

Aidan Nichols, A Key to Balthasar: Hans Urs von Balthasar on Beauty, Goodness, and Truth

Foreword

1. Started reading Balthasar at beginning of studying theology
 - a. Like trying to run before walk
 - b. His study of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux what a *theological* biography of saint should be
2. German original of Balthasar's *Glory*
3. *We were living in an ice-age for Catholic theology*
 - a. Spiritual chill descended instead of Pentecostal warmth Second Vatican was supposed to have communicated
 - b. Heard most about critical theology
 - c. "Hermeneutic of discontinuity"
 - d. Angrily dismissive of theology of past
 - e. *At best a minimal pared-down version of older content*
4. One modern man found there wasn't much for him in critical theology
 - a. Sure this couldn't be all Catholic Christianity had to offer?
 - b. *It was to try to get closer to sheer spiritual greatness of revelation to which art of the Church and historic liturgies bore witness I turned towards Balthasar*
5. The best way to understand something is to teach it or write about it
 - a. Based mainly on material for a course at John Paul II Institute in Melbourne
6. *Aim = provide a key to Balthasar by identifying basic words that structure his trilogy*
 - a. "Free than strict expository style adopted in five substantial books on his corpus" (= ???)
 - b. **The trilogy turns on beauty, goodness, truth**
 - c. His work struck me as all three of entrancingly beautiful, encouraging to goodness and expressive of truth

Chapter one: key-word 'being' - Balthasar and the Transcendentals

1. Introduction

- a. His theology has universally recognised center-piece his theological trilogy
 - i. *The Glory of the Lord, Theo-Drama, Theo-Logic*
 - ii. Also called “Theo-aesthetics”
 - iii. Brings out how each is parallel to others
 - iv. Revolves around three transcendental qualities or determinations of being
 1. ***The beautiful, the good, the true***
- b. “Transcendental” not a word should frighten us
 - i. *Universal* in sense what is not confined by but goes beyond all particular categories
 - ii. Despite our human perspective we can succeed in grasping being
 - iii. By the senses
 - iv. We come into intellectual contact with being helped by the senses in and through particular concrete things
 - v. Balthasar = *epistemological optimist*
 - vi. And *ontological realist*
 - vii. These powers give us access to things as they really are
 - viii. Participants varying in scope and intensity **in being itself**
 - ix. The Ground and Source of such being is God
 - x. **So the activity of our lowly senses goes with access to comprehensive even ultimate reality**
 - xi. (Rw - and is this why I am a post-liberal?)
 - xii. *Contrasts with Kant-inspired methodology of subject-oriented philosophical humanism*
 1. And “Transcendental Thomism”
 2. ***They begin by examining human subjectivity from within***
 3. **Balthasar puts the human subject in relation with the truth that lies outside itself**
 4. *The self-conscious subject exists always in relation to other manifestations of being*

- c. First conscious recognition of “I” is through relation with another - the human parent
 - i. “A Résumé of my Thought”
 - 1. All being is one
 - 2. Is good
 - 3. Is true
 - 4. Is beautiful
 - ii. As in the tradition of Aquinas
 - 1. Participation metaphysic of sort Thomas used in his work
 - iii. Balthasar working with wider number of transcendentals - **four**
 - 1. Unity
 - 2. Truth
 - 3. Goodness
 - 4. Beauty
 - iv. In the last analysis these **are inseparable**
 - v. *Balthasar’s principal theological work is a trilogy*
 - 1. *Divine beauty, goodness, truth, and the modes in which these are manifested in creation and salvation*
 - 2. The transcendental “unity” finds expression in holism of reality
 - a. ***True above all holistic character of reality that is Christian revelation***
 - b. Each part of the trilogy makes explicit reality as a whole (Thomas Schumacher)
 - c. The manner in which beauty, goodness, truth are indivisibly one
 - vi. How do we know?
 - 1. Whatever is known is known according to the knower’s capacity (Aquinas)
 - 2. *In individual subject’s perception of the being of things the degree of understanding turns on certain subjective conditions being met within that individual*
 - 3. Sounds like Kant?

- a. But Balthasar insist “the first prerequisite for understanding is to accept what is given just as it offers itself”
- b. “The objective evidence that emerges and sheds its light from the phenomenon itself, and not the sort of evidence recognized in the process of satisfying the subject’s needs”

4. Reality is more fundamentally a gift to us than it is a construction by us (5)

- vii. We exist in relation to a world of things which by their presence make themselves known to us
 - 1. Human mind lies open to infinite unlimitedness of being thus made known in beings
 - 2. Through awareness of finitude we are aware by that token that while all things are limited being is not
 - 3. ***In calling something finite we are implicitly placing it in context of the infinite***
 - 4. Such awareness of finitude in face of unlimited being = “source of all the religious and philosophical thought of humanity”

2. The transcendentals themselves

- a. So far identified Balthasar’s approach to epistemology and ontology
 - i. ***Now look more closely at transcendentals themselves***
 - ii. *Every existing thing by virtue of its existence shares in being and in the “transcendental” qualities of being*
 - 1. Which occur in different ways and degrees in many kinds of things
 - 2. They characterize all being
 - 3. Belong together in inseparable mutual co-inherence
 - a. The transcendentals run through all Being and are interior to each other
 - iii. This is verified in our own experience
 - iv. Contact with concrete essences in their existence generates an experience of the transcendentals

- v. They set up networks of connection between objects participating in them (6)
- vi. ***“To exist” means belonging to transcendental network of being and thus to be related to all other things***
 - 1. If being were not shared by all things then every object would be distinct from every other and we would not live in a world (common universe) at all
- b. For Balthasar the transcendentals = bridge between Source of all Being (God) and finite existents composing creation
 - i. *Living bonds between God and the world*
 - ii. Though the transcendentals of created being serve as analogues for divine Being the difference between created being and uncreated Being is always greater than similarity (Fourth Lateran Council 1425, Eric Przywara)
 - iii. Enigmatic passage in “Revelation and the Beautiful”
 - 1. Transcendentals are not “static” and have something of God’s own freedom
 - 2. ***Hints at two facets of Balthasar’s teaching on transcendental determinations of being***
 - a. They point us to dynamic life going on for ever within God
 - i. Interpenetration
 - b. Suggestion of relation between transcendentals and divine revelation
 - i. Creature participate in the transcendentals in partial fragmentary way
 - ii. *Implies unfinished character of creation*
 - iii. ***Only in further self-gift of God in revelation in history will openness to the infinite the human creature possesses finds fulfillment***
 - iv. *Transcendentals serve as structure needed if man will perceive and respond to divine revelation which brings creation to completion*

- v. “Sphere of openness” where created being can be drawn into communion with God’s uncreated Being
 - vi. Through them we have foretaste of fulfillment that is “wholly other” since consists in self-gift to creatures of God himself
- c. Balthasar wanted a philosophy and ultimately a theology starting from analogy of being
- i. Not as in Neo-Thomism (9)
 - ii. ***Begin from analogy of being as being is encountered concretely in the transcendentals***
- 3. First conclusion**
- a. Balthasar tends to criticize contemporary theology for failing to view creation and revelation sufficiently holistically
- i. ***The form taken by creation and revelation can only be grasped when they are viewed as they were designed to be viewed***
 - 1. ***As a symphonic whole***
 - 2. Die Wahrheit ist symphonisch
 - 3. *It is human capacity for perceiving the whole that grants us possibility of experiencing being in its inherently beautiful truth and goodness*
 - 4. How that works out will become more apparent in trio of essays that follow (his? Or Balthasar’s?)

Chapter two - Key-word “form” *Balthasar and the beautiful*

1. The place of beauty

- a. Balthasar deeply opposed to separation of beautiful from true and good
 - i. Beauty has been reduced to this-worldly aesthetics with baleful consequences
 - ii. Partly responsible? Beauty’s separation from other transcendentals and “aestheticisation” of the beautiful

1. Why people do not pray and contemplate
 2. ***The notion of sheer beauty of divine Being has disappeared***
 3. Also explains perceived reduction of moral order to self-centered relativism
 4. And metaphysical order to materialism at service of technology and/or psychology
 5. ***Final upshot = incapacity for faith or love***
- iii. ***The Church has become guardian of metaphysics***
1. Only orthodox Christian mind and heart can bridge gap between acosmic spirituality and a present world consigned to domination by positivists
 2. **Revelation can be therapy for metaphysical malaise that has no other medicine**
 3. *The believer can show people how to experience cosmos as “revelation of an infinity of grace and love”*
 - a. Writers like Gerard Manley Hopkins
 - b. Paul Claudel and Charles Péguy
 - c. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
 - d. These showed it is possible
 4. What we should be doing = *Christians who reflect on revelation given them and wish to apply its benefits to surrounding culture*
- b. In Balthasar’s analysis there must be reunion of philosophy and theology and within theology a reunion of spirituality and dogmatic thought *if there is to be for Western man a recovery of the sense of integrity of being in its co-constitutive transcendent and immanent dimensions*
- i. Task = trying to perceive **objective form of revelation in creation and in Jesus Christ in all its splendid harmonious and symphonic fullness**
2. What are “theological aesthetics”?
- a. What does he mean by?
 - i. *Not confined to beauty of the created world*

- ii. Defining question of theological aesthetics goes beyond them (antiquity of Romanticism)
 - iii. Its purview not only creation **but salvation**
 - iv. ***How can the revelation of God's sovereign grace be perceived in the world?***
- b. "Theological aesthetics"
- i. Gives "aesthetics" two co-essential meanings
 - 1. Indebted to Immanuel Kant (!?!)
 - a. Used in *Critique of Judgment*
 - 2. "Aesthetics" considers higher levels of our experience by human senses
 - a. *Sight* as most noble
 - b. So "theological aesthetics" considers part played by senses (with associated powers of memory and imagination) in awareness of God
 - c. Invokes this in relation to series of revelatory events and processes culminating in appearance of Christ
 - d. In Christ ***God made himself a sensuous Object*** seen heard touched
 - e. The divine "form" made available to human perception in Jesus Christ mediated by historical record but also by Liturgy and Christian experience
 - i. (Rw - Scripture, liturgy, experience)
 - ii. (Rw - relation to James McClendon?)
 - ii. Many readers had trouble getting hold on what Balthasar was saying
 - 1. Should not perplex those familiar with *res Christiana* "the Christian thing"
 - 2. Incarnation makes difference how we evaluate importance of senses (15)
 - iii. Second way Balthasar uses term to denote a study of beauty
 - 1. Especially beauty as transcendental determination of being

2. Especially of revealed correlate of beauty = the *glory* of God
- iv. Not all Scholastics treated *pulchrum* as a transcendental
 1. Gradually settled on Thomist school that it is
 2. For 20th century Thomist (such as Jacques Maritain) beauty = *splendor of being and of all the transcendentals re-united*
 - a. We might describe beautifully formed objects as in-gathering and out-pourings of that “splendor”
 - 3. Most important of key terms in first use of “aesthetics” (“form”) recurs in second way he uses the term (16)**
 - a. *Form is as important to understanding beauty as it is to an account of how reality is presented to us by the senses*
 4. Confusion over “form”
 - a. In Thomist language *actual or possessing the real decisive quality making a thing itself*
 - i. What stamps anything with its identity is its Form (Gestalt)
 - ii. The form of a thing is the thing
 5. Balthasar thinks of natural as well as humanly shaped forms
 - a. ***The perceptible form of an object is the expression (under particular conditions) of its metaphysical form - its essence or nature***
- v. We can go one step further
 1. Something’s nature is itself one expression of the inherent possibilities of being at large
 2. The form of a thing tells us more than just about itself
 - a. Also about world in which it is situated, about the universe
- vi. Clarify of form in Balthasar’s aesthetics
 1. Contrasts with Descartes’ equally strong emphasis on “clarity” in philosophy of mind
 - a. In love with “clear and distinct ideas”

2. Balthasar's concept is taken from Thomas for whom clarity (radiance) = an essential trait of the beautiful along with proportion and integrity
 3. The Thomistic "radiance" is expressed by a form actually enacting its own existence, its being-in-act
- vii. Meaning of second component of "theological aesthetics" as intersection of two axes
1. ***Vertical***
 2. ***Horizontal***
 3. *The dimensions of the beautiful are vertically an infinite depth of splendor which horizontally is expressed in a materially graspable extension of form*
 4. The beautiful unifies the definitely shaped form of something present on which the mind can come to rest with an endless sea of radiant intelligibility in which the mind can move without limitation
 5. ***The beautiful is the meeting place of finite form with infinite light***
- viii. Balthasar seems to expand Scholastic teaching on *pulchrum*
1. Marries it with notion of "sublime" an idea late 18th century authors found(?) in the ancients
 2. *Reminds people that ontological beauty is a mystery whose inner momentum can never fully be grasped*
 3. Balthasar does not let it dissolve forms into general sea of being

3. The centrality of Christ in aesthetics

- a. Where central object in question is Jesus Christ *the real object presented to us is not just one of possibilities of created being*
 - i. Because of Incarnation *not merely human being but in direct and plenary way divine Being itself*
 - ii. Sensuous appearance is loaded with the endless significance and inherent authority of the divine
 1. Beauty can be called "glory"
 2. Appearance charged with inexhaustible significance and inherent authority of the divine

- b. Balthasar's aesthetics begin humbly at level of sense perception
 - i. Ultimate investigate meaning and content of encounter with glory of God
 - ii. Form of revelation = main theme of his theological aesthetics
 - 1. *Glorious evidence of divine agency in the world*
 - 2. God not part of the world
 - 3. ***Cannot be ranged among things that happen to exist***
 - a. ***Good Thomistic point***
 - 4. But God does not fail to attain to form
 - 5. ***God is that to which all form fails to attain***
 - 6. "Super-form"
- c. God as "Super-form"
 - i. Balthasar offers his own theologically aesthetic version of Thomistic claim that human creature has natural desire for vision of God
 - 1. ***We humans desire to find a perceivable form that transcends our powers***
 - 2. In that way transcend ourselves by knowing ourselves to be transcended
 - 3. *The contemplation of God is not only dark and baffling but also a cause of joy*
- d. Searching out the beautiful is to explore not only formal possibilities of being
 - i. But also possibilities of human feeling-response in face of forms that being takes
 - ii. ***Has both objective and subjective side to it***
 - iii. What Balthasar is saying is twofold
 - 1. For those with some awareness of God as Source of all being
 - a. Beauty acquires ontological depth
 - b. Can develop seeing world as transparent to God
 - c. Relevant to belief in creation
 - 2. ***Events of salvation history show divine to have its own style of manifestation and we must register its impress***
 - a. Relevant to Incarnation

- b. In biblical revelation self-disclosure of God comes to climax in Jesus Christ
 - c. Center of Scripture who unites Old and New Testament as single form
 - i. Thereby recognised a *center of creation*
 - ii. Who brings genesis and apocalypse - original creation and eschatological fulfillment - into a single form
 - 3. Balthasar draws attention to need for holism these affirmations entail (20)
 - 4. Jesus Chrst is center of this structure but not exclusive content thereof
 - a. Balthasar does not follow Karl Barth in making Christ's form as God the *sole* analogue
 - 5. *Best argument for existence of transcendentals is their capacity to infuse human community with shared meanings where goodness truth and beauty are concerned*
- iv. Christ is very unexpected climax to experience of the beautiful
- 1. The Incarnation is ordered from the Passion (*Mysterium Paschale*)
 - 2. In Christ a strange and terrible beauty is born
 - 3. *The Incarnation is supreme presentation of aesthetic form despite or because of the Cross* (21)**
 - a. *The humiliation of the servant only makes the concealed glory shine more resplendently*
 - 4. *A form none more wonderful can be imagined***
 - a. **The "ground" appearing this "Gestalt" above all in the moment of the Cross is the love that the Trinity is**
 - b. *That statement = climactic assertion of Balthasarian theo-aesthetics*
 - c. Two more words need addressing
 - i. *The ground that appears in the Christ-form is the love and freedom of the triune God*

4. The unification of human experience by the aesthetic form

- a. In his theological aesthetics Balthasar expects human experience to be completed and unified when guided by aesthetic form
 - i. Balthasar presupposed that human beings need rounded patterns through which to shape their experiences and make of them a coherent unity (Francesca Anna Murphy) (22)
 1. Our capacity for this is *imagination*
 - ii. Thrust of imagination for him is toward real foundation which upholds all such forms
 - iii. *Balthasar employs a realistic metaphysics for which form is a basic principle*
 - iv. Beauty as an objective reality
 - v. Functioning of imagination can and should be grounded in objective reality
 1. Realist metaphysics (contrast with historic Romanticism)
 2. ***Symbolic forms allow us to gesture toward inherent reality of things***
 - vi. (dense but profound paragraph page 23)
- b. The shape of this unique form Jesus Christ is congruent with activity of human imagination at large and yet extends infinitely beyond all humanly discerned patterns (beyond range of creation itself)
 - i. Samuel Taylor Coleridge as forerunner of Balthasar
 - ii. *Highest unity the imagination can conceive joins the finite and infinite*
 - iii. This joining is carried out by God in assuming human nature into unity with his divine Word

5. The deficiencies of modern theological culture

- a. Much modern theology does not honor this claim
 - i. Modern theological liberalism
 1. Takes as base the organization of human experience rather than objective givens of divine agency impacting on nature and history
 2. ***Kant is single greatest culprit here***
 - a. Deteriorated under Neo-Kantianism

- i. Philosophical origin of “demythologizing” movement
 - ii. To which Balthasar was opposed
- b. Bultmann regarded all “knowledge” of reality as mere objectification projecting onto the largely unknowable a screen of our own culturally generated ideas
 - i. Such much be stripped from New Testament record
 - ii. *The Gospel has to do with subjective relation to God within one’s own existence*
 - iii. Usefulness of Balthasar’s corpus for those seeking to repel Bultmann-style subversion of revelation-guided thought
 - 1. Contrasts “I’-”I” principle rather than “I”-world principle where transcendentals can enter the picture from the start
- c. Starting point in “I’-”I” relationship will prejudice chances of any presentation of incarnate Christ as divinity given in and through form
 - i. If we follow the Kantians we abandon really metaphysical path to God leading as that path does through a substantial material world of substances making themselves known through their forms to human intelligence mediated by the senses
 - ii. *When we come to theology of revelation (acting subject not ourselves but God reaching out to us) we inevitably cease to think of God’s movement toward us as mediated by forms and images understood as valid for everyone in which the Bible deals*
- d. ***This for Balthasar is where appeal to pulchrum transcendental we call “beautiful” can help restore integrity of Christologically-given revelation of God of all being***
 - i. The beautiful indicates how an object might be outside us facing us yet draw us into itself
 - ii. The beautiful is closest to our senses
 - 1. *A fully objective property of being*
 - 2. Its nature is to be communicative
 - 3. ***The beautiful is reality under aspect of form known as such by imaginative intuition just as truth is reality as***

best known through propositions, by the intelligence, and goodness is reality as best known through values, by the moral sense

4. These ways of knowing refer to same world manifesting itself in distinct but analogously related ways
 5. The prescription Balthasar would prescribe for sick theological patient is *at the center of his aesthetics where he draws on Augustinian and medieval tradition which ascribed transcendental beauty most to the divine Son*
 - a. *Prima pars of Summa Theologiae*
 - i. Christ has *radiance* through being Art of the Father
 - ii. Word illuminates the mind that contemplates him
 - iii. ***Balthasar wants to apply pulchrum to incarnate Son in his sensuous as well as intelligible form***
- e. How is this particular doctrine remedy an ailing theological culture needs?
- i. *The human yearning for structured intelligibility*
 - ii. Impetus for making art
 - iii. Suggested to Balthasar an analogy for form and splendor of transcendental beauty of Christ
 - iv. Artworks participate in the transcendentals
 - v. ***Aesthetic beauty strives towards transcendental beauty*** and is token of its spirituality
 - vi. But cannot spiritualize itself
 - vii. Can only receive direction toward the transcendent from beyond itself
 - viii. What the Romantics looked for is not self-shaped
 - ix. *Subject of religious experience (human self) can be ought to be and has been re-formed by its transcendent object*
 - x. ***The self becomes re-formed divinely when it lets Christ's archetypal experience form its own***

- f. All instances of real participate in form in analogically ordered degrees but that means in unequal degrees
 - i. Some beautiful forms possess more openness to infinite than others
 - ii. ***Every form is a contraction of the totality of being and some are more contracted than others***
 - 1. God provides norm b which he will interpret himself
 - 2. Only God can fashion a form that could be a comprehensive revelation of himself, world, our relation to both
 - iii. Even if phenomenon in which God shows himself is overwhelming it is comprehensible to human modes of perception and knowing
 - iv. Human personality might be locus for imaging glory
- 6. Objective and subjective in revelatory “evidence”**
- a. The aesthetic act always has both objective and subjective side
 - i. Opening volume of his theological ethics is governed by this pair of terms
 - ii. *Divine revelation in Jesus Christ has subjective evidence*
 - 1. Not vague and conjectural
 - 2. ***Evidence from side of the human subject***
 - iii. **But also has objective evidence**
 - 1. *Evidence from the side of the divine-human object*
 - b. ***Subjective evidence***
 - i. Faith is a response but is it part of the evidence?
 - ii. In an important sense God’s self-revelation is self-authenticating
 - iii. ***Faith accepts its own object on authority of that object which in this way becomes “subjective evidence” for it***
 - 1. Our recognition of God is God’s own act in us (Thomas)
 - iv. **Crucial to act of faith is a power of apperception experienced as gift from a source beyond oneself**
 - v. ***We must co-operate***
 - 1. Readiness to receive the light and self-surrender to that light

2. On God's part faith entails gift to us of fresh insights motives impulses by which we are shaped into pattern of Christ and granted understanding of that pattern
 3. Behind this lies Aquinas' account of understanding and ancient Greek philosophy (Aristotle)
 4. Faith -> light is divinely enabled intensification of intellectual light in which we make natural judgements
 - a. Light of faith as anticipation of light of glory the beatific Vision (Thomas)
- c. In all this Balthasar's distinctive stress on how the light of faith makes possible (on our more modest level as disciples) a certain alignment with experience of Christ himself
- i. Archetypal for Christians = experience Christ had in his human nature of his Father and himself in the Holy Spirit
 - ii. (Rw - ???)
 - iii. We learn of that formative experience through apprehension of Christ found in New Testament writers
 1. The variety of their witness (the New Testament writers) Balthasar regards as vital to their function
 2. ***The varied appearances of an object to observers capable of communicating their experience is only way something of object's fullness can be transmitted by the witnesses***
- d. When we appreciate those witnesses by the light of faith we let our senses and imagination be disciplined and re-shaped pneumatically
- i. Some spiritual authors tell us not to say on level of the imagination
 - ii. Balthasar: when in prayer and devotion we break through to another level where sensuous seems stripped away and we go beyond images we should not understand that as a happy victory of the intellectual side over the sensuous
 1. ***Rather as participation by that sensuous side of us in the self-emptying of Christ***
 2. *The negative incomprehensibility of God to materially embodies creatures is less interesting than positive*

incomprehensibility deriving from overwhelming greatness of God's triune self-giving or self-humbling (kenotic) love which Incarnation and Paschal Mystery display

e. Objective evidence

- i. Must be - or else Catholics would be fideists
 - ii. ***Chief objective evidence in Christianity = Christ Jesus as he is in himself the Trinitarian Son disclosing in his humanity the hidden tri-unity of divine being***
 1. That includes *objective evidence* for truth of his claims
 - a. Miracles, fulfillment of Old Testament, teaching, moral perfection
 - iii. Christological objective evidence goes beyond those considerations
 1. They are only *signs* of his Trinitarian identity and not identity itself
- f. To see Christ in this fully way for who and what he is we need an unlimited willingness to receive the impress of God's greatness and glory
- i. Exact antithesis to Bultmann's position
 1. Visually graspable shapes of nature and salvation do not mediate our approach to God because created being is not from substantial self-transcending forms
 - a. (Rw - ?????)
 2. Nature and history not impressed with illustrative form
 3. God must be approached in way that abstracts
 - ii. ***The necessary willingness to receive the impress of God's greatness and glory is mediate in the Church through variety of her approved theologies***
- g. (in those volumes and other essays) theology is rich and complex activity which at one pole contains careful logical analysis which explains the faith and answers heresy ("controversial" theology)
- i. On the other pole (more important) embraces adoring contemplation of God

- ii. In many great mystics contemplation went with capacity for densely concrete and precise poetic expression
 - h. Two volumes of *Glory of the Lord* devoted to such examples
 - i. They suggest how without a theological aesthetics or theological logic can be written
 - ii. ***Unless the content of theology is marvelous why should we spend so much time explaining its truth?***
 - 1. *This is one way Balthasar's trilogy hangs together*
 - i. And for Balthasar the life of Christ culminating in the Paschal mystery has the intelligible beauty of a drama
 - i. The more we penetrate its meaning the more this beauty asserts itself
 - ii. ***Theological dramatics requires theological aesthetics***
- 7. The religious “a priori” and the theological “a priori”**
- a. The light in which we appreciate subjectively the objectivity of the divine epiphany in Jesus Christ is not same as intellectual light in which mind makes natural judgements
 - i. Even if both are given by God
 - ii. Balthasar uses a formula of the sort Thomism borrowed from Kant so he can underline the differences
 - b. In his epistemological writings Kant used “a priori” for way human understanding is structured in advance as it scans the materials of experience
 - i. Balthasar distinguishes between “religious *a priori*” in ordinary human experience and “theological *a priori*” in distinctively Christian experience (33)
 - c. Religious *a priori*
 - i. = our natural participation in light of God as Creator
 - ii. That prior structure of awareness is “transcendental” in Kantian sense of word
 - iii. Must be distinguished from meaning given by high medievals
 - iv. Religious *a priori* = “transcendental” presupposition of objective vision we entertain of divine reality in natural forms of creation
 - v. Source of religious experience in general

- vi. Includes intuition of absence and presence of God in all contingent being
 - vii. *This is how humans produce symbols and construct myths about the “what” and “who” beyond all creation*
 - viii. **Religious a priori = source of mytho-poetic thought in cultures and periods**
- d. How does theological *a priori* come in?
- i. By way of contrast
 - ii. Theological *a priori* takes religious *a priori* for granted
 - iii. But differs in being distinctively Christological and Trinitarian
 - iv. Enables response to new light of Christ
 - v. The “transcendental” presupposition of our sharing in inner life of the Trinity through Jesus Christ on basis of connaturality with divine Persons given by the Mediator
 - 1. When he took what was ours to give us a share in what is his
- e. Religious *a priori* enables us to perceive objective light of the Creator in forms of the creation
- i. Theological *a priori* enables us to perceive objective light of the Trinity in the historical form of Jesus Christ
 - 1. Second structure not inbuilt at creation
 - 2. Rather matter of God’s second gift in new order of divine generosity
 - 3. Goes beyond our natural imagehood of God
 - 4. Brings about new “proportionality” between man + divine Trinity
 - 5. ***Theological a priori concerns itself with distinctively Christian experience as irreducible to any other no matter how religious***
- f. Matter of expression shaped by theological *a priori* draws on genres known to “religious man”
- i. But what is done with them through the Gospel differs utterly
 - ii. ***Myth is now actualised***

- iii. *In Resurrection of incarnate humanity of the Word the literal and particular are carried into the vertical transcendent realm in a final and eternal manner*
- iv. **Symbol takes root in reality of ever-lasting being**
- v. *Science, Religion, and Christianity*
 - 1. Praises Baroque literature and art for having payed out realization of figures of Greek myth in person of historic Christ
 - 2. ***Myth has become fact (C S Lewis)***
 - 3. The truth of Christ is found at the point where the “two piers” of myth and philosophy can be made to form an entire bridge
 - 4. Myth and philosophy reach toward each other but never meet
 - 5. Philosophy pushed myth toward the periphery
 - a. Became enclosed in gnostic fantasy
 - b. Philosophy cut off from doxology and prayer
- vi. ***When religious a priori gives way to theological a priori these ills can be healed, this rupture in our quest for a truth that would also be beauty repaired***
- g. One major source of Balthasar’s disagreement with approach of Karl Rahner
 - i. Rahner made mistake in blocking theological *a priori* with its religious counterpart
 - ii. Rahner *tends* to treat Trinitarian and Christological revelation as simply fullest “thematization” or explicit articulation of a piety which is not “thematic”
 - 1. But pre-contains content of supreme revelation since our intellectual nature is turned towards human-divine encounter from the start
 - 2. ***Balthasar objects to Rahner’s theology of faith in that it fails to derive faith from the form of Christ***
 - a. Christ’s form does not verify itself by the unique evidence contained in its amazing unexpected beauty

- i. Rather it is able to satisfy (on level of understanding) a drive towards transcendence already operative in people's lives
 - b. Rahner half way on road to Bultmann for whom God can only be known non-objectively
- h. Balthasar shows commitment to Christian revelation in its irreducible specific pattern when he insists that in collaboration with this inner grace the form of Christ makes for new revelation with its own evidence which no insight into dynamism of the human spirit in its tendency towards God can anticipate or verify in retrospect
 - i. There is no need to verify words + deeds of Christ
 - ii. *Only Christ's form makes those words and deeds plain*
 - iii. *A posteriori* historical evidence of that form founds Christian faith
 - 1. *Not a priori ahistorical state of affairs for some individual*
 - iv. **What human expectation could envisage what a triune self-sufficient Creator did?**
 - v. *The rhetorical question identifies Balthasar's most basic theological conviction*
 - 1. Nowhere but in historical form of Jesus could anyone verify so extravagantly wasteful a love on side of divinity and so utterly devastating a burden on side of humanity
 - vi. **No human evolution, hope or desire can unity the Hellish destruction of Good Friday with splendid affirmation of Easter Sunday (37)**
 - 1. Only Jesus' form can verify a triune God knowing no need to subject himself to such horrors and yet in total freedom does so
 - 2. **The form of Christ is thus akin to that of an artistic masterpiece**
 - 3. We apprehend it "must" be as it is
- i. Balthasar stresses rupture and transformation Christian conversion entails

- i. Not simply an anonymous Christian becomes so openly
- ii. “Man shall not see me and live” (Exodus)
- iii. New Testament fulfills this
- iv. *In Jesus the believer has for first time seen God***
- v. Something something about stupifying act of God (37-38)

8. Relation of apologetics to dogmatics

- a. Important corollary of Balthasar’s estimate of respective roles of subjective and objective evidence for Christian revelation = a *shift* in relation of apologetics to dogmatic theology
 - i. Balthasar seeks to modify currently understood picture of apologetics by presenting ***apologetics as incipient dogmatics***
 - ii. Investigating motives of credibility is constantly on point of trembling into loving prostratin before figure of Word incarnate
- b. Useful background
 - i. Christian apologists from first generations of the Church after the apostles
 - ii. First to treat issue of apologetics in systematic fashion usually reckoned to be 13th century German dominican St Albert the Great
 - 1. His “antecedents of the act of faith” include important theses of “fundamental theology”
 - 2. Albert did not settle *relation of “antecedents” to certainty aspect of faith*
 - 3. Some masters of High Scholastic period admitted ***two sorts of faith***
 - a. Motives of credibility produce “intellectual faith” which should be distinguished fro faith
 - b. Intellectual faith lacked religious and moral value of virtue of theological faith
 - i. That virtue is such because it has character of unconditional response to God as “First Truth”***
 - c. Albert and Thomas don’t give “intellectual faith” the title of “faith” at all
 - d. (Rw - !)

- e. Motives of credibility may make people certain in *soe* kind of adhering to bearer of revelation
 - f. *This is not yet recognizing Jesus Christ as Word of the Father***
 - g. (Rw - so we cannot argue people into virtuous faith?)
- c. Against early Deist thinkers Catholic writers from 16th century on ***stressed importance of rational motives of credibility***
- i. Some changes later because of Protestantism
 - ii. *Classic Catholic representatives undertook to prove principles of natural and revealed religion*
 - iii. (Rw - ?????) (39-40)
 - iv. By time of Balthasar (in 1920s-30s) some Catholic philosophers and theologians were expressing dissatisfaction with the entire approach
 - v. (Rw - *which approach?*)
- d. Why? Such treatise claimed to establish the *fact* of divine revelation without envisaging (???) the *meaning* of its content
- i. Relation of supernatural truth to human realities not manifest
 - ii. Yes that relation exceeds what we can expect but the wonderful character of that excess was not brought home
 - iii. *The Gospel offers an intelligible message - we are meant to understand even if this stretch our powers to a point where only the gracious enhancement of our capacities can serve our turn***
 - 1. Understanding and mystery develop together in proportion to each other
 - iv. Emphasis on proof of revelation by arguments external to itself
 - 1. This intelligibility failed to make proper appearance in justifying revelation's claims
 - 2. Critical epithet "extrinsicist"
 - 3. Supernatural order added on to natural as autonomous supplement
- e. Catholic apologetics

- i. Single most influential dissentient voice = French philosopher and lay theologian Maurice Blondel (41)
- ii. Blondel proposed to give large share (in commendation of revealed religion) to account of how internal logic of act of faith corresponds to “logic” of highest kind of human activity we know
 - 1. When we set out to discern *meaning* and the *fulness of meaning* in human life at large
 - 2. Not enough to adduce arguments to show fact of divine attestation in Jesus
 - 3. ***Mystery of Christ must be presented as throwing light on whole human condition***
 - 4. Question is not “prove by miraculous facts” but to discern in the “figure” of Jesus (acts and destiny) a divine-human presence penetrating and transforming our sense of relation with God, world, others, ourselves
- iii. ***In so doing the Revealer confers on human history the weight of eternity***
- iv. **Cannot be done without treating content of revelation from within (not simply fact of revelation from without)**
- v. Balthasar’s first step = show beauty is possible vehicle for divine self-manifestation
 - 1. *Beauty is not just property of all created things qua created*
 - 2. ***What appears in beauty f created forms is radiance of being der Glanz des Seins***
 - 3. *Beauty speaks of meaning of what transcends yet inheres in all existents*
- f. **Secondly** Balthasar treats beauty as vehicle of actual revelation of God in Christ
 - i. Made when eternal manifests itself in concrete material form breaking into this world numinously
 - 1. ***The eternal breaking in with the glory that inheres in the form of Jesus Christ***
 - 2. Not sheerly overwhelming but is an intelligible history

3. *This form is a narrative form and meaning of the story is divine love*
4. Content and form are one since both are wonderful
5. Both content and form reflect *love*
6. ***Love shares the structure of beauty***

- g. Thirdly and finally** Balthasar develops his theological aesthetics in two parts that are strongly unified as well as distinct
- i. This spans treatises of apologetics and dogmatics
 - ii. Because his aesthetics is not only epistemological investigation of kind of “seeing” involved in faith
 - iii. Also a doctrine of “ecstasy”
 1. Ecstasy in going out of Godhead in weakness into the world to manifest love interior to divine glory
 2. And in way believer is seized by divine glory in this revelation and taken up into share of life of God (43)
 - iv. ***Ecstasy contains in principle all main themes of dogmatics***
 - v. Faith = response to radiance of *bonum repromissum* (Thomas) beautifully ordered whole of salvation offered to us
 1. Exceeds any “whole” within the world
- h. *What we have here is tendency to elide the distinction between apologetics and dogmatics because Balthasar wants to elide the distinction between “certainty of adhesion” and virtue of theological faith (the Schoolmen)***
- i. Balthasar can proceed this way because he doesn’t think what explains act of faith is simply rationally available materials plus elevation of human judgment by supernatural light
 - i. There is also a “light” shining forth from those materials in their beautiful ordering in Jesus’ person life work
 - ii. Act of faith needs both kinds of light
 1. From within and from without
 - iii. Glory of divine self-emptying in Jesus Christ can be seen only by “eyes of faith” when God prepared me interiorly
 - iv. And “eyes of faith” can only see when light of faith falls on them fro divine form Jesus is

- v. *What the eyes of faith see when this interplay of light works is the opening of the divine heart in love - the self-disclosure of the Trinity*

9. Conclusion on aesthetics

- a. In lives of saints mystics that inspired seeing which animates Christian life in general and theological aesthetics in particular is most fully in act
 - i. Its key is *humility*
 - 1. Readiness to accept divine love as it is
 - 2. Appreciate form of divine revelation as given
 - ii. *Balthasar's concern with practice of holiness as precondition of fruitful theologizing belongs her*
 - 1. *Adoration and obedience follow from humility and draw good theology in their train*
 - iii. **Henri de Lubac contrasted Balthasar's theology with Hegel's**
 - 1. Hegel's thought "speculative Good Friday"
 - 2. Balthasar's "contemplative Holy Saturday"
 - a. Brings out the degree to which Balthasar's material dogmatics are informed by his theological insight into nature of faith as contemplative seeing
 - i. And how his theology centers on self-emptying of Son of God which reaches full term into Descent into Hell
- b. Final volumes of theological aesthetics consist in reading of Old and New Testament
 - i. Turns again to Bible in hope that we can read the Scriptures with new eyes
 - ii. Then we see how through New Testament's amazing consummation of Old the mystery of all creation (including man) received definitive interpretation as hidden presence of Absolute Love to which beauty's qualities of clarity integrity proportion belong
 - iii. Recipients of God's self-revelation receive the call to make the divine visible in charity

1. Christian love of God and neighbor (the intended moral outcome of Balthasar's work)
2. *These statements are conclusions drawn from his theological aesthetics*
3. *And anticipate the message of his theological dramatics and theological logic also*

Chapter three. Key-word "freedom": Balthasar on the good

1. Introduction

- a. We looked at God's saving mystery in our regard from perspective of form
 - i. Corresponds to analogate of beauty
 - ii. Now we look at that mystery in perspective of its self-realization
 1. Corresponds to analogate of the good
 - iii. The beauty of Christ is the beauty of a dramatic action
 1. Opens up movement in the Trinity to human apprehension
 2. Shows it is *philanthropically active*
 - iv. *From there we consider it in perspective of its logic (corresponding to analogate of truth)*
 - v. *Now we concentrate on how self-realization of God's saving mystery = realization of supreme good for man*
 - vi. Unfolds in transforming encounter between two freedoms *in a drama* where players are not only human but divine
- b. Balthasar's *Theodramatik* = "theological dramatics"
 - i. Way of understanding divine revelation on basis of theater of drama
 - ii. We are presented in revelation with not simply ideas attitudes or even narratives
 - iii. *Rather in and through ideas attitudes and narratives we are presented with an action*
 1. *That is complex and unitary with agents both divine and human*

2. *No account of salvation can avoid suggestion of drama enacted*

2. Drama of salvation

- a. What theater / drama is
 - i. Drama could provide excellent model for saving revelation
 - ii. *In drama actors interact so that in playing roles in relation to each other we gain disclosure of what human life is like and become ourselves changed*
 - iii. We are purified and enlarged in our vision as we stumble into ordinary world
 - iv. We seem transformed
- b. In Balthasar's analysis of the drama there are six factors arranged in two sets of three
 - i. A trio concerned with production of the play
 1. The author, actor(s), director
 - ii. Trio involved in realization of the drama
 1. Performance, public, and "horizon" of the play
 - a. "Horizon" = perspective on human existence opened by the drama for those who assist with attention and are drawn in, in some way participating
- c. What do we find when applying this to divine revelation enacted for our salvation?
 - i. Author = Father
 1. Responsible for all
 2. Before and above the play
 3. Yet included and incorporated in strongest most irrevocable sense
 4. *Does not perform the piece*
 - ii. We need an actor
 1. In theo-drama chief actor is divine Son made man
 2. Not simply a servant of the script
 3. In certain way free in its regard
 4. Situates his acting in tension between sympathy for author's writing and mastery over it

5. *He overcomes that antithesis by perfect readiness or well-disposedness*
 - a. *Verfügbarkeit or disponibilité*
 - b. Follows where author's intention and his own reading of the significance of the text
- d. Third necessary figure in production the **director** *Regisseur* or "producer"
 - i. Producer = Holy Spirit
 - ii. Task? Transpose playwright's text into reality of the performance in light of various needs or emergencies that arise
 1. In relation to fluctuating capacities of the company as a whole
 - iii. ***Producer's job is to be faithfully obedient to text yet recreate it as a unity in and through varied company (troupe of players)***
- e. First trio are Father Son Holy Spirit
 - i. Father's script concerns self-emptying
 - ii. Son acts our role of self-emptier
 1. Combination of faithful translation and creative inspiration by concurrence of two wills divine and human united in his single person
 - iii. Holy Spirit guides the Son in his performance
- f. Second trio = performance, public, horizon
 - i. By means of which the Trinity draws us into dramatic action in theater of the world
 - ii. Mode of production is *avant-garde*
 - iii. ***In the last analysis no one can remain a pure spectator***
 - iv. Perspective = comprehensive event of the Trinitarian self-communication as engraving the world

3. The message of the theo-drama

- a. For Balthasar most important thing about theo-drama is the Father no longer sits simply as judge of the *Weltspiel*
 - i. He has his own script and bends down to sinful and suffering creature in concrete form of his Son and his Spirit to scoop us up and bring us to himself

- ii. Self-giving qualities of human Jesus also express stooping down of the Father in service of our redemption and consummation
 - iii. Father's script = his own self-donation
 - iv. The divine nature he possesses and divine communion of life he originated and shared with his Son and Spirit are ***sacrificial - kenotic - love***
- b. How can immutable God enter world-play in fresh guide as *kenotic* love
- i. Balthasar's principal and succinct explanation in preface to second edition of *Mysterium Paschale*
 - 1. ***In intrinsic eternal constitution of Trinitarian relations there is possibility of new modes in which Father Son and Spirit can relate to each other via their activity in creation which the Father - co-working with his Word and Spirit - establish in time, with time, as time***
 - 2. **The aim of the fresh display of inner-Trinitarian kenotic love in the extra-Trinitarian economy of salvation will be homecoming of redeemed man to God through endfolding in communion of the Triune life**

4. Two freedoms

- a. In perspective of theo-drama *main agents in work of salvation are divine and human = speak of inter-relation of two freedoms one infinite one finite* (53)
 - i. How can God and man act vis-a-vis one another without either absorbing the other or finitising the other
 - ii. *This question made it imperative for Balthasar to address interplay of divine and human freedom*
- b. Such interplay is feasible in two senses
 - i. In context of considering freedom as *autonomous motion*
 - 1. *Voluntas ut voluntas* (Thomas) will as will
 - a. Human finitude thereby discovers its ability to be perpetrator of evil

b. Divorced from counsel of God it may miss road to its own fulfillment not to mention leave the road and crash

c. ***God can use failure and tragedy to recall us to himself***

2. (Rw - the above reminds me of Bishop Robert Barron's book *The Priority of Christ* and also of the "Ainulindalë" in *The Silmarillion*)

3. Humanists of antiquity -> our nature demands a practical affirmation of the "whole" over the "part"

a. *Requires from us affirmation of transcendent Goodness God who is good of entire universe*

b. ***But for this to be made by us in practice God's gracious Spirit must liberate our will from within***
(54)

c. This happens when finite freedom is allowed to share in divine quality of infinite freedom through indwelling Holy Spirit

d. ***Man's freedom to consent to God (Balthasar)***

4. Distinctive approach of St Augustine and Latin patristic tradition

c. From this Balthasar moves to manner in which in saving history God made an unbreakable union of relation between finite and infinite freedom

i. *In other words to the place of the Mediator*

ii. In each scheme the role of Mediator is all important

d. Irenaean or "Greek" scheme

i. Waywardness of freedom of autonomous motion (known in our sinful state) implies a rupture between God and man

1. Hence Christ as protagonist of the drama

a. Indispensable yet incalculable

b. Torn asunder by tragic divide yet as he is torn healing the division

2. "In the light of the affirmation of God the fact of evil cannot fail to become 'the problem of evil' but by same

token problem cannot fail to have a solution” (Ben Meyer)

3. *A redemptive Incarnation offering transformation through and beyond tragedy is the solution provided*

e. Augustinian or “Latin” scheme

- i. Balthasar offers a more subtle account
- ii. *The need in the inter-relation of finite and infinite freedom for the Word incarnate*
- iii. Hard to show how one who is infinite freedom makes space for finite freedom to embrace him in genuine consent
 1. ***These are not two finite freedoms meeting on level playing field***
 2. **We cannot do justice to Latin doctrine of consensual freedom between man and God without bringing uin to help us the theme of eternal generation of the Word**
 - a. *We learn (thanks to entry onto world stage of Jesus the Trinitarian Son) from eternal generation of the Word in the mutual surrender of Father and Son and the fruitfulness of that as shown in spiration of the Holy Spirit*
- iv. ***What do we see here?***
 1. We see how “letting-be” making space for otherness is hallmark of freedom at its infinite divine pole
 2. (Rw - again sounds like Bishop Robert Barron)
 3. Negative distance between world and God grounded in positive distance between God and his Logos
 - a. A galaxy of centers of finite freedom which do not lose their freedom through relatedness to the Infinite but salvage enhance and thereby rediscover finite freedom in and through God (56)
 4. ***This is possible only because of primordial relationship whereby Word responds to generating Father***
 - a. *Here we have theo-dramatic version of Pauline and Johannine doctrine of coming to be of all creatures through the Word*

- i. Theo-dramatic rendering that applies that doctrine to *free* creatures able to participate as “persons of the drama” in theater of the world
 - f. Relating human to divine freedom (for sake of human salvation) is corresponding description of how Jesus Christ saves the world
 - i. It takes the Incarnation and above all the Cross to do it
 - ii. ***Those who regard a doctrine of substitutionary death as incompatible with goodness of the Father -> it is human beings who impose this immeasurable burden on Jesus***
 - 1. He can bear it and is willing to accept it
 - 2. Consents to the mission with joy
 - 3. *He can re-present on the Cross not only the “clash” between infinite and finite freedom but the reconciliation between them*
- 4. This is the heart of Balthasar’s dramatic theology of our redemption (Theo-Drama’s fourth volume)**
- g. It is the assent (given in our name by the Virgin at the foot of the Cross) to that primordial consent of the God-man which for Balthasar grounds the subsequent participation of the redeemed in the saving act of the Redeemer *the participation that enables them to enjoy its fruits and sub-media its power to others*
 - i. Balthasar = highly Marian theologian
 - ii. High high doctrine of the Mother of the Lord turns also on audacious personal view of her role in the Atonement
 - 1. At the Cross she becomes the “primal Church”
- 5. Why “drama” not “story”**
- a. When “narrative theology” was appearing in Western Catholicism *why Balthasar insisted the transcendental good should be presented as a drama not a story*
 - i. Why theo-drama and not theo-narrative
 - ii. One explanation
 - 1. Sacred time breaks in on natural human living in unaccountable way so better to view in dramatic terms
 - 2. (Rw - ???)

- iii. More pertinent
 - 1. Praise of drama in one of his Germanist sources
Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling notably *The Philosophy of Art* (1802)
 - a. Drama = genre the best advances self-revelation of the Absolute
 - b. Two reasons
 - i. *Impression of immediacy (drama) creates dispensing with both subjective persona of lyric poetry and retrospective narration of the epic*
 - ii. Drama is more immediate and more comprehensively faithful to reality at large
 - b. All the main methodological elements in contemporary Christian theology were converging on need for dramatic theology (or theological dramatic theory) which would not be something innovative but a matter of manifesting explicitly what has always been implied in structure of revelation
 - i. ***Theology itself calls for this shape - something implicit within it***
 - 1. This revelation is dramatic
 - 2. *The history of an initiative on God's part for his world - the history of a struggle between God and the creature over the latter's meaning and salvation*
 - ii. ***Is the outcome of this struggle predetermined or uncertain?***
(continuing influence of Barth's predestination doctrine)
 - 1. **Christ has ... and yet**
 - a. Dare we hope all may be saved?

6. From "analogy of being" to "analogy of freedom"

- a. Christian theo-drama will make its own the cycle of themes already touched on
 - i. Interplay of dramatic aspects in revelation-event as action involving God and man
 - ii. Divine and human freedom
 - 1. Rooted in creation and prolonged to eschatology

2. Entails self-involvement of God
- iii. ***The saving revelation is unthinkable if God is uninvolved God of deism***
 1. Same is true if God is “absorbed” God of Gnosticism and its modern equivalent Hegelianism
 2. (Rw - Hegelianism is modern equivalent of Gnosticism??? And that includes Marxism)
 3. *Can theological dramatic theory avoid these dangers?*
 4. Through idea of *analogia libertatis* “analogy of freedom”
- b. Important thing in Balthasar’s theological dramatics = theological doctrine or theological thesis of analogy of being is undergoing a sea-change
 - i. “Ratcheting to higher level of operation”
 - ii. ***Theme running through his work = the permutations of analogy***
 - iii. “Analogy of being” made to serve “analogy of liberty” at disposal of a dogmatic theology specifically a theology of redemption
 - iv. Ultimately turns into “analogy of charity”
 1. Moral and mystical life (components of life of holiness) find issue in endless life of the Age to Come

7. Christ as concrete “analogy of being”

- a. Balthasar happily accepts notion of analogy of being - notably in its Thomistic strain - but soon finds he wants to give that notion a nuance coming from revelation and not just from natural wisdom
 - i. Encouraged by medieval Conciliar tradition
- b. Balthasar makes repeated reference to analogy between finite being and infinite Being
 - i. Earliest idea from St Thomas - modulated by Erich Przywara
 - ii. When Balthasar presents common Thomistic teaching that God and world are joined by analogy of being on basis of God’s creative production of the world *he emphasized (with Fourth Lateran 1215) how in all this is always a “greater dissimilarity” between God and creature*

- iii. Increasingly interpreted Thomas' analogy of being in light of Thomist "real distinction" between existence and essence (62)
 - iv. ***Only in God is his essence his existence***
 - v. Even the highest creature lacks self-subsistence
 - vi. (Rw - similar to Melkor wanted the Flame Imperishable?)
8. Because analogy of being so understood is universally applicable it was a mistake to restrict it to relation between infinite and finite on basis of God's creative act
- a. Analogy of being not just way of speaking about natural being's participatory relation to Being of its Source
 - b. Rather analogy of being is equally applicable to rational creature's supernatural elevation by grace
 - i. Comments about Fourth Lateran Council
 - ii. "May they be one in as we also are one"
9. Principle of analogy of being must apply to "highest union between divine and created being"
- a. For Christian revelation that is union found in "God-man himself"
 - b. ***Analogia entis should throw light on Jesus Christ as Word incarnate through whom God is revealed, humanity saved, world brought to completion***
 - c. **Balthasar looks at analogy operating not only in God-world relationship established by Creator and its working out in being of the God-man but also how it functions in relation between man and God which is necessary if divine relation is to be comprehensible to man and finally in inter-relation of divine and human freedoms in salvation**
 - i. *Analogy of being is relevant not only to theistic metaphysics but to Christology, to theology of revelation, and to theology of redemption*
 - d. Analogy will move through its own permutations
10. During his encounter with Barth Balthasar learned how to give analogy of being a Christological form *which sets whole development in motion*
- a. Balthasar tried to re-contextualize the *analogia entis* within *analogia fidei*
 - i. Barth objected to standard Catholic account

1. Reduces concrete Christological center of faith to Scholastic metaphysics
2. *Balthasar's Christcentrism (from Henri de Lubac) made him sympathetic*
3. **But he answered it not by abandoning analogia entis but reformulated the analogy of being so as to show how it could serve not substitute for a Christological account of the creation-covenant**
4. *Jesus Christ is the concrete analogy of being in person*
(63)

11. This helped when Balthasar wrote the theological aesthetics
- a. He already invoked idea of Christ's *form* in this context of analogy
 - b. Agreed with Barth *Christ cannot be regarded as instance of Creator-creature analogy established independently of him*
 - i. Depends upon unique form of the God-man / Christ-form
 1. Manis *made* in Old Testament thinking
 2. In the image of God
 - ii. Since Christ *is* his own form turns only on himself (Rw - ???)
 - iii. ***Only Christ as divine Son and human being can express absolute Being within worldly form***
 1. *Through the elevation of his created nature by the grace of union (expressed by his perfect obedience to the Father) the humanity of Christ is raised up to have common measure with Word's measure*
 2. **He becomes as man the active expression of God**
12. This apparel to uniqueness of Christ in the aesthetics is not by way of *replacing* analogy thinking
- a. Rather the appearance of revelation presupposes analogical relation between God's being and created being
 - i. *There must be some similarity or else revelation could not be seen or happen*
 - ii. ***In terms of theological aesthetics (with "form thinking") to say Christ is "concrete analogy of being" means the hypostatic union furnishes supreme form of relation between God and creature***

1. Since Jesus = Trinitarian Son that analogy furnishes the form that discloses the Trinitarian relationships in themselves and in relation to the world
2. *Through the Incarnation the relation between God and creation (described in analogy of being) is caught up into inner-Trinitarian relations*
 - a. “Relation between God and creature in this way comes to participate in natural indissolubility of the love between the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit” (65)

b. We cannot make further progress without turning from aesthetics to dramatics with its key-word “freedom”

13. The Christological “analogy of freedom”

- a. Theological dramatics considers material content which comes to formal expression in theological aesthetics
 - i. The content that is “God’s action in and upon the world”
 - ii. Balthasar early surmised he would need to find a further extension of analogy thinking to cope with this
 1. “The mission of the Son of God was more concrete - he took on form of concrete analogy between God of wrath and grace and between creature condemned and redeemed”
- iii. *What is added = sense of conflict-ridden mission*** appropriate to fallen world
- iv. *Christ’s analogical character (as union of God and man) cannot be described as comprehensive unless it encompasses drama of redemption***
 1. *Balthasar spends time in Theo-Drama on Christ’s atoning work which is where his mission comes into its own*
 - a. *Analogia entis becomes analogia libertatis*
 - i. Analogy between divine and human freedom
 - ii. Freedom within the Godhead and freedom which makes possible human drama on earth

- iii. ??? *analogy now takes on dramatic character that is salvific for the world*
- b. Balthasar wants to assert “the relationship between uncreated and created freedom is concrete thrust of *analogia entis*”
 - i. Now that concretised analogy fuller realized in Christ is to be made more concrete in the analogy of free activity the *analogia libertatis*
- c. In theological dramatics Balthasar assembled and develops relevant considerations from his earlier works
 - i. In theological aesthetics
 - 1. Since light of faith respects human freedom the engracement of created subject takes place such that his freedom is respected
 - a. Something about act of faith
 - 2. In Catholic theology the act of faith (as properly human action not effect of divine agency) is essentially free
 - a. Little excursus on topic of freedom and obedience in the aesthetics
 - b. If one says “yes” to light of God’s glory in the Christ form *Balthasar understands that as liberation or perfection of one’s freedom and participation in the freedom of Christ*
 - ii. Only in the dramatics does this theme take off
 - iii. Mere existence of finite freedom implies “natural” dramatic relationship between God and world on basis of creation
 - 1. *When God sends his Son a new “acting area” is opened in the created world*
 - 2. ***Distinctive feature = finite freedom can be inserted into infinite freedom***
 - a. Christ as actor mediates the divine author’s plan for humanity along these lines
 - b. “The ultimate horizon which gives meaning to human existence is not just absolute Being but trinitarian Being understood as interpersonal freedom in God” (Thomas Dalzell)

- iv. An adequate grasp of that “horizon” (seen in triune freedom and triune love) is only available if justice is done to significance of the event of the Cross with its issue in Easter and Pentecost
- v. ***In the Resurrection (theo-dramatically conceived) the natural acting area which exists by virtue of creation becomes “area” for action that extends into heaven - into heart of the Trinity***
 - 1. ***Acceptance of Holy Spirit’s Pentecost mission enables individuals to enter into Christ’s acting area and so into the inter-action of the divine persons***
 - a. ... Christ’s concrete analogy takes the form of the Paschal Mystery, the Cross and Resurrection
 - b. **And this (self-giving to Father for guilty creatures) is the redemption of the world**
 - c. ***The analogy of being (now enhanced as analogy of freedom) comes to consummation as trinitarian life in Christ***

14. From “analogy of freedom” to “analogy of charity”

- a. So what happens to analogy of being in analogy of freedom when it finds expression in life in Christ
 - i. *How does analogy of liberty look in Christian life which is both moral and mystical life*
 - ii. To Balthasar ***human sin = blindness to proper relation between God and man - expressed in analogy of being with provision for likeness and dissimilarity***
 - 1. For sinful man analogy becomes **instability** “sliding between nothingness and infinity”
 - 2. *The polarities in human nature point man beyond himself to find fulfillment in God*
 - 3. When not distorted by sin such polarity serves as analogy for inner-Trinitarian relations
 - a. ***If humankind is made in image of God the Word it is made in image of the Trinitarian Son***
 - b. Disturbed polarity **generates indefinitely many distortions in human living**

- c. Characteristic upshot = immerse people in hubristic delusions of grandeur or in disordered despair
 - d. Through Cross and Resurrection the incarnate Son *returns the analogy to its source within the Godhead by redeeming sinful man, and so becomes concrete form of Christian life, to be followed and imitated*
 - 4. Christian life as *participation* in that redemption
 - a. Requires for its understanding the last form of analogy - **the analogy of love**
- b. In its new form *analogia entis* within *analogia libertatis* calls forth a third version of analogy thinking we can term *analogia caritatis* (Manfred Lochbrunner)
 - i. ***Christian is called to be analogous expression of charity of God in Jesus Christ***
 - ii. In accepting a mission in Christ the Christian becomes “Eucharistic”
 - 1. Shared out with Christ as nourishment for Mystical Body
 - 2. *In offering himself in obedience the Christian becomes means of expression and the language God uses to proclaim his kenosis of love* (Belgian, Georges de Schrijver)
 - 3. **This is greatest goodness - of being a saint**
 - 4. And what freedom was meant to be

15. Does the drama of salvation enrich God?

- a. The message of the dramatics is we are to increase in goodness but can we say goodness of God who is himself wholly actual perfection can be augmented too?
 - i. Balthasar offers understanding of Trinity which goes beyond anything in classical Christian thought
 - ii. Final volume of dramatics
 - 1. *A way of speaking about relation between God and world as relation in which world not only receives from but gives to God* (70)

2. A way of divine receiving which preserves transcendence of God
 - 3. *As an enrichment of God* (?!?)**
 4. Balthasar comes to this conclusion by exploring how creation's encounter with God = active participation in encounter eternally eventuating in God between Father Son and Holy Spirit
- b. We need to look at how he understands the immanent Trinity, the Trinity in itself
- i. His conception turns on God's self-revelation in economy found in saving history
 - ii. Categories from world of theater
 - iii. *History of salvation as a drama that reveals an eternal play: the inner-Trinitarian divine existence***
 - iv. In God an eternal drama
 1. Distance between Father and Son guarded and bridged by Holy Spirit in whom communion is secured
 2. Classical theology prefers to speak of *distinction*
 3. Need for a word that suggests "otherness"
 - a. *Precondition for sacrificial loving union*
 - b. (Rw - John Zizioulas)
- c. This Trinitarian "event" is drama that spills over into economy through free engagement of God for man's salvation where nexus of relations constituting the divine Trinity intersects with the world
- i. *He develops account of immanent Trinity where Father communicates himself eternally to the Son giving away his divinity and only possessing it again in that gift***
 - ii. *The Son exists as responsiveness to the Father in an eternal saying "thank you" for gift received***
 - iii. Holy Spirit = mutual love of Father and Son (Augustinian) but also fruitfulness of that mutual love (Balthasarian)
 - 1. *Balthasar deeply influenced by Sergei Bulgakov* who stresses self-emptying character of Trinitarian processions**

- d. Task of theologians is to criticize each other's work in the name of intellectual coherence and faithfulness to Tradition
- i. Père Bertrand de Margerie SJ put several questions along these lines
 - ii. Feared a kind of "human psychologism" which risks "tritheism"
 - iii. Three ideas in Balthasar's theology of immanent Trinity that he finds objectionable
 1. (72)
 2. Son "allowed himself to be generated"
 3. The Spirit "acquiesces" in joint spiration by Father and by Son
 - a. Objects to "separation" language
 - b. Balthasar would see it as true by virtue of covert reference to the role of the Holy Spirit
 - c. Allergy to vocabulary of renunciation and sacrifice of origins and communion (drawn from Bulgakov)
 - d. (difficult to follow discussion page 73 - references to Edward Schillebeeckx)
 - e. Odd that de Margerie did not comment on "gender fluidity of his theology of divine persons"
 - i. Son as feminine to Father's masculinity
 - ii. ***All the persons are both masculine and feminine in different respects***
 - iv. His theology of immanent Trinity in *Theo-drama* = powerful reading which takes seriously the claim in 1 John that "God is love"
 1. Understood as renunciatory yet joyous love typical of willing sacrifice - which reached lowest and highest pitch on the Cross
 2. ***Balthasar interprets the divine essence (originating processions of Son and Spirit) and entire life of communion of divine persons in their reciprocal possession of divine nature from this standpoint***
 - a. Not against ontology of Trinitarian life
 - b. A gloss on Christian metaphysic (Rw - ???) (74)

3. Investigation of the mystery of being alerts us to how being is gift - *it gives itself away*
4. Some think Balthasar's enthusiasm leads to overstepping bounds of theological propriety
- v. For Balthasar God's love = dynamic exchange between hypostases
 1. To describe this we need appropriate concepts but also metaphors
 2. *Metaphor profits by a discipline of correction from metaphysical thinking about God where negative theology can control the assertions of its affirmative counterpart*
 3. Question of divine enhancement through God's relations with the world in creation and salvation is *comparable* to question of sacrifice or suffering and "surprise" in God (last is distinctively Balthasarian)
 4. "The emptying of the Father's heart in letting the Son proceed is taken to be the eternal presupposition and pre-eminent instance of possible suffering, alienation, pain in the world" (Irish, Thomas Dalzell)
 5. *Balthasar rules out worldly-type suffering in the Trinity*
 6. Yet in God there is *something like suffering* (the suffering involved in kenotic love)
 7. Balthasar imagines an event in God which "lays foundation for all possible suffering in the world and the participation of God in it"
 - a. Ancient heresy?
 - b. *The term "kenosis" is not meant to be interpreted in patristic sense but as dramatic dynamism: the Father "is this movement of self-giving that holds nothing back"* (American commentator)
 8. Discussion of divine surprise more indebted to metaphor
 - a. Attempt to go beyond negative theology to evoke the *liveliness* of triune love
 - b. ????? (page 76)

- vi. On issue of “enhancement” of God
1. Dalzell points out this needs to be contextualized in Balthasar’s account of God’s inner-trinitarian love as dynamic ever-intensifying self-enrichment
 2. The eternal exchange between the persons is not deficient and it’s love exchange has nothing merely potential about it
 3. ***Its perfect actuality ever renewed in a fashion that can be called “intensifying”***
 4. Earlier study on Cappadocian Gregory of Nissa
 - a. Balthasar draws on image of divine being as fountain whose water returns to its source in ongoing circular dynamic
 - b. Third volume of dramatics
 - i. *Divine substance as possessed by the Trinitarian persons perdue in an Übereit supra-time as medium for loving interaction of Father, Son, Spirit in fountain-like fashion*
 - ii. Holy Spirit as exuberance and surplus of triune love (77)
 - c. ***The dynamic in God has not ended with the Son***
 - d. *Complete and perfect yet forever coming to be*
 - e. **This does not contradict eternal actuality of God**
 - i. In God’s nature is absolute freedom so can allow new aspects of himself to appear even within the exchange of divine persons
- vii. Question of divine enrichment
1. By creatures + by creatures redeemed and sanctified = question of whether we can describe process of world’s salvation through homecoming to the Trinity as inserted into the content of such “supra-time”
 2. ***The world enters God through participation in the otherness of the eternal Son***

3. When the Son returns to the Father in the Paschal Mystery he takes the world with him into exchange of love in God going on forever in supra-time
4. ***Human being becomes not spectator but participant in “streaming life” of God***
5. God’s inner life of love is always plenary, makes room for contribution from the world
6. Balthasar speaks of *Bereicherung* “enrichment” of heaven, a “becoming ever-richer” of the Trinity, an “embellishment” of the Father’s richness
 - a. Use of metaphors can bring us closer to truth that concepts alone
7. “Addition” to God not condition for divine perfection
8. *What the world gives to God it gives back to God of the love it received in taking part in the Trinitarian dialogue through saving economy in which God himself enfolded it*
9. “Thine of thy own we offer to Thee” (Liturgy of St John Chrysostom)

16. The dramatic dénouement: Balthasar’s eschatology

- a. The denouement of theodrama for Balthasar lies in homecoming of world to God through enfolding of creation in triune life
 - i. “Eschatology” (the life of heaven)
 - ii. Consider Balthasar’s eschatology in terms of (1) the Church and (2) the individual and (3) the world
- b. The Church
 - i. Confident dogmatic tone of Balthasar’s account of world’s homecoming to Trinity and hope that all may be saved might lead us to think his evaluation of fortunes of the community that carries God’s plan must be positive
 1. *This is mistaken*
 2. His prognosis in short + middle terms was *pessimistic*
 3. Rejected French poet and commentator Charles Péguy’s suggestion there is a *communion peccatorum* energized

- by Devil which undermines the *communio sanctorum* achieved by Christ
4. Evil is essentially divisive and isolating and cannot create communion of any kind
 - 5. *Yet the church competes with increasingly self-confident secular world-culture with aspirations of its own* (79)**
 6. Secular universal enlightenment is now within Church also (for example work of Hans Küng)
- c. His negative prognosis based partly on reading the state of contemporary Catholic Church
- i. Based on observation but also interpretation of Scripture and later Tradition
 - ii. *History moving into more polarized world/Church conflict as we draw closer to Eschaton***
 - iii. In the interim the Church acts + struggles on world-stage
 - iv. *Balthasar offered his theodramatics as shining armor for this spiritual warfare***
- d. Balthasar's Christian hope for individuals
- i. Critics ask whether he is committed to universalism
 - ii. Two short popular books
 1. We may hope all will be saved
 2. Some say the way he speaks about Christ's descent into Hell
 - iii. *How can Balthasar say God does not take humanity's "No" as final and allow for human freedom to go to Hell?***
- e. What did his eschatology say about ultimate future of wider social context of individual-civil society?
- i. Contemporary theologians are concerned about lack of *social content* to his presentation of ultimate human destiny
 - ii. *Modern theologians want some assurance what is being said about eschatology is relevant to civil society*
 1. Partly response to world influenced by materialism
 2. But also genuine concern of tradition
 3. *Eschatology is consummation of created order as a whole*

- f. Balthasar is more interested in destiny of persons than of social totality
 - i. His version of eschatology draws from his account of how personal identity of human beings relates to eternal procession and mission of divine Son
 - ii. *The mission of Christ is prolongation of eternal procession (Aquinas)*
 - iii. Balthasar holds to unity of procession and mission of the Son
 - iv. This unity grounds the “idea” of any human being comes forth in the Son in such a way it is also the “idea” of one’s mission in Christ
 - v. *When created freedom responds to God in me or you it becomes participation in the “readiness” of the Son*
 - vi. I exercise my freedom as a play in the divine drama by being in relationship with the Son
 - vii. *The ultimate end of human freedom = taking part in God’s Trinitarian life process*
- g. The finite is already to a degree the realization of its own “idea”
 - i. Its redemption = matter of being enabled to realize that idea more fully by virtue of mediation of incarnate Son
 - ii. *The Resurrection of Christ is for redeemed persons condition and cause of sharing in Trinitarian exchange*
 - 1. Cross and Resurrection event = economic realization of Son’s eternal giving himself back to Father
 - iii. Only by participation in his risen humanity can we be gathered into spacious freedom of God
 - iv. Natural reaching out of human freedom to God is perfected and enabled to reach its goal
 - v. **The relation between graced creature and God preserves and elevates relation between natural creature and God**
- h. It is precisely Balthasar’s emphasis on way natural relations of the creature to the divine plan for humanity are not abolished but preserved and enhanced

- i. Leads some to be astonished at the disjuncture he makes between hopes for a better world and the Trinitarian ingathering *Einbergung* of the redeemed
 - 1. Balthasar's work was framed by French "theology of earthly realities" pre-Conciliar, American "theology of secularization", German "political theology", Latin American "liberation theology" of post-Conciliar
 - a. Inclined to paint them with same brush
 - b. Thought they replaced theological hope by hope as human passion
 - c. *Theological hope has been secularized***
 - i. Absolute hope principle cut off from its religious pole
 - d. *A horizontalized pseudo-theological hope gives priority to socio-political over the religious, to future-oriented human forms of practice over God's practice to us***
- i. Suggested that Balthasar's strong reaction to these is an over-reaction which led him to positions not compatible with his principles
 - i. Yes he puts more emphasis on (in manner of Augustine)
 - ii. Also recognizes truth of Greek patristic position
 - 1. Human freedom has structure apart from grace and not in opposition to grace
- j. Balthasar privileged "forms", "gestalts" of individual realities
 - i. He could have included social forms so in the theological dramatics is lack of social drama
 - ii. He missed an opportunity to bring dramatics into dialogue with social theology
- k. These charges can be answered
 - i. Difficult to see how someone can be regarded as personalist for whom communitarian dimension of life is under-appreciated when they made *communio* crucial to their theology of the Church in light of theology of God
 - ii. Balthasar did not believe communitarianism could trump personalism

1. Perhaps because of background in Ignatian spirituality
 2. *Only individual persons can be subjects of such fellowship and enjoyment*
 3. Balthasar's discussion of traditional basis of Christian anthropology in doctrine of man "made to God's image and likeness" makes clear
 - a. *Gives him a universal theological anthropology turning on biblical motif used by Fathers and later theologians*
- iii. The way he uses analogy of being tends to stress how *individual persons* realize concretely their fundamental human identity in God's likeness
1. Concreteness of analogy of freedom and analogy of charity
 2. He works with what Scholastics called analogy of proportionality
 - a. Relates one relationship to another owing to similar proportions in each
 3. ***In the theological dramatics just as incarnate Son chooses self-transcendence corresponding to self-transcendence of the Father so individual person chooses to accept God in Jesus Christ as law or norm of his life***
 4. ??? (84)
 5. Suggests Balthasar's theology cannot be "rectified" by a little supplementation here and there
 - a. His theology not set up such that it is helpful if what is wanted is account of *social* expressions of divine likeness (other than family)
 - b. ***In Catholicism no one theology can serve exclusively all the Church's needs in bringing her vision to expression***
 - c. This takes us to final contribution of great trilogy, his theological logic, which corresponds to analogate "true"

Chapter four - Key-word “logic”: Balthasar on the True

1. Introduction

- a. Just as Jesus is central icon of theological aesthetics and central protagonist in theological dramatics so Balthasar wanted to claim Jesus was the center of all being as well
 - i. One could not flesh out claim Jesus was midpoint of being without investigating thoroughly the relations of Christology with *ontology* the study of reality in its fundamental pith, shape, direction
- b. Normally an “ontological Christology” is an investigation of reality of Christ as one personal being inhabiting two natures divine and human and accepting their union in himself
 - i. Typically takes seriously the affirmation of Council of Chalcedon and tries to do its philosophical justice
 - ii. But theologians wanting to show Christ was world’s heart could not be content with that
 - iii. *They need to show how Jesus related to whole range of being in its cosmic sweep in all its dimensions and depth*
- c. Title *Theo-logic* comes from Hegel’s thought considered as synthesis of realism and idealism
 - i. Into the real as found in knowing
 - ii. Just as Hegel’s logic is key to his ontology so Balthasar’s theo-logic will be his key
 1. For through Logos and his Spirit all things are made and re-made
 - a. Hegel
 - i. Everything about the world must be grasped from “absolute spirit” in a comprehensive metaphysic
 - ii. Based on how “absolute reason” of divine spirit comes to be as event of the world unfolds
 - iii. (Rw - sheesh)

- b. Balthasar is not interested in absolute reason so much as unconditional love
- c. *Whole story of world has been enfolded from the beginning in “absolute love”*
 - i. *Of the Holy Spirit who is “initiator” of world process and its supreme desirable “fruit”*
 - ii. **This is divine logic, the open secret of reality, truth laid bare**
- d. Last sections of *Theo-logic*’s final volume will set out to show as much of retrospect
 - i. Each volume would include “truth” in its title
 - ii. **Being, when known, is truth**
 - iii. **Ultimate condition of possibility for this lies in fact the truth of God is its measure**
 1. Agrees with Hegel that we give account of the totality of world that marries Trinitarian and historical thinking
 2. (Rw - !!!)
 3. ***But Balthasar disagrees with Hegel inasmuch***
 - a. He holds to version of “perennial philosophy” indebted to Aquinas
 - b. Makes “logic” climax in a theology turning on Christian revelation of divine truth, understood as irreducible to philosophy and independent of it
 - i. Anathema to Hegel
 4. His account of “the True” sets out from a classical metaphysic in tradition of *philosophia perennis* if modified by “phenomenology”
 5. Develops that into a theological logic where God’s freely granted self-disclosure received in faith is what determines how truth looks
- e. Unlike Hegel (whose Trinitarianism is heterodox) Balthasar belongs with great *Paradosis*
 - i. He understands the Son and the Spirit in accordance with Tradition of the Church

1. His ontological understanding of truth does not exclude concern for truth of propositions in which ontology finds expression in right judgments (not least in dogma)

2. The truth of the world

- a. First volume of *Theo-logic* in 1947 under title “Truth. Truth of the World”
 - i. Its purpose “to open *philosophical* access to specifically Christian understanding of truth”
 1. Not in a historical frame of mind
 2. “An adventure of constructive philosophizing”
 3. Wanted to present truth in two inter-related guides
 - a. “Phenomenology”
 - i. Study of appearance of things so long as we don’t mean *mere* appearance
 - ii. In this appearing it is *really they* that make themselves thus known
 - iii. A way back to ontology out of dead end which is empiricism
 - b. Balthasar will consider truth *both* in its appearance to subjects and in its undergirding of all such appearing (thus going beyond phenomenological description to become ontology proper) (92)
- b. We may start from standpoint of the perceiving subject, but that subject is aboriginally bound to being as a whole (as opening chapter took pains to underline)
 - i. *To query the human capacity for recognizing truth in its amplitude is to cut off the branch on which members of our race sit*
 1. Achilles’ heel of the Sceptics held they knew nothing can be known (Augustine)
 2. ***We in human existence are knowingly in solidary with whole host of beings surrounding us***
 3. Balthasar well aware his epistemological optimism and ontological realism constitute philosophy of common man

4. Reason stops being reasonable when it excludes or doubts legitimacy of basic trust in the truth of being

5. Such enables reason to function!

- c. Aim of *Theo-logic* not fully grasped until its ultimately theological purpose is apprehended
- i. Aspects of truth it (= ?) covers converge on shared knowledge and love made available in the Incarnation when an infinite truth took on finite form and on the consequent participation in the mystery of the Trinitarian life where the truth sets them free
 1. “Truth of God” and “The Spirit of Truth” bring this out
 - ii. **Balthasar focuses on four aspects of truth**
 1. Truth as nature
 2. As freedom
 3. As mystery
 4. As participation
 - iii. On these Balthasar outlines an entire metaphysic marrying objectivity of scholastic thought to concern of great German philosophers for inwardness of knowing process
- d. Balthasar discusses his most basic concept of truth under heading **truth as nature**
- i. Combines Hellenic notion of truth as unveiledness or disclosure with Hebraic concept of truth as fidelity
 1. *Aletheia* truth as revelation
 2. *Emet* as faithfulness to what is disclosed
 - ii. Both ensure that central to his treatment of truth as nature will be relation between subject and object
 - iii. ***Truth = an object unveils itself to a subject who engages himself in that disclosure***
 - iv. Balthasar is enough of Latin scholastic to insist our knowledge is always measured by independent reality of things
 1. But enough of classical German to maintain subjectivity is self-determinative and creative
 2. *His resolution of resultant aporia follows from foundational idea of truth with which he began*

3. Human knowing is at once “receptive and spontaneous, measured and measuring”

e. Things, when understood, become more fully themselves (94)

- i. This lies in way things are constituted as intelligible by the divine mind
- ii. ***Because God knows things they are essentially knowable (and knowable to us)***
- iii. The logic with which we operate as human beings is founded on divine creation
 1. *Knowing must embrace both receptivity that tells us things are given to us and spontaneity that prolongs the Creator’s act by entertaining things to make of them something more*
 2. (Rw - sounds like Tolkien and creatures as sub-creators)
- iv. Colors of butterfly wings and bird plumage exceeds demands of “utility”
 1. Evolution’s outcome as distinctively human enjoyment of greatest show on earth (Alfred Russel Wallace)
- v. We don’t have to enjoy or recreate that beauty
 1. When we do = an act of freedom and therefore of love
 2. *A way of answering the call of God*
 3. Here he thinks through Aquinas’ philosophy in a fresh way
 - a. ***Fundamental picture of human knowing things as depending on divine knowing of them long laid out by Aquinas in Disputed Questions on Truth***
- vi. *Truth as freedom* inescapable against both German philosophical and biblical background
 1. To become object of knowledge to others is a sharing of self and something of a service
 2. *Throughout universe of being Balthasar hears echoes of Hingabe (self-surrender) that is crux of triune life*
 3. ??? lack of power to witness
 - a. Witness = self-communication taken onto new level

- vii. Will to self-communication on part of object would be fruitless without corresponding will to self-opening on part of subject
 - 1. Object can achieve its potential only through subject's freedom
 - 2. ??? (95)
 - 3. Some truth only rationally accessible when communicated in freedom
 - a. Truth knowledge is never without element of love
 - 4. Love admits every truth whatever its provenance (in pursuit of its role in "logic") (96)
 - a. Establishes a hierarchy among truths its knows
 - b. Can distinguish more comprehensive truth and one included within a wider whole
 - i. All that is pertinent to divine revelation than which no greater truth can be conceived*
- viii. What of *truth as mystery*?
 - 1. Balthasar has been advancing general ontology of the real that opens out onto mystery
 - a. World = sign system with meaning beyond itself
 - b. Balthasar pondered how essence and existence (what something is and that it is) point to their common mystery which is being
 - c. Something's essence (as proper way of being) is more than what it actually is because a thing strives for fullness of its own kind of life
 - d. And its existence depends on the victory of being over non-being
 - 2. Now Balthasa will deal with truth as mystery
- ix. In world of images being comes to be interpreted by us
 - 1. There is a "kenotic" self-emptying side to its appearance, a distant reflection of the self-emptying of the divine Logos behind which lies the kenotic Trinity

- a. This humble approach of being in the image happens beautifully for beauty is *the power of expressive truth to radiate out and captivate*
 - b. Balthasar employs Aristotelian-Thomist philosophy of mind as “abstractive” to show how our concepts are shaped on this basis
- x. His analysis is in service of a claim more distinctively his own
 - 1. Through images the essences of things stand revealed
 - 2. This mediation brings home to us range and depth of what is displayed by “being” at large
 - 3. ??? (page 97 middle)
- xi. This reminds Balthasar of inescapable heuristic importance of language without which these disciples and practices would fail or be disabled
 - 1. *The envioning world of images takes on new role as repertoire of forms that can be drawn on for purposes of communication between human beings*
 - 2. Languages cannot eliminate mystery (for faithful or deceitful)
 - 3. *It makes us attend to importance of inter-subjectivity (dialogue)*
 - 4. ???
 - 5. This will never abolish the point of the personal (contra Hegelianism)
 - a. It shows the needs for communion of saints
- xii. Balthasar’s conclusion on mystery of being = judged by its trace in the contingent order the ground of things is a communicativeness marked by disinterestedness, by gratuity, and thus by something like love (98)
 - 1. *The ground differs from grounded through not being determined by factors beyond self*
 - 2. God is groundless in a different sense fro that in which the world is groundless
 - 3. The world is actually grounded in another - *in the divine gratuity*

- a. *God is grounded in only his own blessed life*
- b. “In revealing himself as Creator God shows he is deep source of the world and the absolutely hidden being. He unveils himself in exact measure required for teaching the creature he remains the Creator who is both free and hidden in his own mystery”

4. Hence **truth as participation**

- 5. Also indicates how what is disclosure of hidden mystery from God’s side can only be from our participation in that act, never possession of it
 - a. Explains why most important cognitive attitude we can adopt is one which awaits from God alone the measure of the truth we would know
 - b. *Listening to the Word of God in Jesus Christ depends on this*
 - c. Truth has a “dramatic structure” crucially involves in theo-drama whose chief protagonist Israel’s Messiah is

3. The truth of the Word, the Son (99)

- a. Second volume of theological logic (natural logic) the ontology proper to everyday world must become “Christo-logic” by focusing on the Logos and his incarnate
 - i. Since through Word incarnate a revelation inviting man’s fullest possible participation in being (“everlasting life”) actually occurred
 - ii. Reader should beware (!)
 - 1. Second and third volumes of *Theo-logic* do not follow from it in direct or exclusive fashion
 - 2. In between *there intervene aesthetics and dramatics*
 - 3. When Balthasar opens with meditation on “I am the Truth” (John 14:6) the intellectual shock is barely tolerable
 - iii. We should consider central question of second volume of *Theo-Logic*

1. How could eternal Logos express himself within bounds of a creature, the humanity of Jesus?

2. We must have done two things
- a. Contemplate self-disclosure of divine glory in Jesus Christ
 - b. And confront divine philanthropy where same figure is central protagonist of divine action, transforming fallen finite freedom by joining it to all-holy infinite freedom in sacrifice on the Cross
 - i. The aesthetics discovered how God clarifies the form of his own truth as gracious self-giving love
 - ii. ***The dramatics spelled that out in terms of the action of Christ (in tears and blood)***

- b. Now we can take a step further
- i. The splendid goodness of truth is uttered not only in the career up to Easter but also in gift at Pentecost of a share in relation between Father and Son communicated by the Holy Spirit
 1. Spirit = Interpreter of the Son
 2. Transmits to world the gracious Truth of Father and Son exteriorly but also interiorly
 - a. So believers may know that relation in themselves
 - c. Balthasar would deny he has left realm of logic behind
 - i. First volume of *Theo-Logic*
 1. Love lays indispensable role in thought
 - ii. Second volume
 1. Argue case for human logic in image and likeness of triune God the God of love
 2. ***Logic and love meet and embrace (100)***

4. Ana-logic

- a. One could paraphrase “ana-logic” by comparing with movement of an escalator and call it “Logic Going Up”
 - i. His term for enquire into reflection of Trinity in truth and being of the world

1. Certain features of the world point upward to transcendent triune God who is their source
 2. *Suggests difference from “analogy”*
 - a. Can concern itself with family resemblance between things within the world
 3. ***“Ana-logic” looks from the world towards God***
 - a. Reflection intended to throw light on self-expression of the Logos in his creation
 - b. Analyzing the expression from the side of the world
- b. This led Balthasar to become interested in triads
- i. (some examples) (101)
 1. Logic (French poet-metaphysician Paul Claudel)
 2. Personhood (medieval Augustinian theologian Richard of St Victor)
 - a. (echoes of John Zizioulas)
 3. Language (20th century “dialogical” thinkers)
 4. ***These are ana-logical projection lines***
 - a. ***Traces of the Trinity in structure of thought and being in the world***
 - b. Their intersection is unknown to us until Logos takes flesh as Jesus Christ
 - c. In Jesus Christ the word expressed himself by his visibility unveiling the actual structure of the divine life
 - i. Means knowledge of the Father (Source of entire Godhead)
 - ii. Balthasar cites Irenaeus
 - iii. *When considering “Truth of the World” the more fully the mystery of being is disclosed in some striking appearance the more we are aware of unfathomable depths beneath*
 1. Balthasar surprisingly opposed to distinction between divine energies and divine essence (14th century Byzantine theologian St Gregory Palamas)
 - d. Jesus has at his disposal the “grammar” of creation (parables and other sayings)
 - i. Logic whose language is furnished by creaturely being

- ii. And the “grammar” of Israel (Hebrew Bible)
 - 1. *Two sets of linguistic resources for speaking of the Father*
 - 2. Jesus entered a world ana-logically prepared for him and resources for his purposes
- e. But in the way he used these resources Jesus is marked by extraordinary *otherness* even when engaged in service of his fellows
 - i. Balthasar emphasizes how he speaks by silences
 - 1. Makes eloquent another all-environing silence spanning time from Incarnation to return to the Father’s side
 - 2. *Even when making himself comprehensible Jesus retains his mystery and initiative*
 - a. (Palamite distinction locates mystery in wrong place)
- f. What is the place of the Logos in God?
 - i. Balthasar cannot avoid a constructive dogmatics of the Holy Trinity
 - 1. If his aim is to exhibit truth of one who is always “Trinitarian Son”
 - 2. Steers course between radical “essentialism” and radical “personalism”
 - 3. (technical Trinitarian theology)
 - 4. For Balthasar the divine essence exists in a way that is always only “Fatherly, Sonly, Ghostly”
 - a. *The essence is co-extensive with event of eternal processions of these persons*
 - 5. It is co-determinative of that event by way of participation in that essence of Father, Son, Spirit
 - 6. **The self-giving of the persons corresponds to the singularity of the essence, in turn indicates the intimate reality of the essence can only be the being of love**
 - ii. Some theologies of Trinity want to replace language of being with language of love
 - 1. Balthasar proposes the gift of love shall illuminate all being from within

2. In his account of the divine nature all the divine properties take their coloration from what he terms “primordial mystery of abyssal love”

- g. If within the divine life the Son expresses the truth of the Father he must also manifest the Father’s “groundless” love
 - i. he does so by his role in the coming forth of the Spirit
 - ii. *Balthasar is an unrepentant Filioquist* (104)
- h. Thereby he anticipates closing chapters of *Theo-logic*’s middle volume on the career of Jesus
 - i. A theology of the creative agency of the Word in the world’s making follows from an account of his particular way of sharing the divine essence as a person
 - ii. (Greek thought always had trouble showing difference between how Word and Spirit process from the Father)
 - 1. Augustin’s successful analogy of the Word as intellectual movement *Verbum* and Spirit as movement of love *Amor*
- i. Balthasar takes his cue not from Augustine and Aquinas but from Franciscan contemporary Bonaventure who developed Augustinian inheritance differently
 - i. Word and Spirit proceed from Father’s love
 - 1. Word proceeds “expressively”
 - 2. Spirit proceeds “liberally” by readiness to be sent into world as boundless overflow of Father’s generosity expressed in the Son
 - 3. ??? (top page 105)
- j. Natural philosophy shows a diverse creation blessed with difference yet cursed by conflict
 - i. For Balthasar this distinction sets creatures off as finite at other pole from God who is infinite
 - ii. Signals their poverty and also their glory
 - 1. In multiform contingency we see how being reflects the kenotic divine Trinity by gloriously throwing itself away
 - 2. Confirms how Balthasar sees coming forth from Father of the Word and Spirit

3. *Otherness is no strange to triune being where persons are defined by their relations of fruitful and responsive opposition*

- k. The Bonaventurian theology of divine processions (second volume of *Theo-logic*) sheds light on whole approach to Christian theology recommended by Balthasar
 - i. As finite as is the manner of the transcendentals in creation ***they nonetheless signal a share in the Trinitarian expressivity (like the Son) and liberality (like the Holy Spirit)***

5. Cata-logic (106)

- a. “Ana-logic” is elevator ascending Logic Going Up
 - i. “Cata-logic” is descending movement whereby through his Incarnation God brings new quality of being, a new ontology, into the world: Logic Coming Down (106)
 - 1. The way the Word resolves discord into harmony and brings about reconciled creation
 - 2. Christ comes as Word incarnate to fulfill work Trinity enterprised from the beginning of the world
- b. Balthasar’s concept of this is generous and draws on predecessors in the great Tradition
 - i. The incarnate Word unifies tensions in cosmic being creating equilibrium
 - ii. Unifies history furnishing the key to significance of its process
 - iii. Unifies world with God acting as medium between the two
- c. This last point has been central for classical Christianity
 - i. Balthasar emphasizes happening of the “at-one-ment” *in the flesh*
 - ii. ***The flesh has been the pivot for theological aesthetics***
 - iii. For theological dramatics the flesh in history turned away from the life of God that is the light of men
 - iv. **To restore its integrity was why Word assumed it**
 - v. ***In the theological logic the stress lies on potential for redemptive expression found in union of finite flesh and infinite Word***

- d. The “language” of flesh = language of man as spiritual-corporeal unity
 - i. Language of flesh has many registers
 - ii. Before dealing with linguistic modes Balthasar treats expression of Word made flesh in terms of myth and icon
 - 1. Myth became fact in the Incarnation
 - a. (shades of C S Lewis)
 - 2. In that Incarnation an “icon” of divine Personhood was fashioned in human face of Christ
 - 3. In Jesus we have objective symbol of God who uses parables taking us beyond their finitude towards inexhaustible transcendence
 - 4. The word Jesus spoke are modulations of his being the eternal Word (Father’s self-expression) and hence embodiment of charity
 - iii. In the end Jesus is rejected and the Word contradicted
 - 1. Theologically extraordinary because a lie must assert its truth in the presence of Truth itself
 - 2. ***This Truth discloses absolute love - so Jesus the Word is rejected through error but also by sin***
 - 3. Dialect in ministry involves not only his opponents but also contrary forces of evil
 - 4. Overcome by persevering obedience to Father of the Logos made human
 - a. Climax on the Cross and in Descent into Hell
 - 5. Outcome = victory of Christ
 - a. Entrusting to God the collapse of his earthly work
 - b. Jesus allows that work to develop beyond himself in sphere of Resurrection “administered” by Holy Spirit
 - c. ***It is the Spirit’s truth we now in conclusion consider if we are to do a Christian logic justice***

6. The truth of the Holy Spirit

- a. Holy Spirit interprets incarnate Son as Son of the Father
 - i. Hence “entry into logic”

- ii. Approving reference to Hegel's comment in *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*
 - 1. Before Pentecost disciples did not know Jesus as *infinite truth*
- b. To know Christ according to the Spirit not possible without receiving the Spirit
 - i. Makes no sense unless Spirit is God (4th century Fathers) (108)
 - ii. *How can One who expounds the truth of the Son's revelation of the Father not be divine?*
- c. Holy Spirit enters theological logic in guide wherein the Jesus of the High Priestly Prayer (John 16:13) presents him as one who will "lead them into all truth"
 - i. Balthasar emphasizes holistic nature of task
 - ii. Spirit brings to light and life not particular aspects of revelation for their sake but for the way those aspects give access to revelation as a totality
 - iii. **A theology that loses itself in particulars or a "praxis" that brings into prominence some one aspect of Christianity cannot lay claim to animation by the Spirit**
 - iv. The "economy" of Holy Spirit = make available all treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden in Christ
 - v. *Without "qualitative catholicity" of that holistic grasp of revelation the Church is poorly equipped for pursuit of "quantitative catholicity"*
 - vi. Here Balthasar signals much of third volume of *Theo-logic* devoted to Spirit will be given over to ecclesiology
 - 1. Investigation of the *Church* of the Spirit
- d. Balthasar does not neglect causal agency of Spirit in mission of Christ
 - i. But he emphasizes in context of theological logic the Spirit as Interpreter or "Exegete" of the church
 - ii. Contrary to what Filioquist doctrine might conjecture
 - 1. *The Son allows the Spirit to carry him forward on Father's project of redemption*

- a. For disciples Spirit = kind of second gift for more effective appreciation of first gift made by Father in sending his Son
- iii. That appreciation is made possible by love Holy Spirit sheds abroad in our hearts
- iv. ***Thus the role of the Spirit in post-Pentecost economy reflects his place in inner-Trinitarian life (where hs from eternity the living personal gift of Father and Son rounding off being of Trinity as love)***
- e. Theological logic is concerned with salvation's intelligible structure
 - i. Not its attractive radiance which belongs to theological aesthetics
 - ii. Not its power to resolve life's conflicts in favor of the good
 - 1. Subject of theological dramatics
 - iii. Balthasar speaks of Spirit as "expounding" a two-fold movement
 - 1. From Father to Son in Incarnation
 - 2. From Son to Father in Resurrection of the Crucified
 - iv. What Spirit lays out if gift of Father in (1) and endless glory of the Son in (2)
 - 1. In both the perfection of their mutual love
 - 2. Sharing in this movement = "divinization"
 - a. Latins call "incorporation in Christ"
 - 3. These are complementary schemes which exhibit Spirit and Son working together as "two hands" of the Father (Saint Irenaeus)
 - v. Under this rubric Balthasar illuminates several theological topics
 - 1. Relation of theory to "praxis"
 - 2. Nature of Christian experience
 - 3. Historically concrete yet universally valid claims of revelation (110)
- f. The Spirit never renders the Word discarnate
 - i. When Son undergoes Incarnation to uttermost in sufferings on the Cross the Spirit most completely penetrates his manhood

- ii. ***From this Balthasar draws a law of Christian living***
 - 1. **Pneumatization always increases in direct proportion to Incarnation**
 - a. *No Church that would be spiritual and subject and not corporeal and objective could possibly be continuing Spirit-born presence of Christ*
- g. Holy Spirit is not only personal love of Father and Son (expressing their inter-subjectivity)
 - i. He is also supremely objective - *the fruit of their love*
 - ii. This has ecclesiological consequences
 - 1. Not only the Spirit who inspires (list of effects)
 - 2. He certainly is “subjective Spirit” (drawing on Hegel)
 - iii. Spirit also inspired outer forms and institutional mediations
 - 1. Even canon law and theology
 - 2. “Objective Spirit”
 - iv. What the Spirit constructs in Church’s institution expresses divine love as much as the holiness that pattern of Church’s life makes possible
 - v. ***Balthasar writes a pro-mystical ecclesiology which is also anti-Gnostic***
 - vi. The Church is Marian and Petrine
- h. Goal of subjective and objective Spirit = return to the Father’s house
 - i. For individuals and the story of the world
 - ii. *All portrayals of Source and Goal in world religion = “schematisms” if they fail to realize God’s being is love (absolutely and economically)*
 - iii. The trilogy will not end in baffled cessation of thought before Truth’ final mystery
 - 1. Knowledge must stay open to marvel of love issuing eternally from itself without other ground or further reason
 - iv. ***Pondering divine Logic should change our minds and hearts***
 - v. “Desire for a strange land has left us; we want to go home to the Father” (early Romantic poet Novalis - Friedrich Leopold von Hardenberg)

vi. **That is wher ehumankind is meant to belong**

Conclusion

1. Looking back we can scan our original key-word “being” more fully
 - a. It seemed the transcendentals gave us our fullest *entrée* to mystery of being
 - b. Now we can say ore
 - c. **“Being” is not understood aright save in light of the Trinity - truth of the Word and Spirit pointing us to truth of the Father**
 - d. Being “is more proximately the likeness of the triune God, in that it reflects the unity of the self-being (complete and simple) and self-giving (also non-subsistent) of the three Persons” (M Bieler)
 - i. We discover this nowhere else but in the life death and Resurrection of Christ
 - ii. In the divine plan being is a communion which will embrace all the world
 - iii. ***Being and love - love and logic - are already one in God***
2. Balthasar hopes for readers to react not so much with intellectual satisfaction at a conceptual system
 - a. But with deeper discipleship
 - b. ***Holiness is the goal of Balthsar’s theological work and prayer its pre-condition***
3. Main aim of this study = offer a way in to Balthsar’s vast sometimes unwieldy corpus
 - a. Notably the trilogy
 - b. “Being” for project as a whole
 - c. “Form” for theological aesthetics
 - d. “Freedom” for theological dramatics
 - e. “Logic” for theological logic
4. **Also a secondary aim**
 - a. The “goal and “pre-condition” of theology in Balthasar’s eyes
 - b. May there be something inspirational enough to encourage readers to holiness and to steady them in praying life that flows from theological virtues

- i. That is the test of whether any book was worthwhile