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“As a Human to Humans”

The Second Vatican Council’s Understanding of “Self-Revelation” in Context

1. How to Speak About Revelation?

The basic meaning of the term “revelation” is “to take away a veil,” or even more precisely, “to retrieve a veil.” In other words: something which has not been evident before, because it was covered, becomes visible through a certain action—it is “revealed.” This point of view departs from a potential object of cognition that is hidden from the eyes of an observer; the reason why the observer cannot see the object is grounded in the object itself, in its concealment, its “Verborgenheit” or even “Verdrehung,” as the late Martin Heidegger would say.

The American political philosopher John Rawls casts—probably unintentionally—a different light on the concept of revelation: in his work *A Theory of Justice*, first published in 1971, he introduces the idea of a “veil of ignorance,” an imaginative state of origin that disables the subject from knowing “his place in society, his class position or social status, nor does anyone know his fortune in the distribution of natural assets and abilities, his intelligence, strength, and the like.” Behind this “veil of ignorance,” people are able to choose and
to determine principles of justice in a way that is not influenced by personal interests, because they do not know about their position in the society and judge therefore in a “fair” way. For the context of a reflection on the concept of revelation, it is interesting that Rawls in his understanding of a “veil of ignorance” does not attribute the concealment to an object, but to the subject of cognition; it is not that the object is unknowable, but that the subject is not knowledgeable. What sounds trivial at first glance offers an interesting perspective on the sense of revelation: revelation does not only mean that a veil is removed from a concealed object, but it also could signify that a veil is withdrawn from the eyes of a subject to enable the person to see what was already unconcealed in itself, but is still invisible for the subject with the veil in front of his eyes. This provides an interesting understanding of revelation which will serve as a preliminary definition for the reflections to come: revelation is not primarily a supernatural appearance or a visitation of things, but an empowerment of human beings to recognize seemingly ordinary and contingent occurrences as meaningful and disclosing of the question of who God, oneself, and the world is.

2. Revelation in its Conceptual Diversity: The Intellectual Background of Vatican II

Christian faith manifests itself in a visible, concrete, and positive form as a “phenomenon.” Cultural phenomena can always be considered from different perspectives: one and the same medieval text, for instance, can be interesting for theologians or philosophers, for historians or sociologists, for law scholars, librarians, or scientists who try to determine its exact age. A similar observation could be made with regard to revelation. One could choose several perspectives: the Existentialist philosopher Karl Jaspers asks, for example, whether a revelation destroys what he calls the “philosophical faith” in God, which has simple assumptions and which, so Jaspers claims, bases itself on reason alone. Together with the Idealistic philosopher
Schelling, one could consider whether there are other forms of revelation outside religion, like art or philosophy. Referring to the enlightenment thinker Lessing, one could investigate the practical consequences of revelation in the form of the “education of mankind,” as he called it. All these are possible approaches, but they do not fulfil the Council’s primary perspective.

On November 18, 1965, the Fathers of the Council voted to accept a so-called “dogmatic constitution” on the meaning of revelation with a majority of 2,344 affirmative votes, and only 4 votes opposed. The initial words of the document already offer a vision and gave the name to the entire text, Dei Verbum: “Hearing the word of God with reverence and proclaiming it with faith.” As these words suggest, the Council attempts to explain what it means exactly when Christians say that they hear and listen to the word of God. What sounds trivial at first glance is in fact an identification of the intellectual framework in which the Council speaks about revelation. The Council tries to explain revelation from within the Christian tradition; it seeks an understanding through faith and also a way to deepen faith through understanding. Or, in the Council’s own language, only by “hearing the word of God with reverence” is it possible to explain the meaning of this word and the way in which it is perceived. A reasonable account of the Christian understanding of revelation can only be achieved by an internal review that knows about that very tradition.

However, an approach to the topic of revelation from within the Christian tradition has again in itself different possible perspectives. To go back to the example of a medieval text: even if a theologian considers it not from a sociological, legal, or any other point of view that is not his own, it still must be stated that the theologian has many different possible perspectives on it—a dogmatic, a moral, or a pastoral one for instance. The same is true for the issue of revelation. To say that the Council chose a properly theological perspective on revelation indicates only the kind of questions that it posed, but it does not impose the answer that it gave, because the answers to the theological question—what revelation is—differed significantly
within the history of Christianity. Avery Cardinal Dulles identified several historical models of revelation that had been developed within the century preceding the Council. These differing approaches thus form the Council’s intellectual background.

1. The first model could be named “revelation as doctrine.” This approach, which was developed by neo-scholastic theologians and which was very influential in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was occupied mainly with the propositional formulation of a “supernatural” revelation. Neo-scholasticism distinguishes strictly between the natural and the supernatural. The natural dimension of revelation is given in the creation that leads the human mind to a secure cognition of God as the creator, according to the teaching of the First Vatican Council in 1870. But in order to know the “mysteria stricte dicta,” to know that this creator is the one God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and that the eternal Son became man in Jesus Christ, the human person needs a supernatural revelation that is mediated to him in the doctrines of the Church. Revelation provides therefore a set of statements that must be held as true. Such an understanding of revelation is occupied with the different degrees of certainty of phrases. It is interesting that this view, which from the Catholic side is predominantly associated with Jesuit and Dominican theologians, like Christian Pesch, SJ (1853–1925) and Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, OP (1877–1944), has parallels to the kind of evangelicalism developed by American Presbyterian thinkers from the Princeton Seminary. For Benjamin B. Warfield (1851–1921), the supernatural revelation went through different stages: in the biblical time, it had manifested itself by visions and wonders, whereas in later periods, the authority of Revelation was handed over in the form of a propositional doctrine.

Despite this striking parallel between neo-scholasticism and conservative Evangelicalism, there are significant differences concerning the way in which both schools dealt with their understanding of Revelation as mainly contained in propositional statements. Evangelicalism, to a good extent unable to integrate faith and reason, held a
biblical and doctrinal positivism that is very close to what Vatican I condemned as fideism from the Catholic view. “Revelation, for these orthodox Evangelicals, is thus equated with the meaning of the Bible, taken as a set of propositional statements, each expressing a divine affirmation, valid always and everywhere.”

Neo-scholasticism, however, which was much more influenced by the Thomistic trust in human reason, developed a sophisticated system of apologetics that aimed to prove not an identity, but a complementarity between the supernaturally revealed and the naturally known realities. Maybe Peter Abelard’s insight that Christ himself and the Apostles could legitimize their doctrines through wonders that created faith, whereas the Church has to legitimize her doctrine by reason that creates faith, summarizes the attempt undertaken later by the neo-scholastics.

2. The counter-reaction to the understanding of revelation as a collection of mandatory doctrines could be entitled “revelation as history.” In the English-speaking world, this model has been held by the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple (1881–1944). In a series of lectures called “Nature, Man and God,” he developed the notion that God as a personal being chooses other personal beings, namely humans acting in history and thus creating history, as carriers of his revelation. Doctrines, for Temple, are only truncated interpretations of events that are logically and epistemologically prior to them. Truth, in this understanding, is mainly an event, and not a proposition. Therefore, the “essential condition of effectual revelation is the coincidence of divinely controlled events and minds divinely illuminated to read it aright.”

3. For the third model, which understands a revelation mainly as an “inner experience,” a reduction to doctrines or deeds is considered as too externalized. The movement that had its ground in the encounter between Protestant theology and the philosophy of the late Enlightenment and early German Idealism, as it is found in Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), holds that faith, and thus revelation, must arise from human interiority. For Schleiermacher, religion is a “religious feeling” of total dependence on God. This,
however, stands in tension with the human feeling of freedom. Out of this hiatus, human self-consciousness arises that leads, if the subject reflects on its position between dependence and freedom, to a “God-consciousness”\textsuperscript{19} (Gottesbewusstsein). This consciousness is for Schleiermacher the primary notion of revelation.

4. The subjectivism that comes out of this approach, and which was manifest in the so-called Liberal Theology of German Protestantism at the turn of the century, brought about another counterreaction. Today, we call this movement “dialectical theology.”\textsuperscript{20} Karl Barth (1886–1968), for instance, on the one hand was dissatisfied with the naiveté in which the conservative evangelical theology spoke about God, but, on the other hand, he considered the understanding of a revelation as an inner experience as a truncation. Both naiveté and an exaggerated critique are inadequate for him. That is why he tries to develop a dialectical theory of revelation. The main dialectical tension is that God is perceived as being absent and being present at the same time: he reveals himself in such a magnificent way that he transcends the expectations and the intellectual capacity of the human mind, and thus conceals himself again in his very act of revelation. “Revelation in the bible,” claims Barth, “means the self-unveiling, imparted to men, of the God who by nature cannot be unveiled to men.”\textsuperscript{21} Therefore, Barth concludes that it “is the Deus revelatus who is the Deus absconditus, the God to whom there is no path nor bridge, concerning whom we would not say nor have to say a single word if He did not of His own initiative meet us as the Deus revelatus.”\textsuperscript{22}

5. Simultaneously to the dialectical theology that tried to find its way between a naive fideism and a hypercritical historicism, a new development within Catholic theology emerged that attempted to strike a balance between the questions of interiority raised by the so-called Modernists, such as George Tyrrell (1861–1909), and the strict external understanding of revelation as doctrines, which was the predominant understanding of the neo-scholastics. This Catholic \textit{via media} between an extremely intrinsic and a predominantly
extrinsic view could be qualified under the idea of a revelation as transcendental fulfillment.

Dulles summarizes this approach’s concept of revelation under the title “revelation as new awareness.” In this particular case, the Cardinal’s identification is imprecise, because it does not identify what the difference is in relationship to his third model (“revelation as inner experience”), specifically because interiority always needs awareness in order to be recognized as such. One could even say that interiority is a special case of awareness, namely, the awareness that is directed by the self to the self, its thoughts and feelings, its hopes and fears. A second reason why Dulles’s description is unsatisfactory can be understood as being due to the deep philosophical background of the transcendental movement that was prominent at the time among some Jesuit theologians. In relationship to this school, the term “new awareness” is too vague and does not express this movement adequately, because the precise term “transcendental” is a specifically philosophical one.

Departing from the Belgian Joseph Maréchal, SJ (1878–1944), theologians like Karl Rahner, SJ (1904–1984) and the Canadian Bernard Lonergan, SJ (1904–1984) sought to reappropriate the works of St. Thomas Aquinas for their contemporary philosophical discussions. Rahner’s basic thesis is that human beings are by nature directed to a potential supernatural revelation; they have a “potency to obey,” in other words—a potency to receive such a revelation. In every act of cognition, humans embrace consciously or unconsciously the whole of reality, because they presuppose that there is something like truth. This presumption transcends the single object of cognition and opens a space of existential expectation in which a revelation can become manifest. Thus, revelation is the fulfillment, the actualization of a potency already given in human nature.

These various theories noted above are what formed the intellectual background of Vatican II’s discussion on revelation. Without this background, the brilliance of the Council cannot be understood, because it neither adopts one of these models, nor does it condemn
them. Dei Verbum states: “It pleased God in his goodness and wisdom to reveal himself.” Again we have a rather simple statement that has enormous theological importance, because the Council connects the divergent models of revelation back to a fundamental ground. Revelation, in this view, is the self-communication of God who makes himself known in the history of the world and the life of every human person. Revelation is God’s turn toward the world that he has created; it is God’s own action to offer some form of understanding of his being to his creatures. This is Dei Verbum’s primary insight. Revelation in the Catholic sense has, of course, a propositional, a historic, a subjective, a dialectical, and a transcendental dimension, but it needs to be defined primarily from the one who takes the initiative in the process of revelation; it needs to be understood from God as the one who reveals himself. However, this interpretation requires other theological clarifications: how can one speak about self-revelation?

3. Self-Revelation and Incarnation: Absolute Concreteness and Its Consequences

In the introductory part of my article, I mentioned that the concept of revelation does not only ground the disclosure of an object, but also establishes the ability of a person to recognize something that is meaningful for his life. Dei Verbum and its idea of divine self-revelation duplicate the personal dimension of revelation: the Christian revelation must not be understood as a subject-object relation (a subject recognizes something), but rather as an encounter of two subjects, a mutual mediation of persons (somebody recognizes somebody). This has two consequences, one anthropological and one specifically theological. First, the human being participates in the act of revelation as a free subject. Since revelation is an encounter mediated within history, man has, on a personal level, the ability to reject or to misinterpret what he considers as revelation. Second, theologically, the term “self-revelation” implies that God is present in the act of revelation as a “self,” which arises on the one hand from
the divine essence that is beyond human experience, but which, on the other hand, gives justice to the fact that the human being can only, according to the axiom “like is known by like” (simile simili cognoscitur), recognize what is similar to himself.

The only person who expresses God’s self and who encounters man on his own ontological level is Jesus Christ, whom the Church confesses as true God and true man. Dei Verbum §4 states that God “sent his Son, the eternal Word who enlightens all humankind, to live among them and to tell them about the inner life of God.” In other words: God made himself known to men by becoming man. If revelation means that God reveals himself, then Jesus Christ is the revelation itself, because if one looks at him, one can see who and how God really is. Jesus Christ did not only speak about God, but he also made God present in history, because he himself is God, a God who took the form of a servant so that, as Pope Leo the Great noted, his greatness can reach human lowliness, his eternity can reach time, and his life can transform death. One could say that there is no human experience, even if it might appear as ordinary, in which God would not be present. Through the Incarnation, God’s presence in the human flesh, seemingly ordinary and contingent occurrences are, as claimed at the beginning, meaningful and disclosing for the question of who God, oneself, and the world is.

For this reason, and not out of arrogance, the Church has always taught that there can be no further revelation besides Christ. Vatican II confirms this doctrine, as it says: “The Christian dispensation, therefore, since it is the new and definitive covenant, will never pass away; and no new public revelation is to be expected before the glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ.” In other words, through the Incarnation, Revelation has reached its highest possible peak. There can be no form of revelation which is more intimate than the one of the God, who “might dwell among men and tell them of the innermost being of God,” of the God who came “as a human to humans,” as the Council quotes from a patristic apologetic work, the Epistle of Diognetus. By noting this, the Council does not only
reformulate one insight among others, but rather enunciates the core of the Christian understanding of revelation.

God is the giver of Revelation; humans are the receivers. But receiving something is not a passive process, because both reception and rejection are the consequences of a decision. The conscious acceptance and the personal appropriation of God’s Revelation in Christ is what is called “Christian faith.” God does not force men to believe, but he reaches out to them and turns to them without any prior conditions. This undeserved gift is what theologians call “grace.” But grace becomes operative only when a person accepts and collaborates with it. Without faith as the human response, Revelation literally becomes meaningless, because without faith, Revelation is unable to introduce and unfold its meaningfulness in history. In other words: Revelation originates in God, and faith is the human’s answer. This response has to strike a balance, and finally reconcile the obedience that a creature owes to his Creator with the freedom that God has given to his creatures, while acknowledging that this freedom also includes the ability to reject revelation. Dignitatis Humanae, Vatican II’s declaration on religious freedom, notes “that all men are to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power, in such wise that no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others, within due limits.”30

This is not a relativistic belittling of the Catholic truth claim regarding Revelation. On the contrary, the Council opens its declaration with a solemn profession that “one true religion subsists in the Catholic and Apostolic Church, to which the Lord Jesus committed the duty of spreading it abroad among all men.”31 The Council emphasizes then that the “doctrine of freedom has roots in divine revelation, and for this reason Christians are bound to respect it all the more conscientiously.”32 Again, the principles of self-revelation stand as the Christian foundation: “The act of faith is of its very nature a free act. Man, redeemed by Christ the Savior and through
Christ Jesus called to be God’s adopted son, cannot give his adherence to God revealing Himself unless, under the drawing of the Father, he offers to God the reasonable and free submission of faith. It is therefore completely in accord with the nature of faith that in matters religious every manner of coercion on the part of men should be excluded.”33 The freedom to believe is not to be confused with arbitrariness. Revelation challenges humans in their innermost being and requires from them, in the language of Vatican I,34 an act of submission, the “obedience of faith.”35 This obedience, however—and this makes a significant difference—is not the result of coercion, but of love and trust; in the submission under the word and will of God, an even greater freedom can be found, because the creature comes back to its original place, in order to receive, as Augustine would say, the non posse peccare (not being able to sin) of the redeemed, instead of holding out in the fragile posse non peccare (being not able to sin).36 Faith as an act of highest freedom—a freedom that is so free and courageous that it can bind itself through love—has several dimensions. The most obvious one is the personal turn to God that manifests itself in the subject’s profession, prayer, actions, and hopes. But in a Christian sense, faith always has an ecclesial dimension that is prior to and the foundation of the personal appropriation of faith.

The Church carries and proclaims the Gospel through all historical times. God has entrusted his Revelation to the Church, which delivers it through her tradition and her Scriptures. The principle of a universal concreteness and concrete universality37—one could call it the principle of the Incarnation in which the concrete person of Jesus Christ has a temporally-transcendent meaning—determines also the way in which this revelation is made available to mankind, preserved and handed over from generation to generation: in a specific and concrete Church with a universal claim and her particular and concrete teachings with a trans-historical, or universal validity. The concreteness of the Church finds its expression in her tradition and the Scripture. Dei Verbum states that “sacred tradition, therefore,
and Sacred Scripture of both the Old and New Testaments are like a mirror in which the pilgrim Church on earth looks at God, from whom she has received everything, until she is brought finally to see Him as He is, face to face.\textsuperscript{38} The Church’s mission is ever to gaze into this mirror, which reflects an absolute and transcendent dimension into the concreteness of this world. This process of mediation and appropriation will never come to an end in human history. Both the Church as a whole and every human being can grow ever deeper into the mystery of God, which is mediated and made accessible in the teaching and action, in the Scriptures, and in the tradition of the Church. This kind of enlightenment and growth, which affects all areas of human living and understanding, is not a mere technical advance, but identifies the specifically theological meaning of the word “progress,” as is noted by the Council: “There is a growth in the understanding of the realities and the words which have been handed down. This happens through the contemplation and study made by believers, who treasure these things in their hearts through a penetrating understanding of the spiritual realities which they experience, and through the preaching of those who have received through Episcopal succession the sure gift of truth. For as the centuries succeed one another, the Church constantly moves forward toward the fullness of divine truth until the words of God reach their complete fulfillment in her.”\textsuperscript{39}

4. Revelation, Scripture, and Tradition

It makes a significant difference whether the word “tradition” is used in the singular or in the plural, whether we speak of the one tradition, or of the many traditions. The long and often imprecise discussions during the Council of Trent from 1545 to 1563 make clear how important this distinction actually is: if we speak of the traditions of the Church, we actually mean customs, like the fact that you often find the national flag in Catholic churches in the United States. In Central and Western Europe, this is not the case,
but one might find banners of old guilds or groups from a particular parish, like the choir or a fraternity, hanging from the walls of the churches. The different manners of dealing with a flag in the church goes back to different traditions; each of them has its history and each of them is, in itself, coherent. But the different traditions (in the plural) do not split the Church. They are rather the concrete expression of the history in a particular place; the history of other places is different. Both traditions can accept each other, the difference can remain, and there is no reason to require conformity to all these local traditions.

But if we speak of the tradition in the singular, it is different. The Latin verb tradere means “to hand something over.” The tradition in the singular form and in a theological sense is, therefore, the totality of faith, which has been handed over and entrusted to the Church. The faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of Mary, and Christ as the savior of the entire world, is a doctrine that has constantly been proclaimed by the Church and that is handed over from generation to generation; it is central to the core of the Christian tradition. This kind of tradition is normative for Catholics all over the world. So, there are traditions that are very valuable, but are contingent developments of ecclesial life in different places and different times. But there is also the tradition of the Church that contains the Catholic and Apostolic faith.

If the faith of the Church is present and finds its expression in her tradition, then, one might ask, what about the Bible? The Bible is part of the living tradition of the Church, and it is the most eminent and most significant witness of this tradition. The early Christians who confessed their faith orally first, recognized the need to write down their experiences with Jesus, his apostles, and his disciples so that the tradition as it unfolded in time would not lose its foundational relationship to its origin. The New Testament is the most outstanding and normative expression of the ecclesial tradition. The integration of Scripture in the whole of the tradition is not a traditionalistic view, because it does not claim that the historically developed forms
of faith stand over the Scripture. The opposite is true: Scripture is the *norma normans non normata*, the foundation which governs all Christian life without having some norm or foundation standing over it. But even as the ultimate norm of the tradition, Scripture is both historically (through the process of its formation) and systematically (through the hermeneutical context in which it has to be read) a part of the ecclesial tradition.

A similar thing could be said about the Old Testament with regard to the people of Israel. Israel wrote down its experiences with the Lord and tried to find theological patterns of explication in order to understand its journey and fulfilment: historical events, such as the rescue from the Egyptian captivity, the interplay of conquering and being conquered, the experience of the Jewish intelligentsia in the Babylonian exile, the return and reconstruction of Jerusalem, were all read as the history of God and the covenant with his people. God was not only a metaphysical being, but he presented himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and one who remains faithful to all their descendants. The Catholic Church had already at its beginning, in the controversy with Marcionism, made clear that the Hebrew Bible is part of her own tradition, because Christ, the Son of the God of Israel and the Son of the Jewish Virgin Mary, can only be understood from the point of view of the Jewish tradition. The uniqueness of the Incarnation of Christ can only be grasped in constant relationship to the uniqueness of the election of and covenant with Israel. That is why the Bible consists of an Old and a New Testament that give witness to one and the same God as he manifested himself in history and as he is proclaimed by the tradition of the Jews and of the Christians.

If the Bible is the first, most eminent, and irrevocable expression of the tradition, then it is clear that the Bible, on the one hand, and the tradition, on the other hand, cannot be two different sources of revelation. *Dei Verbum* clearly states, that “there exists a close connection and communication between sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture. For both of them, flowing from the same divine wellspring,
What is this end? Revelation does not only want to inform, but to form. Faith is not only informative, but formative in the sense that it wants to shape the intellect and imagination, the mind and the will of the believers. Therefore, revelation is not only interesting, but challenging, because it has a purpose, which is far beyond human imagination: we call this purpose “salvation.” The Council makes very clear that the basic motivation for its teaching on revelation is the wish “that by hearing the message of salvation the whole world may believe, by believing it may hope, and by hoping it may love.” In this sense, one could even say that *Dei Verbum* is a pastoral document—pastoral not as opposed to dogmatic, but in the sense that every doctrine has a pastoral dimension, which means that it has the aim to lead humans to God, so that all “might in the Holy Spirit have access to the Father and come to share in the divine nature.”

5. *Dei Verbum*— *Theological Achievement and Epistemological Challenge*

The historic achievement of Vatican II’s document on revelation consists in the concept of “divine self-revelation.” This approach has liberated the notion of revelation from a truncated objectification: God does not reveal objects, doctrines, or sentences; he rather makes himself known. The insight that God does not simply reveal propositions does not mean at all that the Christian doctrine becomes meaningless. The Council’s vision must not be confused with the late Enlightenment vision of an “undogmatic Christianity,” as can be found in the thought of the Protestant theologian Otto Dreyer (1837–1900). If the Catholic Church teaches that God reveals himself, she does not deny the irrevocability of normative doctrines, but rather she situates such doctrines within a living encounter of God and the human being that manifests itself in history through the tradition of the Church and in the life of every human person through his or her personal relationship with God. The in-
forming, forming, and transforming encounter between God and human creatures takes place and is mediated through Jesus Christ. He is the hermeneutical key that empowers human beings to recognize the radical contingency of their life as disclosing the question of who God is, because through the life and death of Christ, God entered irrevocably into human history and transformed it into a perpetual place of his “self-revelation.”

Notes

1. Martin Heidegger, Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit, Wegmarken (Gesamtausgabe, Vol. 9), ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2004), 25: “Allein für das Unverborgene bleibt nicht nur dieses wesentlich, daß es in irgendeiner Weise das Scheinende zugänglich macht und es in seinem Erscheinen offenhält, sondern daß das Unverborgene stets eine Verborgenheit des Verborgenen überwindet. Das Unverborgene muß einer Verborgenheit entrissen, dieser im gewissen Sinne geraubt werden.” For an interpretation see Francisco J. Gonzalez, Plato and Heidegger. A Question of Dialogue (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), 222: “Pseudos, Heidegger proceeds to argue, does not simply mean ‘concealment’ (Verborgenheit) but rather ‘distortion’ (Verdrehung) . . . that is, not simply concealing a thing, but presenting it in such a way as to misrepresent it.” The Greek letters have been transcribed into Latin and italicized.


6. The first two paragraphs of Lessing’s The Education of the Human Race (the first part of which was already published in the Fragments Controversy between 1774 and 1778) begins with the programmatic statement: “That which Education is to the Individual, Revelation is to the Race. Education is Revelation coming to the individual Man; and Revelation is Education which has come, and is yet coming, to the Human


11. Vatican I, *Dei Filius*, chap. 2, §1 (DS 3004): “The same holy Mother Church holds and teaches that God, the source and end of all things, can be known with certainty from the consideration of created things by the natural power of human reason.”


Dulles summarizes this understanding of revelation under the concept "revelation as dialectical presence" (*Models of Revelation*, 84).


Ibid., 321.


Ibid., §4. Cf. Epistle to Diognetus 7, 2–4: "The omnipotent Creator of all, the invisible God himself, established among humans the truth and the holy, incomprehensible word from heaven and fixed it firmly in their hearts, not, as one might imagine, by sending them some subordinate, or angel or ruler or one of those who manage earthly matters, or one of those entrusted with the administration of things in heaven, but the designer and Creator of the universe himself. . . . He sent him in gentleness and meekness, as a king might send his son who is a king; he sent him as God; he sent him as a human to humans." The translation follows: *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, ed. and transl. Michael W. Holmes after the earlier work of J. B. Lightfoot and J. R. Harmer (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 705–07.
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31. Ibid., §1.
32. Ibid., §9.
33. Ibid., §10.
34. See Vatican I, Dei Filius, chap. 3 (DS 3008–014).
36. Cf. Augustine, De correptione et gratia, chap. 12. Augustine’s wordplay is difficult to translate. The state of posse non peccare (being able not to sin) stands for the freedom of choice: one can sin, but one is also able not to sin. The non posse peccare (not being able to sin) expresses a freedom that is determined by the good and that therefore has no interest to do evil. To this highest, eschatological form of freedom, all possible choices are transparent; it therefore chooses the good, because it is determined by rationality and free from deficiency (privatio), for Augustine the actual source of evil.
39. Ibid., §8.
43. Vatican II, Dei Verbum, §9.
44. Ibid., §1.
45. Ibid., §2.