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HEILSGESCHICHTE: THE INFLUENCE OF DILTHEY'S GEISTENWISSENSCHAFTEN ON CULLMANN'S HERMENEUTICS

Heilsgeschichte: a influência do Geisteswissenschaften de Dilthey sobre a hermenêutica de Oscar Cullmann

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ABSTRACT: The goal of this paper is to present Dilthey's philosophical effort in his academic life to critique Historical Reason, which establishes the epistemological legitimacy of the Geisteswissenschaften. Whereas Oscar Cullmann's hermeneutics sought to find a historical control for investigation of theology (Geschichte und Offenbarung) and a manner to avoid both Theological Liberalism, which is marked for its anti-supernaturalism, and Dialectical Theology with its emphasis on God as the "wholly other" that never reveals himself in the events of history. For him faith must exist in constant interaction with history. That is the way to avoid the criticism that one is merely finding in the NT that which one already believes. The hypothesis suggested here is in struggling to find a historical control for theology, Cullmann drawn in a certain degree from Dilthey's Hermeneutical Theory, and therefore, established an intermediate position between those two theologies, his magnum opus Heilsgeschichtliche Theology or Heils als Geschichte (Salvation as History).

Keywords: Dilthey, Cullmann, Geisteswissenschaften, Heilsgeschichte, Hermeneutics.

RESUMO: O objetivo deste artigo é apresentar o esforço filosófico de Dilthey em sua vida acadêmica para criticar a Razão Histórica, que estabelece a legitimidade epistemológica do Geisteswissenschaften. Já a hermenêutica de Oscar Cullmann buscava encontrar um controle histórico para a investigação da teologia (Geschichte und Offenbarung) e uma maneira de evitar tanto o liberalismo teológico, que é marcado por seu anti-sobrenaturalismo, quanto a teologia dialética com sua ênfase em Deus como o "totalmente outro" que nunca se revela nos acontecimentos da história. Para Cullmann, a fé deve existir em constante interação com a história. Essa é a forma de se evitar a crítica de que se está apenas encontrando no NT aquilo em que já se acredita. A hipótese sugerida aqui é a de Cullmann se baseia em certa medida na Teoria Hermenêutica de Dilthey e, portanto, estabelece uma posição intermediária entre essas duas teologias na sua magnum opus Heilsgeschichtliche Theology ou Heils als Geschichte (Salvação como História).

Palavras-chave: Dilthey, Cullmann, Geisteswissenschaften, Heilsgeschichte, Hermenêutica.

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INTRODUCTION

From a historical viewpoint, hermeneutics has surpassed the domain of philosophy since classical antiquity, Plato (427 B.C) being one of the first to use it. As an art of comprehension and interpretation, hermeneutics developed in two different ways philosophically and theologically. On the philosophical ground, Immanuel Kant and Wilhelm Dilthey are two of the most important figures. Kant is important for having thrown the foundation of the Naturwissenschaften, and Dilthey for having presented the basis of the Geisteswissenschaften.

On one hand, Kant changed the emphasis from ontology to epistemology. He divided truth into Contingent Truth (in which truth or falsehood is known through experience) and the Necessary Truth (in which truth or falsehood is known through reason) Kant (1960) said that one could only approach religion through faith, which relates to practical reason (coupled with experience), rather than theoretical reason. By doing so Kant caused a division that changed the prevailing worldview, creating a gap between cognoscible (rational–scientific and objective) and the uncognoscible scope of value (morality and religion–non-rational). This dichotomy required theology to be placed either on the side of the “rational” (denying the revelation) or on the side of the “non-rational” (existentialism). In other words, science and reason stood on one side of the gap and faith and religion on the other side.

On the other hand, Dilthey was the first philosopher to establish, in German thought, the distinction between the science of spirit and the science of nature. For him, the science of spirit intended to achieve “reality” through the individualizing concept, while the science of nature planned to describe “reality” through generic concepts. Dilthey did not intend merely to separate the two groups of sciences, but to grant the science of spirit the status of true science.

Theologically, there are two poles: (1) Theological Liberalism with its three philosophies which adopted the enlightenment reason – Deism, Rationalism and Romanticism – had no room for supernaturalism. (2) Dialectical Theology, as represented by Barth and Bultmann, which denounced the historical dimension of divine revelation.

This paper has the goal to present Dilthey's philosophical effort in his academic life for a Critique of Historical Reason, which establishes the epistemological legitimacy of the Geisteswissenschaften. Whereas Oscar Cullmann's hermeneutics sought to find a historical control for investigation of theology (Geschichte und Offenbarung) and a manner to avoid both Theological Liberalism, which was seen by him as anti-supernaturalism, and Dialectical Theology with its emphasis on God as the “wholly other” that never reveals himself in the

events of history. Thus, the hypothesis suggested here is that in struggling to find a historical control for theology, Cullmann was influenced to a certain degree by Dilthey's Hermeneutical Theory, and therefore, established an intermediate position between the two theologies above.

Heilsgeschichtliche Theology understood revelation to have occurred in the redemptive acts of God within the framework of general history. It began with the fall and because of that it can also be labeled a history of disaster (Unheilsgeschichte). However, God instituted a plan of salvation which starts with the election of Israel for the salvation of all humanity, then narrows down to a "remnant" which represents Israel as a whole, and narrows still further to the election of Jesus, Israel's Messiah. The vicarious death of Christ and His resurrection constitute altogether the center of the heilsgeschichte. Having gone from the collective (Israel) to the particular, (Messiah), Salvation History now moves from the particular (Messiah) to the collective, from Christ to the church to the whole world.

1. PREAMBLE

1.1 Wilhelm dilthey (1833-1911) and the geisteswissenschaften

Dilthey was a German historian, psychologist, student of hermeneutics, and philosopher. He was the first philosopher to establish, in German thought, the distinction between the science of spirit and the science of nature. He called them Geisteswissenschaften and Naturwissenschaften. It is commonly affirmed that these two kinds of science are logically distinct. "Nevertheless he conceived of both kinds of study as objective sciences... the positivism of the mid-twentieth century differed only in denying any distinction in the logics of the natural sciences and Geisteswissenschaften" (WARNKE, 1987, p. 2).¹ The science of spirit intended to achieve reality through the individualizing concept, while the science of nature planned to describe the reality through generic concepts (GRONDIN, 1994).²

1 For Palmer, Dilthey's attempt to forge an epistemological foundation for the Natural Sciences became a meeting place for two conflicting views in studying a man. (1) Dilthey's concept history, and (2) his "life-philosophical" orientation. Cf. Palmer (1969, p. 99).

2 Whereas the method of the Naturwissenschaften consists in finding the normative laws of observed phenomena, the sine qua non of the Geisteswissenschaften is in understanding through research

Dilthey's proposal was based on the ancient method – the Philosophy of History. From this History, Dilthey worked to build this distinction on an ontological foundation (DILTHEY, 1980). He constructs his foundation on Leibniz, and from it he created the distinction between Geisteswissenschaft and Naturwissenschaften (DILTHEY, 1959). Dilthey did not intend merely to separate the two groups of sciences, but to grant the science of spirit the status of true science (PALMER, 1969).³ The question is: How did Dilthey try to separate these two groups of sciences? In other words: How did he establish the foundations for the science of the spirit?

Dilthey appealed to a thesis defended by Leibniz, which distinguishes two kinds of Truths, the one of Reasoning (Raisonnement) and of Fact (Fait) (LEIBNIZ, 1965). The former is based on two great Principles: that of Contradiction, by which we evaluate as false that which one finds contradictory, and true that which is the opposite of the contradiction. The principle is that of Sufficient Reason, by which one considers that no fact or declaration could be true, unless there be sufficient reason why it would be this way and not the other, even though, in the end, it cannot be known for certain (Leibniz, 1965). In other words, Leibniz recognized that there are two kinds of truths: reasoning truth and truth of facts. His goal was to prove from it that a philosopher could still believe in God.

The outcome achieved is that there are two resulting methods: one logical and another ontological. From this results Dilthey established the Geisteswissenschaft on the sufficient reasons offered by ontology. He states that the sciences of the spirit are comprehensible and distinct from the natural sciences (DILTHEY, 1914). He wanted to conceptualize the human sciences as an autonomous science as well as to defend them from encroachments of the Naturwissenschaften with its methodology (Grondin, 1994).

Dilthey also based his theory on Husserl's work that distinguished between two different experiences: Erlebnis, a lived experience, and Erfabrung, a scientific experience.⁴ For Dilthey the most important was Erlebnis.⁵ Husserl believes that all events of consciousness

3 Palmer (1969, p. 98) says that Dilthey's aim was to develop methods of gaining "objectively valid" interpretations of "expressions of inner life."

4 Warnke says that his concept of understanding also enables him to bring together the foundational notion of lived experience. With the concrete work done in the humanities, the human natural science is distinguished not by their objects (nature/spirit, universal/individual, physical/psychological, etc), but rather by their different approaches. Cf. (WARNKE, 1987, p. 7, 26, 87).

5 The verb Erleben, Palmer says, is itself a recent word, formed by adding the prefix er (which is used as an emphatic prefix, deepening the meaning of the word). Erlebnis as a singular noun was virtually nonexistent in German before Dilthey's use of it in a specific way (PALMER, 1969, p. 107).

are characterized by the mind's ability to make modally, and temporally different acts of responsiveness, and both refer to the same object of awareness (Hirsch, 1967). Experience for Husserl is the relation between an act of awareness and its object. This term is what he calls a meaningful experience which also has two particular aspects: "experiential object" and "experiential act". Hirsch (1967, p. 218) illustrated this idea as follows:

I "intend" a box, there are at least three distinguishable of that event. First, there is the object as perceived by me; second, there is the act by which I perceive the object; and finally, there is (for physical things) the object which exists independently of my perceptual act.

Any knowledge of object is mediate for sensations and judgments, i.e., experience, both "subjective" and "objective" are applied to these subjective sensations which are about objects. A useful illustration is toothache which is said to be subjective because it occurs within someone as a feeling subject. It is not an object in the world for all to see and feel; it belongs to someone alone. The tooth that the dentist extracts is an object and with its removal goes your subjective ache.

Putting in different words, Erlebnis was used in two senses, first, it refers to what is directly given to individual consciousness and thus has a cognitive function. In this case, Erlebnis reflects a "subjective" response to the world. Second, Erlebnisse are those experiences around which an individual life organizes itself, that is, the crucial experiences that orient a person's self-conception and hence life-conduct (PALMER, 1969). For Dilthey, subjective and objective response is a special brand of philosophy which properly applies to sensations and judgments, not to persons; this statement means that every living subject is necessarily subjective in his/her sensations. From these tenets he poses where we can find meanings, which will play an important role on Cullmann's hermeneutics:

In the flow of time, there is something which forms a unity in the present because it has a unified meaning and is the smallest entity which we can designate as an experience. Furthermore, one may call each encompassing unity of parts bound together through a shared meaning for the course of life an "experience" – even when the several parts are separated from each other by interrupting events (DILTHEY, 1921, p. 194).

The unity held together by a shared meaning is defined as an Erlebnis or a "lived experience." Therefore, objectivity is possible only by testing in all ways possible one's Erlebnis (subjective impression), to achieve a right knowledge of an object. It is in the Erlebnisse of

Israel that Cullmann see the historical control for theology. Thus, below we will sketch a brief biography of Cullmann followed by the analysis of his hermeneutics.

1.2 Oscar Cullmann (1902-1999) and the Heilsgeschichte⁶

Cullmann taught at Strasbourg, Basel, and Paris. He was born at a critical juncture of historical-theological eras in Germany. Because of his established competence in New Testament and Church history, he was called to Basel. Being in the center of Western Europe, Basel is close to Germany, France, Italy, and Austria, and even Scandinavia and Britain are not remote. This central geographical location contributed to Cullmann's heritage and scholarship. He realized as professor of New Testament and Church History that any view of God's revealing Himself through history needs a hermeneutic theory, which deals with an indirect understanding (Vorstehen through Erlebnis) of God through history, that is, events historically accessible (DORMAN, 1983).

Cullmann followed a different foundation of Bultmann and Barth. Both Bultmann and Barth asserted that all human attempts to know God objectively were idolatry. Both held to a subtle difference: If for Barth, God was "He whom we do not know," (BARTH, 1933, p. 45).⁷ for Bultmann, God represented "the very counter pole to human, the Dasein" (BULTMANN, 1951, p. 41). As Dorman (1983, p. 14) posits: "'This dialectical' emphasis likewise ruled out any notion of God revealing himself in the events of history, since it was such a notion of revelation in history which gave rise to the ill-fated quest for the historical Jesus."⁸

Not many options for overcoming dogmatic and moralistic types of rationalism were left, except those presented by Kant or Dilthey and Schleiermacher. Because of the lack of many options the nineteenth-century theologians oscillated either between the historical or psychological poles of religious knowledge. Several attempts were made to combine the objective manifestation in history in union with the inspired interpretation of religious experience. According to Braaten (1968), the Erlangen School, offered a brilliant synthesis of the

6 For a brief biography see Wallace (19660, p. 163-197). Cf. Also, Thiselton, (1997, p. 528-530).

7 It is worthy of note a change on Barth's position: the early Barth posited revelation in the sphere that he called Urgeschichte (pre-history). Later, however, he not only abandoned his earlier idea of Urgeschichte, but more and more resumed friendly relations with traditional Heilsgeschichte theology. Cf. Braaten, (1968, p. 21) for more details.

8 Bultmann's method can be called "the existentialist flight from history." Established by Bultmann's influence it agrees with the positivist or old liberal school in its understanding of the nature of history and the necessity of using a thoroughgoing critical-historical scientific method in establishing historical facts. "History" consists only of human events. Cf. Ladd, (1966, p. 58).

historical and psychological modes of approach to revelation, which result in the so called Heilsgeschichte hermeneutic school.

The Heilsgeschichtliche School was divided in two motifs: Historical and Experiential. J. C. K. von Hofmann represented more the historical motif (PREUS, 1950)⁹ and F. H. R. von Frank more the experiential motif (PREUS, 1950).¹⁰ Wallace (1966) connects Cullmann with the Erlangen School and states that Cullmann is responsible for elaborating upon the studies of Hofmann and Schlatter. But Dorman says that he has found no evidence to link Cullmann to the Erlangen tradition and gives several evidences to the contrary (DORMAN, 1983, p. 15). He based his arguments on the fact that although Cullmann's view on salvation history was well formed by 1940, he did not use the actual term Heilsgeschichte until 1943, and with some reservations.¹¹ In fact, Cullmann himself denied any dependence on the Erlangen tradition, even though he does recognize that similarities exist, he states: "although in certain details I approach the salvation-historical ideas of Hofmann and Schlatter, nevertheless my basic conception is essentially different from theirs." (CULLMANN, 1967, p. 55). The main attempt of Cullmann's hermeneutic method influenced by Dilthey was to articulate a hermeneutic that accurately reflects the positive relationship he saw between revelation and history.

Is there some kind of inescapable interrelation between theology and history? Are they to be merged in such a way that either history or theology dominates? If so how did he come to realize this relationship? The answer to these questions will present how Cullmann came about with an important distinction between two further concepts, historish and geschichte.

2. HISTORISH AND GESCHICHTE

There are two different moments on Cullmann's hermeneutic method. At first, he believed that the whole New Testament shows the "Spirit of Christ" who is above history. This

9 Preus (1950, p. 311-321) describes how Von Hofmann combined Schleiermacher's insights with religious experience as a starting point to the theological thought, the formgeschichtliche studies, and the Lutheran orthodoxy theology. He tried to find the religious authority on a tripod: (a) Experience of regeneration; (b) History and reality of the church; and (c) Scripture.

10 In the early 90's Heilsgeschichte theology was attacked by the historical-critical exegesis as being anti-Semitic. Cf. (SCHOTTROFF; WACKER, 1996). The basic confusion, though, was that they confused Hans Conzelmann use of the terminology as though as he would adopt the same meaning connect to it by Oscar Cullmann's approach.

11 The first time that Cullmann used the term Heilsgeschichte was in his book *The Early Church* (Cullmann, 1966, pp. 141-162). There were a couple of authors that wrote on Cullmann's thoughts. In Germany, Hermesmann (1979), Schlaudraff (1988), Cullmann prefaced this book. In America there are two, Harsvel (1950), and Dorman (1983). In France, Boutier (1946), and Frisque (1960).

aligns him with Barth who said that revelation was something “wholly other” than humanity, which came to a person from outside of oneself and from outside of all history (supra-history). Cullmann abandoned this concept, since it contradicts his assumption that revelation happened in history. He also believed that one must have an encounter with the “Spirit of Christ” before historical investigation could begin, which is an agreement with Bultmann who contended that people have the *vorverständnis* (pre-understanding) of revelation (DORMAN, 1983).

Is this encounter with the supra-historical Spirit necessary prior to achieving God’s revelation? If so, how could any subsequent investigation be truly historical? These questions asked by Dorman (1983) serve to highlight the basic difference between Cullmann, Barth, and Bultmann. Barth accused Bultmann of going back to the “old road” of Liberalism (BARTH, 1962, p. 62), while Bultmann affirmed that Barth neglected historical study, which demands a *sacrificium intellectus* (BULTMANN, 1955, p. 261). Cullmann’s method attempted to overcome these two faults of Barth and Bultmann. But he did that by appealing to Martin Kähler’s historical Jesus.

Kähler’s distinction between “*der sogenannte historische Jesus*” (the so-called historical Jesus) and “*der geschichtliche, biblische Christus*” (the historic biblical Christ) was helpful to Cullmann (LADD, 1971, p. 53). In this way he broke the wall of the “life of Jesus” movement and provided a theological alternative to the problem of faith and history (WOOD, 2005). For Kähler, the *historische Jesus* is only the critical reconstruction of a scholar – a phantom, a figment of historical imagination (KÄHLER, 1969). The *geschichtliche Christ* is the person who actually lived in history. Bultmann changed this distinction so that the *historische Jesus* is the reality of past history who by definition must be an exclusively human non-supernatural figure. The *geschichtliche Christ* is the later Christian interpretation of Jesus as the divine being of the *kerygma*, who is also portrayed in the Gospels (WOOD, 2005).

For Kähler, if the historical Jesus is a figment of the imagination of historical-critical method scholars, the *geschichtliche Christ* – the Christ portrayed in the NT – is what we may call the Jesus of History who possessed full factuality (BRAATEN, 1964). Kähler went further to say that the Christ of the church is the biblical Christ, for the biblical Christ whose picture we have is the picture of an earthly figure who lived in history, whose name was Jesus of Nazareth (LADD, 1971). Cullmann (1967) also recognizes that, for Kähler, the historic biblical Christ is also accurate historically. Having been influenced by Kähler, Cullmann’s *heilsgeschichte* merged into two different positions: one between 1928-1930 and the other after 1931. therefore, it is necessary to consider his hermeneutics and what caused this change

3. THE HEILGESCHICHTLICHE HERMENEUTIC AND THE GEISTESWISSENSCHAFTEN

There is a thesis which says that in each generation a particular theological discipline is elevated to the center of theology by virtue of its impact on the cultural environment (ROBINSON, 1969). If that is true, one could say that a discipline in a particular cultural environment could also influence a theological discipline.

It was Oscar Cullmann himself in his preliminary remarks on the question of hermeneutics who said:

The aim of interpreting New Testament texts is to understand the faith of the first Christians, its origin, its content, and the manner in which it is fixed in the New Testament. The latter would call us to the same faith. It is not wrong to say that the ultimate goal of exegesis is fully attained only when this faith is subsequently achieved by us (CULLMANN, 1967, p. 64-65).

The difficulty arises here. How is this understanding possible without knowing what are the qualities of NT faith? Are they what one is supposed to arrive at by one's interpretation? Cullmann answers this difficulty saying that the hermeneutics of his day has introduced the concept of the so-called "Vorverständnis" (pre-understanding) and includes the person of the exegete right at the beginning. For him, a resigned acknowledgement that our exposition can never be completely free from presupposition is not thought to be enough (THISELTON, 1992).¹² And the idea that the object is deliberately no longer seen alone, but only in relation to the subject in the 'address,' in the 'encounter,' it is natural that hermeneutics now gains a significance that it did not have before, it does not mean that one should ignore the objectivity; without objectivity, it could be impossible excluding the possibility that some source of error exists in the one's interpretation (CULLMANN, 1967, p. 68).

Although Cullmann reacted against Bultmann's concept of 'Vorverständnis,' he differs from Bultmann only at the starting point. Bultmann starts with 'Vorverständnis,' asserting that, in the interest of understanding, 'being claimed' ought to be included right from the beginning

12 Cullmann (1967) argues that the influence of Dilthey, B. Croce, and R. G. Collingwood who dealt with the problems raised by interpreting history, the inclusion of the interpreter's own person in the question brought to the text is raised to an exegetical principle requiring the deliberate abrogation of the distance between subject and object. Cullmann (1967, p. 68) disagrees with this, especially because this is exactly what Bultmann proposed. Cf. Bultmann (1955, p. 324).

in the study of a biblical text.¹³ Cullmann says that it is an undisputed fact that what the Bible proclaims demands a decision in faith from us. He also concludes that it is correct that an exegesis without presuppositions is an illusion CULLMANN, 1967, p. 66). However, faith must exist in constant interaction with history. That is the way to avoid the criticism that one is merely finding in the NT that which one already believes. One's view of history does not lead someone to the affirmation that historical study proves one's faith; it does however point in that direction (LADD, 1971, p. 54). Combining these two elements, objective and subjective, was impossible based on Kant's rationalism. Fortunately, Dilthey's theory in recognizing two kinds of sciences and conceding to it a status of science made it possible to combine these imbricated realities (objectivity and subjectivity) to a certain degree. That is what Cullmann was trying to relate, faith and history, but how did he do this? To understand that, we need to analysis Dilthey's Geisteswissenschaften and his hermeneutic method.

3.1 GEISTESWISSENSCHAFTEN: DILTHEY AND HIS HERMENEUTICS

According to Palmer (1969, p. 106-123), Dilthey's hermeneutic is qualified by experience (Erlebnis), expression (Ausdruck), and understanding (Verstehen). Below it will be shown a short explanation and some thoughts considering Cullmann's hermeneutics and Dilthey. It must be said that only experience (Erlebnis) and understanding (Verstehen) will be considered here, since are related to this paper especially in order to establish some related points between their hermeneutic theory.

3.1.1 Experience (Erlebnis)

Erlebnis refers to what is directly given to individual consciousness and thus has a cognitive function. It reflects a "subjective" response to the world in which it is experienced as pleasurable or not, as having certain intuitively clear spatial and temporal relations and the like (WARNKE, 1987). Erlebnisse (plural), are those experiences seen as a unity hold together by a common meaning (PALMER, 1969); it is around those experiences which an individual life organizes itself, the crucial experiences that orient a person's self-conception and hence life-conduct.

13 For more details about theology as hermeneutics, an especial study on Bultmann's position, cf. Painter (1987). Thiselton (1992, p. 33) affirms that the goal of interpretation according to Dilthey is to come to understand the mind, life-process, and life-world of the text's author.

“Lived Experience” and time are related because the stream of time forms a unity in the present, and therefore has a united meaning which is the smallest entity called experience. Dilthey goes further by saying that one may call each encompassing unity of the parts of life bound together through a common meaning for the course of life an “experience” – even when the several parts are separated from each other by interrupting events (DILTHEY, 1921, p. 86). In other words, Erlebnisse is what forms the center around which the meaning of a particular life-history unfolds and therefore constitutes the basis upon which Dilthey applies the hermeneutic circle to life itself (WARNKE, 1987).

Even though, Cullmann, does not use the word “Erlebnis” he states, “if I wish to understand what faith means, I must know what faith is. Furthermore, I must take into account as an exegete that no interpreter can exclude his own characteristic experience of love or faith” (CULLMANN, 1967, p. 66-67). He implements he points by saying that,

the fact that complete absence of presupposition is impossible must not excuse us from striving for objectivity altogether. On the contrary, a special effort is needed if I am not simply to ascribe my own love experience of a particular kind to the writer of the love-song, who could have had very different experiences. (CULLMANN, 1967, p. 67)

Cullmann himself admits that he is in agreement with what is being asked for by modern hermeneutics, which includes Dilthey. But he claims this to be a second act in the work of exegesis (CULLMANN, 1967). He sums it asserting that

Certainly, the experience of Christ in the Church of today, of which I as an exegete am a member, forms an important presupposition for a legitimate Vorverständnis of New Testament faith. But even on this basis, when I approach the text as an exegete, I may not consider it to be certain that my Church's faith in Christ is in its essence really that of the writers of the New Testament. (CULLMANN, 1967, p. 68)

If one accepts the Heidegger's conceptuality of the Bible, which means that one must give up of the false and outmoded philosophy of separation between subject and object, one cannot distinguish between “objective” saving events and their subjective appropriation in faith (CULLMANN, 1967, p. 69). Is not faith for Paul of such a quality that this distinction belongs to its essence independent of any conceptuality? Does faith for Paul mean believing that someone else has already accomplished the saving work for someone else, precisely because it has been done completely independent of someone else and someone else believing? (CULLMANN, 1967, p. 69). Paul shows the following sequence in Romans 10:17ff:

First revelation through the Word of God (ἀποκάλυψις διὰ ῥήματος Χριστοῦ); second, hearing (ἀκούειν); third, believing (πιστεύειν). ἀκούειν precedes πιστεύειν (CULLMANN, 1967, p. 71).

Cullmann (1967, p. 69) agrees with Bultmann as he says that the divine event, together with its interpretation revealed to the prophets and apostles which belongs in that event, extends a claim to us about which we must make a decision. But he rejected the radical dualism which declares that God cannot be known objectively, as though He is the “wholly other.”¹⁴ This claim aligns human existence with concrete history revealed to humanity, with its sequence of events. In other words, the cognitive aspect of such an encounter is possible because God had encountered the first Christians in history (DORMAN, 1983), and through their experience (Erlebnis) one can have the cognitive aspect which is similar to the key category in Dilthey's hermeneutical theory, that is, “lived experience.” Life represents the shared flow of human activities and experiences which together constitute human experience (DILTHEY, 1927). Cullmann aligns himself with Dilthey's hermeneutic principle that the task of the interpreter is to gain understanding of the other through “re-living” (Nacherleben) the other's experience. It is by participation that we exercise interpretation, by stepping into the other's shoes on the basis of “empathy” (Hineinversetzen) or “transposition” (DILTHEY, 1927, p. 131). By applying Dilthey's principles, Cullmann concludes that “we attempt to understand [Jesus] image where it is accessible to us: in the collective spirit of the faithful” (CULLMANN, 1925, p. 459)

For Cullmann (1967), even though he did not use the term, there are two horizons to consider in hermeneutics: 1) OBJECTIVITY–subjectivity, and 2) SUBJECTIVITY–objectivity. The former is the concrete history revealed to humanity, and it is necessary a neutral study of these events and the correct rendering of the interpretations of these events communicated to humanity. The later is a deeper comprehension of that interpretation of faith, which in that case is a necessary personal act of faith by virtue of which one aligns oneself with the saving events in one's place and time in the same way as the first witnesses did in theirs. In other words Cullmann's hermeneutics excludes the exegete's own person from exegesis and yet at the same time it includes him or her.

Faith and hermeneutics work together since faith must exist in constant interaction with history. This interaction is the way to avoid the criticism that one is merely finding in the NT

14 For Bultmann (1969) asserting that God is “wholly other” and its consequence is that we cannot possibly say anything about God Himself.

that which one already believes. One's view of history does not lead him or her to the affirmation that historical study proves one's faith; it does however point in that direction (LADD, 1971, p. 57). There is a sort of alignment between interpreter and writer in hermeneutics. Cullmann states that "if the decision of faith intended in the New Testament asks us to align ourselves with that sequence of events, then the sequence may not be demythologized, de-historicized, or de-objectified, but taken objectively" (CULLMANN, 1967, p. 70). If that is true, historical meaning involves a 'retroactive' re-alignment with past. It could be seen as the outcome of a narrative structure imposed upon events from a position subsequent to them, in light of events that have been seen to come after them.

Cullmann changes Ranke's historical unifier to find a center unity of meaning as a whole. Ranke posited God as the spectator who sees both the beginning and end of history and therefore understands the role each of its individual parts play in the meaning of the whole. Historical understanding clarifies the individuality of historical epochs by placing them within universal history. In that case, the legitimacy of historical understanding depends upon the degree to which the historian, can approximate God's omniscient point of view by liberating themselves from their own place in history and surveying history as a unified whole (WARNKE, 1987). But this is an appeal to something that it is not under the control of historical research. Thus, Cullman says, "to change Ranke's dictum that every historical epoch is 'immediate to God', in this case it must be said that every epoch in the history of salvation 'is immediate to this mid-point in salvation history'" (CULLMANN, 1967, p. 166). In other words, salvation history is not oriented to the 'beyond' of history, but to a saving event. Cullmann also criticized Barth for not subjecting his theological conclusions to the control of historical research (DORMAN, 1983). In sum, Cullmann's works struggled to establish historical controls for theological interpretations and the event-Jesus (incarnation, death, and resurrection) is essential for his understanding.

3.1.2 Understanding (Verstehen)

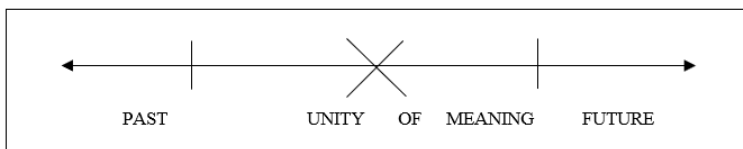
There is no condition to assert that Cullmann's concept of understanding differs or agrees with Dilthey's at all. But Cullmann says that the historical events which are related do Christ should become for us just what they were for the first Christians; they should make us go forth precisely from the contingencies of history in order to make us see how in Jesus Christ heaven has met with earth (CULLMANN, 1925, p. 578). Since heaven has met earth in the Event-Jesus, the knowledge that it is found today is an "immediate objective revela-

tion.” This concept is extremely close to Dilthey’s hermeneutic theory, which we need to consider below.

Gadamer thinks that human beings usually understand one another immediately or they communicate (sich verständnis) until reach an agreement (GADAMER, 2008). While for Gadamer understanding (Verständnis) is first of all agreement (Einverständnis), for Dilthey understanding has the aim of knowing the object and only through understanding are the specifically personal and non-conceptual sides of reality encountered and experience is intrinsically temporal, which is linked with history in the deepest sense of the word, and therefore understanding of experience must also be in commensurately temporal (historical) categories of thought (WARNKE, 1987). Palmer adds an important information about Dilthey’s hermeneutic method, that is, understanding is not a mere act of thought but a transposition and re-experience of the world as another person meets it in lived experience (PALMER, 1969).

A central event bonds to itself two directions to achieve understand of a given meaningful event. To understand the present, one must situate the present in the horizon of past and future. In Dilthey’s conception, understanding and experience spiral around one another. New experiences revise the way in which the past is understood and the future anticipated; at the same time, those experiences are interpreted in the context of an understanding of past and future (WARNKE, 1987). Roughly drawing, it may be illustrated by the following chart.

4. Dilthey’s Hermeneutical Circle

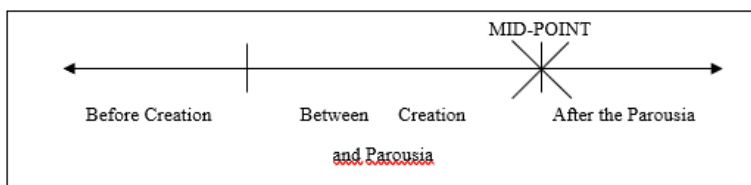


Experience in its unit of meaning tends to reach out and encompass both recollection of the past and anticipation of the future in the total context of “meaning.” Meaning cannot be considered except in terms of expectation which points to the future. The past and the future, then, form a structural unity with the presentness of all experience, and thus temporal context is the inescapable horizon within which any perception in the present is interpreted (WARNKE, 1987, p. 109-110). What is the formulation on how we understand that impacted Cull-

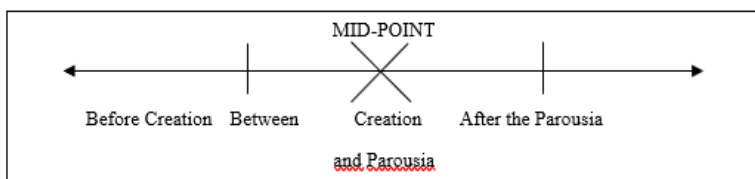
mann's theology. The Theology of Heilsgeschichte understood revelation as occurred in the redemptive acts of God in the "sacred history." For him salvation is bound up with a continuous (fortlaufendes) progression of events (Zeitgeschehen), involving past, present, and future; and the central point (geschichtliche Tatsache der Mitte) of this developing line of salvation (Heilslinie) is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (CULLMANN, 1951, p. 22-23).

Primitive Christianity's consideration of history concentrates primarily upon a definite number of events in a quite particular sort, of which some happen before while others will happen after Christ. Christ is the mid-point and meaning only for Heilsgeschichte which is presented as a connected history (CULLMANN, 1951, p. 20). There is a hermeneutical circle which gives meaning to the whole. The whole receives its definition from the parts, and reciprocally, the parts can only be understood in reference to a whole. For Dilthey the crucial term is "meaning": meaning is what understanding grasps in the essential reciprocal interaction of the whole and the parts. It is a relationship of whole to parts seen by interpreters from a given standpoint, at a given time, for a given combination of parts (PALMER, 1969, p. 118-119). For Cullmann what gives "meaning" to the whole and to the parts is the mid-point (Christ). The point of time in all history, either past or future, that should have most meaning for the Christian, is the powerful fact of the resurrection of Christ (CULLMANN, 1951). He illustrated this point by the following drawing:

Judaism:



Christianity:



The mid-point of this line, the coming of Messiah, was for the Jews' future; for the Christian, it is past; and so, while the lines are the same for Jew and Christian, the *Mitte* is different for each. The central point of the New Testament is that the resurrection of Christ has brought a new division into the Jewish view of history (CULLMANN, 1951, p. 82). Cullmann notes that

the twofold division [the present age and the age to come] has been changed by Christ. The second section ("between Creation and Parousia") is now split in two. As far as the twofold division is concerned, the part that follows the mid-point already belongs to the new age, although according to the still existing threefold division the third section, that is, the final period beginning with the Parousia, not yet come. (CULLMANN, 1951, p. 83)

The assumption is that history and time are "the essence" of the New Testament message, the point of time in all history, either past or future should have the unity of meaning for the Christian. This meaning is found in the Christ-Event which is the mid-point of the time. Dorman (1983, p. 44) asserts that for Cullmann, a theological or philosophical rule of faith are not necessarily connected with historical investigation. So, one must look at the understanding of Christian faith, for it is there that one finds a historical control for interpreting the New Testament, in the form of a historically based faith which is the experience of object (history) through sensations (faith). This similar to what Dilthey asserts, since for him, we always understand from within our own horizon, which is part of the hermeneutical circle, also we understand by constant reference to our experience. The methodological task therefore is to find viable modes of interaction of one's own horizon with that of the text (PALMER, 1969, p. 121). Cullmann (1925, p. 523) follows in this same line as he embraces the idea that a reconstruction of the gospel as tradition-history would enable better understanding of both the objective (cognitive) and subjective (experience) aspects of the faith of the early church through historical investigation. In other words, *fides quaerens intellectum* (faith which seeks for understanding).

There is one point where Cullmann clearly severs from Dilthey's hermeneutics. Dilthey does not see meaning as fixe and firm. For him, meaning is historical, and he concludes that because of this it changes throughout the time; it is a matter of relationship, always related to a perspective from which events are seen (PALMER, 1969, p. 119). Cullmann's reinterpretation never happens in such a way that an earlier account is disputed. Instead, certain aspects of the earlier account which were previously unnoticed now come to light by virtue of the new revelation (CULLMANN, 1967, p. 88)). Yet at the same time, the decisive event (*geschicht-*

liche Tatsache der Mitte) and the rule of the whole salvation history are the unique paradigm to reinterpret the others events, including the secular history (CULLMANN, 1951, p. 99). In other words, Jesus is the mid-point and meaning only for "Biblical History," which is presented as a connected history compared with general History. Thus, even from this viewpoint there remains wide room for the historian to carry on his particular task of organizing and investigating general history (CULLMANN, 1951, p. 20).

Gadamer accused Dilthey of having followed the Historical School in conceiving of the "social-historical world" as a text and the aim of understanding as a "reproduction of an original production" (WARNKE, 1987, p. 32).¹⁵ How does one know when one has appropriated legitimate lessons from one's experience or interpreted it correctly? Cullmann answers this question admitting that he uses a circular procedure. He states, "circular procedure what I believe I have gained in understanding, the New Testament faith must always be examined anew in the light of the text" (CULLMANN, 1967, p. 72). This is not mere theoretical wishful-thinking, for the philological historical-critical method is available for everyone. Thus, inasmuch as one takes New Testament faith seriously as faith in events, one must recognize the importance of historical critical research (CULLMANN, 1967, p. 73).

CONCLUSION

Hermeneutics developed through two different ways both philosophically and theologically. On the philosophical ground Immanuel Kant and Wilhelm Dilthey are two of the most important figures. The former for having founded the Naturwissenschaften; the later for having presented the basis of the Geisteswissenschaften. Theologically, it is found in two extremes: Theological Liberalism - anti-supernaturalism, and Dialectical Theology – a jump out of history.

This paper presented the hypothesis that Cullmann's hermeneutics are marked by the struggle to find a historical control to the investigation of theology. If it is not consciously influenced by Dilthey's Hermeneutics Theory, Cullmann seems to be influenced indirectly by him to establish an intermediate position between those two theologies, liberalism (Kantian) and dialecticism (Heideggerian).

¹⁵ Some Catholics criticized Cullmann accusing him of having fallen into the historical positivism of not having taken transcendence into account. Cf. Cullmann. 1967, p. 15). This accusation was made by Frisque (1960, p. 206).

Dialectical Theology focused on the ontological difference between God and humanity. Cullmann's methodology sought for accurate historical investigation. Dialectical Hermeneutics saw revelation as personal and non-cognitive. Cullmann rejected this concept of revelation as a Kantian heritage that created a wedge between faith and knowledge. While Theological Liberalism locked God into the earth, Dialectical Theology concentrated on the vertical gap between God and history. Cullmann on the other hand sought to bridge the horizontal gap in the line of time by defining the biblical message. Only Dilthey could have furnished such a condition since he liberated science of Kant's postulates.

One of the most important concepts of Dilthey's theory was defined as *Erlebnis* (lived experience). *Erlebnis* is the unity held together by a common meaning even when the various parts are separated from each other by interrupting events. The subjective and objective are not applied to persons and opinion but to sensation. Thus, every living subject is necessarily subjective in all their experience which is twofold: experience of subject (particular inner sensation) and experience of object (shared experience). Cullmann realized a New Testament and Church History professor that any view of God's revealing Himself through history would need a hermeneutic, which deals with an objective understanding. This understanding is made by testing one's subjective impression (*Vorstehen* through *Erlebnis*) so as to arrive at a correct knowledge of an object (events historically accessible).

For Dilthey, understanding has the aim of knowing the object, and only through understanding are the specifically personal and non-conceptual sides of reality encountered and experienced as intrinsically temporal. To understand the present, one must situate the present in the horizon of past and future. Experience in its unit of meaning tends to reach out and encompass both recollection of the past and anticipation of the future in the total context of "meaning." Meaning cannot be considered, except in terms of expectation which points to the future. The past and the future, then, form a structural unity with the present of all experience, and thus temporal context is the inescapable horizon within which any perception in the present is interpreted.

It was impossible to couple these two elements, objective and subjective, based on Kant's rationalism. Fortunately, Dilthey's theory in recognizing two kinds of sciences and conceding to it a status of science made possible to combine to a certain degree objectivity and subjectivity. Lived Experience or *Erlebnis* and time are related in which the stream of time forms a unity in the present, because it has a unitary meaning which is the smallest entity called experience.

Cullmann's and Dilthey's hermeneutics are an invitation to re-alignment. Cullmann says that if the decision of faith intended in the New Testament asks us to align ourselves that is what we have to do rather than demythologized, de-historicized, or de-objectified. If it is true, historical meaning involves a 'retroactive' re-alignment of the past.

For Cullmann, if one wishes to understand what faith means, one must know what faith is. Furthermore, it must be taken into account as an exegete that no interpreter can exclude his own characteristic experience of faith. Thus, a special effort is needed if one is not simply to ascribe one's own experience of a particular kind to a particular writer who could have had very different experiences.

OBJECTIVITY–subjectivity, and SUBJECTIVITY–objectivity plays an important role in Cullmann's hermeneutics. The former is concrete history revealed to us, but we need a neutral study of these events and the correct rendering of the interpretations of these events communicated to humanity by another. The latter is a deeper comprehension of that interpretation of faith, which in that case is a necessary personal act of faith by virtue of which one aligns oneself with the saving events in one's place and time in the same path as the first witnesses did in theirs, but it is necessary a strong scientific method to control and to avoid possible errors. Thus, Cullmann's hermeneutics exclude the exegete's own person from exegesis and yet at the same time it includes him or her.

Although Cullmann based some points on Dilthey's hermeneutics, he clearly severs from Dilthey hermeneutics clearly in respect of instability of meaning. Cullmann would agree with Hirsch's concept of "meaning" which is that which is represented by a text and what the author meant by his use of a particular sign sequence. "Significance," on the other hand, names a relationship between that meaning and a person, or a conception or a situation, or indeed anything imaginable.

It must be recognized that Cullmann had no philosophical concerns when he declares his hermeneutical concepts. The main questions that concerned him were what does the New Testament mean? And then asking: what does it mean for me. However, it should also be in some degree recognized that history was the foundation for his Heilsgeschichtliche Hermeneutics.

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