

Causality and the *Analogia entis*: Karl Barth's Rejection of Analogy of Being Reconsidered

ARCHIE J. SPENCER
Trinity Western University
Langley, British Columbia

RECENT ATTEMPTS at rehabilitating the so-called “Catholic doctrine of the *analogia entis*” by some scholars in the Radical Orthodox group and in the Catholic/Orthodox traditions illustrate both the complexity of the concept of analogy and the propensity for historical misunderstanding regarding the various proponents and critics of the *analogia entis*.¹

¹ The roots of the discussion surely go back to a misunderstanding on many levels that began with a dialogue between Karl Barth and Eric Przywara. But recent attempts at establishing Przywara's position against Barth's have issued in even deeper misunderstandings. The *locus classicus* is, of course, Hans Urs von Balthasar's well-known book, *The Theology of Karl Barth; Exposition and Interpretation*, trans. Edward T. Oakes (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992). The research carried on since would fill many pages. Our immediate concern is with recent attempts to rehabilitate the somewhat discredited view of von Balthasar and Przywara, seen especially in David Hart's book, *The Beauty of the Infinite: The Aesthetics of Christian Truth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), wherein he states, “Most of the details of such an ontology (*analogy of being*) have already, in much of the preceding, been described, and so I shall add only a few elaborations (and it has all been said incomparably better by that most biblical of theologians, Dionysius, in *The Divine Names*); and I should note that, in choosing the term *analogia entis*, I am using it in the very particular sense it was given in the last century by the remarkable Eric Przywara. It is, one must acknowledge, a controversial turn of phrase among some Christian thinkers: Karl Barth's notorious, fairly barbarous, rejection of the *analogia entis* as the ‘invention of antichrist,’ and the principle reason for not becoming Roman Catholic was directed at Przywara's book—a verdict that, frankly, speaks only of Barth's failure

The purpose of this essay is to reconsider the question of Karl Barth's rejection of the *analogia entis*, with special reference to the concept of *causality*. The thesis presented herein is simple, but it has profound implications for further understanding of analogy in the Catholic and Protestant traditions in their dialogue with one another. I shall argue that Barth's rejection of the *analogia entis* can be better understood in the light of his rejection of the Catholic understanding of causality that lies at the heart of the Thomistic doctrine of analogy. Only when we account for this aspect of Barth's argument can we truly understand the most important reason why he rejects the *analogia entis*. Despite opting for a form of analogical method and his apparent "misunderstanding" of Eric Przywara's doctrine of analogy, Barth remains consistent in this rejection of the Thomistic conception. To demonstrate Barth's concern with the principle of causality in Aquinas and his heirs, Scholasticism and Reformed-Scholasticism, we need to trace the appeal to causality in the rereading of Aristotle in the cosmology and theology of Pseudo-Dionysius (following Proclus) as it is mediated through the philosophy and theology of Aquinas.² Here we shall engage the one theologian who seems to have

to understand Przywara. Whether one takes Barth's pronouncement, as Jüngel and others have done, as a reaction against the remoteness of God that so 'empty a concept as "being" actually suggests' or, rather more correctly in all likelihood, as a rejection of what Barth took to be a form of natural theology, it is ultimately nothing but an example of inane (and cruel) invective" (241). Betz says something similar, and somewhat in support of Hart in his "Beyond the Sublime: The Aesthetics of the Analogy of Being (Part One)," *Modern Theology* 21 (2005): 367–408. Betz accuses Barth of paying "little attention to detail" in his critique of Przywara and yet completely overlooks the detailed arguments Barth offers himself against what he considers to be the *analogia entis*. So at least the misunderstanding is mutual at the end of the day. He continues his polemic against Barth in "Part Two." See *Modern Theology* 22 (2006): 1–50.

- ² The literature on Aquinas's connection with Platonism has grown considerably since the publication of Etienne Gilson's *Being and Some Philosophers* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1952), a work that has provided no small impetus in recent Thomistic scholarship along the lines of a neo-Platonic connection. Hart seems to think that his force is spent within Thomistic scholarship but this is a much mistaken assumption. Says Hart, "So, now that Gilson and others who so enormously exaggerated Thomas's originality no longer dominate Thomistic scholarship, we may certainly, if we wish, retreat from Thomas's exquisitely refined terminology to earlier moments in the continuous tradition of Christian ontology that he was interpreting—to the Cappadocians, or Augustine, or Maximus, above all to Dionysius the Areopagite—and choose some other words, 'energeia,' 'plenitude,' 'light,' 'the Good,' etc." *Beauty of the Infinite*, 223. Many examples of recent scholarship can be adduced to put this misunderstanding to rest but none is more pertinent to our present discussion than the excellent work

been most attentive to these problems, namely Eberhard Jüngel. This Dionysian/Proclan reading of causality, briefly stated as “effects resemble their cause,” is employed throughout the Middle Ages as a fundamental epistemic axiom for the knowledge of God and nature. Furthermore, it functions as a veritable metaphysics, a totalizing principle, a genus under which all else has its being, and by which we may know being.³

It can be further demonstrated that Aquinas, and medieval theology after him, appear to have derived an ontology of being from this Aristotelian–neo-Platonic conception of causality when we further consider

of Wayne Hankey, especially his *God in Himself: Aquinas' Doctrine of God as Expounded in the Summa Theologica* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

³ The development of the concept of causality from Plato through to Aristotle and on to its neo-Platonic reinterpretation in Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblicus, and specifically Proclus, are of special significance for our study here. In his ground-breaking study, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics: A Study in the Greek Background of Mediaeval Thought* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1951), Joseph Owens states with regard to the treatment of cause in the Aristotelian *Metaphysics*, bk. IV, that; “In this discussion Aristotle has linked ‘universal’ knowledge with knowledge ‘through cause.’ The implication is that a cognition based just on experience of singular instances, no matter how numerous, cannot be extended to all instances. So it never rises to the order of art or wisdom. If you know the cause of a thing however, you do know what is going to happen or be present in every possible case, regardless of your experience or lack of experience of particular instances.” He goes on to conclude, “this doctrine does seem to involve a notion of cause based ultimately upon the εἶδος or ‘form.’ . . . It implies some kind of identification of ‘cause’ and ‘universal.’ Whatever its explanation may be, such an identification can hardly help having important consequences in the Aristotelian philosophy.” Furthermore, says Owens; “If Entity, as already seen, is the cause of Being, the Aristotelian notion of cause may play a decisive role in the investigation of this subject. Aristotle has commenced by locating the universal in relation to a special type of human cognition, namely, art or science. He has reduced the explanation of the universal to form, and then to cause. . . . The conclusion drawn is that wisdom is the knowledge of certain principles and causes. This conclusion has been reached from an empirical consideration of the various cognitive activities observable in men” (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, IV, 6b, 81–82ff.). Later on in this crucial study Owens establishes the basic epistemological orientation of the Aristotelian replacement of the Platonic form with cause. He writes, “The efficient cause of a thing is therefore identical in form with the formal cause of that same thing, but different in matter. Since the matter is unknowable, the efficient cause must, for purposes of scientific knowledge, be reduced to the form. All that is scientifically knowable in the efficient cause is the form. The two causes are formally identical, materially different. . . . All that has to be accounted for is the same form in a different matter. The one preoccupation seems to be the establishing of a basis for universal predication.” Thus, it is entirely plausible that the term “cause” has an epistemic value in Aristotle that will be transferred to Thomas, via Dionysius and the neo-Platonic commentaries on Aristotle.

Immanuel Kant's demolition and reconfiguration of the argument from causality. This can be seen in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, *Critique of Judgment*, and in his subsequent description of divine providence in his *Lectures on the Philosophical Doctrine of Religion*. In this last work he attempts to secure the principle of the freedom of the human will over against the Scholastic and Reformed-Scholastic restriction of it by God's "omnicausality." In Reformed theology, up to and including Kant's time, providence included the doctrine of *concursus*, which attempted to demonstrate at one and the same time the freedom of both the divine and human agents without the assimilation of one by the other. It is in light of this doctrine that Kant demolishes the "cause-effect relation" as a secure source of the knowledge of God. He does so purely on the basis of the empirical observation of natural causation. It also seems that it was Scholasticism, as it followed Aquinas, that set the stage for this.

In his treatment of "the divine accompanying" in the *Church Dogmatics*, III/3, under the doctrine of providence, Barth is concerned to distinguish his position from any understanding of an *analogia causalitatis*, precisely by reformulating the Reformed doctrine of *concursus* over against the ontological approach to causality in Thomas Aquinas, the Jesuits (Przywara and Molina), the Reformed-Scholastic approach where it follows Aquinas or Molina, and Immanuel Kant. Partly this is because of the Kantian critique but more importantly it is because he considered the Catholic form of the doctrine of "omnicausality" to be contrary to the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*, though he does hold to a form of causal argumentation that is Christologically determined. A close reading of this section of Barth's *Church Dogmatics*, prefaced by a brief comment on his treatment of omnicausality and Molinism in II/1, will amply demonstrate that Barth is rejecting the ontology ingredient in "the *analogia entis*" more than he is rejecting a form of analogy. This is so precisely because such an *analogia entis*, expressed also as an *analogia causalitatis*, is, as far as Barth is concerned, not to be found in the Bible; and to the degree that it aids in establishing a knowledge of God apart from God's self-revelation as the Father of Jesus Christ, it represents a standpoint over against Christ, who is the sole *analogia fidei* to which theology can appeal. Where Barth misunderstood Przywara he needs to be corrected. This has already been most admirably done in Jüngel's and Gottlieb Söhngen's separate treatments of analogy, both of whom won the appreciation of Barth on this issue.⁴ However, this does not mean that Barth's misunderstanding of Przywara is to be equated with

⁴ Jüngel and Söhngen both operate with the same understanding of causality. See Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, trans. D. Guder (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983), 241ff.

a misunderstanding of the Catholic doctrine of the *analogia entis* as Barth understood it generally.⁵ Since the work of Hans Urs von Balthasar on this issue there has been a tendency to interpret Przywara's view of the *analogia entis* as "the true intent of the Catholic doctrine of the analogy of being."⁶ Yet, as Thomas O'Meara has recently noted in his major study of Przywara, "his theory of analogy is somewhat idiosyncratic" in that it is based in the concept of relationality, Christologically centered, as is Barth's, whereas for Aquinas, "the ground of analogy is *causality*" conceived on another basis than Christology (namely the Aristotelian-neo-Platonic conception of causality mediated through Proclan-Dionysianism).⁷ As such his understanding of analogy, together with Barth, von Balthasar, Jüngel, and Sönnngen, cannot be described as the standard form of analogy against which Barth was reacting throughout his *Church Dogmatics*. If the primary markers in the history of the Roman Catholic doctrine of analogy are Augustine, Anselm, Dionysius, Aquinas, Cajetan, and Suarez, then at least it must be admitted that the reactions against Barth are based on an equal misunderstanding of what was standard practice in the application of analogy, not what was "intended."⁸ A host of bad theology may

⁵ Ibid., 262f; G. Sönnngen, *Analogie und Metaphor: Kleine Philosophie und Theologie der Sprache* (Freiburg/München: K. Alber, 1962); E. Przywara, *Analogia entis*, Schriften 1932 (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1962), III, 113ff.

⁶ For instance, Betz writes, "And it is here perhaps more than anywhere else that one can see precisely what it is that he (Barth) rejects in rejecting the *analogia entis*, namely, any openness whatsoever of the creature to God, and thus any natural desire (*desiderium naturale*) for God." "Part Two," 7. See also D. B. Hart, who makes the same assumption: *Beauty of the Infinite*, 241.

⁷ Thomas O'Meara, *Eric Przywara, S.J.: His Theology and His World* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame Press, 2002), 74ff.

⁸ While this list is not exhaustive, I would select the following as being the best representative treatments of analogy in the Catholic and Protestant traditions. Thomas de Vio, Cardinal Cajetan, *The Analogy of Names and The Concept of Being (1511)* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1953); Francisco Suarez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, in *Opera omnia*, 28 vols. (Paris: Vives, 1877); George P. Klubertanz, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Being* (New York: Meredith Publishing Company, 1963) and his *St. Thomas Aquinas on Analogy: A Textual Analysis and Synthesis* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1960); Hampus Lyttkens, *The Analogy between God and the World: An Investigation of Its Background and Interpretation of Its Use by Thomas of Aquino* (Uppsala, Sweden: Almqvist and Wiksells, 1952); Battista Mondin, *The Principle of Analogy in Protestant and Catholic Theology* (The Hague, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963); Gerald B. Phelan, *Saint Thomas and Analogy* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1941); David Burrell, *Analogy and Philosophical Language* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973); Ralph McInerney, *Rhyme and Reason: St. Thomas and Modes of Discourse* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1981); idem, "The Logic of Analogy," *New Scholasticism* 31 (1957): 149–71; Norris W

proceed from good intentions. This certainly seems to be the case with the recent reinvention of the concept of the *analogia entis*, as we shall see.

“Cause” in Early Theological Formulation

The Aristotelian–Neo-Platonic Concept of Analogy

No account of the analogy of being can bypass the significant impact that the Greek conception of analogy has had on the development and the theological employment of analogy. Precisely here is where both agreement and differences of opinion are most crucial. Eberhard Jüngel attempts to clarify this point and argue for a link between Kant and Aquinas by describing the development of analogy in a way that connects Aristotle and Pseudo-Dionysius on the basis of causality.⁹ For Jüngel the neo-Platonic reading of Aristotelian causality is shared ground between Kant and Aquinas in their understanding of the *analogia entis* and he thinks this is a key reason for Barth’s rejection of it.¹⁰ This is also the conclusion that Colin Gunton came to in his treatment of causality in his last book, *Act and Being*, where he writes;

The way of causality is essentially a way of discovering the attributes of God by a process of analogy. In this case, analogy is not in the first place

Clarke, *The Philosophical Approach to God: A Contemporary Neo-Thomist Perspective* (Winston-Salem, NC: Wake Forest University Press, 1979). Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vols. I–IV, ed. and trans. T. F. Torrance and G. W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1959–1975); Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*. See also the important works on Cajetan’s view of analogy in Etienne Gilson, “Cajetan et l’existence,” *Tijdschrift voor filosofie* 15 (1953): 267–86; A. Goergen, *Kardinal Cajetans Lehre von der Analogie; ihr Verhältnis zu Thomas von Aquin* (Speyer: Pilger-Verlag, 1938); and Eric Przywara, “Die Reichweite der Analogie als katholischer Grundform,” *Scholastik* 15 (1940): 339–63, 508–32.

⁹ Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, 269.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 255–61. Jüngel prefaces his whole discussion of the Kant-Aristotle-Thomas continuum with an exposition of the rise of the problem in Pseudo-Dionysius’s *On the Divine Names*, I, q. 79, a. 6, vol. I, 755. Jüngel writes, “As early as Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite we read: ‘Divine things are revealed unto each created spirit in proportion (*kata ton analogion*) to its powers’” (*God as the Mystery of the World*, 254, note 21, quoting Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Divine Names*, I, 1). But he does not just focus on the *Divine Names*, wherein the apophatic approach is raised but not employed at length. Rather, he points to Dionysius’s treatment of the *Celestial Hierarchy* as the one place to confirm the thoroughgoing apophaticism of Dionysius and his heirs. This is certainly demonstrable in the commentary on *The Celestial Hierarchy* completed by John Scotus Erugena. See *Erugena’s Commentary on the Dionysian Celestial Hierarchy*, ed. and trans Paul Rorem (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2005).

a method of predication—of showing how language works—but an ontological process which consists in moving from the lower levels of reality to the higher, until the whole hierarchy is argued to require as its cause—its efficient, material, formal, and final cause—a being who is totally other than it. Aquinas's doctrine of analogical predication is thus grounded in what Robert Jenson has called the ontological analysis contained in the Five Ways. From this analysis, which depends upon a hierarchical structuring of reality, flow many things, noteworthy among them the doctrine of the divine attributes which succeeds them rapidly in Aquinas's account. That doctrine accordingly depends, in essence, on a Christianized form of Neoplatonism, whose movement from the utterly and formlessly material to the ineffably intellectual (Plotinus) is, so to speak, mirrored in the essentially similar structure of natural theology. A certain account of analogical predication is bound up with this ontology, inextricable from it. It holds that the same predicates apply to beings which exist on different levels of the hierarchy of being, but that they apply analogically, proportionally, so that they are more really true of the higher levels than the lower.¹¹

¹¹ Colin Gunton, *Act and Being* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 12–18. See also his *Intellect and Action: Elucidations on Christian Theology and the Life of Faith* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 107ff. In his *Becoming and Being: The Doctrine of God in Charles Hartshorne and Karl Barth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), he writes; “The classical conception of God depends upon a hierarchical ordering of reality. Entities are higher or lower in a scale of beings, the lower depending to a greater or lesser degree on the higher. The hierarchy is to some extent perspicuous to reason, and so lower reality—the only reality we directly experience—is believed to point beyond itself, to mirror a highest being which is both the tip of the pyramid and radically different from it, in being of another order entirely. Aquinas's Five Ways illustrate all these points. They also determine once and for all the shape of his concept of God” (3). See also, Robert W. Jenson, *The Knowledge of Things Hoped For: The Sense of Theological Discourse* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), ch. 3; and Anthony Kenny, *The Five Ways* (London: Routledge, 1969), 41–45. If we doubt this about Thomas's and Dionysius's doctrine of God and resulting anthropology we need only to turn to their treatment of celestial beings to confirm it. See Barth's excellent treatment of this in *Church Dogmatics*, vol. III/3, 369–401. After an exhaustive treatment of the connection between Aquinas and Pseudo-Dionysius, Barth concluded, “Angels as understood in scholasticism are those *essentiae spiritualis*, those *substantiae separatae*; and the objectivity of the heavenly cosmos in the scholastic sense is only that of an artificially and arbitrarily separated, i.e., abstracted and hypostatized, intellectual being as opposed to a material and to our own intellect conjoined with matter, which Thomas like Plato and Aristotle, regarded as relatively less perfect and essentially earthly. Armed with this criterion, Thomas could certainly disclose the ice-cold summits of objectivity. But this objectivity of the spiritual or intellectual is much too equivocal for us to want it to shine again in our Church,” 401.

Analogy, therefore, according to Gunton, is a theory of predication that depends upon a neo-Platonic theory of degrees of being, a theory most evident in Aquinas's Fourth Way, which assumes an equation of being with goodness, both of them hierarchically construed.¹² Recent scholarship on the development of the *Summa theologiae*, undertaken by Wayne Hankey, bears this out across Thomas's theology as a whole.¹³ This being the case, the "concealed *aporia*" regarding the unspeakability of *God* in this model of analogy applies across the board, as Jüngel suggests, to Kant, Aquinas, and the Aristotelian-Dionysian concept of causality. Given this scholarly opinion, there is still a call for a renewed understanding of and approach to the use of analogical method.¹⁴

¹² Gunton, *Act and Being*, 13. Aquinas's arguments for the existence of God really amounts to a knowledge of God on the basis of causality. This is a key reason for Aquinas's employment of the arguments for the existence of God in his *Summa*. The fourth way reads as follows; "The fourth way is taken from the gradation to be found in things. Among beings there are some more and some less good, true, noble, and the like. But 'more' and 'less' are predicated of different things, according as they resemble in their different ways something which is the maximum, as a thing is said to be hotter according as it more nearly resembles that which is hottest; so that there is something which is truest, something best, something noblest, and, consequently, something which is uttermost being; for those things that are greatest in truth are greatest in being, as it is written in *Metaphysics* II. 'Now the maximum in any genus is the cause of all in that genus'; as fire, which is the maximum heat, is the cause of all hot things. Therefore there must also be something which is to all beings the cause of their being, goodness, and every other perfection; and this we call God" (*ST* I, q. 2. a. 3, ad. 2). The Latin reads; "Quarta via sumitur ex gradibus qui in rebus inveniuntur. Invenitur enim in rebus aliquid magis et minus bonum, et verum, et nobile; et sic de aliis huiusmodi. Sed magis et minus dicuntur de diversis secundum quod appropinquant diversimode ad aliquid quod maxime est: sicut magis calidum est, quod magis appropinquit maxime calido. Est igitur aliquid quod est verissimum, et optimum, et nobilissimum, et per consequens maxime ens: nam quae sunt maxime vera, sunt maxime entia, ut dicitur II *Metaphys.* 'Quod autem dicitur maxime tale in aliquo genere, est causa omnium quae sunt illius generis': sicut ignis, qui est maxime calidus, est causa omnium calidorum, ut in eodem libro dicitur. Ergo est aliquid quod omnibus entibus est causa esse, et bonitatis, et cuiuslibet perfectionis: et hoc dicimus Deum."

¹³ Hankey, *God in Himself*, 51. Hankey writes, "One of the characteristics of the later *Neo-Platonism* identified by modern scholarship is its greater acceptance of Aristotle. This also characterizes Christian thinkers. Whereas Augustine has little use for Aristotle, Boethius thinks that he and Plato have the same teaching, and Boethius is responsible for the first of the three Aristotelian waves to wash the West. Thomas says early in his career that Dionysius follows Aristotle; and, while he later comes to understand the Platonic character of Dionysius's thought, he continues to see what is usually regarded as the Aristotelian ascent to God through knowledge of the sensible world in Dionysian terms," 51.

¹⁴ Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, 267.

To properly understand this shared ground, Jüngel offers an analysis of the development of Aristotelian-Dionysian analogical method in two forms. Aristotle gave precision to the Platonic tradition of analogy initially through his analysis of metaphor. Analogy is seen by Aristotle as “a special case of metaphor.”¹⁵ Metaphor is a product of transference in language, usually of a designation to a “bearer” that is to a large degree alien to the metaphorical designation itself. Aristotle applies such a transference of naming in four ways, “namely, either from the genus to the kind, or from the kind to the genus, or from one kind to another, or ‘according to analogy’ [*kata ton analogion*].”¹⁶ The transference is one of relations between two quite dissimilar entities, “or, to put it in Kantian terms,” says Jüngel, “to the perfect similarity of two relationships between quite dissimilar things.” To support his point Jüngel supplies the following quotation from Aristotle’s *Poetics*.

Analogy is possible whenever there are four terms so related that the second (B) is to the first (A) as the fourth (D) is to the third (C); for one may then metaphorically put D in lieu of B, and B in lieu of D. Now and then, too, they qualify the metaphor by adding on to it that to which the word it supplants is relative.¹⁷

The resulting model of analogy is one of mathematical proportionality expressed as $a:b::c:d$. This makes possible the comparison of quite dissimilar entities in regard to their *essential existence*. It is their *relation* to one another that makes them comparable. For instance, in the analogy “day is to evening as life is to old age” the relationship expressed is the comparison between evening and the close of life. The analogy presupposes knowledge of the concepts being compared and that these concepts can be “commonly expressed in language.”¹⁸ This is an important point for Jüngel because “if one wants to say something in this sense about God ‘by analogy,’ then God’s relation to himself and to other existing beings (or to every existent which is to be distinguished from him) *must be correspondingly known*.”¹⁹ As we shall see shortly, it is this understanding of analogy that Kant assumes in regard to

¹⁵ Ibid. See Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. I. Bywater, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941), 1476–77 (1457b5f.). Aristotle states: “Metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else; the transference being either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or on grounds of analogy.”

¹⁶ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1457b15–20.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, 267.

his presupposition that the world's dependence on God, must be understood along the lines of sole-causality and/or omnicausality. It is a commonly held axiom, the knowledge of which makes analogical talk of God possible, strictly in terms of symbolic anthropomorphisms.

According to the Aristotelian model the second form of the analogy of naming related to speech about God is also relationally driven, yet along different lines than the polarity of similarity/dissimilarity. Thus it is not properly metaphor. This second form of analogy is marked by *the ambiguity of multiple referents to one word*. Some words can be "univocal" in meaning: For instance, the word "human" applies to all humans alike and is exclusive of the animal world. The phrase "living being," however, may designate either a human or a chicken. "It is a word used in a simple, identical sense, a *monarchos legomenon*."²⁰ In a second sense, however, a word can designate a different meaning for each existing entity. The German word *Bänke* can mean "bench" or a place where a person carries on financial business. "The one usage cannot keep the promises made by the other: the essential concept is different in each instance."²¹ The word *Bänke* is thus "equivocal" in its use, having a different meaning for each use. Between equivocity and univocity, Aristotle places "analogous speech," in which *the same word is used of different things without being totally identical or totally different in meaning*, "but rather expressing some things as the same, and others different."²² There is *similarity* in the sense that the same word is used of the various entities that it names "on the basis of *something mutual to which they are related*, each in a different way."²³ The multiple meanings are all related to this "one thing," which is "*the hermeneutical first thing*," and on the basis of which, as well as in relation to which, other things can also be named.²⁴

In sum, the point of agreement between the two Aristotelian analogical models is the fact that each model names on the basis of relations:

The first model of analogy understands analogy to be a proportion which, on the basis of similar (identical) relations between dissimilar things, allows comparison with each other within the relation of relations. Thus one speaks of an *analogy of proportionality*, an *analogia propor-*

²⁰ Ibid., 269.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid. see, Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, 783 (1028a, 10), for his classic definition of substantial being stated as follows: "Therefore that which is, primarily, i.e., not in a qualified sense but without qualification, must be substance."

²³ Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, 269.

²⁴ Ibid., 270.

tionalitatis. The second model of analogy understands analogy, on the basis of the non-comparable relations of different things to the one thing they have in common, as a simple analogy of relation (*analogia proportionis*) or also the analogy of [intrinsic] attribution.²⁵

Thus in an analogy of proportionality we write $a:b::c:d$; whereas in the analogy of intrinsic attribution b , c , and d all relate to a from which they receive their common name, that is, $a:(a)b:: (a)c:(a)d$, so that, intrinsically, b , c , and d are of the same genus as a . That is, we know a from the intrinsic-ness of a in b , c , and d . This we know on the basis of the Thomistic principle of cause-effect relation.

At this point, we need to turn to an analysis of the analogy of attribution with a view of pointing out a peculiarity in its structure. Whereas the analogy of proportionality implies merely the correspondence between compared entities, the analogy of attribution implies the dependence of “many things” on the “one common thing.” The “many things” are ordered by and dependent on the “one common thing,” which is the “hermeneutical first principle.” This is precisely what Aquinas calls the “analogy of order” whereby the term “order” primarily means that this analogy is constituted by an *analogans* (one who makes the analogy) on which the thing named after it depends as the *analogatum* (that which is analogized).²⁶

The Neo-Platonic Connection

An important development of this analogy of order took place in the scholastic appropriation of Aristotle’s models of analogy.²⁷ Jüngel’s conclusion here bears repeating:

²⁵ Ibid., 271. See also Aristotle, “Nicomachean Ethics,” in *Basic Works*, 939 (1096b25f.).

²⁶ Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, 271. Jüngel refers to *ST* I, q. 13, a. 5.

²⁷ See also Wayne Hankey, *God in Himself*, 10–11, where he writes, “Aquinas exposes with great acuity the principles organizing Dionysius’s treatise. He perceives that Dionysius begins with ‘good’ as a name and employs an *exitus-reditus* structure in drawing the exposition back to its source by means of the names ‘perfect’ and ‘one.’ Thomas knows the Proclan conception by which these names, ‘good’ and ‘one’ are identified. He notes that the author moves from the more to the less generic in relating the names. He calls these Platonic principles, and in fact they are generally used also by Proclus. . . . As if leaping over the intermediary (Dionysius), Thomas begins like Proclus—as opposed to Dionysius—by establishing the existence of his divine subject; and in fact, for both, the first argument is from motion.” Hankey goes on to work this out in detail in Aquinas’s arguments for the existence of God, which, following the Proclan pattern, precedes the treatment of the “divine names.” This would make the argument from motion a fundamental epistemology, i.e., an order of knowing in which the *analogans* is the source of knowledge for the *analogatum*.

Under the influence of Neoplatonic commentaries on Aristotle, the aspect of dependence (on an ontic first thing) was translated from the logical and hermeneutical context to the ontological during the period of scholasticism, so that the hermeneutical dependence of any *analogatum* on the *analogans* flowed over into the ontological dimension of *dependence of being*. The hermeneutical first thing appears as the ontological origin which under certain circumstances can also be thought of as the ontic [first] *cause*.²⁸

Thus, through the influence of theologians such as Dionysius and John Damascene, the *analogans* comes to possess the most original meaning of the word, than those entities named by the same word, and is designated as the *cause* in a “causal nexus.”²⁹ “Analogy, thus understood, gained special significance in Thomas Aquinas for human talk about God and still determines Kant’s use of analogy in the context of the formation of concepts which are appropriate for God.”³⁰ While both models of analogy play a significant role in scholastic theology and the Western metaphysical tradition, it is important to recognize with Jüngel, Gunton, Hankey, and

²⁸ Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, 272. See also R. T. Wallis, “Divine Omniscience in Plotinus, Proclus and Aquinas,” in *Neo-Platonism and Early Christian Thought*, ed. H. J. Blumenthal and R. A. Markus (London: Variorum Publications, 1981). Wallis writes, “The question is raised at *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 14 a. 5, where, in answer to a number of mainly Aristotelian-inspired arguments to show that God knows only himself, Aquinas replies that for God to understand his essence perfectly he must also understand his power. But this is impossible unless he understands everything to which his power extends; and, since God is *cause* of all, he must understand everything that exists. We may note that Proclus’s *Parmenides* commentary employs similar arguments to show that Aristotle’s view logically entails that of Neo-Platonism. . . . The influence of later *Neo-Platonism* on Aquinas, however, is especially clear when he discusses the mode of divine knowledge of individuals. Following Proclus he insists that God’s knowledge, unlike our own, constitutes an indivisible unity, which does not need separate faculties to apprehend individuals and universals. A similar view had earlier been ascribed by Clement of Alexandria to his teacher Pantaenus, but is not found elsewhere, to my knowledge, before later *Neo-Platonism*. Aquinas’s claim that, since divine power extends to individuals as well as universals, divine knowledge must also embrace them both, is likewise an echo of Proclus, whose views are no less influential on Aquinas’s discussion whether God knows what is infinite” (227–29).

²⁹ Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, 272. On John Damascene’s neo-Platonic tendencies, see Andrew Louth’s excellent monograph, *St John Damascene: Tradition and Originality in Byzantine Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 67, 92, 94. On neo-Platonic principles, “John argues that if there is any good at all, then there must be an original single principle, the source of this goodness, evil being a declension from original goodness.” Louth, *St John Damascene*, 67.

³⁰ Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, 272.

others that both these traditions represent a conflation of analogical methods along neo-Platonic lines; and as such it contributed profoundly to the Kantian *aporia* concerning God's speakability. We must bring the full weight of this critique to bear on Thomas Aquinas's analogical method, and especially in the light of recent scholarship on Thomas's indebtedness to Proclan-Dionysian neo-Platonism, this critique still hits home. In fact, neo-Platonic scholarship contributes to this argument on a regular basis. In the long run even the work of David Burrell, who has no use for neo-Platonism, must support this result of analogical method, at least partially.³¹

Aquinas's Concept of Analogy

Turning to Aquinas we must now demonstrate from his mature work that indeed he employed a method of analogy of attribution with the purpose of solving the problem of how common affirmative predicates, taken from created order, can speak of God. Furthermore, it must be shown that he did this in a way similar to Aristotle, who is later followed by Kant with his purely empiricist point of view.³²

In Aquinas, we find two forms of analogy (intrinsic attribution and proportionality), used with a particular emphasis on the analogy of intrinsic attribution, though conflation of the two models is also present. We may also affirm with Philip A. Rolnick, on the basis of the works of Gerhard Scheltens and George Peter Klubertanz, that Aquinas discontinued the strict usage of the analogy of proportionality that was stressed in

³¹ Hankey, *God in Himself*, 12, states, "This is the strongly negative sense of naming, though for Thomas, naming God from effects is necessary because we do not see his essence directly in this life." David Burrell, *Analogy and Philosophical Language*, 132–33, writes, "Aquinas's move has serious implications, for every subsequent use of language to 'describe' God will be justified by reference to causality. Once we are satisfied that 'good,' 'just,' and 'merciful' can be used of God—even though we recognize that they will be realized in him in a fashion quite beyond our conceiving—we may nonetheless be assured that these terms do refer to something in God, because we mean by God, principle of all. In other words, the justification for analogous usage and the line of argument distinguishing it from the 'merely symbolic' theories (of a Maimonides or a Tillich) itself depends on an analogous use of 'cause.' *On the credit side, this shows Aquinas's consistency in declaring analogous usage irreducible to a univocal foundation. On the debit side, Aquinas's views seem to threaten any move to God, for he is apparently acknowledging that any justification for using analogical predicates will be circular, since the meaning of these predicates is secured only through an analogical use of cause.*" However, for an incisive critique of all of these approaches, see P. Rolnick, *Analogical Possibilities: How Words Refer to God* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1993), 204ff. See also, Gunton, *Act and Being*, 18.

³² Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, 272.

his *De veritate* (1256–57).³³ But what is important to note is that Aquinas would eventually connect these two methods in such a fashion that analogy of attribution would come to represent *both* a hermeneutic and an *ontic* priority that resembled the analogy of proportionality. Aquinas's reworking of analogy called for the rejection of "names (*nomina*), which univocally may be ascribed both to God and the creatures because then God would not be adequately distinguished as the highest cause, from everything which had been caused."³⁴ Aquinas writes, "Univocal predication is impossible between God and creatures. The reason for this is that every effect which is not a proportional result of the power of the efficient cause receives the similitude of the agent not in its full degree, but in a measure that falls short."³⁵ Conversely we do know God *from his creatures*, a fact that prohibits the equivocal naming of God and creatures. Thus, predication about God and creatures can only be expressed analogically: "that is, according to an order or relation to some *one thing*."³⁶

³³ Ibid., 271. See also Rolnick, *Analogical Possibilities*, 204. Aquinas writes in, *Questiones disputatae de veritate*, II, 3, ad 4; "Dicendum quod aliquid dicitur proportionatum alicui dupliciter. "dicendum, quod aliquid dicitur proportionatum alteri dupliciter. Uno modo quia inter ea attenditur proportio; sicut dicimus quatuor proportionari duobus, quia se habet in dupla proportionem ad duo. Alio modo per modum proportionalitatis; ut si dicamus sex et octo esse proportionata, quia sicut sex est duplum ad tria, ita octo ad quatuor: est enim proportionalitas similitudo proportionum. Et quia in omni proportionem attenditur habitudo ad invicem eorum quae proportionata dicuntur secundum aliquem determinatum excessum unius super alterum, ideo impossibile est infinitum aliquod proportionari finito per modum proportionis. Sed in his quae proportionata dicuntur per modum proportionalitatis, non attenditur habitudo eorum ad invicem, sed similis habitudo aliquorum duorum ad alia duo; et sic nihil prohibet esse proportionatum infinitum finito: quia sicut quoddam finitum est aequale cuidam finito, ita infinitum est aequale alteri infinito. Et secundum hunc modum oportet esse proportionatum medium ei quod per ipsum cognoscitur; ut, scilicet, sicut se habet medium ad aliquid demonstrandum, ita se habeat quod per ipsum cognoscitur ad hoc quod demonstratur; et sic nihil prohibet essentiam divinam esse medium quo creatura cognoscatur."

³⁴ Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, 272.

³⁵ *ST I*, q. 13, a. 5: "Dicendum quod impossibile est aliquid praedicari de Deo et creaturis univoce. Quia omnis effectus non adaequans virtutem causae agentis, recipit similitudinem agentis non secundum eandem rationem, sed deficienter."

³⁶ *ST I*, q. 13, a. 4: "For the idea signified by the name is the conception in the intellect of the thing signified by the name. But our intellect, since it knows God from creatures, in order to understand God, forms conceptions proportional to the perfections flowing from God to creatures, which perfections pre-exist in God unitedly and simply, whereas in creatures they are received and divided and multiplied. As therefore, to the different perfections of creatures, there corresponds one simple principle represented by different perfections of creatures in a various and

Thomas also distinguishes two subtypes of the analogy of attribution (intrinsic and extrinsic) based on the analogy of many things to the one identical thing. Jüngel writes:

There is either a dominant relation of the many to the one or there is one sole and dominant relation of the many to the others. Since it is always presupposed that at least two different things have two different relations to the one common thing, in the second instance the one thing (*unum*) might relate to itself as that one common thing to which the other one relates itself in another fashion.³⁷

To illustrate this shift in Aquinas, we may recall the famous health example to which Aquinas (following Aristotle) refers. Herein we clearly see a distinction between the *hermeneutic* and *ontic* “first thing.” The Aristotelian example shows that the human body, medicine, and urine can all be called “healthy.” “The one thing to which all three things are related is, for Thomas, health per se, but it is thought of as subsisting in a definite

manifold manner, so also to the various and multiplied conceptions of our intellect, there corresponds one altogether simple principle, according to these conceptions, imperfectly understood. Therefore although the names applied to God signify one thing, still because they signify that under many and different aspects, they are not synonymous.” In Latin, “Ratio enim quam significat nomen, est conceptio intellectus de re significata per nomen. Intellectus autem noster, cum cognoscat Deum ex creaturis, format ad intelligendum Deum conceptiones proportionatas perfectionibus procedentibus a Deo in creaturas. Quae quidem perfectiones in Deo praeexistunt unite et simpliciter: in creaturis vero recipiuntur divise et multipliciter. Sicut igitur diversis perfectionibus creaturarum respondet unum simplex principium, repraesentatum per diversas perfectiones creaturarum varie et multipliciter; ita variis et multiplicibus conceptibus intellectus nostri respondet unum omnino simplex, secundum huiusmodi conceptiones imperfecte intellectum. Et ideo nomina Deo attributa, licet significant unam rem, tamen, quia significant eam sub rationibus multis et diversis, non sunt synonyma.”

³⁷ Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, 273. *ST* I, q. 13, a. 5: “Therefore it must be said that these names are said of God and creatures in an analogous sense, i.e., according to proportion. Now names are thus used in two ways: either according as many things are proportionate to one, thus for example ‘healthy’ predicated of medicine and urine in relation and in proportion to health of a body, of which the former is the sign and the latter the cause: or according as one thing is proportionate to another” (Dicendum est igitur quod huiusmodi nomina dicuntur de Deo et creaturis secundum analogiam, idest proportionem. Quod quidem dupliciter contingit in nominibus: vel quia multa habent proportionem ad unum, sicut sanum dicitur de medicina et urina, inquantum utrumque habet ordinem et proportionem ad sanitatem animalis, cuius hoc quidem signum est, illud vero causa; vel ex eo quod unum habet proportionem ad alterum).

existing thing.”³⁸ In other words, the *unum* exists in a concrete being because health is predicated about medicine and urine “in relation and in proportion to health of the body, of which the former is a *cause* and the latter a *sign*.”³⁹ This prior thing in relation to which the other things are ordered is a prior thing in a hermeneutic, not an ontic sense. It is, for Aquinas, an order of *knowing*. Significantly, here we must remember Aquinas’s epistemological principle of the priority of knowing over language. Epistemologically, that is, the health of the body comes before the analogy of things as an *ontic* first thing. Ontological primacy must be given to medicine as the hermeneutical first thing because “it is to be regarded as the *cause* of the health of the body.” The result is that the ontic priority of the “one thing,” on the basis of which the other things are named, does not play any role in the *modus significandi*.

It is in this sense that an *analogia entis* is presupposed as the basis of the spoken analogy within the order of participation and causality. The *analogatum* receives no independent emphasis. This is a fact that constitutes one of Barth’s major concerns with Catholic doctrine in general and the *analogia entis* in particular. This epistemic understanding brings out the Thomistic view that talk about God must not employ the analogy of extrinsic attribution whereby the “many things” are *related* to the one “because this would either place God in the same series as the other *analogata*, or would relate God to a third and higher principle.”⁴⁰ Thus, the first form of the analogy of attribution must be rejected (that is, a dominant relation of the many to the one, or extrinsic analogy of attribution).

Therefore, the only analogical method of predication about God that Thomas permits is that method whereby the “one thing” that is the common element in the many things has hermeneutical primacy in the analogy of naming if it “first subsists in God himself and *therefore* [original emphasis] in the creatures *caused* [emphasis added] by God.”⁴¹ With the concept of “goodness,” for example, God would possess goodness by virtue of the possession of his own being. Correspondingly, God distributes this goodness to creatures of his agency through the cause–effect relation.⁴² To comprehend this goodness, the analogy requires a “conceptual reversal”: “For the goodness which God possesses first by his being, is *first known and named* by its *possession* in the creature.”⁴³ That is, “they

³⁸ Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, 273.

³⁹ *ST* I, q. 13, a. 5, emphasis added. See above note 37.

⁴⁰ Rolnick, *Analogical Possibilities*, 205.

⁴¹ Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, 275.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Rolnick, *Analogical Possibilities*, 205.

have it in their particular way of being as those who have been *caused* [emphasis added], and thus based on that, we can know and name what has its original *being* in God himself.”⁴⁴

In sum, Thomas Aquinas’s method of analogy has combined the analogy of intrinsic attribution, analogous naming “according to which the one thing is proportioned to another,” with the first model of analogy along the lines of the Aristotelian category of metaphor, based on a cause-effect relation as read through the neo-Platonic commentaries of Pseudo-Dionysius and finally Proclus; that is, the analogy of proportionality.

For within the proportion of the “one to the other,” which is seen in the second instance of the second model of the analogy of naming as a *casual nexus*, the one thing spoken of as the *cause* relates itself to the common element which is the hermeneutical basis for analogical naming in that it has this common element in the *most original way*, that is, on the basis of this originality it possesses this element in such a way that it is identical with it.⁴⁵

Thus, *being* is derived from the fact that this *unum* possesses the common element in such a way that it is identical with it. Therefore the other things relate themselves to the common element by possessing the

⁴⁴ Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, 275.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 276, emphasis added. Jüngel is followed here by Battista Mondin who, though he will not define intrinsic attribution as a form of the analogy of proportionality, nevertheless sees this as Aquinas’s primary mode of employing analogy. *The Principle of Analogy in Protestant and Catholic Theology*, 100ff. He adds, “Many Thomists are suspicious of the theological possibilities of intrinsic attribution because they believe that intrinsic attribution is exposed to univocity, anthropomorphism, and idolatry” (101). He tries to defend Thomas against this by denying it leads to this, but clearly assumes it as Thomas’s primary position. Then he adds a telling footnote on that same page (101, note 1): “One of the difficulties that seems to preclude analogy of proper proportionality from theology is that when we try to set up a proportionality between God and creatures, e.g., human existence is to human essence as divine existence is to divine essence, there seems to be no similarity between the two proportions; because the relation between the elements of the divine proportion is only logical (since there is no distinction between essence and existence in God), while the relation between the elements of the human proportion is real (since there is a real distinction between essence and existence in man).” He points to two other Thomist scholars who recognize the same potential difficulty, namely, James F. Anderson, *The Bond of Being: An Essay on Analogy and Existence* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1949), 304ff.; and George P. Klubertanz, S.J., *St. Thomas Aquinas on Analogy: A Textual Analysis and Systematic Synthesis* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1960), 99. See also G. Klubertanz, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Being* (New York: Meredith Publishing Company, 1963), 95ff.

common element, albeit in a derivative and hierarchical fashion. In this way, for Aquinas, “the so-called ‘analogy of [intrinsic] attribution’ has drawn into itself the so-called ‘analogy of proportionality’ when the issue is analogous talk about God.”⁴⁶

The preceding analysis now places us in a position to draw the lines of continuity between Kant and Aquinas in their use of analogical method. Jüngel, Gunton, and Jenson (among others) claim, correctly I think, that this connection is valid because Kant employs a conceptual reversal of the analogy of intrinsic attribution that places emphasis on the analogy of proportionality (which Kant takes to be the scholastic understanding) as the “causal nexus” of the analogy of *intrinsic* attribution.⁴⁷ Expressed in terms of intrinsic analogy of attribution, it means God has perfection of God’s being in the same way as the creature has perfections of the creature’s being.⁴⁸ This essentially expresses an analogy of proportionality, $a:b::c:b$ in almost the same sense suggested by Cajetan, Suarez, Mondin, and Klubertanz.⁴⁹ Though these differ among themselves, their approach to analogy yields the same results. Jüngel’s conclusion states the point succinctly:

⁴⁶ Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, 276.

⁴⁷ See also Immanuel Kant, “Lectures on the Philosophical Doctrine of Religion,” in idem, *Religion and Rational Theology*, trans. Allen W. Wood and George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 385.

⁴⁸ Rolnick, *Analogical Possibilities*, 206.

⁴⁹ Cajetan puts it thus, “This analogy excels above the others mentioned above both by dignity and name. By dignity, because it arises from the genus of inherent formal causality for it predicates perfections that are inherent in each analogate, whereas the other analogy arises from extrinsic denomination. It excels above the others by name, because only terms which are analogous by this type of analogy are called analogous by the Greeks, from whom we have borrowed the term. This, too, can be gathered from Aristotle, who in the *Metaphysics* refers to those names which we call analogous by attribution as from one to one or in one as is clear from Books IV and VII. And when he defines unity by analogy in V *Metaphysics*, he synonymously uses ‘unity by analogy and unity by proportions’ and defines as one in this way ‘whatever things are related to one another as one thing to another. . . . By means of analogy of proportionality we know indeed the intrinsic entity, goodness, truth, etc. of things, which are not known from the preceding analogy’” (*The Analogy of Names and The Concept of Being*, 26–27). About this Klubertanz significantly concludes: “Cajetan’s followers have been numerous, beginning with the seventeenth-century Thomist, John of St. Thomas, they are all concerned to defend the main positions of Cajetan against opposing schools of interpretation. Most are conscious of certain tensions within their doctrine of analogy: (1) They insist that, although the analogous perfection is found properly in only one of the analogates in the analogy of attribution, this does not mean that the secondary analogate possesses no relevant intrinsic perfection at all. (2) They

Whereas in the “mode of signification” the language of the world functions as the hermeneutical *analogans*, and talk about God as the hermeneutical *analogatum*, the content expressed by this analogous talk about God is expressed in the hermeneutical *analogatum* as *ontic analogans (causa)*, the world on the other hand as *ontic analogatum (causatum)*.⁵⁰

The Thomistic-Kantian Aporia

On the basis of this brief analysis of the rise of analogical method in speech about God, we can now demonstrate the *aporia* regarding the unspeakability of God that Gunton, following Jensen and Jüngel, considers to be concealed in this method (as a direct result of the neglect of a biblical-Christological orientation). On the basis of this analysis we can at least conclude that both Kant and Aquinas are dependent on the same analogical method that is traceable to the neo-Platonic reading of Aristotle’s conception of causality. This means that, in terms of the theological tradition, the critique of Kant’s use of analogy, understood as *causal nexus*, applies equally to Thomas Aquinas. That is, this method of analogy allows for predication about God only as an unknown entity since *causality* must be understood exclusively within the realm of experience. Thus the logic of the *analogia causalitatis* keeps God out of the world and emphasizes the *infinite qualitative distinction* between God and the world to the point of his unthinkability, unspeakability, and unknowability. This is especially intensified when combined with a failure to ground analogy Christologically.

Both the Kantian and Thomistic model of analogical predication was designed to protect God’s *aseity* from “dogmatic anthropomorphism.” This leaves us with the all-important question of the *viability and validity of the knowledge of God in terms of any Thomistic conception of analogy*. “The question to be decided is whether God is speakable only as the one who

describe the analogous concept involved in the analogy of proportionality now as a similar relation, now as a similar perfection which is the basis of a similar relationship. (3) They point out many ‘mixed’ analogies, in which the same ontological situation gives rise to two different types of analogous predication. (4) They maintain that the analogates in the analogy of proportionality are mutually independent, not all depend upon a primary analogate as in the analogy of attribution, at least as far as the meaning of the analogous concept is concerned. Textually, Cajetan’s followers have added very little to his work, although a number of special studies have been undertaken to prove that Cajetan’s interpretation is faithful to the text of St. Thomas” (Klubertanz, *St. Thomas Aquinas on Analogy*, 9–10). Here we are merely establishing the fact that for a very long time there was much agreement *within the Catholic Church*, that Cajetan’s interpretation of Aquinas was accepted, and defended. So any twentieth-century retractions are somewhat late, and still not agreed upon.

⁵⁰ Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, 277.

actually is unspeakable, and can be made known only as the one who is actually unknown.”⁵¹ On the basis of this understanding of analogy the problem becomes one of speaking about God without “humanizing” his divine essence “since language in all its forms of expression is bound to the form of being of speaking man.”⁵² Thus:

By using the pure analogy of relation (understood as an analogy of proportionality) which preserves the absolute different-ness of the things being related to each other, it appeared that a possibility which maintained the difference between God and man was given for appropriate talk about God.⁵³

This Thomistic desire to protect the *aseity* of God is a shallow victory because, in doing so, Thomas follows the *apophatic* tradition to the degree that he has made God unknowable and unspeakable. If God is speakable only by Kantian “symbolic anthropomorphism,” and not as God *in se*, then God cannot in essence be known. The final result is that “the analogy of [intrinsic] attribution defines so precisely the unknowness of God that it vastly increases that unknowness into God’s *total inaccessibility*.”⁵⁴ In its attempt to solve the problem of God’s speakability it has created the larger problem of God’s speakability *per se*. While Kant tries to avoid this extreme position, he nevertheless falls into it on the basis of his shared conviction with Pseudo Dionysius and Thomas that God and man remain “infinitely distinct” from one another, which, outside of a Christological orientation that Kant denies, leaves theological language vapid.⁵⁵ We are now in a position to draw the lines between Kant and Aquinas much more assertively.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 278, emphasis added.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 280. I am aware of the Radical Orthodox and von Balthasarian critique of Kant, as well as those in the articles by John Betz, and David Bentley Hart’s *Beauty of the Infinite*. Betz states; “For be sure, following John Milbank, one may identify a common discourse of the sublime, running from Burke and Kant through to the various postmodern philosophies of today—a ‘master’ discourse in which the analogy of being figures, if at all, either as a Promethean attempt to lay hold of God in terms of this overarching discourse.” This is a discourse “that is itself susceptible to deconstruction, as we shall see, given that what it denominates as sublime is, in its philosophical variants, ultimately nothing of the kind.” See his “Beyond the Sublime” (Part One), 370. I will not respond myself but merely invoke one of the most incisive critiques of this so-called “discourse of the sublime” as written by the Kant scholar Paul Janz, who writes; “The centerpiece of Milbank’s ideological historiography in its negative aspect is an interpretation of Kant that will be found

Kant, Causality, and the Knowledge of God

Kant's Copernican revolution is in essence his establishment of the principle of *causality* as a valid, a priori judgment that enables us to make sense of our experience of objects in space and time.⁵⁶ This discovery came to him from his analysis of the physical sciences and mathematics, which were understood by Kant not merely to be about the apprehension of objects by means of sensible experience, but as implying that the mind gives something to the determination of the object in space and time. The question that emerges for Kant is, whether or not on this basis, "we might be able to construct a real metaphysics as science."⁵⁷ The problem at the heart of this metaphysics is to rationally explain how we can admit to an a priori judgment that does not turn out a fiction but expresses the real state of affairs. For Kant, the metaphysics of the scholastics (as embodied in Thomism) tended to ignore this a priori element within the mind in its determination of the knowledge of objects, which it assumed

to be almost entirely unsustainable when measured against Kant's own writings." See his "Radical Orthodoxy and the New Culture of Obscurantism," *Modern Theology* 20 (2004): 363–405, at 372. See also his *God, the Mind's Desire: Reference, Reason and Christian Thinking* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). He accuses Milbank et al. of a conceptual reversal of Kant interpretation that is neither faithful to Kant nor to the history of the enlightenment. In a similar vein, Wayne Hankey's comments, which he builds on Janz's, are telling indeed. Hankey writes: "Radical Orthodoxy's falsification of the past is compulsive, because the anti-modern character of its Postmodernity requires it. In fact, there is little genuinely postmodern about Radical Orthodoxy, if we mean by this a stance beyond the modern wars within and between philosophy, and theology, religion, and secularity. Mostly we witness another version of reactionary Christian hatred and fear of Enlightenment reason and secularity. The truth about our past cannot be told from within this polemic." See his "Radical Orthodoxy's Poiesis: Ideological Historiography and Anti-Modern Polemic," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 80 (2006): 1–21, at 20. Therefore I shall leave a full response to this kind of Kantian critique to those more capable of fully deciphering the massive Kantian corpus. My goal in using Kant here is to merely substantiate a common scholarly opinion about Kant still held by many today, despite the revisionist historiography of Milbank, Betz, and Hart, who follow this line of Kant critique.

⁵⁶ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. M. J. D. Meiklejohn (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1950), Preface 4a.

⁵⁷ Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* (New York: Bobs Merrill, 1950). Kant writes: "My purpose is to persuade all those who think metaphysics worth studying that it is absolutely necessary to pause a moment and, regarding all that has been done as though undone, to propose first the preliminary question, "Whether such a thing as metaphysics be even possible at all? If it be science, how is it that it cannot, like other sciences, obtain universal and lasting recognition? If not, how can it maintain its pretensions and keep the human mind in suspense with hopes never ceasing, yet never fulfilled?" (3).

was knowable without in any sense being determined a priori by the mind. Since, in Kant's view, scholastic metaphysics failed to arrive at a true knowledge of the objects in themselves, he asks, following the establishment of a priori knowledge of mathematics, whether or not the nature of the object does not in some way depend upon the subjectivity of the knower.⁵⁸ Herein lies the secret to his Copernican revolution, and it has had no small consequences for Christian theology, with its claims to both the natural and revealed knowledge of God.⁵⁹

Kant goes on to point out that space and time are, according to this theory, bound up with the actual existence of our perceptive faculty. So also are the a priori, synthetic judgments that enable us to state the nature of the objective world as universal and necessary.⁶⁰ So, while our senses receive and interpret the universe as object, our actual understanding of

⁵⁸ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. N. Kemp Smith (Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). "For the chief question is always simply this: what and how much can the understanding and reason know apart from all experience? Not: how is the faculty of thought itself possible? The latter is, as it were, the search for the cause of a given effect, and to that extent is somewhat hypothetical in character (though, as I shall show elsewhere, it is not really so); and I would appear to be taking the liberty simply of expressing an *opinion*, in which case the reader would be free to express a different *opinion*. For this reason I must forestall the reader's criticism by pointing out that the objective deduction with which I am here chiefly concerned retains its full force even if my subjective deduction should fail to produce that complete conviction for which I hope" (12).

⁵⁹ Karl Barth, *Protestant Thought in the 19th Century: Its Background and History* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002). Barth puts Kant's work and time in a much better perspective than Hart does in his *Beauty of the Infinite*. "In Kant's sense 'criticism' does not mean a kind of knowledge fundamentally consisting in the total or partial negation of another merely alleged or at any rate disputable piece of knowledge. Criticism in Kant's sense does not consist in casting doubt upon or denying certain propositions, or alternatively certain things contained in these propositions, which are declared to be objects of knowledge. He could not, it is true, embark upon or set forth his own criticism which is essentially quite different from it: it is criticism of knowledge itself and of knowledge as such" (255).

⁶⁰ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant writes: "Since I cannot rest in these intuitions if they are to become known, but must relate them as representations to something as their object, and determine this latter through them, either I must assume that the *concepts*, by means of which I obtain this determination, conform to the object, or else I assume that the objects, or what is the same thing, that the *experience* in which alone, as given objects, they can be known, conform to the concepts. In the former case, I am again in the same perplexity as to how I can know anything a priori in regard to the objects. In the latter case the outlook is more hopeful. For experience is itself a species of knowledge which involves understanding; and understanding has rules which I must presuppose as being in me prior to objects being given to me, and therefore as being a priori" (23).

it is made up of the knowledge of the a priori principles with which the objective universe is formed into objects of the mind and placed into a "system of connections," which Kant later calls a "causal nexus." Thus, just as sensory perception and understanding as an operation of the mind are to be separated, so also is our understanding of experience as it relates to each. "Perception tells us of an individual thing or object occupying a certain space at a given time. Understanding is our knowledge of the object as such, as it is connected to a system according to the a priori ordering of the mind and not just according to sense perception."⁶¹ Here the human capacity for thought and understanding are crucial questions in establishing the new metaphysics, as the interpretation of experience.

Kant answers this question from the point of view of a "causal nexus," which functions in Kant's philosophy in a way similar to Aquinas, as an ontology, a way of explaining how things in the universe have their being. Kant affirms that in the same way that individual objects can be determined by the constitution of the mind through the faculty of sensory perception, so, in like manner, we can also say that objects ("things in themselves"), within a causal nexus of experience, can be known only on the basis of an a priori, that is, that the mind has a certain unalterable makeup that enables it to categorize our experience of objects according to a causal nexus, which, says Kant, "is a fixed system of how things actually are."⁶² Kant further elaborates that the scholastics failed to explain this in their attempt to explain objects within a system of *cause-effect relation*.⁶³

The primary mode for expressing this in scholastic metaphysics is, according to Kant and Hume, through the concept of *causality*.⁶⁴ Herein

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., 27.

⁶³ Kant, "Lectures on the Philosophical Doctrine of Religion," 421.

⁶⁴ Barth writes, "This does not mean that it is a complete or partial denial of the possibility, validity, and worth of the human method of forming knowledge. Even if it was David Hume, the 'skeptical,' who by Kant's own admission first roused him from his 'dogmatic slumbers,' i.e., first shook him in his untested assumption that human knowledge was possible and valid, this does not mean that Kant intended to pursue the same road as Hume, i.e., that he intended to make the challenging of this assumption his actual goal. Those have truly been guilty of misunderstanding him who have taken him to be a kind of super-skeptic, who have looked upon him as the 'all-annihilating one,' as far as the reality of knowledge, the reality of science and morality, art and religion are concerned: and have regarded him as the man who contemplates civilization from outside, and challenges its values, so to speak, in order to provide it, on his own initiative, with a new basis, or in order to refrain resignedly from the possibility of giving it a basis." *Protestant Theology*, 255ff.

lies one of the chief reasons for Kant's attempt to revise metaphysics in the face of this scholastic understanding. The impetus for this came from David Hume's critique of the medieval metaphysics of causality. According to Hume, in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* and *Dialogues on Natural Religion*, if the mind has to conform to the object in coming to a knowledge of it, then the supposed principle of *causality* is merely an observation about how repeated events and encounters of objects have occurred in our experience.⁶⁵ The mind cannot demonstrate the manner in which causes, and their effects, are connected. For Kant therefore, if *causality* is an a priori principle of the mind, we must assume that it belongs to the mind as an a priori and not to the object itself nor its cause.

In other words, the principle of causality, as we must hold it to be, is the necessary model in which our understanding introduces order and system into the world of our particular experiences; and this order and system it is able to introduce, just because causality is bound up with the very character of our thinking faculty.⁶⁶

The Kantian hypothesis that objects must conform to knowledge functions for Kant as a way of explaining how knowledge itself is possible. It consists in the judgment that we can have a priori knowledge of the objects of experience and that this is a necessary judgment in that the determination of objects in space and time "is a determination belonging to the very nature of the faculty of perception."⁶⁷ This is also the case because there are certain basic modes of knowing and connecting, according to the categories of the mind, which we describe as understanding. But this leads Kant back to the fundamental problem of metaphysics, both old and new. It is a problem that seems to him, on one level, to be insoluble, namely, the knowledge of the supersensible.

Thus, the goal of Kant's new metaphysics of causality, as stated everywhere in his *Critiques*, is not, in the first instance, the establishment of knowledge as understanding in relation to the objects of experience, but rather to answer the question how such an understanding can also, or not, secure our knowledge of the supersensible. Given Kant's answer to the question, "How are a priori judgments of experience possible?" what issues from it, in respect to metaphysics as science, is a severe limitation of metaphysical knowledge to experience. While sensible objects can be known as given to the mind, which orders them according to a system

⁶⁵ See David Hume, "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion," in idem, *Writings on Religion* (Chicago: Open Court, 1993), 59ff.

⁶⁶ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Preface, 5.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

of connections, this leads to considerable problems when the same metaphysics attempts to determine the nature of the supersensible. The type of knowledge we have in the physical sciences is a knowledge specific to objects of the senses and could not exist without the object itself.⁶⁸ But, by definition, “the supersensible excludes everything that is sensible.” The difficulty is that knowledge is impossible without the sensible object. Thus, there can be no knowledge of the supersensible because “it has nothing of the sensible in it.”⁶⁹ As such, metaphysics seems to be at an end; and no real metaphysics of the supersensible, as conceived in scholastic causal and therefore analogical terms, is possible.

But Kant sees this apparent defeat for the scholastic metaphysics of the supersensible as metaphysics’s greatest possibility.⁷⁰ If the objects of sensible experience were “ultimate realities” then indeed the supersensible vanishes, since the supersensible and the sensible would be contradictory categories. However, if the world of the sensible can be shown not to be the ultimate reality, but only a reality as it appears when refracted through the medium of the perception and understanding of the mind, then nothing in the sensible can be completely known in the ordering of the supersensible.⁷¹ As it happens, according to Kant, the essential limitation of sensible objects as they are conditioned by the mind can easily be demonstrated. If that is the case (and Kant gives considerable space to demonstrating this), then the unconditional is free from the limitations of the sensible, so that there is nothing to hinder us from maintaining, with equal validity, that the supersensible is the reality, the foundation, that may be sought elsewhere than on the basis of a special scientific knowledge.

This other basis is, for Kant, practical reason, or moral consciousness, which incidentally is precisely the basis upon which Aquinas established the knowledge of God from an ontology of *causality*. Kant goes on, in his *Critique of Judgment* and the *Lectures on the Philosophical Doctrine of Religion*, to show that the critique of pure reason demonstrates both the a priori knowledge of sensible objects and at the same time prepares a way for the defense of the supersensible, albeit, unknowable in its essence.⁷²

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. J. H. Bernard (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2000); idem, *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. Lewis White Beck (New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1956).

⁷² Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, Appendix, §87; “Of the Moral Proof of the Being of God,” 377ff.; “Lectures on the Philosophical Doctrine of Religion,” 423–32.

We can now turn briefly to the latter two works to demonstrate how it is that Kant works out his metaphysics of the supersensible precisely on the same basis as Aquinas, that of an ontology of *causality*. We would do well to keep in mind, as we mentioned above, that it was this problem, as raised by Hume, that served as Kant's primary motivation for finding the solution to the problem of the knowledge of God, presented in the "old metaphysics," that is, that of the medieval scholastics after Aquinas.

Causality in the Critique of Judgment

While the intertwining arguments on beauty and sublimity in the *Critique of Judgment* are not unimportant, especially so in the light of David Hart's recently published *Beauty of the Infinite*, the real weight of what Kant says about *causality* and its implications for analogy in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Lectures on the Philosophical Doctrine of Religion* comes to fruition and significant conclusion in his appendix in the *Critique of Judgment*. As already noted, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant tries to demonstrate that theoretical reason cannot make objective or synthetic judgments about the supersensible. Given the fact that the world, self, and God are unconditioned by the sensible, reason cannot pass from these ideas to the assertion of objects corresponding to them.⁷³ That is to say, the *causal* connection, as conceived by the understanding, always only amounts to a "regressive series of causes and effects," wherein the cause precedes the effect as its condition; and insofar as the cause is itself again an effect, it is preceded by another *cause*, which is itself an effect, and so on *ad infinitum*.⁷⁴ This kind of regressive connection we call efficient causality.

However, Kant says there is an understanding of causality that does not imply a regressive series, namely the conception of final cause. Considered from the point of view of "ends," final causality cannot be strictly called a series, except from the point of view of our grasp of it. Final cause can be taken as either regressive or progressive but not *ad infinitum*; in other words, the elements causally connected co-exist according to ends, in a way that is mutually dependent. A cause can, therefore, just as properly be called the effect, and the effect a cause. This form of causal connection is what Kant means by final cause (*nexus finalis*).

Understood in relation to this *nexus finalis*, things are a natural end when their parts are possible only in relation to some whole; in other words, when the combination of the parts "presupposes a conception or idea which determines the particular form in which the parts are

⁷³ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 334.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

disposed.”⁷⁵ This, however, is not enough to express all that is implicit in a physico-teleology, in that what has been said is equally true of artificially produced products wherein the cause is clearly an intelligent being. The cause is distinct from the effects, which are combined in a certain way in order to realize that which the subject has in view. Hence, in the second place, a natural product must not only presuppose the conception of an end, but it must be of such a nature as to realize that end “independently of any intelligent cause external to it.”⁷⁶ In other words, the *telos* (end) is not external to but immanent in the object. This can be said to be true only when the parts of the natural product involve a “reciprocity of cause and effect” as it relates to the form of an entity. (Here we recall how closely related are the Platonic concept of form and the Aristotelian concept of cause.) Under no other condition can the idea of the whole determine the form and combination of all the parts. Here we cannot speak of a *cause* that brings together parts in a certain way; what we can only say is that in no other manner can we conceive of the particular combination of parts exhibited in the object except under presupposition of an immanent purpose. In that case, there is a combination of efficient and final causes within a whole in that “the efficient cause is conceived as the means by which the final cause is realized.”⁷⁷

Here we see Kant and Aquinas in the closest possible connection, precisely on Aristotelian and neo-Platonic terms. In a natural product each part not only exists by means of the other,

but is conceived to exist for the sake of the other and of the whole, so that each part is an instrument or organ; and not only so, but these organs reciprocally produce one another—a fact which distinctly marks off organized beings from artificial products. The only natural end, then, is found in self-organizing beings.⁷⁸

That is, organizing beings are the only things in nature that, taken by themselves, must be conceived as existing only as a *relation*. In no other case within nature is purpose attributed to the object. For this reason the conception of an end of nature, as distinguished from a practical end, that is, an end secured artificially by an intelligent subject distinct from the object, first obtains objective reality from the consideration of organizing beings; and if it had not been found that there are natural objects that can be explained in no other way, there would have been no justification for

⁷⁵ Ibid., 335.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 338.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

conceiving nature teleologically, keeping in mind that this is all confined to experience.

When Kant turns in a more direct way to describe what such a teleologically conceived, and phenomenologically limited, conception of causality means for theology and revelation, the full weight of his argument demonstrates clearly the implications ingredient in the medieval, emanationist form of the metaphysics of causality with its concomitant negative return vis-à-vis the knowledge of God. In the *Lectures on the Philosophical Doctrine of Religion*, Kant applies this limited understanding of final causality to his description of theology with special reference to primary and secondary causality in the scholastic doctrine of providence about which he writes:

The system of emanation of the subtler kind, according to which God is regarded as the cause of substances by the necessity of his nature, has one ground of reason opposed to it, which at once overthrows it. This ground is taken from the nature of an absolutely necessary being and consists in the fact that the actions which an absolutely necessary being undertakes from the necessity of its nature can never be any but those internal actions which belong to the absolute necessity of its essence. . . . This ground sets up a resistance on the part of reason toward the system of emanation, which regards God as cause of the world by the necessity of his nature, and discovers the cause of the unwillingness to accept this system, which everyone feels even if he is not able to develop it distinctly. . . . *For here cause and effect are homogeneous*, as for instance in the generation of animals and plants. But it would be absurd to think of God as homogeneous with the totality of the world, because this would contradict entirely the concept of an *ens originarium*, which, as we have shown above, has to be isolated from the world. Hence there remains to our reason only the opposite system of causality, the *systema per libertatem*.⁷⁹

This conclusion issues, in the *Critique of Judgment*, in a completely closed system of causality in which the knowledge of God is finally all but denied.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ "Lectures on the Philosophical Doctrine of Religion," 422 (*systema per libertatem*: "system [of causality] through freedom").

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 432. Kant concludes: "The conception, therefore, of an absolute end, i.e., of the possibility of the free realization of absolute moral laws by beings who are ends in themselves, presupposes the existence of a moral cause or author of the world; in other words, it presupposes the existence of God." But, says Kant, "we cannot assume that in the supreme cause of the world, which we must conceive of as an intelligence, there is the same contrast between reason as practical and reason as theoretical, and that a kind *causality* is required for the ultimate end which is different from that required for natural ends."

It is quite true that we cannot prove the existence of God as the moral author of the "World" simply from a consideration of nature as implying purpose. But it is the very character of reason that it cannot be satisfied with anything short of an absolute unity of principles, and therefore the knowledge of physical ends, when it is brought into relation with the knowledge of the moral end, is the means by which we are enabled to connect the practical reality of the idea of God with its theoretical reality as already existing for judgment.⁸¹

In sum, says Kant, two things must be kept in mind in regard to the moral proof of the existence of God in light of this closed system of ends. "In the first place, since we have no positive knowledge of the existence of a Supreme Being, on account of the necessary limitations of our knowledge to objects of sensible experience, we can only think or conceive the attributes of this Being by analogy."⁸² It is not possible for us actually to know God because there is nothing within our experience that reveals to us the nature of a being who transcends all experience.

Second, it follows from this that "though we are entitled to say that the Supreme Being must by His nature *correspond* to what we mean by intelligence and morality, this does not enable us to know Him as He is, nor can we predicate these attributes positively of Him."⁸³ Thus, according to

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² See *Critique of Judgment*, 348ff.; and "Lectures on the Philosophical Doctrine of Religion," 422ff.

⁸³ *Critique of Judgment*, 348ff. It is worth noting here that Jüngel, Hart, and indeed Barth himself, aim at this *correspondence* that Kant seems to deny to any analogical method. The difference being that for Barth and Jüngel there is an accounting of this Kantian critique, and thus an attempted location of all *correspondence* in a doctrine of revelation that is Christologically and incarnationally oriented. Hart calls for such a *correspondence* but does so on the same grounds that Kant denied to him, the emanationist argument from causality. Hart writes, "Created difference 'corresponds' to God, is analogous to the divine life, precisely in differing from God; this is the Christian thought of divine transcendence, of a God who is made *inconceivably near* in—whose glory is *ubiquitously* proclaimed by—creation's *infinity of difference* from God, its free, departing, *serial excess of otherness*. Theology speaks of nothing if it speaks taxonomically of the one and the many, because difference as revealed in the Trinitarian economy precedes this static and mutually conditioning opposition; the motion of divine love shows self-contained singularity to be a fiction of thought, for even in the 'instant' of origin there is the I—otherness of manifestation" (*Beauty of the Infinite*, 180, emphasis added). But, we would add, only as we view it from the limited horizon of experience, within multiplicity wherein the vision of *pros hen* is obscured! How Hart can deny an "ontology of the one and the Many," then argue in Kantian terms for transcendence, and then appeal to the tradition of emanation in support of statements like this, is a complete contradiction in terms. It raises the question as

Kant, the only manner in which we can realize for ourselves the nature of the Supreme Being is through the application of the idea of *final cause* or purpose, and that idea, as we have seen, is only a regulative not a constitutive principle. Reason must take the form of the determinant judgment before we can absolutely determine the nature of God, and this is contrary to its fundamental character. The final result of Kant's whole enquiry was to place the belief in God, freedom, and immortality upon a thoroughly rational basis, a result that at first sight seemed to be excluded by the necessary limitation of knowledge to the world of sense. This was his achievement for metaphysics. It was an achievement that Kant established precisely because of the failure of scholastic metaphysics to do so. School metaphysics failed at this because it was centered on the Thomistic/Aristotelian/Platonic epistemology of causality.⁸⁴

Karl Barth saw the danger in this emanationist argument from *causality* ingredient in analogical predication about God and its net negative return, and he warns of this problem throughout the *Church Dogmatics*. Indeed, it forms one of the crucial points in understanding his rejection of the *analogia entis* as employed in certain forms of Catholic theology, with the blessing and protection of the Magisterium. Furthermore, were scholars like Przywara, von Balthasar, Hart, Betz, Milbank, and a host of others since von Balthasar, fully aware of Barth's sensitivity to this emanationist understanding of divine predication in much of Catholic thought and some Reformed Scholasticism, then at least a more careful assessment of his rejection of the *analogia entis* would be forthcoming from them.⁸⁵ My point here is simply to register this and not to render judgment as to the correctness of Barth's concern or to defend it *per se*. To help clarify Barth's rejection of the *analogia entis*, and his grounds for doing so, the remainder of this essay exposits his understanding of causality especially in his treatment of primary and secondary causality under the doctrine of *concursus*, in *Church Dogmatics*, III/3, but with special reference to his rejection of omnicausality and Molinism in his treatment of omnipotence in *Church Dogmatics*, II/1.⁸⁶

to whether he has read Jüngel, Barth, Kant, or indeed even Aquinas closely at all. Is he operating purely with the Radical Orthodox reading of Kant? He most certainly has not read the many comprehensive treatments of analogy that would have made him alert to this potential contradiction in terms; especially the works of B. Mondin, D. Burrell, G. Klubertanz, or H. Lyttons.

⁸⁴ "The Philosophical Doctrine of Religion," 427.

⁸⁵ Here I refer to John Betz's characterization of Barth's rejection of the *analogia entis* as an "unfair" and "abrupt" treatment of Przywara, in "Beyond the Sublime" (Part One), as though two wrongs should bring balance to the discussion.

⁸⁶ *Church Dogmatics*, vol. II/1, 529ff.; vol. III/3, 89–154.

Karl Barth and His Rejection of the *Analogia Entis*

There is no question that, in respect to his aversion to neo-Platonic emanationism, Barth remains consistent throughout the *Church Dogmatics*. It is also clear that this constitutes a major reason, though by no means the only one, for his rejection of the analogy of being. In respect to the predication of the perfections of God on the basis of any *cause-effect relation*, says Barth:

The fact that He (God) is one and the same does not mean that He is bound to be and to say and to do only one and the same thing, so that all the distinctions (perfections) of His being, speaking, and acting are only a semblance, only the various refractions of a beam of light which are eternally the same. This was and is the way that every form of Platonism conceives of God. It is impossible to overemphasize the fact that here, too, God is described as basically without life, word, or act. Biblical thinking about God would rather submit to the confusion of the grossest anthropomorphisms than to confusion with this, the primary denial of God.⁸⁷

What is notable about this citation is the direct opposition Barth sees between the biblical descriptions of God's attributes and those of the Platonic tradition, which he sees as irreconcilable with the biblical witness. This is the primary attitude with which Barth begins his doctrine of God; and it expresses much about his attitude toward those Platonizing principles that merely end in either the reduction of God to non-existence, or to nothing but pure potential that is absolutely unknowable, unthinkable, and unspeakable.⁸⁸ Barth sees the epitome of this reductionist approach to theology expressed in the doctrine of omnicausality, expressed in terms of the classical doctrine of omnipotence, which he attributes to the Thomistic conception of causality. Says Barth:

⁸⁷ *Church Dogmatics*, vol. II/1, 496. Gunton puts the importance of Barth's aversion to all forms of Platonic thinking, monist, dualist, and emanationist, into perspective: "Thus, according to Barth revelation overthrows axiomatic monism of the kind that Hartshorne avows. . . . He wishes to preserve an understanding of God as one who really does things with, to, and for mankind, but who does them not because of necessitated metaphysical ties but because he freely and graciously chooses to do them. . . . The triumph of Barth's theology is a God who doesn't need man; therefore He can let man live" (*Becoming and Being*, 154).

⁸⁸ Barth comments later in his treatment of the nature and provenance of the world that some Christian theologies lapse into "a monistic and or dualistic explanation" that is reductionist either on the side of the divine or the side of the world. See *Church Dogmatics*, vol. II/1, 500, where Barth writes that the biblical doctrine of God "sets two limits. The first is against all speculation of a monistic kind. . . . It is no less a speculation, however, when the distinction between creature and creator is drawn in dualistic fashion" (500–501).

It is important to perceive the thrust of grace and mercy and patience in which God makes Himself our omnipotent God and applies His omnipotence beneficially to us as His omnicausality, although He does not need to do this or lose anything by doing it. If we do not see this, how can we acknowledge and worship it as divine omnipotence, and show it the awe and trust it deserves and claims as divine omnipotence. Absolutely everything depends on whether we know God as the One who is omnipotent in Himself, and therefore recognize His omnipotence, of course in His omnicausality in creation, reconciliation, and redemption on the basis of His self-revelation, but really as His omnipotence. Absolutely everything depends on whether we distinguish His omnipotence from His omnicausality: not to the glory of an unknown omnipotent being who is beyond and behind His work; but to the glory of the omnipotent God who is present to us in His work and is known to us by His self-revelation; to the glory of His divinity, of the freedom of His love. Without which His love would not be divine love or recognizable as such.⁸⁹

For Barth, this complete theological identification of God's omnipotence with omnicausality leads to the perception that God is no longer the Subject over his works and is "finally denied as such."⁹⁰ In exactly this way both the Protestant Reformed and the Catholic traditions demonstrate that they are not concerned with God, who is the Subject of omnipotence

⁸⁹ Ibid., 528. In regard to the absolute identification of power and causality in God, as per Aquinas, Barth writes as follows: "If this is all there is to say, is not the conclusion irresistible that no potential can be ascribed to God *intra se*, as distinct from His operations *ad extra*, and therefore that *impotentia* must be ascribed to Him in Himself? Does God begin to be omnipotent only with the existence of a reality distinct from Himself, an extra in which His omnipotence can be omnicausality? Does it first exist as His relationship to this *extra*? But how is this in any sense possible if there is no corresponding being in God Himself? And how can God's relation *ad extra*, His omnicausality, be distinguished from all this outward activity?"

⁹⁰ Ibid., 529. This is the problem, according to Barth, with Schleiermacher's employment of causality as well. He writes, "The summary at the head of §54 of Schleiermacher's *Christian Faith* declares: 'In the conception of the divine omnipotence two ideas are contained: first, that the entire system of nature, comprehending all times and spaces, is founded upon divine causality, which, as eternal and omnipresent, is in contrast to all finite causality; and second, that the divine causality, as affirmed in our feeling of absolute dependence, is completely presented in the totality of finite being, and hence everything really happens and occurs for which there is a causality in God.' This summary itself makes clear that Schleiermacher is not concerned with God as the subject of omnipotence, but with the concept of divine omnipotence as such, and with this, as the first half of the statement shows, only as it denotes the causal basis of the natural system, i.e., the totality of finite causes and effects." See Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith* (1928; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1976), §54.

and possesses it. Rather, they are concerned with the bare concept of divine omnipotence, “as it denotes the *causal* basis of the natural system, i.e. the totality of *finite causes and effects*.”⁹¹ Barth is concerned to point out that a proper understanding of existence through divine *potentia* does not entail a metaphysics of necessity but allows for the freedom of God to decide what will and will not be. Causality must not be a principle that binds God to creation through a neo-Platonic doctrine of the “potency of participation,” as we see in the work of Hart for instance.⁹²

⁹¹ Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. II/1, 529, emphasis added.

⁹² Recently, Wayne Hankey, in his “Radical Orthodoxy’s Poiesis: Ideological Histrography and Anti-Modern Polemic,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 80 (2006), calls into serious question the Radical Orthodox appeal to participatory *poiesis* as the essence of Thomistic metaphysics, which places Thomas’s work squarely in the field of theology and not philosophy. Here Hart follows Milbank’s approach to the reading of Thomas Aquinas. But appeal to the Thomistic understanding of “participation” does not solve the problem of *esse* in Aquinas. As Hankey correctly notes; “Radical Orthodoxy supposes that its theological ontology allows it both to have God as Being and to embrace enthusiastically the theurgic *poiesis* that, however, emerged in *Neo-Platonism* only together with a strongly negative henological theology. Milbank supposes that his neo-Platonism, refounded in Christian myth, will allow him to have ‘the Platonic Good, reinterpreted by Christianity as identical with Being’” (11). In his major treatment of Thomas’s theological development, *God in Himself*, in which he says Thomas developed his synthesis along the lines of *The Elements of Theology* of the neo-Platonist Proclus, he more than demonstrates the veracity of this conclusion. It must at least be taken more seriously than either Milbank or Hart have taken it thus far. In that work Hankey concludes: “Another doctrine of St. Thomas, closely related to this and exposing how he (Thomas) has assimilated and united their divergent traditions, needs to be added to the list. This is the idea that creation is by participation. Particular beings, because they are not absolutely primary, have existence divided from essence and hence participate in the first act of being, God. Creation is this participation: ‘creation is the emanation of all being from the universal existence’” (*ST I*, q. 45, *prol.*). Thomas unites Plato and Aristotle, joining causation and participation in the very first article of the questions considering the procession of creatures. He begins by returning to the simplicity of God. ‘It has been shown above, when treating the divine simplicity, that God is being itself subsisting. And again it was shown that subsisting being is not able to be except as one. . . . It follows, therefore, that all other things are not God’s being but participate the act of being.’ Because all else participates the first being, it must be caused by it. ‘Hence Plato said that it is necessary to posit unity before all multiplicity.’ And Aristotle said, in the second book of the *Metaphysics* that ‘what is most existent and is the cause of all being and of all truth.’ Being itself functions like a Platonic separate form” (*God in Himself*, 139). “Sed sicut hic homo participat humanum naturam, ita quodcumque ens creatum participat, ut ita dixerim, naturam essendi; quia solus Deus est suum esse, ut supra dictum est” (*ST I*, q. 45, a. 5, ad 1).

To drive home this tendency that Barth sees in the Thomistic and Reformed Scholastic traditions we can also note his treatment of Molinism that occurs in the same discussion of the attributes of God, but now with respect to omniscience. The basis of the critique that Barth levels at Molinism is the same as that raised against the absolute identification of omnipotence and omnicausality.⁹³ Barth recognizes that Thomism rejected the Molinist position, but ultimately came to an accommodating position in relation to it (as did the Catholic Church in general). At the heart of this doctrine there is an inherent penchant for synergism expressed as an *analogia entis*, conveyed through a metaphysics of *causality*. Barth writes:

An effective denial of Molinism is possible only when we cease to think in a God-creature system, in the framework of the *analogia entis*. It is possible only when theology dares to be theology and not ontology, and the question of a freedom of the creature which creates conditions for God can no longer arise. But this can happen only when theology is orientated on God's revelation and therefore [on] Christology.⁹⁴

Here, in Molinism, Barth also sees the same operative monism in the treatment of God's foreknowledge that he saw in the treatment of God's omnipotence as omnicausality. Thomism could not ultimately deny Molinism for the same reasons. Barth writes,

The question remains whether this opposition (of Thomism to Molinism) springs from such an appreciation of the total distinction and relationship between God and the creature that it could really be carried through successfully, not merely offering an impressive resistance to the view adopted by the Jesuits, but basically excluding it. The answer is in the negative.⁹⁵

Why does Barth think this is so? He answers: because

the Thomist conception of the relation of God and the creature also offers the picture of a system, of the relationship of two quantities which in the last resort are comparable and can be grouped together under one concept (being). God's infinite superiority and the infinite

⁹³ In this fascinating follow-up discussion to omnicausality, Barth offers a blistering critique of both Jesuitism and Thomism in the Catholic tradition in its dealing with the work of the Spanish Jesuit theologian Molina (1535–1600), and his *Concordia liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis*, “which can only be described as an illegitimate interest in an autonomy of the human will in its relation to the divine knowledge and to God generally” (*Church Dogmatics*, vol. II/1, 569ff.).

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 580.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

subordination of the creature are beautifully set out and secured in this system. Yet in this remarkable relationship the two quantities are embraced in the common concept of being.⁹⁶

So, Barth concludes, “in this fundamental standpoint, which has priority over all the others, Thomist and Molinist are unfortunately one.”⁹⁷

Furthermore, it is precisely the *causal* form of argumentation for this single concept of being that lies at the root of Barth’s problem with Molinism.⁹⁸ So Barth raises a further question within this context that

⁹⁶ Ibid. It is worth noting at this point that Przywara is very much in the Molinist camp as a Jesuit himself. This must certainly complicate his view of analogy as a “Thomistic view.” Barth places Przywara under the same kind of critique as he places Molina through a reference in this section to his treatment of the doctrine of Mary. See *Church Dogmatics*, vol. I/2, 138–46, where, speaking about the comparison of Mary with Sophia in Ecc. 4 Barth writes, “What is the meaning of this *sophia* proceeding from God, like God, yet immanent in the world? E. Przywara purports to give us final clarity in the matter when he writes that there are contained ‘in the Catholic doctrine of the *analogia entis* the possibilities of a true incarnational cosmos, including body and soul, community and individual, because in their totality . . . they are “open” to God. From the standpoint of the Catholic doctrine of the *analogia entis* creation in its totality is the vision, mounting from likeness to likeness, of the God who is beyond every likeness. It is, therefore, a receptive readiness for Him. In its final essence it is, as it were, already Mary’s “Behold, the handmaid of the Lord. Be it unto me according to thy word”’ (144). Says Barth; “All this is what Mariology means. For it is to the creature creatively co-operating in the work of God that there really applies the irresistible ascription to Mary of that dignity. Of those privileges, of those assertions about her *co-operatio* in our salvation, which involve a relative rivalry with Christ” (145). Could this be what Barth saw in Przywara’s doctrine of analogy as an “invention of the antichrist” (145)? If so, then Barth’s Protestant position makes sense from the point of view of a Protestant and should be somewhat understood from a Catholic point of view.

⁹⁷ *Church Dogmatics*, vol. II/1, 584. Barth elaborates this point as follows: “But we must also admit that we do not know how to advise them because we are fully aware that the only advice that we can give them is not practicable for them as Romanist, and even, we may say, as Thomistic theologians. For the school of Thomas has done far more than its opponents [Molinists] to consolidate the basis it has in common with the Jesuits, the great error of the *analogia entis* as the basic pattern of Catholic thinking and teaching” (584).

⁹⁸ Ibid., 585. Barth’s final word on Molinism clearly puts his problem with the Thomistic metaphysics of causality into perspective. “The most secure basis for this pattern is the work of Thomas Aquinas himself, so that every step a Thomist takes, even if it seems to take him far from the Jesuit counter-thesis, really serves implicitly to justify this counter-theory in advance. Those who practice theology as ontology have not merely to admit the doctrine of the freedom of the creature. Willingly they must themselves espouse it even if it means omitting some of the

he deals with in a decisive manner elsewhere in the *Church Dogmatics*, under the Providence God in respect to the Scholastic doctrine of *concur-sus* in III/3.⁹⁹ The question raised here, in the context of his treatment of Molinism's doctrine of divine-human cooperation, is "if God and the creature are really both within a system of being superior to both," so that "the occasional inversion of the concept A–B to B–A" is permissible, then "can Molinism be rejected absolutely or *a limine*?" The answer is, again, negative; and the same is true of the idea that it attempts to establish, "Namely of competition and co-operation on the part of the creature in relation to God."¹⁰⁰ The treatment of the Catholic and Reformed-Scholastic doctrine of *concur-sus* brings this critique of meta-physical causality full circle in Barth's ongoing rejection of the *analogia entis*. We will turn now to this section of the *Church Dogmatics* to round out our description of the reason for Barth's rejection of an *analogia entis*.

Analogia Causalitatis and the Doctrine of Concursus

At the very beginning of his doctrine of providence Barth is concerned to distinguish his position from the Catholic and Protestant-Scholastic-Reformed positions that tended to reduce the preservation evident in the God-Creature relation to a "logical necessity within which a given B is maintained by a given A, a given effect by a given cause."¹⁰¹ The preservation of the creature is a work of divine favor and not expressive of a cooperative relationship in which God, of necessity, must act in a way consistent with a perceived form of cause-effect relation. This relation is not to function, as with the Catholic form of the doctrine of divine simplicity for instance, as a self-imprisonment of God. We must therefore avoid the Thomistic/Kantian view of causality. But we can do so only "if we note the correlation between His [God's] work here and His work within the covenant of grace."¹⁰² Only then can we be kept from the mistake of regarding either "the creature or its nexus as the sustaining principle of creation."¹⁰³ The only way to avoid this confusion of acting

radical conclusions of their protest. They affirm this doctrine when they undertake to practice theology as ontology. And it is not only Catholic theology in general which stands or falls with this undertaking, but Thomism in particular."

⁹⁹ Ibid., see 89–154.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 581.

¹⁰¹ *Church Dogmatics*, vol. III/3, 59.

¹⁰² Ibid., 65.

¹⁰³ Ibid. Barth elaborates as follows: "As we consider His work within the covenant we shall be constantly aware of the fact that His indirect work here in the nexus of being is no less His free decision than is His direct work there in that other and spiritual nexus. And even here in the nexus of being we shall not see anyone else

subjects is by a proper description of the God-human relationship that allows for the eternal coexistence of both. This is Barth's aim in the redescription of the Thomistic and Reformed-Scholastic doctrine of *concursus*, which, in its Reformed expression, is grounded in a distinction between primary and secondary causality.¹⁰⁴ Barth wants to eliminate this dependence of the Reformed doctrine of *concursus* on the Thomistic distinction between primary and secondary causality.

Barth notes that it was in an attempt to "do justice to the problem of a co-existence and antithesis of the divine and creaturely action which should correspond with the testimony of Scripture," that Reformed Scholasticism developed the doctrine of primary and secondary causality in terms of the doctrine of the *concursus*.¹⁰⁵ Faced with this problem, Reformed Scholasticism formally borrowed from the philosophy of Aristotle and the theology of Aquinas.¹⁰⁶ This borrowing amounted to an "adoption and introduction of a specific terminology to describe the two partners whose activities are

at work save God Himself, not to mention the fact that we shall always distinguish sharply between the nexus of being which is the means and the One who uses this means" (65–66). Barth sees two problems with this reading of God and creation from the *causal nexus*, which he calls the "nexus of being." 1. "We understand the nexus of being of all created things (what Thomas described as the order by which one thing is dependent on another) quite one-sidedly and therefore falsely if we understand it only from the standpoint of the uniform interconnection of all being and events, for, as the (in this respect) far wiser older theology almost universally maintained, it has also the aspect of contingency in which all things must be considered according to their freedom. 2. Even if we do understand the *creaturely nexus of being* more comprehensively, its identification with the divine preservation involves a blind surrender of the concepts God and creation. For the identification of the divine preservation with the creaturely nexus means a flat denial of the fact that this nexus is not grounded upon or maintained by itself, but has over it an independent Lord and Sustainer" (66). (Again contra Thomas and Kant.)

¹⁰⁴ It is hard to tell if Barth thinks *concursus* is the Reformed-Scholastic doctrine that attempts to summarize and represent the Thomistic doctrine of primary and secondary causality or if the whole thing is Thomistic. Either way, whether he sees it as a Thomistic doctrine or a Reformed Scholastic doctrine, they both end up in the same place, in a metaphysics of causality that loses both subjects in an eternal respect. Indeed one does so on the basis of the other, namely on the basis of Thomist causal argumentation. Where Barth sees this in the Reformed tradition he rejects it, and as such rejects Thomism at this point as constituting an *analogy of being* through an *analogy of causality*. Barth refers often to the "older dogmatics," and it is a question in some cases whether he means Reformed-Scholastic dogmatics or Thomistic dogmatics. Either way both are criticized for their employment of an Aristotelian causal ontology read through the prism of a neo-Platonic, Proclan, and ultimately emanationist cosmology.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 96.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

understood and represented in the doctrine of the *concursum*.”¹⁰⁷ This was described in the quasi-synergistic terms of cooperation in which the concept adopted and introduced was that of “cause.”¹⁰⁸ For Barth, this Thomistic-Aristotelian and, ultimately Dionysian/Proclan, concept of cause becomes the controlling principle for the Reformed doctrine of *concursum* and its “kindred topics.”¹⁰⁹ The term “cause” involves a question of “the relation between the divine and creaturely activity. But activity means *causare*. Activity is movement or action which has as its aim or object, a specific effect.”¹¹⁰ Barth further defines cause as “something without which another and second thing either would not be at all, or would not be at this particular point or in this particular way.”¹¹¹ He writes:

A *causa* is something by which another thing is directly posited, or conditioned, or perhaps only partly conditioned, that is, by which it is to some extent and in some sense redirected and therefore altered. Now if we are speaking of the activity, and therefore the *causare*, of God and the creature, then wittingly and willingly or not, we are describing and thinking of both of them in terms of *causa*. And at once we have to begin our manipulation of the dialectic of the concept, and it was in this process that the older dogmatists found inspiration and guidance in Aristotle and Thomas. For quite obviously God is a *causa* in one sense, and the creature in quite another.¹¹²

This means that, for Barth, denoting God as *causa* “consists primarily and supremely in the fact that since He is the source of all *causae*, the basis and starting point of the whole causal series, there is no *causa* which is either before or above him, but He is his own *causa*: *causa sui*.”¹¹³ Therefore, it also means that, since everything that exists apart from him was caused by him, as an effect, all *causae* that exists outside him, with their own *causare*, “are not merely partly but absolutely conditioned by Him indeed they are not merely conditioned but in the first instance posited by him,

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 98.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. Barth adds: “Now we cannot deny that even from the standpoint of the subject itself the concept *causa* could and necessarily did both advance and commend itself. It was indeed the whole problem of *causa* which had formed the topic for discussion even in the sixteenth century, and this not only in the doctrine of providence of Zwingli and Calvin but also in Luther’s *De servo arbitrio*” (ibid.).

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid. He bases this on the English meaning of the word cause.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

seeing that they are created.”¹¹⁴ It was in this way that God was known and described according to the “older theology” as “*causa prima*, the *causa princeps*, the controlling cause which governs all other *causae* and their *causare*.” Thus, Barth concludes:

This was the conceptual basis on which the older Evangelical dogmatics understood the *concursus Dei* within the overruling of providence. As *causa prima*, or *princeps*, God co-operates with the operation of *causae secundae*, or *particulares*. The divine *causare* takes place in and with their *causare*.¹¹⁵

Barth does not fault the term “cause” directly for the tendency of this kind of argumentation to lead us astray vis-a-vis the biblical witness. In a very real sense “every terminology is a possible source of error.”¹¹⁶ There is no doubt in Barth’s mind, however, that the use of *causa* did lead to a serious error in Thomas Aquinas in regard to the biblical understanding of cooperation among the acting subjects, God and the human. Indeed the use to which it was put obscured the biblical portrait of the God-human relationship and precisely on the basis of an Aristotelian/neo-Platonic conception of causality that was “completely apart from the message of the Bible.” Under the pressure of this concept of cause “there emerge[d] theological conceptions and asseverations which are foreign and even completely antithetical to that message.”¹¹⁷ Barth thinks that this has happened in the case of Thomism, and so also in the Reformed tradition where it has followed Aquinas in this matter.¹¹⁸ Here Barth launches into a detailed discussion of Protestant Scholasticism, especially in its Lutheran expression, to demonstrate this fact. He finds that while formally their use of the concept of cause is quite correct, materially, their doctrine failed to be sensitive to the biblical witness. This was the case to the degree that what they hoped to preserve, a biblical account of two acting subjects with eternal distinction, was lost. In regard to it he concludes:

It missed completely the relationship between creation and the covenant of grace. In its whole doctrine of providence it spoke abstractly not only

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 99. Furthermore, “all other *causae* can only affirm and attest Him as the one *causa*. All other *causare* can only affirm and attest His *causare causarum*” (ibid.).

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. Here, Barth wants to ensure his own right of access to a form of causal argumentation later and writes: “The term *causa* does not derive from the Bible, but this does not mean that its introduction into the language of theology is a mistake. The term may well be useful in the developing and applying of the message of the Bible.”

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 100.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

of the general control of God over and with the creature, but of the control of a general and in some sense neutral and featureless God, an Absolute. . . . It [also] spoke abstractly of a neutral and featureless creature.¹¹⁹

As a result, when the “older dogmaticians” spoke in terms of the *causare* of the *causa prima* and the *causae secundae*, “neither in the one case nor in the other had it any specifically Christian content.”¹²⁰ To the degree that it was an essentially unbiblical use of the term “cause,” Barth says, it lacked any “definite safeguards” against the mischief that was inevitably the result of an otherworldly reading of causality.

The enemies which it was its business to repel, the enemy of synergism on the one hand and monism on the other [which for Barth are internal to the Thomistic synthesis], of the Papacy on the one hand and the Turk on the other, could also make use of exactly the same form. They could not be repelled merely by the use of that form. When the Evangelicals were seen to be looking to Thomas, it might easily have been a cause of triumph and a source of hope not only in Rome itself but also in countless other states which openly or secretly were seeking a uniform doctrine.¹²¹

So much for the broad strokes of his critique of causality. But Barth only launches this critique of the use of causality in order to exposit the conditions under which a doctrine of *concursum*, based on cause, may be permitted. Here, Barth is more explicit in his rejection of the analogy of being than anywhere else in the *Church Dogmatics*, other than the statement so often referred to and so little understood, namely the description of the *analogia entis* as “an invention of the anti-Christ.” His reasons for rejecting an *analogia causalitatis* further confirm our claim that his rejection has to do with a neo-Platonic *henology* of the one and the many that some scholars deny is at the heart of Thomistic synthesis.

While this neo-Platonic *henology* may be denied, it cannot be done without taking into consideration Barth’s concerns about its employment of causality, which he considers a form of metaphysics, and determinative of Catholic doctrine as a whole since Aquinas. On this basis “we have to ask, therefore, on what conditions the concept can legitimately be applied to this Reformed doctrine of *concursum*.”¹²² Barth delineates five “preliminary conditions,” the fulfillment of which is “dependent upon the fulfill-

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid. We need to keep in mind here that Barth is drawing this conclusion on the basis of a reading that he sees to be endemic to the Thomistic tradition.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid., 101.

ment of one decisive condition” with which he deals in his conclusion to this section.¹²³ The *first* condition, if the concept of causality is to be used effectively in theology, is that

the term *causa* must not be regarded as the equivalent of that of a cause which is effective automatically. If we had no choice but to think of *causa* or cause as the term is applied in modern science, or rather natural philosophy, with all its talk about causality, causal nexus, causal law, causal necessity, and the like, then clearly it is a concept which we could not apply either to God or to the creature of God, but could only reject.¹²⁴

Here Barth recognizes that theology must use causal argumentation in a way that does not make it susceptible to the Humian/Kantian critique. But this is not his main concern in rejecting the Thomistic approach herein, and so we merely note it here as confirming what we said earlier.

His *second* condition comes closer to the mark when he writes;

If the term *causa* is to be applied legitimately, care must be taken lest the idea should creep in that in God and the creature we have to do with two “things.” The German word for cause, *Ur-sache*, might easily suggest this. A “thing” or “object” (*Sache*) is something which in part at least, is perceptible and accessible to man. If we have to do with a “thing” then this means that even if only effectively we believe that we are capable of examining, recognizing, analyzing and defining, in short of “realizing” it, and in some degree we know how to control it. But neither God nor the creature is a *causa* in this sense.¹²⁵

Thus Barth rejects any and all attempts at objectivizing either God or humanity.

Barth’s *third* condition on the use of the word cause is one of the most revealing. He writes:

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid. Barth elaborates as follows: “When we turn to Thomas and our own orthodox fathers we have to ask seriously whether on their definition God and the creature as primary and secondary *causa* could not easily become something very like ‘things’ ” (101). He later adds; “Now when the Aristotelian dialectic of the causal concept was applied to the operations of God and the creature, did it not to some extent involve thinking and speaking about them in that way? The *causal concept*, like the concept of being, is certainly an invitation to error at this point. . . . Rather remarkably, a true theological realism consists primarily in a constant awareness of the fact that neither God nor the creature is a ‘thing,’ that on the contrary, to those who really want to think and speak about them, to theologians—if they are not to thresh empty straw—they must always be self-revealed” (102, emphasis added).

If the term *causa* is to be applied legitimately, it must be clearly understood that it is not a master concept to which both God and the creature are subject, nor is it a common denominator to which they may both be reduced. . . . And if the concept is used, this invitation must be resisted at all costs.¹²⁶

Causa, says Barth, is not a “genus,” according to which the “divine and creaturely *causa* can then be described as species.” When theology speaks of the being of God and of the human, it is not “dealing with two species of the one genus being.”¹²⁷ Furthermore, when Christian theology speaks Christologically about the nature of God and the humanity of Christ, “we are not dealing with two species of the one genus nature.”¹²⁸ Here Barth clearly rejects the “cause-effect relation” principle, and he immediately extends this rejection to his understanding of analogy as follows:

It is true, of course, that although there is no identity of the divine and creaturely operation or *causare*, there is a similarity, a *correspondence*, a comparableness, an analogy. In theology we can and should speak about similarity and therefore analogy when we find likeness and unlikeness between two quantities: a certain likeness which is compromised by a great unlikeness; or a certain unlikeness which is always relativised and qualified by a certain existent likeness. The great unlikeness of the work of God in face of that of the creature consists in the fact that as the work of the Creator in the preservation and overruling of the creature the work of God takes the form of an absolute positing, a form which can never be proper to the work of the creature. But at the same time the divine work in relation to the creature also has the form of a conditioning, determining, and altering of that which already exists. And inasmuch as the conditioning of another also belongs to creaturely activity, there is a certain similarity between the divine and the creaturely work. In view of this likeness and unlikeness, unlikeness and likeness, we can and should speak of a similarity, a comparableness, and therefore an analogy between the divine activity and the human. We have to speak of an *analogia operationis*, just as elsewhere we can speak of an *analogia relationis*.¹²⁹

For many this passage represents Barth’s great contradiction to his dismissal of what he calls the “Catholic doctrine of the *analogia entis*.” But surely

¹²⁶ Ibid., 102.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid. “To put it rather differently, it must be clearly understood that when the word *causa* is applied to God on the one side and the creature on the other, the concept does not describe the activity but the active subjects, and it does not signify subjects which are not merely *not alike*, or not similar, but subjects which in *their absolute antithesis cannot even be compared*” (ibid., emphasis added).

¹²⁹ Ibid.

Barth does not make this error. For that matter, those who have pointed to this passage, and the extended discussion of *analogia relationis*, have often failed to consider the wider context of Barth's theological development. Barth does not at all mean by *analogia operationis* what either Aquinas or Przywara mean in their employment of analogy, notwithstanding von Balthasar's critique (and those who follow his critique). In this very same context Barth goes on to deny the analogy of being for the very same reason that he has always rejected it, and in no uncertain terms. He writes,

Indeed, it would be a mistake to try to compare them simply because they are both *causa*. In the same way it would be a mistake to argue as follows [following Thomism and Jesuitism]. The Creator exists and has being no less than the creature. Therefore although the being of the Creator and that of the creature are unlike, in some respects they are alike and therefore similar. There is therefore an *analogia entis* between God and the creature. To that extent there is a master concept, a common denominator, a genus (being) which comprises both God and the creature. And it would be a really serious mistake if we were to adopt this argument.¹³⁰

Why does Barth think so? Because he thinks it is based on a mistaken Christology, which argues that Jesus Christ has a preincarnate divine and human nature, and that although the two natures are "unlike," they are also "alike and similar." There is therefore an attempt at a Christological grounding of an *analogia naturae* between God and man, which is not biblically warranted. "And to that extent we can speak of a master concept, a common denominator, a genus (nature) which comprises both God and man. This is the type of mistake which we have to avoid at this point. This is the deduction which we have to recognize as false and therefore illegitimate."¹³¹ Rather, Barth wants to lay clear emphasis on the fact of the differences between the two acting subjects.

The concept *causa* does not merely describe activities, but acting subjects. And between the two subjects as such there is neither likeness nor similarity, but utter unlikeness. We cannot deduce from the fact that both subjects are *causa* the further fact that they both fall under the one master concept, *causa*, that they may both be reduced to that one common denominator, or that they are both species belonging to the one genus. On the contrary, they cannot even be compared.¹³²

¹³⁰ Ibid., 103.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid., 102–3. Barth is unequivocal here. "The divine and creaturely subjects are not like or similar, but unlike. They are unlike because their basis and constitution as subjects are quite different and therefore absolutely unlike, that is, there is

The *fourth* condition relates directly to this third, but “the third condition is the most important so far mentioned, and if it is fulfilled the fourth will also be fulfilled.” So Barth deals with it very briefly. He writes, “When the causal concept is introduced, it should not be with either the intention or the consequence that theology should be turned into philosophy at this point, projecting a kind of total scheme of things.”¹³³ In actuality this is, for Barth, an overriding concern in that he sees in the concept of causality the displacement of theology by philosophy. But this concern, as expressed here, is really in preparation for his fifth and most crucial condition on the use of the term “cause.”¹³⁴ It at once summarizes and extends the other four conditions and is typical of Barth’s whole theological enterprise. To miss it, and to misunderstand his intention in stating it, is to misunderstand Barth’s approach to analogy altogether. It is precisely where the Catholic and Orthodox traditions most often misunderstand Barth’s fundamental Christological orientation in his doctrine of revelation.

The *fifth* condition Barth sets on the use of the term “cause” is stated as follows:

As the doctrine of the *concursus*, and indeed the whole doctrine of providence, is expounded, there must be a clear connection between the first article of the creed and the second. If the causal concept is to be applied legitimately, its content and interpretation must be determined by the fact that what it describes is the operation of the Father of Jesus Christ in relation to that of the creature.¹³⁵

This, says Barth is the only “positive condition” under which one may employ the causal concept in the doctrine of *concursus*. It is, of course, the

not even the slightest similarity between them. The divine *causa*, as distinct from the creaturely, is self-grounded, self-positing, self-conditioning, and self-causing” (ibid., 103). And again; “It is quite indispensable to a true doctrine of the divine accompanying that the absolute unlikeness of the two *causae causantes* should be brought into sharp relief, with the consequent rejection of any idea of an *analogia causae*. For otherwise there can never be any certainty that we are speaking of two distinct subjects, God and the creature, when we deal with that twofold *causare* which is our present subject. In respect of other essences we can easily take two quantities and range them under a single master concept, a common denominator or a genus, thus comparing them the one with the other. But we cannot do this with God and the creature. If we tried to do so, the twofold activity whose relationship we should be discussing would not be the activity of these two subjects” (ibid.).

¹³³ Ibid., 104.

¹³⁴ See Barth’s treatment of Philosophy and Theology in *Church Dogmatics*, vol. I/1, 2.

¹³⁵ *Church Dogmatics*, vol. III/3, 105.

same condition that he places on *analogia relationis*.¹³⁶ Only in this respect can causal analogy be regarded as “theologically possible and incontestable.” When it is interpreted in the light of Christology, the causal concept is certainly not exposed to the danger of becoming a means for interpreting the Christian faith as an ontology of the one and the many, of the *exitus* and *reditus* that marks the neo-Platonism and, to some degree, Thomistic systems of thought. Thus, on the negative side these conditions represent a denial of the establishment of any form of divine and human agency grounded in nature in and of itself. On the positive side, they do allow for the possibility of a positive dogmatic description of divine/human action that accounts for causation within a framework of grace, Christologically grounded.

Conclusion

Thus Barth concludes, and so may we, that only under these conditions can one employ any conception of cause. But under these conditions *causa* has “a content in virtue of which it certainly embraces natural events and the uniformity of their processes, and yet cannot be identified with the narrow concept of a mechanical natural cause which effects and is effected automatically.”¹³⁷ The concept *causa*, Christologically grounded, also means that the subjects God and humanity cannot be identified on either side as a “thing.”¹³⁸ This being the case then,

The concept *causa* has a content in virtue of which the two things signified by it cannot possibly be compared. If we keep before us the archetype of divine-human co-operation, the co-operation of the holy God and sinful man in the covenant of grace; if we have regard to the antithesis which in Jesus Christ became an antithesis in unity, we shall refrain from drawing any parallels or comparisons, we shall be delivered from the evil desire to find a master-concept, a common denominator, a genus, a synthesis, in which God and the creature can be brought

¹³⁶ Ibid, 106.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid. Barth explains, “If the *causa prima* is the mercy of God, and the *causa secunda* is its object and recipient, then it follows that neither the one nor the other can ever be controlled by the one who meditates or speaks concerning them. For what is there here that we can ‘realize’? We stand before the mystery of grace both on the one side and on the other. It is clear that the *causa prima* can be known only in prayer, and the *causa secunda* in gratitude, or else not at all. No thinker or speaker can ever be above these things, but only under them. If in a dead orthodoxy he is over something, then *ipso facto* it is not either the *causa prima* or the *causa secunda* in this sense” (ibid.).

together, and we shall be kept from the pleasure of finding analogies between the two subjects.¹³⁹

Finally, says Barth, the causal concept has

no content in virtue of which it ceases to be part of the Christian confession and theological knowledge and becomes part of a philosophical scheme of things. For when the two subjects are so very different, but so closely inter-related, clearly it is only by revelation and in faith that the *causa princeps* and the *causa particularis* can be known both in and for themselves and in the *concursus* of their twofold *causare*.¹⁴⁰

In sum, we have seen how it is that regardless of Barth's misunderstanding of Przywara's conception of *analogia entis*, he has to be taken seriously on his own grounds. Failing to understand this has led not a few well-meaning theologians to identify the Przywarian/von Balthasarian view and the "Roman Catholic" view that cannot be borne out in the details. Such a mistake not only sidesteps the serious concerns that Barth has leveled against post-Thomistic Roman Catholicism in general, but it has made it inattentive to that very same ontology of the one and the many through a reinterpretation of analogy of being in light of a doctrine of participation as process that is just as indebted to philosophy. There are, as I see it, three implications for theology should this mistaken identity between the Catholic view and Przywara continue.

On the scholarly level, this approach to the *analogia entis* may close off dialogue with some of the most crucial research in relation to the Catholic tradition that can be had. This reading of analogy also short circuits the readings of Gilson, Lonergan, Burrell, and Barth, simply because these readings do not support the Przywara reading. As such there is a general failure to take the massive amount of scholarship in this direction into account. The net result is that it bypasses any consideration of the possibly serious consequences that the Thomistic synthesis has had for Christian theology through the Kantian critique. Redressing this state of affairs cannot be accomplished simply through a wholesale reversal of the history of philosophy as if it never happened. The very reason for taking this position within the Radical Orthodox group already admits to a state of affairs about theological speech that they are now wanting to deny. Indeed, as never before, what we need is careful reading of texts. The fact that some will say I too have misread the tradition, Aquinas, Kant, or Barth does not mitigate this

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 107.

need. I have merely shown that the self-assured positions of Betz, Hart, Milbank, et al. demonstrate a fair degree of perspectival reading in respect to all of these authors.

On the level of tradition, this kind of narrow reading of the development of *analogia entis* closes off access to what is clearly a rich tradition of hermeneutic and epistemic scholarship in the service of theological language within the Roman Catholic tradition. Not all of it has been negative and bad for theology in general. The truncated reading of analogy through the von Balthasar/Przywara position makes the multifaceted nature of the development of analogy, and its related hermeneutical, ontological, and theological issues rather monochrome.

On the ecumenical level this reading of *analogia entis* clearly does not respect the continuing differences that Protestants have with Roman Catholics on issues of nature, grace, revelation, Christology, and so on. It could mean ecumenical closure on some levels. One can argue for the primacy of Przywara's view, but this does not mitigate a complete disregard in respect to Barth's great achievement, however much, as Reinhard Hütter puts it, it is a *particulare verbi*.¹⁴¹ The phrase "anti-Christ" was meant in all seriousness, and not as a caricature. Barth had real concerns that at its heart the Catholic Church was indeed a displacement of Christ. These concerns remain for many Protestants, who nevertheless desire détente. Allow me to finish on a particularly Roman Catholic note by citing one of its greatest twentieth-century theologians. In his book on Barth's theology von Balthasar writes:

This book will proceed, therefore, on the presupposition that something is really being said to us [Catholics] and that we can answer only after we have really listened. . . . At any rate it is our duty to listen seriously before we for our part respond. Protestants are convinced that they have seen through Catholicism once and for all; and if it should so happen that they discover a presentation of Catholic views that they do not find absurd, this must surely be due to the Catholic habit of countenancing "Jesuitical" arguments, hiding the Church's true esoteric features behind politically shrewd masks. . . . How can Catholics counter such deep mistrust? How can they show that they hold no "sinister designs"? Let us hear what Barth has to say: "Catholicism stands before us today much more refined and alluring than in the sixteenth century. It has become Jesuitical. . . . It speaks more fearlessly and speaks more skillfully. It presses home its questions to us with greater urgency and at the same time with greater understanding." [So

¹⁴¹ Reinhard Hütter, "Karl Barth's Dialectical Catholicity; Sic et Non," *Modern Theology* 16 (2000).

von Balthasar concludes], the result is that, if sloth and inattention hinder conversation on the Catholic side, mistrust and suspicion cripple it on the Protestant. . . . A calculating spirit of reconciliation is not enough; genuine humility must be the mark of all dialogue.¹⁴² N·V

¹⁴² Von Balthasar, *Theology of Karl Barth*, 17–18.