."[26] As the grasping, working-out of what is projected in understanding, interpretation also belongs to the praxis of discourse. Interpretation could therefore be considered the praxis of understanding, of turning possibilities into actualities.

Heidegger articulates something of this interpretive link between understanding and discourse with the notion of *sense* [*Sinn*].[27] For Heidegger, a being makes sense to Dasein when it is understood on its own terms while being taken up into Dasein's own discursive project.

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[22] Ibid., §32:149. Emphasis original.
[23] See Ibid., §16:75. See also my discussion of present-at-hand consideration of beings as the de-worldization of understanding in Chapter 2.1.2.
[24] Ibid., §32:148.
[25] Ibid., §32:148.
[26] Ibid., §34:161.
[27] See Chapter 2.1.3 for my discussion of the translation of the German *Sinn* in *Being and Time*.

> In the projecting of understanding, beings are uncovered in their possibility. The character of possibility always corresponds to the way of Being of the beings understood. Innerworldly beings are generally projected toward the world, that is, toward a totality of relevance in whose referential relations care, as Being-in-the-world, has rooted itself in advance. When innerworldly beings are discovered with the Being of Dasein, that is, when they have come to understanding, we say that they have *sense*. But what is understood is, strictly speaking, not the sense, but the being, or Being. Sense is that wherein the understandability of something maintains itself. What can be articulated in understanding disclosure we call sense.[28]

In the last chapter, we explored how understanding is not simply our own human perspective on the world but is moreover a mapping of our way of Being onto the very structure of world itself. Here Heidegger both reiterates his account of understanding as corresponding to the dynamic relations of world while also allowing for an aspect of that understanding to well up in articulation: namely, sense. Something "makes sense" to human cognition when one's grasp of its situatedness within worldly relations is appropriated to one's personal projection of possibilities and so brought into the scheme of interpretive taking-as. In the meeting of discourse and understanding, the taking-as of interpretation renders understanding into something which can be expressed in human activity.

This insight mirrors that of philosophers George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in their analysis of language as founded on motor skills. In their investigation of the embodied mind, they argue that "the very structure of reason itself comes from the details of our embodiment. The same neural and cognitive mechanisms that allow us to perceive and move around also create our conceptual systems and modes of reason."[29] Following the findings of modern neurology and behavioral science, Lakoff and Johnson argue that it is not the case that we humans possess separate capacities for motor skills and linguistic thought, for in fact the shape of

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[28] Heidegger, *SZ*, §32:151.
[29] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 4.

the former, developed in dialogical experience with the structure of world, establish the neural pathways which make the latter possible. The categorization which forms the basis of abstract thought is rooted in our sensorimotor familiarity with the way things hang together in relations of causation and directional purpose. Thus, "What we call *concepts* are neural structures that allow us to mentally characterize our categories and reason about them."[30] A concept is a grouping together of categories, which are in turn organizational patterns apprehended from our involved activity. Concepts reflect the spatio-temporal world with which we are already familiar through sensorimotor understanding in a process that Lakoff and Johnson call *primary metaphor*. Our ability to conceive of abstract notions is directly influenced by our embodied understanding of the functioning and structure of world. For example, meanings of importance correspond to physical size (e.g., "Tomorrow is a *big* day"), similarity corresponds to physical closeness (e.g., "These colors aren't quite the same, but they're *close*"), and knowing is akin to seeing (e.g., "I *see* what you mean").[31] The reason our conceptual systems appear to work as well as they do is because they are built out of the same infrastructure as our sensorimotor systems, which have been trained in their embodied understanding by the very shape of the worlds they have come to understand through experience.[32]

What Lakoff and Johnson glean from modern neurological studies, then, reinforces the phenomenological analysis we have so far observed in Heidegger, namely, that our primary understanding comes through involvement with worlds of activity, which then provides the very shape and condition for our own expressive activity. To make *sense* of the world is to situate a particular being or event within the conceptual maps already established in lived experience.

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[30] Ibid., 19.
[31] Ibid., 50-54.
[32] Ibid., 43-44.

When we think, converse, or produce in our discursive activity, we are drawing on what the categorizations established through involved understanding make possible in the first place.

It is for this reason that Heidegger says that all interpretation has its *fore-having* [*Vorhabe*], *fore-sight* [*Vorsicht*], and *fore-conception* [*Vorgriff*].[33] Fore-having indicates our prior understanding of world that makes possible any appropriation of a singular entity from within the worldly totality: "Things at hand are always already understood in terms of a totality-of-coordination [*Bewandtnisganzheit*]."[34] Fore-sight "takes the first cut" by delineating the bounds of each entity and determining how a being fits within previous categorical structures of understanding.[35] Dasein's fore-conception, then, is its awareness of conceptual possibilities for interpretive purposes. An interpretation is never presuppositionless but relies on past understanding of worldly dynamics. Interpretation, in effect, asks understanding what is fore-had, fore-seen, and fore-conceived and then seeks to understand how those three exist in concert to cut out appropriate (i.e., *appropriative*) as-assignments.

So, for instance, when a visitor to the Vatican Museums feels overcome by the emotion of agony and the futility of struggle witnessed in the marble *Laocoön and His Sons*, it is because she can unconsciously interpret the particular contours of wide eyes and open, exasperated lips on Laocoön's face as disclosive of what one already understands as the expression of immense pain. The viewer of the work of art *fore-has* an understanding of facial expressions which can then be interpretively cut into incredibly specific emotive categories like "despair-at-the-sense-of-betrayal," or "grief-for-the-unnecessary-suffering-of-those-one-loves." Such understandings of specific worldly attunements do not lend themselves well to specific description, and yet they

[33] Heidegger, *SZ*, §32:150.
[34] Ibid., §32:150.
[35] Ibid., §32:150.

are understood all the same and are moreover compiled into Dasein's fore-havings. Similarly, the viewer *fore-sees* the structures of faces and bodies contorted and flexed in violent struggle. She does not need to determine that she is looking at a man and two boys wrestling with snakes. Even though she is looking at motionless marble, the viewer cuts the shape of these entities the moment she lays eyes on them because she has long ago learned to be accustomed to such shapes. Finally, the viewer of the work has a *fore-conception* of what it feels like to fight a losing battle or to feel unjustly punished, which opens up for her an experience of empathy with the mood of the figures which she interpretively grasps. Thus, without speaking (or even thinking) a single word, the viewer of the work not only intuitively cuts the shape of the entity before her, but she moreover interprets an entire world of relevance and dynamism to the point of being drawn into the attuning hold of its mood.

Heidegger's account of interpretation provides a meeting-point for understanding and discourse, an existential grounding of our expressive praxis in its equiprimordial understanding of involvement. In Dasein's understanding of world and the beings it encounters, it projects its own possibilities and so appropriates those beings into its expressive project. Taking a being as a certain something, Dasein takes up its understanding and deploys it in terms of the categorization established in that very understanding. Interpretation is thus the cutting of a silhouette, linking equiprimordial understanding and discourse together in continuity.

3.1.3 Assertion

However, we still have not yet reached *language* in the specific sense of words, grammar, and syntax. In order to grasp how understanding ever wells up through interpretation into verbal discourse, we must now at last uncover how Heidegger depicts the operation of *assertion*

[*Aussage*]. Heidegger gives three components of assertion: (1) pointing-out, "letting an entity be seen from itself,"[36] (2) predication, and (3) communication, "letting someone see with us."[37] Just as discourse communicates by bringing to expression one's experience of attuned understanding, so is assertion communicative through the mode of predicative pointing-out. Language has the same communicative force as a crying baby or a Beethoven sonata. It belongs to our existential constitution to put ourselves forward as instruments of our situated understanding. We are always Being-in-the-world as both understanding and discursive. Language, as a set of sounds, markings, and grammatical conventions, is but *one* of the ways in which we convey our unique situatedness, along with laughing, crying, making music, and producing art.

So what unique role does language play in discourse? Let us begin with pointing-out. Describing this first function of assertion, Heidegger writes, "With this we retain the original meaning of λόγος as hard ἀπόφανσις: to let beings be seen for themselves."[38] Heidegger's focus remains on the unconcealment of beings, and so he begins with an insistence that language not *add* something to beings but instead carve out the negative space in which their Being may come to light: "In the assertion 'the hammer is too heavy,' what is uncovered for sight is not a 'sense [*Sinn*],' but a being in its manner of readiness-to-hand."[39] For Heidegger, sense itself is never what is communicated, for communication, as we have already seen, is about bringing others into a shared attunement to world.[40] What is revealed in pointing-out is not our sense of a being but the being itself.

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[36] Ibid., §33:154.
[37] Ibid., §33;154-155.
[38] Ibid., §33:154.
[39] Ibid., §33:154.
[40] Ibid., §32:151: "[S]ense must be understood as the formal-existential framework of the disclosedness belonging to understanding… Only Dasein 'has' sense in that the disclosedness of Being-in-the-world can be 'fulfilled' through the beings uncovered in it."

But how does specifically verbal language participate in this world-disclosure? Whereas music communicates by rousing a listener to a mood through patterns of key, rhythm, and timbre, it is as yet unclear how the grammatical structure of words and syntax in language rouses us to a similar but distinct experience of Being-with-another. This question brings us to the second, predicative, function of assertion. Heidegger describes predication as a "narrowing of content" of what is given in pointing-out.[41] At the level of words, predication gives to beings and their behaviors the attuned expressions of sound and symbol. Grammar and syntax, then, disclose the worlds of those beings' relations through the very arranging, coordinating operation of discourse. "What is said in this meaning [*Bedeutung*] of assertion is not the predicate, but the 'hammer itself,'" writes Heidegger. "What predicates—that is, determines—however, lies in the 'too heavy.'"[42] This is to say that what assertion *points out* is the hammer, while what *predication* contributes is a sense of the hammer's belonging within the relevance-structure in which it is uncovered.

When I say, "The bread and cup are on the table," I am of necessity pointing out *which* bread, cup, and table I am talking about. But I also then disclose the relations that constellate the world in which these beings have their particular Being. The most important word in the sentence, "The bread and cup are on the table," is "on." It is "on" that gives the other beings within the sentence their place and their shape. It is "on" that opens up the world of my understanding in its particular kinetic dance for the one who hears me and comes to share that understanding. Predication thus follows through the verbal act of pointing-out by mapping its grammatical structure onto the relational structures in which beings exist and in which we are already understandingly involved.

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[41] Ibid., §35:155.
[42] Ibid., §35:154.

It is because of this disclosure of the relevance-structure of world that Cristina Lafont reads the early Heidegger as a linguistic constitutionalist. Lafont maintains that, since Heidegger's opening the question of Being invokes the ontological difference between Being and beings, his focus on the being Dasein as the locus of Being's disclosure patently fails this distinction from the outset unless the world that is disclosed to Dasein is in and of itself constituted by the sign-structures of interpretive taking-as.[43] "The absence of any methodological clarification of how to employ his freshly minted concepts," Lafont says, "allows us to suppose that Heidegger, at this particular juncture, is not entirely clear as to the consequences of his replacement of the empirical/transcendental dichotomy with the ontological difference."[44] Lafont takes this methodological void as license to retrofit Heidegger's later concept of language as the "house of Being" onto the earlier *Being and Time*.

Dasein's Being-in-the-world, for Lafont, is Dasein's understanding of itself within "a symbolically structured world."[45] Lafont highlights the same worldly relevance structures that I examined in the previous chapter, although she does so by ascribing symbolic status to those relevances, such that they are themselves products of human language. These relational relevances are, by Lafont's reading, codified into semantic signs that refer to roles and functions of objects within a world.[46] As both the ontic equipment that refers and the ontological indication of signification as a whole, the sign bridges the ontological difference in a way that mirrors Dasein's own dual-nature as the being with an understanding of Being, thus acting as Dasein's point of entry into the worldly disclosure of Being.[47] As a showing, articulating kind of being,

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[43] Cristina Lafont, *Heidegger, Language, and World-Disclosure*, trans. Graham Harman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 17.
[44] Ibid., 17.
[45] Ibid., 15.
[46] Ibid., 34-35. Cf. Heidegger, *SZ*, §17:82-83.
[47] Lafont, *Heidegger, Language, and World-Disclosure*, 35.

each sign belongs to a linguistic element inherent to Dasein's understanding of world.[48] Without each being's own participation in language, Lafont worries that *Being and Time* fails to sufficiently overcome the subject/object schema of Cartesian Metaphysics.[49]

But does Cristina Lafont really believe that language is a pre-condition for our every understanding? She addresses this concern by arguing that Heidegger distinguishes between the "apophantic as" of predication and the "hermeneutic as" of interpretation.[50] That is, while Heidegger is never pre-linguistic in his account of Being-in-the-world, he is pre-predicative in the sense that words and grammar are only secondarily applied by human Dasein to the reality that it understands linguistically through interpretive taking-as.[51] For Lafont, there is no possible understanding that is not already interpreted. All reality is linguistic even if not all language is verbal.

So far as beings are related to one another in reality, we have to agree with Lafont that all beings do indeed refer to one another. But this referral is not a conveyance of meaning nor a description of any particular *what* of beings. Recall from the previous chapter that Dasein is uniquely the way of existence that apprehends the *how* of beings within a world in terms of their material dynamics. It is only because Dasein is uniquely open to the underlying structure of relatedness itself that it can then express this relation with the predicative arranging of language. What is conveyed in predication is not, as Lafont would have it, a translation of invariably linguistic reality into the particular language of the speaker. Rather, predication is an interpretive reflection upon Dasein's involvement with the dynamic worlding of world itself.

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[48] Ibid., 36-38.
[49] Ibid., 41.
[50] Ibid., 51. Cf. Heidegger, *SZ*, §32:149.
[51] Lafont, *Heidegger, Language, and World-Disclosure*, 53.

This highlights the relationship of predication to communication. If what we desire to convey in discourse generally and assertion specifically is a pre-linguistic understanding of world, then what we are articulating is the very totality of relevances out of which each being emerges as its kinetic self. To then predicate these *relevances* and not simply the static beings without relations (as though this were possible at all) is to interpretively cut the shapes of beings and their relations so that their interfacing may disclose how they belong to each other in a world.

The reason that Heidegger places predication second in his sequence of definitions for assertion is because predication bridges pointing-out with its end goal of communication. Thus, "we may give the definition: *assertion is communicative, character-giving pointing-out*."[52] While a certain predication may close off interpretive possibilities from a being, this closing down itself opens up the structure of our understanding to others. Pure predication does *not*, then, correspond to beings and their essences in the sense of strict Metaphysical categories. On the contrary, predication is an act of interpretive carving, like arranging furniture on a stage to give an audience a "sense of the room." What is communicated is not foremost information but rather beauty, pain, horror, fascination, tremor, mystery, anticipation, and so on. In short, what is properly given in language is attunement and its understanding.

3.1.4 Conclusion

Let us be quite clear about what language is and isn't in *Being and Time*. As assertion, language *is*, in fact, quite precise. As predicative pointing-out, language in its purest form is quite literal speech insofar as its ultimate orientation is toward concrete beings extended through space and

[52] Heidegger, *SZ*, §35:156. Emphasis original.

time and encountered through worldly involvement. Where language slips out of this concretion—becoming concerned with meanings before beings—it risks losing its tether to reality and so diminishes its veracity. But as literal, language as Heidegger sees it is still *not* correspondence, if what we mean by that term is a fairly direct alignment of abstract concepts to beings in reality. The reality which language points out is not a sum of static, individual parts but a confluence of nebulous dynamics in constant flux. Just as we established in the last chapter that there are, properly speaking, no such things as *things* at all, so it is improper for language to assume any stable, one-to-one correspondence to beings. Rather, in directing our interpretive consciousness toward beings within worlds, predicative pointing-out engages in assertion's third pole of communication by drawing us into lived experience of those dynamics at play. Far from giving us stable "essences" of things, verbal assertion opens up the mooded character of worlds in motion. In other words, language ushers *thinking beings* into worlds of *dynamic Being*.

This insight should be remembered when we come to the later Heidegger's exploration of poetry as the language that acknowledges the limits of language. Against those who read a sharp break between the early rigor of Heidegger's thought and his eventual turn to the mystical and poetic, I actually think we see here that Heidegger is already planting the seeds of that very development in his later thought. In both cases, I contend that language in its truest form gives us neither conceptual accuracy nor an apophatic emptiness but rather a return to the concrete reality of world. Where language loses this tether to world—either in overly theorized discourse or subjective realms of imagined or virtual experience or academic language games of infinitely deferred meaning—it ceases to be what it is in our most primordial use of it. When language becomes detached from world, in other words, it becomes uprooted from the soil of its life and so dies on the mantelpiece of intellectual navel-gazing. But the possibility of language's tether to

its source is also far from its guarantee, and so we must now evaluate how the foregoing process of discourse-interpretation-assertion goes awry in the technological mindset of human mastery before following up on Heidegger's examination of poetry as language's zenith.

3.2 TECHNOLOGY AS AN INTERPRETIVE WORLD

If Heidegger is most known for reopening the so-called "question of Being," then he is perhaps next most famous for his interpretation of technology. When Heidegger speaks of technology, he is not addressing the topic of technological entities themselves—the phone in my pocket or the computer on which I am typing—so much as the sphere in which our understanding has been oriented by calculative thinking. We might say, then, that Heidegger is more interested in the technolog*ism* of modern life or, to parse out the Greek origins of the word "technology," he is interested in the *logos* of *techne*. In this way, Heidegger is interested in technology as it belongs to human discourse—the revealing of worlds of attunement and possibility. The purpose of this section is to highlight how interpretation (and language in particular) can go awry in the mode of technology as a measuring commodification of beings. I will begin with a survey of Heidegger himself on the topic before transitioning to a consideration of Walter Ong's contributions concerning language as a technology. The goal of this section is both to raise awareness of how the possibility of world-oriented language is not its guarantee and to then supply a foil for the later Heidegger's interest in poetry as a more genuine form of speech.

3.2.1 Technological Enframing

In its original meaning, the Greek *techne* refers to craftsmanship and thus entails a revealing along the lines of art. "*Techne* belongs to bringing-forth, to *poiesis*," Heidegger writes in his

1953 essay "The Question Concerning Technology."[53] In this bringing-forth capacity, *techne* also belongs to *episteme*, knowing.[54] The craftsmanship of *techne* gives it over to the category of *logos*, which Heidegger defines in terms of gathering and showing.[55] Crafting raw materials into a particular product or tool casts those raw materials in a new light such that they are "raw" no longer. A prehistoric person using an animal bone as a club showcases the bone as what it is and can be in a particular light. The employment of the bone as a tool orients both the bone and the one who uses it toward a world of tool-usage. Being thus oriented, one's participation in this tool-usage world constitutes a communication of experience, a belonging to the world as understood in the activity of the original tool-user. As discourse, *techne* unveils something new about beings, giving them a particular interpretive shape and becoming the means through which whole worlds are opened up to us. Technology is thus unconcealment in the mode of production.

What specifically, then, does technology reveal? For Heidegger, "The revealing that rules in modern technology is a challenging [*Herausfordern*], which puts to nature the unreasonable demand that it supply energy which can be extracted and stored as such."[56] The way that modern technology showcases beings within a world is by showing them as resources. The *challenging* of modern technology is the process of domesticating beings. Challenging is a pulling, pushing, tugging of beings, herding them into conceptual and behavioral silos so that they can be deployed at will. A technological view of beings frames them within functionality. So whereas the posture of letting-be allows beings to perform themselves, challenging as a type of

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[53] Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper Collins, 2008), 318.
[54] Ibid., 318.
[55] See Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 132-142.
[56] Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," 320.

interpretation shoehorns beings into performances of human design. Beings thus become resources from which energy, nutrients, and even information can be extracted.

What further distinguishes modern technology from its predecessors, says Heidegger, is its seeking to *store* the resources derived from beings. The purpose of domesticating beings is to make them readily available, pliable in human hands and obedient to human manipulation. Whereas a premodern windmill's sails "do indeed turn in the wind; they are left entirely to the wind's blowing. But the windmill does not unlock energy from the air currents in order to store it."[57] The defining trait of modern technology, as opposed to earlier human tool-usage, is the captivity of beings under technology's sway, what Heidegger refers to as *standing-reserve* [*Bestand*].[58]

As the challenging revealing of beings, technology belongs under the heading of *aletheia*, unconcealment, but only as *one type* of unconcealment.[59] Technology reveals beings as fundamentally storable and therefore as *efficient*. As masters of beings, technological humans both extract resources from beings and hem them into storage units (everything from animal cages to electric batteries) from which they can be summoned at will. As standing-reserve, beings are always on call, so to speak. I may not need my pen at the moment, so I store it in my bag in a specific slot designed to contain it, so that when I find a need for it, I can retrieve it without delay. The same can be said of the more extreme example of meat production. Whereas premodern humans hunted and gathered for their food, and later humans learned farming by tending animals in open pastures, the rise of modern market capitalism incentivizes farms to pen

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[57] Ibid., 320.
[58] Ibid., 322.
[59] For further discussion of technology as unconcealment, see Hubert Dreyfus and Charles Spinosa, "Further Reflections on Heidegger, Technology, and the Everyday," in *Bulletin of Science, Technology, & Society* 23.5 (October 2003): 341, and George Pattison, *Thinking About God in an Age of Technology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 75

in animals, maximizing the number of creatures that can be fit into a minimal container-space, and controlling their reproductive activity so as to keep a steady stream of animals at each point in their life cycle in order to keep up with demand.

The shape of this efficient, technological world is given by *measurement*. Things defined by the grasp of human measurement are what Heidegger calls, borrowing again from the Greeks, *ta mathemata*. In contrast to *ta phusica*—"things insofar as they originate and come forth from themselves"[60]—*ta mathemata* are "things insofar as we take cognizance of them as what we already know them to be in advance."[61] We know beings in advance when we know them in terms of categories with which we are already familiar. Such knowledge is mathematical because quantity is the primary mode of measurement. Measurement does not so much reflect that we have names for things—dogs and cats, knives and forks, and so on—but that we rather submit all these beings to our expectations of standardization, which discloses them as existing for ease of human use rather than for their own sake. The result is that, in our belonging to a technological world, we habitually interpret beings according to our expectations of what they ought to be rather than what they may show of themselves.

But is this not the very process of interpretive taking-as? Is not all interpretation the identification of a being under a particular concept? It should be remembered here that interpretation as we observed it in *Being and Time* is not yet assertion, and so the predication implied in naming a being is not always operative at the level of interpretation. Furthermore, interpretation belongs to Dasein's active discourse, and so interpretive taking-as is not merely a cognitive activity but an expressive interaction with a being. With every change of my fingers

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[60] Martin Heidegger, "Modern Science, Metaphysics, and Mathematics," in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper Collins, 2008), 274.
[61] Ibid., 275.

along the strings of a guitar, I make interpretive discourse with the guitar, drawing out the affordances it presents to my understanding while articulating an expression of my own possibilities. There is thus something inherently dialogical about interpretive discourse as rooted in worldly understanding.

Technological measuring, by contrast, is a discourse that shapes beings monologically. Measuring, says Heidegger, "is therefore an extremely peculiar taking, a taking where one who takes only takes what one basically already has."[62] This measuring, mathematical mode of interpretation is what Heidegger calls technology's *enframing* [*Gestell*]. Enframing is "that challenging claim which gathers man thither to order the self-revealing as standing-reserve."[63] The typical meaning of the German *Gestell*, Heidegger notes, is a skeletal apparatus, a framework holding up a network of parts.[64] In this sense, technological enframing constitutes a world by organizing the relevance-structure of beings in terms of production and efficiency. In a technological world, it is necessary that beings should be static, so that I as subject can dictate their moving, calling them into and out of their Being-for-me. Technology thus suffocates dynamism. If my every engagement with beings is immediately filtered through my pre-measured interpretation of static beings, then not only are other beings limited in the scope of their kinetic reality, but I myself am cut off from the immensity of world and the new possibilities opened up by that experience.

So, for instance, modern technology allows me to summon up other humans, their thoughts, and their experiences through the internet in the form of photographs, videos, audio files, news articles, opinion pieces, and community forums. I can stop and replay a video or song

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[62] Ibid., 275.
[63] Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," 324.
[64] Ibid., 325.

at my whim, I can choose the information to which I am exposed, and I can likewise bracket that data which does not interest me or even challenges my assumptions. In this way, I am able to maintain interpretive order, and the world in which I live is ever more constituted by my own decisions. I can read what I like, listen to what and whom I choose, and maintain the measured definition of reality that I prefer, all through the determining discourse of my browser's search bar. The world is ostensibly entirely reducible to information, which is in turn available for sorting into categories of "true" and "false," which are themselves pre-measured by my technological gaze.

The pinnacle of technological thinking, then, is its commodification of human beings themselves. Thinking technologically, the human's own way of Being is technologized, and the human is subsequently commodified as a cog in the technological wheel. As Heidegger writes,

> If man is challenged, ordered, to do this, then does not man himself belong even more originally than nature within the standing-reserve? The current talk about human resources, about the supply of patients for a clinic, gives evidence of this. The forester who measures the felled timber in the woods and who to all appearances walks the forest path in the same way his grandfather did is today ordered by the industry that produces commercial woods, whether he knows it or not. He is made subordinate to the orderability of cellulose, which for its part is challenged forth by the need for paper, which is then delivered to newspapers and illustrated magazines.[65]

Whereas the forester's grandfather knew the forest by walking in it, chopping down a tree, cutting it into firewood, and burning it in his home, the modern forester understands the same forest through quantity: How much timber has been ordered? How much wood can this or that tree generate? How many new trees must be planted and at what intervals in order to sustain the business going forward? But the forester is not the cause of his calculative interpretation. The world that defines the human's situatedness is itself mechanized, and so one's sense of purpose is driven by the enframing tendency of this world. The forester's technological attitude toward the

[65] Ibid., 323.

forest is thus derived from the demand of technological society, concerned as it is with commodifying beings for its purposes rather than letting them be in their freedom.

What makes technology a world, then, is its domestication of us as "human resources."[66] Individual customers are now "consumers," whose needs and desires become the impersonal data for corporate policies. Political campaigns increasingly transition from building coalitions to mining social media in order to package ideologies into the measure of demographically targeted advertising. As a result, the nuance, fluidity, inconsistencies, and creativity of a given person are increasingly covered over by their compartmentalization into a series of traits and labels so as to be more effectively sorted in the global supermarket of usefulness and moral valuation. One is no longer an individual, navigating the tension between their thrown location in a world and their discernment of the possibilities therein; one is now black, male, Christian, rural, conservative, college-educated, gay, etc., that these may render the individual stable and identifiable, ready to be taken up as useful to ideologies or advertisers or packaged for mass moral assessment. As Hubert Dreyfus and Charles Spinosa recognize, "From the perspective of those who share the technological lifestyle, goals such as serving God, society, our fellow men, or even ourselves no longer make sense. Human beings, on this view, become a resource to be used—but more importantly, to be enhanced—like any other."[67] Given this picture, the body is a resource for the mind, which is itself harvested for the cultivation of the information economy. It may be useful as a vehicle of pleasure or production, but it certainly has no aptitude for holiness. Body and mind together are preserved in their stability by a medical emphasis on homeostasis, in which normalcy, consistency, and perpetuity undercut the validity of ecstasy, inspiration, or sacrifice.

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[66] Ibid., 323.
[67] Dreyfus and Spinosa, "Further Reflections on Heidegger, Technology, and the Everyday," 342.

No one is responsible for deliberately making the world technological; rather, we are each inducted into it through our participation in social speech patterns, public education, and political and economic interests that rest on mastery, security, and production. Indeed, as George Pattison observes, even within the field of theology, claims to truth and the viability of arguments depend upon adherence to scientific standards of measurement: historical-criticism, linguistic-grammatical analysis, the stasis of text, the rules of modern logic, and the like.[68] In the technological world, truth is something possessed, not the dynamic sway of Being to which we are more primordially exposed.

3.2.2 Walter Ong and the Technologization of Language

If technology, as has just been observed, exists as a particularly perverse form of discursive interpretation in the mode of domination, then why exactly do I situate it within a discussion of language? As verbal predication, language encapsulates understanding within the cut-out frame of interpretive taking-as and offers it up as a more or less enclosed *thing*—a *sense* [*Sinn*]—through which to communicate one's understanding. A sentence, poem, novel, or manual each discursively arranges nebulous experiences into a particular whole, and the capacity of language to do just this renders it susceptible to the measuring attitude of technology. To hem our understanding of beings into interpretive word-things brings with it the inherent risk of reducing that understanding to the standing-reserve of *information*. As Walter Ong argues in *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, this technological inclination of language emerges with the advent of *writing*. Since this project is not only concerned with the ontological revelation of Jesus Christ but moreover with the possibility of grounding Christian speech in that

[68] George Pattison, *Thinking About God in an Age of Technology*, 69.

very revelation, it is thus essential to evaluate how our contemporary technological milieu conditions and limits our capacity to speak truly. I will therefore now explore Ong's evaluation of the technological function of writing, the ways that it has historically altered human consciousness, and how the more basic orality of language reinforces the kind of dynamic closeness to autonomous beings that Heidegger understands as the condition of truth. In doing so, I will round out my exploration of Heidegger's views on technology by returning more explicitly to a consideration of language by specifically addressing how language in a technological world shapes and limits the hermeneutic possibilities available to us.

The primal form of human language is the spoken word. Oral speech is more basic not only because it historically predates writing but also because each human acquires speech before they are able to read or write and all humans are naturally predisposed to speech, while not all humans become literate.[69] Orality is dependent upon sound, which unlike all other sensory experiences, resists permanence. Ong writes, "Sound exists only when it is going out of existence. It is not simply perishable but essentially evanescent, and it is sensed as evanescent."[70] A picture can be looked at, a video can be broken down into still frames, and a rose can be smelled for either one second or several. But when I say a three-syllable word, by the time I have reached the third syllable, the first is already long gone. Sound can be recorded, yes, but it cannot be made to be still. If I pause a video, I see a still frame; if I pause a song, I hear nothing. Even a sustained note on the piano is but a continual repetition of the same vibration pattern rather than an enclosed singularity.

By contrast, a written text can not only be read but be *re*-read, and so writing reifies words in a way that is not inherent to the oral use of language. "Without writing," Ong says,

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[69] Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, (London: Routledge, 2002), 81.
[70] Ibid., 31-32.

"words as such have no visual presence, even when the objects they represent are visual. They are sounds. You might 'call' them back—'recall' them. But there is nowhere to 'look' for them… They are occurrences, events."[71] Sound is inherently dynamic, whereas the image is inherently static.[72] The spoken word is elusive by nature. Spoken language emerges from the worldly involvement of human speakers. Orality, then, is primarily *physical*.

This combination of physicality and transience that characterizes orality leads primarily oral societies to lean on rhythm, alliteration, and repetition of themes and phrases as part of their intellectual culture.[73] Dependent upon shared lived experience, oral language reinforces close proximity between humans and their lifeworld.[74] For instance, I can know quite a lot about the President of the United States, despite the fact that I have never been physically near him, only because I can read things written about him. Orality, by contrast, requires that the hearer and speaker share the same physical space, and so what orality captures in speech is quite likely to be physically present to both hearer and speaker.[75] If I were a strictly oral person living in a strictly oral community, I could not know that the U.S. President even existed unless someone from outside my community came to tell me about him. And even then, for such a telling to make sense at all, the speaker would have to draw on what was available within my oral world in order to make the President-world (complete with its government structure, a brief overview of the

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[71] Ibid., 31.
[72] Ibid., 32.
[73] Ibid., 34.
[74] Ibid., 42-43.
[75] Cf. Aleksandr Romanovich Luria, *Cognitive Development: Its Cultural and Social Foundations*, ed. Michael Cole, trans. Martin Lopez-Morillas and Lynn Solotaroff (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), which Ong references in *Orality and Literacy*, 49-56. Luria conducted a study of oral (illiterate) and literate persons to observe their differing structures of consciousness. He found that oral persons had a much more situational way of thinking. For instance, when presented with a shape like a triangle or hexagon, oral persons more often gave the name of a similarly shaped object (plate, moon, etc.) than of any abstract shape (Luria, *Cognitive Development*, 32-39). Additionally, when presented with a series of objects in reality, oral persons were much less inclined to sort them into categories like "tools" or "plants" because they were more likely to identify connections between categorically dissimilar objects within a worldly context (for instance, a saw and a log go together more than a saw and a hammer)(Ibid., 56).

Constitution, the philosophy of representative democracy, and the like) possible. What writing achieves that orality lacks is an expansion of world to include what is physically remote to us.

With this in mind, aspiration for the permanence that writing achieves is entirely understandable. "Writing makes 'words' appear similar to things," says Ong, "because we think of words as the visible marks signaling words to decoders: we can see and touch such inscribed 'words' in texts and books. Written words are residue. Oral tradition has no such residue or deposit."[76] The introduction of writing to human language gives permanence to speech in a way that sound can never deliver. The result is greater distance from words, the ability to examine them for prolonged periods of time, and the opportunity to discuss them as stable objects. In light of what we have already observed in Heidegger's analysis of technology, we can here see the advent of the technological mindset even as far back as the first chirographic innovations of prehistoric humans. Indeed, Ong considers writing the most drastic form of technology.[77]

As with orality, Ong observes how the prevalence of writing also structures the consciousness of literate persons. Writing establishes "autonomous discourse," the existence of language independent of a speaker.[78] Of course, all texts have an author. But the physical separation of the author from their text means that the author cannot answer the questions or critiques of the reader. Additionally, because the reader is not privy to the lived experience of the author, the reader is forced to appropriate what is written to their own world. This is what both necessitates and makes possible hermeneutics—the conscious and deliberate process of interpreting a text—since the intention of the author (which prompted the text's existence in the first place) is bracketed from the reader's experience. Writing also makes abstraction possible,

[76] Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 11.
[77] Ibid., 80.
[78] Ibid., 77.

since words—and thus our thinking about them—are displaced from a physical context to a predominantly intellectual one.[79] The scope of oral language is relatively small, both because it is naturally bound to the physical environment of the conversants and because the transience of sound requires repetition and mnemonics in order for words to be remembered. Because of its permanence, writing expands the realm of thought by reducing both redundancy and the need for memorization. In written form, language itself can become standing-reserve. It can be called upon, stored, cited, discussed, multiplied, shared, and even sold. Therefore, thought need not be as deeply anchored in embodied experience but can exist as purely conceptual. Seeing a word on a page allows that to which the word refers to be separated from the world in which it is involved. This removal of a word-object from the spoken context subsequently yields more rigorous grammar.[80] Because objects, verbs, and turns of phrase are no longer comprehensible in terms of shared history, what words refer to must become narrower, their meanings more precise, and their uses more regulated so as to allow for less ambiguity.[81]

Print and electronic media continue this trajectory of linguistic technologization, says Ong. The breakthrough of print media is of course the increase in volume and accessibility of language, and so printing is inherently consumer-oriented.[82] The pervasiveness of printed texts has further bracketed the individual author—since handwriting is now removed as a last token of authorial expression—and reinforced the expectation in readers for intellectual privacy—since

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[79] Ibid., 45.
[80] Ibid., 101.
[81] Ong exemplifies this phenomenon with an analysis of the ancient Greek language, which was the first of the Indo-European languages to include written vowels in its text (Ibid., 88-89). None of the Semitic languages from which Greek emerged used written vowels, so that an oral acquaintance with the language was necessary in order for the written language to have meaning. The Greek introduction of written vowels, then, meant that anyone who came across an unknown word could at least sound it out or interpret its component parts. The word now existed *entirely* on the page, and Ong suggests that this transference of linguistic reality to the page may have been a major psychological contribution to the eventual ascendancy of Greek abstract thought.
[82] Ibid., 120.

texts can be amassed, read in private, and interpreted interiorly.[83] The very manufacturability of language in print completes the transformation of words from a musical expression of worldly involvement to static standing-reserve.[84] Similarly, while televisual technologies enable a resurgence of the spoken word, such speech is what Ong calls "secondary orality," that is, speech that is dependent upon the conceptual and grammatical norms established in writing.[85] Oral speech can now be rewound, watched again, and recorded. It can be used as stable evidence, whereas in pure orality, speech always disappears into the past.

What writing buys in abstraction and complexity, then, it pays for in proximity to the real. It should therefore be clear by now why the discussion of Heidegger's thoughts on technology are so vital to my overarching concern for language in this chapter. While Heidegger gives a compelling analysis in *Being and Time* of language's emergence out of pre-linguistic, discursive interaction with our environment, the technologization of language evident through the preeminence of writing in modern society poses the risk of disentangling our interpretive takings-as from the dynamic doings that undergird our understanding. Because the goal of this thesis is not merely to discover an intelligible way to speak of Christian revelation but of articulating how it is ontologically possible for said revelation to anchor corresponding speech, the commodification of speech under the auspices of writing technology poses a serious challenge—perhaps *the* challenge—to any theory of a truly Christian hermeneutic.

Consider, for instance, the modern inheritance of Christian fundamentalism and scriptural inerrancy from the Reformation focus on *sola scriptura*. The traditional Protestant deference to the Bible as the sole foundation for Christian doctrine is itself dependent on many features that

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[83] Ibid., 128.
[84] Ibid., 129.
[85] Ibid., 133.

only writing can provide: stability, permanence, mass production, and grammatical exactitude. The individual's experience, by contrast, is suspect because it cannot be verified, because it is "too subjective"; this despite the inherently experiential quality of divine encounter depicted in biblical stories and the predominantly oral sources of many scriptural texts. Against this supposed subjectivity, the Bible appears the same to all persons. It can be "correct," that is, the same as what has been printed before. And as correct, the Bible can be used as *evidence*, a guarantor of intellectual consistency to which one may appeal in times of disagreement or uncertainty. By this reasoning, scripture alone can be taken as reliably true.

In light of Heidegger's examination of technology as a commodifying worldview, however, this appeal to text as evidential raises questions about the domestication at work in fundamentalist readings of scripture. If Heidegger and Ong are indeed right in their respective outlooks, then the exclusive reliance on scripture *as text* seems misguided. The heart of fundamentalism is the certainty it provides by giving clear answers that do not change. Reality, however, is dynamic and fluid, so that to shoehorn involved understanding into the stability of stable concepts in fact becomes the height of *mis*-understanding.

But this fundamentalist inclination occurs just as strongly in ostensibly secular society. Just as the Christian fundamentalist appeals to the Bible because of its supposed stability, so this very stability is the grounds on which the opponent of religion makes his case. The *fact* (this very concept, indicating stasis, being possible only on the basis of writing) that scripture details *events* (entailing a narrative closure that extricates them from the lived experience they depict) that cannot be *true* (meant here in the sense of compatibility with known facts about the operations of matter and minds through present-at-hand observation of events abstracted into written principles of logic), is reason enough to discard the Bible as a source of truth altogether.

Of course, these sketches of both Christian and secular fundamentalism paint an uncharitable picture of reductive arguments. But they are enough, I believe, to prompt the necessary question: If the Bible, along with the creeds and doctrines that follow from it, cannot be read "technologically" or be considered true in a "scientific" sense, then how can it be read as true at all?

The answer, I hope will be clear by now, lies in the tether of discursive interpretation that grounds the production of scriptural, religious, and theological speech within the dynamic understanding of Dasein's Being-in-the-world. But what does such speech look like? Is there a way to speak *non-technologically* without only being allowed to speak *metaphorically*? Is there a way for us moderns, conditioned as we are by the structured consciousness of writing, to still speak authentically out of our involved experience? I believe that Heidegger provides an answer in his exploration of poetry throughout his later works, and so it is to this topic that we now turn.

3.3 POETRY IN HEIDEGGER'S LATER WORKS

Returning to Heidegger's own thoughts on language, it is here worth considering whether technology is a phenomenon needing to be overcome or whether it is simply a reality that is inherent to our present way of existing. That is, if we are to pursue the Being of beings adequately, then what ought our relationship be to our broadly technological worldview?

Coming from an explicitly theological perspective, George Pattison suggests that, rather than producing, organizing, or determining, "Thinking about God is thinking that must wait upon its 'object.'"[86] Such thinking must take the form of *gratitude* for what is given, since what is thought is precisely that which is not human-made.[87] But if we are to think of God in the mode of

[86] George Pattison, *Thinking About God in an Age of Technology*, 122.
[87] Ibid., 123.

gratitude—which we might consider a type of letting-be—then what kind of speech is this thinking to take if not the measurement of technology? On the one hand, Pattison is concerned that negative and mystical theologies run the risk of pointing to God only as ineffable and thus remove themselves from the responsibility of speech anchored in truth.[88] On the other hand, Pattison also believes we are not yet so free of technology's influence as to speak confidently of God in any other way.[89] As a solution, he suggests speaking subjunctively of God (e.g., "God *may*…," "God *might*…").[90] This provisional way of speaking, Pattison argues, is not as noncommittal as explicitly negative theology but is simply a discipline of reserve. As Pattison sees it, such theological speech neither falls prey to the violence of technological measurement nor the equivocation of apophatic speech.

Yet if Pattison's critique of negative theology is its abstention from responsible speech, then his subjunctive proposal hardly offers a more concrete alternative. If all we can say of God is that God *may* or *might* be this or that, then it is unclear how we can have any confidence in our speech at all. Even the staunchly apophatic worldview espouses greater confidence in its insistence on what God is *not*. Moreover, speaking subjunctively risks embracing an attitude of fragility in the face of technology rather than posing a critical alternative to it. Without the confidence exhibited by either mystical apophaticism or technological cataphaticism, the legitimacy of saying anything at all seems suddenly up for debate.

But how can we speak with greater theological confidence without thereby succumbing to technological thinking? Heidegger's answer, as indicated in the title of this section, is an embrace of language in the form of *poetry*. Unlike technology, which determines beings by

[88] Ibid., 128.
[89] Ibid., 129.
[90] Ibid., 132.

shoehorning them into predetermined concepts, poetry leaves language open-ended, turning toward beings with the arranging activity of discourse while at the same time remaining available to what each being may show of itself that is strange or new. As Wrathall notes, "The poet is not a philosophical authority, but, Heidegger believes, he can be regarded as an authoritative voice on at least one thing—the experience of being struck by the power and limits of language itself."[91] This experience of being struck by both the power and limits of language brings with it a dependence upon and orientation toward the worldliness of world. If, as discursive Being-in-the-world, human Dasein reaches out toward beings in part by discursively positioning them and bringing their various facets to light, then as poetic, this same discourse allows the beings thus highlighted to have their say in our understanding. In what follows, I aim to show how Heidegger's later reflections on language in the mode of poetry open up the possibilities for language set forth in *Being and Time* without limiting them to the dominating gaze of technology. I will begin with an examination of how the later Heidegger comes to redefine "language" as the non-representational *logos* of beings before exploring how poetry becomes the central way human speech comes to participate in this redefined language and then concluding with Heidegger's thoughts on naming as the articulation of beings that withdraw from language into worldly belonging.

3.3.1 The New Logos: Gathering & Saying

As Wrathall astutely observes, in the later works, Heidegger's use of "language" as a translation for the Greek *logos* comes to take the meaning of the earlier Heidegger's "discourse" [*Rede*].[92] Rather than assuming a common definition of language throughout Heidegger's works as we

[91] Wrathall, *Heidegger and Unconcealment*, 138.
[92] Ibid., 127.

observed earlier in Cristina Lafont, Wrathall (correctly, in my opinion) observes how the continuity between Heidegger's earlier and later works is paradoxically maintained by his change in terminology. No longer tied to just the interpretive mode of assertion, with its tripartite structure of pointing-out, predication, and communication, "language" now maps onto discourse as a whole.

As early as his 1935 *Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger notes that the Greek *logos* forms the base of the Latin *legere*, which in turn grounds the German *lesen*, meaning to collect, glean, or harvest.[93] Whereas we traditionally think of language or *logos* in terms of imposition of conceptual content by a thinking subject, the more basic definition of *logos* is *gathering* [*sammeln*]. "Gathering is never just driving together and piling up," Heidegger says. "It maintains a belonging-together that which contends and strives in confrontation. It does not allow it to decay into mere dispersion and what is simply cast down."[94] We here again see the arranging, relating quality which we previously saw characterize discourse. As gathering, *logos* is not a mere putting-together or spatial setting-side-by-side but is instead a coordinating of objects in active relation to one another. "As maintaining," Heidegger goes on, "*logos* has the character of pervasive sway, of *phusis*."[95] This notion of *phusis* as the "pervasive sway" disclosed in *logos* reiterates the fundamentally dynamic shape of Being for which I argued in the last chapter. As Heidegger elsewhere defines the term,

> [Φ]ύσις [*Phusis*] is not just the origin and ordering of the movedness of a moving being, but also belongs to this moving being itself in such a way that this being, in itself and from itself and toward itself, orders its own movedness… [S]omething determined by φύσις not only stays with itself in its movedness but precisely goes back into itself even as it unfolds in accordance with the movedness (the change).[96]

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[93] Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 131.
[94] Ibid., 142.
[95] Ibid., 142.
[96] Martin Heidegger, "On the Essence and Concept of Φύσις in Aristotle's *Physics* B.I" trans. Thomas Sheehan, in *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 195.

The *phusis* of a being is not some external movedness enacted upon the being but is itself an aspect of that being's Being. *Phusis* thus encapsulates the intrinsic dynamism of beings, their unfolding of themselves through movement and change. So how can Heidegger now say that human *logos* in the mode of discourse has the same character as *phusis*? Is this identification not the very move that invites thinkers like Lafont to read Heidegger as a linguistic constitutionalist?

On the contrary, it is *logos* that now adopts the material-dynamic character of *phusis*. *Logos* in this characterization does not properly belong to human beings. Rather, human beings belong to it. "Saying and listening are proper only when they are intrinsically directed in advance toward Being, toward logos. Only where logos opens itself up does vocabulary become word."[97] True human discourse is thus narrowed down to the task of following through what beings unfold of themselves. Human intentionality is neither bracketed from the gathering of *logos* altogether nor given dominance in the mold of technology. Rather, Heidegger's exploration of *logos* now ascribes to all beings the expressive activity given to humans in discourse, so that becoming attuned to Being begins with listening to what beings "say" of themselves. As we saw in the last chapter, where the later Heidegger displaces human Dasein from the center of disclosure into a much broader clearing, so here we see the discourse uniquely credited to Dasein in *Being and Time* now expanded to include the initiative of non-human beings as well. Discursive *logos*, by this account, is a flow, a sway, with which the human can only strive to become in sync and only out of which can a genuine predication emerge.

By the time we get to Heidegger's 1959 collection of essays, *On the Way to Language*, *logos* has established the function of bringing human beings near to the fourfold within the clearing. "To say means to show, to make appear, the lighting-concealing-releasing offer of

[97] Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 140.

world," says Heidegger. "Now, nearness manifests itself as the motion in which the world's [four] regions face each other."[98] Saying means to bring to light what has already revealed itself within the clearing. The dynamic relations of world articulate themselves, such that the human who witnesses this coming-to-light can only properly speak by first hearkening to what is unspoken. Heidegger explicitly writes, "Language, then, is not a mere human faculty. Its character belongs to the very character of the movement of the face-to-face encounter of the world's four regions."[99] Indeed, "Language is, as the world-moving Saying, the relation of all relations."[100] As mortals located alongside beings within the clearing, we humans "can speak only as we respond to language."[101]

One therefore does not properly *do* language; one is *caught up in it*. One can speak only insofar as one first listens. Assertion as grounded in discourse as equiprimordial with understanding in *Being and Time* is now clarified to be a manifestation of a prior engagement with the self-expression of beings. Speech is here a matter of dialogue, not monologue. In that spirit, whatever makes its way out of human mouths in the language of predication must have a fundamental apprehension of what beings first "say" of themselves, which invariably will not be in the language of symbolic representation or verbal predication. [102] Instead, beings "speak" themselves in their dynamic performance.

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[98] Martin Heidegger, "The Nature of Language," in *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz (New York: Harper Collins, 1971), 107.
[99] Ibid., 107.
[100] Ibid., 107.
[101] Ibid., 107.
[102] In this way, Heidegger's *logos* offers a counter to what Derrida identifies as the logocentrism of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's logic of supplementarity, wherein language problematically adds representation (and thus referentiality) to beings, thus distancing language from any original guarantee of truth. See Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, Corrected Edition, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 144-268.

3.3.2 Poetry

So what, exactly, does human speech as responsive to *logos* look like in practice? Or, as Heidegger asks the question, "But when does language speak itself as language?"[103] In other words, when does human language (grammar and vocabulary) come into its own as *logos* (synchrony with the dynamic relations of beings)? Heidegger answers,

> Curiously enough, when we cannot find the right word for something that concerns us, carries us away, oppresses or encourages us. Then we leave unspoken what we have in mind and, without rightly giving it thought, undergo moments in which language itself has distantly and fleetingly touched us with its essential being.[104]

Like the ringing silence immediately following a symphony's last note, language is best understood precisely at the point where it leaves off. For Heidegger, it is the poet who is best qualified for such a task.[105] The poet is most familiar with the frustration of language, since the call to poetry is itself the experience of mystery. The power of poetry—be it written verse or a spectacular cinematographic shot—is its capacity to capture a world in newly disclosive ways. Yet for such novelty to be possible at all requires a prior experience with the inadequacy of previous interpretations. "The poet has learned renunciation," Heidegger says.[106] By this he means the poet has undergone an experience with speechlessness, or at least with the futility of available language. "By learning that renunciation, the poet undergoes his experience with the word's lofty sway. He receives primal knowledge of what task is assigned to the poetic saying, what sublime and lasting matters are promised to it and yet withheld from it."[107] The poet's deep attunement to the sway of the *phusis* of beings, the *logos* of their play with one another, is the call to poetic expression. Yet one can only experience this call alongside the withdrawal of

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[103] Heidegger, "The Nature of Language," 59.
[104] Ibid., 59.
[105] Ibid., 59.
[106] Ibid., 65.
[107] Ibid., 66.

language. Only where the calculative, measuring thought of technology breaks off can beings stand forth in their dynamism for human language to discursively encounter.

Thus, Heidegger says in his 1951 lecture "…Poetically Man Dwells…" that "Poetic creation, which lets us dwell, is a kind of building."[108] Indeed, "poetry first causes dwelling to be dwelling."[109] That is, what technology creates is simply static, lifeless, and still. But poetry, as the bringing to expression of what already speaks in beings, allows for relationship with what is created. One can be physically placed in a given locale, but only when they inhabit the resonant relations within their environment can they be said to *dwell* there. Poetry is thus more than human speech; it is our more authentic attitude toward the Being of beings.

It must be remembered here what was shown above, namely, that the later Heidegger develops his understanding of language to entail the gathering saying of Being that belongs to worldliness in general. Language is not a being but rather the interfacing of beings to which humans are attuned. And because it belongs to the human's way of Being to speak, the human's participation within that network entails their bringing to light that which beings already articulate. One's availability to this beckoning language is the basis for poetic speech:

> The more poetic a poet is—the freer (that is, the more open and ready for the unforeseen) his saying—the greater is the purity with which he submits what he says to an ever more painstaking listening, and the further what he says is from the mere propositional statement that is dealt with solely in regard to its correctness or incorrectness.[110]

In the previous chapter, we observed the later Heidegger's definition of letting-be in terms of standing in mutual freedom with beings.[111] Here the poet is put forth as free in terms of being "open and ready for the unforeseen." The poet "submits" what is said to "an ever more

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[108] Martin Heidegger, "…Poetically Man Dwells…" in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper Perennial Classics, 2001), 213.
[109] Ibid., 213.
[110] Ibid., 214.
[111] See Chapter 2.2.1.

painstaking listening," so that what emerges in spoken words is shaped by what is first encountered in the freedom of mutual exposure.

Consider as an example of this poetic grappling the famous photo of "Three dead Americans on the beach at Buna," printed in the September 20, 1943 issue of *Life* Magazine.[112] Depicting three uniformed corpses staggered down a beach in New Guinea, the waves washing up on shore as their boat lies half-sunk in the background, the picture was the first photograph of dead American soldiers to be printed during the Second World War, nearly two years after the United States' entrance into the conflict. There is a quietude about the photo, as though the battle has moved further inland, leaving these nameless men to wash away into forgotten nonexistence. And it is precisely this unsettling quiet that is brought to mind by the opening lines of the accompanying editorial:

> Here lie three Americans.
>
> What shall we say of them? Shall we say that this is a noble sight? Shall we say that this is a fine thing, that they should give their lives for their country?
>
> Or shall we say that this is too horrible to look at?
>
> Why print this picture anyway, of three American boys dead upon an alien shore? Is it to hurt people? To be morbid?
>
> Those are not the reasons.
>
> The reason is that words are never enough. The eye sees. The mind knows. The heart feels. But the words do not exist to make us see, or know, or feel what it is like, what actually happens. The words are never right.
>
> […]
>
> And the reason we print it now is that, last week, President Roosevelt and Elmer Davis and the War Department decided that the American people ought to be able to see their own boys as they fall in battle; to come directly and without words into the presence of their own dead.
>
> And so here it is. This is the reality that lies behind the names that come to rest at last on monuments in the leafy squares of American towns.[113]

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[112] George Strock, "Three dead Americans on the beach at Buna," 1943, *Life* Magazine, September 20, 1943, 35. https://books.google.com/books?id=UlAEAAAAMBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false.

[113] *Life* Editorial Board, "Three Americans," *Life*, September 20, 1943, 34.

What Heidegger identifies as the purpose of poetry is here laid bare in its stark possibilities. Words, as the editorial puts it, "are never right." Instead, the only words that the editorial can muster point to their own inadequacy and so point beyond themselves. The words grapple with the excess of the moment, just as the photograph itself—its framing, angle, etc.—articulates a phenomenon that is at once close to the senses and yet eludes conceptualization. The editorial explicitly comprehends viewers' capacities to be immersed in a visual world at the same time that it accepts its own inability to adequately articulate that world. The words and photo together open up a world of understanding to the reader, but it is an understanding of helplessness and distance as well as one of closeness and solidarity. *Life*'s decision to print the photo is an attempt to facilitate empathy on the part of the viewer. One is brought to a sensory encounter with that which lies beyond their sensory immediacy, and so one is brought to a speechless grappling with that which escapes precision and yet does not elude understanding altogether. The words of the editorial cannot explain, but they can give us up to the experience initiated by the photo. The essence of poetry, in this instance, is to shepherd the viewer into a pre-linguistic understanding, to point beyond itself in reverence to what it cannot contain.

3.3.3 Naming

The essence of poetic speech is thus to yield forth an understanding of worldly involvement. In that way, perhaps counter-intuitively, poetic speech is in fact quite literal speech. Far from an apophatic talking around a conceptual nothingness or a resignation to the distance between speech and reality inherent to metaphor, poetry gives us reality by in fact giving ourselves, as speakers and hearers, back over to reality itself. In other words, following my previous chapter's analysis of Being-in-the-world and the Being of beings as dynamism, what poetic speech gives

to human hearers is both a respect for the otherness of beings to our conceptual grasp—the freedom of letting-be—as well as an attuned point of entry into the visceral worlds of involvement.

We can perhaps best observe this function of language in Heidegger's examination of *naming* in his 1952 lecture series, *What is Called Thinking?*. There, Heidegger emphasizes how true thinking is a pursuit after beings as they withdraw, following down the paths that they trace in their elusion of our categorization:

> To the extent that man *is* drawing that way, he *points* toward what withdraws. *As* he is pointing that way, man *is* the pointer. Man here is not first of all man, and then also occasionally someone who points. No: drawn into what withdraws, drawing toward it and thus pointing into the withdrawal, man first *is* man. His essential nature lies in being such a pointer.[114]

Here we can observe the above themes of language as *logos* and the human speaker as poet. As pointing toward what withdraws from our speech, the human is fundamentally oriented toward the free dynamism of beings, their unfolding of themselves within worlds of relations into which we are plunged in involvement. To think of beings is to follow the paths they lay out in this dynamic unfurling, and so *thinking*, in this way, is the human answer to the call of beings, responding to their beckoning withdrawal. As speakers, human thinkers are poets in pointing toward the beings that withdraw, bringing that very withdrawal to light and so showcasing the path of that withdrawal. It is with this following in mind, then, that Heidegger goes on to define naming as follows:

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[114] Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?* trans. J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper Perennial, 1976), 9.

> To name something—that is to call it by name. More fundamentally, to name is to call and clothe something with a word. What is so called, is then at the call of the word. What is called appears as what is present, and in its presence it is brought into the keeping, it is commanded, called into the calling word. So called by name, called into a presence, it in turn calls. It is named, has the name. By naming, we call on what is present to arrive. Arrive where? That remains to be thought about. In any case, all naming and all being named is the familiar "to call" only because naming itself consists by nature in the real calling, in the call to come, in a commending and a command.[115]

To think of beings is to follow their withdrawal, but to name beings is to summon them to presence. At first, this may seem a contradiction. But to name—in clothing a being with a word—is to call on beings to reveal themselves: "So called by name, called into a presence, it in turn calls." The being that beckons the human pointing now calls on the human that calls it with a word. In bringing a being to presence, that being is summoned to reveal the trajectory of its withdrawal, to forge the path for thinking to follow: "By naming, we call on what is present to arrive. Arrive where? That remains to be thought about." To name something is to invite a certain being to stand out of the fray of its world and show itself, a showing which always takes the shape of withdrawal, inviting us as namers and poets to follow it into its world.

But poetic naming is not simply a matter of speakers clothing beings with words. Heidegger goes on, "What calls on us to think, demands for itself that it be tended, cared for, husbanded in its own essential nature, by thought. What calls on us to think, gives us food for thought."[116] In other words, what calls on us to think (beings) fills the content of our thought not by acquiescing to our grasp but by inviting us to reach. The essence of naming is invitation, a command to beings that they show themselves without any command of what they will thereby show. In that way, naming answers the *logos* of beings—their "saying" of themselves—by inviting them to say it in the first place. Naming, as Heidegger conceives of it, therefore

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[115] Ibid., 120.
[116] Ibid., 121.

epitomizes poetic thinking in the mode of letting-be, answering the call of beings by responding with a questioning call of our own. Poetic naming initiates and sustains an economy of mutual self-disclosure and understanding between beings and the humans who think them.

Perhaps the best example of this naming is Heidegger's famous contemplation of the painting *A Pair of Shoes* by Vincent van Gogh.[117] On the surface, it appears that the painting cannot give us the shoes in the same way that the woman who wears them experiences them as unconsciously ready-to-hand in her daily work. However, the more we are drawn into the painting, the more the world of involvements it depicts opens up to us.

> From the dark opening of the worn insides of the shoes the toilsome tread of the worker stares forth. In the stiffly rugged heaviness of the shoes there is the accumulated tenacity of her slow trudge through the far-spreading and ever-uniform furrows of the field swept by a raw wind. On the leather lie the dampness and richness of the soil. Under the soles slides the loneliness of the field-path as evening falls. In the shoes vibrates the silent call of the earth, its quiet gift of the ripening grain and its unexplained self-refusal in the fallow desolation of the wintry field. This equipment is pervaded by uncomplaining anxiety as to the certainty of bread, the wordless joy of having once more withstood want, and trembling before the impending childbed and shivering at the surrounding menace of death. This equipment belongs to the *earth*, and it is protected in the *world* of the peasant woman. From out of this protected belonging the equipment itself rises to its resting-within-itself.[118]

Simply from contemplating the work of art, Heidegger is able to eloquently articulate how the viewer of the painting is drawn into the world disclosed therein. The world of the peasant woman is not known to us in the way that it is known to her, that is, through involvement. And yet her world still beckons us through the medium of the artwork. The painter answers the call of the shoes in painting them, following them down the path of their history and activity. In so doing, the painting names the world of the shoes through visual portrayal, communicating to other' the same world to which the shoes withdraw and the same worldly

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[117] Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper Perennial Classics, 2001), 32-36.
[118] Ibid., 33.

attunement in which their wearer participates.[119] This naming of withdrawal is what Heidegger means when he concludes that "The painting spoke. In the vicinity of the work we were suddenly somewhere else than we usually tend to be."[120] To name a being poetically—be that in words or the image of a painting—is to call it forth as free from our control. And yet in admitting that freedom, poetic naming also acknowledges that the named being invites us to know it, if only by following it into the world of its Being, where its visible thing-ness vanishes in our dynamic involvement with it.

I argue that this pattern of summoning and following beings that withdraw into worldly belonging is distinct from (though not necessarily incompatible with) metaphor. Janet Martin Soskice endorses a metaphorical framework for speaking about God because the vagueness of this way of speech is valuable to any investigation into what is inherently transcendent to material reality (i.e., God).[121] As Soskice sees it, metaphor entails relational structures between referential connotations that would otherwise be hidden if we limited our speech about God to what is merely observable.[122] Soskice adopts a "cautious realism," in contrast to scientific realism,[123] wherein metaphor allows us to speak in direct referral to God without having to scientifically define God.[124] "[I]n our stammering after a transcendent God," she concludes, "we must speak, for the most part, metaphorically or not at all."[125]

I take Soskice's caution around the possibility of exact speech about God seriously, and I agree with her rejection of scientific realism as an appropriate manner of theological speech. Insofar as her project highlights the relational possibilities opened up by figurative speech, she

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[119] Ibid., 32.
[120] Ibid., 35.
[121] Janet Martin Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 134.
[122] Ibid., 135.
[123] Ibid., 132.
[124] Ibid., 140.
[125] Ibid., 140.

even articulates a certain continuity with the account of primary metaphor outlined earlier in Lakoff and Johnson. But my foregoing analysis of Heidegger, wherein language is always a matter of world-referral, highlights what I find to be a problematic lack in Soskice's conclusion. As the God of revelation, the Christian God is understood primarily on the basis of intra-worldly encounter, so that to resort to metaphor on the basis of God's transcendence is to overlook the ways in which God communicates Godself immanently, including incarnationally. In light of the parameters established at the outset of this project for a philosophical concept of revelation—a presumption of the immanent frame, a requirement for embodied encounter, an emphasis on incarnality in light of the critique of ontotheological Metaphysics—Heidegger's conception of language's world-referral offers an alternative (or perhaps additional) avenue for religious speech to the merely metaphorical tack Soskice takes.[126] Her conclusion that the mystic is the most religious person because she experiences God directly rather than through language is in part aligned with my own emphasis on encounter.[127] But her conclusion that this mystic relationship is ultimately a silent one—"Prayer, darkness, silence, and in the silence all that can be said of God"—tends toward an apophaticism that disregards the immanent frame as the realm of any possible revelation and so overlooks the possibility of world-oriented God-talk.[128]

Poetry is not synonymous with metaphorical speech. While metaphor uses one concept to refer to another—"That man is a mountain," or "This book is impenetrable"—poetry participates in the discursive arrangement of words and images for the sake of extricating human speakers from worlds of mere referentiality. In that way, poetic naming is *directive* toward Being-in-the-world and *effective* insofar as its directing us out of speech and signs situates us within the

[126] See Chapter 1.2.
[127] Soskice, *Metaphor*, 152.
[128] Ibid., 161.

freedom of letting-be. So while metaphor may be employed poetically, it is not always or necessarily so. Poetry is, strangely enough, quite literal speech, perhaps even more literal than the so-called "objective" speech of modern science. But it is literal in that it intends to vacate itself, pointing speaker and hearer alike beyond the limits that poetry acknowledges of itself.

CONCLUSION

As it concerns the theological interests of this project, it seems we have an answer to the question laid out at the start of this chapter: Does an account of involved understanding preclude religious persons from anything like conceptual belief? Following Heidegger, we can conclude that the answer is "no," though with qualifications. Christian speech, like all speech, must be world-oriented if it is to retain its tether to encountered reality. As discursive, Heidegger depicts language as communicating worldly understanding, bringing others into co-attunement with ourselves. As poetic, then, language gives its content back over to the worlds to which it belongs, following the beings that withdraw and calling them to self-revelation in the act of naming. Language, properly speaking, is for Heidegger world-embedded and therefore engaged in world-referral, a point nicely encapsulated by Paul Ricoeur: "[W]hat has to be appropriated [in a text] is nothing other than the power of disclosing a world that constitutes the reference of the text."[129]

Reflecting on the religious implications of this world-referral, Wrathall thus concludes that "faith is not an epistemic state but a mode of existence that reveals the world, and Christian faith arises out of the world as it is revealed through faith in the scriptural word."[130] This, of course, entails a circular character, in which the experiential world of faithful understanding is

[129] Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1976), 92.
[130] Wrathall, *Heidegger and Unconcealment*, 157.

both the source and content of religious speech. But I believe this circularity can be clarified by my treatment of Heidegger's themes of both discourse and poetry in this chapter. Faith is a way of life that opens a particular set of attunements to a world in the mode of discourse and then showcases the particular relevance-structure of that world as shaped by God. At the same time, the poetic quality of religious language serves as a giving-up of meaning on the part of the faithful, both in the sense of foregoing semantic precision and in the sense of giving words over to their content in worldly beings. This position requires that revelation not be a matter of propositional or mental content but must rather have the character of an underlying reality which language can only point out and disclose. Far from limiting us to a frustrating apophaticism, this position rather opens up the possibility of literal speech, where what is spoken of is the world of encounter.

But for the Christian, this encounter is with the person of Jesus Christ. So far as he is himself the criterion of Christian speech, we now need an ontology of personhood. Only with an account of how someone is their particular person can we articulate how one can understandingly encounter that person within a world in such a way that can well up in speech. Only then can we begin to articulate a comprehensive theology of revelation.

CHAPTER 4

PERSONHOOD

Our question is how Christians can understand revelation in such a way that effectively grounds and shapes religious and theological speech. So far, we might reason that we have enough to construct a model for how Christian understanding of God's ontological self-revelation manifests itself in Christian speech. But there are still gaps to be addressed. For starters, Christians claim that the self-revelation of God occurs in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. But are persons beings in the same way that inanimate objects are? What does it mean to *be* a person in the first place? Added to these questions are those of temporal distance. How can a given person be a criterion for speech if they are no longer living amongst us? Christians attest that Jesus is risen from the dead, but what does this mean for a metaphysic of encounter? Can it be said that a person is *present* without a body? Can a person exist in a body other than their own? In multiple bodies at once? If we know a person through embodied involvement with them, then how do we know them without their original body?

I have proposed the Eucharist as a fertile site to which Christians should look for an encounter with revelation, largely because it is there that Christians broadly attest to the real presence of Christ. But if we are to give a metaphysic of revelation alongside an account of how such revelation is understood and filtered into language, then it now appears we also need a metaphysic of personhood to accompany it. As will be shown in this chapter, I believe that we can indeed produce an account of personhood that illuminates our conversation about real presence in the Eucharist within the parameters outlined in previous chapters. Once more following Heidegger's lead, I will make the claim that a person—that which distinguishes one

human individual from another—is a nebulous confluence of historically conditioned attunements and possibilities. To make this case, I will begin with an analysis of the concept of personhood as we can discern it in *Being and Time*. Unlike truth and language, however, Heidegger does not deal with personhood directly. Heidegger's Dasein is certainly *personal*; that is, Dasein maps onto human persons and conditions the way in which we are persons to one another. Yet it is not at all clear that Dasein should be read as *synonymous* with the individual person, and many readers of Heidegger explicitly reject this conflation of concepts.[1] This being the case, we must take an indirect route to a Heideggerian definition of personhood, looking less for an explicit definition in his writings and more for a clearing in which the shape of personhood can emerge. Because we must take such an approach, I will spend less time addressing Heidegger's own thoughts in this chapter as I did in the previous two, choosing instead to evaluate the relevant materials from Heidegger's work as they can be fruitfully applied elsewhere, first in Maurice Merleau-Ponty's analysis of embodiment and intersubjectivity and then in some sample theological accounts of Christ's personhood in the works of Karl Rahner and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, which will mark the transition of this work from philosophical exegesis to constructive philosophical theology.

4.1 PERSONHOOD IN *BEING AND TIME*

Because Heidegger does not give a direct definition of personhood, we have to parse out a definition from the text for ourselves. As I read Heidegger in *Being and Time*, the unique shape

[1] See, for example, John Haugeland, "Heidegger on Being a Person," *Nôus* 16.1 (March 1982): 20. Haugeland argues that Dasein cannot be conflated with the term "person" because the latter can be counted while the former cannot, so that "A person is like an occurrence or 'case' of *Dasein*" rather than a synonym for it. Cf. Thomas Sheehan, who writes that Dasein in fact "*is* human being itself," where Dasein is the unique Being that belongs to particular human beings. See Sheehan, "Dasein" in *A Companion to Heidegger*, edited by Hubert L. Dreyfus and Mark A. Wrathall (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005): 206.

of a person emerges out of a twofold existential movement that qualifies his analysis of Dasein's Being-in-the-world. This movement is an oscillation between what Heidegger calls *das Man* or the "they"[2] of Dasein on the one hand and Dasein's individuating sense of anxiety in the face of death on the other. I will begin by taking these two poles in kind, seeking ultimately to synthesize them into an account of the person who emerges as attuned to particular possibilities.

4.1.1 Das Man: The "Who" of Dasein

In Division I of *Being and Time*, Heidegger refers to *das Man* as the "subject" of Dasein's everydayness.[3] When we ask what the "who" of Dasein is, says Heidegger, we may at first want to say that it is what is constant through changes and experiences, what we often call the self.[4] Yet Heidegger immediately questions this assumption on the basis of his earlier analysis of Being-in-the-world. We have already seen how, as this Being-in-the-world, Dasein understands its environment in terms of its involvement with the relevance structures in which beings exist. Heidegger therefore rejects any substantial or static conception of Dasein's Being: "The '*substance*' of the human person [*Menschens*] is not the spirit as the synthesis of soul and body,

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[2] Heidegger's use of *das Man* is notoriously difficult to translate. The German *Man* generally means "one" or "you" in the sense of "One might find Heidegger confusing" or "You have to think critically if you want to understand Heidegger." Thus *das Man* captures both the impersonality and indistinctness of the other while retaining the possibility that each individual person is capable of being *das Man* themselves. Both Macquarrie and Robinson as well as Stambaugh translate the term as the "they" in their translations of *Sein und Zeit*, evoking an impersonal other in the vein of "They say…". This has largely become the norm in the field, although there is some dissension because of the tendency to read the "they" as completely other rather than including one's own Dasein within it. Hubert Dreyfus translates the term as the "one" in *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's* Being and Time, *Division I* (Cambridge: MIT Press), 1991. Haugeland translates the term as the "anyone" in *Dasein Disclosed: John Haugeland's Heidegger*, ed. Joseph Rouse (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), 2013. However, these translations risk placing outsized emphasis on Dasein's indistinctness and losing the sense of the nameless others in society who nevertheless exert such pressure on Dasein. I have decided to leave the term untranslated for the sake of avoiding this dilemma, trusting that my reader can appreciate the ambiguity and nuance of the term and import that into their understanding of the German original.

[3] Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, Neunzehnte Auflage (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2006), §25:114.

[4] Ibid., §25:114.

but it is *existence*."[5] The thing which a human person is, in other words, is not some metaphysical hypostasis nor any confluence of material or immaterial objects but rather a dynamic way of Being: Being-in-the-world.[6]

But now Heidegger moves to show us how this immersion in world always refers back to others.[7] One's sense of belonging in a world is shared with and inherited from those others who have been shaping that world since before one entered into it. Further, the work with which one occupies oneself is fundamentally relational, almost always meeting the needs of another or following the stream of society's development. The existence of others thus indicates a world that is always co-constituted, and so Dasein's world is always a *with-world* [*Mitwelt*].[8] Being-in-the-world alongside others means that a person's Being is fundamentally not their own but rather stems from and is accountable to someone else:

> Dasein stands as everyday Being-together in *subjection* to the others. It *is* not itself; the others have removed its Being from it. The discretion of the others has at its disposal the everyday possible-ways-of-Being of Dasein. These others are at the same time not *specific* others. On the contrary, any other can represent them. Decisive alone is the inconspicuous domination by others that has already been taken on unexpectedly by Dasein as Being-with.[9]

Heidegger sums up this impersonal force of "the others" with the term *das Man*, and it is this invasive presence of others that becomes the real "who" of Dasein.[10] One's Being under the

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[5] Ibid., §25:117.
[6] In 1982, John Haugeland argued that Dasein is the way of Being in which human persons participate, suggesting, "A person is like an occurrence or 'case' of *Dasein*" (Haugeland, "Heidegger on Being a Person," 20). By the time Haugeland's *Dasein Disclosed* was posthumously published in 2013, however, he had come to understand Dasein as the entity that people are. He writes, "*Existence*, on the other hand, is the *way of being* of that entity… More precisely, existence is the *that*-being or *way-of-being* of dasein [sic]" (Haugeland, *Dasein Disclosed*, 79). While this evolution indicates Haugeland's transition from an abstract understanding of Dasein to a more concrete one, both cases emphasize the dynamism of Dasein's Being. Whether Dasein is itself a way (as in the early Haugeland) or an entity with *Existenz* (as in the later Haugeland), Dasein is defined primarily by its motion rather than its constitution. To be a human being, in short, is always to be a human *doing*.
[7] Heidegger, *SZ*, §26:117.
[8] Ibid., §26:118.
[9] Ibid., §27:126.
[10] Ibid., §27:126.

influence of *das Man* "dissolves [*löst*] one's own Dasein completely in the way of Being of 'the others,' so that the others disappear even more as distinct and explicit.'"[11] One has their way of Being-in-the-world only because that way is inherited and imbibed through participation in the world as co-constituted.

This dissolving need not be inherently threatening to Dasein, however, but is inherent to one's Being as Dasein at all. Because *what* one is is defined by *how* one is, we can say that to be Dasein is to act in a Dasein-ish sort of way. If one were not part of the with-world with others, one could not be Dasein at all. This is not simply a matter of imbibing one's character from culture, although it is that on some level. Whether one speaks French or eats Punjabi cuisine or worships in a mosque, their cultural belonging is itself a belonging to a prior way of Being-with that underlies the respective discourses of speaking, cooking, and religion. What characterizes individual cultures is more like the ornamentation of particular locatedness as discovered and expressed from a broadly human way of navigating worldliness in general. Across ethnicities and communities, humans are inquiring, building, reflecting, engaging, relating, and spiritually open kinds of beings. To belong to Dasein, then, does entail cultural location—be it one's ethnic community or a place of work—but only insofar as it entails a more primordial embeddedness in the structure of Being-with in the first place. "This conclusion will seem strange to us," suggests Hubert Dreyfus, "unless we remember that Dasein is not an organism and not an ego containing a stream of private experiences, but rather is a mode of comportment."[12] The human person—the unique, individual human organism—is thus not itself Dasein but rather belongs to Dasein as its manner of comportment toward beings.

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[11] Ibid., §27:126.
[12] Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, 160.

What we gather from this is a picture of Dasein not only as fundamentally social but moreover as existentially intersubjective. On the one hand, this seems to contradict Heidegger's own statement, "We ourselves are the beings the analysis of which is our task. The Being of this being is *ever always mine*."[13] This line has often been cited against thinkers such as John Haugeland as evidence of the intrinsic one-to-one correspondence between Dasein and human individuals.[14] The reasoning for this argument is basically that for Dasein to be "*ever always mine*" is intrinsically for it to not be anyone else's. However, this interpretation overlooks the exact nature of Heidegger's phrasing: We ourselves are the beings (i.e., plural humans) to be analyzed, and it is the (singular, unifying) Being of this being which belongs to each of those beings individually. In other words, to have Dasein as an individual is not to have a *separate Dasein* from others but rather to have the same Dasein in a way that is always my own.[15] The fact that Heidegger never pluralizes the word Dasein lends itself to such an interpretation.[16] In fact, Heidegger explicitly wishes to distinguish the numerical identification of human subjects from the identification of Dasein:

> So far as Dasein *is* at all, it has the way of Being of Being-with-one-another. This cannot be conceived as a summative result of the appearance of several "subjects." Finding a number of "subjects" is itself only possible if the Others encountered in one's Being-with-Dasein are merely treated as "numbers"… This "ruthless" [*"rücksichtslose"*] Being-with "counts" [*"rechnet"*] Others without seriously "counting *on* them" or even wanting "to have anything to do" with them.[17]

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[13] Heidegger, *SZ*, §9:41. Emphasis original.
[14] See François Raffoul, "Dasein," in *The Bloomsbury Companion to Heidegger*, ed. François Raffoul and Eric S. Nelson (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013): 275: "from the outset, the problematic of Dasein combines the question of the meaning of being with the most extreme individuation." See also Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, 14: "Haugeland's interpretation [of Dasein as collective] runs up against many passages that make it clear that for Heidegger Dasein designates exclusively entities like each of us, that is, individual persons." To support this claim, Dreyfus cites Heidegger's insistence that the "mineness" of Dasein requires the use of a personal pronoun when speaking of it (Heidegger, *SZ*, §9:42).
[15] For further discussion of an intersubjective interpretation of Dasein, see K.M. Stroh, "Intersubjectivity of Dasein in Heidegger's *Being and Time*: How Authenticity is a Return to Community," *Human Studies* 38.2 (2015): 243-259.
[16] Haugeland, *Dasein Disclosed*, 82. See also Richard Polt, "Nailing It Down: Haugeland's Heidegger," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 34 (November 2013): 462.
[17] Heidegger, *SZ* §26:125.

To treat others as quantifiably separate from myself is a "ruthless" counting, so that understanding myself as an individual subject or person is decidedly not the same as cutting myself off from a shared Dasein-with-others. Haugeland illustrates this point by distinguishing between individual humans as "cases" of Dasein and the genus of Dasein itself using the examples of science and language.[18] Both science and language constitute ways of thinking and expressing, and both require a community in which speakers and hearers use these modes of expression to formulate common understandings. Yet both science and language only come into actuality when they are employed (as with chemistry or French), and if they cease to be in use, they effectively cease to exist (as with alchemy or Ugaritic). Following this model, Haugeland argues that while Dasein is on the one hand the genus to which we each belong, Dasein is also only actual when individuals participate in that collective way of Being together.[19] He writes, "An understanding of dasein's [sic] being is embodied in the very way of life that dasein is, and that implies that those who live that way all share in that public understanding."[20] We are Dasein insofar as we speak the language of Dasein, as it were, and thus we are Dasein only insofar as we share in conversation with others. One is Dasein only on the basis of their participation in Dasein-like modes of understanding and discourse.[21] In this sense, Heidegger's notion of *das Man* is not intrinsically threatening to personhood but is rather the condition of its possibility.[22]

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[18] Haugeland, *Dasein Disclosed*, 78-81.
[19] Ibid., 82.
[20] Ibid., 124.
[21] Cf. Ibid., 81-82: "I will say that dasein is a *way of living that embodies an understanding of being*. And existence, the way-of-being of such a *way* of living, is its (still) *being-lived* in the sense just sketched."
[22] Haugeland's interpretation of Dasein as a collective way of Being is derivative of his interpretation of Dasein's understanding in terms of norms. In describing Dasein as a "way of living," Haugeland understands Dasein to be a matter of human practitioners conforming to a general pattern of behavior which unveils beings within the world in a particular way. For a contrasting view, see Katherine Withy, "Haugeland's Heidegger and the Metaphysics of Normativity," *European Journal of Philosophy* 25.2 (June 2017): 463-484. Withy argues that the language of normativity imposes an artificial restriction on Heidegger's account of Being, such that Being effectively becomes synonymous with intelligibility in a way that I myself have argued is inaccurate (see Chapter 2.1.3 on Thomas Sheehan). Because of Heidegger's emphasis on letting-be, Withy argues that it is wrong to conflate Dasein's understanding of Being with social norms of behavior because this undermines the integrity of beings which reveal

Consider the example of children playing house. Living in a family, children unconsciously absorb an understanding of household dynamics—the relevances and attunements that differentiate the world of the kitchen from that of the living room, the relational dynamics of parents to children and each other, etc. As the kind of projecting beings that can turn over possibilities in their understanding, human children are then capable of channeling that understanding into the discourse of play-acting.[23] But the character of the world acted out is fundamentally imitative. That is, when children play house, they are effectively trying on the possibilities for how to be human and then seeing how they fit. The pretend world of a household does not easily collide with the pretend world of a jungle. Children might be able to imitate wild animals just as they imitate their parents, but they will in most cases recognize that tigers do not belong in the kitchen, just as you can't watch TV in the rainforest. What is disclosed to children in the act of imitation are the inherited boundaries of worlds and the possible discourses that open each world up. Imbibing the influence of *das Man* is thus about understanding *how the*

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themselves to Dasein: "There 'is' no contexture of constitutive standards, such as equipmental references, in terms of which entities make sense as that and what they are, There 'is' no world; there 'is' only worlding: things showing up in the light of such standards. There are no norms, only deployment of them in normative practice" (Ibid., 479). To take Being seriously as corresponding to the reality of beings rather than their mere intelligibility to human knowers is to undercut the foundational constitutiveness of norms for human beings. However, within a discussion of the fundamental sociality of Dasein, the normative emphasis of Haugeland is perhaps worthy of some consideration. William Blattner helpfully offers a middle position, reminding us that "there is a difference between conforming to a norm and executing programming. To conform to a norm is to be responsive to normative valences… or statuses… Unlike natural properties and powers, normative valences and statuses can be defied. Normative valences and statuses call upon agents to comport themselves in specific ways, and these calls can be defied or flouted or simply ignored. There must be some facet of Dasein's disclosedness that unveils normative valences and statuses to us" ("Anonymity, Mineness, and Agent Specificity: Pragmatic Normativity and the Authentic Situation in Heidegger's *Being and Time*," in *Giving a Damn: Essays in Conversation with John Haugeland*, ed. Zed Adams and Jacob Browning (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017): 55-56). If we want to say, with Haugeland, that norms are in some way constitutive of human understanding and our ways of Being, then Blattner reminds us that we must be equally willing to admit that such norms are always fluid and malleable. For Dasein to be the kind of entity which can be norm-conforming thus requires some fundamental sociality to Dasein which both undergirds normative standards as well as makes an individual person capable of reacting freely to those standards. This gets at the interplay between sociality and anxiety to which I shall come shortly. For now, however, let us take Haugeland's views on the normative shape of Dasein's way of living as disclosive of an underlying intersubjectivity as a definitive feature of human existence.

[23] See Chapter 2.1.4 for my discussion of projection of possibilities under Heidegger's discussion of attunement.

world is and then acquiring the tools to project *how one can be* according to the contours of that world. This in turn uncovers the capacity within human individuals to ascertain the possibilities open to another and adopt them to oneself. In this sense, *das Man* is essentially the possibility-providing function of community. It is the narrowing force of socialization which discloses the underlying condition of intersubjective sociality.

But here we run up against the potential threat posed by *das Man*. If a person *only* subjects itself to the possibilities provided by society, if it *only* attains a way of Being that enacts conformity, then Being-with-others does not in fact open the person up to genuine possibilities for Being-in-the-world but rather hems them into an inauthentic averageness, thereby "leveling" [*Einebnung*] all possibilities into pre-constructed norms of performance:

> Thus *das Man* maintains itself factically in the mediocrity [*Durchschnittlichkeit*] of what is proper, what is accepted, and what is not, what is deemed successful and what fails. This mediocrity in the preliminary sketch determines what can and may be ventured, watches over every exception put forward. Every personal privilege is noiselessly suppressed. Overnight, everything primordial is flattened as something long known. Everything gained becomes manipulated. Every mystery loses its power.[24]

Das Man imposes itself in what is average, what is assumed, and what is normal, so that personal particularity is always a threat to the uniformity toward which *das Man* tends. In belonging to *das Man*, Dasein is enfolded into anonymous and often arbitrary patterns of existence that limit the openness that is inherent to Being-in-the-world. Heidegger goes so far as to refer to this manifestation of *das Man* as "the *nobody*, to whom Dasein is delivered over in Being-with-others."[25] "The self of everyday Dasein," he continues, "is the *they-self*, which we distinguish from the *authentic*, that is to say, the self-grasped self."[26] The everyday way of Being

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[24] Heidegger, *SZ*, §27:127.
[25] Ibid., §27:128.
[26] Ibid., §27:129. I here translate *Man-selbst* as "they-self" only to avoid the linguistic infelicity of the hybrid "*Man*-self."

of Dasein is intrinsically social, but this itself threatens to close down rather than open up the individual person's possibilities for Being-in-the-world. As Heidegger later writes, "Losing itself in the publicity of *das Man* and its chatter [*Gerede*], [Dasein] *fails to hear* [*überhört*] its own self in listening to the they-self."[27] In a tragic irony, the very collectivity of *das Man* that enables Dasein to participate in its way of Being and thus ascend to personhood also imposes a cap on that possibility, conducing normativity through banality even as it empowers participation in that normativity in the first place.

To be fallen into the averageness of *das Man* is thus not to be fallen into community as such so much as it is to be fallen into a specifically inauthentic way of Being-with-others, namely, that way which treats others and the possibilities they reveal as substantive, instrumentalized givens.[28] Falling into inauthenticity precisely in being given over to the world of *das Man*, the human person is inauthentically individualized not as a maker or revealer of worlds but as an individual within an already-established world. This phenomenon allows us to take the further step of recognizing the parallel between inauthentic existence and the ontotheological foundationalism which this project is seeking to avoid. Inauthenticity is not simply a matter of belonging to others as such but rather belonging to social norms as assumed and unchallengeable. As William Blattner rightly defines it, inauthenticity is a matter of mistakenly taking "the interpretations that the public insists upon as being somehow unchallengeable."[29] This in turn reveals authenticity not as a matter of extricating oneself from

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[27] Ibid., §55:271.
[28] See Ibid., §26:121: "Being for, against, or without another, passing another by, lack-of-concern-for-one-another are possible ways of solicitation. And it is precisely these last deficient and indifferent modes that characterize everyday and average Being-with-one-another. These ways of Being show again the character of inconspicuousness and obviousness which lends itself to everyday Dasein-with of innerworldly Others as just like the ready-to-hand of the equipment of daily concern. *These indifferent modes of Being-with-one-another easily mislead ontological interpretation into construing this Being as the pure Being-present-at-hand of many subjects*." My emphasis.
[29] William Blattner, "Authenticity and Resoluteness," in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger's* Being and Time, ed. Mark Wrathall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 326.

society but rather as *engaging* it with the intentionality of one who has the freedom to accept, reject, or challenge all that is otherwise assumed in the cultural landscape. Authenticity can be as much spurred on by social belonging as it is a product of one's individualized rebellion:

> [T]here is also the possibility of a solicitation [*Fürsorge*] that does not so much fill in for the other as *leaps ahead* [*vorausspringt*] of him in his existentiell potentiality-for-Being, not to take away his "care" but rather to give it back to him authentically as such for the first time. This solicitation is fundamental to authentic care—that is, to the existence of the other, not to a *what* with which he is concerned—and helps the other *in* his care to become transparent to himself and *free for it*.[30]

The possibility of authentic care is here illustrated not as incompatible with sociality but as at times solicited by others in the world. Authentic participation in the world is not a matter of quantitative individuation so much as it is an authentic response to the call of others in the world, who precisely through the Being-with character of each world issue to each individual their respective possibilities for just such a response. It is with this anticipation of an authentic belonging to others that we now turn to anxiety as the catalyst for just such an authenticity.

4.1.2 Anxiety and the Individuation of Dasein

In Chapter 2, we observed how Dasein is always projecting its possibilities, that is, its ways of navigating the dynamic relations of world. In projecting itself toward possibilities, however, Dasein also projects itself toward its own *impossibilities*. That is, in its Being-beyond-itself, Dasein becomes aware of its finitude in the face of mortality. For Heidegger, this alertness to one's mortality emerges in the mood of *anxiety* [*Angst*]. Anxiety is not the fear of intra-worldly entities but rather Dasein's existential grappling with the utter meaninglessness of world itself:

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[30] Heidegger, *SZ* §26:122.

> That before which one has anxiety is always indeterminate. This indeterminacy not only leaves undecided which intra-worldly beings threaten, but says that the intra-worldly beings are not 'relevant' at all. Nothing which is ready-to-hand or present-to-hand within the world functions as that before which anxiety is anxious. The intra-worldly discovered totality of ready-to-hand and present-to-hand is as such completely irrelevant. It sinks into itself. World has the character of complete irrelevance.[31]

That before which one is anxious is no thing at all but rather indeterminacy, meaninglessness, the emptiness of interpretive assignments, and the looming and inescapable force of non-Being.[32] In anxiety, we effectively lose touch with the everyday existence we have inherited. Heidegger sums up this feeling: "In anxiety one is 'uncanny [*unheimlich*],'" that is "Being-not-at-home [*Nicht-zuhause-sein*]."[33] Anxiety prompts consciousness of futility, which in turn opens up the possibility that how one has always conceived of the world is in fact misguided or fails to encompass all of reality.

However, this deconstructive function of anxiety bears an intrinsically creative potential. If *das Man* tends toward the averageness of unchallenged norms, then anxiety breaks that network down, revealing things to us in their strangeness as if for the first time. The possibilities which Dasein projects in its everyday belonging to *das Man* are revealed as intrinsically meaningless and thus as *optional*, providing the space for the individual to choose their own path forward. The immanent possibility of death continually undermines the conventionality and

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[31] Ibid., §40:186.

[32] For a psychological examination of this, see Daphne Simeon and Jeffrey Abugel, *Feeling Unreal: Depersonalization Disorder and the Loss of Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 80-81: "Familiar things look strange and foreign. I feel like an anthropologist from another planet, studying the human species. I look at things that once meant a lot to me, and I don't understand what I saw in them that made me love them. They're just shapes, objects, things, with no personal connection to me. My old coffee mug looks no more familiar than a baby with two heads. It's all just there and it's all strange somehow." This phenomenon of the newfound strangeness and meaninglessness of things is what Iain Thompson calls "retroactively defamiliarised" in *Heidegger, Art, and Postmodernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 144.

[33] Heidegger, *SZ*, §40: 188. Macquarrie and Robinson translate the phrase, "one feels '*uncanny*,'" despite Heidegger's original, "In der Angst ist einem '*unheimlich*,'" (*Being and Time*, 233). Stambaugh likewise translates the phrase, "In anxiety one has an '*uncanny*' feeling," (*Being and Time*, 182). I have chosen to translate the term more closely to the original, since I think Heidegger's choice to identify Dasein itself as uncanny is metaphysically significant. Cf. Katherine Withy, *Heidegger on Being Uncanny* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 238.

reliability of Dasein's conception of itself and its world, so that the possibilities Dasein projects are drawn under constant scrutiny and considered in terms of their alternatives.

What is ultimately gained from anxiety, suggests Katherine Withy, is a sense of finitude and thus particularity. As she points out, "there are limitations to understand ourselves, [and] these are necessary for us to understand anything at all."[34] In anxiety, one comes to terms with one's own temporal finitude, which is the same as coming to terms with the particularity of one's existence: the various worlds that have intersected in a specific historical pattern; the habits, reflexes, and emotional responses that have been accrued over time; and so on. What one ultimately learns when face-to-face with anxiety, then, is that one is *a* being—*an* individual within the intersubjective nexus of Dasein's worldly comportment—and that one is uniquely situated within transient worlds of possibilities that can be owned or disposed of.

This owning of the possibilities opened up in anxiety is what Heidegger describes as Dasein's *resoluteness* [*Entschlossenheit*]. Dasein is resolute when it embraces its possibilities for Being in full face of its death and the emptiness of assumed meanings.[35] In anxiety, Dasein understands itself as Being-toward-death [*Sein zum Tode*], that is, it has its Being as framed by the apprehension of its mortality.[36] Heidegger writes, "Just as Dasein is always already its not-yet, so is it also already its end. The end meant here by 'death' does not signify a Being-at-an-end [*Zu-Ende-sein*] of Dasein, but a Being toward the end [*Sein zum Ende*] of this being. Death is a way to be, which Dasein takes on [*übernimmt*], as soon as it is."[37] What Heidegger here

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[34] Katherine Withy, "Situation and Limitation: Making Sense of Heidegger on Thrownness," *European Journal of Philosophy* 221. (March 2014): 61.
[35] Heidegger, *SZ*, §60:297-301. Cf. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, 194, where he argues that authentic understanding can either be ungenuine (so anxious that Dasein is unwilling to live or act within the world) or genuine (resolutely reentering the world while holding onto anxiety from without), which I find a helpful distinction. Anxiety by itself cannot liberate Dasein and in fact is liable to produce nihilistic resignation; on the other hand, honest resolution can be immensely productive for Dasein in crafting a sense of self.
[36] Heidegger, *SZ*, §49:247.
[37] Ibid., §48:245.

means by Dasein's "end," its *telos*, is not Dasein's arrival at an ontological completion. Instead, Dasein's end is attaining to a fuller availability to possibilities that are pried open in the vacuousness of anxiety.[38] As Dreyfus puts it, "[B]y facing the anxiety of death and so seeing that the issues of his culture and even his own identity could be radically changed, a fully authentic Dasein can manifest an even higher kind of primordial understanding."[39] In facing the reality of its death, Dasein confronts the emptiness of inherited values and interpretive assignments, opening up new horizons for the configuration of oneself in dialogue with a world. In facing these horizons, Dasein is invited to own such possibilities as genuine, real alternatives to the status quo. One is *authentic* [*eigentlich*], then, in acknowledging the truth that what has been need not be the case and that what is given has no intrinsic value, thereby freeing one to consider alternative possibilities, take them up into their personal project, and so disclose original and as yet unimaginable attunements to world.

Anxiety thus individualizes the human person.[40] As a result of anxiety, everyone is forced to deal with themselves as cut off from others, as bound by the limits of their finitude, even as their possibilities for individual resoluteness are shaped by Dasein's intersubjective manner of comportment. Whereas *das Man* constitutes the available ways of Being that enable one to become *a* human person, then, anxiety is the necessary confrontation with one's own finitude that makes it possible to own oneself as *this particular* person.[41]

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[38] See Thomas Sheehan, who argues that Dasein's nature reaches completion in its longing for what it lacks, in "Dasein," in *A Companion to Heidegger*, 206.
[39] Hubert Dreyfus, "What Could Be More Intelligible Than Everyday Intelligibility? Reinterpreting Division 1 of *Being and Time* in the Light of Division 2," *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society* 24.3 (June 2004): 272.
[40] Heidegger, *SZ*, §40:187.
[41] Taylor Carman thus argues that it is erroneous to read *das Man* in an entirely negative light, since it is only through the ways of being opened up by *das Man* that Dasein can express and explore its experience of anxiety. See Carman, "Authenticity," in *A Companion to Heidegger*, eds. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Mark A. Wrathall (Malden: Blackwell, 2005), 293-295.

4.1.3 Personhood in Being and Time

Our goal so far has been to extrapolate a definition of personhood from Heidegger's *Being and Time*. If Dasein is, as Haugeland puts it, "a *way of living that embodies an understanding of being*," then it seems we can distinguish this way of living from the individual being who lives it.[42] That is, we should be able to derive from Heidegger's description of Dasein an understanding of how that general way of Being can yield the unique shape of particular individuals.

I therefore propose to define Heideggerian personhood as gleaned from *Being and Time* between the poles of *das Man* and anxiety. While the former provides the conditions of possibility for anything like personhood—the comportment and understanding which is constitutive of Being-in-the-world and the intersubjectivity of sociality—it is the latter which individuates each case of Dasein within its own temporal location and the unique nexus of possibilities that reveal themselves therein. Contrary to Haugeland, then, I do not understand Dasein's way of Being to be exclusively normatively structured.[43] Nor do I believe, as Katherine Withy does, that it is uncanniness alone which constitutes the true nature of human Being, the flight from which constitutes a rejection of self.[44] It is true that Dasein is uncanny *and* that Dasein finds itself always already subjected to the everydayness of *das Man*. It is never the case, however, that a human person is wholly one and not the other. A person navigates her myriad experiences as Dasein by synthesizing these two poles together through the unique confluence of

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[42] Haugeland, *Dasein Disclosed*, 81-82.
[43] See Haugeland, "Heidegger on Being a Person," 15-26, where Haugeland submits four slogans for Heidegger's view of person: "All constitution is institution" (18), "All intentionality is instituted referral" (19), "People are primordial institutions" (20), and "The 'essence' of Dasein lies in its being extant" (21). Concerning the last slogan, Haugeland criticizes Heidegger for being overly existentialist in his suggestion that Dasein can own itself through self-criticism, suggesting instead that it is the normative power of the first three slogans that constitutes the essence of human existence (24).
[44] Withy, *Heidegger on Being Uncanny*, 3.

her own historical experiences of myriad worlds. If Dasein indeed amounts to a way of living, including all the variations available to that way, then the individual person is the being that lives that life and holds those ways together.

This unending process of integrating one's inheritance with the looming strangeness of reality reveals the inherent instability of a person. One is never a "self" in the sense of a whole, subsistent thing. As Heidegger himself writes, "Therefore, in the character [*Wesen*] of the basic constitution [*Grundverfassung*] of Dasein lies a *constant incompleteness*. This incompleteness indicates something outstanding in its potentiality-to-be [*Seinkönnen*]."[45] A person is constantly in flux, so that it might be more accurate to say that one actively *persons* than to say that one is *a* person.

By way of definition, we might say that *a person is a particular node of attunements and possibilities*. Growing out of the particular context of a family, a community, and an intersubjective experience of world, one imbibes a history of discursive habits and mooded involvements. So far as one then projects an understanding of their finitude in anxiety, one is faced with decisions about which of those involvements have merit, which are disposable, and what new, unforeseen horizons exist by which to frame one's life.

As we anticipate the turn to a constructive philosophical theology of the Eucharist as the site of possible revelation, the foregoing analysis of *Being and Time* provides a great deal to our consideration of the personal presence of Christ in the sacrament. To say that Christ is really and personally present in the sacrament cannot be to say that some substance of his person is either literally or metaphorically transplanted into some static bread-thing. As we discovered in Chapter 2, there is, strictly speaking, no bread-thing at all, and so it cannot possibly become a

[45] See Heidegger, *SZ*, §46:236.

Christ-thing. But as Heidegger has helped us see here, this is not necessarily a problem. The objectifying, technological impulse that wants to turn the presence of Christ into a stable standing-reserve is undermined by the nebulous character of human persons. As a node of countless possibilities and worldly attunements shaped in the give and take between *das Man* and anxiety, the human person of Jesus, like all human persons, is dynamic, fluid, and elusive.[46]

Yet precisely because a person is this dynamic flow of worldly attunements, we can see how an alternative account of knowing Christ in the sacrament is possible. Understanding Dasein as not a one-to-one attribute of individual humans but rather as the way of life that each human uniquely lives, we see how Heidegger articulates the intrinsic intersubjectivity of humans within shared worlds. Heidegger explicitly rejects any quantitative othering of human subjects as inauthentic, so that to seek out a strictly defined, present-at-hand "thing" which Christ becomes in the Eucharist is off the table. At the same time, Dasein's intersubjectivity provides the existential-ontological condition of possibility for sharing and cohabitating worlds of understanding, such that Christ *may* be known in the communication of his various attunements to world and unique possibilities for Being therein. If we are to know Christ authentically (indeed, if we are to know any person authentically), then we must know him not as an object for our conceptual consideration but, more primordially, as a communicator of worlds known through circumspect involvement. That the attunements and possibilities opened up by Christ can be recognized as distinctly *his* is then made possible in Heidegger's account of anxiety, whereby the contours of Jesus' individual person are revealed by his navigation of worlds and histories that shape his particular finitude. Insofar as *knowledge* of Christ is made possible by the

[46] To say otherwise of Jesus on the basis of his trinitarian divine personhood is to make an ontic theological claim which I am attempting to bracket from the current project. That said, even a Chalcedonian Christology which affirms the full humanity of Jesus Christ would necessarily have to account for the fluidity and transience of human existence to the degree that it adopted the Heideggerian anthropology which I am sketching here.

intersubjectivity of Dasein which Christians share with him, this knowledge *of Christ in particular* is contingent upon an understanding of Christ's own way of having a world in dialogical co-existence with others, and this thus becomes the challenge to which the following constructive proposal must respond.

But questions still remain. Insofar as we share the worldly possibilities of others, we do so in the shared physicality of common worlds. In lieu of the body of Jesus of Nazareth, how can Christians credibly say that they experience anything like this intersubjective attunement with the risen Christ? It is with this serious and necessary question in mind that we leave Heidegger behind for now and turn to the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who takes up Heidegger's project of Being-in-the-world and applies it to a phenomenology of embodiment.

4.2 MAURICE MERLEAU-PONTY AND EMBODIED BEING-IN-THE-WORLD

Our purpose in this chapter is to articulate a phenomenology of personhood that maps onto Heidegger's account of dynamic understanding to the extent that it can elucidate the nature of Christ's personal presence in the Eucharist. Further to the point made at the end of the last section, Heidegger's analysis of Being-in-the-world and my subsequent definition of personhood in terms of attunements and possibilities raises the question of embodied presence: How is any of Dasein's involved understanding, discursive activity, or projection of possibilities possible at all if not through the medium of the body? Since Heidegger's thought depends so greatly on human externality and immersion in the world, the absence of the body from his consideration appears to be a gaping hole in his thought. As Frank Schalow notes, the absence of the body from Heidegger's work is all the more curious because of the body's great importance to the

continental tradition that emerges out of his thought.[47] If Dasein exists temporally, uncovering its personal possibilities through the history of its finitude, then the question emerges how Being appears within time, to which Schalow suggests embodiment has the answer.[48] Heidegger's emphasis on language also requires an account of the body, since the dynamics of discourse require a physical medium through which to extend.[49] It is thus incumbent upon the Heideggerian scholar—not to mention the sacramental theologian—to draw out and examine the implicit role of the body that Heidegger neglects.

With these concerns in mind, we here turn to the French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty, whose work integrates Heidegger's phenomenology of Being-in-the-world with the considerations of embodied existence and the insights of Gestalt psychology. The purpose of this section is to examine how the understanding of personhood to which we have already come is further shaped and illuminated within the explicit consideration of embodiment. I will first examine Merleau-Ponty's famous example of the phantom limb and then evaluate his analysis of embodied perception as co-constituted by others.

4.2.1 The Phantom Limb and the World of Possibilities

For Merleau-Ponty, the body is the mechanism of our Being-in-the-world. This is not to say, however, that the body is a mediator "between" the mind and the external world. Following

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[47] Frank Schalow, *The Incarnality of Being: The Earth, Animals, and the Body in Heidegger's Thought* (New York: SUNY Press, 2006), 1. John Caputo is much harsher on Heidegger's apparent disinterest in the body, suggesting that Heidegger's emphasis on the existential essence [*Wesen*] of human beings ensures its "decontamination" from anything organic or biological. The body, says Caputo, is an inconvenience to Heidegger rather than a means to express his central point. See John D. Caputo, "Incarnation and Essentialization: A Reading of Heidegger," *Philosophy Today* 35.1 (Spring 1991): 32-42. While I agree with both Schalow and Caputo that the absence of the body is surprising and problematic for Heidegger's project, I disagree with Caputo's claim that the body is an inherent obstruction to Heidegger's thought.

[48] Schalow, *The Incarnality of Being*, 149.

[49] Ibid., 150.

Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty argues in *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945), that Being-in-the-world overcomes the physical/psychological divide by providing a pre-objective perspective on the world.[50] Merleau-Ponty describes the body not as a sum of material parts but as an unconscious coordination of one's basic materiality in a directional relationality with the beings around it, what he calls a *body schema*.[51] Understanding, in this case, takes on the shape of habit acquisition. "Consciousness is being toward the thing through the intermediary of the body," Merleau-Ponty writes. "A movement is learned when the body has understood it, that is, when it has incorporated it into its 'world,' and to move one's body is to aim at the things through it, or to allow one's body to respond to their solicitation, which is exerted upon the body without any representation."[52] In other words, an entity has become incorporated into one's world when one's body enters into an unconscious dialogue with that entity. Motricity thus becomes the medium of understanding, so that involvement can only take place through the coordinated interfacing of body and objects.

The body *itself* understands, and so it is the body that projects possibilities for Being. Merleau-Ponty illustrates this with the example of reflexes: "reflexes themselves are never blind processes: they adjust to the 'sense' of the situation, they express our orientation toward a 'behavioral milieu' upon us. They trace out, from a distance, the structure of the object without waiting for its punctual stimulations."[53] Here the involved understanding of the body schema comes to light in conjunction with what we have observed regarding personal possibilities. Reflexes indicate the malleability of the body to the shape of its environment, an unconscious muscular-neurological projection into the shifting relevance-structure of a physical milieu. If a

[50] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Donald A. Landes (London: Routledge, 2012), 81.
[51] Ibid., 100-101.
[52] Ibid., 140.
[53] Ibid., 81.

pen rolls off my desk and I reflexively reach out to snatch it from midair, this itself is neither a matter of conscious decision nor of practice over time, since the particular height and dimensions of the desk and my particular position relative to the pen are subtly different from any similar previous experience. The habits of my body schema of course make this action possible, but my ability to adapt to the uniqueness of this particular situation indicate the adjustability of embodied understanding, so that habit alone does not explain the occurrence. What is additionally necessary is an account of embodied projection in line with what we observed in Heidegger in Chapter 2 and again in our above discussion of personhood.

Such embodied projection can best be seen in Merleau-Ponty's famous analysis of the *phantom limb*—an amputee's experience of the presence or pain of an appendage they no longer possess. Rather than consider the phantom limb a cognitive trick of the mind or a neurological reaction to the severance of the limb, Merleau-Ponty seeks to integrate the mental and the physical together. This is not the same as producing a third option in which both the mental representation of a limb and the inputs of the severed nerves simply work together. Rather, according to the Being-in-the-world model, "What refuses the mutilation or the deficiency in us is an I that is engaged in a certain physical and inter-human world, an I that continues to tend toward its world despite deficiencies or amputations and that to this extent does not *de jure* recognize them."[54] The amputee senses her location in a world that was once understood in terms of her pre-amputated body. Her senses of location, purpose, and possibilities were framed by her body with a certain anatomical makeup that is now altered, so that the possibilities to which she has become habituated continue to present themselves to a body that is no longer able to engage them in the same way:

[54] Ibid., 83.

> To have a phantom [arm] is to remain open to all of the actions of which the arm alone is capable and to stay within the practical field that one had prior to the mutilation. The body is the vehicle of being in the world [sic] and, for a living being, having a body means being united with a definite milieu, merging with certain projects, and being perpetually engaged therein.[55]

Here we again see the recurring theme we have observed in Heidegger through the last chapters, namely, the merging of human Being with the structure of world, what Dreyfus calls "being the world existingly."[56] The structure of world is imbibed into the human's very understanding, so that the shape of a given world establishes the dimensional parameters of one's personal possibilities. What the amputee uniquely experiences of this phenomenon is the discontinuity of having a structural compatibility with world that suddenly fails to map onto one's biological makeup. The consequence of this alteration is a reappropriation of one's present person in terms of one's prior possibilities. As philosopher and amputee Vivian Sobchack notes,

> [M]ost 'phantom limbs' adapt—not only to their impoverished commerce with the world but also to the possibilities afforded by a prosthetic. Indeed, over time, the '*dys*-appeared' phantom may diffuse its self-presenced discretion to become once more the transparent absence and integrity of one's habitual, if self-adjusting, sense of one's lived body.[57]

In other words, the amputee learns to live into her previously available possibilities with a new set of available instruments at her disposal. Such adaptation is attested not only in existential reflection but in neuroscientific studies as well. Reflecting on the fact that leprosy patients in India hardly ever experience phantom limbs after their amputations, neurologist V.S. Ramachandran suggests that it is the *gradual* loss of limbs in such patients—the simultaneous progress of nerve damage and the process of amputating further and further up an infected limb

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[55] Ibid., 84.
[56] Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, 249.
[57] Vivian Sobchack, "Living a 'Phantom Limb': On Phenomenology of Bodily Integrity." *Body & Society* 16.3 (September 2010): 60.

over time—that precludes the development of phantoms.[58] The implication is that, because leprosy patients are undergoing constant adaptation in the composition of their limbs, there is no sudden change in embodied possibilities, and so they do not experience their body-world relation as requiring the presence of a lost limb.

What makes this experiential phenomenon neurologically possible, says Ramachandran, is the remapping of neural pathways in the brain.[59] When a limb is severed from the body, the portion of the brain devoted to that limb is often absorbed by neighboring regions of the brain, so that when the parts of the body involved in those regions are stimulated, one often experiences similar stimulation in their phantom limb. We are hard-wired to be soft-wired, so to speak, so that the accrual of embodied understanding through involvement both reflects the inherent plasticity of our makeup and lays the foundation for a literal remapping of our possibilities when confronted with an embodied change to that makeup.

The same remapping that occurs in the case of phantom limbs also occurs in the case of prosthetics. Examining the plasticity of the body schema, Merleau-Ponty observes that through habit, instruments we do not typically think of as linked to our bodies (a cane, for example) effectively become appendages of the body, altering the reach and possibilities of our involvement in the worlds we inhabit.[60] Whereas the adaptation involved in the phantom limb experience is one of integrating a new body-world relationship into an already established body schema, the adaptation involved with a prosthetic is quite the reverse: integrating a new body schema into the body-world relation with which one is already accustomed. One experiences the

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[58] V.S. Ramachandran and Sandra Blakeslee, *Phantoms in the Brain: Human Nature and the Architecture of the Mind* (London: Harper Perennial, 2005), 57-58.
[59] Ibid., 28-34. Cf. T.P. Pons, P.E. Garraghty, A.K. Ommaya, J.H. Kaas, E. Taub, and M. Mishkin, "Massive Cortical Reorganization after Sensory Deafferentation in Adult Macaques," *Science* 252.5014 (June 1991): 1857-1860.
[60] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 153-154.

prosthetic—which we would conventionally consider to *not* be part of one's actual body—as in fact an extension of that body, projecting possibilities—and thus transmitting a performance of one's person—through ostensibly external beings. Rather than a whole defined by the edges of our biological matter, the body in fact proves quite fluid and nebulous, what Merleau-Ponty describes as "a knot of living significations."[61] By participating in the dynamism of world, the body projects itself through those beings that are not itself to the degree that both the body and its ready-to-hand instruments effectively become one.

Again, such prosthetic integration is neurologically attested. Ramachandran points out that brain remapping includes the neurological capacity of our bodies to incorporate new entities into the body schema so that "you can even experience touch sensations as arising from tables and chairs that bear no physical resemblance to human body parts."[62] He demonstrates this phenomenon with an experiment in which the brain of a person whose hand is being touched out of sight beneath a table that is also being touched in the same way will eventually ascribe the touch sensation to the table rather than the hand, even to the point of activating a pain response if someone pounds the table.[63] The experiment illustrates the brain's propensity to project itself onto objects in the world and thereby incorporate them into one's own body schema. Indeed, Ramachandran even wonders whether such incorporation of foreign objects into one's body schema underlies the possibility of empathy and intimacy, so that, in effect, those whom we love are in a very real sense integrated into our embodied selves.[64]

Projecting possibilities through an ostensibly distinct object, the boundaries between its Being and my own are sanded down to become a kind of unity. That Ramachandran muses that

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[61] Ibid., 153.
[62] Ramachandran and Blakeslee, *Phantoms in the Brain*, 60.
[63] Ibid., 60-61.
[64] Ibid., 61.

the same operation may occur in interpersonal relations recapitulates the point made above about the intersubjective constitution of Heidegger's Dasein. But in order to flesh out this potentiality, we need to reflect on the embodiment of interpersonal relations beyond the body schema of the self. To this end, we now turn to Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of shared perception.

4.2.2 The Shared Perception of Embodied Existence

As we saw with Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty insists that the world in which we are immersed is always co-constituted by others. Indeed, he suggests that we do not acquire perception for ourselves as individuals at all, but we rather imbibe our consciousness from the shared realm of embodied interaction. Just as one's body is perceptive, so one perceives the bodies of others as perceptive, and so the perceptive field opens up in which understanding can be transferred.[65] Merleau-Ponty illustrates this point with the example of a baby imitating him in play:

> A fifteen-month-old baby opens his mouth when I playfully take one of his fingers in my mouth and pretend to bite it. And yet, he has hardly even seen his face in a mirror and his teeth do not resemble mine. His own mouth and teeth such as he senses them from within are immediately for him the instruments for biting, and my jaw such as he sees it from the outside is for him immediately capable of the same intentions. "Biting" immediately has an intersubjective signification for him. He perceives his intentions in his body, perceives my body with his own, and thereby perceives my intentions in his body.[66]

The explanation Merleau-Ponty gives for the baby's imitation of him is a primordial human understanding of other bodies as perceptive, so that the possibilities for Being (in this case, playful biting) which are enacted by others can in turn be understood and intended by ourselves, even when we have not yet considered those possibilities consciously. From this Merleau-Ponty observes, "There is, between my consciousness and my body such as I live it, and between this phenomenal body and the other person's phenomenal body such as I see it from the

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[65] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 367.
[66] Ibid., 368.

outside, an internal relation that makes the other person appear as the completion of the system."[67] This system which the other person completes is the realm of shared perception, where I understand others as understanding, so that their understanding can be disclosed to me through shared experience of reality.

Susan Bredlau suggests that what Merleau-Ponty describes in this illustration is more than mere imitation, since this play is the means by which the baby imbibes his own possibilities through embodied performance of what occurs in his shared consciousness with the adult.[68] The infant does not have a subjective sense of "self" cut off from an "external" world, and so he does not perceive Merleau-Ponty as distinct from himself. As such, the child does not *imitate* Merleau-Ponty, as though *pretending* to be him. Rather, the child understands himself and the world *through* Merleau-Ponty. By unconsciously understanding his own body schema as integrated with that of Merleau-Ponty, the infant is able to absorb Merleau-Ponty's enacted possibilities as his own. Merleau-Ponty's playfulness inculcates the possibilities of play into the child by bringing the child into a world of shared performance and common consciousness. Merleau-Ponty thus concludes:

> [W]e have learned in individual perception not to conceive of our perspectival views as independent of each other; we know that they slip into each other and are gathered together in the thing. Similarly, we must learn to find the communication of consciousnesses in a single world. In fact, the other person is not enclosed in my perspective on the world because this perspective itself has no definite limits, because it spontaneously slips into the other's perspective, and because they are gathered together in a single world in which we all participate as anonymous subjects of perception.[69]

This examination illuminates the dynamics of shared understanding in adults as well. Since all understanding, from our infancy, is inculcated by embodied involvement, and since this

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[67] Ibid., 368.
[68] Susan Bredlau, "On Perception and Trust: Merleau-Ponty and the Emotional Significance of Our Relations with Others," *Continental Philosophy Review* 52.1 (2019): 5.
[69] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 369.

involvement takes place in worlds co-constituted by other humans, our understanding of how to understand at all—hearkening back to Heidegger's *das Man* as the condition for Dasein's way of Being—is imbibed through experiences of shared embodied perception. The consciousness which I conventionally think of as "mine" is in fact not just the nebulous, fluid pattern of attunements we established earlier but is further porous and thus participatory in shared reality. Rather than experiencing myself as inherently cut off from others, then, it is more appropriate to say that my most basic way of occupying a world with others is in terms of shared participation, even *communion*. Reflecting on the implications of this for adult understanding, Bredlau writes:

> We can perceive others' behavior as their way of having a world, and, in doing so, we can begin to participate in this way of having a world. That is, rather than just observing how others comport themselves toward whatever is around them, we can take up these comportments for ourselves. By joining others in their way of a having a world, however, their way of having a world will be fundamentally changed; it will no longer be *their* way of having a world, but instead, *our* way. Our perception will be a collaborative endeavor, and the world we perceive will be a shared world.[70]

In Chapter 3 we observed how Heidegger understands discourse as Dasein's expressive, disclosive activity whose end goal is the co-attunement of others—that is, the shared understanding of world and openness to the possibilities afforded therein. Here we observe this communicative function of human discourse reinforced and advanced by the shared field of embodied perception. Perceiving others as perceptive, we are able to occupy a world from a shared vantage. We do not *become* others, strictly speaking, but neither do we remain cut off from them as enclosed selves. In effect, we participate in worlds shaped by our common perspective. We come to see as they see and so become ourselves—as persons of attunement and possibility—in communion with the particular persons with whom we share that world.

[70] Bredlau, "Perception and Trust," 6.

4.2.3 Conclusion

The theological implications of these insights are monumental. Merleau-Ponty's exploration of the phenomenal field of shared perception discloses new pathways for understanding how the personal possibilities of Jesus may shape our own. Perceiving others as perceptive, we are able to occupy a shared vantage on reality and so experience first-hand another's attunement to world and their projection of possibilities therein. In other words, personhood is essentially *communicable* through the medium of shared embodied existence. To share in the presence of Christ, by extension, would thus mean to share in his understanding of world and the possibilities for Being by participating in his embodied way of Being-in-the-world.

The running argument of this chapter is that persons are not "things" so much as nebulous nodes of attunement and possibilities. The particularity of a person is their unique blend of openness and closedness to certain ways of understanding established through their unique and finite history. To consider the person of Jesus not as an entity confined to a specific set of matter but rather as a unique pattern of worldly belonging thus allows the resurrection to function similarly to the phantom limb, where Christ is actively present where his unique attunements and possibilities are operative in material reality. In theological terms, the account just given allows for a phenomenological reappropriation of *theosis* beyond mere *imitatio Christi*.[71] Insofar as I am able to assimilate the possibilities of others as my own, it becomes at least theoretically the case that I could assimilate the possibilities that of Jesus' particular person as normative for my own.

But if embodiment is essential for the assimilation of possibilities, then how can the Christian have such a relation with the person of Jesus in light of the two-thousand-year gap

[71] This is not to disparage the history or usefulness of practices of imitating Christ. It is simply to reopen (or at least keep open) the metaphysical door to a more integrative relationship with his person.

between his existence and our own? Were we to suggest, say, that the personal possibilities of Jesus are made clear in the texts of scripture, would this not end up bracketing the very embodiment which has been so important to this point, not to mention reduce Jesus' person to the interpretive insights of a handful of witnesses? If the foregoing analysis is to be anything more than simply theoretical gymnastics, then an account of Jesus' *present* embodiment is necessary. This will be the subject of my next chapter, where I propose that the Eucharist is precisely the means and context of such embodied encounter.

Before we can enter into such a discussion, though, let us turn to modern theological treatments of phenomenological encounter with Christ. Such an investigation will help to synthesize the concerns of this chapter as they pertain to the specific case of the risen Christ and will further transition this project from its exegetical stage to its constructive conclusion.

4.3 PERSONHOOD IN THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate what characterizes a human person. In the last section, we observed how the definition of persons as nodes of attunement and possibility manifests in the physicality of the body. This raises the question, though, of whether it is possible to conceive of such embodied relations with Christ when his own human body is absent. Therefore, we are now interested in whether and how the particular person actualized in the life of Jesus of Nazareth can be discerned through embodied understanding *without* the presence of his specific human body.[72] With this more explicitly theological concern now brought to the fore,

[72] To that end, our concern is not to determine the nature of divine personhood attributed to Christ as the Second Person of the Trinity—nor, indeed, whether the term "person" is even an adequate term for the trinitarian hypostases. Rather, insofar as Jesus of Nazareth was ever determined to be divine, he was thus understood only by means of his human person, and therefore, since it is an account of revelation we are ultimately after, the means of revelation will have to remain at least compatible with the same revelation of that person to his disciples.

it is time to turn from Heidegger's phenomenological project to more theological treatments of personhood, specifically those that focus on personhood in light of the Christ-event. I will here consult two theologians who are contemporaries of Heidegger, are aware of his work, and engage to varying degrees with his thought in their respective theological investigations of personhood. I will begin with an examination of Karl Rahner's account of human personhood characterized by transcendental openness to God, culminating in the Christ-event, before turning to Dietrich Bonhoeffer's account of human sociality, culminating in Christ's existence as community. In both cases I hope to show resemblances between theological treatments of personhood and the Heideggerian themes we observed earlier, thereby setting a standard for my own constructive moves to follow.

4.3.1 Christological Personhood in the Work of Karl Rahner

The German Jesuit Karl Rahner is a natural conversation partner in our theological appropriation of Heidegger on personhood, not only because Rahner was a one-time student of Heidegger's, but because Rahner and Heidegger share a focus on human beings as the loci of Being's disclosure, each of them articulating a vision of human Being in terms of externality and dynamism.[73] What follows is an examination of Rahner's consideration of human personhood,

[73] As William Kangas points out, "While it is clear that Rahner did not simply translate Heidegger's thinking of the 1920s and 1930s… into a Catholic-Thomistic framework, it seems clear that without Heidegger's attempt to retrieve the question of the meaning of Being through an existential analytic of human being in terms of its transcendental openness to Being as *Dasein*, that Rahner's own quest after Absolute Being would have looked quite different—if it had emerged at all" ("In the Proximity of Guilt and Danger: Karl Rahner as Heidegger's Other," *Philosophy Today* 44.3 (2000): 261). Kangas argues that Heidegger's phenomenological project in *Being and Time* is rooted in his Catholic studies from 1909-1919, so that even when Heidegger departs from any explicit theological consideration, his thought bears the markings of that religious influence and so appeals to the Catholic Rahner, who takes up (and, according to Kangas, completes) the young Heidegger's philosophical project. This does not suggest that Transcendental Thomism is simply a Catholic retranslation of Heidegger, as indicated by Rahner's numerous other influences. Rather, "What Heidegger did provide Rahner with… was a new discursive field within which Thomas's emphasis upon Being as *esse* could be retrieved so as to provide the basis for a metaphysics that could transcendentally ground the Catholic understanding and faithful belief in God; and to do so in the face of Kant's separation of faith and reason" (Ibid., 261). Rahner is thus a helpful exemplar of the constructive redeployment of

which for him takes its shape from and reaches its climax in the paradigmatic person of Jesus Christ. Our purpose here is to learn from Rahner's example: both to consider and evaluate the philosophical and theological resources he provides as well as to further refine our understanding of what is still needed within the scope of the present project.

As with Heidegger, Rahner resists the temptation to conflate the whole person with some interior subject, so that the person proper is the being to whom the thinking subject belongs.[74] The *subject*, Rahner says, is an individual's having to do with herself, a reflexivity characteristic of a primordial openness to world. The *person*, by contrast, is the self-possession of subject in free relation to the total self.[75] In other words, one does not merely think for oneself (subject) but further understands that they are a self about whom one can think (person). And when one thinks of oneself, one is oriented toward that being which is always more than that about which one is presently thinking:

Heidegger which I seek to make in this project, namely, by employing the pre-thematic character of human Being-in-the-world's ontological understanding to ground a metaphysical theological reflection that avoids the pitfalls of the Metaphysics with which Heidegger disposes. Rahner's Catholic use of metaphysics and Kantian language of "transcendence" is thus not at odds with Heidegger's post-Metaphysical phenomenology precisely because it is on the basis of Heidegger's anthropologically centered opening of the question of Being that Rahner is able to engage in metaphysics as he does. Thomas Sheehan identifies this commonality of Heidegger's phenomenology with Rahner's transcendental metaphysics as a matter of ontological "movement," reinforcing the language of "dynamism" I have chosen to use in my description of Heidegger's account of reality. See Sheehan *Karl Rahner: The Philosophical Foundations* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1987), 7. Blending the language of Rahner and Heidegger so as to showcase their compatibility around a metaphysics of movement, Sheehan writes: "Man is already ahead of himself—*de facto* existentiality—in such a way that he can meaningfully encounter particular things. In a briefer formulation, man is excess that makes possible access. The whole of excess-and-access is called 'transcendence,' and the up-shot of the analysis thus far is that in the movement of man's essence there is the opening up or dis-closure (Greek: *aletheia*) of the world of sense" (Ibid., 296). Rahner is thus a useful foil for a theological discussion of Heidegger for two reasons: (1) Rahner demonstrates and validates the redeployment of Heidegger's philosophical tools for theological purposes, and (2) Rahner exemplifies the use of Heidegger's phenomenological investigation into Being for an embrace of metaphysics rather than a wholesale rejection of it.

[74] Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity,* translated by William V. Dych (New York: Crossroad, 1978), 26.

[75] Ibid., 30.

> To say that man is person and subject, therefore, means first of all that man is someone who cannot be derived, who cannot be produced completely from other elements at our disposal. He is that being who is responsible for himself. When he explains himself, analyzes himself, reduces himself back to the plurality of his origins, he is affirming himself as the subject who is doing this, and in so doing he experiences himself as something necessarily prior to and more original than this plurality.[76]

Similar to what we observed in *Being and Time*, where the human person is neither just an isolated subject in the face of anxiety nor a drone under the influence of *das Man* but always the historical navigation and integration of the two together, so Rahner's definition of personhood asserts human independence precisely through recognition of the external conditions of one's existence. In recognizing that one is a product of this or that force, be it social or biological, a person affirms her own capacity for recognition itself, thereby affirming her unique vantage as a self-conscious individual within the network of those influences.

In affirming the finite horizon of one's being and understanding, Rahner argues that the human already surpasses this horizon, apprehending an infinite horizon.[77] Thus, Rahner says that "human nature is absolute openness for all being or, to put it in one word, the human person is spirit."[78] That we can perceive the finite limits of beings at all indicates our implicit awareness of limitlessness.[79] This is the nature of Rahner's famous *Vorgriff auf esse*, commonly translated as the *pre-apprehension of Being*: "the dynamic movement [*dynamischen Hinbewegung*] of the spirit toward the absolute range of all possible objects."[80] Opened to the infinite horizon within which all limited objects have their Being, Rahner contends that the human being is inherently open to the absolute being of God.[81] He even goes so far as to say, "All knowing beings…

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[76] Ibid., 31.
[77] Ibid., 32.
[78] Rahner, *Hearer of the Word*, trans. by Joseph Donceel (New York: Continuum, 1994), 28.
[79] Ibid., 47.
[80] Ibid., 47.
[81] Ibid., 49.

implicitly know God in everything they know."[82] A human being is particular in her humanity precisely as defined in relation to God: "Only that makes us human: that we are always already on the way to God, whether or not we know it expressly, whether or not we will it. We are forever the infinite openness of the finite for God."[83] The human is uniquely human by virtue of her openness to the infinite divine.

If this is indeed the case, then how does Rahner move from the human being in general to the particular person? The answer is finitude. Rather than simply knowing pure infinitude, we can only transcendentally know infinitude as brought to light by our apprehension of the finite boundaries of limited beings.[84] Even as a human is constituted by her understanding of the infinity external to her, the fact that this understanding is of an *external* infinitude affirms her own finitude and thus her particularity, distinguishing the being that she is from others. Finitude, in short, guarantees difference.

So what, then, is the particular, finite character of Jesus' person? Rahner answers that Jesus Christ is the human being par excellence, the being in whom our radical transcendental openness to the infinite horizon achieves permanent completion. Since what defines the human being is openness to the absolute mystery of God, the human is most fully human insofar as she completely abandons herself to this mystery.[85] In this act of self-abandonment, Rahner argues, the human's self-performance mimics that of God, who as Trinity and Creator is eternally going out of Godself.[86] Rahner goes so far as to argue that "this takes place in an unsurpassable way and in the strictest and most radical sense when this nature of man as so understood so gives

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[82] Ibid., 52.
[83] Ibid., 53.
[84] Ibid., 59.
[85] Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 218.
[86] Karl Rahner, "On the Theology of the Incarnation," in *Theological Investigations*, Volume IV, trans. Cornelius Ernst (Limerick, Ireland: University of Limerick Centre for Culture, Technology, and Values, 2004), 112.

itself to the mystery of fullness and so empties itself that it becomes the nature of God himself."[87] Just as God becomes human in the Incarnation by going out of Godself and becoming subject to finitude and change, so humanity in the instance of this one person becomes God through total and radical self-emptying.[88] Rahner sums up, "This man [Jesus] is precisely as man the self-expression of God in his self-emptying, because God expresses precisely *himself* if he empties himself, if he discloses himself as love, if he conceals the majesty of his love and manifests himself in the ordinariness of man."[89] The defining characteristic of the man Jesus, the characteristic by which he is determined by his followers to be God incarnate, is his total abandonment of self in love for others, a material expression of his human personhood defined by its total openness to the infinite otherness of God.

Whether or not this constitutes a compelling argument for the full divinity of the man Jesus, Rahner's depiction of Jesus' humanity is valuable insofar as it expresses the *presence* of Jesus to the experience of the Christian:

> Wherever a person accepts his life and opens himself to God's incomprehensibility and lets himself fall into it, and hence wherever he appropriates his supernatural transcendentality in interpersonal communication, in love, in fidelity, and in a task which opens him even to the inner-worldly future of man and of the human race, there is taking place the history of the salvation and the revelation of the very God who communicates himself to man, and whose communication is mediated by the whole length and breadth and depth of human life.[90]

Were we to import the Heideggerian language with which we have already formulated a description of personhood, we might say that the possibilities that define the person Jesus of Nazareth have the distinct character of total self-emptying, which is subsequently performed and

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[87] Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 218.
[88] Ibid., 222.
[89] Ibid., 224.
[90] Ibid., 411. Prefiguring something like my own argument in the next two chapters, Rahner further makes that case that the Eucharist is the fullest actualization of this conditioning persons toward self-emptying (Ibid., 427). He achieves this specifically through his theology of the real symbol, which I will evaluate in Chapter 5.1.2.

taken up into the personal possibilities of his followers, to the extent that they effectively know Christ as present in living out his own unique manner of Being.

But is this enough to give us Jesus' unique person? Divine revelation as I have been sketching it in this project demands an encounter with the being in whom God communicates Godself. And while Rahner clearly provides us with a model for how God in the person of Christ is made present in the consciousness of the believer, understanding this presence in terms of its revelatory potential requires, I have suggested, an encounter with a particular person which is lacking in Rahner. Granted, Rahner does not treat our encounter with the risen Christ as essential to revelation in the same way as I do. But since we are looking at Rahner in part to provide us an example of how Christ's person can be said to be presently existing in such a way that yields a revelatory encounter, we might wonder whether Rahner actually provides us with a description of Jesus' unique set of personal possibilities and attunements or whether he simply gives us humanity to a maximal degree. In other words, is Rahner successful in providing us the man Jesus in his risen form, such that our encounter with his person yields an understanding of who and how God is, or are we just confronted with humanity in general, albeit in a perfected form?

It is hard to criticize Rahner on this point because he simply isn't interested in revelation by encounter in the manner I am sketching here. In fact, Rahner goes to great lengths to *de*-emphasize the particularity of Jesus' human person in order to account for the apparent dissonance between the human Jesus' self-consciousness and his full participation in God as well as Jesus' apparent error in his apocalyptic expectations.[91] Using the notion of unthematic knowledge of God we have already observed, Rahner returns to the theme of Jesus as

[91] Karl Rahner, "Dogmatic Reflections on the Knowledge and Self-Consciousness of Christ," in *Theological Investigations*, Volume V, trans. Cornelius Ernst (Limerick: University of Limerick Center for Culture, Technology, and Values, 2004): 193-212.

paradigmatic human by emphasizing the perfect and undiluted beatific vision in Jesus' unthematic consciousness alongside his historically contingent thematic development. On the one hand, as fully God, the self-consciousness of the Logos is fully operative within Jesus' unthematic human consciousness.[92] On the other hand, as fully human, Jesus arrives at an explicit grasp of this self-consciousness only gradually and through historically mediated experiences, so that his self-expression as the incarnate Logos is always subsumed by the contingencies of his earthly life.[93] While this exhibits a very clever maneuvering around a question raised by the Hypostatic Union using Rahner's previously developed Christology, it deprives the particular personhood of the human Jesus of any significant revelatory potential. If revelation is to occur through personal encounter, then the shape of the being whom one encounters is of fundamental importance to the shape of any revelation thereby inferred. But in Rahner's account, there is a dissonance allowed between the thematic and unthematic consciousness of Jesus, so that the revelatory value of any personal encounter with him is substantially weakened.

Part of the issue here is that Rahner's focus seems to be on describing human persons in their *humanity* rather than their *individuality*. We get a picture here of what defines the species (and how the species reaches its climactic unity in Christ) but not of what distinguishes one member of that species from another. For the purposes of this project, we might say that Rahner provides us a model of human personhood that illustrates just how Christ is a person (and so how

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[92] Ibid., 208: "For this direct presence to God is the plain, simple self-awareness—the necessary self-realization—of this substantial union with the person of the Logos himself… this and nothing more. This means, however, that this really existing direct vision of God is nothing other than the original unobjectified consciousness [of] divine sonship, which is present by the mere fact that there *is* a Hypostatic Union."

[93] Ibid., 211: "This consciousness in Christ realized itself only gradually during his spiritual *history*, and this history does not consist only, or even first and foremost, in being occupied with this or that fact of external reality but consists rather in the never quite successful attaining of what and who one is oneself, and this precisely as what and whom one always already possessed oneself in the depths of one's existence."

humans can thereby live in Christ), but we are still left in search of the particular personality of Jesus Christ, whose uniqueness is essential to what is revealed in him. Among the underlying assumptions of this project is the belief that the character of God revealed in Christ is necessarily tied to the character of Christ as revelation. Who and how God is are thus understood precisely on the basis of who and how Christ is in the human Jesus. A robust doctrine of revelation (or at least one that depends upon encounter) therefore not only benefits from but further necessitates the uniqueness of the human Jesus to a degree that Rahner simply doesn't account for.

This isn't to diminish Rahner's usefulness to our inquiry, however. On the contrary, Rahner's Heideggerian-inflected analysis of human transcendental knowledge and his further use of that analysis to establish an understanding of human beings in Christ demonstrates the kind of creative use of and departure from Heidegger which is necessary for a project such as this. Rahner's anthropologically centered epistemology, his phenomenologically calibrated metaphysics, and his interest in the present Christian interaction with the person of Christ all demonstrate how the creative redeployment of Heidegger's philosophical tools can be productively applied to questions of revelation, even if my project ends up searching for something other than what Rahner ultimately provides. Where Rahner comes up short for our purposes is his emphasis on human participation in Christ through what is common to everyone (i.e., our humanity) at the expense of any significant account of what distinguishes Jesus as a divinely revelatory being (i.e., his particular person). It is thus in pursuit of a genuinely revelatory notion of Christ's present personhood that we now turn to Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

4.3.2 Christ Existing as Community in the Work of Dietrich Bonhoeffer

If Rahner fails to provide us with a satisfactorily revelatory Christ, then we may find a compelling alternative account in his Protestant contemporary, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who aligns the specificity of the risen Christ with the particular contours of the Church. While Rahner's existential reading of human openness to the infinite horizon draws on Heidegger's dynamically open account of human Being-in-the-world, and his depiction of God as absolute mystery and the infinite horizon of the *Vorgriff auf esse* mirrors Heidegger's own depiction of the nothing at the fringes of the clearing, Bonhoeffer takes a different tack, albeit one that still resonates with the Heideggerian themes we have been observing.[94] Bonhoeffer places the onus of revelation on

[94] The extent of Heidegger's actual influence on Bonhoeffer is murky and disputed, in part because Bonhoeffer rejects Heidegger's foundational ontology on theological grounds as insufficiently Christocentric (Charles Marsh, "Bonhoeffer on Heidegger and Togetherness," *Modern Theology* 8.3 (July 1992), 264). On the other hand, it is also clear that Bonhoeffer had a positive response to Heidegger, based on his explicit use of Heidegger in his 1931 habilitation, *Act and Being*. Even in 1929, before *Act and Being*'s completion, Bonhoeffer's University of Berlin colleague, Wilhelm Lütgert, referred to Bonhoeffer as hopelessly Heideggerian (Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), 94). But Bonhoeffer was exposed to Heidegger much earlier than the composition of *Act and Being*, perhaps as early as 1924 (Marsh, "Bonhoeffer on Heidegger and Togetherness," 263). While Bonhoeffer's earlier work in *Sanctorum Communio*, which will be the focus of my analysis in what follows, is not explicitly Heideggerian, it is entirely reasonable to assume that Bonhoeffer's creative engagement with sociality as the foundation of epistemology is formed within an intellectual sphere in which Heidegger was a known and major voice. As Josh de Keijzer observes, "Although Bonhoeffer disagrees with almost everything Heidegger has to offer… he still becomes the philosopher whose thought in *Being and Time* provides the key to the problem with which Bonhoeffer is struggling. The methodological change resulting from the insights gained here reverberates throughout Bonhoeffer's work from this point on, even when any overt reference to Heidegger is dropped from the theological vocabulary. It is the move from modernist epistemology to an ontology-based hermeneutic as the starting point for doing theology" ("Revelation as Being: Bonhoeffer's Appropriation of Heidegger's Ontology," *Journal of Religion* 98.3 (July 2018), 350). That is, Heidegger's ontological approach to anthropological and epistemological questions was relevant to Bonhoeffer's own interest in retrieving an embodied approach to Luther's *theologia crucis* in contradistinction to what he perceived as the idealist methodology of Karl Barth (Ibid., 348). According to Jens Zimmermann, Bonhoeffer admired Heidegger's philosophical approach for "offering the integration of consciousness with the material world, even if from an untenable atheistic perspective" (*Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Christian Humanism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 153. As we will see, Bonhoeffer is principally concerned with an ontology of social understanding that replaces the self-reflective subject, much as we have seen in Heidegger's thought. Per Zimmermann, in *Sanctorum Communio* Bonhoeffer uses Heidegger to inform his understanding of existential understanding through participation but goes beyond Heidegger by employing language of ethics which is absent in Heidegger ("Bonhoeffer and Heidegger; Two Different Visions of Humanity," in *Bonhoeffer and Continental Thought: Cruciform Philosophy*, ed. Brian E. Gregor and Jens Zimmermann (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 110-111). That Bonhoeffer departs from Heidegger is thus not indicative of a wholesale rejection but of an originary commonality between the two thinkers that predates (and shapes) Bonhoeffer's theological independence. While the degree of Heidegger's "influence" on Bonhoeffer may indeed remain vague, both Bonhoeffer's questions and methodology display a clear compatibility with Heidegger formed against the backdrop of Bonhoeffer's awareness of Heidegger's work.

the collective community of the Church, not only as the place where Christians are formed in their religious beliefs but where they are further shaped as persons under the norm of Christ. Bonhoeffer's model centers on the fundamental sociality of human persons, arguing not only that one cannot attain full personhood apart from belonging to the Church but further that the Church has its own personhood, that of Christ himself, the real "who" of the Christian person. This provides us an opportunity for theological comparison with what we observe from Heidegger's treatment of *das Man*.[95] In this section I will give a brief depiction of Bonhoeffer's Christo-centric ecclesiology, focusing on the young Bonhoeffer's dissertation *Sanctorum Communio,* exploring how human individuals are formed into persons within the Church before examining how Christ's own person is manifest through that community.

In continuity with our analysis of personhood in Heidegger, Bonhoeffer does not understand the person as a stable *person-thing* across time. Rather, "*the person ever and again arises and passes away in time*. The person does not exist timelessly; a person is not static but dynamic."[96] For Bonhoeffer, this dynamism is characterized foremost by ethical responsibility to the other. In contrast to the solipsistic Cartesian subject the Christian account of personhood insists on the reality of sin and redemption, and so the human person in her fullness must be understood in terms of transformation over time, specifically in terms of her moral standing in relation to both God and other humans.[97] Consequently, for a person to exist at all, there must be other persons present.[98] Whereas for Rahner, one's identity and finitude are derived from a preapprehension of infinitude beyond one's bounds, for Bonhoeffer, the human individual's

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[95] See §1.1 of this chapter for my discussion of *das Man* as the "who" of Dasein.
[96] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio: A Theological Study of the Sociology of the Church*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, Volume I, trans. Joachim von Soosten (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 48. Emphasis original.
[97] Ibid., 49.
[98] Ibid., 51.

identity is shaped according to other finite beings with whom she interacts and who form the limit of her person. Who a person *is* is defined by how she performs her personal identity in reference to the other, rendering all personhood ethical personhood.[99]

We can here appreciate the resonance of Bonhoeffer's ethical interpretation of personhood with what we observed earlier in Heidegger's account of *das Man*.[100] Not only is the person formed within the normative community in which she exists, but the community provides the very condition of possibility for her personhood at all. However, whereas in *Being and Time*, *das Man* poses a threat to the individuality of the person, in Bonhoeffer's *Sanctorum Communio*, the existence of the other seems to *require* the individuality of each person. The ethical demand of a person poses the basic question to all others, "Who will you be to me?" One's openness to this question of the other is established by one's location within a shared community.[101] One cannot answer the ethical question of the other until one enters into a common dialogical space with the other.

Community is thus the locus of personhood. In fact, Bonhoeffer goes so far as to argue that "*community can be interpreted as a collective person with the same structure as the individual person*."[102] If we are to fully dismiss the Cartesian legacy of solipsistic and subjective personhood, he argues, then we must also dispose of any account of community that is simply a collection of distinct and self-enclosed individuals. Rather, "A *community is a concrete unity*. Its members must not be viewed as separate individuals, for the center of activity lies not in each member, but in all of them together."[103] This is not to suggest that the individual person is a

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[99] Ibid., 54-58.
[100] See Zimmermann, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Christian Humanism*, 157: "Like Heidegger, [Bonhoeffer] denies an isolated, autonomous mind and insists that consciousness itself is inherently social. Unlike Heidegger, however, this sociality is fundamentally ethical and thus actually humane."
[101] Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, 66.
[102] Ibid., 77. Emphasis original.
[103] Ibid., 78. Emphasis original.

charade and that the collective species alone exists through its various human limbs. Instead, Bonhoeffer argues for the synonymity—even the symbiosis—of collective and individual persons. Just as someone cannot become who she is until called into her individuality by the ethical question of the other, which presupposes shared presence within community, so that very community cannot exist without being constellated by the individual humans who ground its character. Speaking theologically, Bonhoeffer writes, "The universal person of God does not think of people as isolated individual beings, but in a natural state of communication with other human beings."[104] Indeed, "In God's eyes, community and individual exist in the same moment and rest in one another."[105] Considered in Heideggerian terms, we might say that, just as there is no substance underlying each individual, thus guaranteeing the unity and integrity of each person, so a community has no Being apart from the dynamic movements of its members.

Bonhoeffer expresses this relation between individual and collective personhood with the term *objective spirit*. By this Bonhoeffer means the structure of Being established through the interaction of two or more human wills.[106] When two individuals relate to one another, they establish a pattern of behavior that is entered into by any third individual joining the group. This idea is easily illustrated by the experience of coming to know someone closely in a particular context, such as a place of work, only to have the awkward feeling of finding it difficult to relate to that same person when encountered in a radically different context, such as a supermarket. When we relate to each other, our relations establish a pattern of behavior that is itself a product and feature of the world in which those relations occur. The experience of struggling to conjure up those same relational dynamics in a foreign world, then, illustrates the interdependence of our

[104] Ibid., 79-80.
[105] Ibid., 80.
[106] Ibid., 98.

experiences of worlds with our experiences of each other. As a world that both shapes and is shaped by the individual relations within it, a community can with time, repetition, and diversity of members, take on a life of its own, becoming a constant presence though its members come and go. So while a community requires the embodied existence of its members in order to actualize itself, it is not merely a sum of those embodied parts, as it exerts its own personal will and understanding through the individual bodies of its members. Bonhoeffer thus writes,

> Individual persons remain completely separate from one another. The collective person is metaphysically autonomous in relation to the individuals, though at the same time genetically dependent. In the structure of persons the collective person has a status that is no different from that of each individual. Strictly speaking, *unity* and *community* are not mutually exclusive, nor are they identical, but each needs the other.[107]

It is perhaps obvious by now that Bonhoeffer's next move is to articulate how the Church as community performs the collective person of Christ. Because human beings are sinful in their relations to each other, who they are as human persons is formed under the communal norms of original sin.[108] Thus, who humans are as individual persons in relation to one another is discontinuous with who they ought to be in relation to God. The emergence of Christ as a human being reverses the thrust of original sin in society and establishes a new community in which personhood as shaped by right ethical relation to God is effected in the ethical relations between human beings.[109] Personal identity in ethical relationship to God constitutes a new humanity, one

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[107] Ibid., 105. I therefore disagree with Zimmermann's characterization of Bonhoeffer's objective spirit as "tradition," which Zimmermann associates primarily with language (*Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Christian Humanism*, 157). Zimmermann rightly refers to objective spirit as "the collective mind, social ethos, or content conveyed through language," but in this scheme, language is but one part of the totality of objective spirit's activity, whereas "collective mind" and "social ethos" are much more implicit, unconscious elements of communal existence (Ibid., 156). As a collection of humanly expressive symbols, rituals, and patterns of speech and behavior, Christian tradition as it is broadly conceived is inherently linguistic in a way that objective spirit isn't always. Such tradition certainly belongs under the umbrella of objective spirit and seems to play an integral part in Bonhoeffer's conception of Christian formation, but this is different than simply conflating tradition with the Church's objective spirit itself.

[108] Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, 108-109.

[109] Ibid., 145-146.

that is embodied in the practice of the Church as Christ's community on earth. As Bonhoeffer emphatically writes, "It is not as if Christ could be abstracted from the church; rather it is none other than Christ who 'is' the church. Christ does not represent it; only what is not present can be represented."[110] Because the Church is the community defined by persons whose identities are determined in ethical relation to God through Christ, the objective spirit put in motion through that community is identical with the personal will of the individual Jesus of Nazareth. The character of the new humanity endowed to individuals comes to life in the collective activity of the community and so feeds back into that community's individual members, forming them with ever greater precision into the collective body of Christ. Bonhoeffer summarizes:

> Not all the individuals, but the church-community as a whole is in Christ, is the 'body of Christ'; it is '*Christ existing as church-community*.' It bears the sins by receiving forgiveness through the word and seeing its sins wiped out on the cross. It indeed lives *by the word* alone, but in doing so it has the Spirit. It is bearer of the word, its steward and instrument. It has authority, provided it has faith in the authority of the word; it can take the sins of individuals upon itself, if it builds itself on the word of the cross, and knows itself reconciled and justified in the cross of Jesus. It has itself died and risen with Christ, and is now the nova creatura [new creation] in Christ. It is not merely *a means to an end but also an end in itself. It is the present Christ himself, and this is why 'being in Christ' and 'being in the church-community' is the same thing*; it is why Christ himself bears the sins of the individuals, which are laid upon the church-community.[111]

Living by the word—living the life of Christ as his body—therefore constitutes the Church not as a religion but as a revelation.[112] The Church is not primarily a society of cultic practice but the perpetuation of God's self-revelation in Jesus: Christ existing as community.

So far, so good. Bonhoeffer provides us a concrete ontology of Christ's present existence and furthermore articulates this presence in a manner which lays the foundation for revelatory encounter with Christian individuals. He furthermore does this in a manner compatible with the

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[110] Ibid., 157.
[111] Ibid., 190. Emphasis original.
[112] Ibid., 153.

sociality of the individual we observed earlier in Heidegger, so that Bonhoeffer's theological model of Christ's present existence is easily translatable to a Heideggerian metaphysic.

But it is precisely this insight which should give us pause. Bonhoeffer's model of Christ as community raises the question of what actually distinguishes the particularity of Christ's person from the shape of any particular church community. In the Heideggerian model we explored earlier, the generic "who" of Dasein is particularized by Dasein's experience of anxiety: Dasein's confrontation with death and its own inevitable non-Being, which demarcates its existence from that of others. But no such method for distinguishing the collective person of Christ from other human persons exists in Bonhoeffer's model. No doubt Bonhoeffer wants to resist a simple synonymity between the objective spirit of Christ as community and the individual actions of the sinners who fallibly belong to it.[113] But as community, the character of Christ that is so immanent to the Christian has a problematic breadth, so that it can be difficult to discern which activities of the Church are Christ's and which are not. As we will see when we return to Bonhoeffer in Chapter 6, Bonhoeffer wishes to situate Christian hermeneutic and ethical takings-as within the formation of Christians by their participation in Christ's person-as-community. But on what basis is such formation a product of the person Jesus as opposed to simply the church to which one belongs, defined as it is by human sin and localized particularities? To translate this question into Heideggerian terms: What distinguishes *this one person Jesus*, who exists as the *das Man* of the Church, from *das Man* in general?

This is a similar critique to that leveled by John Howard Yoder, who is otherwise sympathetic to Bonhoeffer. Yoder is troubled by Bonhoeffer's lack of emphasis on the actual life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth in his portrayal of the risen Christ as community.

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[113] Ibid., 214.

Bonhoeffer's metaphysical maneuvering to affirm Christ's presence amidst the ecclesial community, says Yoder, ends up reducing Christ to humanity in general rather than articulating anything specific about the particular human being from whom we know God. "The problem of Christology," he writes, "is not whether or how God could or did become man, but what kind of man He chose to be."[114] Without any concrete account of Jesus' human particularity, claims to Jesus' divinity (and subsequent theological and doctrinal formulations) lose their grounding in the historical reality of Jesus' unique personhood. For Yoder, "the true purpose of the Chalcedonian affirmation [is] that he who is confessed as *vere Deus* had to be first seen as *vere homo*."[115] Jens Zimmermann contests Yoder's critique, suggesting that the particular "thatness" of the historical Jesus is itself an abstraction of modern theology, so that even the demand for concreteness is self-defeating: "Yoder's hermeneutic is itself open to the danger of literalism, historicism, and even a certain fundamentalism *because* it wants concreteness."[116] While I think Zimmermann's response to Yoder is correct, I also find that Yoder's critique of Bonhoeffer draws our attention back to an important theme underlying the present project. The entire point of insisting on a revelation by encounter, as I do, is the recognition that who God is said to be will depend upon the human character of the one who is said to be (and thereby reveal) God. I am thus enormously sympathetic to Yoder's demand for concreteness and particularity even as I agree with Zimmermann's response that the demand for such particularity based on fallible biblical witness also risks abstraction.

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[114] John H. Yoder, "The Christological Presuppositions of Discipleship," in *Being Human, Becoming Human: Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Social Thought*, edited by Jens Zimmermann and Brian Gregor (Cambridge: James Clarke and C., 2010), 157.
[115] Ibid., 163.
[116] Jens Zimmermann, "Being Human, Becoming Human: Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Christological Humanism," in *Being Human, Becoming Human: Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Social Thought*, edited by Jens Zimmermann and Brian Gregor (Cambridge: James Clarke and Co., 2010), 42.

The revelation by present encounter which I insisted on in my introductory chapter demands a metaphysic of presence, which Karl Rahner and Dietrich Bonhoeffer both creatively provide. But it also demands the particularity of the person encountered—the variations, details, and nuance that verbal description cannot convey—in order for that encounter to be truly revelatory. This focus on particularity is absent in Rahner and Bonhoeffer. Since neither of these thinkers is interested in the revelation-by-encounter scheme that I am, this is hardly a criticism of their thought as a whole but rather an acknowledgement of what has yet to be produced. Both thinkers provide us creative examples of theological engagement with the kind of phenomenological considerations we have observed in the last three chapters in pursuit of a metaphysic of Christ's real presence. What they contribute to this particular project is as much their examples as creative readers of Heidegger as it is their carving out the negative space which has yet to be filled, namely, an account of Christ's present and personal particularity. To this end, my intent in the following chapters will be to constructively sketch how the particularity of the risen Jesus can be made manifest precisely by recovering the conception of a human person as a node of possibilities and attunements which was the focus of the first parts of this chapter.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter has been to give an account of personhood in order to then establish the possibility of encounter with the particular person of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. Following Heidegger, I have argued that the person is defined in their uniqueness by their worldly attunements and particular possibilities worked out between the poles of human influence (*das Man*) and individuating anxiety. One is formed within the context of their species and community into the kind of being who can be a person. Insofar as one confronts the existential

reality of their death and is defined as a finite individual by it, one enters into this confrontation shaped and molded by the contexts from which they emerge. Likewise, insofar as one engages with that community, one does so as the individual cut off from others by the finitude of their unique, irreplaceable death. A person is therefore one who, faced with their own finitude and the objective meaninglessness of the structures in which they exist, navigates the possibilities laid before them in a unique, unrepeatable fashion. With time, the individual's character is shaped by repeated enactment of these possibilities, so that one's performance of their own possibilities communicates these possibilities to others, underlying the possibility of shared understanding and intersubjective communion.

I followed this investigation into personal attunement and possibilities in my consultation of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, whose emphasis on embodied Being-in-the-world gives a material medium to Heidegger's existential theory. Merleau-Ponty's analysis of the phantom limb demonstrates how the body's worldly involvement is reflected in its self-understanding. The body of the amputee understands itself in terms of its pre-amputated possibilities, and yet it also acquires new possibilities through the addition of a prosthetic. Additionally, we observed how the intersubjective medium of shared perception allows embodied humans to share concretely in the possibilities of others. To be an embodied person, then, is to have one's person always through the material extension of the body at the same time that this materiality proves porous and relational, so that the character of personhood is disclosed as *necessarily embodied* even as it is *not strictly coincident with any one body*.

I finally turned at the end of this chapter to the work of theologians Karl Rahner and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, both of whom take up certain Heideggerian themes in their reflections on the personhood of Christ. While each offers us a compelling vision of how Christ's person is

present in the life of his followers, both run the risk of collapsing the particularity of Christ's person into that of contemporary Christians, either by dissolving Christ's person into general human experience (Rahner) or by identifying Christ so thoroughly with the Church that the community itself risks obscuring the particularity of his person (Bonhoeffer).

But if Christ is to be attested as God's self-revelation, then his person must be distinct from those to whom such revelation is given. It is thus incumbent upon me now, in our search for a viable mechanic of revelation, to articulate a model of revelation in which this personal distinctness is sustained while simultaneously made available through encounter. It is therefore time to turn wholly to the constructive phase of this project and consider a phenomenological argument for the real presence of Christ's person in the Eucharist.

CHAPTER 5

EUCHARIST AS REVELATION

Since the beginning of this project, I have contended that the Christian doctrine of revelation necessitates an encounter with the object of faith, namely, the person of Jesus Christ. Such encounter may be possible, I have alleged, on the basis that Christians believe not only that God fully reveals Godself in the human person of Jesus but that this person continues to exist in a real (i.e., non-metaphorical) way today. The twofold goal of this project is thus to propose a way that the reality of this presence can be articulated credibly in a post-Metaphysical way and to examine how encounter with this presence can be reliably translated into intellectual propositions and interpretive claims.

At the start of this project, I outlined what follows as a philosophical-theological experiment in the theology of revelation. There I proposed that the Eucharist, as the site where the risen Christ is attested as really present, is the most natural starting-point in our search for such revelatory encounter, and so it is on the sacrament that our creative trial in dogmatics will focus. The foregoing chapters have established for us some distinctly non-Metaphysical parameters for exploring this sacramental encounter. Having laid an extensive groundwork for thinking with Heidegger about the nature of human understanding, language, and personhood, the first of the above goals—to articulate Christ's eucharistic presence in a non-Metaphysical way—comes to the fore.

My proposal is as follows: The Eucharist as a sacramental event constitutes a world of dynamic material happenings that, through repetition and continual exposure, patterns its participants into certain attunements and possibilities at the unconscious level of embodied

habituation. This eucharistic world is set in motion under the name of Christ, which, when depicted in the form of prayer, creeds, and readings of scripture, poetically frames the sacramental world as an occurrence of Christ's own person. As poetic speech, liturgy gives up the meaning of its words to the dynamism of the world disclosed rather than hemming beings into premeasured concepts, as technology. The dynamic world that unfolds in the Eucharist, then, fills the poetic naming of liturgy with its embodied content. Thus, in poetically naming the character of Christ in the liturgy, the Church opens itself up to receive Christ's personal possibilities—the possibilities that define him as the unique person that he is—as its own. Grafted into the embodied motion circulating around the elements of bread and wine, Christians imbibe those possibilities into their own performance of personhood, thereby enacting the person of Christ and laying the foundation for subsequent extra-liturgical performance of that person.

To be clear, then, my aim in this chapter is *not* to argue for a qualitative change in the eucharistic bread and wine themselves. Such notions as "transubstantiation" or "consubstantiation" rely on the very Metaphysics that Heidegger rejects. More importantly, to concretely determine what the bread and wine *are* in a given moment is already to domesticate them under a technological way of thinking, hardly in keeping with the later Heidegger's emphasis on letting-be, and so suggesting any kind of transformation of bread-things into Christ-things is out of the question. On the contrary, I have argued, with Heidegger, that a thing is what it does, and so every being's Being is its performance of itself within the relevance-structure of world. What the eucharistic elements *are*, then, is simply what they *do*. In this case, what they do is configure a particular world with its own dynamic sway, its own avenues for embodied praxis, and its own affordances for possible ways of Being, possibilities which are understood as those

of Jesus of Nazareth when recognized as belonging to him in the reading of scripture and the invocation of prayer.

It is therefore neither the case that I argue for a merely *symbolic* or *representational* understanding of the Eucharist. Insofar as the Eucharist is an act of ritual recollection, a memorial of a salvific past, it is a human rite, infused with human-endowed meaning and pathos. I do not want to suggest that the Eucharist ought not include such symbolic value; indeed, one would be hard-pressed to find any communion rite that was entirely stripped of human-inserted meaning. However, insofar as Christians appeal to the Eucharist as a mode of Christ's real presence, the real content of the sacrament must always be more than meaning, and so we must focus here on the ontological manifestation of the Eucharist before we can come to interpretive assignments for the ontic reality unconcealed therein.

In this chapter, I suggest that the Eucharist in its fullness is always an experience of letting-be coupled with one's coming under the sway of what is thereby dynamically revealed, in this case the person of Jesus Christ. In order to demonstrate this, I will begin by reviewing certain ways theologians have appropriated Heidegger to address the issue of real presence in the Eucharist, starting with Louis-Marie Chauvet before returning to Karl Rahner, whom I discussed in the previous chapter. I will then move on to my own articulation of the Eucharist as a dynamic world before introducing the theme of poetic naming in its liturgical function. Finally, I will unite these two themes to explore how the possibilities of the person so named are performed by the material doings of Christians within the eucharistic world, thereby enacting the presence of that very person and filling the words of scripture and prayer with its dynamic content.

5.1 REAL PRESENCE REVISITED: LOUIS-MARIE CHAUVET AND KARL RAHNER

I begin this chapter with brief analyses of the sacramental theology of two Roman Catholics who each belong within Heidegger's theological legacy: French theologian Louis-Marie Chauvet, whose landmark text *Symbol and Sacrament* (1987) represents a monumental contribution to postmodern sacramental theology, and German Jesuit Karl Rahner, who introduces the notion of a real symbol in order to demonstrate the continuity of Christ's sacramental presence with that of the Incarnation. I will begin my analysis with Chauvet and then, finding his conclusions wanting, I will turn to Rahner's account of the real symbol as more fruitful alternative to be considered.

5.1.1 Presence as Absence in Louis-Marie Chauvet's Apophatic Theology

The primary concern of Louis-Marie Chauvet's theology is preserving the integrity of the Christian sacraments—the Eucharist in particular—while rejecting Scholastic Metaphysics. Like me, Chauvet invokes the works of Martin Heidegger to accomplish this task. However, unlike my approach, which centers on Heidegger's Being-in-the-world as overcoming the subject/object distinction, Chauvet largely disregard's Heidegger's contributions to ontology and focuses exclusively s on his rejection of ontotheology. Scholastic theologians such as Thomas Aquinas belonged to a world framed by Aristotelian thinking and were, argues Chauvet, therefore incapable of thinking outside the bounds of ontotheology—wherein the Being of beings is treated as a stop-gap against an infinite regress of causality and thus occupies the place of God in theology.[1] By contrast, modern Christians are neither limited by such intellectual constraints nor

[1] Louis-Marie Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, trans. Patrick Madigan and Madeleine Beaumont (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995), 7-9. Cf. Martin Heidegger, "The Onto-Theo-Logical Constitution of Metaphysics" in *Identity and Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 60: "The Being of beings is represented fundamentally, in the sense of the ground, only as *causa sui*. This is the metaphysical concept of God."

do they typically find such Aristotelian thinking persuasive, and so a new account of sacramental presence is necessary.

Because what must be overcome in a rejection of Metaphysics is precisely the foundationalism characteristic of ontotheology, Chauvet contends that any replacement model of real eucharistic presence must resist the temptation to articulate the real in language.[2] Because language that assumes it is an accurate depiction of the real overlooks the gap between intellect and reality, any language that effectively transcends the ontotheological assumptions of Metaphysics must first reject language's aspirations to representationalism.[3] Instead, language must consign itself to the realm of the symbolic, which, per Chauvet's reading of Heidegger on poetry, comes to mean "what attracts only as it withdraws."[4] What is presenced in symbolic speech "is a true '*coming-to-presence*,' that is, a presence whose very essence is the 'coming,' the advent, and which is *thus essentially marked by the stroke of absence*."[5] Speaking symbolically is speaking with the acknowledgement that what is spoken of eludes our mental grasp and so cannot be domesticated to our language. Symbolic speech therefore does not bring beings to presence as what they are in reality—Chauvet believes this is impossible—but as mere indications of the radical difference of those beings from our own, what Chauvet ultimately calls *presence-as-trace*.[6]

Arriving at the theme of Christ's presence in the Eucharist, we can see how the presence of Jesus occurs in much the same way. The sacraments do not, strictly speaking, convey Christ's

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[2] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 9. See Joseph Mudd, *Eucharist as Meaning: Critical Metaphysics and Contemporary Sacramental Theology* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014), 16: "Chauvet takes the disparity between the real and thought about the real as foundational for a theology of the sacramental. The mistaken assumption of the metaphysical tradition, according to this view, is that when we employ the verb 'to be' we transcribe the real into language."
[3] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 55.
[4] Ibid., 58.
[5] Ibid., 58.
[6] Ibid., 58.

person but rather the *meaning* of his person. The sacraments are instituted by Christ in the sense that, insofar as the Church recognizes itself as receiving itself from Christ, it sees these sacraments as mediating that reception.[7] The Church is the Body of Christ when it memorializes Jesus as its Lord by involving itself in the visibility of this Body as Christ. The Body of Christ is made real to the degree that Jesus' person is meaningfully imparted on the behavior of those who invoke him. It is with this in mind that Chauvet contends, perhaps shockingly:

> Christ cannot be alive if none claim to belong to him: his resurrection is inseparable from the witness people—first, those who form the Church—give of him. Of course, it is not faith which makes God Father or Jesus Lord. But the identity of God as Father or of Jesus as Christ and Lord would be reduced to nothing if none named it by confessing it and thus acknowledging themselves *at the same time* as children of God and disciples of Jesus.[8]

Because no being has actual presence except to the degree that it is brought to meaningful presence by the symbolic word or action that is its trace, the salvific efficacy of Christ's person is contingent upon the confession of his followers. The sacraments become effective symbols insofar as they accomplish what they articulate within the liturgical language game.[9] The Eucharist reveals, in other words, by writing the meaning of Christ's life into the meaning of each Christian life. Sacramental grace is not a "something" to be received but a self-reception, that is, a receiving of oneself into a new identity from God.[10] As Chauvet summarizes:

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[7] Ibid., 409.
[8] Ibid., 428.
[9] Ibid., 436.
[10] Ibid., 442.

> What happens here is not of the physical, moral, or metaphysical but of the symbolic order. This kind of symbolism, we have said, is the most 'real.' Thus, the death-and-regeneration with Christ in baptism is symbolic. It is not a 'real' hidden behind or underneath a verbal-ritual language act which expresses it metaphorically. But neither is it a simple 'as if'—a comparison is not a metaphor or symbol—which would dissolve the real into symbolism. It is, according to faith of course, the believer's communion with Christ in his death-and-resurrection. Communion *in sacramento*, that is, communion whose very reality is not separable from the symbolic expression which gives it form, even though it is not reducible to this form. Clearly, the whole problem here lies in the manner in which one thinks of *reality*: it is not of the order of subsistent entities, but of the order of the on-going transformation of subjects into believers.[11]

As a symbolic act, ritual, as Nathan Mitchell puts it, "reveals through *reversal*; it offers presence through absence and proximity through distance; it delivers promise through paradox and possession through dispossession."[12] For Chauvet, the essence of God is revealed in Jesus' cry of dereliction on the cross, so that the ultimate moment of God's incarnate presence is also the moment of its cancellation in abandonment and the silence of death.[13] The meaning of the Eucharist is thus best typified in the Emmaus story in Luke's Gospel, where Jesus is known in the breaking of bread, at which point he vanishes (Lk 24:31). The story, as Chauvet reads it, requires that "*one let go of the desire to see-touch-find, to accept in its place the hearing of a word*."[14] The word that is heard in the Eucharist is the word of Christ's absence, not as disappearance or unavailability, but as kenotically poured-out. The revelation of the sacrament, then, is the imprinting of this same kenotic calling on each person who hears the word of absence, turning them outward with the same self-effacement that characterizes Christ's own person. In this insistence upon both Christ's absence and the subsequent turn to the ethical, Chauvet believes he can avoid what he sees as the idolatry of the corpse of Christ and its harmful effects of turning the Christian away from the very neighbor toward whom Christ's death ought

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[11] Ibid., 438.
[12] Nathan Mitchell, *Meeting Mystery: Liturgy, Worship, Sacraments* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), 142.
[13] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 495.
[14] Ibid., 162.

to direct them.[15] In the Eucharist, "The Church radicalizes the vacancy of the place of God."[16] It does this by embracing the kenosis of the cross as the meaning of the Church's own Being, a meaning that turns out to be total self-effacing absence.[17]

While Chauvet's depiction of Christ's presence in the Eucharist as manifest in its imprinting upon the gathered Body of Christ anticipates my own similar move of realizing Christ's life in the behavior of the Church, and while I am further sympathetic to his characterization of Christ's person in terms of ethical kenosis, I find that Chauvet's emphasis on overcoming ontotheology distracts him from a fuller embrace of Heidegger's thought as it could be applied to the Eucharist. By overlooking the early Heidegger's work on Being-in-the-world and the later Heidegger's use of poetic speech to describe the dynamism of beings in terms of the fourfold, Chauvet appropriates poetic naming-what-withdraws without an account of the worldly involvement into which beings withdraw. It is true, as Chauvet argues, that for Heidegger language is most true when, as poetry, it highlights its incapacity to speak concretely. But it is also true that for Heidegger understanding most often takes place beneath the plane of cognitive reflection. Just as the absence of beings from language does not mean their absence from worlds in which we are involved, so real presence need not be inverted as a consent to emptiness because one is still Being-in-the-world and is still proximate to the dynamic Being of beings.

What results from Chauvet's radical rejection of anything that smells remotely of Metaphysics is a God whose imagelessness is fetishized to the point of undermining God's own act of self-revelation. The non-image of God that emerges here seems as much a product of postmodern caution as the caricature of God as rational clockmaker was a result of

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[15] Ibid., 178.
[16] Ibid., 178.
[17] Ibid., 509.

Enlightenment reason, becoming a sort of God-of-the-philosophers 2.0. The scandal of Christian theology, however, is that, as the God of revelation, the invisible God gives Godself over to presence. *God wants to be seen and known*. Such a God does not need the well-intended protection of radical apophaticism any more than God is dependent upon Platonist cosmology, Aristotelian Metaphysics, or transcendental idealism. Such methodologies may be useful tools for explaining the *how* of Christian revelation in their times (indeed, that is precisely what my own project is attempting to do), but when they attempt to explain the *what* of that revelation, they invariably risk occluding the very heart of the Christian kerygma: that God wills to be known, so much that God deigns to enter the realm of human life as a tangible, embodied person.

5.1.2 Karl Rahner's Theology of the Real Symbol

If Chauvet is guilty of emptying symbolic language of any real content and thus reducing the presence of Christ in the Eucharist to a meaningful absence, then we perhaps get a properly ontological antidote to this strict apophaticism in Karl Rahner's theology of the *real symbol*. For Rahner, the term "symbol" does not mean an explicit representation of something else: "All beings are by their nature symbolic, because they necessarily 'express' themselves in order to attain their own nature."[18] Beings are not simply static things that exist in isolation. Rather, their every action is a form of communicative self-articulation. In fact, this self-expression is the only way that beings can interact with other beings at all, since if they expressed nothing of themselves (i.e., if they emitted no appearance or sense data and underwent no change or activity), then there would be nothing of them to be detected by some other being.[19] Rahner's use

[18] Karl Rahner, "Theology of the Symbol," in *Theological Investigations*, Volume IV, trans. Cornelius Ernst (Limerick, Ireland: University of Limerick Centre for Culture, Technology, and Values, 2004), 224. Online Resource.
[19] Ibid., 231.

of the term "expression," highlights what we observed in Chapter 3 of the late Heidegger's rearticulation of *logos*.[20] A being's self-expression, in this case, is its very doing of itself within worlds of motion and change, or, as Rahner puts it, the simultaneous distinction and unity of a being's plurality from its original unity.[21] The reason that this self-expression of beings is worthy of the term "symbol," then, is because every being's self-expression entails the possibility of its being taken up into another being's self-expression: "The symbol strictly speaking (symbolic reality) is the self-realization of a being in the other, which is constitutive of its essence."[22] It belongs to the self-expression of beings to be taken up into the self-expression of other beings.

It is on these grounds that Rahner contends that the Incarnation is symbolic. He writes, "Christ in his historical existence is both reality and sign, *sacramentum* and *res sacramenti*, of the redemptive grace of God."[23] Jesus is both a human being unto himself and a perfect symbol of God the Father's self-expression. In that capacity, Jesus is what Rahner calls a *real symbol*, by which he means, "the spatio-temporal, historical phenomenon, the visible and tangible form in which something that appears, notifies its presence, and by so doing, makes itself present, bodying forth this manifestation really distinct from itself."[24] Like all symbols in Rahner's scheme, real symbols are distinct from what they represent. But real symbols alone actualize that which they represent in their own self-expression without dissolving their distinction from it.[25] As Annice Callahan explains, "An arbitrary sign does not constitute what it signifies and is separate from what it signifies. It is chosen at random to express a reality in time and space,

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[20] See Chapter 3.3.1.
[21] Rahner, "Theology of the Symbol," 228.
[22] Ibid., 234.
[23] Karl Rahner, *The Church and the Sacraments*, trans. W.J. O'Hara (London: Burns & Oates, 1974), 15.
[24] Ibid., 37.
[25] See Gerald A. McCool, Introduction to Karl Rahner, "Theology of the Symbol," in *A Rahner Reader*, ed. Gerald A. McCool (London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1975): 120: "The 'real symbol' is a distinct being which, although it retains its proper ontological autonomy, is united to its expressive producer's own ontological reality."

whereas a real symbol intrinsically expresses the reality it signifies."[26] Jesus is able to perfectly symbolize that to which he is distinct—namely, the Father—because, as the trinitarian Son, he is at once wholly united to and wholly distinct from the Father.

The Church is the next link in the symbolic chain. The Church is the real symbol of Christ, who is the real symbol of the Father. The Church's symbolic function is therefore just as efficacious a source of grace as Christ himself.[27] If we are to speak of Christ's real presence in the Church, then for Rahner we need go no further than the continuation of God's communication of grace in the Church as begun in Christ: "When we say that the Church is the persisting presence of the incarnate Word in space and time, we imply at once that it continues the symbolic function of the Logos in the world."[28] Callahan summarizes:

> The logos is called the symbol of the Father, the Father's self-utterance who is distinct from and one with the Father. The humanity of Jesus Christ is described as the symbol of the Logos of God when God becomes another to himself in a creature. The Church is seen as the symbol of Jesus Christ, of the universal salvation he brings and is. The sacraments are regarded as symbols of the grace of God offered everywhere and in explicit shape in the Church. The Eucharist symbolizes the Church as the real presence of Jesus Christ in the real world.[29]

Sacramental presence comes down to a chain of real symbols linking God the Father with the ritual sign. For Rahner, the sacraments actualize the Church's nature as Church, and so they not only derive their symbolic legitimacy from the Church, but they are an essential function of the Church's very existence.[30] Because the sacraments bring to expression the nature of the Church, which in turn brings to expression the Being of Christ, who is the real symbol of the Father, they effect in their recipients the very grace that is brought about in the life and death of

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[26] Annice C. Callahan, "Karl Rahner's Theology of Symbol: Basis for His Theology of the Church and the Sacraments," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 49.3 (September 1982), 196.
[27] Rahner, *The Church and the Sacraments*, 19.
[28] Rahner, "Theology of the Symbol," 240.
[29] Callahan, "Karl Rahner's Theology of Symbol," 195.
[30] Rahner, *The Church and the Sacraments*, 39.

Jesus, and so Christ's presence is verified in their work, as Christ and the sacraments achieve the same grace in the life of Christians.

However, while Rahner's model of real symbols provides an ontological continuity from God the Father through the Incarnation of the Son to the Church and the Eucharist, it leaves somewhat vague the character of the grace revealed therein. If the Eucharist is indeed a real symbol of the Church, which is a real symbol of Christ, and so on back to the Father, we would expect that it is the Eucharist to which Christians ought to turn for their primary—even their essential—understanding of the life of God. And yet, as we saw in the last chapter, Rahner suggests that one encounters the character of Christ wherever one participates in the self-emptying character of his person.[31]

If one can experience the life of Christ as easily outside the Eucharist as inside it, then how does the sacrament have a priority place in the chain of real symbols tracing back to God's own self? If the Eucharist is actually a real symbol in the sense of participating in the sacramental chain without diminishment, then it seems it must have a revelatory primacy that Rahner neglects to give it. Where Chauvet's linguistic account of the symbol gives us the unique revelation of Christ's meaning without any ontological presence to ground that meaning, Rahner's ontology of the symbol provides us a real presence without anything to distinguish the revelation of Christ's character in the Eucharist from the experience of his person anywhere else.[32]

Since Rahner is not particularly interested in the Eucharist as the wellspring of Christian revelation, he might not see this as much of a problem. But since Rahner believes that what is

[31] See Chapter 4.4.1.
[32] This advances my critique of Rahner in Chapter 4 that what he gives of the present person of Christ is simply humanity to a maximal degree rather than anything particular to the person of Jesus.

revealed in the person of Jesus is God's own self, it seems that he should articulate how the Eucharist is revelatory insofar as it is uniquely located in the chain of real symbols.[33] Either the Eucharist reveals the unique contours of Christ whose person it perfectly expresses, or the sacrament does not in fact have the total and undiminished participation in Christ's person which Rahner himself asserts. And if the sacrament does not give sufficient definition of the person it presences, then we need either another venue for revelatory encounter or an alternative model of eucharistic presence. It is with this need for an ontological account of Christ's particular presence in mind that we now turn to my own proposal for understanding the Eucharist as revealing real presence of Christ.

5.2 EUCHARIST AS A WORLD

If we are to encounter the revelation of Christ, then we must encounter it materially. Following the groundwork I laid in Chapter 2 with my analysis of Heidegger on the truth of beings, we can recall how human understanding is rooted in involvement—pre-cognitive familiarity with beings in their worldly dynamism. To understand a being is most fundamentally to become entwined with its activity within the relevance-structure of a world. This being the case, our examination of revelation must begin at the level of embodied understanding. This is not an unreasonable requirement, given that the entire Christian tradition hinges on the embodiment of revelation in the Incarnation. Insofar as the Word was with God and was God, it must also be remembered that this claim is only believed in the first place because "the Word became flesh and lived among us" (Jn 1:14). Insofar as we can encounter this Word, then, we encounter it in the flesh. And given my foregoing analysis of Heidegger, in which understanding has its basis in embodied

[33] See Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity,* trans. William V. Dych (New York: Crossroad, 1978), 116.

involvement, to fail to know Christ at this primordial level is already to misunderstand him on the interpretive plane.

As a first step toward understanding the Eucharist as Christ's real presence in Heideggerian terms, this section will explore how the sacrament constitutes a material world. The relations and trajectories of beings within that world provide its dynamic shape that draws human participants under its sway. The eucharistic event thus becomes a particular clearing in which beings such as bread and wine come to light not as static entities but as coordinated performances of a particular manner of Being, which then drafts its participants into new trajectories and transforms the possibilities of their persons.

5.2.1 A World of Relevance

Recall from Chapter 2 that Heidegger does not believe that we understand beings as isolated entities but as enmeshed within worlds constituted by relevance [*Bedeutsamkeit*].[34] The relevance of beings is not simply a matter of their spatial relations to one another but of their belonging to worlds of causality and direction. What makes human beings unique as Dasein is their apprehension of "relevance *itself*."[35] The human being is uniquely aware of causal and directional phenomena, acquiring an understanding of the structure, logic, and ultimately the character of the worlds it inhabits. Beings reveal themselves within this structure as fundamentally dynamic, as we observed in Heidegger's later thought concerning the fourfold.[36] The tug and pull of worldly forces that hold beings together in relevance-structures were there disclosed poetically in terms of each being as a node of relation between earth, sky, divinities,

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[34] See Chapter 2.1.3.
[35] Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, Neunzehnte Auflage (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2006), §18:87. My emphasis.
[36] See Chapter 2.2.2.

and mortals. Every being, in other words, is composed of matter extended through space and oriented toward ends revealed to mortals as the beings with an awareness of Being.

Within the theological reflection on the Eucharist, then, we can establish how the worldly character of the sacrament is fundamentally dynamic and therefore disclosive of relevance. What is ontologically understood in the eucharistic milieu is not foremost the ontic meaning of the event nor some Metaphysical alteration of substance but the distinct spin, as it were, of this particular world, laid out through the patterns and relations of its constituent elements. To understand Christ in the Eucharist is first to understand the Eucharist in terms of worldly involvement.

Such dynamism is inherent to the Eucharist's nature as action. As Gregory Dix suggests, while most moderns consider the Eucharist to be something *said*, so that what is most important in the rite is the meaning conveyed through spoken words and material signs, prior to the Fourth Century, the case was exactly the opposite.[37] As something *done*, and moreover done by the congregation as a whole, the Eucharist was considered an act of obedience and response to God, wherein one's sanctification was effected and one's moral compass shaped through repeated patterns and habits.[38] Dix famously suggests a four-action shape of the liturgy which encapsulates the various actions at play within the sacramental event: (1) *Offertory*, in which the bread and wine are offered together with the gifts of the congregation, (2) *Prayer*, in which the president gives thanks to God over the elements, (3) *Fraction*, in which the bread is broken, and (4) *Communion*, in which the bread and wine are distributed and consumed.[39] Dix's emphasis on

[37] Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London: Continuum, 2005), 12-13.
[38] Ibid., 13.
[39] Ibid., 48. The historical accuracy of Dix's ascribing this fourfold shape universally to ancient liturgies is widely challenged, as in Paul Bradshaw and Maxwell Johnson, *The Eucharistic Liturgies: Their Evolution and Interpretation* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012), 20-21. However, for the purposes of contemporary reflection on the liturgy, this historical dispute is less important than the insights gleaned from an analysis of the of dynamics of the sacrament itself.

the various dynamics of the sacrament thus gives us a useful starting point. I will here examine two of Dix's four actions—offertory and fraction, reserving prayer and communion for my next section on eucharistic language—as a framework for thinking about the Eucharist as a world of dynamic relevance.

We begin with *offertory*. Dix writes, "The church corporately, through the individual offertory by each member for himself or herself personally, offers itself to God at the offertory under the forms of bread and wine, as Christ offered Himself, a pledged Victim, to the Father at the last supper."[40] The offering is always a *self*-offering and therefore always *sacrificial* offering. The function of offertory is to move the giver into a posture of giving, so that her life as a whole comes to reflect the disposition enacted in the offering.

The physical movement of the offertory is thus of even greater importance than the things offered, because such movement is precisely what performs self-offering in the bodies of the participants. Actions such as passing a collection plate allow one to receive the invitation to give, to physically relinquish her gift, to pass it on to others, and to watch as her offering, anonymous within the sum of gifts, is presented to the altar. Likewise, other gestures, such as kneeling, enact the offertory character of the liturgy. While the act of kneeling is indeed symbolic—one literally lowers oneself in the sight of God—it is more deeply a physical experience. Very rarely when one kneels does one consciously ponder their submission before God. More likely, if one reflects at all upon their kneeling, one reflects upon the aching of aged knees, the hardness of wooden kneelers, or the frustration at how long one must remain in such an uncomfortable position while the priest labors on and on. The way that the act of kneeling is understood by our Being-in-the-world is more often one of physical frustration than of willing supplication, characterized more

[40] Dix, *Shape of the Liturgy*, 247.

by fidgety restlessness than purity of heart. The physical act of relinquishment, whether moving from holding to empty-handedness or literally lowering oneself in the face of God, thus attunes one to a particular structure and orientation revealed as operative within the sacramental space.

The best example I can give of the attuning potential of this embodied offertory is a personal anecdote. From May to August in 2011, I lived on the south side of Mount Kilimanjaro in the village of Uswaa, Tanzania, where I taught English in a Lutheran secondary school. While there, I was struck by how the liturgy of the Lutheran churches in the local diocese centered around the offertory. Because of the severe economic poverty of the region, few people had money to give, and so what was given was most often produce from local farms, which were processed up to the altar before the Eucharistic liturgy. The last act of the liturgy, then, was not the communion, but a sale, as the leftovers from the Eucharist were processed out of the sanctuary, followed by the whole congregation, who gathered in front of the church to auction off all that had been given, with the proceeds going to the church. Only at the end of this auction could the final hymn be sung and the benediction said.

The practical outcome of this incorporation of an auction into the liturgy was a material impact on those who participated in the rite. For the first half of each three-hour church service, worshippers sat in the pews having to physically hold their corn, sugarcane, eggs, unruly chickens, and even the occasional goat, and the sound of animals formed the ambience of many services. Each Sunday's auction constituted the largest market in the village, so that worshippers came to church with both their offerings and their shopping lists. And because proceeds went to the church, participants were often more willing to pay higher prices for their goods. The shape of the liturgy, in this case, exerted a tangible impact on the economic well-being of people within

the community, instituted relations of gift-giving between congregants, and enacted a public giving-up of literal first fruits for the visible benefit of one's neighbor.

The point of this illustration is to demonstrate how the shape of liturgical offertory discloses a relevance-structure which affords certain possibilities to each participant. A Christian in the liturgy is always situated within a world of movement. In the case of offertory, this movement is a movement toward humility and sacrifice. But this is not just an abstract or representational movement, for it is informed by the way in which it is made manifest, namely, through physical relinquishment of possession and power. In offertory, the Christian comes to understand the shape of the eucharistic world by coming to understand her location within it. The sacrifice which is theoretically ascribed to the sacrament as a whole is physically realized in the activity and movement of the participants. Dix thus writes, "The body of Christ, the church, offers itself to *become* the sacrificed Body of Christ, the sacrament, in order that thereby the church itself may become within time what in eternal reality it is before God—the 'fulness' or 'fulfilment' of Christ."[41] In order to conceive what this sacrificial fullness of Christ looks like, we must turn to the enactment of Christ's body in the liturgy, which Dix here locates in the breaking of the bread.

We thus come to Dix's third act of *fraction*.[42] Following the Emmaus story (Lk 24:1-35), we might with Chauvet wish to point out how Christ is most known in the moment of his disappearance, so that the breaking of the bread, as in the story itself, represents the breaking of the visual, wherein the (idolatrous) image we have of Jesus is fractured and replaced by the invisibility of his death on the cross. However, as I mentioned in my earlier response to Chauvet,

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[41] Ibid., 247.

[42] As a reminder of my comment above, because they are shaped in part (as in communion) or entirely (as in prayer) by language, I will consider Dix's actions of prayer and communion as part of my next section on eucharistic language.

it is not sufficient to simply point to the emptiness of invisibility as constituting the presence of Christ because (1) it belongs to Christ's nature to be the "image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15), and so it is counterproductive to identify this image as imageless-ness, and therefore (2) since this invisible God is imaged in Christ precisely as a human person, it must be through material incarnality that this image is encountered in the present.

It is for these reasons that, while I take the perceived invisibility of Christ in the breaking of the bread seriously, I argue that this invisibility is less the invisibility of *absence* and more the invisibility of *transparency*. Recall from Chapter 2 how Dasein's equipmental dealings with ready-to-hand beings reveals those beings as nodes of directional relation.[43] The present-at-hand thing-ness of beings thus fades away in our common dealings, so that in their dynamism they open to us an entire nexus of worldly relevance. To handle beings in this way—within the view of circumspection—is to apprehend what they afford to our discursive purposes and what they further reveal of the character of the worlds to which they belong. Beings circumspectly handled become *transparent* in the sense that they are intimately available to our understanding at the same time that they vanish from our conscious, interpretive consideration. So whereas Chauvet's understanding of the breaking of the symbolic bread is a deconstruction of the conceptual image of Christ, from the standpoint of ready-to-hand involvement with bread, we must recognize how the breaking of bread is actually fundamental to its Being.

To our circumspect understanding, bread cannot be bread unless it is broken. To break bread is therefore not to obliterate its image but to fulfill its reality. This is because bread is not bread as *seen* but as *eaten*, so that when Chauvet highlights the un-see-able nature of bread in its

[43] See Chapter 2.1.2.

breaking, his deference to sight blinds him to the dynamic reality of bread known primordially through taste and touch. As it turns out, *to break bread is to make bread*.

Comparing the life of Christ to that of the eucharistic bread, the medieval writer Johann von Krolewiz depicts Jesus as grain that is "sowed, sprouted, stood in flower, grew, was mowed, bound like a sheaf, driven to the threshing floor, threshed, swept with a broom, ground, thrust into an oven, and left therein for three days, taken out, and finally eaten by men as bread."[44] Von Krolewiz here gives us a helpful insight into the way that the history and dynamics of bread frame the particular ways that it can and cannot be used symbolically. It can be held, torn, crumbled, chewed, swallowed, and digested. It can be sweet or chalky; moist or dry; gummy or tough. A thin wafer can be snapped like a slaughtered animal's neck, and a crusty loaf can be stretched and torn like supple flesh. The symbolic possibilities of bread are thus shaped by the way its material constitution fits within existing patterns of relevance. What bread *means* to our interpretive discourse is derivative of what bread first affords to our involved experience of it.

Similarly, understanding the material history of bread enriches our hermeneutic interpretation of how Jesus himself used bread symbolically. For instance, as David Grummett points out, the historical opinion that barley grain was inferior to wheat because of its taste, difficulty to digest, and lower gluten content frames Jesus' being offered five barley loaves by the boy at the feeding of the five thousand as indicative of the fundamental poverty from which the miracle springs (Jn 6:9).[45] That Jesus refers to himself as "the bread of life" in the same chapter, then, underscores the significance of the barley offering, as he locates himself in continuity with the poverty on display in the literal bread just shared (Jn 6:35).

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[44] Quoted in Heinrich E. Jacob, *Six Thousand Years of Bread: Its Holy and Unholy History* (New York: Skyhorse, 2007), 58.
[45] David Grummett, *Material Eucharist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 28-29.

So while all of these associations with bread exist at the level of mental interpretation, they are possible only on the grounds of our prior ready-to-hand involvement with bread. Bread belongs to worlds of farmers handling soil and navigating climate and seasons; of hands-on kneading and baking in homes and bakeries; of conversation over shared meals and inter-generational passing on of traditions. Yet in each of these cases, the bread itself is transparent, un-thought. To "break bread" with someone is to share intentionally over bread which is almost always consumed unconsciously. The bread is not the focus of these events but rather the gravitational center around which the dynamics of a world constellate themselves. And so to any *interpretation* of bread within the Eucharist must be given an acknowledgement of how bread is operationally *transparent* in our primordial involvement with it.

To focus on the bread-thing itself, then, is to occlude what bread intrinsically does, how it functions within other worlds, and is thus to store meaning and value in bread in the manner of technology. For Chauvet to insist upon the presence of Christ precisely in the disappearance of bread is to domesticate this disappearance into the visible. It seems Jesus himself is aware of this temptation in John's Gospel, as his identification of himself as bread is given as a response to his disciples' request for a tangible sign of the Father (Jn 6:30-34). And when his disciples can only manage to think of Jesus-as-bread in terms of literal cannibalism, so that his meaning is impenetrable to them, Jesus answers, "Do not complain among yourselves. No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me" (Jn 6:43-44). While the disciples are occupied struggling to think about how Jesus can be a bread-thing, Jesus is more interested in the drawing that this "bread" enacts.

This, then, is what the fraction does. The function of bread in the Eucharist is not principally to *be* Jesus but to be that by which and around which the dynamic of *being drawn*

into Jesus occurs. As Gordon Lathrop suggests, "Participants in Christian worship are invited to experience ritual that criticizes ritual… They set these [holy] things in juxtapositions that enable the imagination of a new thing, beyond anything their rite could contain."[46] The point of all bread is not the bread itself—"One does not live by bread alone" (Mt 4:4; Lk 4:4)—but the meal that is shared around it. Like a family's traditional Christmas turkey or an awkward first date over burgers and fries, it is the particular dynamics of the meal that give the Eucharist its particular character and its special significance for Christians. Fraction sets in motion a particular kind of meal that entails its own manner of understanding. As Richard McCall suggests, "Hidden in [the performance of the Eucharist] is a vision of life in Christ that is not a state of being but rather an act, an act of the worshippers who *en*act a cosmos and a community that is nothing less than God's act of creation."[47] While we are not yet at a point where we can ontically say with McCall that the Eucharist "is nothing less than God's act of creation," we can at least observe here how Christians in the sacrament "*en*act a cosmos and a community." As Lathrop contends, the things of the liturgy give shape to worship by forming a center to its world, a gravitational core around which our existence finds its motion.[48] In this way, it is not so much the singular actions of the Eucharist that give shape to our understanding, but how these actions align with each other to disclose the recognizable rhythm of their world. Having established this world-character of the Eucharist, we can take the next step of analyzing the language used within the community it enacts to better conceptualize the particular reality of its cosmos. But first we must explore how the world-structure of the sacrament directs its human participants and affords them particular possibilities for their projecting self-understanding.

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[46] Gordon Lathrop, *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 139.
[47] Richard D. McCall, *Do This: Liturgy as Performance* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 2.
[48] Lathrop, *Holy Things*, 90.

5.2.2 A World of Attunement

The eucharistic world is not just a dynamic trajectory composed of beings in particular relevance-relations. The dynamics of offertory and the meal initiated by fraction may each be understood through involvement with their active unfolding, but what is understood as a whole is the distinctive character of this world, what we have seen Heidegger call a mood [*Stimmung*]. Recall from Chapter 2 that a mood is not the same as an emotion but is rather the distinct, unconscious character of a world to which Dasein acquires attunement [*Befindlichkeit*].[49] Humans are constantly adjusting their attunement to the moods of the various worlds in which they find themselves by projecting possibilities for how to be in each situation. Projection, I suggested, is like Dasein's sonar, whereby it unconsciously sends out signals of its particular openness to its world and receives back a sense of the available paths to traverse in a kind of existential echolocation. To be situated in a world is to find oneself attuned to that world's particular character and to have the possibilities for one's own character shaped in response. Having set forth a model for thinking of the Eucharist as a world of dynamic structural relations, let us now explore how the Christian participant becomes personally attuned to the character of that world and the consequences of that accrued familiarity.

The actions that Christians perform in the Eucharist are in many cases actions they already do elsewhere. It is only because they do them in a particular way that they enact the specific event which we call Eucharist. And within this structure, it is the little details of tone of voice, the color and smell of the sacramental space, the nature of noise or quietude within the liturgy, and so on that collectively coordinate and disclose the mood of the Eucharist as the unique world that it is. Candles, stained glass, or vaulted stone ceilings can articulate a holiness

[49] See Chapter 2.1.4.

to the sacramental space that qualifies the humility of offertory as both decentering of the Christian and yet affirming her intrinsic goodness. Raising the host before breaking it discloses at once a fear and reverence on the part of the priest toward the ensuing meal.

So when a child in a school cafeteria raises her bologna sandwich above her head, tears it in two, and passes it to those on her left and right, her peers will laugh because they get the joke—they know the reference and can appreciate the subversiveness of its relocation into profane life because they are already *attuned* to the dynamics of eucharistic ritual and the mood of solemnity that is satirized in the child's play. This simple example highlights the ways that increased familiarity with the relevance-structure of the eucharistic world also conditions one's experience of other worlds, and vice versa. The coordinated dynamics of beings together open up worlds of mood to which Christians become increasingly familiar and which can thus be tapped into either reverently or subversively outside their normal milieu.

So, for a less humorous example, a family whose members have all undergone a lifetime of sacramental experiences may be both comforted and unsettled by the experience of sharing communion around the hospital bed of a dying parent. The angelic sounds of choirs, bells, and organs are replaced by the routine humming and beeping of medical machinery. The smell of incense is supplanted by the lingering scent of sterility. The ornate ambience of a purpose-built sanctuary is substituted by a pale, confining, purely functional hospital room. And so the shared celebration of the sacrament around the words and actions of a pastor or chaplain elicits feelings of both familiarity and discontinuity. The relevance-structure of Eucharist with which these participants have previously been so familiar now repeats itself unexpectedly in a foreign world, a world where it ought not belong and yet now does. The way that bread and wine hang together between stained glass beneath a gilded cross now repeats itself inexplicably above a bed now

become an altar with cheap white sheets for vestments. The body broken as bread, which for many in the room may have heretofore been considered only as a symbol, is now realized materially in the broken body of a loved one.

As Being-in-the-world, we humans understand not only by physically doing but by becoming attuned to the character of the various worlds we inhabit. The nature of our involvement is not simply that of becoming entwined with beings but with the entire network in which they exist. Becoming attuned, as creatures of habit and know-how, we recognize the characteristic patterns of specific worlds wherever they occur. Just as the world of a football match—with its rules, strategies, goals, and spatial orientation—can erupt just as easily in a family's backyard as it can on a regulation pitch, so too can the structural character of the Eucharist be recognized where it is not explicitly named or where it is not previously anticipated to emerge. Becoming attuned to the dynamics of this world, then, inducts the Christian into patterns of recognition and understanding.

But by the same token, our attunement to extra-eucharistic worlds forms the backdrop of our attunement within the sacrament. The struggle entailed in making my money is what makes the gesture of offering so stark. The competition and paranoia of modern life is contradicted by the patience and belonging of the sacramental meal. The old woman I would hastily pass on the sidewalk outside the church is now the one whom I patiently stand behind in line to the altar, providing me the necessary time to admire her lifetime of commitment or observe her physical toughness that I would have surely otherwise overlooked. To look a neighbor in the eye and share with them a handshake of peace may prompt me to squirm if I despise them or feel shame if I have wronged them, in each case forcing me to confront my inner hypocrisy and the discontinuity of my peaceful words with my feelings and actions. The husband who, with well-

rehearsed routine, slides his wife's compact walker out of the pew and snaps it open to be ready for her as she helps herself out of her seat, or the ex-marine who comes to the altar with his loyal therapy dog, or the newcomer who is clearly embarrassed because she does not know the common protocol all refract the mood of the meal like light through a prism, uncovering new facets of its character to which Christians become continually re-attuned. The possibilities for Being unveiled in the Eucharist become the possibilities of reconfigured sight and newfound recognition elsewhere, and one's understanding of worlds beyond the Eucharist likewise shapes their attunement to what may be opened up within the sacrament.

What the Eucharist accomplishes, then, is a conditioning of human understanding, which includes the projection of personal possibilities. How we see the component parts of each world we inhabit is conditioned by our relationship to the sway of that world as a whole. How beings hang together, how they choreograph a shared existence, drafts us into its current so that, even when we get out of the stream, we are still carried along from within by that motion which we have interiorized. Grummett helpfully offers the image of the Eucharist as "a grid for the training of memory, serving as a kind of mental repertoire of doctrines and associations external to the mind but which are nevertheless made use of by the mind."[50] The Eucharist trains our eyes, our attitudes, and our bodies. Moreover, it does so in such a way that shapes how we understand the universe outside the liturgy.

5.2.3 Conclusion

In this section, I have offered a portrayal of the Eucharist as a world in the Heideggerian sense, shaped by the relations of beings under a common sway of movement. The Eucharist, by this

[50] Grummett, *Material Eucharist*, 79.

account, is more a process of inscribing muscle memory on existential bodies than it is a set of cognitive meanings or values. Yes, The Eucharist is "Eucharist" because of the linguistic claim that the Body of Christ is made present there. But it is only in the enacting of the event, in the fading away of the representation, that the symbolic descriptor has its referent. To encounter Christ in the Eucharist is to encounter him in body and activity before it is ever to encounter the meaning of his person for our theological reflection.

But this raises the question of whether the Eucharistic world I have depicted actually constitutes a real encounter with Christ's person as opposed to a mere cultural experience. To describe the Eucharist as a world is simply to describe it as one milieu among many which may direct our character and influence our possibilities. At this point, then, it does not appear we have anything more than the world of a particular culture, where the Church is more akin to the world of France or a Maasai village than it is to the human Jesus of Nazareth.

However, in the introduction to this chapter, I suggested that the possibilities presented within the eucharistic world are *Christ's own possibilities*, the ways of Being-in-the-world characteristic of his unique person and constitutive of his resurrected life. What Christians understand through sacramental involvement, I suggest, is the very happening of Christ's own person, so that by belonging to this sacramental world, one knows Christ by becoming taken up into the sway of his person. How this presence of Christ's person can be understood within the framework of a world now needs exploring. We therefore now turns to the role of liturgical language in its poetic function of naming Christ and how this language discloses the world of the Eucharist according to the shape of Christ's person.

5.3 LITURGICAL POETRY

For the Eucharist to be understood as more than just a cultural world but as the real presence of a specific person, its correspondence to Jesus Christ needs articulating. In this section, I will explore how the speech that runs throughout the eucharistic liturgy frames the embodied world that occurs in the sacramental event. Specifically, I argue that the language of Eucharist is best understood in the mode of Heidegger's concept of poetry, which, following my analysis in Chapter 3, is a rejection of both calculative thinking (exemplified in magical-literalist thinking about the transformation of the eucharistic elements) as well as purely metaphorical thinking (exemplified in purely symbolic or meaning-oriented sacramental thinking). Poetry in the vein of Heidegger's thinking, rather, always entails a certain literalism because of its worldly orientation, which forms an essential link between the eucharistic world and the language of liturgy.

In Chapter 3 I highlighted the world-referral of poetry through Heidegger's notion of naming in *What is Called Thinking?* (1952).[51] Naming a being, says Heidegger, brings to conscious presence what withdraws from the mastery of our grasp. In other words, to name is to bring attention precisely to that which exceeds the measure of our gaze in such a way that beckons that being to reveal itself to us. In highlighting the withdrawal of beings from our intentional meanings and categories, naming invites human namers to follow the trace of beings brought into relief by the act of naming. As language, naming is strictly speaking meaningless, though this does not make it vacuous, as it instead points toward the Being of beings by directing human speakers into worlds where beings abide.

Within the Eucharist, then, poetic naming occurs through all types of liturgical speech: the reading of scripture, the creeds, and proclamation; the eucharistic prayers of the epiclesis and

[51] See Chapter 3.3.3.

anamnesis; and in the words associated with the distribution of the consecrated elements. Such liturgical naming carves out the rough frame of the person of Jesus Christ while giving the content of such speech over to the dynamic world into which his person withdraws. In that way, the language of the Eucharist gives interpretive shape to what is dynamically understood in the sacrament by naming that world as the person of Jesus Christ at the same time that it gives up the meaning of its own words to the involved understanding of the world to which it points. In what follows, I will evaluate how this poetic naming occurs in the various forms of reading, reciting, and praying that makes up the eucharistic liturgy, with the ultimate intent of showing how such poetic language both couches the world of Christians' involvement and receives its ultimate meaning from that involvement.

5.3.1 Scripture & Creeds

The most obvious way in which the Church names Christ poetically is the reading and proclaiming of scripture. Like the peasant shoes of Van Gogh's painting, the various portrayals of Christ in the New Testament disclose a particular world of lived experience.[52] The experience of the first Christians is of course lost to us, but their witness in the biblical texts as we have them, like the work of art, directs us away from the text as text and toward an involved world in which the experience that grounds the text comes alive. As Nathan Mitchell astutely puts it, the meanings of scripture "emerge only when we *stop making sense*, only when we sit silently in the words awhile, waiting to see what happens."[53]

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[52] See Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper Perennial Classics, 2001), 33. See Chapter 3.3.3 for further discussion.
[53] Nathan Mitchell, *Meeting Mystery: Liturgy, Worship, Sacraments* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), 116.

To read the four gospel accounts of the life of Jesus poetically, then, is neither to take them (technologically) as factual depictions of the past nor (metaphorically) as representations of an elevated form of human life alongside some insightful wisdom teachings. Rather, in naming Jesus through description of his life and passion, the gospels call to mind the various traits that define Jesus' person in terms of his history and possibilities while at the same time inviting the hearers of scripture to follow this particular person down the path of his withdrawal. Because the Jesus of scripture only exists in terms of portrayal, he remains fairly generic. The idea of a poor, traveling, healing, radical prophet who is killed for his subversive views and whose death is viewed as a saving sacrifice is neither original to the gospels nor wholly perfected in them—a point illustrated by the prevalence of "Christ-figure" tropes in literature.[54] And even though the gospels flesh out this character with details about his responses to his particular location and culture, this world remains historically and culturally remote to us, so that imagining this Jesus beyond very flimsy mental sketches remains difficult if not impossible. To read scripture poetically therefore implies a trajectory *beyond* the text but always along a path laid out *by* the text. We cannot understand Jesus within his own world, but the details of his depiction in that world, basic and remote though they be, give us enough direction to set us on a particular path in search of this Jesus in our own world.

In summoning Jesus to our mental consideration, the naming function of scripture reveals both Jesus' elusiveness as well as traces the path of his particular withdrawal. In naming the particularity of Jesus, we give enough linguistic definition to his person to recognize how insufficient such speech is to the *Ding an sich* of his person. Through depictions of Jesus' life and passion, we are given just enough sense of his character to follow where his lived uniqueness

[54] See Hans W. Frei, *The Identity of Jesus Christ: The Hermeneutical Bases of Dogmatic Theology*, Updated and Expanded Edition (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013), 71-91.

escapes us. In disclosing this character of Jesus, the gospels by no means give us enough to say that Christ is himself present in their reading or explication, but we are prompted by them with the question of that real presence itself, as the gospel writers' challenge of grappling with Jesus' person and meaning is made our own challenge today. For those first witnesses as well as for us, the task is to work out our understanding by following the trace of Christ laid out in the text but which flowers in the world of lived experience.

Nowhere is this theme better depicted in scripture than in the original ending of Mark, in which the resurrection of Jesus is attested but not witnessed. Instead, the women who visit Jesus' tomb are confronted with a man in white who tells them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here… But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you" (Mk 16:6-7). The Jesus once known in concrete terms is no longer visible, but this absence presages an imminent presence, albeit in a new location under a new constitution. The forecast of Jesus' presence in Galilee, then, becomes for us the promise of Jesus' real presence beyond the pages of scripture, where, with the closure of the gospel, the visible, concrete Jesus gives way to the Jesus who "is not here." That Mark's gospel originally ends with the fleeing of the women and their fearful silence thus functions as a question to Mark's readers, prodding them whether they themselves have the faith to go searching for Jesus, to follow the path of his resurrected withdrawal (Mk 16:8).

This dual function of naming as both giving interpretive shape to our conscious thought at the same time that it directs our thinking beyond that interior reflection reaches its liturgical zenith in the recitation of the Christian creeds. Depicting the whole life of Jesus within the framework of cosmic history, the creeds effectively articulate both the character of Jesus and

give specific shape to the possibilities that define his person through the use of action verbs, highlighting the contours of his character in terms of his myriad dynamisms and thus hinting at the whole person which they together reveal. In the words of the Apostles' Creed, for example, Jesus was conceived, born, suffered, was crucified, died, was buried, descended, rose, ascended, is seated, and will come to judge. Insofar as one who speaks the creed is familiar with the gospel narratives, they will already have a sense of how these actions attributed to Jesus manifest themselves within his world as portrayed by the biblical authors and how together they constitute his person. However, the creed also ascribes verbs to the one who recites it, so that "I believe" in not only the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit but also the Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. What is recited of Jesus' history is brought to presence within the world of the speaker. In other words, to confess belief is to presume some real and present relationship between the believer and the believed.

Again, to recite the creed as a depiction of literal fact is to believe in a magical Metaphysic by drawing on a now-defunct cosmology, whereas to recite it metaphorically is to render its statements of belief optional or allegorical, limiting its meaning to some existential wisdom about human life. By contrast, to recite the creed *poetically* is to summon all the named character-defining actions and events of Christ's person to presence while inquiring into the nature of their Being today. What does it actually *mean* to describe Jesus' person as crucified and yet risen? What does it *mean* to trust in the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, or the resurrection of the body? These are questions that conceptual language cannot answer for us. And yet in raising these questions explicitly in the confession of faith, the Christian orients herself toward the world that she names with an eye for discovering how her statements are true within that experiential milieu.

The reading of scripture and creeds—to which we might also add songs and sermons[55]—when undertaken in the mode of poetic naming functions both to summon Christ to presence and to summon the Church to witness. By framing the particularity of Jesus' person through narrative and theological contemplation, the words of the Christian tradition disclose what we are to look for in seeking Jesus in our own world. Yet these depictions do not suffice to give us Jesus himself. All we have here are representations and interpretations, limited portrayals of a person in a world that is lost to us. In order to make sense of these interpretations and to determine their practical value for us, we must first depart from them toward that which they depict—that is, the world of Christ's appearance—by which standard alone we may return to the text with a criterion for its interpretation.

5.3.2 Prayer

Such world-referral is made most explicit in the language of prayer. Whereas scripture and creeds name Jesus descriptively and thus create the frame for our observation of what Jesus shows of himself, prayer invites this Jesus to that very act of disclosure, training our eyes ever more explicitly in a posture of searching and discovery. Gregory Dix observes that, as the middle act of the Eucharist which bridges offertory and communion, prayer serves to state the fullness of what is done in the Eucharist and so discloses the present reality of its character.[56] I will here evaluate two ways in which the eucharistic prayers function as a poetic summoning of Christ to self-disclosure, beginning with the epiclesis before focusing on the anamnesis as a precursor to the Church's embodied re-membering of Christ's person.

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[55] Cf. Lathrop, *Holy Things*, 104: "The content of the sermon, self-consciously juxtaposed to the meaning of the other events in the gathering, is meant to break the archetypal symbols of word and book and holy speaker, making them serve the present purpose of the mercy of God."
[56] Dix, *Shape of the Liturgy*, 269.

The *epiclesis* is the priest's prayer that the bread and wine may become the real body and blood of Christ. While only an explicit movement of the liturgy in the Eastern eucharistic rites, the epiclesis occurs at least implicitly in all liturgical formulas.[57] For example, in the Roman Mass, the priest utters the prayer over the elements after the offering, saying, "Be pleased, O God, we pray, to bless, acknowledge, and approve this offering in every respect; make it spiritual and acceptable, so that it may become for us the Body and Blood of your most beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ."[58] The disposition of the prayer is revealed in the subjunctive language employed. Asking God that the bread and wine "*may become*" the body and blood of Christ is foremost to acknowledge our incapacity to make them so ourselves. Furthermore, inviting God to act upon the elements is always to preserve the possibility that God *might not* act upon them, and that, consequently, no revelation may occur in what follows. As an act of letting-be, the epiclesis articulates the bounds of the eucharistic clearing, allowing space within the community for God to show Godself while preserving the possibility for both absence and surprise.

In this capacity, the epiclesis further reveals the limits of our understanding of what "the Body and Blood of your most beloved Son" actually are. In both admitting its own incapacity to

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[57] See Bradshaw and Johnson, *Eucharistic Liturgies*, 38-44.

[58] Gibbons, Robin, ed, *The Sunday Missal: Sunday Masses for the Entire Three-year Cycle Complete in One Volume together with extracts from the Sacramental Rites and from the* Divine Office (London: Harper Collins, 2011), 64. The epiclesis is a difficult case for a phenomenology of the Eucharist within the parameters of the immanent frame and the critique of ontotheology assumed in this project. On the one hand, the epiclesis is a prayer directed to God the Father, about God the Son, either implicitly or explicitly through the power of God the Holy Spirit, thereby displaying a clear assumption of the Eucharist as an event of God as Trinity rather than simply a revelation of Christ alone. However, the triune character of God is a *theological* (in Heidegger's sense of an *ontic* science) conclusion on the basis of an ontic revelation, namely, the Christ-event, which is itself what is at issue for us. On the other hand, then, a non-foundational *philosophical* (in Heidegger's sense of an *ontological* science) inquiry into revelation must necessarily bracket any subsequent theological conclusions about the trinitarian character of God. But does this automatically render the epiclesis outside the bounds of our investigation? I think not, for the simple reason that what is fundamentally at issue for our purposes here is the nature of liturgical prayer as poetic and its corresponding subjunctive inflection. We need not assume a trinitarian God in order to observe the poetic function of language at work in the epiclesis: language as beckoning and inviting, regardless of to whom that specific invitation is issued. While the epiclesis clearly demonstrates theological commitments that are subsequent to the revelation which is the object of our inquiry, it is not the content of the prayer itself so much as the function of its linguistic structure which is relevant to us now, so that our investigation is not unsettled by the trinitarian commitments displayed here.

make the elements into Christ's embodied person and acknowledging God's unique ability to reveal them as such, the Church further concedes its own conceptual poverty in regard to the terms it here employs. To speak of the bread and wine as Christ's flesh and blood in any one-to-one Metaphysical correspondence is to draft them into humanity's own technological way of making and measuring. But by explicitly deflecting the source of this transformation to God's dynamic doing, the Church divests itself not only of agency but of any right to conceptual determination. It is telling, in this regard, that the above text from the Roman Missal does not even cite the bread and wine explicitly as that which is to become Christ's flesh, instead asking God "to bless, acknowledge, and approve *this offering in every respect*; make it spiritual and acceptable, so that it may become for us the Body and Blood of your most beloved Son."[59] Recalling the last section's evaluation of offering as a worldly shaping of embodied behavior, the phrasing of the epiclesis here emphasizes the worldly character of Christ's personal coming-to-presence. To pray for the transformation of the elements in this way is to include a potentially infinite number of beings, acts, and dispositions which may be claimed by God as those very elements, just as it is to allow us to be surprised by the nature of that into which they are transformed.

The subjunctive mood of the epiclesis takes a turn to a more concrete realization of what is expected, however, in the *anamnesis*, the commemoration of Christ's institution of the Lord's Supper. It is here that the Eucharist's relation to Christ's passion is verbally recalled and physically reenacted with the elevation of the elements, climaxing with the fraction. In its role within the eucharistic prayer, the anamnesis typically borrows its language from St. Paul's initial depiction of the Last Supper:

[59] My emphasis.

> [T]he Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes (1 Cor 11:23b-26).

It is worth noting early on the similarity between the functions of the privative "*a*—" prefix in both the liturgical *anamnesis* and Heidegger's own use of *aletheia* as "truth" or "unconcealment." In both cases, the emphasis is on a discovery of what is already the case, either the Being of beings in Heidegger or the event of Jesus' institution of the communion ritual, rather than any human making that may constitute the truth-event. As Dix suggests:

> [W]e have to take account of the clear understanding then general in a largely Greek-speaking church of the word *anamnesis* as meaning a "re-calling" or "re-presenting" of a thing in such a way that it is not so much regarded as being "absent," as itself *presently operative* by its effects. This is a sense which the Latin *memoria* and its cognates do not adequately translate, and which the English words "recall" and "represent" will hardly bear without explanation, still less such words as "memorial" or "remembrance."[60]

Because it articulates a present perpetuation rather than mere memory of a past event, the anamnesis functions as a continuing of that first action rather than a ritual play that only represents it for the sake of our imaginary needs. "As the *anamnesis* of the passion," Dix writes, "the eucharist is perpetually *creative* of the church, which is the fruit of that passion."[61]

Along these lines, I have argued that poetic speech as Heidegger depicts it is both directive and effective—directive by pointing our gaze beyond the linguistic plane to our more primordial engagement with beings and effective by shaping our encounter with said beings. Like scripture and creeds, which frame both what we are able to see as belonging to Christ in the eucharistic world and what we must bracket from his person, the anamnesis characterizes the shape of Christ's passion alongside the shape of the event which is concurrently enacted. The act

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[60] Dix, *Shape of the Liturgy*, 245.
[61] Ibid., 248.

of breaking bread with one's friends is generic enough that its literary depiction does not give us anything concrete of Jesus' person. But the arrangement of dynamics in concert to form the world depicted therein—*took*, *gave thanks*, *broke*, *eat*, *drink*, etc.—form a nebulous whole, in the specific participation of which we may discover a character which resonates with those dynamics of his person we similarly find arranged in scripture and the creeds—*born*, *suffered*, *crucified*, *risen*, *ascended*, etc. To that end, the anamnesis, like the epiclesis, draws us away from the linguistic plane toward that of lived involvement. More concretely than the words of the epiclesis, which point to their own inadequacy as they anticipate the free agency of God, the anamnesis initiates the transition from word to world by enacting what it describes. As McCall describes the anamnetic actions of the priest:

> Such a reactualization is not mere mimesis of the past, not an imitation. Neither is it divorced from any connection with something or someone else. Rather, the past is enacted in such a way that the present moment (including the present enactors) is brought into a transformative, consequential relationship with it. This is both "restored behavior" (in that it is enactment, a repetition, of an act) and also utterly new (in that it is enacted in *this* present by *these* actors in *these* circumstances). Moreover, the intention of an "actual" is the transformation (initiation, change of status) of the participants. This is neither the simple communication of a previous reality nor a lessening of the real through imitation. Rather, actualization and anamnesis point to a reality constituted by performance, or, perhaps to use a word less encumbered by mimetic and purely aesthetic resonances, by *enactment*.[62]

As an action—moreover, as an action that bridges the words of the rite and its embodied performance—the anamnesis initiates the event of Christ's performance of himself in the present world of a congregation, so that what is named as Christ's action discloses itself to those conditioned by particular environments and so addresses itself to the needs of their particular worlds. Whereas mimesis seeks to enact *something else* or something that is *somewhere else*, anamnesis makes present this one thing, only in a presently unique environment.[63] I can

[62] McCall, *Do This*, 60-61.
[63] Ibid., 61.

mimetically reenact the life of Henry V by acting in Shakespeare's play, but I can never anamnetically *be* Henry V. What takes place in the anamnesis is not, therefore, a *representation* but a *recapitulation* of the events of Christ's Passion, so that its performance is not an imaging of what happened *back then* but a rendering actual of the same event *here and now*.

In terms of the privative "*a*—" that mutually characterizes Heidegger's understanding of involved truth and the liturgical bringing-to-presence of Christ's person, we can now begin to grasp just how the re-calling of Christ in the enactment of his Last Supper with his disciples constitutes a *dis*closure, an *un*concealment of what is always latently occurring. The linguistic characterization of Christ we have seen in scripture, creeds, and now in the eucharistic prayers does not just give us a strict description of the man Jesus of Nazareth but also provides a sketch of his personal possibilities, the possibilities that made him who he was, and their actualization within his particular world. By naming him as the being that both calls to us across the centuries and yet withdraws from our conceptual grasp, the Church beckons that same constellation of possibilities to converge once more in and around the communion table, epicletically allowing for Christ's person to show up with a surprising answer to our current situation. With the anamnesis, the enactment of those spoken possibilities as depicted in events long past emerge as the possibilities for the present Church. The only thing left to be enacted, then, is the participation of the full communal body into this enactment of Christ's personal possibilities.

5.3.3 Communion

With the enactment of the Last Supper narrative in the anamnesis, the linguistic portion of the eucharistic liturgy transitions to one of embodied action. While I made the case in the last section that the Eucharist, as a world, is fundamentally defined by its action, so that it is never not

dynamic, it is in the distribution of the communion elements that the action both reaches its climax and that the language of the rite points most directly to the physicality of its world.

Nowhere is this directive function of language more apparent in the Eucharist than in the words that accompany the distribution of the elements. Many variations exist of what is said by a priest or attendant to a communicant as the consecrated host is shared—"The body of Christ," "This is the body of Christ," "The body of Christ, broken for you," and so on—but the point remains the same: what is given in the bread is Christ's flesh, and what is received in the cup is his blood. Of course, at first blush it may seem that this correspondence of the words "body" and "blood" with the material elements of bread and wine asserts either a magical-literalism or a pure metaphorical representationalism that I have shown other liturgical speech to poetically avert. A priest holding out a wafer while saying "*This is* the body of Christ" suggests a specificity of linguistic correspondence to the physical being which in one way or another domesticates it to our meaningful purposes.

Of course, as with all speech within the context of worship, the language of distribution *can* always be taken as either a scientific or purely symbolic articulation of the beings to which they point. However, the case I have been making throughout this chapter is that the nature of prayer lends itself to the Heideggerian notion of poetry not as metaphorical speech but as directive and effective speech characteristic of the posture of letting-be. Naming, as a calling to presence that which withdraws from our conceptual mastery, thus becomes the mode of all liturgical speech, and so it is fitting that the same norm be applied to the language associated with distribution of the elements. Insofar as we accept this norm, we see how the entire enacted liturgy which I explored in my previous section meets up at last with the linguistic portion of the liturgy centered around the eucharistic prayers. Following Gregory Dix's four-action model, we

might say that the myriad movements associated with offertory and fraction finally meet up with linguistic prayer in the shared climax of communion. So while we might be inclined to hear the words "This is the body of Christ" as imposing a technological measurement on sacramental bread, the fact that these words are spoken at the climax of communal action—with all the multi-directionality and even chaos that involves—suggests that here more than ever the words of the liturgy ought to be understood in poetic reference to the embodied action around them.

To illustrate the way that the words of the communion ritual refer to the dynamic event of the eucharistic world in a unique way, consider the table below, in which I have roughly translated the phrases "This is the body of Christ" and "This is the blood of Christ" into basic literal, metaphorical, and poetic interpretations.[64]

[64] As mentioned above, there are several different phrasings that accompany the distribution of elements. I have chosen "This is the body/blood of Christ" simply because it expresses the common meaning across all phrasings.

SPOKEN WORDS	**LITERAL**	**METAPHORICAL**	**POETIC**
"This…"	"This bread…" "This wine…"	"This bread…" "This wine…"	"This gathering?" "This offering?" "This elevating?" "This breaking?" "This pouring out?" "This receiving?" "This praying?" "This kneeling?" "This sharing of a meal?" "This exchange of peace?" "This sending out?" *etc*.
"...is..."	"…equals…" "…is the same as…"	"…represents…" "…is similar to…"	"…is doing…" "…is performing…"
"...the body..." *"...the blood..."*	"…the physical matter…"[65]	"…the meaning…"	"…the person…"
"...of Christ."	"…of the historical Jesus."	"… of the Christ of Christian tradition."	"…of the risen Jesus."

When spoken poetically, the language of communion does not properly refer to the static bread and wine but rather to what the bread and wine *do*. What is ultimately referenced in the language of communion, and in the eucharistic liturgy as a whole, is the world of its performance. In saying "This is the body/blood of Christ," the dynamism of the eucharistic world is at last declared to be the performance of Christ's own person, a person named in the descriptions of scripture and creeds, invoked in the epiclesis, and recapitulated in the anamnesis.

[65] It is true that the traditional Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation does not hold that the consecrated bread and wine become the biological material of Jesus of Nazareth, nor does it imply the heresy of impanation. See Kevin W. Irwin, *Models of the Eucharist* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2005), 248 for a theoretical rejection of the identification of transubstantial presence with physical presence. Nevertheless, transubstantiation *does* still associate a literal transformation of substance in the particular beings of bread and wine. More importantly, it remains the case that many lay Christians still think and speak about the Eucharist as if it were the biological stuff of Jesus. It is therefore not only pertinent but essential to address literalist and physicalist interpretations of the consecrated host in the interest of the Church as a whole people, not simply the Church according to its official doctrines.

The reality of the event is preserved precisely in the poetic dispossession of its comprehension. It cannot, strictly speaking, be *thought* but only *lived*. That what is lived within the eucharistic world is named within the parameters of scripture, creeds, and prayer does not intellectualize the world to the point of snuffing out its dynamism. On the contrary, when spoken poetically, the direction is reversed, so that the meanings of the words read and spoken are left undetermined until illuminated by their fulfillment in our present physical space.

5.3.4 Conclusion

For the later Heidegger, the function of poetic naming is twofold: naming a being answers that being's call to be thought, and it invites that being into the world of our understanding. In that way, naming initiates a twofold action of following a being down the path of its self-disclosure and actively calling that being to presence within a particular nexus of worldly relations. In this way, poetic naming is the verbal expression of letting-be, neither surrendering to the complete ineffability of beings nor domesticating them under our technological mastery but employing speech to engage them in action.

To name Jesus Christ in the myriad forms of liturgical speech is thus to follow after the Christ whose character and meaning eludes our categories, but it is also to invite that same person of Christ to be present with us here and now. In naming Christ, we allow what Christ shows of himself in scripture and the creeds to form the bounds of the clearing in which we may recognize him as present. In reading scripture, creeds, and prayers poetically, we point to the Christ who is known only through lived encounter. Reading scripture poetically, we believe its words to be true of Jesus, yet we do not know precisely *how* they are true. By invoking Christ in

the anamnesis and calling on Christ to be present in the epiclesis, we give shape to whatever action ensues by drawing it under the same name as that of Christ in scripture.

To invoke Christ poetically, then, is to invite the Jesus of first century Palestine to disclose the nature of his possibilities in our current locale. No doubt this Christ will manifest himself differently in our world than in the world depicted in the scriptures. Yet by invoking Christ's name in prayer and proclamation, we name the ensuing event as belonging to Christ's person, so that what it discloses may become the meaning of the words we use to describe him. If naming Christ in scripture and creeds, in prayer and remembrance, is neither to magically conjure his presence nor to re-present him in lieu of his actual presence nor even to highlight his absence but is rather to situate to our involvement with matter, then we must now finally turn to the way that such involvement fulfills those prayers by belonging to Christ's own person.

5.4 PERFORMING PERSONHOOD

In §2 of this chapter I laid out the case for an understanding of the Eucharist as a dynamic world. In §3 I then suggested that the prayerful nature of language as employed within the eucharistic liturgy takes on the role of poetic naming, so that what is enacted in the dynamic world of the sacrament is understood as belonging to Christ's person as described in that very language, which in turn receives its meaning from the sacramental enactment. But if, as I have proposed, we are to understand the Eucharist as the dynamic *real presence of Christ*, then it is now incumbent upon me to explore how what I have laid out so far amounts to an actual presence of that particular person. In this section I will first explore how this endowment of possibilities on Christian communicants constitutes an impartation of personhood on the ecclesial community following Merleau-Ponty's model of the amputee. I will then demonstrate how this model exists

in practice through an exploration of the Christian concept of sainthood within the context of this discussion of personal possibilities.

5.4.1 Resurrected Possibilities—Sacrament as Phantom Limb, Presence as Prosthetic

In Chapter 4.2 we saw how Merleau-Ponty understands the phantom limb not as a mere trick of the mind nor as a neurological illusion but as an embodied-existential experience of living into one's pre-amputation possibilities with a post-amputation body. What we gleaned from Merleau-Ponty's analysis was a sense of the embodied self not only as defined by established habits, but as capable of adapting one's previous possibilities to new circumstances.[66] In a similar way, we observed from philosopher and amputee Vivian Sobchack how the amputee's adaptation to life without a former limb is then supplemented by the introduction of a prosthetic, which establishes new, previously undisclosed possibilities not by replacing a previous appendage but by expanding the affordances of a body that has already adapted to its amputated state.[67]

In this subsection, I wish to suggest a twofold understanding of Christ's real presence in the mode of embodied Being-in-the-world. On the one hand, the performance of Eucharist in its sacramental context performs life *as if* the human Jesus of Nazareth were present. That is, such performance enacts a world that is established by a particular human individual who does not presently exist as such, and so one's participation in this world is comparable to a phantom limb experience. However, because that world is poetically named to be the very person of the individual who is commemorated in the sacrament, the performance of the sacrament enacts a performance of that same individual's personal possibilities, so that his very person—that which

[66] See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Donald A. Landes (London: Routledge, 2012), 79-90.
[67] See Vivian Sobchack, "Living a 'Phantom Limb': On the Phenomenology of Bodily Integrity," *Body & Society* 16.3 (September 2010): 62.

makes him the person that he is—becomes operative in embodied spacetime and further imprints itself upon those who partake of the sacrament, thereby illuminating new, extra-sacramental possibilities for their behavior. This then presences Christ as his own particular nexus of attunements and possibilities and imparts his person onto those who share in his activity, much the same as an amputee experiences a prosthetic.

Let us take these two themes in turn. In the first place, the Eucharist as a ritual *memorial* functions as a phantom limb of sorts because it physically enacts the world disclosed through the personal possibilities of Jesus of Nazareth in lieu of his human body. As mentioned above, the ritual actions of the Eucharist are not themselves constitutive of Jesus' particularity. However, I have already shown how the overarching thrust of the world they establish is named through liturgical readings and prayer as belonging to the person of Jesus. So to enact these behaviors in a world under the name of Christ is to glean from their very enactment an understanding of how Christ is the person whom scripture and creeds describe.

As an involved instance of Being-in-the-world, the Christian participant in the Eucharist develops a nuanced circumspection toward beings within the sacramental space—kneelers, stained glass windows, offering trays, communion rails, bread, wine, etc.—that discloses a relevance-structure through which the Christian can project their own possibilities. Within this world, certain moods prevail, certain manners of behavior prove more or less viable, and a uniquely characterized with-world in the presence of others is enacted. However, the interpretive shape of this world is poetically provided by liturgical naming, so that the world with which the Christian comes to such deep, unconscious familiarity is also the world that is proclaimed as the world revealed by Christ's unique way of Being-in-the-world in the mode of Being-as-meal. To know the world both through the intimacy of unconscious praxis *and* as poetically framed by the

person of Christ is to know the world of one's understanding as an endowment and inheritance of Christ, who first disclosed the world in just such a way.

For example, the various enactments of offering within the liturgy do not correspond to notions of generosity or self-sacrifice in general. Rather, the particular contours of the offering, the ways that it functions as an embodied discipline for participants, is particularized under the myriad depictions of Christ's own offering: as a penitential sacrifice to God (cf. Is 53:5, 1 Cor 5:7, Eph 5:2, Heb 9:26), as charity for the poor (cf. Mt 19:21, Mk 10:21, Lk 4:18, Lk 18:22, 2 Cor 8:9,), and as embodied discipline towards kenotic existence (cf. Jn 12:24, Rom 5:8, Rom 6:8, Phil 2:6-7), to name just a few. Under the umbrella of this particular naming, the character of this particular offering can be grasped with greater depth.

Note, however, that this is not simply a case of hearing a scriptural reading and consciously applying an interpretation of that reading to one's subsequent liturgical understanding, although this may of course take place. Deeper than this, through a lifetime of accrued experiences under various namings one gradually comes to a pre-reflective familiarity with the particular character of Jesus' offering, fraction, distribution, and so on. This destabilizes what we might typically think of as "knowing" another person, but it remains consistent with a Heideggerian account of knowing another person in two ways. Firstly, in light of the intersubjectivity of Dasein in the manner of Being-with which we observed in Chapter 4.1, to conceive of Jesus as a numerically distinct "subject" is to individualize him in an inauthentic manner as a present-at-hand kind of something. A more authentic manner of Being-with entails not a total quantitative individuation from the person of Jesus but rather a participation in the uncovering of world which he makes possible as opposed to the closing down of world when his Being is assumed according to preexisting conceptual structures. This leads to the second way

Heidegger reshapes what "knowing" the person of Christ may entail, as we have observed how our discursive relations with others tend toward communication not as the exchange of information but as opening up a co-attunement to world. To know the person Jesus as an authentically unique being with whom we occupy the eucharistic world in the mode of Being-with is thus primarily to know that world as Jesus communicates it to us, opening it up in a particular light through his unique attunement to that world. To know the person of Christ in this Heideggerian sense is principally to know *through* Christ, that is, to know the world that Christ uniquely communicates by intersubjectively participating in his personal possibilities for Being-in-the-world. Since the model of knowledge we have been sketching all along in Heidegger is grounded in praxis through the circumspection of ready-to-hand involvement, laying out a model for knowing Christ in just such an unconscious, habituating, embodied manner of involvement is not only appropriate but essential to the developments we will make in the next chapter regarding the ground of theological speech in this lived understanding. Through embodied repetition, one gets a *feel* for the eucharistic Jesus, much like lovers can gain a sense for a partner's various tones of voice or learn to read a thousand minutely different facial expressions. To know Christ most intimately is to know Christ in *flow*, in an intersubjective synchrony of personal performance, even and especially to the degree that the present-at-hand Christ-object fades out of conscious thought. To describe the liturgy as a phantom limb, then, is to say that the world is understood as communicated by Christ through his lived possibilities *even as Jesus of Nazareth is himself absent*.

However, Christians do not merely memorialize Jesus through imitation of his past actions. Central to the significance of the Eucharist (not to mention this project!) is the idea that Christ is really living and present in the contemporary spacetime of eucharistic practice. I have

so far made the case that the poetic form of liturgical speech functions as a naming of the sacramental world as the disclosure of Christ's person. But it is also essential that this naming itself belongs to the possibilities of Jesus' person. Because Jesus *himself* identifies his person with the eucharistic meal and the basic formula for its enactment (Mt 26:26, Mk 14:22, Lk 22:19, Jn 6:35, 1 Cor 11:24), to name the recurring event as an event of Christ's presence is itself a part of Jesus' own personal possibilities. To "do this in remembrance" of him, then, is not merely to add a posthumous ritual to our commemoration of Jesus. It is to perform Jesus' possibilities *in the very mode in which Jesus himself performs them*. Unlike other commemorations in which that which is past is called to mind through repetition of a person's acts—ritually marching across the Edmund Pettus Bridge to mark Martin Luther King Jr. Day, for example—the Eucharist can credibly claim to partake in the real person of Christ in the present because it belongs to the very possibilities of Jesus to articulate his own presence in such an enactment. In other words, Martin Luther King Jr. is not personally one with the act of marching across the Edmund Pettus Bridge because to say that his person is actualized in such an act is discontinuous with the kind of personhood he espoused in life. By contrast, it belongs to Jesus of Nazareth's particular way of Being-in-the-world to deliberately, discursively disclose his character in the eucharistic meal. Unlike other commemorations based on repetition, the Eucharist is not merely "doing what Jesus did" but is more profoundly "doing Jesus," because Jesus himself associates his very person with the doings that constellate the eucharistic world. For Jesus to effectively say, "*I am* this meal" is for him to say that the enactment of said meal is not merely one of recollective imitation but of participation in his person. So while the sacrament as repetition of Jesus' act is indeed a mode of taking on his possibilities as one's own in the same vein as any other memorial reenactment, the fact that it belongs to the unique possibilities of Jesus to exist in

and through the Eucharist means that he alone among human beings can be said to be credibly present in the actualization of those sacramental dynamics.

At this point it might be justifiably asked whether Jesus' self-identification with the eucharistic meal (and with the bread of life in John 6) is not in fact a metaphorical provocation on Jesus' part rather than a literal association of his person with the meal. After all, doesn't the Eucharist entail a *clash*—rather than a continuity—between what is physically encountered and what is said of that experience, so that only metaphor seems an appropriate coping strategy for this paradoxical reality? Of course, metaphor is one option for understanding the words of Jesus as they pertain to the Eucharist, and it may even be closer to the understanding of the New Testament authors in ascribing such words to Jesus. But within the scope of our Heideggerian consideration of language, it must be remembered that language is always only true to the degree that it refers to and helps communicate an experience of world. Even where language is uttered poetically and thereby comes close to metaphorical speech, it has its force only to the degree that it is open to what actual worlds reveal through lived involvement. While Heidegger's approach is certainly not the only available option for interpreting the words of Jesus, then, within the scope of this project his approach is assumed, and so it must likewise be assumed that Jesus' words are true insofar as they refer to actual ways in which beings are unconcealed within a particular world, in this case the world of the eucharistic meal.[68]

To that end, the Eucharist is not only an act of sharing in ritual remembrance á la the phantom limb (understanding a present world in terms of that which is absent), but it is furthermore a prosthetic experience (enacting the possibilities afforded by a foreign other). In

[68] As a reminder, Heidegger is chosen as the conversation partner for this study not on the basis of the presumed superiority of his thought to other options but because of the thorough compatibility of his philosophical project with the needs and parameters of this experiment. See Chapter 1.3 for further discussion.

participating in the Eucharist, Christ's possibilities are enacted in Christian bodies, so that the lasting effect of repeated sacramental exposure is a gradual alteration of one's own possibilities in accordance with his. Like the prosthetic, that which is foreign to one's body becomes effectively integrated into the performance of one's person, so that the boundaries between the body and the prosthetic gradually dissolve into the transparency of ready-to-hand familiarity. Within the Heideggerian scheme we have been sketching, one does not "think" Christ's presence in the Eucharist. One performs it, or rather, one is caught up in it. The Christian's involvement in the dynamics of the eucharistic world yields *both* an understanding of world as communicated by Christ's attuned Being-in-the-world through habitual participation in his possibilities for Being *and* a lived actualization of his person in enacting the dynamic particularities of his person as it exists in the sacramental meal.

The purpose of this subsection has been to employ my Chapter 4 reflections on personhood in terms of attunement and possibilities toward an articulation of the dynamic presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The real presence of Christ, according to this proposal, occurs wherever the unique attunements and possibilities that constitute him as the person he is are operative. Because what a person *is* is neither an embodied mass nor an ethereal soul nor some conjunction of the two but is rather the attunements to worldly relevance-structures and the possibilities for involvement projected therein, to speak of Christ's resurrected person is always to speak of his embodied dynamism. That we lack the resuscitated body of a first century Palestinian rabbi, then, is of little consequence so long as the person which that body lived is lived still. Such a proposal opens up the possibility of speaking *literally* of the living person of Jesus Christ insofar as (1) we acquire sufficient familiarity with his person through liturgical speech and dynamic involvement so as to credibly identify him in the movement of the liturgical

world, and (2) his personal possibilities are truly actualized in the community that lives his life across the diversity of worlds which they occupy. To this end, I now wish to explore how these possibilities may be further discerned among the ecclesial participants in Christ's person by analyzing the Christian concept of sainthood as a model for understanding the prosthetic influence of Christ's person.

5.4.2 The Communion of Saints

The exact nature of taking on Christ's personal possibilities can be helpfully illuminated at this juncture by the Christian notion of sainthood. For the purposes of this examination, I will define a saint as any person in whom Christ's possibilities are disclosed with particular clarity in a given context. That is, a saint is one who, though distinct from Jesus' person, adopts and participates in his possibilities to such a degree that Christ is made visible to the eyes of those trained to recognize him. It is therefore telling that saints are only saints in the eyes of Christians who deem them as such, because it is only through involved familiarity with the person of Christ revealed in the Eucharist that one has the understanding to discern Christ's more ephemeral presence outside of the liturgy. In this brief examination, then, I will explore how this concept of sainthood accounts for the extra-liturgical disclosure of Christ's real presence at the same time that it informs embodied familiarity with the liturgical presentation of his person.

To define a saint as a person in whose possibilities the possibilities of Christ are actualized is not the same as identifying a saint as Christ himself. Jesus alone is given the title of Christ because, traditionally conceived, only Jesus experiences total alignment with the person of Christ, so that his personal possibilities are recognized as wholly and exclusively those of the Christ, whom Christians consequently believe to be the Second Person of the Trinity. Further, it

is theologically understood that the whole of Christ's personal possibilities are those of the human Jesus of Nazareth, so that in their union, there is nothing of Jesus' that is not Christ's, and vice versa, so that we can say that they are one person, one *hypostasis*. By contrast, the saint is *not* Christ, and yet in some aspect of their life that which we recognize as belonging to the particular person of Christ shines forth in the habits, behaviors, desires, or worldly orientations of this person who is not Christ.

Consider the example of St. Paul, who famously proclaims, "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:19b-20). In taking on the norm of Christ's own way of having a world (i.e., crucifixion as a form of sacrificial love), Paul experiences his life as given back to him, but as Christ's life, or as life "by faith in the Son of God" rather than simply a resuscitated version of his previous existence. In other words, in learning to lose his life according to the pattern of Christ's own laying down of his life, Paul has now learned to live a life that was previously not his own (cf. Mt 10:39, Mk 8:35, Lk 9:24). Paul has not become Christ, but neither has he remained the Saul of his youth (cf. Acts 13:9). The saintliness of Paul is in this case disclosed through the double-movement of Paul's participation in Christ's own possibilities and Christ's active transformation of Paul's distinct person.

It may be said, then, that saints are the vehicles through which Christ's person operates within contexts foreign to that of the human Jesus of Nazareth. In light of Heidegger's insight that the worlds of our involvement shape the persons we become, it seems obvious to say that Jesus, were he transplanted to any other time and place than his own, would be a distinctly different person than he was. Hans Frei is thus correct to be skeptical of the efficacy of so-called

"Christ figures" in literature and history on account of their inability to fully encompass the particularity of the human Jesus.[69] That is, Jesus the Christ is only who he is specifically as Jesus *of Nazareth*.

That said, we have also seen how it belongs to the characteristic possibilities of Jesus of Nazareth to be embodied in the sacramental meal. Furthermore, it belongs to this unique person's possibilities to be risen after death and even to remain present in the lives of his followers even after the disappearance of his flesh (cf. Mt 18:20, Mt 28:20). It should not be surprising, then, that we can also add to Christ's unique personal possibilities the capacity of his person to be disclosed in others. As Matthew's Jesus famously says, "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them" (18:20) and, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me" (25:40). Jesus himself seems to identify his particular person with the variety of those who are not his person. And not only does Jesus suggest that it belongs to his Being to be disclosed in those not himself, but he further identifies the nature of this disclosure along the lines of his own personal manner of Being-in-the-world: hunger, thirst, a stranger, sick, naked, and in prison (Mt 25:35-36).

It is therefore possible for Christians who attain an involved familiarity with the explicit Christ of the Eucharist to recognize the implicit Christ in the lives of others. The naming of Christ in his various ways of Being—as having "nowhere to lay his head" (Mt 8:20), as one who lays down his life for his friends (Jn 15:13), as combating seeming wisdom with apparent foolishness (1 Cor 1:23-27), or as one who empties himself to take on the form of a slave (Phil 2:7), to give but a few examples—and the realization of that naming in the dynamic of the liturgy together empower Christians to recognize these intersecting attunements to world in others as a

[69] See Frei, *The Identity of Jesus Christ*, 81-82.

participation in Christ's person. Otherwise unassuming figures—from the homeless person we pass on the street to the annoying purveyor of inconvenient truths; from Dostoevsky's idiot to Melville's Billy Budd; from the martyr Bonhoeffer to the prophet Martin Luther King Jr.—thus become peripheral participants in Christ's active way of Being-in-the-world, imaging Jesus not in whole but in part.[70] As eucharistic participants, it becomes not only a possibility but a responsibility for Christians to actively recognize the patterns of Christ explicitly named in the sacrament as implicitly at work in the world, to name these enactments for what they are, and to adapt their behavior toward such figures accordingly, thereby taking on the possibilities of Christ for themselves by recognizing the person of Christ in others.

But it is not only the case that sacramental participation grounds extra-sacramental witness, for the reverse is also true. In witnessing Christ disclosed in a new and foreign context to the ritual world of the liturgy, our understanding of his person is illumined and expanded, having been encountered in living human flesh. For example, a beloved friend whose untimely death in a car accident provides life to others by means of organ donation may not only be recognized as participating unexpectedly in the possibilities of Christ's own death as gift, but this participation further adds profundity and intimacy to the specifically sacramental encounter. This then illuminates the meaning of Eucharist as the *communion of saints*, for to meet the personal possibilities of Christ as united with those of the saints is also to recognize the saint as taken up into our encounter with Christ. So while the saints recalled in the Eucharist are not present in the way that Christ himself is present (i.e., prosthetically), our living into Christ's personal possibilities so far as they coincide with those of the saints renders our participation in his person

[70] Frei is thus able to recognize the value of Christ figures on account of their bringing the particularity of Christ into relief through their enactment of isolated character traits that only coalesce as a whole in the person of Jesus (Ibid., 91).

a simultaneous sharing in the lives of the saints as well. Recalling the double analogy I made above of Christ's presence s both the phantom limb and the prosthetic, we might therefore say that the saints are partially presenced as phantom limbs in the Eucharist, but Christ alone is wholly presenced as both phantom limb and prosthetic, retaining his personal uniqueness even as that person is imparted onto us from without.

5.4.3 Conclusion

The purpose of this last section has been to illustrate how the world understood through Christians' sacramental involvement can be legitimately conceived of as the very person of Jesus Christ. In Chapter 4, we explored how a person, as a node of attunements and possibilities within a world, is necessarily extended through embodied matter yet is not necessarily restricted to any enclosed set of matter. It belongs to the human way of Being-in-the-world to transcend the supposed bounds of one's subjectivity and to moreover integrate other beings into one's own embodied life. To be a person is to discursively open up a way of having a world, so that in each person an utterly unique vantage on reality is disclosed through the various structures of habit, inclination, and the variety of responses to stimuli built up over time. This analysis has provided the opening through which we may discuss the person of Christ as existing in a real, present, embodied way but without the same set of biological matter that constituted the first century Jesus of Nazareth.

What we find in the Eucharist, according to this proposal, is a revelation of the dynamic character of Christ actualized in the material happenings of the sacramental world. The confluence of relevance and mood, when named by the poetic reading of scripture, creeds, and prayers, uncovers the character of Eucharist as the same as the character of Christ and moreover

informs those descriptions of his character with their actualization in the present. What this looks like in any given context is of course varied, but so too are the various attunements and possibilities that define the nebulous whole that each person is anyways. In participating in the Eucharist, Christians come to understand through habituation and familiarity how Christ operates in the various worlds they inhabit, so that they are then equipped to recognize these very patterns of his person outside of the sacramental space. This was illustrated by my treatment of the communion of saints, where I defined a saint as a person in whose life the personal possibilities of Christ are ephemerally revealed to those who have eyes to see them. The Eucharist becomes revelatory, then, insofar as it initiates Christians through time and repetition into modes of understanding and inhabiting the world as Christ does and to thereby recognize the person of Christ as operative even where the name of Jesus goes unsaid.

CONCLUSION

No doubt some readers may find the conclusions of this chapter threaten the particularity of Christ by collapsing his person into the generality of a world. After all, isn't this de-particularization the very problem I highlighted in Rahner and Bonhoeffer in the last chapter, where Rahner dissolves the character of Jesus into the general disposition of kenotic love and Bonhoeffer reduces his person to the ecclesial community in general? Isn't Jesus' particular body and social context essential to who he is, so that collapsing Christ into the sacramental meal strips everything that is unique or definitive of his person in the name of a more general access?

This is a legitimate concern to which I want to be sensitive. No doubt the model I have given here provides some license for gratuitous misinterpretation of the sacrament on the part of Christians, but such misinterpretation seems to have been a problem that Jesus himself faced

amongst his first followers (see Matt 16:13-28), so that misinterpretation hardly rules out the possibility of genuine discipleship. What I have attempted here is a model of eucharistic presence that, on the one hand, avoids reducing the presence of Christ to a matter of human measurement and, on the other hand, provides a credible metaphysic for talking about real presence without reducing that presence to the ontotheological Metaphysics that have characterized it in the past. The result, I hope, provides scope for understanding the person of Jesus Christ as multiple and variable—just as all persons are—and yet as having a world in a particular way. Persons are ways of having a world, much like prisms refracting the same light in unique ways. The argument of this chapter has been that the world of the Eucharist refracts the various worlds in which Christians exist today through the prism of Christ's own person, so that the way of Being that characterized the life of the rabbi from first century Nazareth may continue to characterize the sacramental life of Christians in modern times and disparate locales.

Just as we come to know other people most intimately by acquiring a feel and familiarity with their particular Being-in-the-world—the way they get agitated by being late, say, or the way they light up and become chatty when they are around friends, and so influence our own experience of mood and attunement within various worlds—so Christians may come to know the person of Christ through lived, dynamic involvement with his person. In the language and ritual of the liturgy, the general features of Christ's person are sketched out so that the particular contours of that way of Being are disclosed in the world that ensues. The Eucharist, as the world of that involvement, discloses the character of Christ's person so that, as familiarity with his person grows, he may be recognized as personally present even where he is not named by words. Following Heidegger's lead, I am arguing that the person of Jesus is no more synonymous with the static things of bread and wine than any person is synonymous with a corpse. A person *is*

what their transient materiality *does*, and the experimental hypothesis forwarded by this chapter is that what the Eucharist does is a recapitulation and perpetuation of the living, dynamic character of Jesus Christ.

Of course some who participate in the Eucharist may reject this account of Christ's person in the sacrament or argue that this world fails to reveal anything of significance. This too is not a death knell for the model I have given, as we are all prone to dismiss the personhood of our fellow humans, treating them technologically as instruments for our personal gain or as obstacles to avoid, and so it would not be surprising for us to do the same toward the sacramental world. But like a long-lasting marriage, a lifetime of eucharistic participation will bring its dry spells and moments of neglect alongside seasons of warmth, discovery, passion, and growth. To know the person of Jesus over a lifetime is thus to continually see the prism of his person turn to refract the world in constantly new light, prompting us to repeatedly answer the question anew, "Who do you say that I am?" (Mt 16:15, Mk 8:29, Lk 9:20).

It is in the interest of our each being able to answer this question that we must now at last turn to the topic of Christian speech. While addressing the matter of revelation as encounter, all that has been laid out in this chapter has not yet satisfied the initial question motivating this exploration, namely, how revelation can effectively ground, shape, and provide a common point of reference for Christian discourse. Insofar as the Eucharist is taken as an encounter with the person whom Christians allege to be the self-revelation of God, it seems we have a basic model to ground our contemporary practices of second-order Christian meaning-making. But how do we advance from dynamic participation to conscious interpretation? Once again, our foregoing analysis of Heidegger yields an answer, and so it is now time to turn to my final chapter, in which we will explore the implications of the Eucharist for Christian hermeneutics.

CHAPTER 6

EUCHARIST AS HERMENEUTIC

We come now to the conclusion of this exploration of revelation in a Heideggerian perspective. The overarching question that has motivated this project is: How can Christians credibly appeal to revelation as a ground and framework for Christian speech? That is, we have been asking how Christians can speak with any claim to truth in a pluralistic world largely devoid of the Metaphysical categories regnant during the construction of most Christian doctrines. If the last chapter was an answer to the first component question of such an investigation—How can Christians credibly *know* any revelation through encounter with the person of Jesus Christ?—then this last chapter must account for its second component question: How does such revelatory knowledge ground and frame Christian interpretive decisions? In keeping with my proposal from the last chapter that the site for Christian understanding of Jesus is the Eucharist, I now wish to explore how that same sacrament, in its revelatory capacity, forms the backbone of Christian hermeneutics. In so doing, I hope to illuminate how the Eucharist is not only *both* revelation and a hermeneutic but how it further forms an *essential link* between the two.

My argument for the hermeneutic nature of the Eucharist will in many ways mirror that of my previous chapter but in the reverse direction. There, I argued that the poetic naming of Christ in the Eucharist discloses the possibilities of the sacramental world as synonymous with those of Jesus' person. In that way, speech as *poiesis* serves up language as hopeful questioning to which the enactment of a world gives concrete specificity, thereby providing said language with its content. Here, by contrast, we will begin with the embodied understanding of the Eucharist in its revelatory mode and only then move to language as discursively rooted in that

embodied experience. Drawing on the early Heidegger's notion of discourse as equiprimordial with and yet dependent upon pre-conscious understanding, we can demonstrate how the rootedness of Christian communities in worlds shaped by the revelation of Christ's person grounds them in their subsequent speech, so that their theological and interpretive claims are shown to be not merely a language game of circular concepts but a verbal working-out of what is primordially understood in the flesh.

In order to demonstrate this function of Eucharist as the basis for Christian hermeneutics, I will begin, as I did in my last chapter, with an analysis of two accounts of Christian sacramental hermeneutics, those of Jean-Luc Marion and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, for the purposes of sketching how thinkers have addressed the present issue and what is still necessary for our own interests here. I will then move on to a reconsideration of Heidegger's notion of discourse and language, which I discussed at length in Chapter 3. Here, however, I will explicitly relate my earlier the examination of Eucharist I gave in my last chapter, seeking ultimately to demonstrate how discourse forms an essential chute from sacramentally involved understanding to conscious theological language. With this mechanical basis laid out, I will end this chapter with a practical exploration of how eucharistically framed hermeneutics can manifest in biblical interpretation. I ultimately conclude that the Bible can function as scripture in two directions, both oriented toward the phenomenal world of revelation: (1) the Bible poetically names the world of revelation, offering up the polyphonic bounds of the clearing for God's disclosure, and (2) in naming the contours of the revelatory world, the Bible also becomes the lexicon for Christians' discourse in their experience of that world. Within the Heideggerian scheme we have been sketching, the referent of the Bible is shown to be not principally some past event nor any ethereal intellectual content but rather the Christian's lived reality and the revelation of God

therein. The words of scripture do not describe reality on their own but rather point beyond themselves to worlds of understanding where, for the one trained to see Christ in the Eucharist, the divine presence may irrupt at any time.

6.1 EUCHARISTIC INTERPRETATION

We begin with a brief survey of others' accounts of the Eucharist as a hermeneutic framework. As was the case in Chapter 5, the purpose of this section is to consult with theologians broadly engaged with phenomenological and/or Heideggerian thought concerning theological questions similar to my own in order to glean both insights that can be usefully deployed and an awareness of the potential pitfalls in addressing these questions. I will start with an evaluation of the French Catholic philosopher Jean-Luc Marion, who deploys phenomenological methodology toward theological ends and who engages in that tradition in conversation with Heidegger in his account of the Eucharist as saturated phenomenon. Then, just as I returned to Karl Rahner after my discussion of Louis-Marie Chauvet in the last chapter, I will here return to the figure of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, whom we briefly consulted in Chapter 4, for an evaluation of his hermeneutic account of participation in Christ as Church. While I find that neither of these two figures offers a sufficient account of sacramental hermeneutics to answer the guiding question of my project, they help provide greater clarity of what is necessary for my own constructive reflection.

6.1.1 Jean-Luc Marion: Hermeneutics of the Saturated Phenomenon

As with Heidegger, Jean-Luc Marion wishes to dispose of ontotheological Metaphysics in favor of an understanding that respects the ontological difference, and he does so by supplanting the

reifying language of *Being* with a phenomenology of *givenness*.[1] Rather than focusing on what a particular being *is*, Marion asks what a being *gives of itself*: "What *shows itself* first *gives itself*."[2] Here we can observe a basic compatibility with the later Heidegger's concept of letting-be, wherein beings are not principally evidence for our interpretive takings-as but are rather self-revealing and so beckon humans to attend to what they reveal.[3] The truly phenomenological apprehension of beings is foremost an allowance of beings to genuinely give themselves in their complexity and excess to an understanding which is only then shaped by that givenness: "The phenomenon can appear as such, and not as the appearance of something else more essential to it than itself… only if it pierces through the mirror of representation."[4] In other words, a phenomenon only appears phenomenologically when it is not considered under a concept but rather according to its own self-disclosure.

The epitome of givenness is what Marion calls the *saturated phenomenon*, a phenomenon wherein "intuition surpasses the intentional aim," that is, the phenomenon whose given content exceeds the human capacity to comprehend it.[5] "The saturated phenomenon," Marion writes, "will be described as *invisible* according to quantity, unbearable according to quality, absolute according to relation, irregardable according to modality."[6] The saturated phenomenon cannot possibly be reduced to an objective thing in the eyes of its observer precisely because it entails

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[1] Jean-Luc Marion, *Being Given: Toward a Phenomenology of Givenness*, trans. Jeffrey L. Kosky (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 2.
[2] Ibid., 5.
[3] See Chapter 2.2.1 for my discussion of Heidegger's notion of letting-be. Marion is critical of Heidegger in *Being and Time* for locating the disclosure of Being in Dasein itself and thus undermining the integrity of beings as self-giving (*Being Given*, 33). Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, Neunzehnte Auflage (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2006), §43: 212. See Chapter 2.1.5 for my rebuttal to the view that Heidegger necessarily locates Being in Dasein.
[4] Marion, *Being Given*, 69.
[5] Jean-Luc Marion, *The Visible and the Revealed*, trans. Christina M. Gschwandtner and others (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 16.
[6] Marion, *Being Given*, 199. Cf. Marion, *Visible and Revealed*, 34.

too much for any gaze to fixate upon. Such a phenomenon resists categorization, but this is not to say that it becomes wholly elusive either. On the contrary:

> [C]onfronted with the saturated phenomenon, the I cannot not see it, but it cannot any longer gaze at it as its mere object. It has the eye to see but not keep it. What, then, does this eye without gaze see? It sees the superabundance of intuitive givenness; or rather, it does not see it clearly and precisely as such since its excess renders it irregardable and difficult to master. The intuition of the phenomenon is nevertheless seen, but as blurred by the too narrow aperture, the too short lens, the too cramped frame, that receives it—or rather that cannot receive it as such.[7]

The saturated phenomenon is simply too much for the human gaze to grasp in full. What one experiences in such a phenomenon is not a static being fit to an adequate concept but rather one's "own powerlessness to master the measurelessness of the intuitive given."[8] It is precisely this excess of the phenomenon which engulfs the viewer that leads to what Marion calls *constituted witness*, in which the subject is still the place of truth's disclosure but is not herself its producer but its recipient.[9] The subject is constituted by the truth of the phenomenon beyond the scope of her gaze, and her understanding of the world she inhabits is altered not from within her subjectivity but from beyond it by the influence of a phenomenon too excessive to be swallowed. As Marion strongly puts it, "In space, the saturated phenomenon swallows [the subject] with its intuitive deluge; in time, it precedes him with an always already there interpretation."[10] The power of the saturated phenomenon turns out to be its interpretation-shaping capability: what is seen alters the viewer's eyes and so affects all subsequent seeing.

We can thus see how Marion understands the Eucharist, as saturated phenomenon, to be a hermeneutic framework. Because to speak of God as an object would subject God to the idolatry of human concepts, no true theology can be a product of human reflection but must first be given

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[7] Marion, *Being Given*, 215.
[8] Ibid., 216.
[9] Ibid., 216-217.
[10] Ibid., 217.

of God's own self.[11] In revelation, God does precisely this, giving Godself "as the Word given even in the silent immediacy of abandoned flesh."[12] In the Incarnation, God not only gives Godself, but in so doing overcomes the idolatry of objectifying language by nullifying the difference between sign and signified in the person of Jesus.[13] Christ is the being who, as Word, speaks, and yet at the same time is the very content of that speech. He is the sign, the referent, and the speaker all in one. Whereas language invariably distances the object of speech from the conceptual representation of that object, the person of Christ as Word speaks itself in flesh and blood, so that this Word-event is both immanently present to the disciples and yet totally in excess of what language can capture. As Marion puts it, in Christ, the Word is "exposed" rather than stated in language.[14]

So far, Marion's interpretation here is reasonably similar to my own: Christ is revealed, but not primarily through language. It is by being drawn *into* Christ, rather than possessing him as a conceptual object, that one is integrated into revelation. Marion even goes so far as to say:

> [T]he Word, at the eucharistic moment, does not disappear so much as the disciples, who eating his body and drinking his blood, discover themselves assimilated to the one whom they assimilate and recognize inwardly; the Word does not disappear to their sight so much as they themselves disappear as blinded individuals, literally stray on paths that lead nowhere.[15]

Through the disciples' immersion into Christ's person they themselves give way to an alternative array of possible interpretations. By collapsing referent, sign, and speaker into the

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[11] Jean-Luc Marion, *God Without Being*, trans. Thomas A. Carlson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 139.
[12] Ibid., 139.
[13] Ibid., 140.
[14] Ibid., 141. See also Martin Laird, "Whereof We Speak: Gregory of Nyssa, Jean-Luc Marion and the Current Apophatic Rage," *Heythrop Journal* 42 (2001): 8, where Laird refers to Marion's work as *logophatic*: "the *theo*logy that results from union with the Word is not a return to the 'distinguished blasphemy,' that presumes to have God as its object; rather the theologian 'lets himself be said by the Word.' In logophatic discourse it is the Word who speaks."
[15] Marion, *God Without Being*, 151.

single event of Christ, the excess of the Incarnation to linguistic categories overwhelms and thus alters the very gaze of those who witness it, and so God gives Godself as the transformative norm of Christian speech. As a saturated phenomenon, the eucharistic Christ forms the basis of any and all true Christian hermeneutics by constituting the witness of the disciples as they vanish into the resurrected Jesus. Hermeneutics is possible for the Christian insofar as it is born out of eucharistic involvement, wherein the gaze of the Christian is fundamentally changed so as to interpret the world in a distinctly Christological light.

Marion's notion of constituted witness is certainly helpful in our search for a revelatory foundation for a Christian hermeneutic. Indeed, as will be seen in what follows, the interpretive chute which I borrow from Heidegger in my application to the Eucharist bears a strong resemblance to Marion's notion of Christians' theological thinking being shaped within the sacramental sphere. But it is precisely the rootedness of this hermeneutic in revelation that seems to cause problems here for Marion. As stated in my introductory chapter, the character of divine revelation in the Christian understanding is ontological, that is, revealed in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. This was the insight which led to my preliminary expectation for a revelation through encounter. To treat revelation only as an epistemic endowment is to overlook the "thing itself" of revelation and thus to overlook the essentially ontological character of that revelation.

By contrast, Marion's hesitancy around metaphysical articulations of presence precludes him from allowing any such ontological plane of revelatory encounter, leaving the reality of the Word which speaks through the Eucharist—and into which Christian speakers themselves disappear—somewhat dubious and undefined. Marion interprets Heidegger's insights regarding ontotheology in terms of "mutual grounding." That is, Marion concludes that in metaphysics theology and ontology are dependent upon one another, so that any discussion of ontology

invariably distorts God-talk by determining the shape of God according to the sphere of beings.[16] As seen above, this leads to Marion's resistance of any ontological ways of speaking in favor of speaking in terms of givenness so as to avoid the metaphysical objectification of "presence." For instance, responding to the critique that the theory of transubstantiation idolatrously reifies God as manipulable in human hands, Marion argues that the same idolatry occurs in any relocation of presence from the thing itself to the consciousness of the believer. Presence, in this case, "henceforth depends entirely on the consciousness of it possessed, here and now, by that community communion."[17] Idolatry occurs once more wherever the community believes its own consciousness to be constitutive of real presence.[18]

But Marion's answer to this double idolatry amounts to nothing more than the givenness of Eucharist as Christ's presence. Because the Eucharist inherently resists metaphysical identification of the elements with Christ's person—that is, because no non-idolatrous account can be given of *how* Christ is present in the sacrament—the Eucharist is in fact uniquely able to give itself in excess of our understanding and thus become for us the saturated phenomenon of Christ's Incarnation. Marion writes, "The Eucharist anticipates what we will be, will see, will love: *figura nostra*, the figure of what we will be, but above all ourselves, facing the gift that we cannot yet welcome, so, in the strict sense, that we cannot yet figure it."[19] The Eucharist *gives* what it never yet *is*, so that metaphysical reflection on its Being commits the very idolatrous error of covering up its phenomenality, which is the givenness of Christ over and against our conceptualizing gaze.

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[16] Joeri Schrijvers, "Marion, Levinas, and Heidegger on the Question Concerning Ontotheology," *Continental Philosophy Review* 43 (2010): 210.
[17] Marion, *God Without Being*, 166.
[18] Ibid., 168.
[19] Ibid., 174.

However, this hardly seems to satisfy the question of whether the Eucharist is actually revelatory or not because it disregards out of hand any preliminary ontological investigation into *what* the Eucharist *is* such that it can perform this function of the Word. Marion's fear of idolatry leads him to assert that the givenness of the Eucharist is simply the sacrament's gift of itself. On the one hand, Marion allows for no metaphysical reflection on the nature of *presence*, to the point that what is given is hardly an excess but rather a total deficiency. By this way of thinking, the Eucharist that only gives itself gives nothing, not everything, since there is literally *nothing* which presences excessively. On the other hand, if indeed the Eucharist gives the saturated person of Christ the Word, then it seems it can only be recognized as such by the community that receives him, in which case such recognition would also seem to undermine the excess of the phenomenon by locating that presence within the sphere of human concepts. Consequently, rather than solving the problem of presence as idolatry, Marion has merely kicked the can down the road on answering whether and how the Eucharist actually *is* anything which can be revelatory.

This leads to a second objection to Marion: namely, that rather than actually grounding a practical hermeneutic, we are simply left with an extreme apophaticism of another color.[20]

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[20] In applying the charge of apophaticism against Marion, I wish to distinguish between "apophaticism" on the one hand and "negative theology" on the other. See Tamsin Jones, *A Genealogy of Marion's Philosophy of Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 8: "Negativity is an insufficient descriptor of Marion's phenomenology primarily because Marion is interested in the excessive plenitude of intuition rather than its poverty. Thus, the inability to arrive at adequate concepts is driven by an *excess* rather than a *lack*." Marion thus uses the terms "mystical theology" and "apophasis" as distinct from negative theology, where "mystical" corresponds to an exclusively theological way of thinking, while "apophasis" corresponds to a broader (and thus phenomenologically eligible) way of speaking. See Jean-Luc Marion, "The Unspoken: Apophasis and the Discourse of Love," trans. Arianne Conty, *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 76 (2003): 42. Jones further notes that there is an ambiguity in the Greek origin of "apophasis," such that it entails both denial and speech (whereas negation only entails denial). The kind of speech that is rooted in one's disappearance into the Word is thus a floundering speech, which amounts to an apophatic imprecision as it lacks an object while simultaneously avoiding the negation of negative theology: "Characterizing [Marion's] thought as 'apophatic' is a shorthand way of signifying his fundamentally critical stance toward the subjectivist hold on modern philosophy and his attempt to escape conceptual idolatries in both theology and phenomenology. Idolatry refuses to recognize excess or plenitude, but an appropriately apophatic stance begins in response to this excess" (Jones, *Genealogy*, 9).

Whereas we observed in Chauvet's account of Christ's presence-as-absence a fetishization of God's incomprehensibility, with Marion we are given the opposite: an over-abundance of content to the point of obliterating the thinking self of the Christian witness. We have seen that Marion wishes to identify the Eucharist as the site of hermeneutics through the constituted witness of those who receive its saturated disclosure, but his emphasis on the excess and incomprehensibility of that phenomenon raises questions about what any subsequent hermeneutic can look like. The fact that he gives no insight into what constitutes an appropriate transition from eucharistic participation to Christian speech but only provides caution against the idolatry of such speech leaves a gaping hole where the content of a eucharistic hermeneutic should be accounted for. If language was left groping in the dark by Chauvet, then it seems Marion leaves it blinded it by the light.

6.1.2 Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Communal Christ as Hermeneutic Formation

While Marion gives us a theory of eucharistic hermeneutics but lacks a sufficiently ontological foothold for hermeneutics, Dietrich Bonhoeffer offers us both a metaphysic of Christ's presence and the way that shapes human speech. Recalling Bonhoeffer's ecclesial account of Christ's person from Chapter 4, we may remember how he understands the Church to be both a collection of individual persons ethically formed in their mutual relation to God and at the same time the objective spirit of the person of Christ existing through their dynamic activity.[21] Without dissolving the particular identities of the individuals who make up the Church, Bonhoeffer is thus able to insist quite literally on "*Christ existing as church-community*."[22] The purpose of this

[21] See Chapter 4.3.2.
[22] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio: A Theological Study of the Sociology of the Church*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, Volume I, trans. Joachim von Soosten (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 190.

section is to follow up on that analysis by examining how the personal formation that occurs within the Christ-community yields a particular hermeneutic.

Like Marion, Bonhoeffer's theology of Christian hermeneutics emerges out of participation in Christ's disclosure in the life of the Church. Addressing the specific need for an ethical hermeneutic, Bonhoeffer writes, "The source of a Christian ethic is not the reality of one's own self, not the reality of the world, nor is it the reality of norms and values. It is the reality of God that is revealed in Jesus Christ."[23] Ethics are not based on principles but rather on the person of Jesus as revealed and encountered in the Church. Ethical decision-making has its ground prior to explicit thought in one's ontological participation in revelation. Bonhoeffer goes on, "Good is not the agreement of some way of existence that I describe as reality with some standard placed at our disposal by nature or grace. Rather, good is reality, reality itself seen and recognized in God."[24] Because the Christian tradition affirms that God not only creates the world but moreover affirms it as good, any attempt to take some phenomenon as good begins with seeing the world as God sees it. To engage in Christian interpretation requires that one first be drafted into the vantage point of God.

One acquires this posture through incorporation into the person of Christ as he exists ecclesially. Bonhoeffer flatly states, "'Formation' means therefore in the first place Jesus Christ taking form in Christ's church. Here it is the very form of Jesus Christ that takes form… The body is the form. So the church is not a religious community of those who revere Christ, but Christ who has taken form among human beings."[25] Ethical formation is bound up with

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[23] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Christ, Reality, and Good: Christ, Church, and World" in *Ethics*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, Volume VI, trans. Reinhard Krauss, Charles C. West, and Douglas W. Stott (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 49.
[24] Ibid., 53.
[25] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Ethics as Formation," in *Ethics*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, Volume VI, trans. Reinhard Krauss, Charles C. West, and Douglas W. Stott (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 96.

revelation insofar as the irruption of Christ's person into the ecclesial community coincides with the adoption of his perspective by those within the community. "This does not happen as we strive 'to become like Jesus,' as we customarily say," writes Bonhoeffer, "but as the form of Jesus Christ himself so works on us that it molds us, conforming our form to Christ's own."[26] The agency of Christian formation belongs to Christ, so that any subsequent hermeneutic is also Christ's. Insofar as the world is disclosed in new lights through the Church, it is disclosed according to Christ's own pattern of interpretation.

For Bonhoeffer, the form of this disclosure is the cross. Christ discloses the world according to the view of God by enacting God's posture toward the world as Creator and Redeemer. He does this principally through his passion and death on the cross, which thus becomes the locus for the Christian's formation as a participant in Christ as Church. "Over against the successful," Bonhoeffer writes, "God sanctifies pain, lowliness, failure, poverty, loneliness, and despair in the cross of Christ. Not that all this has value in itself; it is made holy by the love of God, who takes it all and bears it as judgment."[27] Left to mere observation of the world, where competition is regnant, the will to power becomes the default ethic. Likewise, if suffering is merely validated as a general ethical principle, then we are left with both a baseless and harmful valorization of pain without any *telos*. But by taking its cue from the person of Christ, the Church is able to understand the world not through a conceptual principle but through the dynamic relationship of Christ's particular person to his world, a relationship Christians understand to be indicative of the Father's relationship to the universe as its affirming Creator. Bonhoeffer summarizes:

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[26] Ibid., 93.
[27] Ibid., 90.

> Christ is not a principle according to which the whole world must be formed. Christ does not proclaim a system of that which would be good today, here, and at all times. Christ does not teach an abstract ethic that must be carried out, cost what it may. Christ was not essentially a teacher, a lawgiver, but a human being, a real human being like us. Accordingly, Christ does not want us to be first of all pupils, representatives and advocates of a particular doctrine, but human beings, real human beings before God.[28]

In the face of ethical estrangement from God, the way of Christ—the way of the cross—appears as the enacted norm of right relations with a broken world. By participating in the life of the Church, Christians participate in the person of Christ disclosed in ever new times and places, so that his way of Being-in-the-world opens up new horizons for Christian interpretive practice.[29] This is not to say that the Church embodies the personhood of Christ infallibly, as individual members still bring their sinfulness to the assembly.[30] Nor does Bonhoeffer wish to suggest that the Church be a wholly non-cultic entity, as it is precisely through preaching and the sacraments that the community is nourished in their personal identity as Christ's body.[31] Reflecting on the way in which this very cultic practice sustains the Church as Christ's body, Bonhoeffer writes,

> The word is the word preached by the church-community. Is it not the Bible, then? Yes, it is the Bible also, but only in the church-community. Does this mean then that the Bible becomes the 'word' only through the church-community? That is indeed true, namely as the church-community is created only through the word and sustained by it. The question as to what was first, the word or the church-community, is meaningless because the word inspired by the Spirit exists only where human beings hear it, so that the *church-community makes the word the word, as the word constitutes the church-community as church*. The Bible is the word only in the church-community, that is within the sanctorum communio. The word, to be specific, is present in the church-community as the word of scripture and of preaching—essentially as the latter.[32]

Getting to the heart of my own project's overarching question, Bonhoeffer here insists on the communal basis of scriptural inspiration, specifically grounding the spiritual validity of the

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[28] Ibid., 98–99. For a helpful summary of this point, see Jens Zimmermann, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Christian Humanism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 335: "Ethics is not life according to a checklist or moral code but a mode of Christomorphic existence."
[29] Ibid., 100.
[30] Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, 214.
[31] Ibid., 208.
[32] Ibid., 232.

Bible in the community-grounded practice of preaching. The Bible becomes holy precisely *as preached*, because proclamation is a constituting pattern of the Church's life in Christ. Wherever Christ is personally active in the bodies of Christians, there the Word is spoken in preaching. And only where such preaching occurs is the Bible proclaimed as the authentic Word of God.

However, this very point should give us pause. Bonhoeffer's project offers a compelling model of Christ's perpetual existence and revelation in the Church. But while Bonhoeffer's model is compatible with Heidegger's notion of human persons formed through involved, communal habituation, his insistence on the preached Word as the primary means for Christians to participate in Christ reverts to an emphasis on the mental. That the Bible is made scripture by the Church community is consistent with what Bonhoeffer has suggested to this point about Christ's communal existence. That the Word as Christ makes the Church what it is, then, is not difficult to comprehend. That the Word "to be specific, is present in the church-community as the word of scripture and preaching," however, does not seem self-evident nor consistent with the ontological analysis Bonhoeffer has laid out to this point.[33] As a consciously interpretive activity, preaching emerges from the subjectivity of the individual preacher rather than from the objective spirit of the collective. As an explicitly mental activity, preaching as it is commonly practiced is an individuating activity. One person writes a sermon and gives it from the pulpit. Likewise, though many individuals may be sitting together in a congregation, they each hear the sermon privately in their own minds.

This is not meant as a criticism of preaching itself (indeed, the point of this chapter is to uncover a legitimate grounds for such intellectual activity), but as a critique of Bonhoeffer's identification of proclamation as the linchpin of what he otherwise portrays as the collective

[33] Ibid., 232.

experience of Christ's ontological presence. It may be the case that the preacher is ethically formed by Christ existing as community, so that her sermon bears the linguistic fruit of that formation. But that then presumes a more primordial basis for hermeneutics than the proclamation of scripture which Bonhoeffer identifies as the foundation of Christ's ecclesial existence. Bonhoeffer's sourcing of Christ's communal person in the individuating, mental activity of preaching reads like a young Protestant veering toward safer waters rather than following through on the ontological argument he has already laid out. In my introductory chapter, I suggested that what is necessary for a legitimate ecclesial hermeneutics is a common encounter with the person of Jesus, and Bonhoeffer nearly gets us there. But in basing his model of Christ's person as community in the practice of individual thinking, he ends up undercutting his own insights and falls short of realizing just such a model of encounter.

While Marion gives us a concrete encounter (the Eucharist) as a hermeneutical ground which is missing in Bonhoeffer, he fails to fully flesh out how this encounter yields an actual model of interpretation, leaving us instead with apophaticism by excess. By contrast, Bonhoeffer gives us a concrete ontological ground for Christian interpretive formation (Christ as community), but his suggestion that the Church is constituted by the mental and individuating act of preaching undercuts his argument for Christ's ecclesial ontology. Just as the shortcomings of Louis-Marie Chauvet and Karl Rahner in the last chapter helped carve out the space for our articulation of Christ's particularity in the Eucharist, so now does the contrast between Marion and Bonhoeffer demonstrate the need for a continuous chute from the ontological event of revelation to the intellectual task of interpretation. It is no good to have an ontological account of revelation if it does not yield a concrete hermeneutic, nor is any hermeneutic well-served by

divorcing it from its worldly foundation. It is with this concern in mind that I now turn to a constructive, Heideggerian model of the Eucharist as a hermeneutic.

6.2 EUCHARIST AS DISCOURSE

Since what we are looking for in our investigation into Christian hermeneutics is a credible chute from ontological revelation to intellectual theological reflection, we turn first to Heidegger's notion of discourse [*Rede*]. In Chapter 3, we saw how Heidegger considers discourse in *Being and Time* to be the "*existential-ontological foundation of language*."[34] Discourse, as "the articulation of understanding," is not yet language itself but is the existential precondition for language, namely, Dasein's creative, expressive character that deploys its understanding to communicate its attunement to world.[35] We then saw how discourse links up with understanding in interpretation [*Auslegung*], which is Dasein's still pre-linguistic function of taking a being as a certain kind of something, what I likened to cutting the shape of a being.[36] This, then, finally wells up into explicit language, or assertion [*Aussage*], which communicates through predication by disclosing the relational structure of the worlds to which we are attuned.[37] By tracing the origins of language back to discourse's equiprimordiality with understanding, I established how Heidegger demonstrates the kind of chute from embodied involvement to interpretive language that we are looking for here.

So far as the last chapter established the ontological real presence of Christ's person in the Eucharist, wherein the dynamics of the material world perform the shape of his unique personal possibilities and attunements, we thus have a basis from which to propose an

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[34] Heidegger, *SZ*, §34:160. Emphasis original. See Chapter 3.2.1.
[35] Ibid., §34:161.
[36] Ibid., §32:149. See Chapter 3.2.2.
[37] Ibid., §33;154-155. See Chapter 3.2.3.

intellectual hermeneutic steeped in ontological revelation. This section will explore just how the Eucharist, as a world of involved understanding, is furthermore a discourse in which Christians participate and which frames their interpretive possibilities. The next section will then use the example of biblical interpretation to examine how this discursive interpretation may be practically applied to Christian speech.

6.2.1 Eucharist as Discourse

We begin with the Eucharist as a discourse. In Chapter 3, I used the image of a sponge to describe the way that Dasein absorbs its world in understanding and then squeezes out its own experience of that world in discourse. For instance, the fact that Dasein can replicate the relevance-structure of a face in a work of art reflects a prior understanding of the way in which the parts of a face hang together to constitute a united whole. Similarly, the ability of a guitarist to pluck strings in particular patterns and styles to create music reflects a more basic understanding of not only the affordances of the guitar but the way that certain combinations of sounds evoke certain musical moods. As this articulation of understanding, discourse is not so much a conveying of information as it is an opening up of a world. The ultimate end of discourse, Heidegger says, is "co-attunement" with others.[38] The point of a piece of music is not to articulate cognitive content but rather to arouse an ineffable feeling within the listener. Even when discourse wells up in language, its ultimate purpose is not the conveyance of concepts but the uncovering of the speaker's world to the understanding of the hearer.

Since the Eucharist is a world with a particular character, what is understood therein is discursively uncovered. And insofar as the content of what is understood in the eucharistic world

[38] Ibid., §34:162.

is the person of Jesus, it can likewise be observed how the performance that opens up that eucharistic world is the expression of Jesus' personal discourse. That is, because the content of the sacramental event is understood to be the dynamic enactment of Christ's very person, the source of that personal expression can likewise be accredited to his person. To understand the Eucharist as revelation is to understand what is disclosed as *Christ's own discourse*. When Christians are drafted into the sway of Christ's performative possibilities, they enter into a fundamental co-attunement with the Christ whose person is operative in that world. Insofar as those same Christians encounter a world of new understanding, this novelty must be credited to Christ as the person by whose activity such a world is communicated.

Such a co-attunement with the discursive Jesus of the Eucharist, however, does not amount to thinking the same thoughts as Jesus or, in some Apollinarian twist, supplanting the mind of the participant with that of the risen Christ. Rather, in keeping with Heidegger's notion that discourse is at its base a sharing of attunement, it might be said that, in being drafted into the sway of Christ's personal possibilities, the Christian enters into dynamic understanding of a mooded world as Christ opens it up. For example, the unique mood of a funeral mass—with its particular intersection of somberness and sobriety with hope and anticipation of renewal—articulates a distinctly different attunement toward death than might be otherwise assumed outside the eucharistic realm. Grief, pain, and loss are met with otherwise unfathomable peace and the promise of an albeit mysterious resurrection. Framed by its resilient performance of eschatological hope, communal sharing of a meal, and words of comfort, the funeral mass imparts to those who attend it an alternative attunement to death, one which is both foreign to human impulse and yet one which becomes the norm for those who partake of it.

Insofar as the performance of world that opens up this attunement is itself the performance of Christ's own personal possibilities, and insofar as this exact mooded world does not spring up just so outside of this performance, we can credit the discursive disclosure of this world to Christ's personal agency. And since the purpose of discourse, says Heidegger, is to establish a co-attunement between the actor and audience of that discourse, we can further grasp the attunement of a Christian established in their eucharistic understanding as a co-attunement with Christ's own way of occupying a world.

Here we may recall the analysis of Maurice Merleau-Ponty given in Chapter 4, where Merleau-Ponty's articulation of the field of perception uncovers the nature of human personhood as communicable.[39] One's set of possibilities and attunements—one's way of having a world—is transmittable through the physically extended field of shared perception, wherein we intrinsically grasp others as perceptive and thus as co-constituting the world of our understanding. The baby playfully opening and closing its mouth as Merleau-Ponty bites his finger is not, strictly speaking, *imitating* Merleau-Ponty but understanding himself to in and through his counterpart: "[The baby] perceives his intentions in his body, perceives my body with his own, and thereby perceives my intentions in his body."[40] To the degree that the world opened up in the Eucharist is synonymous with the characteristic structure of Christ's person, what is opened up is fundamentally Christ's worldly attunements and possibilities. Since these attunements and possibilities are Christ's unique way of having and inhabiting a world, their manifestation in act constitutes a discursive communication, an articulation of a particular understanding of a world, and so brings those who share in that expression into a co-attunement with the one who communicates himself in this way.

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[39] See Chapter 4.2.2.
[40] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Donald A. Landes (London: Routledge, 2012), 368.

Perhaps this is what St. Paul means in exhorting the church at Philippi, "Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus" (Phil 2:5). So far as co-attunement is not the same as co-thinking or coincidence of ideation but rather a matter of shared understanding, we can grasp this idea of Being-with-Christ as the dialogical space where Christ is encountered as both the content of what is communicated as well as a conversation partner with whom we come to share an intersubjective world of shared perception.

For despite the fact that it is the risen Christ who is the agent of the Eucharist, it remains the case that it is Christian participants themselves who enact his performative discourse. In the act of naming Christ as personally present in the eucharistic world, the priest and congregants perform Christ's person by enacting his own self-naming at the Last Supper. Likewise, by enacting a world of offering, fraction, prayer, and communion, Christians are not merely recipients of the world Christ discursively uncovers, as is the case when one is moved while attending a concert, but they are moreover drafted into Christ's own activity itself. As both message and messenger, what Christ communicates is not only himself as content but also his very activity of communication and disclosure. Christ communicates himself not only *to* but *through* Christian persons, placing the responsibility on those persons to own that discourse as their own. One cannot say that the eucharistic world is merely a product of Christ's activity for us, as it were, so that Christians are somehow exempted from that same way of Being-in-the-world. As enacted by Christian bodies in motion, the personhood of Christ understood in involvement also becomes the measure of Christian discourse. And as this measure—as that for which Christians must take personal responsibility in their own discourse—the Eucharist becomes the norm of possible interpretations.

6.2.2 Eucharistic Interpretation

Recall from Chapter 3 that interpretation as Heidegger defines it is not yet apophantic language but is merely the working-out of what is dynamically understood.[41] "In interpretation," Heidegger writes, "understanding does not become something different; it becomes itself."[42] This does not mean that understanding is not understanding until it becomes interpretation but rather that interpretation is understanding's understanding of itself. Interpretation is Dasein's discursive answer to the unspoken question, "What, now, do I do with what I have understood?" Heidegger thus says that interpretation is not "the information of what is understood, but the working-out of possibilities projected in understanding."[43] In interpretation, we are not yet making explicit statements about beings. We are simply grasping the shape of the terrain as it has been opened up to our understanding and projecting our possibilities accordingly.

We can therefore conceive how Christians, whose own mooded understanding is shaped in a co-attunement with the risen Christ in the Eucharist, can engage in a distinctly eucharistic interpretation. Since the Church's discourse in the Eucharist is Christ's own discourse, abstract ideas like forgiveness and love that are spoken about in that context derive their interpretive shape from what that world yields to understanding. Returning to the above example of the funeral mass, the way the Church takes death to be what it is in the sacramental context is fundamentally at odds with the purely naturalistic mindset of competition for survival, wherein an individual's death can only be seen as a failure of its life. In contrast to the evolutionarily instinctive interpretation of death as threatening, through co-attunement with Christ in the Eucharist, death's sting is removed (1 Cor 15:55). Likewise, whereas in a world shaped by

[41] Heidegger, *SZ*, §33:158.
[42] Ibid., §32:148.
[43] Ibid., §32:148.

rugged individualism and competition over scarce resources violation of one's neighbor prompts animosity and conflict, in a eucharistic world defined by its speech of mercy and love and its embodied practices of gift-giving, sharing of peace, and even the occasional washing of feet, the embodied taking-as of erstwhile sinners as not only forgiven but fully restored to divine favor becomes a standard for the taking-as of all enemies.

Notice that in each of these cases, the nature of interpretation is not yet that of linguistic definition but of a more primordial grasping of beings. Interpretation is not yet semantic meaning-making. It is simply understanding one's prior understanding of a world in such a way as to apply that understanding to one's possible future actions. In other words, interpretation takes a being as what it is in terms of the parameters of the particular world in which it is discovered and so sets the standard for how that being may be recognized elsewhere. Thus, how Christians pre-consciously understand the Christ with whom they are involved in the Eucharist inherently reshapes the contours of their whole interpretive landscape. Death, finitude, frailty, hope, love, other people, and a whole host of phenomena are taken as slightly different somethings than in the extra-eucharistic world. Their character is derived from the dynamic thrust and trajectory of the world in which they are showcased in particular lights through the co-attunement of the Christian with Christ in the sacramental discourse.

As an example, William Cavanaugh helpfully explores this phenomenon in his examination of *martyrdom* as a eucharistic reinterpretation of torture. Whereas torture as a political instrument constitutes an embodied "pedagogy of the state,"[44] liturgy enacts an alternative pedagogy and thus an alternative politic.[45] In each case, it is the actions of and upon

[44] William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics, and the Body of Christ* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 6.
[45] Ibid., 12.

human bodies that shapes the behaviors and worldviews of their corresponding persons. Along these lines, "A martyr is one who lives imaginatively as if death does not exist. The eschatological imagination sees that, although they presume to kill us, Christ has vanquished the powers of death once and for all."[46] Trained to understand the world according to the dynamics of the Eucharist, the Christian becomes the site of an alternative interpretation of her situation. Whereas the tortured body is an instrument of the state, whereby the torturer is able to make their victim say and do whatever they wish, in martyrdom the suffering of the victim is turned over on the torturer as an instrument of disclosing the identity of Christ by living into his own discursive world-disclosure.[47] What death, enemies, torture, and so on are taken to be are conditioned by the parameters of the Christ-world rather than that of the torturer. When Christ's person is discerned in the suffering of the martyrs, the meaning of suffering is altered, and the world of pain becomes the canvas for a divine discourse. As Cavanaugh succinctly puts it, "Martyrdom makes the body of Christ visible."[48] Martyrdom is a eucharistic taking-as of the profane world.

Cavanaugh's interpretation of martyrdom as a reinterpretation of the embodied facts of torture illustrates how the pedagogy of liturgy exerts its claim on the Christian's capacity to cut the shape of reality. The martyr does not act *as if* the world were different than it is. The martyr in fact *makes* the world according to the shape of their interpretation of it. By sharing in the discourse of Christ's own person as enacted in the Eucharist, the martyr denies the reality articulated by her persecutor and instead discloses an alternative truth in the incontrovertible matter of flesh and blood. As Cavanaugh writes, "In giving their bodies to Christ in the Eucharist, a confession is made, but it is not the voice of the state that is heard. The torturer

[46] Ibid., 65.
[47] Ibid., 62. As Cavanaugh later puts it, "Torture creates victims; Eucharist creates witnesses, *martyrs*" (Ibid., 206).
[48] Ibid., 63.

extracts a confession of the unlimited power of the state. The Eucharist requires the confession that Jesus is Lord of all, and that the body belongs to him."[49] Because the Eucharist, as a discourse of both Christ and the Church, demands that the Christian participant take responsibility for the shape of its world for herself, it exerts its exhaustive interpretive claim over the whole life of the believer.

Because a Christian is the kind of person who discursively uncovers beings as certain kinds of somethings within the sacramental space, she can take those same beings to be those same certain somethings even outside of that space. In taking her enemies as worthy of sharing the peace within the liturgy, for instance, the Christian becomes accustomed to taking her enemies as worthy of the same beyond the liturgy. As co-attuned with Christ's ways of having a world, the Christian understands her own world in a new light. As an active participant in Christ's discourse, she undergoes the training to take that interpretive lens as her own normative measure in all worlds. And so by participating in the performance of Christ's person in the Eucharist, the shape of the liturgy becomes, for the Christian, the shape of all reality.

6.2.3 Preliminary Conclusions

We have not yet reached an account of explicit Christian speech—our account of discourse and interpretation has not yet manifested anything like Heidegger's assertion [*Aussage*]. However, we have laid a foundation for such an examination by providing a chute from the pre-cognitive, involved understanding of the revelation of Christ's person to the plane of interpretive taking-as. Before we can proceed to consideration of Christian theological speech as grounded in revelation, though, let us consolidate the insights of this section as a stepping-stone to the next

[49] Ibid., 279.

section on biblical language. In particular, two preliminary conclusions ought to be highlighted: (1) Christian speech from co-attunement with Christ remains separate from Christ's own speech, and (2) Christian speech is primarily oriented toward pre-linguistic worlds and not toward intra-linguistic structures of meaning.

In the first case, Christian speech should be understood not as synonymous with the speech of Christ but as speech *with* Christ. In the Eucharist, Christians are not transformed into Christ but rather encounter his personal possibilities through involved understanding and come to shared co-attunement with his own vantage on reality. The Eucharist is not the Christian's own discourse but is rather the self-articulation of a distinct person, whose communication of himself includes the dynamic task of that very communication. The Christian does not will Christ's being into Being so much as she becomes a conduit for it. It is therefore disingenuous to suggest that by virtue of their participation in the revelation of Christ's person in the sacrament Christians are somehow entitled to call their speech the speech of Christ. Rather, the character of Christ disclosed in the sacrament becomes the standard for Christian discourse, so that the norms of how Christians interpretively act and speak in the world is measured against the world in which they are formed, and so Christian speech is accountable to the person of Jesus whom the whole Church encounters. Just as discourse becomes ignorance or error when it detaches from worldly understanding, so too can Christian interpretation fail to sufficiently coincide with that of Christ. The character of Christian discourse is thus marked as much by the gap between itself and Christ as it is by their points of continuity.

The second implication for Christian speech is that Christian discourse is fundamentally oriented toward the world from which understanding is derived. The understanding of Christ in the Eucharist which was the subject of my last chapter is a wholly pre-reflective understanding.

It is a dynamic world with which Christians become familiar most by entering into flow with its structural dynamism and trajectory. Insofar as the Eucharist is a discourse in which Christians share and from which they can arrive at interpretations, such discourse draws its content from this worldly understanding. Consequently, speech that is eucharistically grounded is fundamentally world-oriented in nature. This is entirely consistent with Heidegger's definition of assertion [*Aussage*] in *Being and Time* in the threefold structure of pointing-out, predication, and communication.[50] Verbalization of interpretation begins with directing the attention of one's listeners away from the speaker and toward the world, and it ends with the communication of a co-attunement when that world is uncovered in a particular light by means of predication.[51]

But this worldly orientation of language raises the question of the *meaning* of Christian speech. If Christians are speaking out of and about the world opened up by Christ's revelation in the sacramental world, then what meaning do Christian words have in themselves? So much of the Christian tradition is linguistic: from the Bible and liturgy to various theological and mystical traditions to the words shared in pastoral counseling and private prayer. How, then, do these words *mean* at all if Christian speech is to be tethered so firmly to the sacramental world? The final section of this chapter will aim to answer this query by exploring the ways the Bible can be productively used while retaining its necessary tether to its criterion in eucharistic revelation.

6.3 THE BIBLE AND THE EUCHARIST

Recall from Chapter 3 that assertion is composed of three parts: (1) pointing-out, "letting an entity be seen from itself,"[52] (2) predication, and (3) communication, "letting someone see with

[50] Heidegger, *SZ*, §33:153-160.
[51] See Chapter 3.1.3.
[52] Heidegger, *SZ*, §33:154.

us."[53] Through the means of sounds, signs, and grammatical arrangement (predication), humans direct each other's attention towards the various structures of world (pointing-out) in order to convey a particular attunement to that world (communication). The ultimate end of language, in this scheme, is not *meaning* in the sense of intellectual content but is a redirection of human cognition toward the dynamic Being of world. As but one manifestation of interpretive discourse, language emerges out of our primordial, unconscious, embodied familiarity with worlds and so properly directs our attention back to that worldly immersion. This definition of assertion, then, anticipates what we have also seen of the later Heidegger's emphasis on poetry as giving speakers and hearers over to the worldliness of what is poetically named by disclosing the strangeness and dynamic tension of beings beyond our grasp. Language can be said to be "true," when it takes as its referent the embodied world from which it springs.

With this world-orientation of language in mind, this section will take up the Bible as an exemplary form of Christian speech in which to observe the referentiality of theological language. As scripture, the Bible is valid across denominations and has maintained its centrality to the Christian faith throughout time, so that the Bible makes the most sense as an exemplar of theological speech. This section will explore how the Bible may be read as world-oriented from two different directions. Following the late Heidegger's thought on poetry, we will first address how the Bible is read as framing the clearing in which Christians come to expect an embodied revelation. In the other direction, we will follow up on the foregoing analysis of discourse and interpretation in this chapter by highlighting how the meaning of scripture is derivative of Christian involvement in the world of the Eucharist. The aim of both analyses, then, is to demonstrate the dependence of the meaning of scriptural texts upon the world of revelation.

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[53] Ibid., §33;154-155.

6.3.1 Scripture as Poetry

In the first place, following our findings from the later Heidegger on poetic naming, scripture frames the world in which God is understood. Recall from Chapter 3 that, for the later Heidegger, naming is the simultaneous act of summoning a being to presence and following that being as it withdraws from our grasp.[54] To poetically name a being is both to call it into the clearing opened by our words and to then witness its withdrawal into the world of its belonging. Poetic naming thus gives the poet over to the world of dynamic involvement and employs words only in order to transcend them. As I suggested in that chapter, poetry is both *directive* and *effective* in that it is concerned with beings in the world rather than with abstract concepts. Poetry directs us out of linguistic thought into dynamic engagement with that world, and it effects the truth of its words by giving us over to the dynamism that endows them with their content.

Within the liturgical milieu, then, I described how scripture names the person of Christ by giving the poetic boundaries of the clearing of his personal revelation without providing any conceptual content to that revelation.[55] Scripture does not give us Christ but rather the parameters within which we may recognize him in our world. For instance, Christ is scripturally named as loving, gracious, judging, healing, caring for the poor, crucified, risen, and so forth. None of these by themselves encapsulate Christ, nor do any of these descriptions have meaning in themselves apart from the worldly life of his person. Rather, by the intersection of their vague depictions of Jesus, such descriptions elicit a nebulous boundary to the particular set of attunements and possibilities that constellate his person. Scripture poses a question to the Christ who presences, asking him what he may show of himself to our lived understanding.

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[54] See Chapter 3.3.3.
[55] See Chapter 5.3.2.

As in liturgical reading and proclamation, then, a poetic reading of scripture in broader use does not offer technological measurements of the God of revelation but rather depictions of the phenomenal world of that revelation itself. By answering the call of a being's withdrawal, naming resists the temptation to contain and control beings that typifies technology as "standing-reserve" [*Bestand*].[56] Rather than deigning to describe God precisely, scripture describes the world in which God reveals Godself, a world with which the Christian is familiar through her involvement in the Eucharist. In the Old Testament, this world-depiction takes the form of various theophanies and the history of the covenant relationship between God and the people of Israel. In the New Testament, naming the world of God's revelation consists of various accounts of Jesus of Nazareth and the subsequent effects of his revelation on the early Church. Both testaments give us cacophonous accounts of revelation, so that a technological mastery of any concept of God is rendered impossible by the polyphony of the texts. What scripture gives us through its naming function is rather the *world* of revelation, not the revelation itself.

Walter Brueggemann's notion of *testimony* in the Old Testament is particularly helpful here. For Brueggemann, testimony is a useful description of Old Testament language because what is given in that collection of texts is not scientific theological analysis of the nature of God but rather intra-worldly experiences of God's character in action.[57] As in a court trial, in which truth as lived experience is impossibly remote to the judge and jury, the testimony of witnesses is a necessary but ambiguous step toward piecing together some idea of what happened.[58] As Brueggemann admits:

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[56] Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper Collins, 2008), 322. See Chapter 3.3.1.
[57] Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Fortress Press, 1997), 119. Brueggemann's use of testimony draws on the previous analysis of Paul Ricoeur, especially *Essays on Biblical Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), 119-154.
[58] Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 120.

> The witness allegedly had access to that event, was there, saw it and experienced it, and so is qualified to give testimony. The actual event, however, is enormously supple and elusive and admits of many retellings, some of which are only shaded differently, but some of which are drastically different.[59]

The result of testimony's ambiguity is that no single witness has authority. Only by cross-referencing many witnesses can a jury come to a reasonable conclusion of what happened in reality. In the Old Testament, we do not get anything like an ancient Israelite systematic theology of God. Instead, we get a series of polyphonic witnesses—various stories of the patriarchs and the Exodus, laws, ritual regulations, prophetic condemnation and hope, and wisdom literature—all of which together hew a jagged boundary of expectations for what the character of Yahweh is like. Various narratives, prophecies, laws, and poetry repeatedly articulate the myriad themes of Yahweh's character within the story of Israel.[60]

This testimony is then clarified by the presence of *counter-testimony*. Just as no trial witness is above cross-examination, so the core testimony of the Old Testament needs refining by the critical questioning of alternative experiences.[61] The positive testimony about Yahweh's benevolence toward Israel is sharpened by the reality of suffering and feelings of abandonment.[62] The purpose of the counter-testimony is not to undercut or dispute the truth of the core testimony. Rather, its purpose is to refine that very testimony, giving clarity to the precise ways in which it is true, exploring how the world of involved encounter with Yahweh accords with the way it is set up and named in Israel's core testimony. Without the counter-testimony, the core testimony would remain too vague and thus have no authority. It is precisely by the intersection of competing accounts of revelatory encounter that the world of that encounter is poetically

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[59] Ibid., 120.
[60] Ibid., 126-144.
[61] Ibid., 317.
[62] Ibid., 319-323.

delivered up. Brueggemann refers to this balancing of tensions as "tacking" between testimony and counter-testimony.[63] No single witness, text, or statement has the authority of objectivity, and so the reader must oscillate between testimony and counter-testimony in their own discernment of the worldly milieu of true understanding.

In effect, the testimony of the Old Testament provides readers with a *feel* for Yahweh, a set of expectations for how Yahweh may act in the present and future, rather than an exact description:

> Israel does not offer a finished portrayal of Yahweh. Israel only provides the materials out of which a coherent account of Yahweh, *in any particular setting*, might be presented. Israel offers odd, incidental, concrete, episodic case studies, whereby material is given from which the listener may do constructive work. But for each such formulation proposed by a listener to the witnesses, we recognize that other listeners with the same material may arrive at a significantly different general portrayal of Yahweh. All such formulations may be credible but, because of the nature of the material, it will not do to imagine that any such portrayal is the right one or the master one. The nature of the material precludes such a claim.[64]

Within Heidegger's scheme of poetic naming, scripture sets up a polyphonic skeleton of the world of revelation but does not go so far as to provide that revelation itself. The meanings of the words on the page are not stable, nor do they correspond to static things in reality. They rather mark out the rough boundaries of the clearing of divine disclosure. Just as a clearing in a forest is not marked by the exact edges of a fence but by a scattered array of naturally and independently occurring trees, so the plurality of texts, authors, and perspectives that make up both testaments cuts a rough series of edges for the revelatory region. We do not have one testament but two; not one gospel but four; not one authoritative epistolary theologian but several; and at times we even have several people writing under the name of a single prophet or

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[63] Ibid., 400. Brueggemann borrows the notion of "tacking" from David Blumenthal, *Facing the Abusive God: A Theology of Protest* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), 47-54.
[64] Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 206.

apostle. The Bible itself resists the measuring gaze of technology, and in its at times dissonant tensions, it functions to offer up a roughhewn frame of how and where we are to have eyes to see and ears to listen for the God who shows up beneath and beyond where words extend.

Even though scripture is not revelation itself, then, it plays an irreplaceable role in shaping and attuning one's encounter with revelation. On the one hand, a poetic reader of scripture does not know what the words on the page mean until they are illuminated by involved understanding of the world served up by those words. One cannot gather the nature of God's love, for instance, simply by reading but only by becoming engrossed in worlds that disclose the myriad dynamics and contours of that love. On the other hand, one cannot coherently interpret what one encounters in a world without the parameters set up in its naming. So, for the example of love, one cannot sufficiently understand the specific manifestations of God's love in the world without first having eyes to look for a God who "is love" in the first place (1 Jn 4:8). Perhaps this is what Jesus himself recognizes with his frequent commendation: "Let anyone with ears to hear listen!" (Mk 4:9, 4:23, 8:18; Lk 8:8, 14:35; cf. Mt 11:15). Presumably, everyone to whom Jesus is speaking has functional ears. But not everyone, it seems, has *ears to hear*. Not everyone is primed to receive what the worldly encounter with Christ gives to understanding. The poetic function of language, as a following after what withdraws from speech, thus primes hearers to a particular posture of witness in the world.

6.3.2. Scripture as Discourse

Christians do not only speak *toward* the world of understanding, however, but speak *from* it as well. As illustrated in Chapter 3 and reiterated earlier in this chapter, Heidegger provides us the philosophical tools to understand language as rooted in the pre-cognitive operations of embodied

understanding by linking assertion [*Aussage*] to its predecessor interpretation [*Auslegung*] as grounded in discourse [*Rede*]. The human being is always simultaneously understanding and discursive, so that in every act she imbibes uninterpreted content from the world even as she produces interpretive responses in her own right. So far as some of these responses well up into verbal assertion, the roots of language are not located in some mind distinct from the body but in the body's own sensorimotor understanding of reality.[65] So far as Christians read the Bible as scripture out of their participation in the eucharistic world, then, their reading becomes a resource to make sense of present experience. As a sense-making of what is already imbibed in understanding, the Bible becomes the lexicon for Christians to articulate their uniquely Christ-shaped reality. That is, in discourse, Christians speak the words of scripture *as their own words*.

Jesus himself performs this discursive appropriation of scripture. The pre-existing verbiage of the Second Temple Jewish tradition provides the lexicon for Jesus' original articulation of his unique understanding of his world. In his admonition against wrath—"You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not murder'; and 'whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment" (Mt 5:21-22a; cf. Ex 20:13, Deut 5:17)—Jesus uses his attunement to world to both subvert and enhance the words with which his audience is familiar, endowing them with meaning not self-evident in the original text. Similarly, in his cry of dereliction—"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mt 27:46, Mk 15:34; cf. Ps 22:1)—Jesus takes up ancient words to express his present and particular attunement to God as one of abandonment and despair. In both cases, it is Jesus' situatedness in relation to God within the world that provides the impetus for his interpretive use of the scriptural text. In both cases,

[65] See my analysis of the sensorimotor foundations of language in the work of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in Chapter 3.1.2.

then, the *meaning* of the biblical words are derivative of what is more primordially uncovered in the pattern of Jesus' involvement with God.

Since the central premise of this whole project is that the criterion for any meaning in scripture ought to be the self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ, and since I have proposed that the very person of Jesus Christ is present and understood through embodied involvement in the Eucharist, it seems that Jesus' own use of scripture can be not only a model to be imitated by Christians but should moreover be the norm and measure of their practice. The Church is given license to speak scripture as its own words, to author the same texts anew, as it were, when it speaks out of a primordial relationship to the person who is both the exemplary norm and ontological object of its faith.

We see the poetic and discursive functions of scripture play off one another in the way the revelatory world of the Old Testament provides the framework for the revelatory world witnessed in the New Testament. The polyphony of testimonies about the God who reveals Godself to the people of Israel poetically demarcated the clearing in which the first Christians recognized Jesus as who he was and offered the lexicon by which they discursively articulated that encounter. The world offered up in the Hebrew scriptures is characterized by messianic expectations, cries for liberation, guilt for collective and individual failure in the covenant with God, and so on. The world opened up by the Old Testament poetically frames the world that the New Testament authors witness as filled in by their encounter with Christ. As biblical scholar James Barr puts it:

> Jesus comes in what… is the situation "where a Christ is expected." This is not by any means identical with the Old Testament situation… The Messianic emphasis of some late Judaism and of the New Testament is a redistribution of emphasis among elements which were generated from the Old Testament (along with, it may be, some elements of foreign origin, which came to be accepted and integrated within the later tradition). The self-identification of Jesus takes place within the terms thus generated. In this respect, the Old Testament material relates itself to Christ not so much through the meanings directly intended by the original writers of passages, but through the combinations and alterations which these meanings produce when they are associated with other elements under the conditions which actually obtained in post-biblical Judaism.[66]

In other words, the New Testament does not answer the poetic naming of the Old in terms of the latter's own expectations. Instead, the way in which the Old Testament texts poetically yield a world of revelation is precisely what allows later inhabitants of that world to identify Jesus as the long-awaited messiah. The world of the Old Testament abides by an inherent logic, a *logos* of gathering and showing God's character, to borrow from Heidegger's terminology,[67] which grounds and illuminates the disclosure of Jesus as the Christ. Were the world of his appearance named under different categories, even if Jesus were the same person, who he is interpretively taken to be would be radically different.

And yet as Barr reminds us, "The tradition works, however, not only to illuminate and to identify the Christ, but also to reject and resist the Christ."[68] The Old Testament does not simply legitimate Jesus' claim to be the Christ, but it also and equally legitimizes his opponents and persecutors.[69] In both cases, we see the essential function and challenge of using scripture as world-naming and as worldly discourse: such language gets closer to the reality of beings precisely as it cedes exactitude and clarity. The truth of scripture in its poetic capacity is inherently contested because it vacates itself of precision. So far as scripture can be discursively

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[66] James Barr, *Old and New in Interpretation: A Study of Two Testaments* (London: SCM Press, 1982), 27.
[67] See Chapter 3.3.1.
[68] Barr, *Old and New in Interpretation*, 27.
[69] Ibid., 28.

employed toward new meaning, then, its legitimacy is bound to the shared experience—the co-attunement—of those who encounter the revelation at its base. At its best, this situation gives language a rootedness in the world exterior to it. At its worst, it may give license to overly subjective and divisive interpretations.

But reading scripture as worldly discourse is not simply a form of human meaning-making, giving sense to a world that otherwise threatens us with meaninglessness. Where discourse loses its roots in what gives itself to understanding, it becomes "chatter" [*Gerede*], which covers up our anxiety with the averageness of assumed was of speaking.[70] No doubt the Christian scriptures have been and still are often used in just this way. But because the scriptures have the dual function of poetry and discourse, a proper reading of them resists the temptation to produce conceptual meaning as technological standing-reserve. Scriptural meaning can neither be given over to the whims of heavily metaphorical and symbolic readings which are ultimately optional, nor can meaning be given over to technological assumptions of scientific accuracy, wherein meanings in particular times and worlds are deemed universally applicable. If Christians are to speak in ways more concrete than the ambiguous giving up of meaning performed by poetic naming, then they must speak out of discourse rooted in understanding. But if that discourse is to remain tethered and bound to the world of that understanding, then it must always at the same time become a naming, following the trace of what withdraws from words into the world of involvement. Where the circle is broken, unfounded interpretation is bound to occur. But even where the world-orientation of Christian speech is retained, the Christian must be prepared to grapple with the inexact character of involved understanding against the false illusion of precision.

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[70] Heidegger, *SZ*, §35:168.

6.3.3. Beyond Bibliolatry

The goal of this chapter has been to draw my analysis of the Eucharist as revelation to its completion by exploring the ways that said revelation grounds Christian hermeneutics. The guiding question of this whole project is not simply how Christians can credibly conceive of revelation in a post-Metaphysical milieu but moreover how the nature of that revelation as personal encounter practically shapes Christian language. I have not here attempted to judge which specific biblical or theological interpretations are good or bad. I have tried only to offer up what amounts to both a manner of approach and thus a means of assessment. So far as that goes, I am also aware that such a process remains vague, perhaps problematically so. However, in not providing a precise methodology for reading so much as a description of how the Bible can function as scripture, I have hopefully nevertheless given some insight into how the Bible ought and ought not be read.

On the one hand, the Bible as witness to a revelatory world counteracts the impulse toward biblical literalism. To take the biblical text as sufficient for conveying information is to read it technologically on two counts: (1) such a reading dehumanizes the reader by reducing what is communicated in the Bible to information, mental concepts which hem the beings into static, artificial categories; and (2) such a reading removes the reader from involvement with the phenomenal world where the Bible attests God to be revealed. A reading of the Bible that assumes either a literal record of historical fact or a standard, unchanging endowment of true instructional data not only misrepresents how the Bible operates as witness, but it further severs the umbilical of that witness to the witnessed phenomenon itself.

On the other hand, that our approach to the phenomenal world of revelation is framed by the poetic function of scripture hems in and checks any subjective interpretations that come out

of that world. One cannot simply take the Eucharist and then pronounce an infallible theological opinion. This too would be a technological reduction, though in this case a reduction of the sacrament rather than of the biblical text, for it turns the Eucharist into standing-reserve, a static object with definite properties and a finite but reliable set of outcomes. As a common encounter, the Eucharist draws Christians not only into communion with Christ but into accountability to one another. Therefore, precisely because it names and thus frames the phenomenal world of revelatory encounter, the words of scripture also provide the only reliable lexicon for interpretation out of that world. The Bible provides the necessary guardrails both into and out of Christian experience, so that only within its parameters does the experience of revelation become communicable and accountable on the plane of language.

We are thus given some idea of how biblical scholarship can be helpful to theological hermeneutics. Since the Bible is fundamentally world-oriented, historical research and philology can illuminate the worlds the biblical authors were describing and thus open up and restrict the possibilities of what worlds their words may name today. Studies in genre and form uncover both how texts can be poetically disclosive and how those same texts draw on the naming of earlier texts to then articulate contemporary experiences. Reception history provides a sense of trajectory, allowing deeper insight into how the bounds of the revelatory world have shifted over time. Biblical scholars looking to make a meaningful contribution that is both useful to theology and which keeps theologians accountable to scripture therefore have a general path forward. By maintaining the world-orientation of the biblical text in both its poetic and discursive functions, biblical scholarship can help clarify and define the edges of acceptable speech within communities of sacramental involvement.

So far as Christians wish to speak about God, the Bible is both their point of entry and their exit ramp, but it is not the object of speech itself. However, because our most primal understanding, our deepest acquaintance with the real, is embodied experience of worlds in motion, we still have hope in the possibility of true speech. If the Eucharist is the dynamic personal presence of Christ, then those who partake of the liturgical event become immersed in a world that not only grounds Christian words and interpretations but moreover grounds them in the very life of the one who is attested as God Incarnate. In rejecting the technological abuses of the Eucharist on the one hand—through either magical-literalist Metaphysics or metaphorical reductionism—as well as technological readings of the Bible on the other—through fundamentalist literalism to subjective meaning-making—real encounter with revelation in Christ is not threatened but in fact liberated, if only we have the patience to discern its strangeness and dynamism.

CONCLUSION

I have often felt that Doubting Thomas gets a raw deal. The Fourth Gospel gives the disciple a hard time for his apparently outlandish insistence that seeing is believing (Jn 20:24-29). Yet after journeying for years in the company of the disciples, after seeing their myriad confusions, misinterpretations, and failures to properly understand, any intelligent person would certainly want more evidence than just hearsay when told by those same disciples that Jesus was raised from the dead. And if the heart of Christian doctrine still holds, if Christians truly believe that God reveals Godself totally and completely in the person of Jesus Christ, then for Christians Jesus is himself the *Ding an sich* of faith. To hear good news *about* Jesus, no matter how good or reliable the news may be, will always pale in comparison to the thing itself. The witness may be

well-intentioned and even reasonably correct, but the witness itself is always distinct from that to which it is a witness in the first place. Should we not, then, say that it is the rightful desire of every Christian, the real object of faith, to each touch the wounds of the risen Christ and say the only words that are left to us: “My Lord and my God!” (Jn 20:28)?

The preceding project has attempted to address this desire for encounter with Christ through a philosophical theological experiment. In my introductory chapter, I highlighted the need within a secular and pluralistic milieu for a reconception of the doctrine of revelation as a matter of encounter that both grounds and shapes the parameters of Christian religious speech. In proposing the Eucharist as a natural site of such encounter, I have borrowed from the work of Martin Heidegger to explore how the sacrament constitutes a world of understanding, wherein what is understood through involvement amounts to the very person of Jesus Christ.

Of course, as a theological experiment, this proposal allows for the possibility that some will come to the Eucharist and walk away with the conclusion that no person in fact materialized or that the person encountered therein is of no particular significance. Nothing about this project has made the explicit case that Jesus of Nazareth was the Incarnation of God. Nothing about this project has proven that the same Jesus is risen from the dead and is alive today. As a work of Christian theology, this project assumes those statements to be true, though it does not necessarily assume that every reader will arrive at the same conclusions. The aim of this work has instead been to address how theological claims and textual interpretations can be credibly rooted in something other than simply inherited tradition, something more intimate to shared, everyday experience. The intent of this work has therefore not been to give any particularly new (ontic, theological) insight into who Jesus was or is but to provide the (ontological,

philosophical) conditions of possibility for contemporary Christians to answer Jesus' question for themselves: "Who do you say that I am?" (Mt 16:15, Mk 8:29, Lk 9:20).

In consulting Heidegger in this pursuit, I have not attempted to produce a Heideggerian theology but to instead lay out various resources from Heidegger's philosophical toolbox in the interest of evaluating what these resources avail to our inquiry. In Chapter 2 we came to see how human beings encounter and come to know reality most intimately in their pre-reflective involvement with worlds in motion. The Being of beings, I argued, is their dynamism, their unfolding of themselves in motion and act, so that understanding manifests itself in involvement and familiarity with that dynamism. In Chapter 3 we saw how Heidegger articulates language as emerging out of this embodied understanding by its ground in discourse—the gathering, showing, and expressing impulse of human Dasein to disclose new facets of its world and communicate attuned understanding. For the later Heidegger, we saw language reach its zenith in poetry, where words do not effectively capture or contain meanings that correspond to reality but rather arrange clearings in the world for embodied understanding to emerge. Finally, with the help of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, we saw in Chapter 4 how Heidegger's dynamic, fluid, and immersive understanding of the world shapes how we may understand persons, so that a person is more a matter of their unique projective possibilities than a stable substance or a set of facts or a mental ghost in the machine. To be a person is to be a fluid, embodied, historical node of attunements and ways of Being, so that to know another person is to be swept up in their own dynamic character, made possible through the intersubjective relationality of our species.

These resources from Heidegger's toolkit then helped situate my own constructive treatment of the Eucharist. In Chapter 5 I proposed a model of Christ's real presence in the Eucharist according to the metaphysical structure of reality laid out by Heidegger. The Eucharist

is a dynamic world wherein beings perform their Being as they are caught up in the trajectories and impulses of the sacramental milieu. This world of dynamic movement is the very world of Christ's own person insofar as it performs his attuned posture toward the world and enculturates its participants into the prevailing possibilities of his person, which are poetically named in the reading of scripture and liturgical prayers. The Christian's involvement with the Eucharist thus becomes her involvement with the risen Christ, the real person as operative in and through the material world and recognized by the ways it fills out the content of Christian speech.

That very Christian speech, then, is given its theological meaning and interpretive value by the way it emerges out of the Eucharist as a discourse. In this last chapter, I have made the case that, precisely as an encounter of embodied understanding with a person not our own, the Eucharist is also a discursive behavior on the part of the Church, so that whatever is understood of Christ's person in the sacrament is squeezed out in his Body's own discursive and interpretive acts. The result is an account of language as world-oriented, which was illustrated in the Bible's both naming the clearing of Christ's worldly revelation and discursively reflecting on the Church's understanding of revelation therein.

If Christ is the Incarnation of God—the object of Christian faith—then Christ alone is a sufficient criterion for interpreting scripture or making theological claims. To read the Bible faithfully is thus to read it according to its criterion who is attested to be alive and present. So far as the Eucharist is the literal, dynamic, embodied performance of Jesus' unique person, and so far as that person is operative in and through the Christian bodies that perform it, the understanding that is Christ's becomes the ground and framework of the Christian's thought and speech.

However, as I have already cautioned, this understanding is not as simple as ascribing legitimacy to all Christian claims on the basis of eucharistic participation. Nor does my model give license to identify the beliefs, words, and actions of the Church as those of Christ himself. Christians remain sinners, formed as much by extra-eucharistic worlds as by the sacrament itself, if not more so. Moreover, precisely because the revelation I have described is one of embodied understanding, it inherently eludes mastery, resists stability, and so frustrates any speech that aspires to scientific precision. The legitimacy of this entire process thus hangs by a thread. Where the Eucharist is understood without becoming the active discourse of its participants, it becomes ineffectual. Where the Eucharist is treated as ritual discourse without genuine understanding of the person disclosed therein, it becomes human self-indulgence. Where Christian speech names the world of disclosure without being filled by involved understanding, its words are reduced to optional metaphors and non-committal apophaticism. Where such speech is a discourse of personal experience in the world without the destabilizing force of poetry, it skews either into individual subjectivism or collective fundamentalism.

The legitimacy of the Eucharist as real presence and thus as revelation is preserved on the condition of its remaining an anti-technology, that is, a dynamic world that resists the human temptation to hem beings into standing-reserve. But this in no way makes its reality inaccessible to Christian understanding. So far as the Eucharist is the presence of the risen Christ, it retains the personal freedom to be complex, inconsistent, elusive, and irreducible. That Christians have confidence to speak out of their immersion in the Eucharist can only last so long as that confidence is matched by the obligation to always return to the sacrament empty-handed—"I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mk 9:24).

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