

Hans Urs von Balthasar His Life and His Work, ed David Schindler

Preface

- The Christian remains the guardian of the metaphysical wonder which is point of origin for philosophy and for authentic human existence (von Balthasar)
 - Through a child opening eyes to mother's smile
 - The relationship is *a priori* and calls forth wonder at being permitted to be
 - ***The condition of being permitted cannot be surpassed by any additional insight into laws and necessities of the world*** (von Balthasar)
- "Being permitted" = disposition providing unifying center of great themes of von Balthasar's life and work
 - Aspects of and responses to gift
 - *Gift first spoken by trinitarian God in Jesus Christ and received into creation through Mary and the Church by means of the Holy Spirit*
- Von Balthasar's theology = theology of wonder and gift
 - Finds form in CHristic-Marian-ecclesial *fiat*
 - Basic method of theology = *kniende theologie* praying/kneeling theology
 - Does not exclude other (historical-critical) methods
 - Includes and transforms them
 - The saints alone have warrant to speak about God
- Profound sense of gift inspires his reading of Western culture
 - The West drifted from wonder to mere admiration
 - Human consciousness from Being to things
 - Loss of gratuitousness
 - Instrumentalist-positivist cast of mind of modernity = extreme form of this shift
- Christians of today tasked with affirming Being
 - Bringing light to areas of Being in darkness so primal so that light shines anew upon the whole world

- *Only in this light man can walk in accordance with what he is truly called to be*
- Not merely a speculative task
- Must read the signs of the times
- *This is the ultimate truth: Christians as guardians of a metaphysics of whole person in age which forgot Being and God, entrusted with leading this metaphysics of wholeness through that same fire (1 Corinthians 3:13)*
- Can only answer adequately by lending their own love, in encounter with their brother
- ***The mission of Christians today is to give witness in all aspects of their existence to the metaphysical act***
 - Act of love whose form is given in suffering *fiat* of Jesus Christ
- Died days before he would have been made a cardinal by JP2
- Papers in volume prepared especially for *Communio*
- (David Schindler)

Hans Urs von Balthasar, a resume of my thought

- Man with many large books -> what did he want to say?
 - Different answer for philosopher or theologian
 - ***One wishes to touch the heart of his thought***
- *Where must one start to understand you?*
 - Will try to do so “in a nutshell”
 - Danger of being too abstract
 - Here, a scheme of the trilogy
 - **Aesthetic, dramatic, logic**
- Start with situation of man
 - Limited being in limited world, but his reason open to the unlimited, to all of being
 - Proof = recognition of his finitude, contingency
 - Essences are limited, being (*l'être*) is not
 - That distinction (Thomas) = source of all religious and philosophical thought of humanity
 - All human philosophy is essentially religious and theological

- Poses problem of the Absolute Being (1)
- Major solutions to this enigma humanity has attempted?
 - Leave behind division being being and essence, infinite and finite
- Finite and limited will be non-being, an illusion one must detect
 - Buddhist mysticism
 - *Or* pure becoming in pure finitude can only conceive of itself in identifying contraries
- ***Thus necessary to commence from inescapable duality - the finite is not the infinite***
 - *Whence the division? Why are we not God?*
- First attempt at response
 - *There must have been a fall and road to salvation = return of sensible finite into intelligible infinite*
 - Way of non-biblical mystics
- Second attempt
 - Infinite God needed a finite world
 - Why?
 - *Solutions lead to pantheism*
 - If God does not need the world ***why does it exist?***
- No philosophy gives satisfactory response
 - Paul would say *God created man so he would seek the Divine*
 - **True response to philosophy can only be given by Being himself**
 - *Will man understand this revelation?*
 - To hear and understand the auto-revelation of God man must be a search for God
 - **Thus there is no biblical theology without a religious philosophy**
- **Here the substance of my thought inserts itself**
 - Our philosophy = meta-anthropology, presupposing cosmological sciences, also anthropological sciences, surpassing them toward question of being and essence of man
- Man exists only in dialogue with his neighbor
 - Infant brought to consciousness of himself by love

- (epiphany of being has sense only if in the appearance we grasp the essence which manifests itself)
- ***The One, Good, True, Beautiful = transcendental attributes of Being***
 - There must also exist an analogy between the transcendentals
 - Between those of creature and those in God
- **Two conclusions**
 - Man exists only by interpersonal dialogue (by language, speech)
 - Why deny speech to Being?
 - If God is truly God then God will be plenitude of the One Good True Beautiful
 - The limited creature participates in the transcendentals only in partial fashion
 - (confusing point about unity in a finite world) (3)
- I tried to construct a philosophy and theology starting from an analogy not of abstract Being but of Being as encountered concretely in its attributes
 - Transcendentals run through all Being
 - And are interior to each other
 - A being appears
 - Gives itself
 - Speaks itself
- ***Thus one can construct a theological aesthetique - God appears***
 - How do we distinguish his appearance among other phenomena?
 - Or the true and only living God of Israel?
 - How we perceive the glory of God in the life Cross resurrection of Christ?
- We can continue with a *dramatique* since this God enters into alliance with us
 - ***How does the absolute liberty of God in Christ confront the relative but true liberty of man?***
- We can end with a *logique* (theo-logique)
 - How can God make himself understood to man

- Infinite Word express itself in finite word without losing its sense?
 - *Problem of the two natures of CHrist*
- How can limited spirit of man grasp the unlimited sense of the Word?
 - Holy Spirit
- Touch briefly on Christian response to question posed in the beginning
 - Christian response
 - Old Testament and Islam cannot give satisfactory answer
 - The two religions affirm the fact not the why
- *The Christian response contained in these two fundamental dogmas = of the Trinity and of the Resurrection*
 - The otherness of creation is not a fall but an image of God even as it is not God
- The Son can without contradiction assume in himself the image that is the creation, purify it, make it enter into communion of divine life without dissolving it
 - One must distinguish nature and grace
- **All true solutions offered by the Christian Faith hold to these two mysteries**
 - The true battle between religions begins only after coming of Christ
 - *Humanity will renounce all philosophical questions rather than accept a philosophy which finds its final response only in Christ*
 - Christ sent his believers into the world as sheep among wolves
 - *Before making a pact with the world it is necessary to meditate on that comparison (5)*

A sketch of his life

- Danger of focusing on the writer and forgetting the human being
- *What follows = preliminary and inadequate attempt to draw a picture of this person*
- Gifts
 - Uncomplicated, humble, childlike

- Origins
 - Old patrician family in Lucerne
 - Cosmopolitan attitudes, trilingualism
 - Connection to Protestantism through grandfather
- Childhood + youth pervaded by music
 - Perfect pitch
- Studies
 - Wavered between musical and literary studies
 - Why did he go to less musical Jesuits?
- Faith
 - Simple straightforward faith
 - Survived anti-Christian currents at university
 - Doctoral dissertation
 - Examine German literature theologically from its attitude to Last Things
 - Thirty day retreat given by Fr Friedrich Kronseder SJ in 1927
 - **Decisive turning point**
- The Jesuit
 - Before the retreat never thought of becoming priest or religious
 - *You have nothing to lose - you have been called*
 - 1929 entered the novitiate of south German province of Jesuits
- Regular formation of a religious
 - Double license in philosophy and theology
- Renunciation
 - “Languishing in the desert of neo-scholasticism” (12)
- Valued certain teachers and fellow students and friends
 - *Real problem was the theology itself*
 - Was determined to rebuild the world from its foundations
 - *Erich Przywara*
- Henri de Lubac
 - *What theology was and could be*
 - Read through Augustine’s complete works
- France introduced him to theology but also great men of her literature
 - Claudel
- Bowel and throat infections

- But preparation for priesthood
- July 26 1936 ordained by Cardinal Faulhaber
- Sermon at first Mass
 - He blessed, he broke, he also gave
- Two years to work on *Stimmen der Zeit*, and his own books
 - Fr Albert Steger
 - Interpret Ignatian spirituality mystically not just ascetically
 - Professor or chaplaincy? He chose pastoral work
- The student chaplain
 - Jesuits tolerated not officially accepted in Switzerland
 - Constitutional prohibition
 - No institutional presence
 - Student chaplains had highest profile
 - *Apologetischen Blätter* kind of underground newspaper
 - No professors or “intellectuals”
- Swiss Catholicism undergoing cultural awakening
 - Student chaplaincy meant cultural work in early 40s
 - Catholics turned more to French Catholicism (reaction against Hitler’s Germany)
- Von Balthasar worked as editor and translator
 - Von Balthasar responsible for ten of fifty short anthologies
- Work with students largely cultural
 - Lectures
 - Debates (!)
 - Founded Studentische Schulungsgeheinschaft (SG) in 1941
- Student liturgies, regular sermons, conversations
 - Several retreats
 - Took full Ignatian form of exercises
- Robert Rast (1920-1946) perhaps closest to von Balthasar
 - Idea for and first leader of Schulungsgemenishaft (17)
 - Never found right approach with scientists and science
- Encounter with Protestantism
 - Basel as stronghold of Reformation
 - Karl Barth taught at Basel

- Tried to take up failed dialogue about *analogia entis* between Barth and Przywara
 - Took de Lubac's theology of creation as starting point
- Barth as third great inspirer of von Balthasar's theology
 - Especially his radical Christocentrism
- Von Balthasar aimed at Barth's conversion (!)
 - Von Balthasar the "convert maker"
 - Professor Albert Béguin
 - Adrienne Kaegi-von Speyr
 - His godmother
- With Adrienne
 - Determining influence on rest of his life and work
 - Publication of her works
 - Two volume commentary on Apocalypse of St John
- Leaving the Jesuits
 - Problems multiplying
 - 1945 Christmas sermon canceled
 - *Led to discussion of this article of the constitution*
 - Personal troubles (family, friends sick and/or dying)
 - Jesuits would not take responsibility for Frau Professor Kaegi and Community of St John
- His Lyons friends coming under fire theologically
 - Von Balthasar's emerging(?) aestheticizing theology
 - "Had not yet found his way to the true 'seeing of the form' of God's glory" (20)
- Article by the Dominican Garrigou-Lagrange "where is the new theology going?"
 - In theology he could no longer move about freely
- September 1947 meeting with Father General
 - "Go on retreat and make final decision"
 - June 1948 decided to leave the Society
 - Took 18 months to find a bishop to accept him
- Question of conflict between his "interior certainty, reached in prayer" and his obedience to the Society (the Society or God)

- “God ensures that such obedience, if practiced in a childlike way without ‘heroism’ or arrogance, ends up, not at the edge, but at the very foundations of the Catholic Church” (22)
- For years von Balthasar had been confronted with superabundance of charismatic attestation
- Much later could not be readmitted to Jesuits
- Two things
 - If Adrienne von Speyr had a mission in the church then she needed the mediation of a priest like von Balthasar
 - Founding of Community of St John could not have worked out better if von Balthasar had not left the Jesuits
 - In the Society his theological work would scarcely have taken this form
 - “Gamaliel principle” left his decision to future and to God
- The final years with Adrienne
 - Von Balthasar literally on the street after leaving the Society
 - Had to find new place to live outside Basel
 - “Incardinated” in diocese of Chur
 - Could move back to Basel and accept hospitality of Professor Kaegi
 - Financial upkeep???
 - Lecture tours
 - *Die Gottesfrage des heutigen Menschen*
 - Later retreats for theologians
 - Several university chairs offered
 - Turned down all
 - Needed to be free for his mission
 - *In years of middle age he found his own real center*
 - *Der Laie und der Ordensstand* 1948
 - *Die Schleifung der Bastionen* 1952
 - *Kleiner Lageplan zu meinen Büchern*
 - *Rechenschaft* 1965
 - ***The issue is the Church in the world, not radiating Church’s holiness into the profane world, but leavening***

of the world from within in order to make visible God's glory which still shines in this world

- **The center of the Church is where people see periphery - her secular mission**
 - The mission of the Church must be carried out by the laity who live completely in the world
 - Must live at very heart of Christianity, in shame of the Cross, in prayer, renunciation
 - Role of secular institutes (25)
- **All of von Balthasar's polemics revolve around this point**
 - There should be no abandoning or obscuring the bond between Christian's mission in the world and imitation of Christ crucified
- Was again "in the world"
 - Lifestyle and mission began to coincide more closely
 - *Abiding at the center meant prayer and contemplation*
 - *Adoratio* 1955
 - "Theologie und Heiligkeit"
 - "Sitting" versus "kneeling" theology
- Deeper into the Cross
 - Collaboration with Adrienne
- His own health affected
 - Form of leukemia
 - Yet never stopped working
 - Began to plan **his trilogy**
 - First volume 1961
 - Preparation of Council
- Second volume
- 1967
 - Mortal illness of Adrienne
 - Died September 17 cancer of the bowel
- New phase of life began
 - Could move more freely
 - *Erster Blick auf Adrienne von Speyr*
 - Community of St John amazed by her charismatic gifts

- The work - the foundations
 - His most important works = his foundations
- Studentische Schulungsgemeinschaft
 - Akademische Arbeitsgemeinschaft
 - Two fellowships had absence of organization
 - Depend on friendship + good will of members
 - Community of St John
 - Regarded as center of his work
- Foundation of the men's community eluded him
 - 1968 holiday home for community of Rigi-Kaltbad
 - Only in 1983 the priest' branch of Community established (29)
- Johannes Verlag
 - Attempt to be independent of market forces
 - *Opportune, importune*
 - Without this venture his own work would not have been written or published
 - *Minimum of organization*
- *Communio _ International Catholic Review*
- The writings
 - One of most prolific writers of our times
 - 85 separate volumes
 - 500+ articles and contributions
 - ~ 100 translations
 - His earliest works came into being independently
 - Dissertation, *Apokalypse*, monographs = early work
 - Patristic studies
 - *Das Weizenkorn* 1944
 - *Das Herz der Welt* 1945 and *Das Weizenkorn*
 - ***His real breakthrough work***
 - Then writings around Adrienne's mission
 - Study of Bernanos
 - *Descent as a way to God in imitation of God who came down to us*
 - *Theologie der Geschichte* 1950

- Early expression of heart of his theology
- Second creative period
 - Richer, more easily surveyed
 - ***Great trilogy with fifteen volumes*** (1961-1987)
 - An aesthetic of God's glory blazing forth in the world became possible only when von Balthasar came to see the descent of Christ as the form in which God reveals himself in the world
 - All volumes of *Herrlichkeit* circle around this point
 - Holy fools, steps of prophetic obedience
- *Theodramatik* conceived before the Aesthetic
- Theologik mattered to him less
 - Almost did not write it
 - **The trilogy was complete**
- A few works planned for remained unwritten
 - "The book on obedience" parts can be assembled
 - "Encounter with Asia"
 - "Buddhism and Christianity"
 - *Lectio Spiritualis* and *Christliche Meister*
 - Concern for spiritual tradition of the Fathers
 - And "continuous German spirituality"
- Expansion and Simplification - Honors
 - Last two decades became what he was regarded as being
 - Last volume of *Herrlichkeit*
 - Determined theological image people have of him
 - Second Synod of Bishops 1971
 - One of the theological secretaries + drafted document on priestly spirituality
- Accumulated honor after honor
 - Romano Guardini Prize 1971
 - Corresponding Fellow of British Academy
 - French Academy
 - 1977 first von Balthasar symposium at Catholic University of America
 - International Paul VI Prize 1984

- Symposium on Rome on Adrienne 1985
- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart Prize 1987
- Shorter works
 - Public passion shines through the trilogy
 - Breaks through unrestrained in smaller works of final years
 - Carried his theology out into the world more than the trilogy
 - *Glaubhaft ist nur Liebe* 1963
 - Positive counterpoint to *Schleifung der Bastionen*
 - Emphasized Church's committed action on behalf of the world
 - Now misunderstood to mean adaptation to the world
 - *Wer ist ein Christ?*
 - "Horn blast" of *Bastionen* followed by "drumbeat" of *Cordula*
 - Famous for dialogue between Christian and well-intentioned commissar
 - Respect and admiration for Karl Rahner
 - Did not understand each other at deep level
 - *Rahner's starting point was Kant and scholasticism, von Balthasar's was Goethe and the Fathers*
 - *Klarstellungen* 1971
 - *Der antirömische Affekt* 1974
 - Contains von Balthasar's ecclesiology *in nice*
 - Another series intended to lead the reader to heart of Christianity (39)
 - Guide people to simplicity of faith
 - International Theological Commission
 - ***Does one have to find some kind of consensus from diversity of theologies, a diversity already evidence in New Testament? Or has unity already been given, from the beginning, in Christ, a unity which can be unfolded into diversity?***

- *Einfaltungen: Auf Wegen christlicher Einigung* 1969
- *Die Wahrheit ist symphonisch: Aspekte des christlichen Pluralismus* 1972
- *Katholisch: Aspekte des Mysteriums* 1975
 - How distinctively Catholic doctrines belong to heart of Christianity
- *Christen sind einfältig* 1983
- One last controversy mainly with the right
 - Hope beyond judgment and possible damnation
- The final years
 - Final years more difficult
 - Not enough time to read and work
 - Size of mail and number of visitors
 - Three new circles of friends
 - 1988 appointed to cardinal
 - “Heaven had other plans”
 - On the desk lay completed manuscript of a book
 - *Wenn ihr nicht werdet wie dieses Kind*
- John
 - He gave name “John” to most important foundations
 - Community of St John
 - Johannes Verlag
 - “The watchword for the Church and theology in every age: ‘What is that to you?’” (42)
 - The Johannine Church (of love) runs ahead of the Petrine office and gives it precedence

Werner Löser, The Ignatian Exercises in the work of Hans Urs von Balthasar

- *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius of Loyola as among most important works of spiritual literature
 - The voice of von Balthasar is little heard
 - Section one
 - Biographical background

- Section two
 - Interpretation of the Exercises in his theology
- Section three
 - How his entire theological conception is shaped by options stemming from the Exercises
- Biographical aspects
 - Von Balthasar as “fervent disciple” of St Ignatius (de Lubac)
 - Key to understanding his work and path
 - Summer 1927 thirty day Ignatian retreat under direction of Friedrich Kronseder SJ
 - Crucial turning point
 - Came to know + grasp God’s will in sense of “first occasion of making a good choice”
 - Choice is center of the *Exercises*
 - Twenty years in Society of Jesus
 - Leaving the order 1950 not turning from Ignatius
 - Remained tied to Society of Jesus
 - Expressed at times in concerned criticism
 - ~ 100 retreats
 - “Becomes clear what being a Christian means in its ‘origin’”
- The *Exercises* in his theology
 - Considerable number of studies
- Works surrounding his theological studies. Translation of the *Spiritual Exercises*
 - First came out 1946
 - “To reproduce whenever possible the authentic tone of the original”
 - The “open comparative” = “spiritual password of the Exercises”
- The *Exercises* and theology
 - Soon after 1948 article in journal *Orientierung*
 - Theology of Exercises not sufficiently noticed and containing permanently relevant accents
 - Ignatius had new access to Gospe moved by God’s Spirit
 - Could enrich academic theology + make it fruitful
 - Theologians should pay new attention to Exercises

- Few considered Exercises must contain pointers + points for theoretical theology also
- Certain dualism between theoretical philosophy and theology with specifically pre-Ignatian form
- Three concepts around which theology of Exercises revolves
 - Choice
 - Indifference
 - Obedience
- Interpretation of motifs and texts taken from Spiritual Exercises - The Christian state of life
 - *The Christian State of Life* 1945 but published 1977 in reworked form
 - Core event of Exercises = self-abandonment to God's call, choosing God's choice
 - Choice is made into a "state"
 - General state of Christians
 - Differentiated state of life as priest, person with vows, married
 - "Concrete standing here and there within this state"
 - Ignatius surpassed ancient + medieval doctrine of spiritual life
 - Ladder of perfection independent of concrete call of God
 - Unfolded systematically what is contained in new spiritual teaching of the Exercises
 - God who chooses + calls out of love
 - Jesus Christ in his obedience to the Father
 - The Holy Spirit who bears the Father's will toward Christ
 - Thus the Triune God
 - And the Church
 - Finally the human person
 - *The Christian State of Life* = systematic meditation + reflection on motif of "choice"
 - Placed into larger theological contexts + clarified in its implicit contents
 - "Three forms of abandonment"
 - Correct fundamental disposition of creature in face of choosing + calling God = *abandonment* or disposability

- Abandonment of the Christian
 - Of Mary
 - Of Jesus Christ
- Abandonment = openness without which one going through Exercises cannot choose
 - At issue is *indiferencia*
 - First week of purification
 - By fourth week
 - We choose what God chooses for us
 - We have been created for this reality chosen for us by God from eternity
 - By choosing God's choice we realize our own idea as it exists in God
 - ***This is supreme freedom***
 - In Ignatius passive abandonment becomes "active indifference"
 - *Indiferencia* transforms into obedience
- "To love the Church?"
 - Famous chapter "Rules for Thinking with the Church" (353-70)
 - Only the Marian character of the Church (rules 1 and 13) serve as foundation for assent to the Church
 - ***Remarkable paragraph top 110***
 - What is at issue = fundamental attitude: obedient readiness before the "true bride of Christ" and her ordinances
 - Von Balthasar reminds us of Church's Petrine character
 - Marian and Petrine elements constitute inner dimensions of Church founded by Christ
 - Final word of exercises is *alabar*
 - Praise and fundamental assent + approval of ecclesial things
- "Two modes of faith"
 - 1967 study
 - Two modes of faith
 - Martin Luther

- More negative attitude toward meditation on life of Jesus
- Ignatius of Loyola
 - Person abandons himself to God's call in context of meditations on life of Jesus
 - *Exercise 53*
 - Von Balthasar
 - Relation between master who calls + disciple who follows "comes from Pauline faith in substitution of the sinner on the Cross"
 - ***Confusing paragraph bottom 111***
 - Ignatius has us meditate not only on Christ on the Cross but on *Christ as he meets us in multitude of mysteries of his life*
- "Modern exegesis has shaken trust in the texts of the Gospels, but also opened up possibilities of seeing the mysterious content of Jesus' earthly life in retrospective vision from Easter" (for example, implicit Christology)
- *This brings to bear the concerns of Ignatius (112)*
 - Call of Jesus' divine word to place person into eschatological dimension of life
- Meditation on the *mysteria vitae Christi* employs all senses + powers
- Ignatius does not speak of spiritual senses that grow when bodily senses are laid to rest
- **The human person is unity of body and soul and all faculties of sense are borne (so Aquinas) by the one and only spiritual soul**

- *Applicatio sensum*
 - See *The Glory of the Lord*
 - Perception of the form *Gestalt* of revelation
 - Poverty plays a great role
 - “Enduring all injustice, shame, poverty” (113)
- Discernment of Spirits
 - (113) two series of “rules for discernment of spirits” (313-27; 328-36)
 - Especially in third volume of *Theologik* 1987 (especially theology of Holy Spirit)
 - Working of Holy Spirit in the Church
 - *Being moved by the spirits was for Ignatius the point of departure of his spiritual path*
 - Characteristic = orientation of the rules toward choice
 - “In every life or state which God gives us for us to choose, we should be able to reach perfection”
 - Task of the retreat master to discern spirits
 - Must be a control of this subjectivity through objectivity of the official Church
 - Locating the exercises in the history of theology
 - Situates endeavors concerning the Exercises within history of theology and spirituality
 - “Homo creatus est”
 - “Principle and foundation” of the Exercises
 - “Man was created to praise, reverence, serve God and sl.9o to save his soul” (23)
 - Places that within context of history of philosophy and theology
 - In the Exercises *the Christian image of God and humanity is expressed with new and unaccustomed clarity*
 - Expresses meaning of being human in two ways
 - To praise ...

- To save ...
 - Motif with long pre-Christian history
 - “Origin and destiny of human person disclosed in longing for happiness”
 - Sometimes God becomes means of reaching for bliss
 - *Man becomes measure of all things and theology becomes anthropology (115)*
- Striving for salvation + blessed is human destiny in the second place
 - Praise + service of God
 - Psalms
 - Jesus’ life + death = praise, reverence, service
 - Completed in the Cross
 - *The distance of the incarnate and finally crucified Jesus from the Father, which can only be thought in a trinitarian theology, is final ground of possibility of God-given distance and self-standing of created human person before God*
 - Ignatius gave first place to think in terms of descending *agape*
 - Subordinate place ascending *eros*
 - Eros must be integrated into the whole
 - Ignatius went beyond theology of the ancient Church + Middle AGes
 - Brought biblical thought to bear in a new way
 - **Ignatius is decisively important in attempting to**

**find correct mediation
between Western metaphysics
and Christian theology
inasmuch as he freed theology
and anthropology again from
the embrace of philosophy
not by abandoning
philosophy but by inserting it
into the primarily theological
overall picture**

- Ignatius of Loyola and the Baroque glory of representation
 - Ignatius of towering importance in history of spiritual theology
 - Received from late medieval tradition but placed new emphases
 - Especially concerning *indiferencia*
 - “Becoming empty” and readiness to “transcend beyond all other creatures into immediacy with God”
 - *First to include an active cooperation with the omnipotent and all-active God*
 - *An analogia libertatis (117)*
 - ***The true mystery of Christian revelation = the completion of the kingdom of God may be sought as God’s universal causality in the creature’s active cooperation***
 - Man chooses what God gives us to choose
 - Great culture of the baroque
 - One-sided tendencies felt when the Reformation was resisted
 - Spiritual teachers + schools of the Society of Jesus took up “indifference” and interpreted it in other ways
 - In earlier terms
 - The “mystical” tradition alive everywhere

- (Rw - passive contemplation)
- ***Clear that part of Ignatian spirituality is closely intertwined unity of action and contemplation***
- Theology out of the spirit of the exercises
 - Von Balthasar shaped his own theological conception out of the spirit of the Exercises
 - *I will venture to pinpoint (more briefly than von Balthasar did in the Epilog to the trilogy) the central thought out of which the whole is formed and relate it to the fundamental Ignatian intuition*
 - Decisive thing = *analogia libertatis*
 - “Analogy of freedom” patterned after “analogy of being”
 - Also refers to relation between God and the world, Creator and creation
 - Being now understood as freedom
 - Issue is togetherness of infinitive divine freedom and finite human freedom
 - (Rw - echoes of Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity?*)
 - **Theology from *analogia libertatis* means:**
 - **Emphasis on action of the triune God on behalf of the world, which can in no way be deduced**
 - **And simultaneously on the Marian, ecclesial, personal presence with God in the sign of indifference or following**
 - *Analogia libertatis* signals comprehensive new shaping of Christian theology as a whole
 - Decisive question =
 - ***How can human freedom live itself out to the point of closing itself against God while God respects such***

human paths and integrates them in saving fashion into his own life?

- **To answer this von Balthasar placed Christian theology of the Cross at the center of his work**
- In the Cross God remains in the face of the drama of history the God of merciful and glorious love
- This theology claims to be an ontology made concretely possible only through the Gospel
 - The trilogy shows how the great themes of Western metaphysics are transformed in such an ontology
 - Beauty
 - Freedom
 - Truth

Antonio Sicari, OCD - Hans Urs von Balthasar: Theology and Holiness

- Von Balthasar dealt with *theology and holiness* for first time in essay published in *Wort and Wahrheit* (1948): 881-96
 - Later part of first volume of *Skizzen zur Theologie: Verbum Caro* (121)
- *It is another matter to answer whether theology in general and theologians in particular have taken note of those provocative suggestions or have grasped their weightiness*
 - (Rw - which suggestions? Ah in the above publications)
 - Not subjective but an objective matter
- Meanwhile Second Vatican gave impetus to renewal of theology
- Worth posing the terms of the “question” anew
- “Here we understand the title ‘theologian’ in the fullest sense as that of a doctor of the Church whose office and mission consist in explaining

revelation in its fullness and completeness and thus in considering dogmatics as the central point of this activity” (*Verbum Caro*, Italian, 200)

- The author observed in first centuries of Christian era not difficult to perceive unity between knowledge and life
 - “Doctor” “pastor” “saint” normally combined in same person
- The most significant personalities assume these offices and missions
- For first millennium great dogmatic theologians are some of the great saints
 - “Total theologians”
 - ***Several qualities essential to theological work***
 - “Walk in the truth” = modality in which believers are in possession of the truth
 - Certainty of doctrine
 - Theological totality gave to their teaching profound tranquility and certainty
 - *Ecclesial credibility*
 - Unitary character of the disciplines
 - Not dualism between dogmatics and spirituality
- *The problem begins when theology finds itself with “abundance of philosophical truth” and then with development of secular sciences of nature and of spirit (!)*
- First great theologians of mature scholasticism
 - “Concern for the whole” remains fundamental
 - Theology sacramentally transfigures science and irradiating it from within
 - When one sees the division between dogmatic and spiritual theologians
 - Overload of earthly philosophy is foreign to spiritual theologians
 - Dogmatic theologians dedicate to describing and grounding theology as a rational science in face of other sciences
 - ***They develop subtle and satisfied ability in mastering the data of revelation and of the human sciences together***
- With bitterness von Balthasar observes
 - Bremond’s *Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux*

- Spiritual theologians feel constrained to describe experience of God subjectively (123)
- Even if they attain “doctors of the Church” they are never such from dogmatic point of view
 - Sometimes even the Bible frightened them
- Dogmatic theologians render their task more objective and scientific from which they tend to exclude
 - Duty of giving existential covering to their teaching
 - Growing difficulty perceiving and conceiving reciprocity of offices and charisms
 - Their “office” of dogmatically questioning experience of spiritual theologians
 - ***If spiritual theologians no longer dare to be dogmatic, the dogmatic theologians no longer dare to be spiritual***
- Dogmatic theologians have cultivated a secret vice
 - No longer have pretensions of holiness
 - Passed to more dangerous pseudo-theological justification of not infecting purity of the science with devotion and subjectivization
- Von Balthasar offered outline of how to move towards a “new unity”
 - Described the existential placing of the saint from view of those problems that theology is called to confront theoretically
 - Show how experiences of the saints should be used in reconstructing fundamental theological treatises
 - Most comprehensive point of view = ***question of the “doctrine of faith” understood as a personal dialogue between bride and groom, between Church and Christ***
- A further question and possibility
 - Von Balthasar was reserved in his essay
 - ***A theologian who demands a bond between holiness and theology exposes himself***
 - Subject to judgment and even blackmail
- Saint should have recourse to objective descriptions
 - Speak of the holiness of the Church
- Where theology is “theological activity” this objective “holiness” should show subjectively

- The problem returns
- When bond is habitually broken
- Tempted to renounce the entire project
 - Unless something happens to unity the subjective and objective aspect to permit him to speak freely of both
 - This “something” is well known
 - ***Between the subjective holiness that theological should have in actu and objective holiness (of the Church) there is inserted the contagion, objective and subjective at once, between different ecclesial subjects whose experience and mission is unified by the Spirit***
- When discussing relations between “theology and Church” Ratzinger observed (125)
 - Such talk has its foundation in the logic of things and the testimony of history
 - We can understand where this new discussion arises starting in 1948
 - Encounter with Adrienne von Speyr 1940
- Preface to *A First Glance at Adrienne von Speyr*
 - *Adrienne laid the foundations for most of what I published beginning from 1940*
 - Her works and mine = two halves of a whole with single foundation at its center
- The depths von Balthasar received from experience and teachings of von Speyr found a place and rigorous systematization in his dogmatics (!)
 - *Mysterium Paschale* (1968)
 - He loves those books of his in which the *communio sanctorum* is most evident
- Only existing theologian considers his “translations” as integral and not secondary part of his own work
 - His whole output secondary with respect to weaving ecclesial ties and forming people in holiness
 - All the themes of Second Vatican were precisely anticipated by him (wrote de Lubac)

- “Von Balthasar calls all ... to produce their notes since for him all voices are necessary to compose the catholic symphony for the greater glory of God” (de Lubac)
- *The problem of relations between holiness and theology, between dogmatics and “spirituality” (in broadest sense) cannot be only a problem of the work and personal life of Fr von Balthasar*
- **Most difficult task = systematizing omst important data for reconstruction of their unity**
 - Necessary to make explicit a problem only hinted at implicitly in texts to which we referred
 - *Separation between dogmatics and spirituality has basis in separation artificially induced by interpreters within revelation itself*
 - Think of ecclesiology on one hand and the Gospels on the other
 - In ecclesiology only certain general statements of principle are generally drawn from the Gospels (128)
 - Entire rest of the Gospel *the whole* “episodic mess” is abandoned to “spirituality”
 - Spirituality reflects and writers on these “encounters”
 - Dogmatics does not know what to do with them
- A serious consequence is observed (of such a separation)
 - Often in theology a question of legitimate pluralism or plurality of theologies present in Scripture
 - ***What is forgotten is this plurality is not a plurality of theological theories but of “theological encounters” of which the texts are a testimony***
 - *In every encounter Jesus creatively establishes a particular reality with unmistakable contours*
 - *These constitute irrepeatable unities that are impossible to add together*

- **How does it stand with the alleged theological pluralism if the multiplicity of encounters and approaches is what is neglected, while there passes into the foreground a multiplicity of presentations abstracted from the one and only Christ, thus a multiplicity of theories, and thus again a multiple possession of eventual theologies on the Christ-idea? (128-129)**
- *Let us try to synthesize in schematic way the strong points are from rediscovered unity of theology and holiness*
 - (1) rediscovered at the source by recovering the identity of Jesus as the sole “theologian”
 - Son did this by emptying himself in listening obedience to the Father
 - Theology required holiness because it “leads into” the intimate life of God where true and original “theology” takes place of itself
 - (2) letting oneself be “sanctified” by his Spirit to the point of offering one’s life
 - Knowledge can only be loving knowledge
 - Loving knowledge can only be attained in practiced love which becomes an instrument of knowledge
 - (3) a particular witness will be adequate only if the one who “speaks of God” assumes the interior form demanded by the word
 - If one “understands” one is holy, if one is holy one “understands”
 - (4) prayer is “the only realistic attitude before the revealed mystery”
 - Does not mean affective theology is opposed to rigorously scientific one
 - (5) need to escape dualism and not confuse “prayed theology” with external attitudes as outer covering of scientific activity
 - At its highest point revelation is the Word of God made man
 - Perfect free response is necessary for this becoming man
 - *Mary is the prototype of the whole theology of the Church and for this she is honored with the title “Theologos”*

- Every ecclesial theology as a response to the infinitely free and gratuitous Word of God must be adoration, thanksgiving - **doxology**
- (6) before (7) through (10) we must radicalize the discussion by adding this
 - *The essential element of the whole previous reflection is given by the realization that the Christ-Mary relation (speaking-listening) and thus the Christ-disciple, -community, and -hagiographer relation is not only the extrinsic condition of revelation but also the “content” of revelation, a content into which each one should enter who wishes to treat of revelation as such*
- (7) “praying theology” founded on total involvement in what is revealed has enormous methodological relevance
 - Permits him correctly to confront most serious and fundamental question
 - Dogmatics is not a “connecting link” between revelation and something else
 - It is enough to understand the “sole mediator between God and man: Jesus Christ” and to believe in him
 - The Christian does not need to leave the center that is Christ to communicate him to the world
 - Saints know they do not leave their center in Christ for an instant
 - They philosophize as Christians
- (8) theologian’s proper placing with respect to “holiness” provides him existentially with a set of conceptual instruments
 - The category that pervades all revelation and theology is the “indissoluble marriage”
 - Between human and divine natures in Christ
 - Revelation of trinitarian love poured out on the world
- (9) theology is learning to depend on its center to explain all existence and history
- (10) A great tripartition of the Creed will be recovered
 - To explain doctrine of creation in relation to the Father

- Making use of saints experience of God's paternity of the world
- To explain Christological doctrine especially in its "passiological" core
- Explain the pneumatic doctrine as a "proclamation of Christ in the heart of the Church and of the believer" so as to take up in it the whole of ethics, piety, liturgy, sacramental theology, apologetics
 - And introduce into this *the archetypical figure of the saints and not that of the sinner*
- **Theology takes place beginning with the living insertion of the theologian within the Church, and this living insertion is both an assumption of objective holiness and a gift/task of subjective holiness**
 - From this sole point of view theology can maintain its identity and wholeness

George Chantaine, SJ - Exegesis and Contemplation in the Work of Hans Urs von Balthasar

- Asked German priest of Community of St John what relevance belonging to the Community had to his ministry
 - *We have learned how to contemplate God in the Scripture and how to exercise our ministry in God*
 - Here we touch on the mystery of God's communicating himself to man
 - Why had priest not learned this
 - How did work of Fr von Balthasar assist him
 - What bond connects exegesis and contemplation in theology of von Balthasar
- **Exegesis and Contemplation from Sixteenth Century to our Day**
 - "In school we learned scientific exegesis. How does that foster personal prayer and life of our faithful?"
 - Exegetical method (taught in seminaries) is estranged from spirit in which Church reads and understands Sacred Scripture in her liturgy

- Last Synod 1987
 - “Scripture had no role in the work of the Synod”
- Causes of this dichotomy are known
 - At latest from the sixteenth century
 - For intellectual reasons and spiritual drift
 - *Spiritual reality presents itself under three aspects in the spiritual sense*
 - Mystery of Christ + the Church
 - Appropriation by the faithful
 - Ultimate and heavenly manifestation in God
 - ***The allegorical***
 - ***Tropological***
 - ***Anagogical***
- Sixteenth century
 - Opponents of Erasmus labeled him a philologist
 - Meister Eckhard hastened separation between theology and mysticism
 - ***Because of their (religious persons) work and spiritual drift of the times they were put in position of developing a subjective mysticism - in which the experiences and states of the subject were interpreted as graces from God rather than lived exegesis of the mysteries of the Lord (134)***
- Luther perceived this situation
 - Wanted to restore to theology its spiritual objectivity by rooting it in Scripture
 - Effectively tore word of God out of the ecclesial subject considered as subjective spirit and thus as sinful (???)
 - **Contemplation became dogmatic**
 - Who received the word?
 - Who by faith identifies with the objective spirit?
 - ***What is that if not the Church?***
 - Two different answers
 - Kant
 - Transcendental subject
 - Contemplation is impossible

- Hegel
 - Absolute Spirit
 - Contemplation is restored
 - But is not contemplation of Scripture
 - *Meaning is extracted from fact by reason - it is not the meaning of the fact itself*
 - As with Luther ***dialectic brings about meaning***
- The idea is forged of an objectivity of literal sense which simply becomes the meaning of Scripture
 - Objective
 - Not theological or spiritual
 - ***What is objective is true - everyone thinks according to a common universal mentality***
 - Theological and spiritual is matter of choice
 - No one can contest without shackling liberty
 - (Rw - see work of Bishop Robert Barron)
 - **Here is the root of pluralism**
 - Meaning is objective which is determined by faith purified from facticity
 - (Rw - somewhat confusing discussion page 135)
 - **Such exegesis ignored contemplation**
 - *The objectivity of a subject who is able freely to determine who he is*
 - Heinrich Schlier
 - *Without foregoing scientific precision the exegete has rediscovered traditional exegesis but at a new price*
- **The ecclesiastical milieu**
 - Two remarks
 - No intention of considering the evolution of theology since sixteenth century as catastrophic
 - The work of von Balthasar does not present as the Blessed Isles in the middle of a stormy sea
 - It is positioned in the midst of an exceptional theological and spiritual flowering

- The work of von Speyr *is crucial for the contemplation of God and Sacred Scripture*
 - She enjoyed gift of prophecy ~ interpreting Scripture
- How do these gifts concern us and clarify our subject?
 - With Adrienne
 - What is extraordinary disappears in order to be put at the service of all
 - The spiritual and intellectual crisis is deeper than we thought
 - Von Speyr found in von Balthasar a theologian predisposed to contemplate the mystery of God in Scripture
 - Ignatius Loyola formed him through the Exercise
 - Friendship of Fr de Lubac
 - The division between theology and sanctity is “the worst disaster in the history of the Church” (1984)
 - *It is Christ seated at the Father’s right hand acting in the world thanks to the Spirit who animates the Church*
 - Such a unity of exegesis and contemplation does not allow return to the past or nostalgia for former state of the disciplines
 - Von Balthasar deals with modern exegesis with same seriousness
 - Unforgettable meditation on the Old Testament in volume four of *Herrlichkeit*
 - Von Balthasar recognizes the “humility of the spirit” (de Lubac) of which scientific exegesis only notices the objective shell (138)
- “To know as I am known”
 - Neither exegesis nor contemplation are weakened in the thought of von Balthasar
 - It is question of understanding with available exegetical methods what the letter of Scripture makes known of the history of God with his people in order to contemplate there the trinitarian love toward all humanity as it springs forth from the intimate life of God himself

- *To contemplate “the heart of the world” with those who also contemplated it - first of all with the Mother of God*
- How does von Balthasar connect exegesis and contemplation?
 - “I know as I am known” (St Paul)
 - There is no contemplation of God in Scripture if one does not allow himself to be determined and measured
 - The “center of the form of revelation” is Christ
 - Von Balthasar formulates principle of Christian exegesis
 - ***The historic Fact of Christ is not a fragment of revelation***
 - It is the plenitude of revelation and completely illuminates it
- Only objective evidence offers a foundation of solidity which can support such an edifice (see above top 140)
 - Central figure of revelation should be self-evident
- How does one perceive such evidence?
 - It “says nothing to me”
 - Subjectivity closed upon itself and not open to what is objective
 - Fact of Christ as one of many objects of knowledge
 - Apply scientific method
 - Its status is determined by method one applies to it
 - Scientific knowledge but not contemplation
 - Third case
 - Knowledge of the Fact of Christ as he gives himself to be known
 - One who desires to know should correspond to him making himself known
 - **Does not allow the perceive to intervene in the objective evidence or modify it or substitute something for it**
- Should we apply scholastic axiom *quidquid recipitur, secundum modum recipientis recipitur*?
 - whatever is received, is it received according to the manner of the recipient?

- **No**
- ***Confusing discussion 141***
- This alliance of God + man possesses a dialectic characteristic of the contemplation of God
 - ????? page 143
 - To believe is not to divest oneself of what is offered but to offer oneself and stand fast (von Balthasar) (143)
- **Thus the first condition for understanding is at one and the same time that of faith and of science** (144)
 - “To accept what is given just as it offers itself”
 - ?????
- **The tradition renewed and enriched**
 - We understand why his contemplation is scriptural and his exegesis contemplative
 - *We must show this reason overcomes the reasons for separation between exegesis and contemplation (since 16th century)*
 - Exegesis forms a unity with contemplation because **it accepts what is given just as it offers itself**
 - The datum manifests what is given and instead of submitting it to its determination the subject receives it in its “givenness”
 - With openness corresponding to opening of human spirit to God and is **Marian**
 - This attitude is manifest in act of giving oneself to God - ***in Christ the central figure of revelation***
 - **We must allow the Creator to communicate without interference with his creature**
 - Centrality of Mary and John
 - Von Balthasar **integrates** the approaches of Ragner and Teilhard
 - The anthropological and cosmological ways are not appropriate to the *theologos*
 - With John he knows the Spirit is received entirely through the faith of the Mother, open to God, and that united by the Lord to the Mother, John the apostle is the witness to it

- Between God and man is a dialectic not of appropriation and construction (Luther and Hegel) but superabundance and contemplation
 - at the moment when he is transcended
 - This dialect follows the rhythm of the life and logic of the Trinity
- ***And so the area of contemplation never ceases to expand, the texts of the Church broaden, the soul is dilated***
 - Contemplation is coextensive with the mission
 - “If you do not believe you will not hold fast” (Isaiah 7:8, Buber)
 - *Let things happen (von Speyr)*
 - **Mission is the true name of contemplation**
- Citation from *as betrachtende Gebet*
-

Peter Henrici SJ - The philosophy of Hans Urs von Balthasar

- Never earned a doctorate in theology
 - Let us set up a few marker to stake out his philosophy in rough outline
- The works
 - His books permeated by philosophy
 - Three volumes of *Apokalypse der deutschen Seele*
- Studied scholastic philosophy two years in Pullach
 - Volume on Maximus, subtitle *Höhe und Krise des griechischen Weltbilds*
 - Extension of Chalcedonian formula to cosmic formula
 - Prototype of encounter between East and West
 - Between Asian and European thought
- Three following writings constitute heart of his philosophical writings
 - 1946 “Von den Aufgaben der katholischen Philosophie in der Zeit”
 - Response to charge of anti-scholasticism
 - *Sees the presupposition of a mutually fruitful encounter in the scholastic doctrine of the transcendentals and in the real distinction between existence and essence*

- Systematic-philosophical main work *Wahrheit, Bd I: Wahrheit der Welt*
 - Only purely systematic-philosophical work
 - A phenomenology of truth
 - Nature of truth seen in encounter between lover and beloved
 - Truth manifests itself as revelation but also as sheltering participation
- *Karl Barth: Darstellung und Deutung seiner Theologie*
 - The dialogue had failed because of sharp opposition between *analogia entis* and *analogia fidei*
 - Comes closest to academic theology
 - Shows how he conceives interpenetration of philosophy and theology
- Ten years transitional period
 - *Die Gottesfrage des heutigen Menschen*
 - **Attempt to explain “to this modern man his specific religious situation in contrast to earlier situations”**
 - Other important works
- Late or mature period
 - The Aesthetic, Dramatic, Logic
 - Six places where philosophy occupies center stage (152)
 - *Herrlichkeit, Bd III/I: Im Raum der Metaphysik*
 - Embed theological aesthetics in European intellectual history
- Little volume *Glaubhaft ist nur Liebe*
 - Densest summary of his thought
 - Less central role of philosophy
 - “Regagner une philosophie à la théologie”
 - Brings to light his position on theory of knowledge and science
- The form (Gestalt)
 - Method
 - Two points from the lit
 - Von Balthasar made an important contribution to Christian philosophy
 - He makes this contribution less as a systematic thinker than as interpreter of thought
 - Rahner chose Kant, I chose Goethe

- Goethe's poem, "The Metamorphosis of Plants"
- *We attempt to glimpse the form (Gestalt) of his philosophy by observing how he sees the great figures (Gestalt) of the history of thought but also the form (Gestalt) of the central philosophical contents*
- In seeing figures his method cannot be called systematic nor historical
 - It is closest to phenomenology (with measure of literary criticism)
 - *They use the historical structures of world views like stones to build a building which has trans-historical meaning*
 - We must condense a movement which is drawn in condensed fashion (155)
 - Von Balthasar keeps himself outside this movement
 - *He does not read history so much as he lets his own views be formed step by step by the course of history*
 - **We want to focus on a few figures whose presence shapes the whole of his work**
- Figures - Plato-Plotinus-Hegel
 - First deep access to philosophy in Hans Eibl's lectures on Plotinus in Vienna
 - The vista opened up by Plato remained ambiguous (his philosophy of eros) (156)
 - The question (which remains open in Plotinus) confronts us with the "European decision"
 - *Whether the successors tend toward a philosophy of identity (highpoint is Hegel but whose influence pervades and falsifies? Christian mysticism) or whether they interpret Plotinus in terms of the "suspended-adventist" features of his thought*
- **Hegel**

- The post-Platonic line of false decision leads directly to Hegel and finds its unsurpassable conclusion in “absolute knowledge”
- *Plotinus concludes the thought of antiquity*
- *Hegel concludes that of modernity*
 - **His philosophy stands before von Balthasar’s eyes as the possibility which is infinitely proximate to the Christian thinker yet cannot be accepted (157)**
 - In *Glory* von Balthasar shows
 - Hegel proceeds from Christian revelation
 - Expels biblical glory from it in three steps
 - Identifies the remaining doctrine of the Holy Spirit with the absolute [divine-cosmic] spirit
 - Against Hegel’s attempt “to construct something like a system of truth” which “knowingly or not contains a feature of blasphemy, a feature of anti-Christianity”
 - (Rw - something about Christ who unites in a single act the absolutely divine and anti-divine in the simplicity of his obedience) (158)
- Kierkegaard and Nietzsche
 - Kierkegaardian cadence in final passage of second volume of *Theologik*
 - Kierkegaard’s condemnation of the aesthetic
 - Fascinated by Nietzsche even though no Christian can follow his thought
 - The ordering of nature to supernature remains fundamental theme of von Balthasar
 - He sees “supernatural” especially in God’s loving descent
 - Truth and good exist only in dialogue
 - Three “jousts” between Kierkegaard and Nietzsche
- Thomas Aquinas
 - Ecclesiality provides a final key word

- Alternative between Nietzsche and Kierkegaard could mislead into dissolving philosophy into pure existence, attitude without contents
- This contradicts entire Western tradition of thought and the structure of revelation itself
 - Normative = *Thomas Aquinas*
 - The figure does not appear but his thinking is omnipresent
 - His commentary on Aquinas is exemplary for how one should read Thomas
 - On background of his sources
 - Framework of debates of his time
- Von Balthasar does not understand himself as a “Thomist” nor back up his thought by means of quotations from Thomas
 - Von Balthasar **integrates Thomas’ thinking rather than being integrated by it**
 - Situates it historically without sterilizing it historically
 - **Key turning point in history of Christian thought**
 - Aquinas as a *kairos* passing moment between old world and an approaching dualistic world that tried to separate philosophy and theology of revelation and turn each into a totality
 - ***His kinship with Thomas is connected with three of his themes***
 - *One classically Thomistic*
 - *Second controversial*
 - *Third often forgotten*
 - Main achievement was distinguishing *esse* in relation to essences
 - God as the Wholly Other
- **The Proper Form (Eigen-Gestalt) - Philosophy in view of revelation**
 - He considers the passage through the history of thought as more important than his own systematic construction

- *Always sees philosophy in light of revelation*
 - As conscious and unconscious approach to revelation
- **Therefore his philosophical doctrine of knowledge explains the truth of revelation and the process of knowledge as disclosure/concealment**
 - His entire philosophizing an *intellectus fidei* (as Anselm)
 - **An openness to revelation as such**
- *Therefore his philosophizing is thoroughly “apologetic”*
- The inner relation to revelation confronts the thinker again and again with a decision
 - Philosophy is always existential
 - Yet truth is not “subjective” as for Kierkegaard
 - What is decisive is not the attitude
 - But the attitude faced with the decisive contents
- Philosophy of being
 - Von Balthasar’s philosophy is a **philosophy of being**
 - A philosophy oriented toward objective content of revelation (different from Rahner’s) *must reflect on that in which God first reveals himself to thought*
 - **Even supernatural form of revelation can and must be inserted into this naturally revealed + revealing light**
 - *Which is being*
 - Three consequences
 - Being must be seen as filled with value
 - Issue is **being** and **metaphysics**
 - *Being unfolds itself as endowed with value in the transcendentals*
 - *And again among them first and foremost in their epitome beauty which includes truth and goodness in itself*
 - Hence the structure of the theological trilogy
 - The transcendentals are seen in the living history of the human race

- Since what manifests in the transcendentals is not merely being itself
 - Von Balthasar sees them as vessel and frame for the revelation of the glory of God
 - **The doctrine of the ontological difference (between *Sein* and *Wesen*, *esse* and *essentia*) must be the heart of his philosophy**
 - He sees entire history of metaphysics under this aspect
 - *He sees the difference as the difference between universal being and God*
 - **This difference raises the decisive question in Western history of thought**
 - *Affects and penetrates the transcendentals*
 - *Makes revelation possible in first place through the simultaneous distance and relation between the beauty of being and the glory of God*
- This opens up third aspect namely *analogia entis*
 - Learned from Erich Przywara
 - Takes analogy more deeply into the event of revelation
 - **???? (165-166)**
 - **Increasingly grounded in the trinitarian and Christological difference**
 - Analogy is more than a mere structure of creaturely metaphysics
 - ***It is anchored in being itself***
 - Because it is rooted in God
 - *Only in theological terms one can speak adequately about analogia entis*
- **But the greatest is love**
 - The chapter points to something he said again + again and has been heeded so little
 - **Being is intelligible only as love**
 - **The philosophy of being points beyond itself to a philosophy of love**

- Western history of thought (hinge in Plotinus + philosophy of love)
- In individual genesis of understanding of being and of the world when the child awakes in experience of “you” and “sees the absolute ‘God’ first in mother / in parents”
- In God’s gift of being which must be understood as a freely given personal gift
- This is more than “personal ontology” + more than dialogic
 - **It is a metaphysics of love**
 - Love alone is “credible” because it is only thing truly intelligible
 - The only thing that is truly “rational”
 - Its wonder lies beyond all that can be constructed by thought
 - ***Yet is real and is the ground of all that is real***
 - **Only when we see being as love (as poverty of eros and as selfless gift of self) do the perspectives of this immense thought come together into a simple and impressive form (Gestalt)**
 - ***Since being is love the center of the trilogy is not the Aesthetic but the Dramatic***

Wolfgang Iser, True Foundations of Authentic Theology

- Von Balthasar’s literary activity culminated in a theological synthesis the trilogy on which he spent last decades of his life
 - ***Formed in this work is the enthusiastic will of a theological mission which was entirely captured by the divine glory, led into solitude of inescapable encounter with God’s truth as it forms itself in its drama***
- The trilogy (realizing itself in analogy of series of transcendentals truth goodness and beauty) unfolds God’s saving mystery for us from perspective of
 - Form In the analogate of beauty
 - Of its self-realization in analogy of the good
 - Of its logic analogous to truth

- *The trilogy constitutes a methodically specified circling around God's absolute self-revelation in its distinct aspects*
 - *What theological method does he consider most appropriate to its divine content?*
- **Theology realizes itself with authenticity of method to the degree it receives its form from the content that molds it**
 - **Theology must relate as theology in the Holy Spirit to the comprehensive space of creation and salvation history**
 - *Theology must be a catalogically/analogically mediated integration*
 - (Rw - ?????) (169-170)
- Catalogical analogy
 - A Gerken introduced concept of catalogy (dissertation about Bonaventure)
 - *Theologie des Wortes. Das Verhältnis von Schöpfung und Inkarnation bei Bonaventura (1963)*
 - Bonaventure grasped something of the presupposition of theology
 - Lies in man's entry into God *per Christum* as absolute mediator
 - Implication
 - *If this entry per Christum is tied to this God-man then it must necessarily take on his form*
 - John 14:6
 - Entry into God *per Christum* is process of being drawn into the descent of the Son
 - A *condescensio* of human beings with incarnate Son
 - **This process = positive presupposition of all valid theologizing (Bonaventure)**
 - Theologizing must have form of descent within itself
 - "Catalogy"
 - Versus "kenotic theology"

- Despite close unity between content and form one must maintain distinction between defining the method's form and expressing the content
- For von Balthasar everything in method stands and falls with the fundamental presupposition that content determined the form in a union with the form which bears the difference between the two (171)
 - (Rw - !?)
 - The measure is not absolute knowledge but faith which must follow to the end
 - *It is in faith theologians have their content*
 - *It is in faith they have the form molded by kenosis*
 - **And as theology relates to this kenotically-formed mediation it does so in a primacy of catalog**
 - *Catalog as a theological concept of method formulates the awareness of a theological methodology that God's self-expression in the incarnate Son can only be read truly from above downward as a formed process of following the divine kenosis in theological re-flection*
- *Kenosis* = the fulcrum of both content and form of theology for von Balthasar
 - ????
 - There is a permanent mediation between truth knowledge and faith and thus between knowledge and mystery
 - This mediation resist the impression of an insight that would abolish the mystery
- Determination of *kenosis* is highly differentiated in von Balthasar
 - Three forms of *kenosis*
 - Intratrinitarian
 - Foundation of all the others
 - The act in which God exists kenotically = intradivine presupposition for seeing economic descent as *kenoses* of God and not mere displays and abstract appearances
 - Creation thus finds its place

- God descends in creation as he gives another out of love the freedom of self-actualization
 - Negative peak in human beings who want to actualize an abstract autonomy
 - *From God's perspective this position (of free creatures) has kenotic character*
 - *It can and did become other than God and even became opposed to God*
 - **Here lies the economic beginning of the theo-dramatic process of God's contact with sin**
 - Israel's "empty time"
 - God descended in the unique one and entered his final engagement
- *This is the third kenosis and at same time the kenosis posited economically by the intradivine presupposition*
 - **The incarnate Son who gives himself completely away on the Cross stands in the world as God's own descent in which the final battle occurs**
 - *In "the confrontation between the groundlessness of God's love and the groundlessness of human sin"*
 - Peak of *kenosis* reached in death of Christ
 - All hope in God extinguished in God's emissary
 - Here he suffers unsurpassable forsakenness by God in the descent of his mission *to hell* and traverses for us the infinite spaciousness which the trinitarian God is (in and for himself) (173)
- *Kenosis* becomes a key determination of God
 - Of God's theo-dramatics within himself and in the history of salvation

- If one reflects on this it leads in free divine necessity to a catalogically constituted form of theology
- We have thus catalogically found the framework and at same time the explicit criterion for assigning proper theological place to the formula of analogy formulated by Fourth Lateran Council against Joachim of Fiore
 - “For between Creator and creature no similitude can be noted, however great, without noting a greater dissimilitude” (no 806)
 - Von Balthasar sustains this and attempt to give it a catalogical foundation and remove it from false alternative between *analogia entis* and *analogia fidei*
 - Problems with both
 - This fruitless alternative (= ?) could be overcome by “catalogical analogy” which integrates in itself the legitimate aspects proposed by both *analogia entis* and *analogia fidei*
 - Catalogical analogy affirms
 - Negates formation of any analogy that sustains itself by means of an abstract substrate of concept of creation degraded to pure nature (174)
 - ***The positive formation of analogy (as opening up of world’s truth and of its character as analogy to God) can only be gained in vision of this world’s being reached in the condensio of God***
 - (taking analogy within creation into account)
 - There also occurs disclosure of what lies in being as a creation from God (catalogically) that it must *have been*

able to be prepared for the new reality which could no longer be deduced from it and therefore can be determined in its truth only by cataloging

- (Rw - I struggle to understand this discussion)
- Von Balthasar gives catalogical foundation to analogy
 - He ties the methodical determination of cataloging to the content of *kenosis*
 - *The criterion and measure of cataloging is found where content and form were one or where God has become a man*
 - **Jesus Christ is therefore the absolute analogy or the concrete analogy of being**
 - *All analogy is given a Christocentric determination by Christ*
 - **A triple step made which lies in stringency of two aspects of catalogical analogy**
 - (1) Jesus Christ as the eternal Son who descended from God is the dwelling of the divine ideas for creation and of their analogical character
 - *The triune God bears within himself a difference of persons who cannot be reduced to each other such that one absorbs the other just as created reality cannot gain power over its essence through its existence*
 - *The eternal Father “kenotically” generates the Son who is equal in essence*

- *Thereby positing an eternal kenosis in which all economic kenosis is included founded and made possible*
- *Creation as kenotic act of God is included and founded in this primal kenosis*
- ***In this way the Son proves to be the dwelling of all ideas for creation and therefore of the dwelling of their analogical character - as he is “analogical” toward the Father”***
- ***(2) the affirmative character of analogy shows itself in the descending Son in catalogic fashion***
 - In the determinate man Jesus of Nazareth God is revealed as the “God who is ever greater”
 - In terms of catalogy
 - In the Son of God sent from God the truth of free and sinful humanity before God becomes manifest in such a way that God has nothing in common with sin but brings sin into an annihilating and saving judgment

- (3) implication = if Christ is absolute analogy posited in a descent from God then he must be understood as the totality that sums up everything in itself and as the center that brings everything to its goal in itself and relates everything to itself
 - ***A complete Christocentrism which results from the understanding of catalogical analogy***
 - Since Christ is such a totality (above, page 177) - a protological temporal and eschatological summation - this requires a theological form as integration which is realized catalogical analogy attempting to do justice to the claim of absolute revelation in its specificity
 - “The one who sees more truth is more deeply right”
 - (Rw - odd critique of “integration”)
 - ***This is not the aim of integration as realized catalogical analogy***
 - Chris in his concreteness is the Spirit of theology so that one must necessarily speak of a theology in the Holy Spirit

- Theology in the Holy Spirit
 - Required for two reasons
 - Christ liquified his totality completely into the interpretive Spirit that testifies to him because he completed the utterance of the Word (himself)
 - “A theology can be authentically developed only in the Holy Spirit” (178)
 - If theology does not have its object without faith, if faith is brought about by the divine Spirit, if theology is the appropriate reflection of that Spirit, it can only be true if it realized itself in the same Spirit of faith
 - *In order to recognize the absolute form of revelation which communicates itself to faith the corresponding organ if knowledge is required, **namely faith**, in which alone the truth of the form is communicated in the impact of its glory*
 - This correspondence turns out to be theological scientific objectivity (179)
 - ***We face the problem which arises for theology from catalogical-analogical integration***
 - ***How theology faced with the one Spirit can legitimate and sustain itself as plural in its exercise***
 - *Does what von Balthasar intends with his characterization of catalogical analogy lead to contradictions in the face of the necessary implications?*
 - One Spirit and multiplicity of theology
 - The thesis must be sustained that the one Holy Spirit gives the one interpretation which is only one appropriate to God’s absolute form-word (the Spirit is able to universalize the Word in correct manner)
 - Theologians of New Testament place everything + everybody “into the never bounded space of an

- ever greater truth” which makes different approaches possible and even demands them (180)
- ***The multiplicity of perspectives is rooted in the one Holy Spirit providentially assigning the expression of the absolute revelation in each case to a determinate time***
 - (Rw - sounds a bit like Lossky)
 - Von Balthasar excludes idea that synthesis of finite + momentary expressions produce the “absolute concept” which ends up dissolving the mystery
 - God’s truth is infinitely unfolded - “symphonic”
 - ***That the Christian truth is symphonic = most necessary truth which must be proclaimed and taken to heart today***
 - Theology will never possess its mystery in a final way in a concept
 - ***This is what the catalogical analogy means***
 - As the linguistic expression of the *condenscensio* into which the individual is taken as an elect
 - All theological content offers itself to thought in catalogical/analogical form
 - Von Balthasar introduces a theological method whose claim stands high without limit and reminds us of what makes theology Christian theology
 - ??? (181)
 - In view of this “way” (back to the mystery of the absolute from what is revealed in God’s *kenosis*) the theologian is compelled to think of theology in the form of *condenscensio* (catalogically and of co-rising (analogically))
 - This presents the service of theology as von Balthasar saw it and defined it methodologically
 - ***His theology contains the immediate enthusiasm of the divine word in content and in its form and style***

- Von Balthasar was able to reflect this immediacy (top 182) to the absolute word-form of God in methodological terms
- Great relevance of this approach for all theology
- **The claim of catalogical/analogical integration does not favor a mere intuition or incantation but stands for true justification of a theology that must legitimate itself in scientific terms**

John O'Donnell SJ, Hans Urs von Balthasar: The form of his theology

- The Enigma of man
 - Some say von Balthasar's theology (centered on Christology and rooted in the *Catholica*) is incapable of dialogue (207)
 - Perhaps his rejection of Rahner's transcendental method implies his theology is not anthropological in scope and interest
 - Both judgements are facile and lack nuance
 - For von Balthasar the primordial human experience is of the Thou
 - Child first is aware of mother's smile and becomes *Geist*
 - Child becomes an I
 - Thus the primary word is love
 - A glimpse infinite love is possible
 - The original intuition abides
 - Origin of person's religious pilgrimage
 - Spirit of man awaked in original encounter with the Thou is inevitable religious and oriented to God
 - If man is openness to God how does he realize union with the Infinite who always recedes with every human attempt to grasp him?
 - Here von Balthasar uses resources of Christian Faith to enter dialogue with great ways of salvation which human spirit has produced in its history
 - The way of primitive religions
 - Polytheistic
 - Some aspect of human need

- Gods in service of man
- *Basically projections of some aspect of finite experience onto realm of the divine*
- Mythology
 - Their view of time
 - Events in primeval time
 - Language of myth is language of this-worldly time based on imagery from our spatiotemporal world
- Doomed to failure
 - Man realizes the gods he fashioned are finite and not worthy of worship
 - The way of idolatry
 - A built-in tendency to magic (satisfy human needs)
 - Mythological events in *Urzeit*
 - Real temporality not taken seriously
 - *Christ shatters the mythological view of time by becoming incarnate in our history*
 - *Integrates myth into himself by redeeming the world so the world becomes a means of salvation*
- When man realized the self-defeat of the way of religions
 - Man attempted a new way to God = the way of philosophy
 - Placed his hope in reason
 - Radical attempt to purify religious desire and seek the true God
 - *The transcendent God of the philosopher = can be sought only by way of radical negation*
 - **Such abandonment has nobility for reasons linked to love**
 - Self must abandon original intuition
 - Philosophy seems to call for annihilation of the I
 - One can abandon oneself to a nameless one but not love a faceless Infinite

- **Neither the way of the gods nor mystical way of the philosopher can recuperate the original intuition of love**
 - Can only be resolved in Christ
 - Only in Christ the reality of God is revealed as the mystery of love
 - *To understand this we must plumb depths of Christ's identity and trinitarian origins*
- **Christology: "He was in the form of God" (Philippians 2:16)**
 - Major contribution to Christology = his attempt to employ aesthetic categories to illuminate the mystery of Christ
 - Aesthetic experience has two essential dimensions
 - The form (with harmony, proportion, measure)
 - The ecstasy (when perceiver is drawn into the form)
 - *The unity of the form transcends its parts*
 - Faith's judgment = Jesus is the form of God revealed in the flesh
 - Preference for fourth Gospel
 - John 1:18
 - Jesus = visibility of the invisible God
 - Many elements in history of Jesus
 - Itinerant Jewish preacher
 - Wonder-worker
 - Condemned criminal
 - Faith asserts one has not seen what is there until one sees Jesus as the God-man
 - Key that unlocks mystery of his identity = Jesus' obedience vis-a-vis his heavenly Father
 - John 4:34
 - John 6:38
 - John 8:29
 - *The center of Jesus' existence is his obedience*
 - **Jesus' "where" is in the Father**
 - Two points

- Von Balthasar's understanding of the person is rooted in concept of mission
 - *Geistessubjekt* <-> person
 - *Geistessubjekt* becomes person in his uniqueness in the mission he receives from God
 - ***He is the person par excellence because his whole being = his obedience to the Father***
 - Sonship and obedience go hand in hand
 - Son is radically open to Father's mission
- Such an understanding of his sonship and mission only makes sense within trinitarian context
 - "The mystery of the Son's mission in the world is a purely trinitarian mystery"
 - ***What happens on earth in terrestrial ministry of Jesus is the unfolding of his eternal relation to the Father*** (210)
 - **Only in the power of the Spirit can Jesus fulfill his human mission**
- From incarnation to Paschal mystery
 - Von Balthasar develops his theological aesthetic vision according to which Jesus = form of God revealed in the flesh
 - Also the *kenosis* of Jesus
 - Joins self-emptying of Incarnation with that of the Cross
 - *Jesus became incarnate in order to die for us*
 - 2 Corinthians 5:21
 - ***The inevitable outcome of clash between God's love and sinful humanity's refusal to accept that***
 - Von Balthasar one of the few to plumb the depths of what God's identification with sinful humanity entailed for Jesus
 - Holy Saturday
 - Contrast with theology of Good Friday
 - Human death is ***the supreme act of his liberty***

- *Dasein* = being-toward-death (Heidegger)
- Active self-surrender of Good Friday must be balanced by radical passivity of Holy Saturday
 - Represents Jesus' complete identification with man in his sinfulness
 - Jesus becomes "cadaver obedience"
- Von Balthasar appeals to Jesus' descent into hell 1 Peter 3:19, 4:6
 - Triumphal journey?
 - Or Christ's total identification with sinner to point of experiencing God-forsakenness
 - And to Old Testament category of Sheol
- So great is this solidarity with God-forsaken Jesus experienced hell on the Cross
 - Hell is a Christological concept
 - *What it means to be separated from God has to be understood by looking at the crucified Jesus*
 - A **qualitative** experience
 - Looking back (no hell in Old Testament) and forward (vision of hope)
 - ***May we not hope even the most hardened sinner in moment of death will be brought face to face with the crucified Christ and be converted from selfishness to love?***
- In this experience of the Lord von Balthasar finds the divine response to conundrum of human freedom
 - ***The history of God with the world is a dramatic confrontation of two freedoms (divine and human) (212)***
 - **Does man have capacity to utter final No to God?**
 - Does God's freedom have final victory over man's hardheartedness?
 - *Answer in the Cross*

- In the Cross *God comes in love to disturb the solitude of the hardened sinner turned in upon himself*
- The sinner is no longer alone in hell
- Trinitarian love
 - Now the trinitarian dimension of the Christ event
 - Only in the Trinity the mystery of man is fully illuminated
 - Primordial intuition in childhood
 - *On human level the person seeks meaning of existence in human community*
 - Does a dialogue between I and Thou offer final solution to mystery of man?
 - Closest to real solution = Ferdinand Ebner with emphasis on the Word
 - On basis of Christology Jesus' identity is rooted in eternal trinitarian community
 - Father is source of love
 - Son is radical response to Father's love
 - Mutual love overflows in love of the Holy Spirit
 - In Jesus we can say God is love and in him we come to know who God is
 - Christian faith enables us to proclaim that ultimate reality is love
 - *The classical problem of philosophy (problem of being) turns out to be mystery of love*
 - **The Trinity teaches that being is love**
 - Plurality is as primordial as unity
 - Ultimate mystery of being = mystery of community
 - One of von Balthasar's principal desires = think God's being (and trinitarian processions) in terms of love
 - Criticizes Augustinian-Thomistic tradition on two counts

- Prefers as prime analogue of divine life the *human mind* (with acts of intellect and will)
 - *How do we distinguish first procession from the second?* (214)
 - Appeals to theology of Bonaventure
 - ***Generation of the Word takes place per modum exemplaritatis***
 - New mode of love = Holy Spirit
 - *Per modum liberalitatis*
- ***Since Holy Spirit = ecstatic openness of the Father + the Son beyond themselves the Holy Spirit can be described as the place of the world***
 - **Looking at the world in trinitarian perspective enables von Balthasar to resolve classic conundrums**
 - God does not need the world
 - This grounds the abiding value of the world
 - *The world as God's theophany the sphere of divine glory*
- Finally we show how the Trinity also provides ultimate context for understanding the event of the Cross
 - Von Balthasar's vision of God/world relation is dramatic
 - Do we end with vision of God which Luther called *Deus sub contrario*
 - Is God torn apart in the event of the Cross?
- ***The drama between God and the world culminating in the Cross can be understood consistently without falling into Lutheran Deus sub contrario if we base historical drama of salvation upon the inner trinitarian drama***
- The Mystery of the Church: Body and Bride

- If Cross = revelation of God's trinitarian love (even to the end) it is also basis for understanding the mystery of the Church
 - Blood and water from his side
 - Jesus entrusted his Mother to the beloved disciple
- *The Church is born from the side of Christ dying on the Cross*
 - Symbols of sacraments of baptism + Eucharist
 - Mary as mother of the Church
 - Combined role of Bride and of Mother
 - Imagery of John must be combined with Pauline image of Ephesians (5:32)
- When we ask "who is the Church" the bridal image helps us find a response
 - Bridal relationship presupposes two persons
 - Goal of matrimonial relationship should express complementarity of sexuality of the spouses
 - Christ takes the initiative
 - Church's role of receptivity but not passive
 - Von Balthasar -> Church must avoid everything masculine lest relationship fall into religious homosexuality which perverts nature of God-man relationship
 - *There is a masculine principles in the Church which has validity insofar as it serves the feminine character of the Church*
 - Embodied in Peter and expressed in authority, sacraments, teaching office, canon of Scripture
 - Masculine principle is always subordinate to feminine and exists so Church might fulfill her feminine identity
- ***The background and condition of possibility for spousal relationship with the Church is God's trinitarian love for the world***
 - Unity with humanity is realized in the Church
 - Church is entirety of humanity

- Holy Spirit allows the other two persons to remain distinct and joined them in unbreakable bond of love
- ***Fulfills same role in the Church***
- The bridal image is not sufficient to illuminate the mystery of the Church
 - We also need Johannine image of vine and branches
 - Body of Christ
 - *Union between Christ and his faithful is so great that Head and members are one Body the Totus Christus (Augustine)*
- Here von Balthasar meditates upon patristic idea of *corpus triforme* of Christ
 - Physical Body of the Lord
 - Mystical Body of the Church
 - Sacramental Body of the Eucharist
 - *This union happens when at baptism believer is inserted into Christ's body (218)*
 - ***The culmination of this conformation to Christ = celebration of the Eucharist in which the Marian spousal image and Pauline bodily image coalesce***
 - *The Church presents her emptiness to the Father and she in turn is filled with Christ the Bread of Life*
- Christian Life: Being Molded into Christ
 - To appreciate the goal of von Balthasar's theology we must bear in mind he was formed in school of Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius
 - Culminate in meditation for obtaining love of God in which the exercitant contemplates God's presence indwelling his creation and offers his entire being to the Lord so that from henceforth he can find God in all things
 - His theology is focused upon *connubium* of God with the world
 - Myth understands God/world relationship as theophan (*Herrlichkeit I*)

- *Eschatologically the world is being assimilated to Christ so it becomes the theater of God's glory*
 - *Takes place as human person lets himself be molded by form of Christ*
 - **Such receptivity to Christ's informing action is what he means by faith**
 - Three stages
 - Meaning of faith
 - Significance of obedience
 - Nature of mission
- For von Balthasar faith not intellectual act but existential surrender of the whole person
 - Hands over whole being to Christ
 - Faith in no way is preoccupied with self
 - Contra Lutheran idea of faith as security
 - Philippians 3:13-14
- Faith is other-centered and obedience
 - So the Christian's being informed by Christ consists in radical availability to do the will of the Father
 - Faith will always be Marian (219)
- This brings us to notion of sending
 - Obedience becomes concrete in the mission each received from God
 - A *Gestessubjekt* becomes a person in concrete unpredictable mission one receives from God
 - Man becomes person only through dialogical relation
 - Partner is God through whom person receives the mission by which freedom becomes concrete
 - He deepens the Ignatian tradition of the Exercises whose central focus is the election
 - *From all eternity God knows each person with a particular love which is realized in a unique mission no one else can fulfill*
- If the religious question arises in that primordial movement the resolution is found in God's address to man in Christ

- In Christ + the Cross we see form of God's love for the world
- Responding to that to a mission ... the person discovers the meaning of his freedom which becomes concrete and informed
 - Enabling him to verify in his experience the truth that Being is love

Ellero Rabini, Jesus Christ: Form and norm of man according to Hans Urs von Balthasar

- Von Balthasar constructed the type of relation between Christology and anthropology
 - Between the reality of Christ and the reality of man
 - ***One of the most precious supports for renewal of theology along lines of sound and authentic Catholic Tradition***
 - Yet that relation has remained little examined
 - We forget seven volumes of *Herrlichkeit* are followed by *Theodramatik* and *Theologik*
- With *Theodramatik* he elaborates a complete + systematic doctrine of man and his connection with Christ the Redeemer of man
 - *Here I would confront problem of relation between anthropology and Christology in wake of Theodramatik*
- How are Christology and theological anthropology related?
 - Three steps that deepen the discourse in three successive stages
 - Summed in three words
 - *We will see how Jesus Christ is the "form" and "norm" of man*
- Mission
 - Jesus Christ as man who lived + dies to fulfill the mission received from his Father in the Holy Spirit as the man who identifies himself with his mission (John 4:34)
 - In Christology of *Theodramatik* the key concept provided by divine *mission* which animates anthropology by reflex action
 - John 20:21

- Keystone provided by category “mission” of which “role” is a theatrical prefiguration
- Man = being in process of becoming
- Becomes a person by virtue of his mission
 - ***The existential task received from and in Christ the real protagonist of the theo-drama of which God the Father is the author and the Holy Spirit the director (222)***
- By means of the mission man discovers why he was made and who he is since it is in mission (received as gift from an “other”) he is called an “I” by a “Thou” and is called to a response
 - (???)
- That responsibility is carried out by “corresponding” to the role received (one’s vocation)
 - Philosophical category of “correspondence” finds its theological counterpart in category of “obedience”
 - If the keystone of Christology is mission then its content (historical coloration it assumes) is obedience
 - An obedience of love
- At bottom this obedience = practical translation of fundamental vital attitude of filial dependence which creature has before Creator
 - *Angewiesenheit*
- This does not suppress or thwart the original freedom which distinguishes man
 - Indeed empowers man for conscious + significant exercise of his freedom
 - If human person is defined primarily from the personalizing mission then there results a living anthropological picture
 - Man is ontologically a spiritual subject
 - But this is animated and moved by tension - by becoming
- Dynamic concept of man as open being moving toward fulfillment growing toward personal maturity and toward full appropriation of the truth about himself
 - His original vocation = growing existential adequation to being *imago Dei*

- Practical verification of *analogia entis* by conforming to Christ who is *Analogia entis* made concrete
- The axis about which everything revolves is this conception of *analogia entis*
 - Whose center is in Christological dogma of Chalcedon
 - ***The just and correct relation of loving dependence of man before his Creator is safeguarded thanks to this underlining of maior dissimilitudo*** (distance which makes possible true union of love)
 - Avoids mysticizing and nullifying fusion of contours and identity typical of “gnosis” (224)
- This *analogia entis* crosses nucleus of hypostatic union and is verified reformulated + elevated by it
 - ***Precisely by this journey toward extreme remoteness (Mark 15:34 and descent into hell) a new nearness, intimacy, communion between God and man is reestablished and created***
- At this Christological level the original *analogia entis* is surpassed and inserted into another relation which is revealed as more original
 - Trinitarian relation of Son with Father in the Holy Spirit
 - ??? (bottom 224)
- Thus *analogia entis* finds its *ubi constantam* crystallization and verification in Christological dogma of Chalcedon
 - This proves that category “mission” is exhaustive interpretive and explanatory factory in Christological and in anthropological truth
- Substitution
 - *Stellvertretung* “representation” or “substitution”
 - Clarifies and deepens on soteriological level what is plain about first point *mission*
 - Von Balthasar adopts + maximizes Chalcedon’s Christological dogma
 - This is increased by using the soteriological model of vicarious substitution
 - From St Anselm *Cur Deus homo*

- Completed with Thomistic theory of *gratia Capitis* + theory of *admirabile commercium*
- Properly locates terms of soteriological relation between man and Christ, between these latter and the Father
- Meets the demands of soteriology which is not satisfied with image of God “already always” to reconcile with man
 - Takes seriously human drama in radical need for salvation
 - *Category of substitution furnishes a model for explanation and criterion for verifying man’s radical belonging to Christ*
 - *This insertion of anthropology into Christology is far from cutting off discourse of anthropology or absorbing it*
 - ***The Stellvertretung acted out by Christ makes possible for man a full display of his freedom ... offering him possibility of exercising his co-responsibility of being a Mitspieler a co-actor in the drama***
- This verifies how anthropology is “normed” by Christology and is informed and vivified by it
 - Man acquires new and unexpected possibility of self-realization and authentic exercise of his original freedom
- Categories “correspondence” and “participation” assume new worth and importance
 - Categories which animated Neoplatonic-Areopagitic tradition and Thomistic tradition
 - In *Theodramatik* they are appropriated and utilized from new viewpoint
 - **The human/divine drama in which man is called to recite his part**
- Singularity
 - *Third step*
 - ***Von Balthasar’s particular emphasis on and use of category “singularity”***
 - Refers to Christ being his typical + inalienable quality in his original unrepeatable *unique* position as mediator between God and world
 - Consequence = man’s singularity

- Unconfusable originality of the call and personal mission from God through Christ Jesus
- “Unicity”
 - Analogical participation in unicity of mission of Christ and of ecclesial figures closest to him
- In *Theodramatik* and *Herrlichkeit* von Balthasar insists on underlining this unicity which is typical of Christian “figure”
 - The salvation accomplished in and through Christ is something absolutely new
- An obstacle to this novelty (which von Balthasar always addressed) is *immer schon gewusst* present in his transcendental Christology
 - Risk of considering Christian salvation as something which was already known and intuited by man in various forms
 - This tendency to generalize what is distinctive of the Christian event is obstacle to perceiving its singularity
 - **The Christian element cannot be reduced simply to what is universally human, to the human in general**
 - (Rw - so direct contradicts liberal theology)
- **Important qualification**
 - Distinction drawn between “general” and “universal”
 - ***One of the conquests and fundamental acquisitions of Theodramatik was having made plain original and irreducible subjectivity characteristic of the Christian Gestalt and of the Christian event with its center in Christ***
 - This singularity beings with it inalienable *singularity* (228)
 - **The universality of redemption worked by Christ cannot be severed from its unicity**
 - **Indeed its universality derives from its singular position**
- Soteriological category of vicarious substitution (appropriated by von Balthasar) allows for manifestation of the aspect of universality typical of Christian redemption
 - Preserves + highlights singularity of Jesus Christ

- *His original position is irreducible to some generally human position and is immune to attempt at generalization*
- His singularity and unicity grant him universality
- Allows him to represent in himself by substitution all humanity and each man in particular
- From this singularity a people takes its origin
- This is because there is already a community at the beginning
 - Intratrinitarian communion between the divine Persons
 - *He asserts + sheds new light on trinitarian implications and presuppositions of every phase in salvation history and every aspect of Christian life giving them a relief and importance not often seen in contemporary theology*
 - Adrienne von Speyr excelled at teaching this
- **The Christian subject (the theological personality) has a communal origin**
 - From beginning to end there is a communion which is participation in trinitarian life (a communion of persons)
- Thus the theological elaboration of *Theodramatik* (more clearly than *Herrlichkeit*) answers the need for a *theocentric* anthropology expressed by *Dives in misericordia*
- With *Theodramatik* von Balthasar fulfilled the theological program of showing how Christ is the “form” and “norm” of man and of history *on an ontological and ethical level*
 - **His manifestation of the unbreakable bond between Christology and anthropology is one of the most important contributions he made to Catholic theology**